

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Doctor of Theology Dissertation

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

5-1-1987

Biblical Authority in the Westminster Confession and its Twentieth Century Contextualization in the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony Of 1980

John Delivuk

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_delivukj@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/thd>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Delivuk, John, "Biblical Authority in the Westminster Confession and its Twentieth Century Contextualization in the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony Of 1980" (1987). *Doctor of Theology Dissertation*. 127.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/thd/127>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Theology Dissertation by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY IN THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION AND ITS
TWENTIETH CENTURY CONTEXTUALIZATION IN THE REFORMED
PRESBYTERIAN TESTIMONY OF 1980

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

by


John Allen Delivuk

September 1987


Approved by

 7/21/87

Advisor



Reader



Reader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter
I. INTRODUCTION 1

- The issue of authority in Christianity and its importance
- The importance of the Westminster Assembly's doctrine of Biblical authority
 - The influence of the Westminster Standards
 - The Westminster Standards as an example of Protestant Biblical authority
 - Biblical authority in ecumenical discussions
 - The liberal attack on Biblical authority
- Scope of this study in the Westminster Standards
 - Limited in documents
 - Limited in time-the sixteenth century
 - Limited in geography-Great Britain
 - Limited in doctrine-Biblical authority
 - Limited in application to doctrine, morals and practice as seen in worship
 - The scope of this study in the twentieth century
- Method of procedure
 - The historical background
 - Procedure with the Confession and Testimony
 - Sources for the Confession and Testimony

II. THE BACKGROUND OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY 9

- The historical background of the Westminster Assembly
 - The Reformation
 - The Stuart kings in England
 - The English Civil War
 - The calling of the Westminster Assembly
- The history of the doctrine of Biblical authority
 - The Reformation and Biblical authority
 - The Calvinist Reformation and Biblical authority
 - Definitions of Puritanism and Anglicanism with respect to Biblical authority
- The Vestments controversy
 - The first Vestments controversy
 - The second Vestments controversy
- Thomas Cartwright and presbyterianism
- Summary of important issues

The authority of the Bible
 The role of things indifferent in the church
 Christian liberty
 The Law of God

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND
 ITS TESTIMONY 35

The Scottish background of the Reformed Presbyterian
 Church
 The Scottish Reformation
 The battle against the Stuart kings
 The founding of the Reformed Presbyterian Church
 in Scotland
 The Reformed Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. until
 1833
 The Reformed Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. after
 1833
 History
 Evaluation
 Reformed Presbyterian confessionalsim
 The Reformed background
 Reasons for the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony
 The process of Testimony revision
 Observations on Testimony revision

IV. BIBLICAL AUTHORITY IN CHAPTER 1 OF THE WESTMINSTER
 CONFESSION AND REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN TESTIMONY, PART 1 . . . 73

Section 1, the formes of revelation
 The purpose of this section
 Creation insufficient revelation
 The necessity of Scripture or special revelation
 The Testimony's rejections of liberal theology
 in the light of the Confession
 Sections 2 and 3, the canon and inspiration
 The content of the canon
 The Apocryphal books not canonical
 Inspiration
 Section 4, God, the author of Scripture
 Scripture and the church
 God, the author of Scripture
 Scripture as the Word of God
 Christ and the Bible
 Neo-orthodoxy and the Confession
 Section 5, the testimony of the church and the Holy
 Spirit to Scripture
 The church and the Scriptures
 The witness of the Spirit to Scripture
 Contemporary issues
 Inerrancy in the Westminster Confession

- The position of Rogers on inerrancy
- The dictionary definitions of infallible and inerrant
- Evidence that infallible meant inerrant to the authors of the Confession
- The inerrancy position of the Testimony
- Summary

V. BIBLICAL AUTHORITY IN CHAPTER 1 OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFESION AND REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN TESTIMONY, PART 2 . 122

- Section 6, the purposes, sufficiency, and hermeneutics of Scripture
 - Introduction
 - The purposes of the Scriptures
 - The sufficiency of Scriptures
 - The meaning of "good and necessary consequence"
- Section 7 and 8, the clarity and text of Scripture
 - Section 7, the perspicuity of Scripture
 - Section 8, the text of Scripture
- Section 9, the interpretation of Scripture
 - The analogy of faith in the Confession
 - The analogy of faith in the Testimony
- Section 10, Scripture as the judge
 - Introduction
 - Why Scripture is the supreme judge
 - What it judges
 - The Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture
- Summary

VI. WORSHIP AND BIBLICAL AUTHORITY IN THE WESTMINSTER CONFESION AND THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN TESTIMONY: A CASE STUDY 178

- The Directory for worship
 - The regulative principle of worship
 - The Definition of the regulative principle
 - Proofs for the regulative principle of worship
 - The circumstances of worship
 - Circumstances must not be a sacred ceremonies
 - Circumstances are not determined by Scripture
 - There must be a good reason for a circumstance
 - The practices of worship
 - Practices listed in the Confession and directory
 - The Testimony additions to the practices
 - The Psalmody argument in Testimony section 5c
 - The musical instruments argument in Testimony section 5d
- Summary

VII. CONCLUSIONS 214

- The source of Biblical authority God's authorship
- The Bible sufficient for every need of the church and believers
- The Bible's many purposes
- The Westminster Confession's position on Biblical inerrancy
- The Holy Spirit speaking the Bible as the supreme judge in religious controversies
- Men not saved by the Bible's message unless the Holy Spirit effectual through it
- The Westminster doctrine of Biblical authority and its principles of Biblical hermeneutics
- The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony on the whole in agreement with the Westminster Confession on Biblical authority
- The Testimony and plenary inspiration
- The Confession and the Testimony application of doctrine of Biblical authority to worship
- The authors of the Confession use of Biblical authority in an ecumenical manner
- The Testimony's problem of consistency
- The Confession's ecumenical purpose

LIST OF CITED AUTHORITIES 221

BIBLIOGRAPHY 223

- Seventeenth Century Sources Consulted
- Works of Modern Authors Consulted

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of the doctrine of Biblical authority as believed and taught by the Westminster Assembly in its Confession of Faith, and this doctrine's application to the late twentieth century. Further, this dissertation will consider the definition of that doctrine, and how it was applied in the Westminster Confession. This study will also consider how the Westminster doctrine of Biblical authority is applied today in the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony of 1980. These issues will serve as the center of this study.

The issue of authority is one of the most important in Christianity, because it affects the salvation and life of every believer. Thus when one studies the authority of the Bible, one considers an issue at the heart of the Christian religion. For example, one's view of the Bible's authority affects how and what one believes and teaches (doctrine), how one loves God and his neighbor (morals), and how one worships and governs his church (church practice). It affects both the corporate life of church members, and their individual and family lives as well. For God has chosen the Bible to be the means by which He teaches believers how to live as members of His family.

This dissertation will study Biblical authority in the Westminster

Confession. Because they have been the historical standards of Presbyterianism, the Westminster Confession and its related Standards have served as one of the most influential sets of confessional documents in the western world. The Confession has also served, with minor modifications, some denominations of Baptists and Congregationalists. As a result, the Westminster Standards have had a great effect on Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, Australia, North America, and nations like Korea, where Presbyterian missionary efforts have been successful,

The doctrine of Biblical authority has great implications for all of theology, particularly Protestant theology. Because Protestants have historically done theology by collecting every Bible passage on a subject and attempting to summarize their teaching, the extent to which the Bible is authoritative, and the issues on which it is authoritative, are at the heart of Protestant theology. This study in the Westminster Assembly's doctrine of Biblical authority will serve to increase our understanding of how and for what purposes the Bible is used among Protestants, and especially among those in the Reformed tradition.

Another reason for this study is the ecumenical discussions between Reformed and other traditions. It is this author's hope that a clear statement of the Reformed doctrine of Biblical authority can advance these dialogues.

A final reason for this study is the effect of liberalism on many denominations' understanding of the authority of the Bible. The divine inspiration of the Bible has been seriously attacked as a result of the historical-critical method. This method assumes the human authorship of the Bible with or most often without divine aid. As a result the

church now has a "Bible" in which the church "hears the word of God," (note the intentional small "w" in word)¹ instead of being God's infal-
lible and inerrant Word. The effect of liberalism has been to undermine
the authority of the Bible. Part of the debate between liberals and evan-
gelicals also relates to the Westminster Confession, specifically whether
the Confession teaches that the Bible is inerrant, what the Bible's pur-
poses are, and whether it can be interpreted in a neo-orthodox manner.

The scope of this study will now be defined. The authority of
the Bible will be studied first in the writings composed by the Westmin-
ster Assembly of Divines in the 1640s. These documents, jointly known as
the Westminster Standards, are the Confession of Faith (often called the
Westminster Confession), the Larger and Shorter Catechisms with their
Scriptural proofs, A Directory for Church Government and Ordination of
Ministers, and The Directory for the Publick [sic] Worship of God. The
Confession will serve as the primary document, with the others used to
enlighten its meaning. Background material will be limited primarily to
England in the Reformation and Puritan periods, as English events and
theology had the greatest effect on the Westminster Assembly.

The doctrinal scope of this dissertation will also be limited.
The Westminster Standards have much more to say about the doctrine of
Holy Scripture than this dissertation can consider. This dissertation
will focus on the extent of Biblical authority, and will see how the As-
sembly applied it to specific issues. Therefore, it will discuss only

¹Edward A. Dowey, A Commentary on the Confession of 1667 and In-
troduction to "The Book of Confessions" (Philadelphia: Westminster Press,
1968), pp. 18, 100.

such areas as canonicity, clarity and translation, revelation, inspiration, the role of the Holy Spirit and hermeneutics as they relate to the authority of the Bible.

This dissertation will also investigate the doctrine of Biblical authority and the extent of this authority in the area of worship. Worship was chosen because the Westminster Assembly was unified on this issue, and because worship combines doctrine, morals, and practice, all areas of importance to the church today. The church is still deeply concerned with doctrine, as the impact of liberalism and American individualism have combined to create a great diversity of doctrines. She is deeply involved in moral issues such as abortion, divorce and chemical dependency, which are effecting more and more of her members. She is concerned with worship as some call for a greater emphasis on liturgy (the liturgical renewal), and others wish for greater freedom and innovation in worship.

A second consideration in the choice of worship is the amount of material written by the Westminster Assembly on worship. In addition to a Confession chapter on worship, the Assembly also wrote a directory for worship.

In order to apply this study to the present century, Biblical authority will be examined in the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony. The authority of the Bible is under attack by the forces of liberalism and humanism described above. Attempts are also being made in evangelical circles to downgrade the authority of the Bible. For example, the Bible is said to be infallible, but not inerrant. It is said to be correct in matters of faith, but not history and science. There has also been at

least one attempt to reread the history of the church in such a way as to view the doctrine of inerrancy as a product of the last century.² The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony was written to address these issues.

Churches that hold to the traditional Protestant view of the Bible have attempted to answer the above challenges in various ways. Some have been content to have their theologians answer the charges in their writings. Others, like the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, have requested that committees of their theologians write responses to these problems based on the Bible and their Confessions, and have formally adopted these position papers. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America had a different response. Unique among conservative American Presbyterians, this denomination wrote a confessional document, the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony (completed in 1980), to deal with modern theological problems. As a confession it carries greater weight than the work of an individual theologian, or a resolution of a denominational body. Because of its confessional status, its response to modern challenges to the Bible's authority, and its foundation in the Westminster Confession, the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony will be used as model for a modern application of the Westminster doctrine of Biblical authority. This study will ask whether Reformed Presbyterians have kept the same doctrine of Biblical authority as the Westminster Assembly. It will also examine how they have applied the Assembly's doctrine of Biblical authority to the present challenges to the Bible's authority.

This dissertation will begin with an historical survey of the

²See Jack B. Rogers and Donald McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979).

background of the Westminster Assembly, to give insight into the Assembly's thinking. This survey will cover primarily the English Reformation and early Puritan period.

Next will come a survey of Reformed Presbyterian history with a discussion of the history and goals of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony.

Finally, this dissertation will devote three chapters to examining the sections of the Westminster Confession and Reformed Presbyterian Testimony dealing with the authority of the Bible. Two of these chapters will deal with the explicit teaching of the Confession and Testimony about Biblical authority. It will examine some aspects of the doctrine of Scripture, and will focus on a detailed exposition of the authority of Scripture, using the sources discussed below. It will deal with questions such as the source of the Bible's authority, and the usefulness of other authorities. The next chapter will discuss the application of Biblical authority to worship.

The discussion of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony will follow a different approach. Since the dissertation's goal is to compare the views of the Testimony and the Westminster Standards, the Testimony will be discussed with the appropriate sections of the Westminster Confession. This approach is encouraged by the Reformed Presbyterian Church's decision to print the Confession and Testimony in parallel columns. The questions to be asked in comparing the documents are: first, whether the view of Biblical authority is the same? Second, why additions or changes, if any, were made to the teaching of the Westminster Standards? Were these additions or changes based on a better understanding of the Bible? Did

these additions deal with modern challenges to the faith? Or, did these additions result from a different doctrine of Biblical authority?

The use of sources in this dissertation will be similar to the method used by Jack Rogers in his Scripture in the Westminster Confession, but with one difference. This dissertation will attempt to put more emphasis on the documents produced by the Westminster Assembly than Rogers did. In his study of Westminster Confession Chapter 1, titled "Of Holy Scripture," Rogers depended primarily on James Ussher (the theologian who most influenced the Westminster Divines) and the theologians who were the architects of the Confession to determine its meaning.³ For example, when discussing the meaning of the Confession Chapter 1, he cited the authors of the Confession. However, he failed to use or even cite the scriptural proofs as a help in understanding the meaning of the Confession. While the authors of the Confession compose a vital source for understanding the Confession, they must be looked on as sources secondary to the works of the Westminster Assembly itself, such as the Confession

³These men were Cornelius Burges, Thomas Gataker, Robert Harris, Charles Herle, Joshua Hoyle, Edward Reynolds, Thomas Temple, and the four Scots, Robert Baillie, George Gillespie, Alexander Henderson, and Samuel Rutherford. This dissertation will frequently refer to them as the authors of the Confession. See Jack Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966), pp. 40, 161-82. (The Kok edition is identical to the Eerdmans edition of 1967.) While this dissertation is critical of Rogers at a few points, his major contribution to the study of the Westminster Confession must be acknowledged. The majority of his conclusions are insightful and accurate, and his methodology of using the authors of the Confession as major sources for its meaning will probably become the standard method for future research on the Confession. This author would like to express his gratitude to Professor Rogers for his fine work, and the help it has been in the research for this dissertation.

The writings of the authors of the Confession are now available on the three University Microfilms' series titled: Early English Books, 1475-1640, Early English Books, 1641-1700, and the Thomason Tracts, which can be found at a number of college and university libraries.

and Catechisms with scriptural proofs, and the minutes of the Assembly. Thus no position held by an author of the Confession can be said to be the position of the Confession unless it is supported by the Confession or another of the Assembly's works. Also to be considered is the influence of seventeenth century Reformed Theology on the Westminster Assembly, primarily through the use of Ussher and the Irish Articles of 1615. Finally, these conclusions will be compared with those of modern scholars who have studied the Westminster Assembly and Puritanism. Resources for the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, are much more limited than those available for the Westminster Standards. There is the Testimony and its various drafts. Unfortunately, the committee that rewrote the Testimony kept no minutes, and there has been very little scholarly discussion of it. Thus the main sources will be the Testimony itself and interviews with members of the Testimony revision committee.

In conclusion, there are a number of scholarly controversies concerning the Westminster Assembly and its work. A few that have not been mentioned include whether it was possible to establish Presbyterianism in England with an Erastian Parliament, and whether the majority of Westminster Assembly Divines were Presbyterians or moderate Episcopalians at the beginning of the Assembly. These controversies will only be treated as they relate to Biblical authority.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY

The Historical Background of the Westminster Assembly

The goal of this chapter is to give the reader an historical and theological background to serve as a basis for understanding the Westminster Assembly and its view of Biblical authority. The first part of this chapter will discuss the historical background from the beginning of the English Reformation to the time of the Westminster Assembly. The second part will give a discussion of the history of Biblical authority in the same time period.¹

The Reformation began when Martin Luther nailed the Ninety-five theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church in 1517. The King of England, Henry VIII, at first opposed the Reformation. However, when the Pope refused to annul Henry's marriage, he declared himself to be the head of the church, required the English clergy to submit to him, and began a partial reformation in England in 1534. Under his son, Edward VI (1547-

¹Since much of the information in this chapter is common knowledge to anyone familiar with English church history it will not be footnoted. For more information the reader is referred to: W. E. Lunt, History of England, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), A. G. Dickens, The English Reformation, (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), Patrick Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), and Robert S. Paul, Assembly of the Lord, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985.)

53), the Reformation took a more markedly reformed direction and the Puritan and Anglican parties began to emerge. The Vestments controversy, discussed below, is usually considered the beginning of the Puritan movement. The Puritans demanded more reform, but the Anglicans, who were content with the status quo, opposed further reformation.

After the death of Edward VI, his sister, Mary I (1553-58), attempted to restore the Roman Church to England. After her death her Protestant sister, Elizabeth, restored the Protestant religion. Like her father, Henry VIII, Elizabeth was a strong-willed monarch who wished to control the church and desired only limited reformation. The Puritan-Anglican divisions increased, and vestments again became an issue. With the death of Elizabeth in 1603, James VI, king of Scotland came to the English throne as James I. The Puritans hoped that the king of Presbyterian Scotland would be sympathetic to the establishment of some form of Presbyterian government and worship in England. However, King James had developed a dislike for Presbyterianism, and the English bishops appealed to his ego. Therefore, he not only embraced Anglicanism but attempted to force it on Scotland as well. The result of his reign was to heighten Puritan-Anglican tensions, and to increase Scottish support for Puritanism.

Under the reign of his son, Charles I (1625-49), religious and political tensions exploded into a civil war. Charles was a poor administrator, and frequently ignored the laws of England. He was forced to call Parliament into session in 1640 when Scotland invaded England. His goal was to pass additional taxes to meet military and other expenses. However, Parliament refused to pass the taxes unless there were reforms

of political and ecclesiastical abuses. So Charles dismissed Parliament. He then proceeded to break more laws in his efforts to raise funds. Later that year he called Parliament into session again. Tensions were very high. Parliament moved to protect itself by impeaching the Earl of Strafford and Archbishop William Laud. Strafford had threatened to lead the Irish army against the king's enemies in England and Scotland. Laud's uncompromising enforcement of Anglicanism, including the use of force, had made him hated by Puritans and Scots. In January 1642, Charles I attempted to arrest some leading members of the House of Commons for treason. On August 22 Charles raised the Royal Standard at Nottingham, and the English Civil War began. It resulted in a short victory for Parliament which was soon dismissed after Oliver Cromwell assumed power in 1653.

It was this Parliament that called the Westminster Assembly into session. Why did Parliament call the Westminster Assembly? One reason was the strength of the Puritan movement. This caused many Britons to request that Parliament carry out a program of reform. Ministers, like Cornelius Burgess, one of the most popular ministers in England, even used their sermons before Parliament to remind it of its responsibilities to reform the church.² Another reason was the persecution of Puritans by the bishops. These abuses were so great that the resulting protest had forced King Charles to allow the impeachment and beheading of Archbishop Laud. Also, Parliament wanted support for its struggle against the king, and reform of religion was a popular cause.

²Larry Jackson Holley, "The Divines of the Westminster Assembly: A Study of Puritanism and Parliament" (Ph. D. dissertation, Yale University, 1979), pp. 46-47.

Finally, there was a major administrative problem for the new government. The old form of church government had been abolished. Parliament therefore called an assembly of divines³ together to form a consultative body for the purpose of advising Parliament on the points of ecclesiastical government and discipline that required the approval of civil government for their full implementation. The assembly was called by a Christian government, in a transitional time in the church to answer the question of how shall the national church be constituted.⁴

Parliament gave the following as its purpose in calling the Assembly:

to settle the government and liturgy of the Church of England and for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the said church from false aspersions and vituperations as should be agreeable to the Word of God and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the church at home and bring it unto near accord with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed churches abroad.⁵

The following procedure was used to call the Assembly of Divines. After considerable discussion and delay, a bill was passed on June 12, 1643 establishing the Assembly. There were to be 151 delegates, 30 lay and 121 clerical delegates. The delegates were chosen by Parliament from the various counties in England. The following oath, administered to all members of the Westminster Assembly, shows the concern of Parliament that the Assembly be governed by the Bible:

³"Divine" is a seventeenth century term for theologian.

⁴W. M. Hetherington, History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 5th ed. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1890), p. 108.

⁵New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 1912 ed., s.v. "Westminster Assembly," by David S. Schaff. The full text of the Assembly Ordinance is found in Holley, "Divines," pp. 223-24 and Hetherington, History, pp. 88-90.

I,----, do seriously promise and vow, in the presence of Almighty God, that in this Assembly, whereof I am a member, I will maintain nothing in point of doctrine but what I believe to be most agreeable to the Word of God; nor in point of discipline, but what I shall conceive to conduce most to the glory of God, and the good and peace of His Church.⁶

The first session of the Westminster Assembly of Divines was held on July 1, 1643. After the adoption of Solemn League and Covenant on September 25, 1643, Scottish representatives were added to the Assembly, not as delegates, but as treaty commissioners. Between July 1, 1643, and February 22, 1649, it held 1163 sessions. The last record of Scottish commissioners is November 9, 1647. It had irregular meetings to 1653, mainly for the trial of ministers, and was never formally dissolved.

The Assembly was composed of 151 nominated members - 30 lay and 121 divines. There were four parties of ecclesiastics with diverse views: The Episcopal party consisted of nine men including four bishops. They rarely attended, because of their loyalty to the king. The moderate Anglicans, most of whom would become Presbyterians as a result of the Assembly debates, formed the largest group, and consisted of men like Edmund Calamy, Edward Reynolds, and Anthony Tuckney.⁷ The Independents were

⁶Hetherington, History, p. 110.

⁷The exact position of this group is disputed. John R. De Witt, Jus Divinum: The Westminster Assembly and the Divine Right of Church Government (Kampen: Kok, 1969), p. 31, note 75 argues that they were Presbyterians against the view that they were ambivalent held by Ethyn W. Kirby, "The English Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly," Church History 33 (December 1964):418-28. Paul, Assembly, p. 30 note 56, and pp. 110, 111, and 164-65, makes the most convincing case. He argues these English Puritans began the Assembly as moderate episcopalians on church government, and changed their belief to Presbyterianism either out of conviction, or out of a belief that Presbyterianism did not contradict Scripture and offered a acceptable solution to the problem of establishing a new church.

small in number, but large in influence due to their favor with Cromwell and the army. Independents included Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye. The few Erastians were under the intellectual leadership of John Lightfoot. This group had strong support in Parliament. In 1643, after the Solemn League and Covenant was signed, eight Scots, five clerical and three lay commissioners were added. The Scots were Presbyterians.

At this point more information concerning the Solemn League and Covenant will prove helpful. When King James I became the king of England, the nations of Scotland and England became one. This resulted in one nation, part of which (Scotland) was Presbyterian and determined to stay that way. The efforts of the Stuart kings to bring Anglicanism to Scotland resulted in a war between Charles and Scotland in 1639. Hostilities ceased pending the meeting of the Scottish Parliament and General Assembly. The latter abolished bishops in Scotland. In 1640 hostilities were renewed and a Scottish army occupied northern England. A temporary settlement was reached with Charles. After the Civil War began, Parliament wanted the help of the Scottish army. This desire led to the Solemn League and Covenant between Parliament and Scotland in 1643. The Scottish army would assist Parliament in return for the establishment of Presbyterianism in England. As a result of the agreement, Scottish commissioners joined the English divines in forming the Westminster Assembly. They would be a great influence in writing the Westminster Standards.

The History of the Doctrine of Biblical Authority

The Protestant doctrine of Biblical authority began with Martin Luther. He wrote Ninety-five Theses which were primarily concerned with

abuses in the Roman Catholic Church. In the debates over Luther's criticisms of the Roman Church, he was challenged on the basis of papal authority. The Pope is the head of the church, opponents argued. They said that Christians must obey the Pope and if he approves of these practices, they must support them. Luther answered this challenge by an appeal to the Bible's authority, and chose to stand on its authority in challenging Rome. Clearly, Biblical authority was the critical doctrine of the Reformation.⁸

The Calvinistic reformers were more radical than the Lutherans in insisting on the Bible as the only standard for practice as well as doctrine. Professor Richard Greaves summarized the Protestant reformers position on the Bible and authority as follows:

Perhaps the most crucial doctrine of the Reformation, the question of authority and the place assigned to Scripture determined the nature of the theology, polity, and worship of the Reformed Church. For the reformers authority involved the fundamental question of the basis of belief and practice, i.e. the standard by which all things must be judged. In rejecting the broad Catholic doctrine of authority, the Protestants gave varying degrees of consideration to the authority of the church, councils, and even civil government, but ultimately the final standard was Scripture.⁹

⁸There is some misunderstanding of the Lutheran position on biblical authority. For example, Ian S. Palmer, "Authority and Doctrine of Scripture in the Thought of John Calvin," Evangelical Quarterly 49 (January-March 1977):36, incorrectly summarized the Lutheran position as follows: "Scripture is authoritative when bearing witness to Jesus Christ." Dr. George Robbert, a Lutheran historian, told this author that this statement should read, "The sixteenth century Lutheran position is that Scripture is supreme and authoritative on whatever subject it speaks." If the Bible was only authoritative on Christ, Luther would have had no standard for challenging church abuses.

⁹Richard Greaves, "The Nature of Authority in the Writings of John Knox," Fides et Historia 10 (Spring 1978):30.

The Calvinist Reformation and Biblical Authority

Having briefly shown the importance of the Biblical authority for the reformers, the development of this doctrine among the Calvinist reformers will now be summarized. First, John Calvin's view of the authority of the Bible will be considered. Calvin saw the Holy Scriptures as the sole authority in the life of the church. Ronald Wallace summarized his position as follows:

For Calvin the Bible is not only the sole source of Church proclamation but also the sole authority that must rule the life of the Church. It has been pointed out that through the preaching of the Word of God Christ rules within His Church. The Preacher of the Word is bound to turn to no other source for his testimony than to the Scripture. This means that the Scripture is set over the Church by God as the authority that must be allowed full freedom to rule the life of the Church. It must be given a place of unsurped honour within the Church. It was through the Word that the Church was brought into being; it is through the same Word always being given afresh that the Church is continually renewed in its life and preserved as a Church. We cannot admit the existence of a Church where the Word of God does not so rule . . .¹⁰

Calvin's view was developed by later reformers and Puritans. His disciples, such as John Knox, would be the ones who would carry his beliefs to their logical conclusion. Ian Palmer summarized the differences, saying that Calvin did not accept:

the extreme Puritan stand, which declared that Scripture must govern everything, and anything which is not prescribed is not lawful. Calvin recognized different types of authority in Scripture, and that there were some areas which came outside its direct authority. . . . The interpretation of the Scripture through the indwelling Holy Spirit

¹⁰Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), pp. 99-100. John Calvin's position is stated in the Institutes of the Christian Religion in book I, chapters vi-vii.

applied the Word of God to a contemporary situation.¹¹

To conclude this section on Calvin, his view of the Bible will be related to the view of God that forms the theological center of Calvinism. Abraham Kuyper viewed the relationship in this way:

It is a mistake, therefore, to discover the specific character of Calvinism in the doctrine of predestination, or in the authority of the Scriptures, or in the doctrine of the covenants, or in the tenet of hereditary guilt, or in strictness of life, or in the Presbyterian form of Church government. For Calvinism all these are logical consequences, not the point of departure--foliage bearing witness to the luxuriance of its growth, but not the root from which it sprouted. . . . Because it would have God remain God, and therefore held that wherever He spoke it behooved the creature to be silent, it professed the authority of the Holy Scriptures.¹²

While the Bible has the greatest authority in the Calvinist system of theology, its authority is derived from its author, God. Because the Calvinist loves God as a result of God's unmerited salvation, he loves the book that told him of God's salvation, and gives the Bible the authority that God wants it to have.

From Geneva the theology of Calvin went to Britain and Scotland, where it blended with national influences. The milieu of sentiments and ideas already existing in England accounted for much of the willingness to accept Reformation doctrines. This native British tradition in theology, in a sense, can be defined as Augustinianism (meaning a concern with the doctrines of grace and election, rather than with the entire system of Augustine). Reformers could look back to Anselm and Thomas

¹¹Palmer, "Authority and Doctrine of Scripture," p. 36. While the Westminster Assembly did not go the extreme Puritan position, it did extend the authority of Scripture further than Calvin. For an example of how the Assembly viewed adiaphora see chapter VI of this dissertation.

¹²Abraham Kuyper, "Calvinism and Confessional Revision," Presbyterian and Reformed Review 2 (July 1891):381.

Bradwardine, John Wyclif, William Tyndale, and others, who were used as authorities for reformed doctrines in earlier times in the English church. The effect of this background was to remold much of the Continental theology.¹³

John Knox had a great influence on the English and Scottish Reformations. While he is usually thought of as the most important Scottish Reformer, he was also important to the English Reformation. He went to England in 1549, was made chaplain to King Edward VI in 1551, and assisted in the final stages of the revision of the Second Book of Prayer. Although his time in England occurred before his journey to Geneva in 1554, his importance was such that he had a significant influence on English Puritans, particularly through the theology of the Church of Scotland. He influenced the Westminster Assembly directly by his writings, and indirectly through the Scottish delegates and the example and teaching of the Church of Scotland and its clergy.

While Knox's understanding and use of Scripture were in fundamental agreement with Calvin's, there were important differences. "Knox adhered to a more rigid insistence on express Biblical sanction than did the Geneva reformer."¹⁴ Richard Greaves has shown that Knox considered the church fathers to be one source of his doctrine of Biblical authority. The belief that nothing should be accepted without biblical warrant was held at one point by Tertullian. The sufficiency of Scripture was

¹³George Hanlin Fitzgerald, "The Irish Articles of Religion and the Westminster Confession of Faith" (Th. D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, VA, 1962), pp. 10-12.

¹⁴Greaves, "Nature," p. 48.

enunciated by Athanasius. The willingness to relinquish any belief that was unscriptural was like that of Augustine of Hippo. Augustine, however, went further than Knox in accepting tradition. Knox held to the view of scriptural authority which had also been held by Thomas Bradwardine, John Wyclif, Wessel Gansfort, and John Hus. The other view, held by Rome, accepted an authoritative oral tradition as well as an authoritative Bible. Knox was also influenced by John Hooper, whose beliefs on Biblical authority set off the Vestments controversy in England. The exact extent of Hooper's influence on Knox is unknown.¹⁵

The following illustrations will further clarify Knox's position on the extent of Biblical authority. The first is a dispute with the Catholic Abbot of Crossraguel, Quintin Kennedy, in September, 1562. The main subject in dispute was the mass. Knox took exception to Kennedy's reliance on authority of the church, general councils, and the doctors of the church, and firmly maintained biblical supremacy. Knox took the position that if a group called a church taught essential doctrines not sanctioned in the Bible, it was not God's church. Greaves also shows that Knox did allow some compromise on the authority of the Bible as demonstrated by Knox's agreement with, but not his authorship of, the Book of Discipline and the Scots Confession.¹⁶

The following illustration shows that Knox's position was shared by the Church of Scotland. The Kirk of Scotland was asked to approve the

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 37-39.

¹⁶Greaves, "Nature," pp. 34-35. Greaves disagrees with Hugh Watt that scriptural supremacy was not Knox's normal position. See Watt's John Knox in Controversy (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1950).

Second Helvetic Confession in 1566. Chapter xxiv of the Confession included approved religious celebrations of Jesus' nativity, circumcision, passion, resurrection, and ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit to his disciples. On September 4, 1566, the Kirk commended "every chapter and every sentence" of the confession except the provision calling for religious festivals associated with Jesus. The Kirk said, such festivals, "obtain no place among us; for we dare not religiously celebrate any other feast-day than what the divine oracles have prescribed."¹⁷ Greaves emphasized Knox's agreement with the above decision.¹⁸

Greaves summarized Knox's position and teaching on the doctrine of Biblical authority in this manner, "In the main, Knox sought to make Scripture the sole basis for his authority, though at times he allowed some scope to apostolic tradition."¹⁹

The last several paragraphs have discussed the Reformed doctrine of Biblical authority and some channels by which it came to influence England. Now this dissertation will turn to the discussion of Biblical authority in England. It will begin with definitions of Puritanism and Anglicanism, and some characteristics of the two movements.

Definitions of Puritanism and Anglicanism

Puritanism is normally defined as the movement within the Church of England that sought to reform it after the manner of the reformed

¹⁷The Church of Scotland to Theodore Beza. *The Zurich Letters* (Second Series), trans. and ed. Hastings Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1845), p. 363-64.

¹⁸Greaves, "Nature," p. 32.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 30.

churches of the continent and the Church of Scotland. It was a result of a church reformed in doctrine, but, according to the Puritans, not fully reformed in practice. As a result Puritans often concentrated their theological interests on matters of ecclesiastical and personal practice. "Puritan theology had a distinctively practical cast to it."²⁰ This practical cast was shown by its interest in and intensive study of church polity and worship.

How did Puritans view the Bible? As their only authority. Patrick Collinson describes their view of Biblical authority in this way:

The Bible, either in its explicit teaching or in what one puritan divine calls 'the constant sense of the general tenor of scripture'-- this was the only authority which the puritan acknowledged in matters of religion. Where human authority failed to conform with even the general implication of scripture, as expounded and applied by the preacher, it must be resisted.²¹

The Puritans were opposed by the Anglicans, who supported the status quo in the Church of England. The term "conformist" will also be used for Anglicans and the term "nonconformist" for Puritans. The conformists or Anglicans held a different position on authority, which Collinson describes as follows:

Conformists, on the other hand, if they were no mere time-servers, drew a philosophical distinction between the essentials and the non-essentials of religion, the invariable and the variable, and taught that, in all 'indifferent' matters, human reason and human authority had the power to devise and enforce policy. This concept of the adiaphora of God's service, which had a notable influence on the affairs of the Lutheran churches of Germany, formed the corner-stone of Anglicanism, if by Anglicanism we mean the claim made on behalf of a

²⁰Godfrey, W. Robert. "Biblical Authority in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Question of Transition." In Scripture and Truth, pp. 225-50. Edited by D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983), p. 235.

²¹Collinson, Elizabethan Puritanism, p. 27.

national Church to develop its own forms of church order.²²

Finally, it is very important to remember that many of the doctrines today associated with Puritanism, such as predestination and covenant theology, were also characteristic of the Anglicanism of that day. This was also true of some practices such as Sabbath keeping.

The Vestments Controversy

Historians normally date the beginning of the Puritan-Anglican tensions to the first Vestments controversy. It is necessary to begin this controversy by defining the term "vestments." John Primus defined them as follows:

It is necessary to understand at the outset, that the vestments about which there was controversy were not garments or robes or gowns in general, nor were they simply ecclesiastical garments or robes or gowns, but they were, most specifically, those ecclesiastical garments which had gained liturgical stature in the course of the history of the medieval church. The Vestments controversy with which we are concerned then, was a dispute in the early English Protestant church regarding the question whether her clergy could legitimately use the liturgical apparel which had been introduced and was still worn by the Roman Catholic clergy. Involved, therefore, in this ostensibly insignificant controversy were implicative questions regarding the relationship which the new Church of England should maintain over against the old.²³

The key man in the Vestments controversy was John Hooper, an early English reformer who spent time on the continent with Calvinistic reformers and returned to England in 1549. He was appointed bishop of Gloucester, but hesitated to take the position because of the oath of supremacy (which King Edward altered for him) and because of the use of vestments. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer refused to consecrate him without vestments.

²²Ibid., pp. 27-28.

²³Ibid., pp. xii-xiii.

Meanwhile, in July Bishop Nicholas Ridley of London was assigned to see Hooper. Ridley refused to approve of his consecration. But on August 5, 1550, the king gave Hooper a dispensation on vestments. Ridley appealed that decision to the king's council. Primus said of this controversy:

Here we see the first emergence of an issue that became very important in every later vestments debate, an issue that is basic in every struggle that pits conformity against nonconformity. It is the question of the authority of the individual over against the authority of the organization. The council on May 15 had declared vestments indifferent and therefore left it to the judgment of the individual whether they were worn or not. The council only requested that bishops who differed on this score should nevertheless mutually recognize each other in love as fellow bishops. Ridley, however reasoned from the same premise--that vestments are indifferent--to quite a different conclusion--that therefore they may properly be retained and enforced without exception by church and state.

Ridley won the debate. Hooper was eventually consecrated with vestments in 1551.²⁴

The Vestments controversy was important in the formation of the Puritan movement, a movement that would later be very influential in the composition of the Westminster Standards. The controversy is also important to the development of the Standards because the fundamental issue was authority. The controversy left many questions unanswered such as:

Who is permitted to judge what is or is not godly ecclesiastical polity? Who may determine what is or is not contrary to God's Word? How is a civilly ordained, ungodly practice of ecclesiastical polity to be resisted? How is the magistrate to be restrained from initiating ungodly church practices?²⁵

The Westminster Assembly would attempt to answer some of these questions.

²⁴John Henry Primus, The Vestments Controversy (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1960), pp. 14-15. The entire Latin text of Hooper's defense is found in C. Hopf, "Bishop Hooper's 'Notes' to the King's Council," Journal of Theological Studies 44 (January-April 1943):194-99. This was its first publication.

²⁵Ibid., p. 31.

The Vestments controversy was important for a third reason. It showed the question of authority could not be considered by itself, but also involved issues such as christian liberty, freedom of conscience, the role of the individual in the church, the priesthood of all believers, and the role of things indifferent in the church.

The second Vestments controversy occurred under the reign of Queen Elizabeth. After the death of Edward VI, his Roman Catholic sister, Mary, became queen. Her goal was to reestablish the Roman Catholic Church in England. The Roman bishops imprisoned during the reign of Edward VI were released and reappointed. Some Protestants were executed; many fled to Europe for their lives. In Europe they came into contact with the Reformed churches, and were influenced by their theology and practice. After the death of Mary, the Protestant Elizabeth came to the English throne in 1558. The refugees returned home. Mary's bishops refused to serve under a Protestant queen. Underlings who supported Mary could not be trusted, so Elizabeth was forced to appoint the dedicated exiles to the vacant sees. Their Puritan or near Puritan convictions were out of sympathy with Elizabeth.²⁶ As a result the second Vestments controversy arose.

This controversy will be discussed only with the goal of further understanding the theological issues that serve as a background of the Westminster Assembly. Therefore, only one document will be selected for consideration, the letter of Jerome Zanchi to Queen Elizabeth on the Vestments controversy. Primus described this as "a very impressive letter,

²⁶Collinson, Elizabethan Puritanism, pp. 61-62.

containing some of the most cogent pro-Puritan reasoning of the entire controversy."²⁷ On August 8, 1571, Zanchi, professor of divinity at Heidelberg, wrote a letter to Queen Elizabeth on the subject of vestments. It was one of the few attempts to deal directly with the one person who could resolve the conflict.²⁸

Following is a summary of Professor Zanchi's letter. Zanchi greeted Queen Elizabeth and introduced the subject. The apostle Paul commanded in I Tim. 2:2 that prayers be made for those in authority so that Christians may lead a quiet life, that is, a life in godliness and honesty. This life style required certain things of rulers which are summarized by the following three responsibilities of kings: They should either restore the true religion and true worship if it has been banished, and if restored, preserve it in all its integrity. Second, men should live holy and honest lives. Therefore, licentiousness should be outlawed.

²⁷Primus, Vestments Controversy, p. 154. The reasons for the detail in which Zanchi's letter is examined are, first, because the letter cogently states the main Anglican-Puritans issues that are behind the Westminster Assembly's positions discussed in this dissertation. Second, it summarizes the Scripture proofs supporting the Puritan positions. These Scripture proofs are necessary for understanding the background of the Westminster Assembly, and this letter serves as a way of giving them in their historical context.

Born as Girolamo Zanchi (1516-1590), Zanchi was forced to flee from Northern Italy. He was particularly influenced by Calvin and Bullinger. His career was a distinguished one. He was a pastor in Italy and a professor at Geneva and at Heidelberg. While not original, he was considered one of the best scholars of his day, and his counsel was highly valued. For more information see New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 1912 ed., s.v. "Zanchi, Girolamo."

²⁸Hierome Zanchius to Queen Elizabeth, 10 September 1571, Zurich Letters (Second Series), pp. 339-353. The original is found in Epistolæ Zanchii, I. p. 423, Hanoviae, 1609. The Turabian format has been followed in this paper, which permits several quotations from the same author to be cited in one note at the end of the paragraph.

Third, peace and friendship should be cultivated among people, by removing all occasions of discord.²⁹

These responsibilities apply to the Vestments controversy as follows: Because the magistrate is to maintain the worship of God in all its integrity, he is to remove practices that violate worship either by their own nature or incidently. Worship is to be restored according to the ancient, apostolic and pure rule of God's word, and not to have even the appearance of evil. How can the Queen, allow practices which do not edify and which bring mischief?³⁰

Jerome Zanchi than urged the Queen to avoid bad company by not using Roman religious practices unless the practices were used by the apostles because these practices will corrupt the true church. The Bible teaches that "a little leaven leavens a whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). Hosea (9:10, 10:1) rebuked the Jews for "having transplanted the shoots of superstition from Israel into their garden, that is into the true church." Why were some godly kings rebuked in Scripture for allowing Jehovah's worship at the high places, where believers worshiped before the temple was built (1 Kings 15:14, 22:43)? The answer is because the temple had been built and God no longer permitted other places of worship. These passages apply to the Christian era, because in Christ's kingdom Aaronic ceremonies no longer have any standing. "Wherefore the apostles very properly took care that they should be done away with after the ascension of Christ, so that not even any relics should remain" (Acts 15), but the

²⁹Ibid., pp. 339-41.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 341-42.

impious papists restored them.³¹

Zanchi found other problems with papal practices. The use of vestments serves to confirm the Romanists in their religion (they will say that the Queen of England is beginning to return to Rome gradually). For evidence Zanchi cited Old Testament passages on purity. In 2 Chron. 19:2 it is taught that the godly must not help the ungodly. The prohibitions against mixing such as not plowing with an ox and an ass hitched together (Deut. 22:9-11) apply here.³²

What is the reason for vestments? The only reason the professor could think of is to disgrace England by wearing the garments of a harlot. The purpose of the Roman pomp and ceremony are to lure men to commit spiritual fornication. It is a shame to have them in the church of Christ. King Hezekiah destroyed the bronze serpent because the people were abusing it contrary to the Word of God (2 Kings 18:4). The same should be done to the garments which the apostles never used, but were adopted by Rome. Both things indifferent, which have been used by Rome to dishonor God, and vestments, the invention of Satan, should be forbidden.³³

The second responsibility of a ruler is to see that people live holy and honest lives. Nations have laws against wearing strange garments, because they corrupt good morals [this probably referred to decency laws]. How can Queen Elizabeth receive counsel to introduce garments unknown to the Christian kingdom of the apostles? This principle is

³¹Ibid., pp. 342-43.

³²Ibid., pp. 343-44.

³³Ibid., pp. 345-46.

proved by Bible passages such as the prohibition of a man wearing that which pertains to woman and vice versa (Deut. 22:5). Protestants are of a different religion, and should be distinguished from Rome by a different sign.³⁴

The third responsibility of the ruler is keeping peace. Vestments disturb the peace as do all novelties, and the disturbance is always greatest in the area of religion. To disturb the peace for reformation is good because it is an ungodly peace. But peace should not be disturbed by insisting on things indifferent. In the apostolic church the trouble makers insisted on the observance of circumcision and the ceremonial law. This caused a lot of trouble, and would have caused even more if the synod at Jerusalem (Acts 15) had not rejected them. It is the Queen's duty to follow the apostles: "you must imitate the apostles in this matter: neither must you impose this yoke upon the necks of the disciples of Christ yourself, nor allow it to be imposed on them by others." If there is disagreement among the bishops on this matter, call a Synod and have the issue decided by Scripture. Then order it observed by act of Parliament.³⁵

The majority of the Reformed churches have rejected vestments. There are some churches, who for the sake of peace have accepted vestments, these exceptions have made a mistake because the papists are not going to change their errors.³⁶

³⁴Ibid., p. 356.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 347-48.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 348-49.

Another problem of vestments is that they are offending the sensitive consciences of English believers. As the Bible teaches it is a grievous offence to disquiet the consciences of the godly and to offend the consciences of the weak. As Paul said,

"If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13.) For in these words he affords by his example a general rule taken from the doctrine of Christ; namely, that nothing indifferent is to be admitted, much less enforced upon others, and still less commanded by act of parliament, if in admitting, enforcing, or commanding it the consciences of the faithful are offended. For a tender and God-fearing conscience is a most precious thing, and very acceptable to God.³⁷

Zanchi then applied the argument from the liberty of christian conscience to vestments in detail. Vestments are either indifferent or essential. If essential, the church is acting sinfully in making necessary something Christ would have free; if indifferent, they should be left free in the churches. There are two possible sources for use of vestments. They are Divine, that is from God through Moses, Christ, the Holy Spirit acting through the apostles; or human through godly or ungodly men. It cannot be through Moses because the Levitical vestments were to cease at the death of Christ as is taught in Colossians and Hebrews. "For which reason they cannot be restored without a transgression of the divine will." It cannot be said Christ or the apostles instituted them, since there is not a word of proof. If godly men instituted them, they did it for reasons of edification, or order, or decency. However they

³⁷Ibid., pp. 349-50. Zanchi is defining christian liberty in terms of the individual right to be protected from requiring things indifferent, a view shared by Puritans and Presbyterians. Anglicans tended to define christian liberty in terms of the church's right to add things indifferent.

are not edifying, they promote disorder, and do not add to the beauty of the bride of Christ. Therefore "the church, as in doctrine, so also in ceremonies and vestments, is to be framed after the model of the apostolic church."³⁸

Zanchi closed with a plea that Her Majesty not listen to improper counsel about vestments, but instead use her time and energy seeing that the bishops did their duty to their flocks "watch over the flock; teach sound doctrine; refute heresies; drive away the wolves; keep everyone to his duty, and exhort, incite, and stimulate all persons to a life becoming a christian man." The true vestments of a Christian bishop are those Paul listed in writing to Timothy and Titus. (1 Tim. 3:2-4 and Titus 1:7). "For the garments and ornament of the Aaronic priest were types of these true ornaments: they were the shadow, there the substance."³⁹ This ends the letter of Jerome Zanchi to Queen Elizabeth, a theological high point of the second Vestments controversy.

This letter included Scriptural proofs and hermeneutical assumptions that were of great significance in the Westminster Assembly. These included the assumption that the apostolic church was the model for the later church to follow, the priority of Scripture over all other sources for authority, the use of the Old Testament to prove the regulative principle of worship, the attack on vestments from the priesthood of Christ, and the argument for christian liberty in the church.

The Vestments controversies included several major issues

³⁸Ibid., pp. 350-51.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 352-53.

summarized by John Primus as follows:

The vestments controversy involved, probably more than anything else, the problem of authority--individual authority, church authority, Scriptural authority, state authority, apostolic authority--in ecclesiastical affairs. It involved a profound doctrinal question related to the whole opposition between Roman Catholics and Protestants, the question of the nature of the clerical office in the light of the doctrine that all believers are priests. It involved a methodological question: the tempo of reform. It even involved an ecumenical question: Oneness with 'best reformed churches' on the continent.⁴⁰

Unfortunately, the English church did not resolve the Vestments controversy at that time. It would continue to be a source of friction between Puritan and Anglican.

Thomas Cartwright and Presbyterianism

The area of controversy soon expanded from vestments to church polity, largely due to the teaching of Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603). A professor at Cambridge University, he was one of the most influential early Puritans. In 1570, he gave a series of lectures on Acts in which he concluded that Presbyterianism was taught in that book. His unwillingness to be merely a scholar resulted in his wide influence. As Andrew Pearson observed:

Cartwright was unable to dissociate the functions of the interpreter and the advocate. As the former he read Presbyterianism in the constitution of the early Christian Church; as the latter he proclaimed that the Apostolic Church was the model for all time. He could not consistently approve of the, in his opinion, only allowable system, without condemning that which subverted it.⁴¹

Thomas Cartwright was responsible for the Puritan movement moving beyond vestments to a belief in the presbyterian form of government. Cartwright

⁴⁰Primus, Vestments Controversy, p. 67.

⁴¹Andrew F. S. Pearson, Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism, 1535-1603 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1925), pp. 25-26.

shared with John Hooper and other Puritans the guiding assumption that the apostolic church is the model for the Reformed churches. Pearson expressed it in this manner:

The guiding principle running through them is that the Church should be modelled on that of Apostolic times and the inevitable consequence of this principle, according to Cartwright, should be the total abolition of diocesan Episcopacy and the establishment of Presbyterianism.⁴²

What were the issues involved in the vestments and Thomas Cartwright controversies? The first issue is that of authority itself. The Puritans saw the issue of Biblical authority as the major issue. The form in which they debated Biblical authority was the limitation of ecclesiastical authority only to what the Bible commanded. In other words, Puritans argued the church's authority was limited so that it could require no more--and no less--of men than the Bible required. To do otherwise was to do more or less than God required. Other areas were to be left to the consciences of men.

Puritans also were concerned about the state's authority, especially in the "unseparated" church and state situation of England. They believed that the state's authority in ecclesiastical matters is limited. It could only enforce religious practices that God wanted enforced, and forbid what He forbids. Thus apostolic practice was to be encouraged by legislation, and idolatry, which included Roman practices not found in the Bible, were to be outlawed. Both church and state, at least in matters of religion, were limited to requiring or forbidding what the Bible commanded or forbade. The Puritan view is summed up by the following

⁴²Ibid., p. 29.

passage of God's Word, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:32).

Summary

The Vestments and Cartwright controversies included debate over four issues of great import to the Westminster Assembly. First, whether the Holy Scriptures alone are a sufficient authority for the church. In contrast to the Conformists, who advocated tradition and reason as additional authorities, the Puritan answer was sola scriptura. The Scriptures not only tell a man all he needs for salvation, but they also tell the church all it needs in order to fill the great commission. Thus the Bible is a whole and complete manual for polity, liturgy, and morals.⁴³

The next debate was over the role of things indifferent in the church. While this is not mentioned above, Puritans came to make a distinction between adiaphora inside and outside the church. How much authority, if any, did the church have in requiring things indifferent? Must all adiaphora have a scriptural basis? These unanswered questions formed a background for the Westminster Assembly.

Christian liberty was the topic of the third debate. The Puritans wanted the consciences of men free to serve God. They rejected the man-made good works of the Roman church, believing that God in the Bible determined all sins and good works. Everything else was to be left free. Church and state could not command in spiritual matters what God did not.

The final debate was about the Law of God. The Puritans believed

⁴³The classic defence of the Anglican position on authority is Richard Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, reprinted on numerous occasions.

that the church and the state could only require men to obey the moral law. They saw the insistence on ceremonies by Anglicans and Romanists as a reestablishment of the ceremonial law which had been fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

Beginning with a summary of the Reformation and the following historical period in England, this chapter moved to an historical and theological survey of the controversy about Biblical authority in England during the same time periods. It showed that the Vestments controversy included the issues that were later to become major debates between Puritans and Anglicans. These included biblical, church, and state authority, christian liberty, the role of things indifferent in the church and the Law of God.

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA AND ITS TESTIMONY

The Scottish Background of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

The history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church will begin with the Reformation, proceed to the battle with the Stuart kings for control of the Church of Scotland, and conclude with the founding of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland.¹

The Scottish Reformation

Like the English Reformation described in the last chapter, the story began with Martin Luther. After Luther and his followers began the Reformation, it spread rapidly through Western Europe. In France it affected a young man named John Calvin, who was forced to leave France

¹Since the material in this section is familiar to anyone acquainted with Scottish Church History, it has not been footnoted. The literature on this period is voluminous. The reader is referred to John C. Johnston, Treasury of the Scottish Covenant (Edinburgh: A. Elliot, 1887), a bibliography of older works. Some more recent sources are, for Knox himself, John Knox, The History of the Reformation in Scotland, ed. Cuthbert Lennox (London: A. Melrose, 1905); for the Reformation and Covenanter period, James King Hewison, The Covenanters, 2 vols. (Glasgow: John Smith, 1913); for the Covenanter period alone, J. D. Douglas, The Light in the North (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) and for the Scottish Reformed Presbyterian History, Matthew Hutchison, The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland (Paisley: J. & R. Parlane, 1893).

because of his beliefs. In 1536 he visited Geneva, Switzerland, intending to stay only a short time. William Farel asked him to join in the work of Reformation which he reluctantly did. Under Calvin's leadership Geneva became a center for Protestant refugees from other countries, who were sheltered and taught Reformed doctrine.

One particular refugee, John Knox, was to become Scotland's greatest reformer. Knox was born in Haddington around 1513. He was educated at Glasgow, received minor orders and may have been a priest. Under the influence of George Wishart, he joined the Reformation cause and became a preacher at St. Andrews in 1547. When the castle fell to the French, he was sent to the galleys. After his release in 1549, Knox went to England and served the Church of England. There he became Chaplain to Edward VI and assisted in the revision of the Second Book of Prayer. When the Roman Catholic Mary Tudor succeeded Edward, Knox fled to Geneva in 1554. He returned to Scotland the next year, but continuing persecution forced him to flee abroad again. While he was gone, the Reformation gained strength in Scotland, and Knox returned in 1559. He became the leader of the Reformation party, held numerous disputes with its enemies, and died in 1572 before the completion of the Reformation. John Knox was one important reason why Scotland followed the Reformed system of doctrine and worship.

The Battle Against the Stuart Kings

Under Knox, the Reformed Church gained her independence from the Pope, but a new battle began for independence from the King. This struggle gave birth to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. James Stuart disliked the independence of the Church of Scotland, but could do

little to bring it under control. However, when he became James I, king of England and Scotland, he had the power to begin a serious attempt to control the Church of Scotland by changing its form from presbyterian to episcopalian. (Bishops appointed by the king are easier to control than presbyteries.) Many ministers and elders opposed the intrusion of James I on the basis that Jesus Christ was the King of the Church. Tensions grew and erupted in a near riot in Edinburgh in 1637 when Charles I imposed a prayer book on the Scottish Church. In 1638 men from all parts of Scotland signed the National Covenant, in which they promised to work for the independence of the Church of Scotland. The Scots gained the support of the Parliamentary party in England, who wanted more rights for Parliament. In 1643, the two parties signed the Solemn League and Covenant, which bound them to work for the rights and privileges of Parliament and the establishment of Presbyterianism in Great Britain and Ireland. The failure of both sides to compromise led to a civil war. The king lost, and was beheaded. The Puritans took control of Parliament and convened the Westminster Assembly to develop statements of doctrine and practice, which became the standard of confessional Presbyterianism.

The immediate result of the English Civil War was to bring Oliver Cromwell to power. The failure of his son, Richard, to wield that power effectively led to the restoration of the Stuarts. Scotland agreed to help Charles II come to power if he signed the Covenants. He signed them, but he did not keep them. Like his father and grandfather, he wished to control the Church of Scotland. Like their fathers and grandfathers, the Scots resisted. In 1664, four years after Charles' ascension, four hundred ministers quit their churches in protest. The King, not content to

have two churches in Scotland, offered indulgences (that is, pardons that included restoration to their status as clergy) and positions to ministers willing to join the Anglican church. But there were ministers who would not be swayed and laymen who would not listen to indulged ministers. The lines became more and more firmly drawn. Troops were sent to enforce the Anglican system. Bloodshed and persecution resulted. The most provocative incident came in 1680 when the Rev. Richard Cameron rode into the village of Sanquhar and excommunicated Charles II, thus adding treason to the religious crimes of Cameron and his associates.² The next eight years were the bloodiest period, the "killing times." In this time worship services, including sacraments, were held on the moors with armed guards. Many found themselves in prisons or martyr's graves.

The continued persecution was in part responsible for the demise of the Stuarts. The British, tired of Stuart autocracy and the drift towards Romanism, forced the abdication of James II, brother of, and successor to Charles II. When William and Mary came to the throne in 1688, they realized that the religious problem could be solved only by a compromise in which Scotland became Presbyterian and England Anglican.

The Founding of the Reformed Presbyterian Church

If the 1688 compromise had been acceptable to all Scotland, there would be no Reformed Presbyterian Church. The Covenanter laity rejected the settlement (the few remaining Covenanter clergy joined the state

²The followers of Cameron were known as Cameronians. The name Covenanters was widely applied to the Presbyterian party in Scotland in the 17th century and has survived as a colloquial name for the Cameronians, now formally called Reformed Presbyterians.

church) for two reasons. First, they had fought for a church controlled by King Jesus, and now the Church of Scotland could meet only if King William's commissioner was present. Second, England and Scotland had promised in the Solemn League and Covenant that the churches of both kingdoms would be Presbyterian. They therefore dissented from a government that had broken its promises. These dissenting laymen were the root that would grow into the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The common experiences of persecution created a strong bond of fellowship. The stories of persecution were passed on to later generations and became part of their existence and heritage. A love for doctrinal truth, strengthened by persecution, was also passed on. (The Covenanters had not been persecuted for being Christians. They had been persecuted for believing and practicing some doctrines different from those held by the state church.)

The Covenanters also had a shared view of church and state. On the positive side, the church was to be presbyterian, independent of the state, and the state was to support the Presbyterian Church. On the negative side, it meant a separation from a state-controlled church, and dissent from a state which established an episcopal church. The Covenanters believed that the state was to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in the same way as the church and to pattern its practices by the Bible.

Finally the Covenanters were strengthened by a shared worship. After they were forced to leave the church buildings in 1664, they worshipped in hidden locations because death was the penalty for attendance. They met on the moors of Scotland and their ministers emerged from hiding to preach and administer the sacraments. They worshipped with guards posted and weapons ready to fight patrolling soldiers. In smaller groups

called "societies" they gathered for worship conducted by laymen. Since there were no longer presbyteries and synods, the societies would send delegates to "general meetings" which made decisions concerning reactions to government policies, training of clergy, times and places for worship, and so forth. For many years after the Restoration settlement this group had no name and no ministers. They were most often called "society people" and the laymen carried on the church without the administration of the sacraments. In 1706, Rev. John McMillan of the Church of Scotland joined their ranks. Many years later, in 1743, Thomas Nairn joined from the Associate Presbytery. With two ministers a Presbytery could be formed and thus the first "Reformed Presbytery" was founded.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church
in the U. S. A. until 1833

Most Reformed Presbyterians came from Scotland to America by way of North Ireland. There were two causes for this indirect migration. The first dealt with Scottish nature. Being less adventurous than the English they chose the more conservative migration to Ireland. Second, they were attracted by land. King James I had seized much land from Irish landlords after the rebellion of Tyrone and opened it for settlement.

During this period the gap between Covenanters and other Presbyterians became more clearly defined. The Covenanters developed their own identity and became the group from which the American Reformed Presbyterians came.³

³Not much work has been done in Reformed Presbyterian history. The two important works are William Glasgow, History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Baltimore: Hill and Harvey, 1888) and David Carson, "History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America to 1871" (Ph. D.

A large-scale migration from North Ireland to the United States, including many Covenanters, began about 1720, caused by economic and social problems. English legislation restricted the Irish economy. For example, when the Irish raised cattle, the English forbade the importation of meat into England. When they produced wool, high duties were placed on it. Tenants worked hard to improve their land and were rewarded with higher rent. America offered men a chance to own their own land and buy it cheaply for their sons.

Religious problems were caused by the establishment of the Anglican Church in Ireland. This put Presbyterians under great pressure, because their marriages were not valid, and inheritances were handled by church courts. Citizens were fined for not attending church and were taxed to support Anglican clergy. Covenanters refused to pay the tax.

So the Covenanters came to America. The early settlers concentrated in southeastern Pennsylvania, South Carolina, New York City, the Hudson valley, with some in Vermont. The total was under 10,000 members.⁴

Having no ministers, the Covenanters depended on the society meetings to maintain their religion. David Carson described the functioning of the societies as follows:

dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1964). In addition are the two books of biographical sketches of ministers, Owen Thompson, Sketches of the Ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America from 1888 to 1930 (Pittsburgh: Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 1930) and Alvin Smith, Covenanter Ministers 1930-1963 (Pittsburgh: Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1964); which also contain summary histories of various Reformed Presbyterian Church institutions.

⁴Carson, "History," pp. 18-20.

For these unshepherded people the society meeting proved its worth (as it had done in Scotland and would continue to do in America), for it was a means by which laymen could continue their fellowship in worship and belief. This device, worked out for times of persecution in Scotland, had an obvious usefulness when the problem was instead the lonesomeness of the American frontier and the scattered membership. When groups of Covenanters found themselves living near each other, there was an organizational device ready for them. They gathered for "society." They conducted worship services themselves, either reading from accepted authors, or by proposing some subject for consideration, a Bible passage, a question of Christian faith or practice, or the proper behavior by which to maintain a faithful testimony.

The "society" not only provided for the worship of God, but also in the beginning carried on such governmental functions as were necessary: the admission of members, any necessary financial matters (though occasions for financial dealings were few), decisions on doctrine, and the exercise of discipline. Over the societies was the General Meeting, to which accredited representatives of each organized society were sent. These periodic General Meetings continued to be the highest authority in America until the organization of a presbytery in 1774.⁵

While the society provided worship, discipline and fellowship, a minister was needed to provide for the formal preaching of the Word and for the administration of sacraments. The need for a minister was met for a short time by the Rev. Alexander Craighead who joined the Covenanters in 1742. For seven years he served the Reformed Presbyterians before returning to the Presbyterian Church.⁶

The reasons for Craighead's joining the Covenanters give an important insight into their religious character. During the 1730s and 1740s the Great Awakening brought revival to the American church through the preaching of such men as George Whitefield and John Wesley. The Awakening led to a tension in the Presbyterian Church between the revivalists, who

⁵Ibid., pp. 21-22. A manual on Society worship was published, The Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland, Guide to Private Social Worship, (Philadelphia: Covenanter's Publishing Society, 1854).

⁶Glasgow, History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, p. 467.

stressed personal conversion and the experimental aspect of religion, and confessionalists, who stressed doctrinal orthodoxy. Craighead, in contrast to many of his colleagues, kept a balance between the two viewpoints. Glasgow described him as "an earnest fervid preacher, and a zealous promoter of revivals. He was a great admirer of Whitefield, and accompanied him upon some of his tours." At the same time, "he contended that his ministerial brethren were too liberal in their views and lax in the application of discipline."⁷ When in 1741 the Presbyterian Church split into revivalist and confessional presbyteries, Alexander Craighead joined the revivalist New Brunswick Presbytery. Because of this group's insufficient emphasis on the Westminster Standards and refusal to adopt the Solemn League and Covenant,⁸ Craighead joined the Covenanters in 1742. The next year he led the Covenanters of eastern Pennsylvania in a renewal of the Scottish Covenants. Soon he opened a correspondence with the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland asking for additional clergy. When this was not forthcoming, he returned to the Presbyterian Church in 1749.⁹

Please note an important balance in Craighead's ministry. He attempted to combine doctrinal orthodoxy and "experimental" religion, or, in today's terminology, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Rev. Craighead joined the Covenanters to find this balance, and as their first minister had a great opportunity to strengthen it. This balance has been a key element in preserving the Reformed Presbyterian Church from the

⁷Ibid., p. 465.

⁸Leonard J. Trinterud, The Forming of an American Tradition (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949), p. 112.

⁹Glasgow, History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, p. 467.

extremes of Fundamentalism and Liberalism. While the balance has been threatened many times, it has never been totally lost.¹⁰

Craighead wrote to Scotland for assistance, but it was 1751 before the Scottish Reformed Presbytery, which had few clergy herself, could send a man, a very good man, the Rev. John Cuthbertson. Cuthbertson was born in 1718 of a Covenanter family. He studied theology under Rev. John McMillan, was licensed to preach in 1734, ordained in 1747, and served as missionary to Covenanters in Ireland in 1750. In 1751 he was sent to America. His work centered in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, but included extended missionary tours of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland and western Pennsylvania. In his thirty-nine years of ministry he preached on two thousand, four hundred and fifty-two days; baptized one thousand, eight hundred and six children; married two hundred and forty couples; and rode on horseback seventy thousand miles in the days before bridges and roads. The inscription on his grave is from Psalm 112:6: "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."¹¹

Worship under Cuthbertson's ministry will now be examined. David Carson described a typical Sabbath service of Cuthbertson's as follows: The news of the pastor's arrival in the community would bring Covenanters together at the meeting house, whether a farm kitchen or barn, or a grove

¹⁰For an excellent study of how the Great Awakening contributed to the formation of Fundamentalism and Liberalism coming respectively from the revivalist and the confessional school, See Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York: Vintage, 1963), chapters 3-5.

¹¹Glasgow, History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, pp. 476-78.

where trees had been felled to make rude benches and another tree cut off at an appropriate height for a sort of rough pulpit. A typical Sabbath service consisted of three parts: the explanation of a psalm or a portion of one, a lecture and a sermon. Cuthbertson's diary records the texts he preached. He used the following pattern for the psalm explanation. On sabbaths he explained consecutive portions of the psalms. Psalm 8 was the first one recorded. In 1770, he reached Psalm 150 and then began again with Psalm 1.

The lecture was an exposition of a Bible passage, normally longer than one verse. Cuthbertson's pattern was to lecture through sections of the Bible. After his arrival in America, he lectured through the twelfth chapter of Luke. Next he lectured through Galatians followed by the Song of Solomon. In the days before Sabbath Schools, the lecture was one important means of Bible teaching.

The sermon followed the lecture. Sometimes there was a break to eat a simple meal between the two. Cuthbertson preached the great themes of the gospel. Even his Old Testament texts, were often to be ones relating to the salvation offered through Christ Jesus. They included: Amos 4:12, "Prepare to meet thy God;" Genesis 49:18, "I have waited for thy salvation O Lord:" or with the prophecies of Christ's coming: Daniel 7:13,14, "I saw . . . one like the Son of Man," or Isaiah 28:16, "I lay in Zion . . . a precious corner stone." The New Testament texts also centered around Christ: Hebrews 3:19, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief;" Acts 10:42, regarding Christ as "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead."

Carson observed concerning Cuthbertson's preaching:

Carson observed concerning Cuthbertson's preaching:

This sort of preaching is a reminder of the importance of personal piety to these people. The records they have left concern themselves more with doctrine, and especially disputes over doctrine. But they were also concerned with personal faith, they were humbled by their sinfulness, they set themselves the goal of personal obedience to the law of God.¹²

For theological reasons based on the regulative principle of worship (see Chapter VI), Covenanters do not celebrate Christmas, Easter and other holidays as a church. By the elimination of these competing events, the sacraments, particularly communion, are emphasized. The Lord's Supper was also significant for historical reasons. It bound Covenanters to their ancestors who celebrated the sacraments on the Scottish moors threatened by British troops. Supreme, therefore in the Covenanter church year, is the celebration of the Lord's Supper.¹³

Carson observed that the Sacrament was a source of great emotion that is difficult to appreciate and describe. Part of this came from history. The communion service bound Covenanters with their ancestors who had suffered for the faith and with the traditions of Scotland. One of the conditions for Communion that was always read and explained during worship was

The owning of all the scriptural testimonies and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses, whether martyrs under the late persecution, or such as have succeeded them maintaining the same cause,
 . . .

¹²Carson, "History," pp. 38-40.

¹³More information on the regulative principle of worship is given in chapter VI of this dissertation. The prohibition against the celebration of holy days is included in the Westminster Assembly's directory for worship. See Westminster Assembly of Divines, The Westminster Directory, ed. by Thomas Leishman (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1901), pp. 78, 152-54.

long distances the people came, hungry for fellowship with those of the same faith, to pledge their renewed loyalty to their common Christian beliefs. Most important, for these earnest believers, was the sacramental union with their Lord. On the previous day of fasting they had humbled themselves by means of confession and repentance of sin. Cuthbertson reminded them, by the words of institution from first Corinthians of the death of the Jesus Christ for them. At the climax of the service, in the eating of the bread and drinking the wine, they felt themselves partaking of the spiritual body and blood of the Lord.¹⁴

Carson continued by describing the first sacrament after John Cuthbertson's arrival, one typical of the early Society communion services. Saturday, August 22, 1752, was a fast day with preaching from the 110th Psalm and from Gen. 24:58. The session met, communion tokens were distributed (they were required for admission to the sacrament), and the pastor exhorted the people.¹⁵

The Sabbath day was the celebration of the Sacrament. The service lasted nine hours. Cuthbertson preached from Psalms and from John 3:35. After prayer and singing, he gave an address on the sacrament, debarred (warned the unworthy not to commune), and invited the worthy to the sacrament. The 150 communicants came forward to the communion tables singing the twenty-fourth Psalm:

Who is the man that shall ascend
into the hill of God?
Or who within his holy place
shall have a firm abode?

¹⁴Carson, "History," pp. 42-43.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 43.

Cuthbertson read the words of institution. The people celebrated the sacrament. The minister exhorted, prayed, and the service closed with Psalm 103:

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord:
and all that in me is
Be stirred up his holy name
to magnify and bless.

There was a twenty minute intermission and the minister preached again from John 16:31. To conclude the Communion season the customary Monday services were held. The pastor explained the 148th Psalm and preached on Ephesians 5:15.¹⁶

While worship met a spiritual need, the organizational need of the church also had to be met. In Presbyterian practice, two ministers were needed for the formation of a presbytery, and there was only one in the United States. Appeals were sent to the Scottish and Irish Presbyteries, which resulted in the addition of Matthew Lind and Alexander Dobbin. With these two men, Cuthbertson formed the first Reformed Presbytery in America in 1774 at Paxtang, Pennsylvania.¹⁷ The Covenanters were now successfully transplanted into the new world.

The new presbytery was short-lived. In 1782 it merged with the Associate Presbytery to form the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. In Scotland the two groups had differed only in their doctrine of political dissent. In the United States, with the coming of independence, there was a different political situation. The argument was thus made that Americans were no longer bound by the Scottish Covenants. Most Covenant-

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 43-45.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 47.

ers accepted this argument, with the result that all the ministers and most of the laity joined the new denomination. However, the cause of the Covenanters did not die. A minority of laymen remained out of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. They again petitioned Scotland for ministers. In answer to the appeal the Rev. James Reid came to America. His immediate reason for coming was a health problem that doctors thought could be helped by a sea voyage. He stayed about a year and encouraged the brethren.¹⁸

The revival of the Covenanter cause would wait for the coming of James McKinney. The Rev. McKinney was forced to leave Ireland for political reasons in 1783. One of his important contributions was the furnishing of the intellectual basis for a doctrine of the State different from that held by the Associate Presbyterians. He reformulated the negative aspect of the political dissent doctrine, and took the old ideal for Great Britain, a Reformed Church with a government that supported it, and generalized it for the American situation.¹⁹

The political dissent position was developed beyond McKinney's position. After 1800 the nature of the United States Constitution kept Covenanters from giving their allegiance to it. Rev. Samuel Wylie listed several defects: First, the "constitution . . . does not even recognize the existence of God." Second, both state and federal constitutions allow "heresy, blasphemy, and idolatry under the notion of liberty of conscience," (that is, they allow freedom of false religion). Office holders

¹⁸Glasgow, History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, p. 76.

¹⁹Carson, "History," p. 80.

are required to take an oath to support the constitution, which means they bind themselves to defend heresy, blasphemy, and idolatry. Third, the federal constitution makes "no provision for the interest of true religion" (that is, Protestant Christianity). Fourth, the state, by refusing to accept the Bible as the supreme law of the land is in rebellion against God. Fifth, there is no religious test for office holders, "Deists, even atheists may be chief magistrates." And, finally, because slavery was legal.²⁰ How did dissent work out in practice? Covenanters dissented primarily by a refusal to take an oath to the constitution, and therefore to hold office and by extension to vote for office holders. They did not raise the problem of paying taxes and obeying laws, though logically they might have. Their goal was reform not revolution.²¹

The above is an application of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God to politics. The Father gives Christ the kingship of the creation (Col. 1:15-17).²² Glasgow gave the application of the doctrine to the United States Constitution as follows: The Constitution does not recognize the supremacy of Christ as King of the world and the Bible as the supreme law. Thus the nation is in the same relation as a subject who refuses to recognize his sovereign. The Christian has his highest allegiance to Christ. Therefore, if the government refuses to recognize Jesus as King,

²⁰Samuel B. Wylie, The Two Sons of Oil (Bowling-Green, OH: Stephen Young, 1806), pp. 45-61.

²¹Glasgow, History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, pp. 54-55.

²²The fullest statement of this doctrine, called the mediatorial kingship of Christ is found in William Symington's Messiah the Prince (London: T. Nelson, 1881). A shorter summary is found in A. A. Hodge's Outlines of Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), chapter xxiv.

it is the Christian's duty to stand aloof from such a government and refuse to incorporate himself into the political body.²³

With their doctrinal position secured, the society people were able to reorganize the Reformed Presbytery in 1798. The small presbytery grew rapidly, largely through immigration. By 1832 there were 36 ministers, four to five thousand members, and sixty congregations.²⁴

The records for this period show a busy church working at the task of organization. Men were trained and ordained for the ministry; Samuel B. Wylie was the first in 1800. The original presbytery divided into three smaller ones in 1802. The recognition of the new presbytery by the Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and Ireland was asked for and secured. The denomination continued her dissent from society by taking stands on moral issues. Slaveholding was outlawed. In 1809 The Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary was founded in Philadelphia. Duties to God were not forgotten in the rush to become organized. In meeting after meeting of presbytery one reads of Days of Prayer and Fasting being set aside for the sins of the nation; and days of Thanksgiving for God's blessing. Presbyteries checked to be sure congregations observed these days. The maturing was also shown by a name change when in 1809 the Reformed Presbytery became the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

Complicating the task of organization was geographical expansion. The immigrants from Ireland wanted land, and the cheapest and sometimes

²³Glasgow, History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, pp. 54-55.

²⁴Carson, "History," p. 66.

the best land was in the west. The church had to follow her members. A typical family would move from eastern Pennsylvania to western Pennsylvania and on to Iowa in three generations.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church was infected with a spirit of optimism in the early 1800s. This was due largely to the post-millennial view held by the denomination and to her success in the new world.²⁵ The church grew, young men went into the ministry. Reformed Presbyterian ministers became major figures in some communities, periodicals were published, a tract society was formed, and members were educated. Yet there were serious problems. Membership increased, but from immigrants instead of converts. Society still did not accept her viewpoints. So dissatisfaction grew.

There were several possible solutions to this problem. The church could die, she could withdraw from the world, she could hold her position, or change to fit society. The Reformed Presbyterian Church divided over which of the latter two possibilities was appropriate. In 1833, over the question of political dissent, the denomination separated, with about half the denomination going each way, both parts claiming to be The Reformed Presbyterian Church. The "new light" group changed their position on political dissent. They eventually became known as the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.²⁶ This dissertation will deal with

²⁵The post-millennial view caused optimism because it viewed the world as improving until the second coming. For a discussion of the effect of the post-millennial viewpoint on Reformed churches, see Iain Murray, The Puritan Hope (London: Banner of Truth, 1971).

²⁶The General Synod merged with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in 1965 to form the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. The latter denomination founded and controlled Covenant College

the "old lights," the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, also called the Covenanter Church, who maintained their stand on political dissent.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church
in the U. S. A. after 1833

Up to this point a chronological outline has been followed. At this point the approach will shift to a topical approach and look at the history of various aspects of the Reformed Presbyterian Church's life.

The first area to examine is membership. The communicant membership grew from roughly a thousand in 1798 to a high of 11,289 in 1890,²⁷ then declined to 3,893 in 1984.²⁸ The number of congregations was 125 in 1890²⁹ and 71 in 1984.³⁰ The causes of the gradual decline are several. The Reformed Presbyterian Church was and still is largely a rural denomination, and the population of rural areas has been decreasing. The denomination has lost many of her children, having failed to convince them of her doctrines. In the 1960s and 1970s many congregations cleaned their

and Covenant Theological Seminary. For a history of both sides of this merger see George P. Hutchinson, The History Behind the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (Cherry Hill, NJ: Mack Publishing Co., 1974). In 1982 this denomination voted to join the Presbyterian Church in America.

²⁷Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 1890, p. 325. Hereafter called Minutes.

²⁸Ibid., 1985, p. 10.

²⁹Ibid., 1890, p. 325.

³⁰Ibid., 1985, p. 11.

roles of inactive members.³¹ While there are signs that the decline has been reversed, such as an increase in baptized membership and an increasing emphasis on evangelism, this is impossible to prove.

Geographically the denomination has spread across the United States. Congregations range from New York to Los Angeles, and Orlando, Florida to Anchorage, Alaska. The main concentrations of members are in Kansas and western Pennsylvania.

The denomination has a Presbyterian form of government. Elders rule the congregations and deacons handle finances, property, and the ministry of mercy. Above the congregations in a geographical area are the presbyteries composed of one minister and one elder from each congregation. Some of presbytery's responsibilities are discipline cases involving ministers, matters appealed from a congregation, presbytery conferences, handling calls for ministers, visiting and evaluating congregations, and home missions.

The highest governmental body is the Synod, which meets annually. It is composed of one elder from each congregation plus all ordained ministers. It handles denominational enterprises such as the Seminary, missions, and publications through boards. It is the final court of appeal in discipline matters, and in conjunction with the elders of congregations decides questions of doctrine and polity.

In 1979 Synod made an important change in polity when it concluded that the offices of teaching elder (that is, minister) and ruling elders

³¹Ronald W. Nickerson, "Terminal?" Covenanter Witness, August 27, 1975, p. 2.

were the same office with different functions.³² The implications of this decision will take several years to understand and apply.

Finances are almost always a problem for churches. The Reformed Presbyterian Church has them too. The early American settlers did not have the habit of giving, because there was no church to be the object of giving. The early ministers were supported by subscription from the members of the congregations. This system did not work and was eventually dropped in favor of weekly contributions. Gradually the practice of tithing spread. Denominational programs likewise had the problem of support. At first, voluntary offerings were taken by the congregations for each board. This was effective for the popular boards, such as Foreign Missions; however, less popular ones such as Widows and Orphans suffered. In 1920 the denomination went to a central budget system and congregations began to donate from general funds. Moneys donated to congregations totaled \$238,615 in 1890³³ and \$3,219,883 in 1984.³⁴ There were also successful drives to build up an endowment fund. There are presently around five million dollars in funds functioning as endowment.

Like most Presbyterian churches, Covenanters emphasized education. The Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary was founded in 1809,³⁵ and is the fifth oldest of American seminaries. In its early years it moved often, as it followed the pastorates of men designated as professors. In

³²Minutes, 1979, p. 87.

³³*Ibid.*, 1890, p. 325.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 1985, p. 11.

³⁵While founded in 1809, the first students did not appear until 1810. Hence, 1810 is generally used as the starting date of the Seminary.

1856, the Seminary moved to Pittsburgh where it still remains. The Seminary is a small one reflecting the needs of the denomination, and her desire to give free training to Reformed Presbyterian candidates for the ministry. After a period of decline, the Seminary recovered in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1890-91 the Seminary had twenty-three students.³⁶ In 1984-85 it had five faculty and one hundred and thirty-five full and part-time students.³⁷

The other pillar of Reformed Presbyterian education is Geneva College. The college was founded in 1848 at Northwood, Ohio, by the Lakes Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. It eventually came under the care of the Reformed Presbyterian Church Synod and moved to its current location in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. After the Civil War it served as a training ground for Negro freedmen. In 1890-91, it had 123 students.³⁸ Geneva College has grown and had 1,076 day students in 1984-85.³⁹ The college is particularly strong in the science-engineering area and has historically attracted a large percentage of non-Christian students.

In recent years Reformed Presbyterian parents have joined the Christian School movement in increasing numbers. This movement deals with pre-college training, and runs parent controlled schools, rather than parochial schools.

³⁶Minutes, 1891, p. 262.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 1985, p. 88.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 1891, p. 264.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 1985, p. 45.

Denominations also have periodicals, and the Covenanters have had several. The main ones have been the Reformed Presbyterian, begun in 1837, and the Covenanter begun in 1845. These merged in 1863 to form the Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter. The desire for a weekly paper eventually resulted in the Christian Nation, which was finally superseded by the current Covenanter Witness. On the whole, these publications have assumed a readership educated in the basic Christian faith.

Foreign missions have also been an important part of the church's life. The first missionary was sent to Haiti in 1847. He unfortunately adopted the view of some neighboring Seventh-day Baptists and was suspended from the ministry. The Board of Missions tried again and opened more successful work in Syria in 1856. Since few people would come to a worship service, the missionaries opened a school and began to offer medical services. These provided opportunities for the spread of the Gospel. The mission lasted almost a century before it was forced to close by the Syrian government.

The Cyprus mission began in 1887. Originally, plans were to work with the Turkish population, but the first success came with Armenians. The Armenian church eventually decided to break with the Covenanter Church. Officially the difference was over exclusive psalmody, but older missionaries think the real reason was the desire to be in a denomination with other Armenians. The mission's work in education proved to be its greatest success and greatest failure. Since Cyprus had no university it was important that the children go to preparatory schools which would teach courses in English so the students could go to other countries for university training. The Reformed Presbyterian mission ran two of the

finest schools of this type in Cyprus. While many students became Christians through the witness of the school, they went to foreign universities, and stayed in other countries. Since both students and a large number of other Cypriots knew English (Cyprus is a former British colony), some of the missionaries never did learn Greek. Complicating matters even more, the students who did become converted would spend much of their time discussing Christianity with teachers and students in English. This created a language problem as Greek was their normal language, and English their religious one, so it became more difficult to communicate the Gospel in Greek. (Preaching was in Greek, however.) The final problem was that missionaries were so busy with the school, that they were not building churches. A few congregations were formed in spite of the problems. Because of nationalism in the church and anti-Americanism following the Turkish invasion, the mission was closed. In 1976 the Cypriot church was given autonomy.

The south China mission began in 1895 with the usual school, church and hospital combination. The project was one of the more successful Reformed Presbyterian missions; 1938 statistics showed sixteen mission stations with 615 members.⁴⁰ While Communism destroyed much of the work, some still remains. A few years ago a message reached the Rev. Samuel Boyle, former head of the South China mission, from a former Chinese Reformed Presbyterian pastor. After the Communists took over, he was forced to leave the pastorate and take a secular position. During the Cultural

⁴⁰Ibid., 1939, p. 160. A history of the south China mission can be found in Alice E. Robb's, Hoi Moon (Pittsburgh, Board of Foreign Missions, 1970).

Revolution, he was publicly humiliated, and his wife suffered a stroke that left her unable to speak. After President Nixon's visit, he was given some money as restitution and a small pension. He still witnesses, when he goes to the required public meetings, he introduces himself as a Christian minister. He wanted Dr. Boyle to know that he still kept the faith.

In the 1930s work began in Manchuria but did not last long due to the Japanese invasion and the Communist Revolution.

After closing of the Chinese mission, Synod decided to transfer the missionaries and resources into Kobe, Japan. Having learned from past experience, this mission had no school or hospital, just evangelism and church planting. In 1984 there were three churches with Japanese pastors, two mission stations, and 119 communicant members.⁴¹

The Reformed Presbyterian Church has always had a strong commitment to foreign missions. The strength of this commitment is shown by the ratio of missionaries to members. In 1890 there were thirteen missionaries,⁴² about one per thousand members. In 1973, before problems in Cyprus, there were twenty-three missionaries,⁴³ about one per 200 members. In 1984 there were six missionaries,⁴⁴ about one per 650 members. The high was reached in 1919 with thirty-four missionaries for

⁴¹Ibid., 1985, p. 166.

⁴²Ibid., 1891, pp. 307-09.

⁴³Ibid., 1974, p. 8.

⁴⁴Ibid., 1985, p. 151.

7,800 members.⁴⁵

Like other denominations, Covenanters dealt with controversial issues. The first major issue concerned slavery. In 1803 the church decided her members could not hold slaves. The test of this position came when a committee was sent to South Carolina to inform the local congregations of the decision. To a remarkable degree the congregations acceded to the demand, and members became active in anti-slavery associations and the underground railroad. The Covenanters were extremely enthusiastic about the Civil War and many enlisted to help abolish slavery.

The prohibition movement was strong in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The Reformed Presbyterian Church Synod concluded in 1857 that the Scriptures forbid the use of beverage alcohol, and made total abstinence a requirement for membership. The members have a long history of participation in temperance groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union. This position is presently being questioned by younger members of the denomination who believe that drinking is a matter of adiaphora, and believe that the church should make recommendations on matters of adiaphora rather than requirements. The recent revision of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony addressed this issue but has not resolved it. In 1986 the denomination was voting on whether to recommend abstinence, rather than require it.

Closely related to the prohibition question has been the issue of "national reform." Reformed Presbyterians have not only seen the Gospel as a message of individual salvation, but also as a transformer of

⁴⁵Ibid., 1919, insert following p. 76.

culture. The Christian is not only to bring men, but also society under the Kingship of Jesus Christ. The application in this area has been to support movements that attempt to bring civil laws into conformity with the biblical moral code. Covenanters have therefore supported and continue to support blue laws, anti-abortion laws, drug reform, and so forth. The most visible form that this movement has taken is the National Reform Association founded in 1863 and is still operating. Its mainstay has been the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The denomination has also dealt with doctrinal questions. Perhaps the longest controversy is on the issue of political dissent. It was mentioned above as a cause of the 1833 split. In the early 1960s a change was made in the position which many members felt allowed them to vote and to hold office. Yet dissatisfaction remains. The feeling remains that the church has not totally resolved the problem on what the relation of the Christian, the church, and the state should be.

The largest dispute of the nineteenth century was the question of whether congregations should have deacons. The reason for the dispute was hard to understand. The one group argued that they were unnecessary as they were to care for the poor and the congregations had few poor. The opposition argued that they should function as trustees and care for the property of the congregations. This caused great division in the denomination, but there was no open split. The dispute began in the 1840's and died down after the Civil War. David Carson best summed up the controversy, "Why the deacon question reached such proportions and

developed such an emotional drive remains mystifying."⁴⁶

On the whole, there has been surprisingly little doctrinal controversy. The doctrinal debates were concerned more with restating the faith and applying it, rather than changing it. Liberalism must be mentioned primarily because it has largely bypassed the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Some reasons for this are obvious. Liberalism is often linked to pride, and the lack of status and large congregations does not attract proud men. Presbyteries refuse to allow ministerial candidates to attend liberal seminaries. Smallness also helps. Seminary professors are elected by the entire Synod, who know the men for whom they vote. Thus, it is easy to screen out unqualified men. Also, a minimum of five years pastoral experience is required to be a professor. Most important, the Holy Spirit has worked to keep the church orthodox.

Evaluation

How should the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America be evaluated? Has she been successful? It depends on how success is measured. Numerically, the church has not done well, being at less than half her 1890 size. As far as maintaining reformed orthodoxy is concerned her record is admirable. Her service to Christian education has been amazing considering her size. She has been diligent if not particularly successful in foreign missions. However, times are changing. There is a renewed interest in orthodox Christianity in the last half of the twentieth century, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church has both encouraged the movement and profited from it.

⁴⁶Carson, "History," pp. 153-55.

Reformed Presbyterian Confessionalism

This portion will briefly discuss the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. It will look at the rather unusual confessional position of the Reformed Presbyterians, and finally at the process of revising doctrine.

Its Reformed Background

Reformed Presbyterian theology grows out of the Puritan-Presbyterian branch of the Calvinist Reformation. Hence, the Reformed Presbyterian Church follows the theological system developed by John Calvin in The Institutes of the Christian Religion and modified by later Reformed theologians. Calvinism is based on the Bible as the source of theology. Its unifying principle is the sovereignty of God. In contrast the Lutheran churches, which have attempted to apply their Reformation Confessions in the light of their understanding of the Bible to different historical situations,⁴⁷ the Reformed churches wrote, or more recently re-wrote, new confessions to fit their various historical and national situations. The general practice among larger American Presbyterian churches has been to keep the Westminster Confession as their doctrinal standard and to delete or change sections of it which the particular denomination

⁴⁷For example the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod believes that its confessions are firmly based on the Bible as the inspired and inerrant Word of God. As problems and questions arise which are not directly addressed in the Lutheran Confessions, extensive theological studies are made to carefully reflect what the Bible has to say about them. These are shared with the clergy and congregations of the Missouri Synod for study and guidance. These studies often form a basis for Synodical resolutions which are binding on the denomination.

disagrees with.⁴⁸ Reformed Presbyterians have used the different approach of writing an additional document. Previously called The Reformed Presbyterian Declaration and Testimony, it is today called The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, or more popularly, the "Testimony."

Reasons for the Testimony

Why was the Testimony written when the denomination already had the Westminster Confession? The Rev. Thomas Sproull, a contemporary of some of the men who wrote the first Testimony in 1806, said the major reason for it was to adapt the truth of the Reformed faith to the American culture. He wrote:

Truth is unchangeable. But the manner of its exhibition, the form in which it is to be presented in order to commend it to the minds of men, and make effectual as the divine agency in building and kingdom of Christ, need to be varied in order to be adapted to the condition of society in which it is promulgated.⁴⁹

The next question which faced the early Covenanters was the relationship of the Testimony to the Westminster Confession. Sproull concluded that the denomination probably faced three options. The first was to replace the Confession with the Testimony. The objection to this was a dislike of breaking with the Scottish and Irish Reformed Presbyterian churches. A second possibility was to make the Testimony a supplement to the Confession, which implied the Confession was defective, and this again

⁴⁸S. Bruce Willson, "The Value and Purpose of a Contemporary Testimony," Covenanter Witness, January 26, 1977, p. 7. Dr. Willson was professor of Church History at The Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary from 1953 to 1978.

⁴⁹Thomas Sproull, "The Reformed Presbyterian Church in America: Sketches of her Organic History," Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter, 14 (February 1876):42. Rev. Sproull (1803-1891) was a professor at The Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

broke the tie to Scotland and Ireland. The third, accepted alternative was to consider the Testimony an application of the truth, which meant that the Confession was looked on as general truth, and the Testimony its application to American society.⁵⁰ The original Testimony of 1806 was published in a work called Reformed Principles Exhibited.

How do the Confession and Testimony relate to the Bible? Reformed Presbyterians hold that the confessions are subordinate to the Scriptures, having authority derived from the Scriptures, and being summaries of Scripture. There is, however, the problem of those who take the "subordinate standards" too seriously, tending to canonize them. Dr. S. B. Willson wrote:

In spite of this official stance of the church, there has been a tendency on the part of all our churches to virtually canonize the "subordinate standards," rather than allow them to function as the writers intended, as implementation and application of the systematized teaching of God's Word as defined in the historic creeds and confessions.⁵¹

Rewriting the Testimony helps prevent canonization by reminding members that it is man-made and temporary.

Since Sproull's time Reformed Presbyterians have modified their position concerning confessions. For a contemporary summary of their position, Dr. Wayne R. Spear, professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary has been chosen as spokesman. Spear wrote that confessions are man-made documents which do not have the attributes of inerrancy and unchangeability. Two factors make new confessions necessary: The first is the church's growing understanding of truth.

⁵⁰Ibid., (March 1876):78-79.

⁵¹Willson, "Value and Purpose," p. 7.

Confessions express the church's common understanding of truth at a particular time in history, but that understanding should be growing as the church benefits from her experience and study of the Bible during succeeding generations. Secondly, the church faces different forms of error at different times in history, and must identify them and warn believers against them. While the Westminster Confession has served the church well, it does not address some important twentieth century problems. The Reformed Presbyterian Church is dealing and has dealt with problems such as the requirements for church membership, the task of deacons, the role of the family, Christian education and foreign missions. The Reformed Presbyterian Church wrestled with some of these questions and, as agreement was reached on the Scriptural teaching about them, summarized the teachings in her Testimony.⁵²

Spear's article was written during the Testimony revision of the 1970s, the first total revision since the Testimony was written in 1806. He summarized the reasons given to Synod in 1969 for undertaking the revision as follows:

1. The [Westminster] Confession of Faith provides the stability and constancy necessary as a statement of our doctrinal commitment, while the Testimony needs to be a contemporary document to meet the challenges of the day.
2. The Testimony may well be shortened by eliminating matters which overlap with the Confession of Faith.
3. There are many issues in our contemporary society which are not issues at the time of the composition of the Testimony.
4. Rewriting the Testimony could be a means of achieving greater unity with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

⁵²Wayne R. Spear, "Why Our Denominational Testimony Needs Revision," Covenanter Witness, January 12, 1977, p. 7.

5. The present structure of the Testimony is confusing, especially because of the listing of errors at the end of each chapter, and because of the language used.⁵³

According to Wayne Spear, the church now regards the Testimony as a supplement to, as well as an application of the Confession, a contrast with her earlier position which considered it only as an application.

The Process of Testimony Revision

How has the Reformed Presbyterian Church revised her Testimony? Until the most recent revision it was done on a chapter by chapter basis as questions and problems occurred. For example, Chapter 8 of the Testimony titled, "Of the Holy Spirit" was rewritten in the 1960s because of the Charismatic movement.⁵⁴ The procedure has been for a committee to rewrite a chapter until Synod is happy with it. Sometimes, as with the political dissent question, this took several rewritings. If a two-thirds majority of Synod approved the chapter, it would be submitted to the congregations in overture. The Clerk of Synod would send enough copies of the overture to each congregation so that each elder would have one. These would be passed out ten or more days before a vote on the overture. An overture would require passage by two-thirds of the sessions and a majority of the elders voting in favor of it.⁵⁵

Due to its importance, and as an example of the revision process,

⁵³Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁴Minutes, 1966, pp. 21-23.

⁵⁵Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (Pittsburgh: Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1949), pp. 300-01.

the complete Testimony revision of the 1970s will be looked at in some detail. This summary comes from an article by the Rev. James D. Carson, who served as the chairman of the Testimony Revision Committee.

The first move of the Committee was to devise a format designed to put material on the same subject in one place (previously it had been in four places, reflecting the division of the denominational Constitution into Westminster Confession, Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, and Larger and Shorter Catechisms). The solution was to print the Confession

in one column on the left hand side of each page. In a parallel column to the right, the Committee has inserted parallel subject matters of the Testimony. Then at the top of each chapter, the related references are given to both the Larger and Shorter Catechism.⁵⁶

After the format was determined some general policies were adopted. If the treatment in the Confession was adequate, nothing would be added in the right column unless clarification was needed, or the issue was particularly controversial today.⁵⁷ Examples of comment on controversial issues include Biblical inerrancy, neo-orthodoxy, and baptismal regeneration. An example of a clarification is the section on administering Communion to shut-ins. Examples of additions to the Confession include the family, Christian education, and abortion.

The third major step was to examine the old Testimony to be sure every area was either covered by the Confession or included in the Testimony. Both old and new Testimonies include a listing of some errors. These begin with "We reject" or "We deny." For example, "We reject any

⁵⁶James D. Carson, "Revising the Testimony," Covenanter Witness, January 26, 1977, p. 5.

⁵⁷Ibid.

teaching which subordinates any person of the Godhead as to substance, power or glory." The temptation to name groups holding these heresies was resisted because more than one group often holds them.⁵⁸

The fourth step was to collect and process comments on the work. The Committee sent copies of the revision to every pastor and elder. These men gathered as sessions to evaluate the work, and respond to the Committee. The Committee then reviewed the correspondence. Carson wrote:

We can assure you that every letter and every comment was considered by the Committee. That does not mean the Committee concurred with the correspondents in every case, although many changes were made as correspondence was reviewed. The Committee placed a high emphasis on this for the reason that the Testimony, if it is to be valid for the church, has to come from the church, not just a Committee of the church.⁵⁹

Carson closed with a plea for prayer "that the Lord will be pleased to use the 'Testimony' as a unifying force among us as we seek to witness effectively for the truth of the Scriptures in our generation."⁶⁰

After the Committee had finalized their draft of the chapters they were presented on the floor of Synod under the following rules: fifteen minutes of debate was allowed for each chapter followed by a call for a vote, if the chapter did not receive a two-thirds majority it was returned to the Committee for revision in light of the debate. The Committee would then resubmit the revision. When all chapters were finally adopted, a final vote was taken on whether to adopt the new Testimony.⁶¹ In 1979,

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid. In a conversation with this writer, Wayne R. Spear, a member of the Testimony Revision Committee estimated that half the suggestions were used.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 8.

⁶¹Minutes, 1977, pp. 7-8.

the final chapters were approved, and the new Testimony sent to the congregations in overture. Each chapter was voted on separately, and all were approved by majorities well over the required two-thirds. At the 1980 Synod, the new Testimony became the law of the church.

Does the new Testimony differ significantly from the Confession? A few minor sections of the Confession were rejected. Two were the prohibition of a man or woman marrying any kindred in their spouse's family closer than they could in their own (Chapter 24:4), and the provisions allowing the state to call church synods (Chapter 31:2). The significant changes were the additions and clarifications. These included sections on Scripture, the Holy Spirit, the stewardship of creation, evangelism and missions, the civil government, and the family including the education of children. Many of these were applications of the Confession's theology to current problems (like abortion), rather than new doctrine.

Observations on the Testimony Revision

This chapter will close with some observations on the Testimony revision. First, laity played an important role in the Testimony revision process. Three members of the original Testimony Revision Committee were laymen. Since the different drafts of the Testimony were reviewed by the elders, laymen had additional opportunities to help revise the Testimony. The study of the various drafts left the elders better informed voters when the Testimony was finally sent down in overture.

Secondly, notice the time when the Testimony was written. The twentieth century in American churches has been a time of theological anarchy. Major denominations such as the United Presbyterian Church, the

Episcopal Church, and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have had splits over doctrinal matters since 1965. The confessional churches have had three options in reacting to the American situation. They could broaden their confessional base to address fewer questions authoritatively and thus allow more diversity as the United Presbyterian Church did with the Confession of 1967 and her Book of Confessions.⁶² They could keep their old confessions and write position papers applying the old confessions to current problems, as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has done through its Commission on Theology and Church Relations. The Reformed Presbyterian Church chose the third option of writing a confession to address contemporary questions and to clarify her position on several controversial issues. As a result of God's providence, the denomination observed the society and addressed the problems of other churches before they became major Reformed Presbyterian problems. Future church historians will have to decide if this effort was successful in preserving Reformed Presbyterian orthodoxy.

Thirdly, this revision showed the nature of the Reformed Presbyterian Church's conservatism. Traditionally, Reformed Presbyterians have been regarded as the most conservative of Presbyterians, the last to change anything. The major Testimony revision of the 1970's shows the nature of Reformed Presbyterian Church conservatism lies not in traditionalism, or in keeping out-dated forms (such as the "canonized" Westminster Confession), but a conservatism based on her understanding of Biblical

⁶²The United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., The Constitution of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Part I, Book of Confessions 2nd ed. (New York: Office of the General Assembly The United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 1970).

truth. Because of the priority of the Bible in Reformed Presbyterian theology, the Reformed Presbyterian Church felt free, and indeed compelled, to revise her Testimony to testify from God's Word to this generation.⁶³

⁶³For information comparing the various smaller presbyterian churches see Presbyterian Church in America. Ad Interim Committee on Inter-Church Relations. Information Introducing and Comparing the Presbyterian Church in America, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (Greenville, SC: Presbyterian Church in America, 1981). Unfortunately this document fails to deal with the question of worship, and does not use the most recent revision of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony. Nevertheless, it is, to this author's knowledge, the most complete comparison of the above denominations available. For a good summary of Reformed theology Leonard Coppes, Are Five Points Enough? Ten Points of Calvinism (Manassas, VA: Reformation Education Foundation, 1980) is recommended. This book goes beyond "TULIP" and discusses other important Reformed doctrines like scripture, church government, the Covenant of Grace, and the sacraments. Dr. Coppes holds a Th. D. from Westminster Theological Seminary.

CHAPTER IV

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY IN CHAPTER 1 OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION AND THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN TESTIMONY, PART I

The Westminster Confession and the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony both begin with a chapter discussing the doctrine of Scripture as understood by the Westminster Assembly and the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The approach used below will be to examine each section of the Confession-Testimony in turn, emphasizing the topic of Biblical authority.

Section 1, the Forms of Revelation

Each division in this chapter will follow the format of quoting a section of the Confession-Testimony and then discussing it. Sections of the Confession are numbered 1a, 2a, and so forth, while sections of the Testimony are numbered 1b, 1c, 1d, 2b, 2c, and so forth. Section 1 will refer to the entire section.

TESTIMONY

1b. God has revealed himself in his works, called natural or general revelation, and his word, called special revelation. This self-revelation contains all that man needs to know about God. The revelation of God in his works is clear, but it does not make known the covenant purposes of God. Hence, God began, from the creation of man, to make known the covenant relationship he had established between himself and man. These matters could not have become known to man except by special (verbal) revelation.

1 Cor. 2:9; Gen. 1:28; 2:16-17; Rom. 1:19-20.

1c. These two forms of revelation, his works and his word, are complementary. Any apparent obscurity of either of them, or alleged confusion or contradiction between them [sic], arises from the natural limitations of man, and especially from his sinful state of rebellion against God, and the resultant curse of God upon him and the whole creation. The Scripture reveals that both the works of God and the written word of God have been spoken into being by the Son, the living Word of God, the Creator, who also, as the incarnate Mediator and risen Savior continues to uphold the universe by his powerful word.
Psalm 19; Job 38-41; Psalm 139:6; Rom. 1:19-32; John 1:1-3; Heb. 1:1-3.

CONFESSION

1a. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men unexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased.
Rom. 2:14-15; 1:19-20; Psalm 19:1-3; Rom. 1:32 with 2:1; 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:13-14; Heb. 1:1; Prov. 22:19-21; Luke 1:3-4; Rom. 15:4; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Isa. 8:19-20; 2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Peter 1:19; Heb. 1:1-2.

TESTIMONY

1d. The revelation of God's works can be rightly understood only in the light of the written word.
1 Cor. 1:21.

1e. The living Word became man, Jesus Christ. In his life, death and resurrection he fulfilled the covenant broken by man's disobedience and did most completely reveal God and his purpose for man. The Son makes the Father known to man; yet the Son is not known by man except by the Spirit through the Scripture. Hence the Scripture is the final word of God to man for faith and life.
Matt. 11:27; John 1:18; John 14:24-26; 1 Cor. 2:10-13.

1f. God gave his written revelation progressively by holy men whom he chose, and inspired and infallibly guided to write inerrantly and completely the revelation of his will. No further such revelation is to be received. The human authors with differing skills expressed themselves in the peculiar idioms and a variety of literary forms common to their times. They used human sources of historical information and they recorded interpretations of the those events and prophecies concerning the

future that God revealed to them. In all they wrote, however, they were guided by the Holy Spirit as to matter and manner so that their writings are indeed the word of God.

Gen. 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 1 Kings 11:41; 14:29; 2 Sam. 23:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Jer. 36:32.

1g. We reject any view of Scripture that denies the objective truth of the Bible by making the authority of its message dependent on the circumstances or the subjective experience of the reader.

1h. We reject the notion that the process of revelation was a mechanical one in which the writers were reduced to mere stenographers.

1i. We also reject all theories of composition that make the writers mere editors or collectors of human tradition and liturgy, so that their writings are but human accounts or interpretations of religious development under God.

1j. We reject the teaching that prophecy is history written after the event.

The purpose of this section was to state the relation between natural revelation and special revelation (Scripture). The authors of the Confession were dealing with attacks from two sides. On the one side, the Anglicans wanted to establish a separate sphere for reason, independent of Scripture. The Westminster Divines replied that reason was "not sufficient." On the other side, the Sectarians claimed irrational direct revelations. The Westminster Divines used Scripture to argue against these revelations, claiming that the revelation of God is committed "wholly unto writing" and "those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people" have now ceased.

The Anglican and Sectarian disputes made a section on the two forms of revelation necessary. Creation is an insufficient revelation according to the Confession. It is sufficient to leave men inexcusable, but not sufficient to give a saving knowledge of God. Robert Harris, one of the authors of the Confession, drew some conclusions concerning the

insufficiency of God's works or general revelation. He concluded that "there is no sight of Gods essence" obtainable by the light of nature, because there is no direct contact between the eye and the object, God. God can only be seen by reflection from nature. From nature, the only things that can be known of God are impressions and footsteps of God's wisdom, power and other attributes. These attributes of God are sufficient to leave men without excuse, but not sufficient to tell men the way of salvation. Harris added that God must make Himself known to people.¹

George Gillespie gave a partial indication of what was meant by the "law of nature," when he related it to the moral law written on men's hearts. He said that the law of nature was the law which God had written and imprinted on the nature of man. This law written in man's nature before the Fall was the Ten Commandments or the moral law, however, after the Fall, the law of nature was written by God on men's hearts. The law of nature falls far short of the moral law written on men's hearts before the fall.²

The teaching of the Testimony with respect to this section is both exclamatory and defensive. In section 1b Testimony clarifies by

¹Robert Harris, The Workes of Robert Harris, Bachelor in Divinity and Pastor of Hanwell, in Oxford-Shire. Revised and in Sundrie Places Corrected, and Now Collected into One Volume (London: Printed by R. Y. for J. Bartlet, 1635), pp. 385-86. The format followed for this dissertation is to use the original spelling with necessary clarifications inserted in brackets.

²George Gillespie, A Dispvte against the English-Popish Ceremonies, Obtrvded vpon the Chvrch of Scotland. Wherein Not Only Our Owne Arguments against the Same Are Strongly Confirmed, But Likewise the Answers and Defense of Our Opposites, Svch As Hooker, Mortovne, Bvrges, Sprint, Paybody, Andrewes, Saravia, Tilen, Spotswood, Lindsey, Forbesse, &c Particularly Confuted (n. p.: n. p., 1637), pt. 3, p. 197.

introducing and defining the modern terms, "natural, general, and special revelation." (These terms were not used in the Confession.) Also this section reflects the influence of covenant theology in modern Reformed circles, and in particular the influence of Geerhardus Vos and his son, Johannes on the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.³ Thus, revelation is seen to be a Covenant formulation between God and man.

The necessity of Scripture or special revelation is taught in the Confession and the Testimony. While this topic will also be discussed in more detail with section 6, when the purpose of Scripture is considered, it will be briefly introduced now. The Bible is God's declaration of "His will unto His Church." It is "for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and malice of Satan and of the world." The Bible is, therefore, a manual for war, in which God tells His army their orders. Tying the purpose of natural and special revelation together, Robert Harris observed that they both have the goal of obedience to God. He wrote,

And as his word, so all the workes of God, all his acts, whether immanent or transient, looke this way, he hath elected us, but why? that we might obey him; he hath created us, called us, sanctified us, &c. and all to obedience. All that God doth by way of mercy or correction, looke this way: The whole creation teacheth obedience, the Bible teacheth it, all divinity is practicall, and calls for

³Interview with Drs. E. Clark Copeland, Wayne R. Spear, and J. Renwick Wright, Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 1986. These seminary faculty were members of the Committee that rewrote the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony. Hereafter this will be called, Interview with the Testimony Revision Committee. The Testimony uses silence as the method of showing agreement with the Confession. No minutes of the Testimony Revision Committee were kept.

On covenant theology see Geerhardus Vos, Biblical Theology, ed. Johannes G. Vos (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948).

obedience.⁴

The Testimony has nothing to say about the necessity of Scripture in section 1, indicating the agreement of the Reformed Presbyterian Church with the Confession's position.

Section 1a continues saying that the Scripture was committed "wholly unto writing." This is a very important declaration, for the term "wholly" teaches that the Bible is the total fullness of God's revelation. This has great implications for all of church life. As one scholar observed,

As has been previously observed in connection with the doctrine of total depravity--when the framers of the Westminster Confession insert the word wholly, the occurrence is never accidental. The Word of God in special revelation for the Church on earth is simply the words of Scripture ('oracles', XXV.3). The purpose of Scripture is to function as 'the rule' of faith and life in the Church (I.3).⁵

The Testimony has nothing to add here beyond the affirmation that the Son spoke the written word into being in section 1c.

The similarities and differences of natural revelation and Scripture give insight into their respective degrees of authority. Jack Rogers observed the continuity between the two kinds of revelation. He said the Confession teaches a progressive revelation of God in which God continued to reveal Himself in different ways suited to the goal of man's salvation. Natural and special revelation were not considered two separate sources of revelation, but one, "because it is the same God who is revealing Himself." Because the revelation in nature was suppressed by man, "that

⁴Harris, Workes, p. 569.

⁵Charles K. Robinson, "Philosophical Biblicism: The Teaching of the Westminster Confession Concerning God, the Natural Man, and Revelation and Authority," Scottish Journal of Theology 18 (March 1965):37.

same, not another, knowledge of God was given in written Scripture, that sinful man might be confronted with it again." This does not teach two sources of revelation, but recognizes one word of God coming to man.⁶ Thus, the sources are equally authoritative, because they are both from God. However, they do not have the same content, purposes, or sufficiency.

The teaching of the Testimony also ties natural and special revelation together, only it goes further by relating it to Christ in 1c declaring, "The Scripture reveals that both the works of God and the written word of God have been spoken into being by the Son, the living Word of God." This section also attributes alleged contradictions between God's works and His Word to man's limitations. Section 1f also is more explicit than the Confession in teaching progressive revelation.

A major contribution of the Testimony to this section is to state in clear terms how the Reformed position differs from that of the liberal and neo-orthodox theologians. The first difference is in section 1b where a dichotomy is rejected between God's works and His word. Misunderstandings between them are men's fault and not God's purpose or communication. The revelation of works is said to be rightly understood only in the light of the written word in section 1d. Man's knowledge of God outside of Scripture is limited. Section 1g is aimed at the neo-orthodox, stating that the Bible is true whether men believe it or not.⁷

⁶Jack B. Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession: A Problem of Historical Interpretation for American Presbyterianism (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966), p. 283.

⁷Interview with Testimony Revision Committee.

Section 1e was written with the goal of rejecting the idea of immediate revelations. Jesus can be known to men only through the Scripture.⁸ As the Westminster Divines battled the irrational revelations of their day, Reformed Presbyterians also battle modern subjective movements.

The sections on inspiration, 1f to 1i, will be discussed in more detail below in section 2 of the Confession. The Testimony's strong statement on inerrancy is a result of the contention of some evangelicals, like Jack Rogers, a professor at Fuller Seminary, that the Westminster Confession does not teach the inerrancy of the Bible. This will also be discussed below. Also, the authors of the Testimony rejected the historical-critical method. Section 1i is aimed at the form critical schools of men like Rudolph Bultmann, and the followers of tradition history. Section 1j is aimed at the old liberalism that rejected predictive prophesy.⁹

Sections 2 and 3, The Canon and Inspiration

Sections 2 and 3 dealing with the canon and inspiration are perhaps the clearest in this Confession chapter.

CONFESSION

2a. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these, of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the,

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

Apostles, Romans, Corinthians I, Corinthians II, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians I, Thessalonians II, To Timothy I, To Timothy II, To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, The Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation to John.

All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

Luke 16:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 22:18-19; 2 Tim. 3:16.

TESTIMONY

2b. The Old Testament is the word of Christ and is of equal authority with the New Testament. Nor are the earthly words of Christ quoted in the Scriptures in any way of greater authority or of greater significance to the church than the rest of God's Word. It is the triune God who speaks with equal and absolute authority in and through every part of Scripture.

CONFESSION

3a. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.
 Luke 24:27, 44; Rom. 3:2; 2 Peter 1:21.

One of the questions raised by the Reformation was the content of the canon. Rome argued for the books listed above plus the Apocryphal books. The Lutherans, while on the whole holding to the canon listed above, considered the content of the canon an open question.¹⁰ In contrast to both, the Reformed declared the canon to be the traditional Old and New Testaments. To leave no doubt as to the Bible's content the authors of the Confession listed the books of the canon, and added that the criteria for canonicity is inspiration.

In contrast to the Canons of Trent, the Westminster Confession excludes the Apocryphal books from the canon because they are not divinely

¹⁰Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 1:292, 332.

inspired. It considers them the equal of other human writings, no better and no worse, and denies them a special place in the church. The authors of the Confession concluded that the Apocrypha was not inspired, and was therefore a human writing.

The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony indicates its agreement with the Confession's canon by silence. In section 2b the Testimony affirmed the equality of the Old Testament with the New, and rejected any special position for the words of Christ. The support for the equality of the Old Testament is aimed at certain evangelicals who neglect it. The comment about the earthly words of Christ not being of greater authority than other Scripture is aimed at red letter Bibles.¹¹ Both views opposed by the Testimony imply that part of the Bible is "second class" revelation.

Inspiration

Inspiration was used by the authors of the Confession as the criteria for canonicity. As it relates both content of the canon and the role God played in revealing the Scriptures, it is an issue in Biblical authority. First, the role of inspiration in determining the canon will be discussed, then the limits of inspiration and the method of inspiration. The authors of the Confession had been made aware of the relation between authority and inspiration by the Irish Articles. The Articles say because God's inspiration is the basis for canonicity, the Scriptures are of the highest authority.

Surprisingly the Westminster Confession has little to say about

¹¹Interview with Testimony Revision Committee.

the questions of canon formation and the meaning of inspiration. Jack Rogers observed that,

The question of how the canon was formed was apparently not discussed by the Westminster Assembly. The Confession gives no indication of any test or mark of canonicity. This is a deliberate omission . . . The Westminster Confession gives no definition of inspiration but simply points to its result: a Word of God written which is "the rule of faith and life" for Christians.¹²

In twentieth century America, the term inspiration is freely used in many secular and religious contexts. A baseball player can play an "inspired" game, and a hymn writer can also claim inspiration.¹³ Therefore, the definition and usage of "inspiration" in the Westminster Confession must be discussed.

James Ussher, a major influence on the Westminster Assembly, defined inspiration. In answer to the question asking how can the Bible, written by fallible men, be called the "Word" of God. Ussher answered that the Word proceeded not from the mind of men, but holy men were set apart by God to speak and write as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Therefore God alone is to be regarded as the author of the Bible, because He inspired men to be his secretaries.¹⁴ Inspiration, then, is God moving men by means of the power of the Spirit to write in such a way that God remains the author. Ussher's definition implies a dictation theory of inspiration that will be discussed below.

¹²Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 295.

¹³William Morris, ed., The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (Boston: American Heritage Publishing and Houghton Mifflin, 1969), p. 680.

¹⁴James Ussher, A Body of Divinitie, or the Svmmme and Svbstance of Christian Religion (London: Printed by M. F. for Tho: Dovvnes and Geo: Badger, 1645), pp. 7-8.

Samuel Rutherford, an author of the Confession, also limited inspiration to the Bible. He affirmed that, while there is a revelation of the letter of the Gospel to those who never believe, no one could reveal the mind of God to the writers of the Bible concerning salvation but God alone, hence, "none were inspired of God, but writers of Canonick scripture."¹⁵

Thomas Gataker developed some of the implications of inspiration. He observed that the inspiration of Scripture implied that every verse of it is inspired, historical and doctrinal passages inclusive, and that the inspiration of God is enough to make the Bible understandable. There is no need for strange methods of interpretation that mislead believers. In a dispute with an opponent, both he and his opponent agreed that the Bible is inspired. But, Gataker argued, inspiration does not mean that the application of this truth is to "rise higher than the letter of the Scripture" and expect a new revelation for the raising of some new spiritual sense. Gataker continued writing,

This is a way . . . to make the Scripture a nose of wax, that men may wind and turn which way they list, as their quaint fancies and wanton wits are pleased to play with it: for Sir, was not (2 Tim. 3.16) every parcell of Scripture, whether Historicall or Doctrinall, given by inspiration, as well as any one of it? But this is not unlike that idle dotage of the Jewish Doctors, who tell us, that every Scripture hath seventy severall faces or senses: and the Popish conceit of four severall sorts of interpretation of Scripture; which our Writers do

¹⁵Samuel Rutherford, A Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist. Opening the Secrets of Familisme and Antinomianisme in the Antichristian Doctrine of John Saltmarsh, and Will. Del, the Present Preachers of the Army Now in England, and of Robert Town, Rob. Crisp, H. Denne, Eaton, and Others. In Which Is Revealed the Rise and Spring of Antinomians, Familists, Libertines, Swenck-feldians, Enthysiasts, &c (London: Printed by J. D. & R. I. For Andrew Crooke, 1648), pt. 1, p. 39.

justly oppose.¹⁶

The Confession does tell how one can know that the Bible is inspired by the action of the Holy Spirit in section 5. In contrast, the Roman answer is that the church determines what is inspired. In answer to Rome, Samuel Rutherford, an author of the Confession, used the biblical argument that Jesus' sheep hear His voice. He gave two reasons why believers know the Bible to be the Word of God. He said, as instinct teaches a lamb to know its mother among a thousand sheep, the instinct of grace knows the voice of the Beloved among many voices (Song 2:8). This is the discerning power of the believer. There is a second way of knowing, by the power in the object, namely the Word. "To the new creature, there is in Christ's word some character, some sound of heaven, that is no voice in the world, but in his only." In Christ as seen by the eye of faith, there is a shape and stamp of divine majesty that no one but the believer can know. Rutherford next drew an analogy. If there were a hundred counterfeit moons or suns the human eye could discern the true moon and sun. Christ offers the believer's eye "little images of Christ, that the soul dare go to death and to hell with it, that this, this only was Christ, and none other but he only."¹⁷

¹⁶Thomas Gataker, Shadowes without Substance, or, Pretended New Lights: Together, with the Impieties and Blasphemies That Lurk under Them, Further Discovered and Drawn Forth into the Light: In Way of Rejoynder unto Mr Iohn Saltmarsh His Reply: Entituled Shadowes Flying Away (London: Robert Bostock, 1646), p. 69. Gataker and other authors of his time frequently used emphasis instead of quotation marks. Thus, underlining may signify either quotation or emphasis.

¹⁷Samuel Rutherford, The Trial and Triumph of Faith (n. p.: By John Field and are to be sold by Ralph Smith, 1645; reprint ed., Edinburgh: Printed for the Assembly's Committee, 1845), pp. 136-37.

The Westminster Confession states the canonical books are inspired but does not define inspiration nor discuss the method of inspiration. The authors of the Confession believed, however, that inspiration was limited to the Bible, that men were moved by the Holy Ghost to write Scripture, that inspiration produced an understandable text of Scripture, and that believers knew what was inspired. Jack Rogers summarized the position of the Westminster Assembly as follows: The text of the Bible is the Word of God, and God's word is not to be sought independent of the text. Inspiration neither implies a particular theory about how the Scripture came to be the Word of God, nor does it eliminate the human contribution the authors of Scripture made. Inspiration cannot be used to separate the God's Word from the Bible's written text.¹⁸

With the above the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony is in agreement. The difference comes as follows on the method of inspiration.

The authors of the Confession believed in the dictation theory of inspiration, as can be seen from the following quotations:

So the Prophets were inspired . . . carried, rolled, moved, acted immediately by the Holy Ghost, for God used not reason, of humane discoursing as a intervening organ or acting instrument to the devising and inventing of spirituall of Gospell truth, 2 Pet. 1.20, 21. but yet this immediately inspiring Spirit spake written Scripture, commanded the Ordinance of actuall prophesying, commanded the Prophets to write, and the People to hear and to read the words of the Prophesie . . .¹⁹

In another book, Rutherford said he doubted that

his Commandment to write Scripture, was any other then an immediate inspiration, which essentially did include every syllable and word that the Apostles and Prophets were to write . . . [The Bible] . . .

¹⁸Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, pp. 301-02.

¹⁹Rutherford, Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist, pt. 1, p. 314.

is written by the immediate finger of God

Rutherford supported his position with an analogy. Princes do not give a rough outline of a letter to a foreign prince to their secretaries and go to sleep, leaving it to the wits of the secretary to put it into the proper form and style, and then sign and seal it. God did not give a rough outline of the Law and Gospel and leave it "to the wit and eloquence of Shepherds, Heardsmen, Fishers, such were the Prophets . . . and Peter and divers of the Apostles, who were unlettered men" to write the words and style they desired,

but that in writing every jot, tittle, or word of Scripture, they were immediately inspired, as touching the matter, words, phrases, expression, order, method, majesty, stile and all: So I think they were but Organs, the mouth, pen and Amanuenses; God as it were, immediately dyting, and leading their hand at the pen . . .²⁰

The Testimony, unlike the Confession, deals with the method of inspiration. Instead of a dictation theory, the Testimony Revision Committee adopted the modern evangelical theory of plenary inspiration as was shown in sections 1f and 1h above. Indeed, Section 1h explicitly rejects the dictation theory. (1h was aimed at liberals, some of whom believe that some biblical authors merely recorded dictated oral tradition.) The theory of plenary inspiration as stated in the Testimony says that men with differing skills, languages, and literary contexts used historical information in recording and interpreting events and

²⁰Samuel Rutherford, The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication: or a Peaceable Dispute for the Perfection of the Holy Scripture in Point of Ceremonies and Church Government; in Which the Removal of the Service Book is Justified (London: Printed by John Field for Christopher Meredith, 1646), p. 66. Rutherford listed the following passages as proofs for the above argument: Deut. 4:5; 31:24-26; Mal. 4:4; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16; Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 11:23; and Luke 1:70.

prophesies. They were guided by the Holy Spirit in such a way that what they wrote was the Word of God. The description of inspiration given here follows Benjamin B. Warfield and the old Princeton School.²¹

The rejections in Sections 1i and 1j are against the defective views of inspiration held by followers of the historical-critical method. These views teach a view of inspiration that reduces the Bible to a human account of religions experience, and denies that God can give men knowledge of a future event.

In this section the questions of canonicity were discussed. The Westminster Confession lists the books of the canon and attributes their canonicity to inspiration, not to the witness of the church. The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony agrees with the Confession's position and adds to it the method of plenary inspiration, stresses that all parts of Scripture are of equal authority, and rejects the historical-critical method.

Section 4, God, the Author of Scripture

In the final analysis, the authority of the Bible is determined by whether it has one author or many authors. If it is written by men, it is a human work with the faults of its authors. If it is written by God, it is perfect and completely authoritative. The latter was the position taken by the Westminster Divines. Section 4 of the Confession says the following:

²¹Interview with Testimony Revision Committee. For a fine summary of the Princeton position on inspiration see, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1915 ed., s.v. "Inspiration," by Benjamin B. Warfield.

CONFESSION

4a. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.
2 Peter 1:19, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 5:9; 1 Thess. 2:13.

Scripture and the Church

This section begins by rejecting the idea that the authority of Scripture depends on man or church. Here the authors of the Confession countered the claims of Rome. Ultramontane Romanism located the authority of the church in the Pope, and Gallican Romanism placed the church's authority in a General Council.²² Both forms of Romanism assumed the prior authority of the church, which the Confession denies. The evidence below shows that the authors of the Westminster Confession believed the church gained its authority from the Scriptures, not the reverse.

Samuel Rutherford clearly supported the position of Scripture above church. In his catechism he said,

Q. For quhat [what] cause should wee believe the Word to be the Word of God?

A. Not because men or the kirk [church] sayeth it, but because God quho [who] can not lie sayeth it.--Joh. v. 33, 34, 34; Math. xvi. 17.²³

In another work Rutherford reaffirmed this position, saying that the Word got its authority from God not man. After stating that the document is

²²For definitions of these two types of Catholicism see The Oxford Dictionary of the Church, 1st ed., s. v. "Ultramonism" and "Gallican Articles, The Four."

²³Samuel Rutherford, "Ane Catachisme Containing the Soume of Christian Religion," in Catechisms of the Second Reformation, pp. 159-242, ed. by Alexander F. Mitchell (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886), p. 162.

not the Word of God if it is not part of the canon, he wrote, "for though the Word have authority only from God, not from the Church nor from men, or the manner of delivering of it"²⁴

James Ussher also affirmed the superior authority of the Bible. He wrote that the authority of the Scripture is the highest in the church because it is the authority of God. Learning of men or angels under whatever name or title cannot be counted equal to the Scriptures, neither can Scripture be judged by men or angels (Gal. 1:8, 9; 2 Thess. 2:2).²⁵

As the above evidence shows, the members of the Westminster Assembly taught that "authority comes from God alone and that it is transmitted through the Scriptures to the church, and not in the reverse order."²⁶

In a related topic, Jack Rogers observed that nineteenth century Presbyterian theologians found themselves in a theological inconsistency by tying canonicity to the witness the church. They contradicted this section of the Westminster Confession, by saying that the authority to determine the canon comes from the church not God.²⁷ The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony avoids this inconsistency by indicating its agreement with the Confession by silence.

God, the Author of Scripture

One of the most important issues with respect to the Bible's

²⁴Rutherford, Divine Right of Church-Government, p. 69.

²⁵Ussher, Body of Divinitie, p. 18.

²⁶Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 308.

²⁷Ibid., p. 309.

authority is its authorship. On the one hand, if it is written by men, it does not have a greater authority than other human books. On the other hand, if it is written by God, it has great authority. The writers of the Confession taught that God was the author of the Bible and, therefore, it is authoritative. A number of citations will be used as evidence for this assertion.

Robert Harris attributed the authorship of the Bible to God. The following quotation has as its context a man who fears he is a hypocrite. Harris appealed to the divinely written Bible's authority to encourage the man to change his mind, saying, "if God say so in his Word, wee must consent, and say so too; but where is it that God in his Word chargeth thee for a hypocrite?"²⁸

Thomas Gataker, another author of the Confession, saw the Holy Spirit as the true author of Proverbs and Solomon as the human author. Gataker said, "For the Author, (to omit the Principall, Gods Spirit: for, All Scripture is inspired of God;) the Penman of it was Salomon."²⁹

Edward Reynolds, the only member of the Westminster Assembly to become a bishop, expressed his belief in the divine authorship of the Bible in many places. For example, he wrote, "God's saying, is ever doing something; his words are operative, and carry an unction and authority

²⁸Harris, Workes, p. 383.

²⁹Thomas Gataker, A Good Wife Gods Gift: and, A Wife Indeed. Two Marriage Sermons (London: Printed by Iohn Haviland for FVike Clifton, 1623), p. 1.

along with them."³⁰ In the context of God as the Bible's lawgiver, Reynolds said, "Therefore he is "our lawgiver" likewise; and therefore he may appoint himself laws according to his own will."³¹

Jack Rogers summarized the position of the Confession on the divine authorship of the Bible and its authority by writing, "There is no doubt that for the Westminster Divines, the believer must know and obey the Scripture because therein he knows and obeys God who is its author."³²

God's authorship of the Bible has implications of great consequence. It immensely adds to the Bible's authority both quantitative and qualitatively. Because God is the author of the Bible it should be believed and obeyed in every detail, as is fitting for the Word of God.

Scripture as the Word of God

Accepting God as author of Scripture leads one to see the Scriptures as the Word of God, meaning the Scripture is a personal letter from God to people containing His actual words. The authors of the Confession and James Ussher often described the Bible as the Word of God.

Archbishop Ussher in his Body of Divinitie gave several reasons why the Bible is the Word of God. 1. Because the godliness of the writers surpassed men of other religions, which showed the work of the Holy Spirit in them and made it unlikely that such men would write their ideas instead of God's word. 2. The integrity and sincerity of the writers

³⁰Edward Reynolds, The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds, D. D., 6 vols. (London: Printed for B. Holdsworth, 1826), 2:9-10.

³¹Ibid., 2:88.

³²Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 314.

was shown by their unwillingness to spare themselves or their friends from scandal. 3. The quality and condition of the authors, many of whom were academically untrained (Peter, Amos, James), and others of whom, like Paul, were enemies of the truth. 4. The heavenly subject matter of Scripture. 5. Its doctrine is above man's capacity to imagine. 6. There is no contradiction of Scripture by Scripture. 7. The prophecies have come true. 8. The Bible has great majesty and authority. 9. In matters of the highest nature, the Scriptures give commands, and not persuasive arguments. 10. The goal of the Scriptures is God's glory and man's salvation. 11. The Scriptures have a power in them to convert men's minds and hearts. 12. The antiquity of the biblical writers is another proof. 13. The devil and wicked men hate it. 14. The preservation of the Scriptures have been an act of God. 15. The Scriptures have the power to humble a man when they are preached.³³

George Gillespie also believed the Bible to be the Word of God, and saw it as the source of God's teaching about Himself and His worship, as is clear below:

The one absolute, whereby the most high God, whose supreme Auctority alone, bindeth us to beleve whatsoever he propoundeth to be believed by us, hath in his written Word pronounced, declared, and established; what he would have us to believe concerning himself, or his worship.³⁴

Thomas Gataker, an English divine, also affirmed the Bible as the Word of God as is implied by the citation below. The intention of the passage is pastoral, to show believers that the sure ground of their faith

³³Ussher, Body of Divinitie, pp. 8-11.

³⁴Gillespie, A Dispyte against the English-Popish Ceremonies, pt. 3, p. 176

is the true, stable Word of God. The sure ground is not the outward props such as sight or "sense" [probably a reference to experience] which often fail and delude believers, but God's Word and truth, and the firmness of His promise, which will not fail even if heaven and earth pass away. Believers learn to trust the Word when other props are pulled away from them. Gataker used Matt. 24:35; Psalm 119:49, 50, 114; and Heb. 1:3 as support for the above conclusions.³⁵

Edward Reynolds too saw the Bible as being the Word of God. In his work on Psalm 110, he linked the Word to the kingship of Christ, observing,

The word of God cannot be bound nor limited; it is the scepter which his Father hath given him; and we cannot, without open contestation against God, resist his government therein over us.³⁶

The Confession teaches both the divine authorship of the Bible, and that the Scripture is the Word of God. Edward Morris tied these positions together. As Morris observed, the Bible "is to be received because it is the Word of God. The authoritativeness in the case is divine, and is therefore forever supreme and final." Morris made three observations about Biblical authority based on the Westminster Assembly's doctrine of Scripture. He noted, first, that the claim of the Bible is based on its divine authorship. Morris emphasized the importance of this point with the following words:

So long as there are doubts respecting this cardinal fact,--so as the human agency in revelation is lifted into prominence to the relative

³⁵Thomas Gataker, Certain Sermons, First Preached, and after Published at Severall Times (London: Printed by John Haviland for Fulke Clifton, 1637), pt. 1, p. 331.

³⁶Reynolds, Whole Works, 2:16.

retirement of this divine agency in its production, so long there will be room for hesitancy or for unbelief in respect to the biblical teaching and requirements.

Then Morris gave his second observation, that the claim of the Scriptures to universal belief and obedience is of the same nature as God's own claim. His final observation concerns the comprehensive character of Scripture. The authority of the Bible increases greatly when one remembers that it tells all that God requires of man in order that he might be saved, and that he know the comprehensive law of life. Morris concluded saying,

The complete authority of God stands behind each particular requirement in the sacred series: the full potency of this supreme personality pours itself into the very least of these commandments. He is himself, in his totality, revealed in every article of belief, and in each mandatory precept each gracious promise, each judicial warning. Hence the force and worth of the remarkably strong declaration of the Symbols on this vital point,—a declaration which more fully than any found in any other creed of Protestantism, exalts Holy Scripture in both aspects as the rule of faith and the rule of obedience universal, perpetual and perfect.³⁷

Christ and the Bible

Another issue in Biblical authority considered by the authors of the Confession was the relationship between Christ and the Bible. Jack Rogers observed that, to the authors of the Confession, "Christ and the Scriptures are so identified that to believers they are the one Word of God."³⁸

Bishop Reynolds was clear about the identity between Christ and the Word. He observed that Christ frequently honored the gospel with His

³⁷Edward E. Morris, Theology of the Westminster Symbols (Cincinnati, OH: The Faculty of Lane Seminary, 1911), pp. 106-08.

³⁸Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 313.

title and attributes. Therefore, the author of Hebrews spoke of Christ and the Word as one and the same. Heb. 4:12, 13 reads

The word of God is quick and powerful, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature which is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do. [Emphasis added.]

Reynolds observed that the term 'Word' in the first verse, is 'Christ himself' in the second verse. Therefore, some scholars have taken "Word" as used above for the person of Christ. For another proof, the bishop used Gal. 3:1. There Paul says that Christ was crucified among the Galatians. But He was actually crucified in Jerusalem. The solution is that He was crucified in His person at Jerusalem and crucified at Galatia in the ministry of His Word. The same crucifixion that was set forth in Paul's preaching was really acted out in Christ's person, for Christ is as present to His church today in the spiritual dispensation of His ordinances, as He was physically present with the Jews in the time of his flesh. Reynolds concluded,

And therefore I say it is, that we find the same attributes given to both: "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i.24); and the gospel elsewhere "the power of God" (Rom. i.16), and "the wisdom of God in a mystery" (1 Cor. ii.6, 7) to them that are perfect. Again, "Christ the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. ii.8), and the gospel "the gospel of glory" (1 Tim. i.11), or the glorious gospel. "Christ the prince of life" (Acts iii.15), yea, "the word of life" (1 John i.1), and the gospel "the word of life" (Phil. ii.16) too.³⁹

The authors of the Confession did not have a great deal to say about this topic, nor did they incorporate this concept into the Westminster Confession, however the strength of Reynolds declaration and its

³⁹Reynolds, Whole Works, 2:124-25. The original incorrectly cites Gal. 2:1 instead of Gal. 3:1 as corrected above. Reynolds' capitalization does not match that of the King James Bible he quoted from.

numerous biblical proofs, implies some support for the position in the Westminster Assembly.

The relationship between Christ and the Scriptures is included in the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony. Section 1c speaks of the "written word of God" which has been "spoken into being by the Son, the living Word of God." These statements show a relationship between Christ and the Bible and strongly imply that the Testimony supports the view that the Scriptures have the attributes of Christ. The position of the Testimony needs to be understood in the light of section 1e which says, "the Scripture is the final word of God to men for faith and life."

Neo-orthodoxy and the Confession

There have been attempts to interpret the Westminster Confession in a neo-orthodox manner. John Murray, former professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary said that Confession does not allow a neo-orthodox interpretation. First, his summary of the Barthian position will be briefly considered, and then his view of the Westminster Confession sections 4 and 5. In the following quotation Murray concluded that Karl Barth and the neo-orthodox school that follows him separate the Bible and God's authority.

It is apparent, therefore, that for the Barthian the authority-imparting factor is not Scripture as an existing corpus of truth given by God to man by a process of revelation and inspiration in past history, not the divine quality and character which Scripture inherently possesses, but something else that must be distinguished from any past action and from any resident quality. The issue must not be obscured. Barth does not hold and cannot hold that Scripture possesses binding and ruling authority by reason of what it is objectively, inherently

and qualitatively.⁴⁰

Murray observed that the position of the Bible as the authoritative revelation of God held by the Westminster Confession is

not only in conflict with the current view of Scripture as the witness to revelation; it is also the corrective to what, mistakenly, is sometimes said, that Scripture is to a large extent the record of revelation and not directly revelation. It is true that Scripture provides us with the history of revelation. But even when it records for us the revelatory data given in past ages, it is the inscripturated record and, because inscripturated, takes on the character that inscripturation as a distinct mode of revelation and the final mode of revelation imparts to it.⁴¹

Murray's comments must be taken in the light of what has been said above concerning God as the author of the Bible and its standing as the Word of God. Against Barthianism the Confession teaches that authority comes from God to man through the Scriptures. The Scriptures therefore possess God's binding and ruling authority. The Confession also teaches that the Scriptures are inspired, and that inspiration is limited to the writers of the sacred books, not given to their readers. As will be seen below, the Holy Spirit works to illumine the readers and hearers of the Word.

As was stated above, the Testimony added clear statements to the Confession rejecting neo-orthodoxy in sections 1e, 1f and 1g. These say that the Bible is the both the Word of God because of its inspiration, and the final Word of God because it is the source of men's knowledge of Christ. It also affirms the objective truth of Scripture and denies that

⁴⁰John Murray, "The Attestation of Scripture," in The Infallible Word, ed. N. B. Stonehouse and Paul Woolley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), p. 42.

⁴¹John Murray, "The Theology of the Westminster Confession," in Scripture and Confession, ed. John H. Skilton (n. p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1973), p. 128.

the authority of the message is dependent on the subjective experience of the reader.

Section 5, the Testimony of the Church
and the Holy Spirit to Scripture

CONFESSION

5a. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doeth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

1 Tim. 3:15; 1 John 2:20, 27; John 16:13-14; 1 Cor. 2:10-12; Isa. 59:21.

TESTIMONY

5b. The truthfulness of God, and not the reasonableness of any doctrine, is the ground of our faith. It is the work of the gospel to cast down reasonings against the knowledge of God, and to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

1 Cor. 2:15; 2 Cor. 10:5.

5c. We reject the view that the Bible sets forth truth in the form of myth.

The Church and the Scriptures

The authors of the Confession were faced with a Roman Church that taught the Scriptures were to be believed on the basis of the church's authority. This made church a higher authority than Scripture. The authors of the Confession wished to avoid this error, while at the same time admitting that the church influenced men to a high esteem for the Bible. They did this by admitting the good influence of the church's witness to the Bible's truth, while insisting that the full persuasion of

truth came by the Word and the Spirit working together in the hearts of men. This dissertation will now examine the views of authors of the Confession on the testimony of the church to Scriptures, and their views on the testimony of the Spirit to the Scriptures.

The authors of the Confession viewed the relationship between the Bible and church as follows: They began section 5 by observing that the testimony of the church can and frequently does move men to a high regard for Scripture. They thus recognized the church as the means by which many are introduced to Scripture.

The authors of the Confession did not expend much ink discussing the relationship of the church and the Scripture. However, Professor Rutherford supported the Confession by seeing the church's authority as a means and motive for believing the Bible to be the Word of God. He said that the church's authority was not the formal reason why he believed the Scripture to be the Word of God, "but the Churches authoritie is not excluded from being a meane and motive;" for, since faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17), Christ was the formal reason for Rutherford's faith, and he rested on Christ because He is Christ.⁴²

The Westminster Divines saw the witness of the church to the Bible as a means that God uses to introduce some men to the Bible but not a source of the Bible's authority. The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony is silent on this point signifying its agreement with the Confession.

⁴²Samuel Rutherford, A Sermon Preached to the Honorable House of Commons: At Their Late Solemnē Fast, Wednesday, Janu. 31. 1643 (London: Richard Whittakers & Andrew Crooke, 1644), p. 32.

The Witness of the Spirit and Scripture

While there is no certain proof, some evidence implies that section 1a was based on a writing of George Gillespie's. He wrote,

The Scripture is known to be indeed the word of God, by the beams of divine authority which it hath in itself, and by certain distinguishing characters, which do infallibly prove it to be the word of God; such as the heavenliness of the matter; the majesty of the style; the irresistible power over the conscience; the general scope, to abase man and to exalt God; nothing driven at but God's glory and man's salvation; . . . the marvelous consent of all parts and passages (though written by divers and several penmen), even where there is some appearance of difference; . . . these, and the like, are characters and marks which evidence the Scriptures to be the word of God; yet all these cannot beget in the soul a full persuasion of faith that the Scriptures are the word of God; this persuasion is from the Holy Ghost in our hearts. And it hath been the common resolution of sound Protestant writers (though now called in question by the sceptics of this age) that these arguments and infallible characters in the Scripture itself, which most certainly prove it to be the word of God, cannot produce a certainty of persuasion in our hearts, but this is done by the Spirit of God within us, according to these scriptures, 1 Cor. ii.10-15; 1 Thess. i.5; 1 John ii.27; v. 6-8, 10; John vi.45.⁴³

While the immediate source was probably Gillespie, this section expresses views that go back to John Calvin. Calvin stated that the Word could not be effectual without the Spirit moving in men's hearts. Robert C. Johnson summarized Calvin's position as follows,

As God alone is a sufficient witness to himself in his own word, so the Word will never be effective in the heart of men until it is confirmed by the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. At this point the Westminster Confession is true to Calvin in insisting that the relationship of the church and the individual to the Bible has a

⁴³George Gillespie, A Treatise of Miscellany Questions; Wherein Many Useful Questions and Cases of Conscience are Discussed and Resolved, for the Satisfaction of Those Who Desire Nothing More than to Search for and Find Out Precious Truths in the Controversies of these Times (Edinburgh: Printed by George Lithgow for George Swintoun, 1649; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 1, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), pp. 105-06. While this work was first published in 1649, George Gillespie died in 1648. Given the nature of this work, it is probable that the above quotation was written before the Confession section.

personal dimension.⁴⁴

Namely, the Holy Spirit bearing witness in men's hearts.

James Ussher followed Calvin in insisting that the Holy Spirit was necessary for the Scripture to be effectual. He declared in a question and answer format,

Are these motives of themselves sufficient to work saving faith, and persuade us fully to rest on Gods Word?

No; besides all this, it is required, that wee have the Spirit of God, as well to open our eyes to see the light, as to seale up fully into our hearts that truth which we see with our eyes: for the same holy Spirit that inspired the Scripture (1 Cor. 2.10. & 14.37. Ephes. 1.13.) inclineth the hearts of Gods children to beleeve what is revealed in them, and inwardly assureth them above all reasons and arguments, that these are the Scriptures of God.⁴⁵

The evidence presented above shows that early Reformed theology taught that the work of the Holy Spirit was necessary to bring men to a belief in spiritual truths, and thus laid a basis for the Confession's position.

The teaching of the Westminster Confession with respect to the relationship between Word and Spirit is of great importance. This was true in the seventeenth century when the Westminster Divines battled the Sectarians who believed that there were revelations of the Spirit outside of Scripture and today when the neo-orthodox attempt to separate the Word from revelation. This dissertation will consider the teachings of three authors of the Confession on the relationship of the Bible and the Holy Spirit beginning with Thomas Gataker.

Thomas Gataker, an English pastor and a prolific writer, helped

⁴⁴Robert C. Johnson, Authority in Protestant Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), pp. 55-56.

⁴⁵Ussher, Body of Divinitie, pp. 11-12.

write the Confession. He saw clearly that the Holy Spirit alone was not sufficient for belief, but the Word was also necessary. For the Word gave a message that the Spirit worked "by and with." In response to the question of whether one could believe from the Spirit alone, Gataker replied, "No Sir, none can believe from the Spirit, but those alone that believe from Gods word."⁴⁶

Samuel Rutherford also taught this view in his polemics against the Antinomians. He observed that the Antinomians taught that the Word must be tried by the Spirit, and not the Spirit by the Word. He quoted the Antinomians who said, "All doctrines, revelations and spirits are to be tryed by Christ the Word, rather then by the Word of Christ." To disprove this position, Rutherford appealed to Christ, who, even though He was the Son of God, was content that the Jews use Scripture to judge Him and to decide controversies. He listed John 5:39; Acts 17:11; 24:14, 15; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; and Matt. 22:29-33 as proofs.⁴⁷ From these proofs Rutherford concluded that the Word tests the Spirit, and thus is the source of the Spirit's teachings.

Rutherford is also helpful on understanding the Confession's position on how Word and Spirit work together. The preached Word is the instrument of the Holy Spirit, not the author or efficient cause of conversion. The Word is not the object of faith, but the intervening means or medium of faith. The Word is human and literal, but the thing signified by it, Christ and faith, is supernatural, and is conveyed to the soul by

⁴⁶Gataker, Shadowes without Substance, p. 72.

⁴⁷Rutherford, Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist, pt. 1, p. 23.

the operation of the Spirit acting above the letter in a supernatural manner. The action of the Spirit is immediate in the sense that the Spirit comes after the Word and infuses faith. (The Word here is spoke of as preparing and informing the external man.) Also, the work of the Spirit is mediate in the sense that

the Spirit worketh with the word, so as in one and the same act, the Spirit opens the heart to heare and receive what is carryed along in the letter of the word, and so the Spirit worketh mediately, not immediately.⁴⁸

Samuel Rutherford gave the following illustration to show how the Spirit credibility depends on the Word. Rutherford wrote, the truth of the Spirit's speaking is not based on the Word, but the weight one gives to the Spirit depends on the Word. He wrote that one knows the Spirit by the Word as one knows the body of the Sun by its light. One does not know the Word by the Spirit as one cannot know the light by the substance of the Sun's body. He concluded, "the word of Prophecie is surer to us then the Fathers voiced from heaven, 2 Pet. 1."⁴⁹

From Edward Reynolds' discussion of steps to salvation great insight is gained into the roles of Word and Spirit in the lives of Christians. Reynolds saw the Word as the instrument by which the Spirit becomes effective. The Spirit gave the Word and transforms men into the image of the Word. He asked how can the Spirit, by use of the commandment, convict men of their state of sin? First by quickening and putting an edge on the instrumental cause, which is the sword of the Spirit. The word is a dead letter, it is only effectual as the Spirit puts life and

⁴⁸Ibid., pt. 1, p. 25.

⁴⁹Ibid., pt. 2, p. 89.

power into it. Secondly, the Spirit transforms the spirit of man into the image of the Word of God, bringing the heart to fear God and writing His Law on men's hearts. As the moon illumines part of earth by reflecting the sun's light, so the church, though absent from the Lord, is illuminated by God's Spirit working by means of the word. As the sun and moon must work together to illuminate the dark places of earth, so the Word and Spirit must work together. The Spirit does not convert, and the Word cannot convert, but the Spirit working by the Word as its sword and instrument converts. Reynolds concluded,

So then when the Spirit turns a man's eye inward, to see the truth of the Word written in his own heart,--makes him put his seal unto it,--frameth the will to search, acknowledge and judge the worst of itself,--to subscribe unto the righteousness of God in condemning sin, and him for it,--to take the office of the Word, and pass that sentence upon itself, which the Word doth,--then doth the Word spiritually 'convince' of sin.⁵⁰

Reynolds continued his discussion of Word and Spirit when he discussed how the two help believers to see Christ. If Christ is the king, believers must trust in Him. Since Christ is absent from human senses, believers need faith in their hearts to see Christ present by His Spirit, and to seal the truth, majesty and authority of His commands. The Lord is heard speaking from heaven by the revelations of the Spirit out of the Word, giving proofs of His living by God's power, and speaking in the ministry of his Word to our consciences.⁵¹

According to Reynolds, the Holy Spirit used conviction as the method of making the Word effectual, "for all, which the Word bringeth to

⁵⁰Reynolds, Whole Works, 1:231-32.

⁵¹Ibid., 2:21-22.

pass, it doth it by the conviction of the Spirit." Reynolds divided conviction into two parts, the first was "conviction unto conversion." In it the men's sinful hearts were overruled by the evidence of the Spirit of truth, to realize their sinful condition. The second part was the terror of the Lord which persuaded men to accept any deliverance from their sinful estate.⁵²

With the Confession, Reynolds calls the Spirit of God a "witness" to the Word. He wrote, "The Holy Ghost is compared unto a 'witness,' whose proper work it is to reveal and affirm some truth, which is called in question." Adding that men are often afflicted by doubts and rebellion from Satan and yet are comforted by the Spirit, he continued,

In this case, the spirit of a man . . . staggereth, droopeth, and is much distressed: till at last the Spirit of God, by the light of the Word, the testimony of conscience, and the sensible motion of inward grace, layeth open our title, and helpeth us to read the evidence of it, and thus recomposeth our troubled thoughts.⁵³

It is clear that the authors of the Confession believed that the Word and the Spirit worked together in men's hearts. While there is abundant objective evidence for the truth of the Bible, men cannot be fully persuaded of it unless the Spirit moves in their hearts. Edward Reynolds concisely explained their relationship as follows: "For the causes of faith . . . the ordinary are the Word of God, and the Spirit of God: the Word as the seed, and the Spirit as the formative and seminal virtue, making it active and effectual."⁵⁴ Word and Spirit are united in causing

⁵²Ibid., 2:133-34.

⁵³Ibid., 3:137.

⁵⁴Ibid., 3:133.

faith. The Spirit sends the Word, and makes it effectual in the hearts of men. The Word tests the spirits, and furnishes the objective content of revelation.

The Testimony again indicates agreement with the Confession by silence. The addition of section 5b on reason needs some explanation. Before the Testimony quoted in this dissertation was written, there was another edition that was not written in parallel columns with the Confession. Instead it was written in a form similar to the Westminster Confession. One responsibility of the Testimony Revision Committee was to incorporate all parts of the Old Testimony in the new. Section 5b is from the old Testimony's section on reason, which was originally aimed at the rationalism of the French Revolution.⁵⁵ This section simply states that God is the author of doctrine, and the reasonableness of any doctrine is not a factor in the Christian's responsibility to believe. Testimony section 5c will be discussed below with contemporary theology.

With respect to the Confession and contemporary theology, John Murray observed the Westminster Confession teaches that the Holy Spirit is not an authority. Scripture is the authority. This is in contrast to the neo-orthodox who appeal to section 5 of the Confession for support that the revelations of the Holy Spirit are authoritative. If Murray is correct, what is the relation of Scripture and Spirit? Since the authority of Scripture resides in its character as the Word of God, what persuades men of its authority? In section 5 this persuasion is defined as coming from the Holy Spirit. Section 5 concludes, "our full persuasion

⁵⁵Interview with Testimony Revision Committee.

and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts." Note that this says "persuasion and assurance" of authority, and not source of authority. Murray wrote,

In one word, Scripture is authoritative because God is its author and he is its author because, as is stated in Section II, it was given by inspiration of God. Nothing could be plainer than this: that the Confession represents the authority of Scripture as resting not upon the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit but upon the inspiration of the Spirit, a finished activity by which, it is clearly stated, the sixty-six books enumerated were produced and in virtue of which they are the Word of God written.⁵⁶

The authors of the Testimony chose not to deal with neo-orthodoxy under this heading. Instead they choose to address the historical-critical method. The Testimony rejects the teaching that the Bible or the stories in it (except parables and similar literary forms) are myths, that is, forms that contain truth without fact. This is a rejection of the liberalism of Rudolph Bultmann and others that considers historical passages, such as Genesis 3, to be myth rather than history.⁵⁷ This rejection shows the Reformed Presbyterian belief in the historicity of the Scriptures.

Inerrancy in the Westminster Confession

Jack Rogers' dissertation on the Westminster Confession doctrine of Scripture caused a major controversy. Particularly controversial was his conclusion that the Westminster Confession did not teach inerrancy. He stated his conclusion as follows:

The question of the errancy or inerrancy of the Scripture is one which

⁵⁶Murray, "Attestation of Scripture," pp. 43-44.

⁵⁷Interview with Testimony Revision Committee.

is strange to the Westminster Divines. . . . To contend that the Westminster Confession teaches the inerrancy of the Scripture because it does not assert that there are errors in the Scripture is to impose a modern problem on a pre-scientific statement. . . . Thus in an ahistorical manner, the Westminster Confession is still drawn into a controversy to which its authors were not a party. Certainly the Westminster Divines believed, and the Confession states, that the Bible is true and infallible. But to equate these terms with the modern concept of inerrancy is to impose upon the Westminster Confession criteria for proof and apologetic implications which had no place in their thinking.⁵⁸

While Rogers is correct that the authors of the Confession did not have a notion of inerrancy determined by a reaction to liberalism, as defined, for example, by the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy,⁵⁹ the evidence below shows that authors of the Confession believed that there were no errors in the Bible.

The first argument that authors of the Confession believed in the inerrancy centers around the definition of "infallible," a word used twice in Chapter 1 of the Confession, in Section 5 in the phrase "assurance of the infallible truth," and in Section 9, in the phrase, "the infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture itself." Rogers discussed infallibility, when he considered Section 9 of the Confession, but failed to define the term.⁶⁰

The first source in the quest for infallibility's definition is the Oxford English Dictionary. It is clear from this source that infallible and inerrant were synonymous in the seventeenth century. The definition of "infallibility" reads "1. The quality or fact of being

⁵⁸Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, pp. 305-07.

⁵⁹A copy of this document is found in Norman L. Geisler, ed., Inerrancy, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), pp. 493-502.

⁶⁰Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 416.

infallible or exempt from liability to err." The references included the following examples:

1611 Bible Transl. Pref. 8 Men..priuiledged with the priuiledge of infallibilitie. 1624 Gataker Transubst. 110 The Pope setting in his Chaire,..may yet err for all his infallibility so much and so oft bragged of.⁶¹

The quotation of Thomas Gataker above is particularly significant as he was a member of the Westminster Assembly committee that wrote the Westminster Confession.

The definition of "infallible" is as follows:

1. Of persons, their judgments, etc.: Not liable to be deceived or mistaken; incapable of erring. 2. Of things: Not liable to fail, unailing. a. Not liable to prove false, erroneous, or mistaken; that unailingly holds good.

The references included the following examples:

1643 Sir T. Browne Relig. Med. II. # 9 If General Councells may erre, I doe not see why particular Courts should be infallible. 1654 tr. Scudery's Curia Pol. 73 That Maxime is infallible, that what is just, is honourable.⁶²

For the sake of completeness, the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of "inerrancy" will also be considered. Since the term "inerrant" was only used for astronomy in the seventeenth century and the term "inerrancy" is not listed as being used until the nineteenth century, the definitions of the earlier forms, "inerrability" and "inerrable," will be considered. The definitions for the four forms are basically the same. The following examples are very important in understanding the relationship between inerrant and infallible. The definition of inerrability is

⁶¹The Oxford English Dictionary, 13 vols. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1933), 5:249.

⁶²Ibid.

Freedom from liability to err; infallibility. 1627 H. Burton Baiting Pope's Bull 84 You are perswaded of the Popes inerrability.

The definition of inerrable is

Incapable of erring; not liable to err; exempt from the possibility of error; infallible, unerring. 1613 Jackson Creed II.xxiv.#6, Such a facile, inerrable rule as the Papists haue famed for direction in points of faith.⁶³

The definitions of "infallible" and "inerrant" clearly show that the words are synonymous. They also show a common usage of the terms with respect to the infallibility or inerrancy of the papacy. These conclusions should be kept in mind as the following quotations, taken from authors of the Confession and James Ussher and using the word "infallible," are considered below. The majority of these quotations were chosen to show from context that infallible means inerrant and/or fallible meant errant. Other quotations were chosen to show that the Bible has God's attributes such as perfection and truth, which also imply inerrancy.

James Ussher, a major source for the theology of the Westminster Confession, answered the question of how the Bible, written by fallible men, could be accounted the Word of God by saying,

Because it proceeds not from the wit or mind of men, but holy men set apart by God for the work of God spake and writ as they were moved by the holy Ghost; therefore God alone is to be counted the Author therof, who inspired the hearts of those holy men whom he chose to be his Secretaries, who are to be held only the Instrumentall cause thereof.⁶⁴

This explanation implies that the perfect God who makes no errors wrote the perfect (inerrant) Bible, and a dictation theory of inspiration, which by its nature implies inerrancy.

⁶³Ibid., 5:242-43.

⁶⁴Ussher, Body of Divinitie, pp. 7-8.

Cornelius Burges, an author of the Confession, used "infallibility" and "impossibility to err" as synonymous in the following passage, thus showing that infallible was used to mean inerrant. He wrote, "But was not this the Mother of all that mischiefe now befallen, that once famous Church of Rome . . . at first conceiued, and at length brought forth that prodigious blasphemy of impossibility to erre." In a note to this passage he discussed the first theologian who "vndertook expresly and professedly to maintaine the infallibilitie of the Popes iudgement."⁶⁵

In a second passage Burges also used infallible to describe the Pope. He wrote papists "must condemne that, which their Infallible supreme Pastor hath pronounced (not as a private fact, but even) ex Cathedra, out of his judiciary Tribunall to be warrantable and necessarie."⁶⁶

As an application of the infallibility/inerrancy of the Bible, Burges appealed to it as a dependable source of truth. He said,

My next worke is to make good the point in hand, by Diuine and infallible Testimony of Holy Writt. And this is that foundation only, which I build vpon, for prooffe of the Proposition. If any shall convince me to haue failed in this, I would for euer abandon this opinion, (although it should be with perill of life,) what euer all the men and Churches in the world should professe, and bind me to beleue to the contrary.⁶⁷

It is clear that Rev. Burges used infallible as a synonym for inerrant.

⁶⁵Cornelius Burges, The Fire of the Sanctuarie Newly Uncovered, Or A Compleat Tract of Zeale (London: Printed by George Miller and Richard Badger, 1625), p. 54.

⁶⁶Cornelius Burges, Another Sermon Preached to the Honorable House of Commons Now Assembled in Parliament, November the Fifth, 1641 (London: Printed by R. B. for P. Stephens and C. Meridith, 1641), p. 34.

⁶⁷Cornelius Burges. Baptismall Regeneration of Elect Infants, Professed by the Church of England, According to the Scriptures, and Primitive Church, the Present Reformed Churches and Many Particular Divines Apart (Oxford: Printed by I. L. for Henry Curteyn, 1629), p. 70.

Samuel Rutherford's comments about infallibility also show that he used infallible as a synonym for inerrant. The first quotation concerns the infallibility of the papacy, a subject where, as the Oxford English Dictionary showed above, the terms infallible and inerrability were used interchangeably. Rutherford declared, "the man must make the king more infallible than the Pope; for the Pope, as a man, can err;--as a Pope he cannot err, say papists."⁶⁸

In the next quotation, Rutherford used the Confession's phrase, "infallible truth," in a context where "not infallible" means "may err." Rutherford's point is that the "liars" whom God chose to be apostles and prophets were kept from error when they were inspired by the Spirit to write the Bible. Rutherford wrote,

Yea the fallible church may determine infallible points. This is a principle that Libertines preceed upon, that men who are not infallible may erre, and therefore can hold forth to others no infallible truth. Which is most false, for Prophets and Apostles, Nathan, Samuel, David, Peter being deserted of the immediately inspiring Spirit did erre as well as the Church and Pastors now deserted of the ordinary Spirit can and doe erre. For all men Prophets and Apostles are lyars, Rom. 3 yet they may and doe carrie infallible truth to others a blind man may hold an candle to others.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Samuel Rutherford, Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince; a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People: Containing the Reasons and Causes of the Most Necessary Defensive Wars of the Kingdom of Scotland, and of Their Expedition for the Aid and Help of Their Dear Brethren of England (London: John Field, 1644; reprint ed., in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 3. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1843), p. 150.

⁶⁹Samuel Rutherford, A Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience Tending to Resolve Doubts Moved by Mr. John Goodwin, John Baptist, Dr. Jer. Taylor, the Belgick Arminians, Socinians, and Other Authors Contending for Lawlesse Liberty, or Licentious Toleration of Sects and Heresies (London: Printed by R. I. for Andrew Crook, 1649), pp. 24-25.

In the next quotation Rutherford used both "fallible" and "infallible" a context where the terms "erroneous" and "inerrant" would be used today by an evangelical to explain why there seem to be errors in the Bible. In addition to the linguistic evidence, note Rutherford's goal of defending the Bible from charges that it contains errors.

Whereas the meanes of conveying the things beleevd may be fallible, as writing, printing, translating, speaking, are all fallible meanes of conveying the truth of old and new Testament to us, and yet the Word of GOD in that which is delivered to us is infallible, 1. For let the Printer be fallible, 2. The translation fallible. 3. The grammar fallible. 4. The man that readeth the word or publisheth it fallible, yet this hindereth not but the truth it self contained in the written word of God is infallible . . .⁷⁰

The next quotation from Rutherford shows that the believer in the visible church "is thus farre infallible that in 1 fundamentall, 2 necessary for salvation they cannot, 3 finally and totally, erre and fall from faith."⁷¹ This sentence says that men can have inerrant knowledge from the Bible, implying its accuracy.

The authors of the Confession used the term infallible in two senses. One sense was the believer's assurance of salvation as in the above quotation. The other kind of infallibility was given to the writers of the Bible by inspiration. Samuel Rutherford in particular believed that the Bible had a superior inerrancy to the certainty of belief that the average Christian had. Rutherford said,

. . . there is a twofold infallibility: now, though beleevers have not that infallibility proper to Prophets and Apostles, in prophesying and writing Scripture, yet must we not runne to the other extremity, and say as these that fight for Liberty of conscience, that there is not, since the Prophets and Apostles fell asleep, any infallible

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 362.

⁷¹Rutherford, Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist, pt. 1, p. 278.

perswasion and certainty of faith; but all our knowledge is conjecturall . . .⁷²

Since it has been established that Samuel Rutherford used the term "infallible" to mean "inerrant," George Gillespie's use of "infallible" will now be examined. First, his use of the term with respect to the papacy will be considered. Gillespie said the Pope "claimeth infallibility, at least ex cathedra."⁷³ Gillespie also used the following argument to show that infallibility was impossible for the Pope and that he could err:

It is a good argument: He is a wicked man, a covetous man, a proud man, a carnal man, an unhumbl'd man; therefore he will readily miscarry in his judgment. So divines have argued against the Pope's infallibility! The Pope hath been, and may be a profane man; therefore he may err in his judgment and decrees.⁷⁴

Gillespie also taught that men could know biblical truths infallibly, that is without error. He said,

Beware of those new lights which not only refuse to admit some certain truths, but refuse to admit any truth now held or professed in the reformed churches, as sure, and certain, and infallible; as if, because men's judgments are not infallible, but subject or error, therefore we cannot be sure, nor infallibly persuaded, of this or that article. The holy Scripture will teach us, that believers may attain to a certain and infallible knowledge of some truths; for it was no impossible thing that Paul prayed for, when he prayed that the Colossians might have "all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father,

⁷²Ibid., pt. 1, pp. 277-78.

⁷³George Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming; or The Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated (London: Printed by E. G. for Richard Whitaker, 1646; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armory, vol. 1, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), p. 83.

⁷⁴George Gillespie, A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons at Their Late Solemn Fast, Wednesday, March 27, 1644 (London: Printed for Robert Bostock, 1644; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armory, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), p. 10.

and of Christ."⁷⁵

George Gillespie also used the term "infallible" to mean inerrant in his discussion of the role of civil synods in church matters, saying if ecclesiastical national synods can err, than civil synods are even more apt to err in religious matters. His statement follows:

. . . for who seeth not the judgment of the supreme civil senate to be nothing more infallible, yea, also, in matters of faith and ecclesiastical discipline, more apt and prone to error (as being less accustomed to sacred studies) than the judgment of the national synod?⁷⁶

Another source of evidence for George Gillespie's belief in inerrancy is his confidence in the historicity of the Bible. This follows from his belief that the chronology of the Bible is accurate. He said,

When Scripture saith that such a thing was done at such a time, it must be so believed; but when Scripture mentioneth one thing after another, that will not prove that the thing last mentioned was last done.⁷⁷

Edward Reynolds is the final member of the Confession writing committee whose writings will be examined concerning his definition of infallibility. He saw infallibility as attribute of God, that was passed on to Scripture resulting in "every supernatural truth" being for men's belief. His wrote,

1. That God in his authority is infallible, who neither can be deceived, nor can deceive. 2. That the things, delivered in holy Scriptures are the dictates and truths, which that infallible authority hath delivered unto the church to be believed; and therefore that

⁷⁵Gillespie, Treatise of Miscellany Questions, p. 55.

⁷⁶George Gillespie, One Hundred and Eleven Propositions concerning the Ministry and Government of the Church (London: Evan Tyler, 1647; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armory, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), p. 19.

⁷⁷Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 206.

every supernatural truth, there plainly set down 'in terminis,' is an unquestionable principle; and everything, by evident consequence and deduction from thence derived, is therefore an undoubted conclusion in theological and divine knowledge.⁷⁸

In the next passage Reynolds also linked infallibility to God, seeing it as part of God's character, and adding that God cannot lie or deceive. The relationship of revelation to God implies that it must be accurate, totally without error. The context of this passage teaches that before believers could yield their assent to the doctrines of Christianity, they must be convinced of two principles,

First, That God is of infallible authority, and cannot lie nor deceive: which thing is a principle, unto which the light of nature doth willingly assent. And, secondly, That this authority, which in faith I thus rely upon, is, indeed and infallibly, God's own authority. The means whereby I come to know that, may be either extraordinary, as revelation, such as was made to prophets concerning future events; or else ordinary and common to all the faithful.⁷⁹

Whether by direct revelation like visions, or by the more common means of the Bible, Reynolds believed that God accurately revealed His will and the believer could know it inerrantly.

In the section of the Confession quoted above, the phrase "infallible truth" was used. This phrase implies that the truth found in the Bible is of a particularly pure kind. In a very important selection Edward Reynolds discussed assent as being based on evidence of or the authority of a narrator. Note his stress that the source of faith must be true because it shares God's properties of truth, "which are certainty and evidence." These properties imply inerrancy. Reynolds said, the assent of faith is grounded on the authority and trustworthiness of a

⁷⁸Reynolds, Whole Works, 6:286.

⁷⁹Ibid., 3:142-43.

narrator, upon whom believers must rely without any direct evidence. He continued,

Now that faith is a certain assent, and that even above the certainty of mere natural conclusions, is, on all hands, I think, confessed: because, however in regard of our weakness and distrust, we are often subject to stagger, yet, in the thing itself, it dependeth upon the infallibility of God's own Word, who hath said it, and is, by consequence, nearer unto Him who is the fountain of all truth; and therefore must needs more share in the properties of truth, which are certainty and evidence, than any proved by mere natural reasons: and the assent, produced by it, is differenced from suspicion, hesitancy, dubitation, in the opinion of schoolmen themselves. Now then inasmuch as we are bound to yield an evident assent unto divine truths, necessary hereunto it is, that the understanding be convinced of these two things:--First, That God is of infallible authority, and cannot lie nor deceive,--which thing is a principle by the light of nature evident and unquestioned: Secondly, That this authority, which, in faith, I rely upon, is indeed and infallibly God's own authority.⁸⁰

The last evidences from Reynolds are quotations which shown his use of infallibility to mean inerrancy with respect to the claims of Rome. He said,

How shall it invincibly appear to my conscience, that other churches and bishops all, save this only door, may err? and that this, which will have me to believe her infallibility, is not herself an heretical and revolted church? . . . that Peter did there sit as moderator of the catholic church; that his infallibility should not stick to his chair at Antioch, as well as to that at Rome . . .⁸¹

Edward Reynolds, along with the other authors of the Confession, believed that the Bible was inerrant as was shown above by the meaning of the word infallible, their use of infallible in contexts where it meant inerrant, and by their view of Scripture as the product of a perfect God, who had given some of His attributes, such as truth and perfection, to His Word. The combined evidence of these points leads one to conclude

⁸⁰Ibid., 1:459.

⁸¹Ibid.. 1:462.

that the authors of the Confession believed strongly in the inerrancy of the Bible. This notion of inerrancy differs somewhat from the modern viewpoint in that it is not stated in terms that were conditioned by controversy with liberals or moderates, instead it was conditioned by controversy concerning the Roman notion of papal infallibility. However, and this point must be emphasized, the authors of the Confession, held with great tenacity to the core of the inerrancy doctrine, namely, that the Bible contained no errors in any field of knowledge. They based their belief on the character of God, who was for them the author of Scripture.

The authors of the Testimony were aware of the modern inerrancy controversy, including that surrounding the Westminster Confession. In 1f, a paragraph loaded with all the "right" words, the Testimony Revision Committee said, "God gave his written revelation progressively by holy men whom he chose, and inspired and infallibly guided to write inerrantly and completely the revelation of his will." (Emphasis added.) The targets of this paragraph were not liberals, but theologians somewhat in the evangelical tradition such as Jack Rogers and some faculty members at Fuller Seminary.⁸² The Testimony also performed a valuable function by defining inerrancy. In Section 6b the Testimony states that the Bible, as originally given, did not contain "any inaccuracy in fact or history."⁸³

⁸²Interview with Testimony Revision Committee.

⁸³The Testimony's definition of inerrancy is important because evangelicals have been criticized for not defining inerrancy. Two examples of this criticism are Berkeley Mickelsen, "The Bible's Own Approach to Authority," in *Biblical Authority*, ed. Jack Rogers (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1977), pp. 84-87, and Michael Bauman, "Why the Noninerrantists Are Not Listening: Six Tactical Errors Evangelicals Commit," Journal of the

Summary

Both the Westminster Confession and the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony hold to two forms of revelation, natural and special revelation. While natural revelation is sufficient to leave men unexcusable, it is not sufficient to lead them to salvation, hence, written revelation is necessary. The Testimony makes a point of emphasizing the harmony between the two forms of revelation, and also teaches that Jesus, the living Word, is only known through the Scriptures, and, thus, they are the final Word of God.

The Confession and Testimony also agree on the content of the traditional Protestant canon, and hold the Apocryphal books to be uninspired documents. The Confession gives inspiration as the criteria for inclusion in the canon, meaning that the books are given by God. While the Confession does not define inspiration, the Testimony accepts the modern evangelical position of plenary inspiration. It also rejects views of inspiration held by followers of the historical-critical method. The authorship of the Bible is another area of agreement. Because the Bible was written by God, God is the source of its authority, and the Bible is, therefore, the Word of God.

While men may be moved by the testimony of the church and the qualities of the Scriptures to a high opinion of the Bible, men can only be fully persuaded of its truth and authority by the work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in men's hearts. Here again

Evangelical Theological Society 29 (September 1986): 321-22. While the Testimony's definition is too brief to answer all the questions on the meaning of inerrancy, it does address key issues.

the Confession and Testimony agree. The work of the Holy Spirit was examined, and it was found that the authors of the Confession believed that the Bible gave the content of salvation and that the Spirit made it effectual.

The final issue considered in this chapter was whether Jack Rogers was correct when he claimed the Westminster Confession did not teach the inerrancy of the Bible. It was shown by dictionary definition and by the context of a number of examples chosen from the authors of the Confession, that the term "infallible" as used in the Confession means inerrant. This definition was supported by evidence that God gave His attributes to the Bible. The Testimony left no doubt of its position on inerrancy by describing God's written revelation as "inerrant." It also defined inerrancy as meaning that the Bible has no "inaccuracy in fact or history."

CHAPTER V
BIBLICAL AUTHORITY IN CHAPTER 1 OF THE WESTMINSTER
CONFESSION AND THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN
TESTIMONY, PART 2

Section 6, the Purposes, Sufficiency,
and Hermeneutics of Scripture

This section deals with the purposes and sufficiency of Scripture and introduces the subject of biblical interpretation which will be considered further in the discussion of Section 9 of the Confession. Section 6 stands at the end of a portion, Sections 2 through 6, which indicate how men know Scripture to be the Word of God. Sections 7 through 10 are concerned with how the Bible is to be used.

When the question of how far the authority of the Bible extends is asked, the question of what is the Bible sufficient for is also asked. The answer to this latter question has great implications for church doctrine and practice. Related to the sufficiency of Scripture are its purposes, whether it is a guide merely for salvation, or a manual of God's will for all activities of the church.

CONFESSION

6a. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and

government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed. 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Thess. 2:2; John 6:45; 1 Cor. 2:9-12; 1 Cor. 11:13-14; 1 Cor. 14:26, 40.

TESTIMONY

6b. We reject the view that the Bible is only partially inspired, that inspiration pertains only to "revelational" matters, or "saving" truth, or that the Bible as originally given contains any inaccuracy in fact or history.

6c. We reject the view that the Holy Spirit gives personal revelations or that he leads men apart from the general principles of the Word or contrary to its teachings.

6d. We reject the concept that there is continuing revelation of God in the actions, decisions or decrees of the church.

The Purposes of Scripture

In his book, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, Jack Rogers took the position that the Confession taught that the primary purpose of Scripture was the glorification of God in man's salvation and, therefore, it is not an encyclopedia of answers to questions. As will be seen below, both his claim and his conclusion from it have been contested. Jack Rogers stated his position as follows:

The subject of this section has often been termed the "sufficiency" or "perfection" of Scripture. The purpose for which Scripture is declared to be perfect or sufficient is the glorification of God in man's salvation. It is to that primary end that the Scripture is given. Other purposes are subordinate to and from this central one. . . . The Westminster Divines also urge that God's glorification in man's salvation is the primary purpose of Scripture. . . . The Word of God does work to other purposes than only salvation. However these other purposes are subordinated to and flow from the saving purpose of the Word. . . . Thus, the Westminster Divines certainly teach that the Scripture has application to all of life. But they make plain, as the Confession is careful to assert, the prime purpose for which Scripture is given is that men might know Christ savingly, which is to the glory of God. Flowing from this saving knowledge of the Word of God are the guidelines for man's faith and life in the broadest

possible spheres.¹

In section vi the saving content of Scripture was clearly delineated: "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life." Scripture was not an encyclopedia of answers to every sort of question for the divines. They asserted that some things are to be ordered by our natural reason and Christian prudence. Those things even included some circumstances of worship and church government.²

Rogers' position is that the primary purpose of the Bible is salvation, with the qualification that the Westminster Divines taught that the Bible has application to other areas that flow out of salvation, therefore, the Bible cannot be used as an encyclopedia for all kinds of questions. The evidence below rejects this premise, arguing that salvation was a purpose and not the purpose of Scripture. The evidence also expands the extent of Biblical authority from salvation to all matters the Bible addresses. Rogers' conclusion, that the Bible is not an encyclopedia will be considered below under the sufficiency of the Scriptures.

The refutation of Rogers' position that salvation is the primary purpose of the Bible will begin with the internal evidence of the Westminster Confession and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

Chapter 1, Section 1a of the Confession gives some purposes of God in revealing the Scriptures. Section 1a reads, It pleased God

to reveal Himself and to declare that [revelation] His will unto His Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church
 . . .

¹Jack Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966), pp. 327, 328, 329, and 331.

²Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 207.

If salvation was the main purpose, why is there no mention of it in this Section? The stress here is on God's will and truth, both of which go beyond salvation. Also the church is stressed, an institution which requires much information to manage and teach properly than merely what is necessary for salvation. If salvation was the stress of the Confession one would expect to see this section emphasize individual believers, rather than the institution of the church.

Section 5a is particularly important. In discussing the Bible it says the "scope" of the Bible is to give all glory to God. Section 5a thus teaches God's glory as the primary intent of Scripture, and salvation as a topic the Bible discusses fully. There is no hint that salvation is the primary subject, that is said to be God's glory. The Confession only says that salvation is discussed fully.

In Section 6a four purposes are listed, which Rogers tries to compress into one. The Section reads, "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for (1) His own glory, (2) man's salvation, (3) faith, (4) and life. . ." [Numeration added.] One strongly suspects that "all" things necessary for God's glory goes beyond man's salvation. Also the additions of "faith and life" to salvation imply man's relationship with God after salvation. In contradiction of Rogers, this section does not stress salvation as the purpose of the Bible.

The Bible text used by the Westminster Assembly as a proof text for this part of the Confession supports a wider purpose for Scripture than salvation. As 2 Tim. 3:15-17 reads,

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is

profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

This text is addressed to Timothy, a man who was already saved. It also says that the purposes of the Bible go beyond salvation to include all good works. The text gives salvation as the purpose for unbelievers, and gives reproof, correction, and instruction as the purposes for men of God.

Section 10 also gives a purpose of the Bible. It says,

The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, and be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

Here the Confession lists another major purpose of Scripture, the judgment of religious controversies. And religious controversies go far beyond the matters relating to salvation.

The final Assembly document to be examined is the Larger Catechism question 5 (Shorter Catechism question 3 is identical to this question).

It reads

Q. 5. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Here again, salvation is not mentioned, and the purposes mentioned, while including salvation, go far beyond salvation. It is clear that neither the Westminster Confession nor its catechisms support Rogers' position that salvation is the primary purpose of Scripture. Instead, they teach that God's glory is the primary purpose of the Bible, and that the Scriptures have as their goal the conveying of God's will to the church and to man for the purposes of preserving and propagating the truth, establishing

the church, man's salvation and sanctification, and the judging of religious disputes. The Scripture was revealed for several reasons, and there is no evidence in the Confession or Catechisms to claim that salvation is the primary purpose of the Bible.

As has been shown above, the Westminster Divines represented Puritanism. Puritans were involved in a dispute with the Anglicans over such areas as church government and worship. If the authors of the Confession had concluded and stated that the primary purpose of the Bible was salvation (the position of the Thirty-Nine Articles), they would have played into Anglican hands. The Anglicans argued that the Scriptures were authoritative only in the area of doctrine, and areas like worship and polity were to be determined by men using reason and tradition within limits set by the Bible. Had authors of the Confession said that salvation was the primary purpose of Scripture, than the Anglicans would have won a major point in their debate with the Puritans by default.

What did James Ussher and authors of the Confession consider to be the purposes of the Bible in their writings? James Ussher will speak first. Ussher found two purposes for the Bible, to teach truth and to encourage good works. He said in answer to the question, what are the uses or purposes of Scripture?

Two: First, to teach Doctrine, by laying out the Truth, and confuting errors.

Secondly, to exhort out of it, by stirring us to good, and turning us back from evill, whereunto belong those four uses mentioned by the Apostle, in 2 Tim. 3.16.³ [emphasis in original]

³James Ussher, A Body of Divinitie, or the Svmmme and Svbstance of Christian Religion (London: Printed by M. F. for Tho: Dovvnes and Geo: Badger, 1645), p. 25.

Thomas Gataker also wrote about the purposes of Scripture. In the next quotation he discussed the Bible as God's guide in moral matters. In a book examining the moral issue of gambling, he wrote,

For what is the word of God for morall things, but the perfection of true Reason, and a Summe or Body of that Law of Nature at first imprinted in mans soule?⁴

Robert Harris also believed that the purpose of the Bible went beyond salvation to man's obedience. The following quotation makes that clear:

So that obedience is a conformity to the will of God, as it is revealed, first, in his Word, whether it be in the Gospell, whereunto we owe the obedience of faith, or in the law, whereunto wee owe the obedience of fact. Secondly, in his workes. The commanding will of God is revealed in his Word: his disposing will is revealed in the acts of his providence. To the former we owe an active, to the latter passive obedience, quietly submitting to his good pleasure in all estates.⁵

George Gillespie found four purposes of Scripture in 2 Tim. 3:16-17. Not one is salvation, although it is mentioned in verse 15. He observed,

The first two are commonly referred to doctrinals, the last two practicals. The Scripture is profitable for "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If any of these be wanting, a Christian is not perfect, so much as in the

⁴Thomas Gataker, A Ivst Defence of Certaine Passages in a Former Treatise Concerning the Nature and Vse of Lots, Against Such Exceptions and Oppositions as Haue Beene Made Thereunto by Mr. I. B (London: Printed by Iohn Haviland for Robert Bird, 1623), pp. 135-36.

⁵Robert Harris, The Workes of Robert Harris, Bachelor in Divinity and Pastor of Hanwell, in Oxford-Shire. Revised and in Sundrie Places Corrected, and Now Collected into One Volume (London: Printed by R. Y. for J. Bartlet, 1635), pp. 574.

perfection of parts.⁶

The implication, of Gillespie omitting salvation as a purpose of Scripture in a passage where it is explicitly stated, is that he did not view salvation as the primary purpose of Scripture.

The final list of the purposes of Scripture comes from Samuel Rutherford. This quotation shows that Rutherford realized that the purposes of Scripture were limited. However, he found several purposes. He wrote,

. . . Scripture is our Rule, but 1. not in miraculous things. 2. Not in things temporarie, as Communitie of Goods. 3. Not in things Literally expounded [expounded], as to cut off our hands and feet. 4. Not in things of Art and Science, as to spake Latine, to demonstrate conclusions of Astronomie. 5. It is not properly our Rule in Circumstances, which are but naturall conveniences of time, place, and person, and such like. But it is our Rule 1. in fundamentalls of salvation. 2. In all moralls of both first and second table. 3. In all institutions, and wee conceive the Government of the Church to be a proper institution, to wit, it is a supernaturall ordinance, or helpe above nature to guide the Church to a supernaturall happinesse . . . 4. It is a rule in Circumstantialls of worship: Because some time some thing, as the Lord day [sic] is both worship, and a Circumstantiall of worship⁷

Rutherford said above that the Bible is not authoritative for the matters that it does not address, or in exceptional matters (like miracles), or in matters that God has delegated to men, however, it is authoritative in

⁶George Gillespie, A Treatise of Miscellany Questions; Wherein Many Useful Questions and Cases of Conscience are Discussed and Resolved, for the Satisfaction of Those Who Desire Nothing More than to Search for and Find Out Precious Truths in the Controversies of these Times (Edinburgh: Printed by George Lithgow for George Swintoun, 1649; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 1, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), p. 62.

⁷Samuel Rutherford, The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication: or a Peaceable Dispute for the Perfection of the Holy Scripture in Point of Ceremonies and Church Government; in Which the Removal of the Service Book is Justified (London: Printed by John Field for Christopher Meredith, 1646), pt. 2, p. 99.

matters it does address.

It is clear from the above quotations that the authors of the Confession believed that the purposes of Scripture went beyond salvation. Indeed, they emphasized most obedience to God's law, when they dealt with the purposes of Scripture. The Divines did not call any purpose of Scripture primary.

There is also evidence from secondary sources that the Puritan position on Scripture expressed in the Westminster Confession had a view of the purposes of Scripture that went far beyond salvation, and covered many subjects. Ernest F. Kevan, for example, concluded in his published dissertation,

A fundamental principle of Puritanism was the recognition of the exclusive authority of Scripture for all things, a recognition which, in turn drew attention to the significance of the Law of God. The ecclesiastical corruptions of the time led the Puritans to affirm that nothing should be tolerated in the Church which was not authorized by Holy Scripture. . . . But, as the masters of practical divinity, the major concern of the Puritans was that of the moral Law in its relation to the saving grace of God and the subsequent life of the believer.⁸

In his work on the Westminster Assembly, Professor Robert Paul observed that the major conflict between the Anglicans and the Puritans on church government was caused by their differing views on Biblical authority. The background of this conflict was the two philosophical bases for the form of the Church of England that appeared after the death of Queen Elizabeth. The first advocated the theory of the divine right of the king with supremacy over every department of state including the church, and the second advocated that the episcopacy was established jure

⁸Ernest F. Kevan, The Grace of Law: A Study in the Puritan Theology (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1964), p. 21.

divino. These seem to have merged into a single Anglican position in the seventeenth century. Since the theory of the divine rights of kings could not prove a sufficient, solid basis for maintaining the form of the Church of England, the heart of the debate with Puritans came over the jure divino episcopacy. Paul observed,

This was bound to come into headlong collision with jure divino Puritan ecclesiologies based on a more or less literal appeal to the New Testament pattern of the Church, because it represented a different primary authority for structuring the Church's doctrine, order and worship. Was that basic authority to be found in the divinely inspired scriptures (as puritans affirmed), or in the divinely-guided ecclesiastical tradition (the papal answer), or in some essential relationship between the two (which now appeared to be the answer of the Stuart Divines)? The conflict was bound to be bitter, because in the seventeenth century there was no room for mutual recognition or compromise on what Christians were to regard as their basic authority.⁹

This quotation also supports the above position above that the Puritans did not find salvation to be the primary purpose of Scripture, but only an important purpose of Scripture, and that Scripture was used to answer many questions. If they had found salvation as the primary purpose the debate with the Anglicans would either not have happened, or lacked its deeply serious nature.

As was mentioned above, Jack Rogers has been attacked for his position on inerrancy in the Westminster Confession. Professor John Gerstner, in an article disagreeing with Rogers on inerrancy in the Confession, claimed that Rogers' position limiting the purpose of Scripture

⁹Robert S. Paul, The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the 'Grand Debate' (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), pp. 19-20.

to salvation was designed to restrict the inerrancy doctrine.¹⁰

In the above portion of the dissertation, the Westminster Confession's teaching about the purposes of Scripture has been considered. Jack Rogers' position that the Confession taught salvation as the primary purpose of Scripture has been refuted by the internal evidence of the Confession itself, its Scriptural proofs and the evidence in the related Larger and Shorter Catechisms. A number of passages from authors of the Confession have also been examined. These passages listed a number of purposes for the Scriptures, but failed to call any of them primary. The purpose of Scripture most emphasized by the authors of the Confession was to encourage men to good works. Rogers' position was also criticized by observing that his position would have played into the hands of the Anglicans. Authorities were quoted to show that the Puritan position represented by the Confession was counter to the Anglican position, and implied a view of the purposes of Scripture that went beyond salvation. It is clear that the Westminster Confession teaches several purposes for Scripture, and regards none of them as primary. It is also clear that the authors of the Confession found the answers to many spiritual and some secular questions in the Bible.

The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony for the most part indicates its agreement with the Westminster Confession on the purposes of the Bible. Section 6b is significant because it rejects the view that the Bible is only partly inspired, and that its inspiration pertains only to

¹⁰John H. Gerstner, "The View of the Bible Held by the Church: Calvin and the Westminster Divines," in Inerrancy, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), p. 399.

"saving truth." The partial inspiration position is supported by the combination of Rogers' rejection of inerrancy and his insistence that the Confession teaches that salvation is the primary purpose of Scripture. The members of the Testimony Revision Committee did not mention Rogers when they were interviewed on this point. Their targets were Daniel Fuller, David Hubbard, and the supporters of Fuller Seminary.¹¹

The Sufficiency of the Scriptures

Another major theme of Section 6 is the sufficiency of the Scriptures. This does not mean that the Scriptures provide all information or even all religious information. It merely means that the Scriptures are sufficient for the purposes for which they are written.

As was mentioned in the previous section, Jack Rogers concluded from the primary purpose of Scripture being man's salvation, that the Bible is not an encyclopedia. Rogers realized that his position was different from that of many Presbyterian theologians such as Archibald A. Hodge. Rogers reacted to Hodge's view concerning the Confession position on sufficiency as follows:

The central concern for salvation in the Confession has been broadened out by Hodge to a sort of encyclopedic concept of Scripture as serving all the practical necessities of man. The completeness of the revelation in Scripture is discussed without adequate reference to the qualifying purposes stated in the Confession. The stress of Hodge's discussion seems to lie on the objectivity and completeness of the

¹¹Rogers is a member of the Fuller Seminary Faculty. Interview with Drs. E. Clark Copeland, Wayne R. Spear, and J. Renwick Wright, Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 1986. These seminary faculty were members of the Committee that rewrote the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony. Hereafter this will be called, Interview with the Testimony Revision Committee. It was the Committee's policy to indicate agreement with the Westminster Confession by silence. Unfortunately, no minutes of the Committee were kept.

revelation given in Scripture rather than the purpose for which it functions and by which it is to be understood. The danger in this subtle shift of emphasis would seem to be borne out by the struggles over Scripture in early twentieth-century American Presbyterianism. Problems foreign to Scripture itself can intrude when the religious purpose for which Scripture is given is not insistently stressed.¹²

As evidence for his position, Rogers pointed to the support of the Westminster Assembly for the new University of London including physical science in its curriculum. He also quoted Samuel Rutherford's list of areas where the Bible is not the rule. Rutherford said Scripture was not the rule "in things of Art and Science, as to speak Latine, to demonstrate conclusions of Astrononomie." Rutherford affirmed Scripture as the rule in "1. in fundamentals of salvation. 2. In all morals of both first and second table."¹³ A third source of evidence was quotations from some authors of the Confession concerning the centrality of the Gospel.¹⁴

There is some difficulty in refuting Rogers conclusion about the encyclopedic nature of Scripture for two reasons. First, the Bible is not meant to give men all knowledge. Secondly, Rogers admits that the Bible has other purposes than salvation, and even gives a list of the

¹²Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, pp. 331-32.

¹³Rogers, Authority and Interpretation of the Bible, p. 206. Rogers quoted from Samuel Rutherford, Divine Right, London, 1644, p. 99. The reader will note that Rutherford has added morals to salvation as a purpose of Scripture. The full quotation given above lists four purposes of Scripture. It must be noted that Rogers fails to quote any author of the Confession in defense of his view that the Bible is not an encyclopedia in Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, pp. 331-33. The first two points of evidence listed above came from his later work. This chronological difference leads one to wonder why this evidence was not given in his first work.

¹⁴Rogers, Scripture and the Westminster Confession, pp. 327-31.

ones he found in the writings of the authors of the Confession.¹⁵ This is thus a refutation of the extremeness of his position.

There are two implications that come from the sufficiency of Scripture. The first is that other sources are unnecessary, especially those of the Anglicans, the Sectarians, and Romanists. The second implication is that there can be no additions to or subtractions from Scripture.

The historical context of the Westminster Divines put them in opposition to groups who wished to add other sources to Scripture. On the one hand, the Sectarians wished to add other revelations allegedly from the Holy Spirit to the revelation in the Scriptures. The authors of the Confession denied that God gave any new revelation by the Spirit, instead they said the "Spirit witnesses to the sufficient revelation already given and recorded in Scripture."¹⁶ On the other hand, the Anglicans and the Romanists argued for tradition as an authority in addition to Scripture. Both of these groups wished to add to Scripture other authorities such as tradition and reason. The Anglicans, as represented by Richard Hooker wanted only to acknowledge the general doctrinal principals of the Bible as authoritative, and be free on the details of Christianity. Samuel Rutherford opposed them by appealing to God as the author of every detail of Scripture.¹⁷ Indeed, he seemed to adopt a dictation theory of inspiration as a tool to attack them.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 229-31.

¹⁶Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 348.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 311.

The Confession stands clearly opposed to the Roman and Anglican views of tradition as an additional authority. Samuel Rutherford expressed the view of the authors of the Confession when he wrote his catechism. He saw the perfection of Scripture as meaning it could not be added to or taken away from with a curse on the offending party. The catechism reads,

Q. Then this Word of God is a perfit rule of faith and manners?
 A. Yea, it is so perfite that they are under a curse that addeth to it or taketh from it.--Ps. xix. 7; 2 Tim. iii. 16; Luke. xvi. 29; Joh. xx. 31; 1 Cor. ii. 6; Rev. xxii. 19; Deut. xii. 31 [sic]; Prov. xxx. 6.¹⁸

Edward Reynolds also opposed adding to or taking away from the perfect Word in preaching, teaching, or by using tradition as an authority. He viewed it as "great wickedness" to charge imperfections against the perfect Word, and, as a consequence, to use insincerity and deceit to adulterate it as the Pharisees did by using interpretations that diminished its force. Reynolds said these interpretations were "confuted by our Saviour (Matt. v.21,27,38,43)."¹⁹

The major immediate influence behind the Confession, James Ussher, believed the Scriptures to be sufficient for all of man's spiritual needs, and said so. The first question of Ussher's catechism read,

Question. What sure ground have we to build our religion upon?

¹⁸Samuel Rutherford, "Ane Catachisme conteining the Soume of Christian Religion," in Catechisms of the Second Reformation, ed. Alexander F. Mitchell (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886), p. 161.

¹⁹Edward Reynolds, The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds, D.D., 6 vols. (London: Printed for B. Holdsworth, 1826), 3:415-16.

Answer. The Word of God contained in the Scriptures.²⁰

In a citation particularly relevant to Rogers' position, Ussher, in his Body of Divinitie, made an even stronger case for the sufficiency of Scripture. He saw the Bible as so complete for salvation, that no other sources were necessary and, as a result of this completeness for salvation, it was the judge of all traditions, revelations, and opinions. He wrote that the Scriptures are so complete or sufficient concerning the knowledge of Christianity, that they contain all doctrine needed for salvation. They are the only perfect source of instruction for salvation.

Ussher continued, concluding

whence it followeth, that we need no unwritten verities, no traditions or inventions of men, no Canon of Councils, no sentences of Fathers, much less Decrees of Popes, for to supply any supposed defect of the written Word . . . Finally, these holy Scriptures are the rule, the line, the square, and light, whereby to examine and try all judgements and sayings of men and Angels, Joh. 12.48. Gal. 1.9. All traditions, revelations, decrees of Councils, opinions of Doctors, &c. are to bee imbraced so farre forth as they may bee proved out of the Divine Scriptures, and not otherwise . . .²¹

This citation at first glance, seems to support the view of Rogers that salvation is the primary purpose of the Bible. However, Ussher does not

²⁰James Ussher, "The Principles of the Christian Religion," in Catechisms of the Second Reformation, ed. Alexander F. Mitchell (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886), p. 139. Mitchell used the London 1645 and 1654 editions in the preparation of this edition.

²¹Ussher, Body of Divinitie, p. 18. A possible explanation of Ussher and Rogers coming to a different conclusion from the same premise is that the Puritans tended to view salvation in the terms of covenant, salvation was thus a "package" consisting of the entire ordo salutis from foreknowledge through repentance and faith and on to sanctification and glorification, including a good deal about all areas of Christian living. And the content of the covenant was seen as the entire Bible. Twentieth century Americans like Rogers, do not generally view salvation in the broad sense of Covenant. Instead they view salvation in the sense of "The Four Spiritual Laws," or, in other words, the minimum an evangelist must tell a person in order to lead him to salvation.

say that salvation is the only purpose of the Bible. Also, his conclusion from the Bible's complete sufficiency for salvation as one of its purposes is the complete opposite of Rogers. Rogers argued that because salvation is the primary purpose, the Scriptures are not an encyclopedia of other issues. Ussher, using the same premise, concluded that the Scriptures are the judge of all issues in the church. How could they be the judge unless the Bible spoke authoritatively and at some length to these issues, even as an encyclopedia does? Ussher drew the opposite conclusion from the same premise as Rogers!

In the Irish Articles, which were influential on the authors of the Confession, Ussher also clearly stated the sufficiency of Scriptures. Article VI of the Irish Articles states,

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary of salvation, and are able to instruct sufficiently in all points of faith that we are bound to believe, and all good duties that we are bound to practice.

In his study on the Irish Articles, George Hanlin Fitzgerald noted their broad view of the sufficiency of Scripture. He said, "In the entire Irish Articles the Scriptures are set forth as the norm, not only for the faith of the Church, but for its life as well."²²

Cornelius Burges, another author of the Confession, saw the teaching of the Bible as sufficient for all areas of faith. He said this in the next quotation, "One particular Object of zeale then is the Sacred

²²George H. Fitzgerald, "The Irish Articles of Religion and the Westminster Confession of Faith." (Th. D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., 1962), p. 122.

word of Truth, containing all necessarie rules of Faith."²³

Robert Harris argued that the Scriptures were sufficient because they were complete on details. He argued, God would not give believers details, and neglect doctrines and necessary instructions. In answer to the question why are Christians told the very gestures of Christ in God's worship, Harris replied,

First, Because every action of his is for our instruction, though not imitation ever. Secondly, because God would doe us to know, that his eye is upon all his worshippers. Here wee mought fall upon Popery, which brings up an ill report upon the sacred writings of God, as if they smelt of some unsufficiencie, were but a partiall rule, and had not in them a full and selfe-sufficiencie: What? doth God descend to circumstantialis, and is he defective in the substance? Doth he so often repeat ex abundanti the same thing, and in the meane forget any main point? Doth he acquaint us with the very gestures of our Saviour, and in the meane leave out some doctrines and articles? Doth he record the Saints salutations one to another, and over slip necessarie instructions of his owne? Let bastards emplead his last Will and Testament whilst they please, as if it were imperfect, every true son will say with their elder brother, I adore the fulnesse of the Scripture.²⁴

George Gillespie also gave a reason for the sufficiency of the Bible, namely, the institution of Christ. This institution is shown in two ways. First the fidelity of Christ in his prophetic and kingly office was such "that he hath sufficiently provided for all the necessities and exigencies whatsoever of his Churches, to the end of the world." Therefore He was faithful even as Moses (Heb. 3:2), who delivered the laws

²³Cornelius Burges, The Fire of the Sanctvarie Newly Uncovered, Or A Compleat Tract of Zeale (London: Printed by George Miller and Richard Badger, 1625), p. 27. He continued, "The office of zeale about this [the Bible] is, to perserue the honour therof vntained from all blemishes of error . . ."

²⁴Harris, Workes, p. 245. This argument for God's care in details of the Bible implies more purposes for Scripture than salvation.

governing the Jewish church. Gillespie than drew his conclusion that the authority of presbyteries over elders and the authority of synods over both needs a warrant from Christ's institution, because without this authority there are important church necessities that cannot be guided.²⁵

Modern scholars, like Marshall M. Knappen, have also noticed the Puritan view of Biblical sufficiency expressed in the Westminster Confession. To the Puritans the Bible was not only a unique authority, it was a complete one as well. "It contained the principle of all truth and all necessary details." As God prescribed the details of the tabernacle in the Old Testament, so he described the specifications of the church of the new dispensation. Church government was of the substance of the gospel, and discipline was essential to the faith. Because Christ left a will covering the rules of his house,

what was not prescribed in the Bible must not be used in the church. Similarly detailed regulations for education, marital relations, secular government, and all other human concerns might be found in the Good Book.²⁶

The Puritans believed the Bible to be sufficient for all religious and many secular needs.

John F. H. New also saw the sufficiency of Scripture as a key Puritan-Anglican difference. Because the Puritans viewed the Bible as sufficient, they attempted to find all the answers there. He wrote,

²⁵George Gillespie, An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, in the Points of Ruling Elders, and of the Authority of Presbyteries and Synods (Edinburgh: James Bryson, 1641), pp. 157-58.

²⁶Marshall M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1939; reprint ed., Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1963), pp. 355-56. This citation also supports a broad meaning for salvation.

In reality the antagonisms arose from two incompatible habits of Biblical exegesis, each consistent with its own rationality. Puritanism claimed that Scripture revealed the model for Church organization, and for all behavior; that what was in Scripture ought to be implemented, and what was not explicitly there ought not to be practiced. Anglicanism considered the Scriptures authoritative for all things that pertained to redemption, but permissive for those that did not, in which case men might adjust their own affairs.²⁷

It has been shown that the Puritan-Presbyterians saw that the Bible was sufficient for many things, particularly spiritual matters. Rogers conclusion that the Bible is not an encyclopedia will now be examined in this light. First, his conclusion is not helpful. What is necessary to know is what the Westminster Divines did believe about the extent of Biblical authority. Second, his conclusion does not proceed from his premise that the primary purpose of the Bible is salvation. Professor John Gerstner observed that Rogers was guilty of a logical non sequitur when he concluded that because the Bible is primarily concerned with salvation, it not concerned with other details. Gerstner wrote,

Rogers notes that the last five sections of the Confession delineate the "saving content of Scripture," "the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life." Then follows the non sequitur . . . "Scripture was not an encyclopedia of answers to every sort of question for the divines." The non sequitur (because the Bible is concerned primarily with salvation it is not concerned with other details) is meant to avoid the inevitable inerrancy doctrine. The "saving content" is supposed to be one thing, the saving context another thing. But they are inseparably woven together in Scripture! No Westminster divine questioned this truth, and Jack Rogers does not logically deny it. So it does not follow from the fact that the Bible reveals the counsel of God for our faith and life that it does not include reliable answers to incidental questions.²⁸

²⁷John F. H. New, Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558-1640 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 28.

²⁸Gerstner, "The View of the Bible," p. 399. Gerstner quotes p. 34 in Jack Rogers, "The Church Doctrine of Biblical Authority," in Biblical Authority, ed. Jack Rogers (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1977).

In this author's opinion, the best summary of the Westminster Confession's position on the sufficiency of Scripture is that of Benjamin B. Warfield, who said,

It is not affirmed that the Scriptures contain all truth, or even all religious truth; or that no other truth, or even all religious truth, is attainable or verifiable by man through other sources of knowledge. This would be inconsistent with the frank recognition in section 1 of the light of nature as a real and trustworthy source of knowledge concerning God. There is only a strong assertion of the completeness and finality of the Scriptural revelation of truth, for the specific purpose for which Scripture is given.²⁹

As the above has shown, the Westminster Divines considered the Bible a sufficient (in other words, "perfect" and complete) source for the church and the life of the believer. It is sufficient for much more than salvation, and its sufficiency went beyond religious matters to some secular ones. It was given as the covenant by a perfect King who allowed no additions or subtractions to His Word. Those adding to or subtracting from the Bible were guilty of sin. The doctrine of the sufficiency of the Bible was a major impetus to the Puritan dream of reforming all areas of British society by use of biblical principals. This discussion of sufficiency undermines the conclusion of Jack Rogers that the Bible is not an encyclopedia.

The sufficiency of Scripture is mentioned only once in the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, the silence signifying its agreement with the Westminster Confession. In section 6d the Testimony rejected the

²⁹Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 224

church. This is aimed at the Roman Catholic position.³⁰ Here the Testimony has followed its policy of repeating the Confession's positions when they are problems in this century.

The Meaning of "Good and Necessary Consequence"

This portion of the dissertation is a discussion of the hermeneutics of "good and necessary consequence," which gives both a method of interpretation and criteria for evaluating hermeneutical conclusions. Section 6a of the Westminster Confession uses the phrase "good and necessary consequence" as a means of saying that the Bible has implications that are equally authoritative and binding with Scripture's literal statements. There are two requirements for these implications, they must be morally good and consistent with the rest of the Bible, and they must be certain, not possible or even probable implications. This position set the Westminster Divines between the two positions held by the Sectarians and the Anglicans. Rogers saw the position of the Divines as distinctive because it was attacked from those on both sides of the Westminster Assembly theologically, the Anglican Arminians on one side and the Sectarians and Anabaptists on the other side. This led to a conflict with the Anglican position represented by Richard Hooker. Hooker asserted that the Bible gave only general principles, but no details of religious life. One pillar of Hooker's argument was the elevation of reason to an authority with Scripture and tradition. Unlike the Anglicans, the Westminster Divines did not exalt reason, but by defending logical deduction from

³⁰Interview with Testimony Revision Committee.

Scripture maintained it as the essential authority over against reason.³¹

The following examples show how the authors of the Confession defended good and necessary consequence. The first example of these defenses, and probably the most important occurs in the minutes of the Westminster Assembly. Because of the influence of "good and necessary consequence" in the Assembly, and the influence this discussion had on the formation of the Confession, the portions of the minutes discussing necessary consequence will be cited in detail. The context of these examples is the discussion of whether divine warrant can be found for a divine rule of church government. The minutes of session 640 answer the question, Is necessary consequence a sufficient argument of Christ's will?

Resolved upon the Q., First proof; 'Christ proves the resurrection in Matt. xxii. 31, 32: "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" which is proof of the resurrection of the dead by a consequence only.'

This proof; 'Christ, John x., refutes the Jews reproaching Him with blaspheming for saying that He and the Father were one, by a consequence drawn from Scriptures,' calling princes gods.

Resolved upon the Q., Acts xiii. 34, 'And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David,' which proves the resurrection of Christ by a consequence only.

Resolved on the Q., Heb. i.6, 'And again, when He bringeth in the first Begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him,' where it is proved that Christ is the Son of God by a consequence.³²

The deliberations on this topic continued in session 649. The minutes give the resolutions. The first resolution is that there are Old Testa-

³¹Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 339.

³²Westminster Assembly of Divines. Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (November 1644 to March 1649), Ed. Alexander F. Mitchell and John Struthers (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), pp. 231-32.

Testament examples of jus divinum by implication. The examples used were the building of altars to God and the offering of sacrifices by men from Adam to Abraham, which was done in faith, but for which there is no command recorded in the Bible. The second resolution dealt with the duty of the surviving brother to marry the wife of his dead childless brother. There is no evidence that this was God's law before Moses except the example of Judah's sons in Genesis 38. The third resolution appealed to the "Jews having of synagogues and worshipping of God in them, and in particular of their reading of Moses and the prophets there every Sabbath-day." Next came the observation of the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath. The following concluded the Assembly's resolutions:

Resolved upon the Q., 'and of baptizing persons but once....'
Resolved upon the Q., 'In all which examples, as we have cause to believe that the fathers at the first had a command from God of those things whereof we now find only their example for the ground of their posterities's like practice for many generations, so likewise, though we believe that Christ, in the time that He conversed with His disciples before and after His resurrection, did instruct them in all things concerning the kingdom of God, yet nothing is left recorded to show His will and appointment of the things instanced in, but the example and the practice the Apostles and churches in their time.'³³

In session 654 the Westminster Assembly finally reached the conclusion based on the proofs above. The assembly concluded that the Bible teaches a divinely appointed form of church government, or a jus divinum. The minutes read,

Resolved upon the Q., 'Those examples, either of the apostles, evangelists, or of the Church planted and ordered by them, which are recorded in the New Testament, and are no where therein disallowed, and the particular reason whereof still abides, do show a jus divinum, and the will and appointment of Jesus Christ so as still to remain.'³⁴

³³Ibid., pp. 237-38.

³⁴Ibid., p. 241.

The conclusion that the implications of the Bible are binding along with the explicit statements would play an important role in determining the positions of the Westminster Assembly on issues such as baptism, worship, and the church polity. The above citations from the Assembly's Minutes used the three types of proofs of "good and necessary consequence" commonly used by the authors of the Confession, namely Christ's use of "good and necessary consequence," its use in catholic doctrines, and examples from the Bible where the practices prove the existence of commands not found in the text. These proofs will now be examined in the writings of the authors of the Confession.

First, Christ's use of good and necessary consequence will be considered. In his refutation of the Antinomians who rejected the consequences of Scripture, Samuel Rutherford appealed to Matt. 22:29-33, where Jesus used logical consequence to refute the Sadducees. Samuel Rutherford wrote,

God is the God of dead Abraham, ergo the dead shall rise, by the very name of scripture, which yet was but a consequence drawn from Exo. chap. 3.6. yee erre, not knowing the Scriptures, and further he rebuketh the Saduces as ignorant, who did not make use of the like logical consequence to see the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection, yee erre, not knowing the scriptures. Mat. 22.31. Have yee not read that which was spoken to you? &c. ergo it was their unbeleife and dulnesse that they did not read and understand the logick of the Holy Ghost, and they ought to have read the article of the resurrection, Exod. 3.6. in the consequence of it, as the Scripture it selfe.³⁵

³⁵Samuel Rutherford, A Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist. Opening the Secrets of Familisme and Antinomianisme in the Antichristian Doctrine of John Saltmarsh, and Will. Del, the Present Preachers of the Army Now in England, and of Robert Town, Rob. Crisp, H. Denne, Eaton, and Others. In Which Is Revealed the Rise and Spring of Antinomians, Familists, Libertines, Swenck-feldians, Enthysiasts, &c. (London: Printed by J. D. & R. I. For Andrew Crooke, 1648), pt. 1, p. 50.

Rutherford continued in the same context, observing that Paul also used good logic in drawing arguments from the Old Testament, such as Isaiah says, Hosea says, and thus with other prophets.

The second defense of good and necessary consequence come from the ecumenical doctrines or practices derived by the method of good and necessary consequence. In addition to being an example of the second defense, the quotation below also shows the important assumption behind good and necessary consequences, namely that God knew the implications of His words when He spoke them. As a result believers must accept both the literal message and the implications of the Bible. George Gillespie observed,

If we say that necessary consequences from Scripture prove not a ius divinum, we say that which is inconsistent with the infinite wisdom of God; for although necessary consequences may be drawn from a man's word which do not agree with his mind and intention, and so men are often times ensnared by their words; yet (as Camero well noteth) God being infinitely wise, it were a blasphemous opinion to hold that anything can be drawn by a certain and necessary consequence from his holy word which is not his will.

Gillespie concluded the result of this logic was to make God as foolish as men who cannot see all the implications of their words. Therefore, one must believe that mind of God follows necessarily from the word of God. He continued his argument with widely accepted examples based on the use necessary consequence, such as the admission of women to the Lord's Supper.³⁶

Other authors of the Confession also used good and necessary consequence to defend and derive doctrines, like infant baptism. Cornelius Burgess, for example, used good and necessary consequence to defend infant

³⁶Gillespie, Treatise of Miscellany Questions, pp. 102-03.

baptism. He admitted that there is no text of Scripture that explicitly teaches infant baptism, however, men should be satisfied "that by like sound and necessary consequences I haue from the scriptures made good this point in hand."³⁷

Robert Baillie also used good and necessary consequence to defend infant baptism. He commented on the baptist rejection of good and necessary consequence as follows:

When in their debates against the baptism of infants they are straited with consequences from the circumcision of infants, and the promises of the Covenant made with Abraham, and his children; many of them do run out so far as to deny all scripturall consequences: refusing with the Jesuit Veron in their reasonings all deductions though never so necessary and clear, requiring for every thing they will admit, ex-
presse and syllabicall Scriptures.³⁸

A less controversial use of good and necessary consequence was to support church discipline. George Gillespie took note of Bible passages "as either directly, or at least by consequence, prove that notorious and scandalous sinners were not admitted into the temple or to partake in the ordinances." Gillespie used the example of Deut. 23:18, where the law forbids one from bringing the hire of a whore to the house of God, drawing the consequence, that it was even more "contrary to the will of God, that the whore herself, being known to be such, should be brought to the house

³⁷Cornelius Burges, Baptismall Regeneration of Elect Infants, Professed by the Church of England, according to the Scriptures, and Primitive Church, the Present Reformed Churches and Many Particular Divines Apart (Oxford: Printed by I. L. for Henry Curteyn, 1629), pp. 113-14.

³⁸Robert Baillie, Anabaptism, the True Fovntaine of Independency, Antinomy, Brownisme, Familisme, and the Most of the Other Errours, Which for the Time Doe Trouble the Church of England, Vnsealed (London: Printed by M. F. for Samuel Gellibrand, 1646), p. 37.

of the Lord?"³⁹

Gillespie also used good and necessary consequence in understanding the apostolic practice and doctrine of church polity. He wrote below that the existence of a church officer, proved the institution of that office by God. He wrote,

That Scripture which supposeth an institution, and holds out an office already instituted, shall to me (and, I am confident, to others also) prove an institution; for no text of Scripture can suppose or hold out that which is not true.⁴⁰

As can be seen above the Westminster Divines frequently used good and necessary consequence to defend their doctrines. They defended the practice on the basis of Jesus and the authors of the Bible using it, its historical use in deriving doctrines from the Bible, and the existence of practices commanded by God when the commands are not found in the Bible. They also assumed that God wrote the Bible in such a way that He determined the consequences of the words as well as the words themselves. Hence, the implications of Scripture are to be regarded as of equal authority with Scripture.

The Rejection of Allegorical Interpretation

With the Assembly's adoption of good and necessary consequence as a criteria of interpretation taught by the Bible, there was a corresponding rejection of allegorical interpretation. Allegorical interpretation was used by two movements that the Westminster Assembly was opposed to,

³⁹Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 44.

⁴⁰George Gillespie, Male Audis; or, An Answer to Mr. Coleman's Male Dicis (London: Printed for Robert Bostocke, 1646; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), p. 7.

the Roman Catholic Church and the Sectarians. The latter used it to justify their sometimes unusual interpretations. Thomas Gataker, an author of the Confession, rejected allegorical interpretation especially where the literal interpretation was clear. He wrote that believers should not use allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures when a literal reading yielded a clear interpretation, and condemned groups like the Enthusiasts who tried to "obtrude on us their vain and profane fancies in stead of Gods sacred Oracles."⁴¹

Rutherford did more than reject the allegorical method, he also described its problems. He listed them as follows:

This makes 1 The Scripture a mass of contradictions and lyes. 2 This turnes our faith and knowledge into a phancie, for the scripture it selfe cannot be a rule of expounding [expounding] scripture, if the glosse destroy the text. 3 The scripture shall not Judge all controversies, as Christ referres the gravest question that ever was, Whether he be the sonne of God or no, to this tribunall: Search the Scriptures for they testifie of me, Ioh. 5 [sic John 5:39]. 4 All the articles touching Christ his birth, life, death, buriall, resurrection, ascending to heaven . . . shall teach nothing, an Allegory shall cause scripture say the contrary.⁴²

Rutherford rejected the view of the Antinomians and Enthusiasts that there are two senses of Scripture, a literal that proved nothing, and another spiritual and allegorical that only "spiritual" persons could understand. As a proof of the literal position, Rutherford observed that Christ and Paul proved both the resurrection of the dead, and the Messiahship of Christ by the literal use of the Bible. When the Pharisees and

⁴¹Thomas Gataker, Shadowes without Substance, or, Pretended New Lights: Together, with the Impieties and Blasphemies That Lurk under Them, Further Discovered and Drawn Forth into the Light: In Way of Rejoynder unto Mr Iohn Saltmarsh His Reply: Entituled Shadowes Flying away (London: Robert Bostock, 1646), p. 69.

⁴²Rutherford, Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist, pt. 1, p. 67.

Sadducees, who denied these truths, opposed Jesus and Paul, the two men referred the opposition to the literal sense of the Bible, not its allegorical interpretation. Jesus and Paul taught, "the scriptures hold forth a cleare, literall sense, which these men, though not spirituall, might understand."⁴³

The next aspect of good and necessary consequence is the limitations of it. Jack Rogers observed that there were problems in the application of good and necessary consequence. Responding to Gillespie's teaching on the subject, Professor Rogers said that Gillespie drew a distinction between natural and regenerate reason. Gillespie concluded, because God was wholly consistent with Himself, man's deductions from the Scripture would correspond to God's will. This tended to underestimate man's subjectivity in drawing consequences. Rogers concluded that Gillespie was not sufficiently sensitive to the possibility of men making errors.⁴⁴ Like any method of Biblical interpretation, the drawing of implications can be abused. One method used by the authors of the Confession to prevent this abuse was comparing their conclusions with other theologians. Cornelius Burges said concerning his use of Scriptural implications about baptism,

Nor haue I beene mine owne iudge, or expounded them out of mine head, but take such expositions as the most Learned Iudicious, Reuerend, and eminene Diuines of this last age, as well as others of lesse note . . .⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid., pt. 1, p. 23.

⁴⁴Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, pp. 335-36.

⁴⁵Burges, Baptismall Regeneration of Elect Infants, p. 114. The writing of the authors of the Confession are filled with quotations, notes or allusions to other theologians.

As the above evidence has shown, the acceptance of good and necessary consequence as a method of interpreting the Bible also involved a rejection of the allegorical form of interpretation because it was inaccurate, and not used by Jesus and Paul in the Bible.

The Role of Reason

The last item to be discussed under the heading of good and necessary consequence is the role of reason. Rogers observed that the place of reason to the Westminster Divines was subordinate to that of Scripture.

The Westminster Divines give a definite, if restricted, place to the right use of reason whether under the name of light of nature, Christian prudence or conscience. But they make it clear that reason, in whatever form, never has an independent authority, but only an authority subordinate to and dependent on the Word of God.⁴⁶

The following examples show how the authors of the Confession used reason as a servant to interpret the Bible, and not as an authority independent of Scripture. In the first example George Gillespie used reason to go from the effect, spiritual fruit, to the cause, salvation, as an application of the biblical doctrine of the assurance of salvation. He said,

It is a consequence no less sure and infallible,--here is unfeigned love to the brethren, therefore here is regeneration; here are spiritual motions . . . therefore here is spiritual life.⁴⁷

Edward Reynolds, in his discussion of the nature of faith allowed for the use of reason in understanding Biblical content. His argument concluded Scripture was a more sure source of knowledge than reason. He

⁴⁶Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 365.

⁴⁷Gillespie, Treatise of Miscellany Questions, p. 104. Gillespie used reason as a tool for determining the "good and necessary consequences" of Bible passages.

wrote that all faith is not saving faith, for there is a faith that makes the devils tremble (James 2:19). "Faith, in general, is an assent of the reasonable soul unto revealed truths." Every inducement to assent comes either from the "light" of the object or from the authority of a narrator, upon whom men rely without evidence. He used an analogy from John 4, to show the Bible was a better source of knowledge than reason. The Samaritans first assented to Christ's miracles by the woman's testimony or by faith. Later they assented because they had heard and seen Christ, and this was sight. Both kinds of assent have attached to them either certainty or probability. The certainty of faith, "even above the evidence of demonstrative conclusions," is universally agreed, because men often are weak and untrusting. However, if faith depends on God's Word, which is near to the one who is the fountain of truth, whose properties include certainty and infallibility, this faith is more sure than anything produced by natural reason alone.⁴⁸ In listening to and believing the woman, the Samaritans depended upon the empirical or reasonable evidence of a fallible eyewitness. When they heard Christ the evidence for their belief shifted from empirical evidence to a belief in the living Word. Likewise, the infallible Word is a source of more certain belief than fallible reason.

In his defense of the Church of Scotland, Alexander Henderson, after defending the high place of Scripture, observed that the place of reason was a lower one than that of Scripture. He saw reason as a useful tool for guidance in circumstances where the Bible gave general rules, and men

⁴⁸Reynolds, Whole Works, 3:141.

were to fill in details. He wrote that the Scottish reformers had no pattern and rule of Reformation, but the Bible and the practice of the early church in the Word. While the Bible is perfect, and a perfect directory of church activities,

it presupposeth the light and law of nature, or the rules of common prudence, to be our guide in circumstances or things locall, temporall and personall, which being Ecclesiastico Politica, are common to the church with civill societies, and concerning which, the word giveth generall rules to be universally and constantly observed by all persons, in all times and places:

Henderson used two rules to apply his point. First the physician cannot determine the patient's diet and bath by a letter, the pulse must be touched. Second, when a change is not for the better, it is without and against reason to make a change. It is without reason because, when the change is made to something equally good, the reasons are equal. It is against reason because in that case it hinders edification, favors the love of innovation, and downgrades the authority that made the constitution.⁴⁹

The authors of the Confession gave a definite but restricted place to the proper use of reason. They used reason to interpret the Bible and to determine specific circumstances where the Bible left guidelines. However, they regarded reason as subordinate to and dependent upon the Holy Scriptures. The authors view of reason as a tool to interpret and apply the Bible contrasted with the Anglicans who viewed reason as one of their three sources of authority, the others being Scripture and

⁴⁹Alexander Henderson, Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland, Cleered from Some Mistakes and Prejudices, by the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Now at London (n. p.: Robert Bostock, 1644), p. 5.

tradition.

In this portion the hermeneutics of the Westminster Confession in the form of good and necessary consequence have been examined. By the phrase "good and necessary consequence" the authors of the Confession indicated that they believed that authoritative deductions could be drawn from the Scripture, and that these deductions must meet the criteria of being good and certain, not possible or even probable. The authors of the Confession assumed that God has written the Bible in such a way that the implications of the Bible are perfect and therefore binding. The authors of the Confession used three proofs for good and necessary consequence, its use by Christ and the apostles and prophets, the practices in Scripture that were commanded by commands not found in the Bible, and the fact that many catholic doctrines had been derived from the Bible by good and necessary consequence. Examples of these doctrines included infant baptism, church polity and church discipline. Allegorical interpretation was rejected as undependable and having no warrant from Scripture. It was also found that the authors of the Confession did not use reason as an authority, but instead used it as a tool to interpret the Bible, and to help men regulate some practices according to the general rules of the Word. Jack Rogers summarized the position of the authors of the Confession on reason when he said,

They did not deny the use of human reason, nor did they wholly discount the opinions of theologians, either individually or in council. But they claimed all opinions of men were valid only insofar as they agreed with the Scripture.⁵⁰

The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony says nothing directly about

⁵⁰Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 430.

good and necessary consequence, which indicates its agreement with it. The Testimony also shows agreement by the use of good and necessary consequence in some additions. For example, nowhere does the Bible explicitly forbid abortion. But, because of the Biblical evidence that unborn children are in the image of God from conception, the Reformed Presbyterian Church concluded in chapter 24:2 of the Testimony, that,

Unborn children are to be treated as human persons in all decisions and actions involving them. Deliberately induced abortion, except possibly to save the mother's life, is murder.
Exod. 20:13; 21:22-23; Psalm 139:13-16.

Sections 7 and 8, the Clarity and Text of Scripture

These sections continue the exposition of the Westminster Confession's doctrine of Holy Scripture. They deal with the understandability or perspicuity of Scripture and the definitive text of Scripture.

Section 7, the Perspicuity of Scripture

CONFESSION

7a. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.
2 Pet. 3:16; Psalm 119:105, 130.

TESTIMONY

7b. There are in the Scripture doctrines which unassisted reason could never have discovered; and yet, when revealed, are perfectly intelligible by the human mind. Other doctrines are taught in Scripture which human reason cannot fully comprehend and which must be received on the authority of God.
Isa. 40:13; 1 Cor. 1:20; Psalm 119:130; 1 Cor. 2:6-16.

7c. We reject any suggestion that God uses human reason on a level with Scripture to reveal his truth.

Section 7 exemplifies the concern of the authors of the Confession to meet both the needs of common people, and the needs of careful scholarship in Biblical studies. The Divines held both that the Scriptures were sufficiently clear to enable the uneducated to obtain salvation, and that there were some less clear issues that needed a scholarly approach.

The background of this section is the Irish Articles paragraphs 4 and 5. These teach that the Scriptures are so clear that unlearned men can learn enough for salvation by reading them.

The authors of the Confession held to the clarity of the Scriptures in their writings. George Gillespie, for example, observed in the quotation below, that the Bible uses words in their normal manner. He wrote,

This is no good report which Mr Prynne brings upon the English tongue, that men promise to do a thing immediately, when they do not mean to do it immediately. I hope every conscientious man will be loath to say immediately, except when he means immediately . . . and for an usual form of speaking, which is not according to the rule of the word, it is a very bad commentary to the language of the Holy Ghost.⁵¹

Robert Harris found much joy in the crystal clear Bible giving mankind a clear view of God. Basing his conclusion on the book of Revelation, he wrote that God's word and laws are, in the book of Revelation, compared to a sea of glass for largeness, for steadiness and for clearness in giving men a clear vision of God. The word is also compared to crystal in Revelation.⁵²

⁵¹George Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming; or The Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated (London: Printed by E. G. for Richard Whitaker, 1646; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 1, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), p. 209.

⁵²Harris, Workes, p. 387.

Samuel Rutherford acknowledged that the Bible contained intellectual challenges and mysteries. Yet he disagreed with the Papists who said that the Gospel portions of the Bible were obscure. He countered, saying that the Scripture has a deep subject matter, far above the reach of reason, yet its language is plain and easy. For example, the word says that a virgin will be a mother, that the ancient of days an infant, that through one man sin came into the world. These are deep mysteries, yet the Gospel is not obscure as the papists argue.⁵³

In his catechism Samuel Rutherford also expressed his belief, supported by scriptural texts, that both the educated and uneducated could understand and examine the Scriptures. He wrote,

Q. Hes all men place to read the Word?

A. All, both learned and unlearned (Joh. v. 39) should search the Scriptures (Col. iv. 16; 1 Thess. v. 21; Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8), and try the spirits and the Word preached, and not receive it be ges [by guess] (1 Joh. iv. 1; Acts xvii. 11).⁵⁴

Edward Reynolds said that the Scriptures were clear and gave reasons for the seemingly obscurity of the Scriptures. He observed that sin was the main problem in understanding the Bible, and the reasons why some places were more difficult to understand were two, first to encourage the diligence of believers, and second to encourage the respect of believers for the perfection of the word. However, the Scriptures themselves are clear, true and consistent. These virtues are a product of the Bible's author, the Spirit of truth, who cannot lie or deceive, "who is the same

⁵³Samuel Rutherford, Christ and the Doves Heavenly Salutations, With Their Pleasant Conference Together; or a Sermon before the Communion in Answorth, Anno 1630 (n. p.: n. p., 1660), p. 535.

⁵⁴Rutherford, "Ane Catachisme conteining the Soume of Christian Religion," p. 162.

yesterday, to-day, forever."⁵⁵

As the evidence above shows, the authors of the Confession saw the Bible as a book sufficiently clear so that the uneducated could gain salvation through a clearly presented portrait of their saviour, yet containing deep truths that would tax the efforts of great scholars so that men would exercise diligence and be humbled in the presence of the word of God.

The Testimony shows its agreement with the Confession's teaching on the clarity of Scripture by silence. The Testimony Revision Committee chose to include their discussion of reason with this Section of the Confession. Section 7b is the third section of the old Testimony chapter on reason. It is aimed at the old rationalism that made reason the judge of truth. Disagreeing with this view, the Testimony teaches that revelation does not have to be fully comprehensible to finite reason to be true.⁵⁶ Section 7c supports the attack on reason by rejecting the idea that God uses human reason on a level with the Bible to reveal divine truth. Thus 7c does not reject reason as a tool of learning or a source of knowledge, it merely places it below Scripture.

Section 8, the Text of Scripture

CONFESSION

8a. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authenticall; so as, in all

⁵⁵Reynolds, Whole Works, 3:411.

⁵⁶Interview with Testimony Revision Committee.

controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scripture, and are commanded in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scripture, may have hope.

Matt. 5:18; Isa. 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39, 46; 1 Cor. 14:6, 9, 11-12, 24, 27-28; Col. 3:16; Rom. 15:4.

TESTIMONY

8b. Bible translations must combine faithfulness to the original text with the idiom of the native language, and thus will always be imperfect. The church is responsible to examine the documents available to determine as far as possible what was originally written, and to study the translations as to their accuracy in conveying the meaning of the original, and to advise the public concerning them. Paraphrases, which interpret rather than translate, must be used with great caution.

This section is one of the least controversial in Chapter 1 of the Confession. When the Confession writers placed authority in the Bible, they had to answer the question of which texts of the Bible are authoritative. At the time of the Confession, Rome was arguing for the Vulgate as the authoritative text of the Bible. The Westminster Assembly chose the more scholarly Protestant solution of the Greek and Hebrew texts being the authoritative texts. The word "authentic" in this section is explained by Jack Rogers in this manner,

The authors of the Confession of Faith apparently mean by the word "authentic" that the text of Scripture in the original language is to be considered the ultimate source of reference for understanding.⁵⁷

Section 8a also deals with Bible translating. The authors of the Confession concluded that the Bible should be translated and gave reasons for translating it. These reasons were that many believers did not know the original languages, the word should dwell in believers, that they

⁵⁷Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 391.

should worship God in an acceptable manner, and that they might have hope. For these reasons, the Westminster Assembly concluded that it was essential that the Bible be translated into the language of all men.

In section 8b, the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony makes an addition to the Westminster Confession. The Confession did not address the problem of multiple translations that face today's English speaking churches. Since translations are always imperfect, what is the responsibility of the church with respect to them? The Reformed Presbyterian Church concluded that it was the denomination's responsibility to examine translations in order to protect members from inaccurate translations and to advise them concerning the good translations. The Testimony also warns against paraphrases such as the Living Bible.⁵⁸

Section 9, the Interpretation of Scripture

CONFESSION

9a. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold but one) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly. 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Acts 15:15-16.

TESTIMONY

9b. All men have the right to read the Bible, to inquire into its meaning, and to adopt the doctrines it teaches. In studying the Bible men must depend upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit. They must use God-given human faculties and search in earnest for the truth, in submission to the authority of the Scripture. In interpreting the Bible consideration must be given to the historical situation in which the passage was written, to the grammatical structure, and to the literary form. The instruction and counsel of fellow believers, of teachers of the Word, and creeds and confessions of the church should be given due consideration. When men understand the message of the Bible, they must earnestly seek to obey that message in all they think and do.

⁵⁸Interview with Testimony Revision Committee.

Acts 2:42; John 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11.

Above, the topic of the hermeneutics of Scripture was introduced by an examination of the term "good and necessary consequences." In Section 9, another hermeneutical principle is taught, "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." This principle, called the "analogy of faith," will now be discussed. The Westminster Divines used the analogy of faith against errors in Biblical interpretation, appealing to the whole of the Bible against those who would take passages out of context, or introduce rules of interpretation external to the Scriptures.

James Ussher in his discussion on Scripture gave reasons why Scripture must interpret Scripture. From his examination of Scripture, he concluded that men can only know with certainty the teaching of the Holy Spirit by confirming it in the Bible. He said that the Spirit of God is the only certain interpreter of God's Word, which was written by His Spirit, for no man is able to know the things of God, but the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:11). The Bible's prophecies are not of human interpretation, for their source was not the will of man, but holy men spoke as there were lead by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). The interpretation of Scripture must therefore be by the same Spirit that revealed the Bible, and men's interpretations are only acceptable as far as they can be confirmed by the Holy Scriptures.⁵⁹

In the following quotation, Archbishop Ussher gave more detail concerning how the analogy of faith was to be used to interpret the Bible,

⁵⁹Ussher, Body of Divinitie, p. 24.

namely more obscure places were to be interpreted by less obscure. He wrote,

According to the Analogie of Faith, Rom. 12.6. and the scope and circumstance of the present place, and conference of other plain, and evident places, by which all such as are obscure and hard to bee understood, ought to bee interpreted; for there is no matter necessary to eternall life, which is not plainely, and sufficiently set forth in many places of Scripture, . . . [emphasis in original]

He also showed that Jesus used the analogy of faith when He was tempted by the Devil. Ussher wrote that the texts which are abused by the Devil and his ministers may be properly interpreted using the example of Christ in the Temptation. When the Devil tempted Christ, he abused Psalm 91:11. Christ replied that the Psalm passage must be understood in the light of the clearest and most expressive commandment, Deut. 6:16, "Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God."⁶⁰

The analogy of faith presupposes several assumptions about the Bible, among them its truthfulness, clarity, and consistency. Thomas Gataker observed that the analogy could not be properly used without these assumptions being consistently applied. Gataker wrote that the Bible is the source of all Christian doctrine. The collation of Scripture with Scripture gives many insights into the obscure places. No part of Scripture can contradict or take away the truthfulness of any other part.⁶¹

George Gillespie agreed with Gataker on the use of the analogy of faith.⁶² For example, he argued against a position on the basis that it broke the noncontradiction assumption of the analogy. He wrote,

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 25.

⁶¹Gataker, Shadowes without Substance, p. 29.

⁶²Gillespie, Treatise of Miscellany Questions, p. 21.

That exposition which now I argue against, tendeth to make one scripture contradict another, and to make that lawful by one scripture which another scripture makes unlawful, even some of themselves being judges.⁶³

The Confession calls the analogy of faith the only "infallible" interpreter of Scripture. The authors of the Confession were reacting against the infallibility of the papacy. By calling the Scripture infallible truth in Section 5 and calling Scripture the infallible rule of interpretation in Section 9 the Divines were setting an infallible book against an infallible papacy. One modern scholar stated the Westminster Assembly's position in this way,

It is almost cliche to say the Protestantism revolted against an 'infallible Pope' only to set up an 'infallible Book.' . . . the Westminster Confession leaves no lingering doubts: There are two 'infallibles'. The first, already noted, is the infallible foreknowledge of God. The second is closer to hand: 'The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself' (I.9, cf. XVIII.2).⁶⁴

The above has shown that the authors of the Confession believed that the only inerrant way to interpret the Bible was by using the Bible. This method, called the analogy of faith, served as the Puritan-Presbyterian answer to the Roman doctrine of papal infallibility. The infallibility of Scripture thus lays a logical basis for Section 10 of the Confession, Scripture as the Supreme Judge.

The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony adds to the Confession a statement of the grammatical-historical method commonly used by evangelicals. Section 9b begins by affirming the position of the Westminster

⁶³Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 184.

⁶⁴Charles K. Robinson, "Philosophical Biblicism: The Teaching of the Westminster Confession Concerning God, the Natural Man, and Revelation and Authority." Scottish Journal of Theology 18 (March 1965):37.

Assembly that laymen are to study the Bible. It affirms the grammatical-historical method of using history, grammar, literary forms, and biblical languages. In order to prevent error, the Bible student is to check his conclusions by consulting other believers, teachers of the word, and the historical teachings of the Christian church. Believers are not only to understand the Bible's message, but also to obey it.⁶⁵ The last statement is particularly significant in a time when the unbiblical notion is abroad that the knowledge of truth makes no demands for obedience. It also shows the Testimony's concern for men's souls, and its view that the authority of the Bible extends to matters of practice as well as faith.

Section 10, Scripture as the Judge

CONFESSION

10a. The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined; and in whose sentence we are to rest; can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.
Matt. 22:29, 31; Eph. 2:20 with Acts 28:25.

Section 10 is the most important section on the extent of Biblical Authority. It teaches that the Bible, through which the Holy Spirit speaks, is the supreme judge for all controversies of religion, and lists councils, ancient writers (a reference to tradition), doctrines, and private spirits as subject to the authority of the Bible.

It is important to understand who the Westminster Divines were opposing at this point. On one side was Rome and the Anglicans who attributed authority to the ancient writers and to councils both

⁶⁵Interview with Testimony Revision Committee.

independently of Scripture and as interpreters of Scripture. They derived "doctrines of men" which were attributed to human reason and tradition outside of Scripture. On the opposite side of the Assembly were the Sectarians who, according to the authors of the Confession, also taught "doctrines of men," but which the Sectarians claimed to be revelations of the Spirit. The Sectarians claimed the revelations of these "private spirits" transcended the Scriptures. The authors of the Confession tried to offer a balanced position to these extremes. They did not deny the use of reason nor wholly reject the decisions of theologians and councils, but they did insist that these decisions must conform to the standard of the "Holy Spirit Speaking in the Scripture."

The first phrase of the section is "the supreme judge." Professor Rogers offered the following as a possible explanation for this phrase:

The Westminster Confession perhaps separated the questions of the "infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture" and the "Supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined" in order more clearly to answer opponents who separated these same questions.⁶⁶

Benjamin Warfield wrote that Rome distinguished between the Rule and the Judge. Romanists were willing to let the Bible be the rule, though an incomplete rule. But they insisted there must be a judge to apply the rule.⁶⁷

Archbishop Ussher and the authors of the Confession will share their views on the Scripture as the supreme judge of the church. Ussher saw the authority of the Bible as above all other sources in the church,

⁶⁶Rogers, Scripture in the Westminster Confession, p. 425.

⁶⁷Warfield, The Westminster Assembly, p. 254.

and that these sources cannot contradict or add to Scripture in doctrine or in practice. Ussher wrote, "no interpretation of holy Fathers, Popes, Councils, Customs, or practice of the Church, either contrary to the manifest words of the Scriptures," or containing matters that cannot be proved out of the Bible are to be received as undoubted truth.⁶⁸ Ussher's last point is very important in the light of the previous discussion of "necessary consequence." Matters which cannot be proved out of the Bible as necessary consequences, not possible consequences, or even probable consequences, cannot be legislated by the church. This greatly limits the authority of the church to make decrees, and thus protects the Bible's authority from challenges by other authorities. If the church has the authority to command matters the Bible does not command, another authority would have to judge these matters. The Bible would lose part of its authority, and instead become the judge of some matters, and be no longer the supreme judge of all religious matters.

The beliefs of the authors of the Confession concerning the various authorities will now be considered. The first authority to be considered is tradition, which includes ancient writers and the Papacy. Because the Bible is the original source of Christian theology, and more importantly the only infallible source, it judges the writings of ancient and contemporary men. Thomas Gataker concluded Scripture must be searched as the source of the will of God. He observed,

wee must make diligent search and enquirie into Gods Word, for it is that alone that can fully and infallibly informe us of it: Other writings only so farre forth as they are drawne out of it, agree with

⁶⁸Ussher, Body of Divinitie, p. 25. The last clause also applies to adiaphora.

it, and are grounded thereupon.⁶⁹

Robert Harris accused the Papists of replacing the authority of Word, with the authority of the Papacy. Seeing the Bible as more authoritative than the Papacy, he wrote that the Papists leave the ancient rule of the Bible, and put themselves into the hands of a weak man who "is apt to reele, unless this Chaire hold him up."⁷⁰

Samuel Rutherford argued for the Bible as the judge over tradition. In answer to an opponent who wished to submit a controversy to the fathers, Rutherford argued for the superiority of the Apostles and Prophets, saying, that following the errors of the Fathers would lead to heresy. He asked why his opponent wanted to submit all controversies to the judgment of the Fathers? "Can fathers decide controversies better than the Word of God?" The only possible reason for using the Fathers as judges, rather than the Bible, is that the Bible is obscure. One must therefore conclude that the Scriptures do not have the clarity and authority to judge controversies except as far as they have authority from the Fathers and the church. There are two problems with this. When the Fathers favor the Protestants, the Papists corrupt them, and, secondly, what were only errors of the Fathers, when the "children add[ed] contumacy to error," became heresies in the sons.⁷¹

⁶⁹Thomas Gataker, Certaine Sermons, First Preached, and after Published at Severall Times (London: Printed by John Haviland for Fulke Clifton, 1637), pt. 1, pp. 22-23. Gataker's side note beside the word "infallibly" listed John 17:17; James 1:18; and 2 Peter 1:19 as proofs.

⁷⁰Harris, Workes, p. 35.

⁷¹Samuel Rutherford, Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince; a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People: Containing the Reasons and Causes of the Most Necessary Defensive Wars of the Kingdom of Scot-

Modern scholars have recognized the Puritan position on Scripture and tradition. Charles H. George wrote,

Why this English Protestant preference for Scripture over all other sources of religious authority? Because Scripture alone is seen to be the authentic word of God, whereas traditions and the church are both fallible in the human quality of their origins.⁷²

George Gillespie was particularly strong in his claim that the Scripture was a higher authority than the councils of the church. In the quotation below he showed that the Westminster Divines were not against councils (indeed, the Westminster Assembly itself was a church council), but that these councils, while used by God and benefiting from His promise to be present, could and did err. Hence, they could not be the supreme judge of the church. Gillespie continued, observing that Christ had promised to be present in assemblies that meet in His name. He is present "by a spiritual aid and assistance of his own Spirit, to uphold the falling, or to raise up the fallen." It is by this Spirit that the errors of previous assemblies are discovered and amended, and the second thought is often better than the first.⁷³

Gillespie also understood that because councils derived their authority from the Scriptures, their rulings were conditional upon their adherence to the Scriptures. In other words, the council or synod's

land, and of Their Expedition for the Aid and Help of Their Dear Brethren of England (London: John Field, 1644; reprint ed., in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 3. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1843), p. 207.

⁷²Charles H. George, Protestant Mind of the English Reformation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 344.

⁷³George Gillespie, One Hundred and Eleven Propositions Concerning the Ministry and Government of the Church (London: Evan Tyler, 1647; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), p. 19.

authority was limited to its conformity to the Scriptures. He wrote,

The Lawes of an Ecclesiasticall Synod, to the obedience whereof in things belonging to the worship of God . . . the Lawes (I say) of a Synod can not bind absolutely, but only conditionally, or in case they can not be transgressed without violating the Law of Charity, by contempt shewed, or scandall given.⁷⁴

Gillespie found a Biblical example to support his attack on the infallibility of councils. He observed that a Jewish council condemned Christ, noting as follows: "and Brentius argueth from this example against the infallibility of councils, because this council of the Pharisees called Christ himself a sinner."⁷⁵

To understand fully the Westminster Assembly's position on Biblical authority with respect to councils, it will be necessary to quote the sections of Chapter 31 of the Confession, titled "Of Synods and Councils," that relate to biblical and councilor authority.

3. It belongeth to synods and councils, ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience, to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of His Church; to receive complaint in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in His Word. Acts 15:15, 19, 24, 27-31; Acts 16:4; Matt. 18:17-20.

4. All synods and councils, since the Apostles' time whether general or particular may err; and many have erred. Therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice; but to be used as a help in both.

⁷⁴George Gillespie, A Dispvte against the English-Popish Ceremonies, Obtrvded vpon the Chvrch of Scotland. Wherein Not Only Our Owne Arguments against the Same Are Strongly Confirmed, But Likewise the Answeres and Defense of Our Opposites, Svch as Hooker, Mortovne, Bvrges, Sprint, Paybody, Andrewes, Saravia, Tilen, Spotswood, Lindsey, Forbesse, &c Particularly Confuted (n. p.: n. p., 1637), pt. 3, p. 155.

⁷⁵Gillespie, Aaron's Rod Blossoming, p. 31.

Eph. 2:20; Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 2:5; 2 Cor. 1:24.

The Confession makes the following points about councils. They can and do err, and, therefore, are not the final authority, but a help in faith and practice. Councils do have the authority to apply the Scriptures to worship and government, to handle church discipline, and have the right to expect obedience, as long as their decisions are in agreement with the Word of God.

Samuel Rutherford, in a work written after the Westminster Confession was published, found it necessary to defend councils. After Rutherford helped write a Confession that said in Chapter 31:4 (see above) that councils err, this Confession was used to attack all councils. Rutherford replied that councils are not infallible in the sense that the Apostles are infallible, "both in believing and teaching by immediate inspiration, and so their word is not a rule of faith." While councils may err in particular acts, and for some period of time, it does not follow that the whole Catholic church at all times may fall from the sound faith.⁷⁶ Rutherford's purpose was to defend councils as important and necessary, while limiting their authority to issues where they agreed with the Word. In the next quotation he more closely refined his position on councils and the Word. When the council or General Assembly (the term was and still is used for the highest church council in Scotland) makes a decision, that decision binds only as far as it conforms to the Word. If the Assembly makes decision that contradicts the Word, or is not a necessary consequence, the decision is not binding. Thus the Assembly is a

⁷⁶Rutherford, Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist, pt. 1, p. 278.

channel for God's authority, not a source of it. Rutherford wrote,

What a Generall Assembly determines, bindeth no farther but as it is necessary, and as it is agreeable to the word, ergo, Whatsoever a Generall Assembly determines is necessary, and is agreeable to the word of God, it followeth in no sort at all, yea the just contrary followeth, ergo, if it be not necessary, and in so farre as it is not agreeable to the word, it obligeth neither these that are present nor absent, and is not infallible at all.⁷⁷

Perhaps the role of councils can best understood by drawing an analogy with the United States government. The United States has three branches of government, the judicial interprets the law, the legislative makes the law, and the executive carries out the law. God through the Bible is both the judge and the legislature. The function of the church council is then executive, meaning that it is to execute God's will as found in the Bible in the life of the church. While the councils are given more freedom in some areas than others, even in the freest areas they are still bound by "the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed."⁷⁸

While it is clear that the authors of the Confession had a great respect for councils and used with care their judgments and the judgments of reason, theologians, and the Fathers, these were also looked on as subordinate to the Scriptures, which served as the supreme judge. The councils were important only as channels for Biblical authority, not as authorities in themselves.

The Holy Spirit Speaking in Scripture

The final authority is said to be not the Scriptures, but the

⁷⁷Ibid., pt. 1, int., pp. 19-20.

⁷⁸Quoted from Confession 1:6.

"Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." Jack Rogers observed that the Westminster Divines

claimed that all opinions of men were valid only insofar as they agreed with the Scripture. Furthermore, the Scripture was only rightly understood by those whose minds were enlightened by the Holy Spirit. But neither the reason apart from Scripture, nor the Spirit apart from Scripture was authoritative in religious matters. Only the Spirit speaking in the Scripture was the "supreme judge" in controverted points.⁷⁹

As Scripture interprets Scripture, so the Confession interprets the Confession. Since the relationship of Spirit to Scripture was discussed above, this topic will be treated briefly here. Section 6, discussed above says,

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word . . .

Section 5 on the same topic says,

our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word.

Prof. John Murray argued that the Confession is dealing with the Bible as the supreme judge of controversies, and gave the phrase "the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture" a different meaning than the Spirit's bearing witness in the hearts of believers. Murray said,

This phrase was put in the Confession to answer Rome, who insisted that the voice of the church was necessary as well as Scripture, and the enthusiasts who argued for a special revelation in coordinate with Scripture.⁸⁰

⁷⁹Rogers, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible, pp. 217-18.

⁸⁰John Murray, "The Theology of the Westminster Confession," in Scripture and Confession, ed. John H. Skilton (n. p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1973), p. 130.

While Murray is correct that placing the Holy Spirit with Scripture offered a valuable corrective against the Romanists and Sectarians, it appears to this writer that the authors of the Confession wished to say more than this about the Spirit and Word as judge. One must admit, however, from the quotations above concerning councils and tradition, that the authors of the Confession frequently did not mention the Holy Spirit when they discussed the Bible and other authorities, possibly implying that Spirit here referred to authorship.

Against Murray, Edward Reynolds, an author of the Confession, showed great insight into the working of Spirit and Word in the following quotation. He saw the Word as absolute truth from God, yet it was a truth the Spirit worked within the soul to help men hear and to make the truth of the Word effectual by working to seal the truth. While Reynolds is referring to conversion, man's need for truth does not stop at conversion. Reynolds wrote,

So then a true faith hath its evidence and certainty, grounded upon the authority of the Word, as the instrument, and of the Spirit of God raising and quickening the soul to attend, and acknowledge the things therein revealed, to set its own seal unto the truth and goodness of them.

How did a believer know the Word to be God's Word and the Spirit to be God's Spirit? Reynolds continued,

undoubtedly the Spirit brings a proper, distinctive, uncommunicable majesty and lustre into the soul, which cannot be, by any false spirit, counterfeited: and this Spirit doth open first the eye, and then the Word, and doth in that discover 'notas insitas veritatis,' those marks of truth and certainty there, which are as apparent as the light, which is, without any other medium, by itself discerned.⁸¹

Following Reynolds belief that Word and Spirit work together,

⁸¹Reynolds, Whole Works, 1:462-63.

Professor Wayne Spear, an author of the Testimony, noted the ways in which Word and Spirit work together as supreme judge. Discussing the phrase, "the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture," Spear said negatively, this phrase denies that there is any human being or institution which can give a final verdict in controversies. Positively, this phrase teaches that the Spirit is the "living judge who renders decisions in disputed cases." The Spirit who reveals the Word is illuminating the minds of believers so they may correctly interpret it. "Thus it is not the Spirit apart from Scripture, nor the Scripture without the teaching of the Spirit, but both together." Religious disputes are to be settled by use of a prayerful and humble appeal to the Spirit and the Word.⁸²

The Testimony chose to address Sections 9 and 10 of the Confession together in 9b of the Testimony. The Testimony indicates agreement with the Confession in the matter of the Spirit speaking through Scripture as the supreme judge. In the context of a discussion on modern evangelical hermeneutics, the Testimony adds an explanation of the role that the counsel of believers and theologians and the creeds of the church are to play in aiding the grammatical-historical method. These contemporary additions are evidence of the Reformed Presbyterian belief that God continues to teach His people from Scripture, and that the church has a responsibility to confessionalize this knowledge.

Summary

This chapter began with a discussion of the purposes of Scripture.

⁸²Wayne R. Spear, "The Westminster Assembly and Biblical Interpretation" in The Book of Books, ed. John H. White (n. p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 51-52.

Jack Rogers argued that salvation was the primary purpose of Scripture and that therefore the Bible was not an encyclopedia. The evidence of the Confession showed that the Westminster Assembly did not call any purpose of Scripture primary in the Westminster Standards. It was also shown that Rogers' conclusion was not based on his proposition. The members of the Westminster Assembly saw the Bible as authoritative in any and every area it addressed. The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony agrees with the Confession about the purposes of Scripture and adds sections rejecting the view that the Bible is only partly inspired, a section aimed at the supporters of Fuller Seminary where Rogers is a professor.

In a related issue the Scriptures were considered "sufficient" by the Confession. This means that the church does not need other authorities than the Bible, and that additions to or deletions from the Scriptures are forbidden. The Testimony supports this position and states its rejection of revelations outside the Bible, whether personal, or in the decisions and actions of the church.

The phrase, "good and necessary consequence," tells much about the methods of biblical interpretation used in the Westminster Confession. The Westminster Assembly held that both the implications and the explicit statements of Scripture are binding. They proved this by appealing to the use of good and necessary consequence by Christ and other inspired authors in interpreting the Old Testament. These implications must be necessary or certain, not possible or probable. As a corollary of this, they rejected the use of allegorical interpretation. The Testimony shows its agreement with the Confession by silence and its use of good and necessary consequence in deriving its stances on issues like abortion.

Sections 7 and 8 of the Confession teach that the way of salvation found in the Holy Scriptures is so clear that the unlearned can understand it, and that the definitive biblical texts are found in the Greek and Hebrew editions. The Confession encourages the translation of the Bible into common languages. The Testimony adds the responsibility of denominations to evaluate translations and to advise their members about them.

The Confession chapter closed with two major sections on the authority of the Bible. Scripture is the only "infallible" interpreter of Scripture. This means Scripture has only one sense, and the difficult passages must be interpreted by the clearer. The supreme judge in religious disputes is the "Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures." While the exact meaning of this phrase cannot be determined with certainty from the resources available, this author favors the view that the Holy Spirit helps men to understand the meaning of the Bible, which He revealed, as men consider its meaning in determining judgments. The emphasis on Scripture as supreme judge in the Confession is not meant to abolish church councils. The Westminster Assembly understood the authority of church councils as binding, as long as their decisions are limited to matters the Bible addresses and the decisions conform to Scripture.

The Testimony chapter closes with a section that covers the last two Confession sections. It endorses the grammatical-historical method of interpretation including an encouragement for the use of historical Christian interpretations of Bible passages. It closes with a reminder that the purpose of biblical study is obedience to the will of God.

CHAPTER VI

WORSHIP AND BIBLICAL AUTHORITY IN THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION AND THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN TESTIMONY: A CASE STUDY

This chapter will use worship as a case study to show how the Westminster Assembly applied its doctrine of Biblical Authority to derive its teachings on other subjects. There are several reasons for this choice. First, worship combines the areas normally referred to as practice, doctrine and ethics. Thus it gives great insight into all three areas. Second, worship was not as controversial in the Westminster Assembly as the other comprehensive choice, church polity. Professor Robert Paul observed that worship was instead an area of unity among the Westminster Divines, saying, "There was no fundamental difference in their understanding of the sacraments and Christian worship, and the variations were largely procedural and culturally inspired."¹ Less research has been done in worship than polity, so there is a greater need to discuss worship. Finally, it is an issue of great importance in both the Westminster Confession and the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony.

¹Robert S. Paul, The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the 'Grand Debate' (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985, p. 360), footnote 14.

The Directory for Worship

The historical background of the Westminster Assembly shows that one of its goals was to reform worship according to the Word of God. Indeed, the Solemn League and Covenant, which served as the treaty between England and Scotland, and led to Scottish participation in the Westminster Assembly said,

That we shall . . . endeavour . . . the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the word of God, and example of the best reformed churches.² [Emphasis added.]

As a result of its mission, the Westminster Assembly wrote not only Confession and Catechism sections on worship, but also a directory for worship.³ The order for the Assembly to prepare a directory for worship was given by the two houses of Parliament on October 12, 1643. The work on the Directory was done primarily in 1644. The Directory was completed and passed Parliament on January 3, 1644/45.⁴

The principle application of Biblical authority in Chapter 21 of

²Westminster Assembly of Divines. The Confession of Faith the Larger and Shorter Catechisms with the Scripture Proofs at Large Together with the Sum of Saving Knowledge (n. p.: The Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1967), pp. 358-59.

³A critical edition of the Directory had been edited by Thomas Leishman, The Westminster Directory (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1901). The original title of the directory, A Directory for the Publique Worship of God throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, is found on p. 1 of Leishman.

⁴Alexander F. Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, 1897), p. 220-25. During the time of the Assembly England had not yet adopted the custom of starting the new year on January 1 rather than March 25, hence dates in the early part of the year are referred to with the slash. Scotland began the new year on the first of January.

the Confession, titled "Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day," is the regulative principle of worship, which is underlined in Section 1a below. The texts of the Westminster Confession and the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony follow:

Chap. 21.--Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day.

CONFESSION

1a. The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and with all the soul, and all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture. [Emphasis added.]

Romans 1:20; Acts 17:24; Psalm 119:68; Jer. 10:7; Psalm 31:23; Psalm 18:3; Romans 10:12; Psalm 62:8; Josh. 24:14; Mark 12:33; Deut. 12:32; Matt. 15:9; Acts 17:25; Matt. 4:9-10; Deut. 4:15-20; Exod. 20:4-6; Col. 2:23.

TESTIMONY

1b. All people are required to worship the true God, in a scriptural manner, with sincerity of heart. Sincerity cannot make unscriptural worship acceptable to God. Proper worship is to be conducted in an orderly manner. The tendency to emphasize ritual, liturgy and ceremony is contrary to the Scriptures.

Acts 24:16; John 16:2; Isa. 1:11-15; John 4:24; Heb. 10:19-22.

1c. Worship is to be offered only in accordance with God's appointment, and in harmony with the Scriptural principle that whatever is not commanded in the worship of God, by precept or example, is forbidden. Lev. 10:1-3; 2 Sam. 6:1-11; Matt. 15:8-9.

1d. The use of pictures or images of Jesus in worship, or as aids to devotion, is unscriptural. The Scriptures do not provide a sufficient description of his physical appearance to picture him. The work of artists should not be received as accurate representations of his person. Exod. 2:4-5.

CONFESSION

2a. Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and to Him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and, since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.

Matt. 4:10 with John 5:23 and 2 Cor. 13:14; Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10; Romans 1:25; John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 2:18; Col. 3:17.

3a. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men: and, that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of His Spirit, according to His will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue. Phil. 4:6; Psalm 65:2; John 14:13-14; 1 Peter 2:5; Romans 8:26; 1 John 5:14; Psalm 47:7; Eccles. 5:1-2; Heb. 12:28; Gen. 18:27; James 5:16; James 1:6-7; Mark 11:24; Matt. 6:12, 14-15; Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18; 1 Cor. 14:14.

4a. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter: but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death. 1 John 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; John 17:20; 2 Sam. 7:29; Ruth 4:12; 2 Sam. 12:21-23 with Luke 16:15-26; Rev. 14:13; 1 John 5:16.

5a. The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: beside religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner. Acts 15:21; Rev. 1:3; 2 Tim. 4:2; James 1:22, Acts 10:33; Matt. 13:19; Heb. 4:2; Isa. 66:2; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; James 5:13; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-19; Acts 2:42; Deut. 6:13 with Neh. 10:29; Isa. 19:21 with Eccles. 5:4-5; Joel 2:12; Esther 4:16; Matt. 9:15; 1 Cor. 7:5; Psalm 107 throughout; Esther 9:22; Heb. 12:28.

TESTIMONY

5b. Public prayer is to accompany the reading and preaching of the Word. Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:13-19.

5c. Singing God's praise is part of public worship in which the whole congregation should join. The Book of Psalms, consisting of inspired psalms, hymns and songs, is the divinely authorized manual of praise. The use of other songs in worship is not authorized in the Scriptures. The Greek words in the New Testament which are translated "psalm," "hymn" and "song" all appear in the Septuagint (Greek) version of the Book of Psalms. Psalm 95:2; 40:3(4); 96:1; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Mark 14:26; 1 Cor. 14:26; James 5:13.

5d. The Psalms are to be sung without the accompaniment of instruments, which are not part of the New Testament pattern of worship. Musical instruments were commanded for use with the offering of sacrifices

in the Old Testament temple worship. The death of Christ being the perfect and final sacrifice brought an end to this way of worship. There is neither command for nor example of the use of musical instruments in the words or practice of Christ and the apostles. The command of the New Testament is to offer the sacrifice of praise - the fruit of our lips. Num. 10:10; 2 Chron. 29:25-30; Heb. 9:12; 13:15.

5e. Religious fasting is an ordinance of God in which the believer voluntarily abstains from food for a season for the purpose of seeking the will of God, strength for service or deeper spirituality. It should be accompanied by meditation, self-examination, humiliation before God, confession of sin, repentance and renewed dedication to a life of obedience.

Exod. 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8; Dan. 10:2-3; Joel 1:14; 2:12-13, 15; Matt. 4:2; 6:16-18; Mark 9:29; Acts 13:2-3.

5f. The presentation of tithes and offerings is warranted as part of worship.

1 Cor. 16:1-2; Mal. 3:10; 1 Chron. 29:6-13; Exod. 23:15.

CONFESSION

6a. Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the Gospel either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshipped everywhere, in spirit and truth; as, in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself; so, more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, called thereunto.

John 4:21; Mal. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:8; John 4:23-24; Jer. 10:25; Deut. 6:6-7; Job 1:5; 2 Sam. 6:18, 20; 1 Peter 3:7; Acts 10:2; Matt. 6:11; Matt. 6:6; Eph. 6:18; Isa. 56:6-7; Heb. 10:25; Prov. 1:20-21, 24; Prov. 8:34; Acts 13:42; Luke 4:16; Acts 2:42.

TESTIMONY

6b. Heads of families are responsible for leadership in family worship.

Gen. 18:19; Eph. 6:4.

6c. Worship in small groups is also encouraged by the Scripture. Acts 5:42; 12:12.

CONFESSION

7a. As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be sent apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the

resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.

Exod. 20:8, 10-11; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6-7; Gen. 2:2-3; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10; Exod. 20:8, 10 with Matt. 5:17-18.

TESTIMONY

7b. We reject the teaching that the Fourth Commandment is no longer binding under the New Testament.

CONFESSION

8a. This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs before-hand, do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up, the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy. Exod. 20:8; Exod. 16:23, 25-26, 29-30; Exod. 31:15-17; Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15-19, 21-22; Isa 58:13; Matt. 12:1-13.⁵

The Regulative Principle of Worship

The regulative principle of worship is not an innovation of the Westminster Assembly. Its roots go back at least to John Calvin.⁶ George Gillespie wrote that the regulative principle was well established by the time of the Westminster Assembly, and cited the Reformed theologians Jerome Zanchi and John Calvin in support of the principle.⁷ As the

⁵Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (Pittsburgh: Reformed Presbyterian Church, Board of Education and Publication, 1980), pp. 50-54.

⁶For a brief history of the Regulative Principle, see Michael Bushell, The Songs of Zion (Pittsburgh: Crown and Covenant Publications, 1980), pp. 10-16.

⁷George Gillespie, A Dispyte against the English-Popish Ceremonies, Obtrvded vpon the Chvrch of Scotland. Wherein Not Only Our Owne Arguments against the Same Are Strongly Confirmed, But Likewise the Answeres and Defense of Our Opposites, Svch As Hooker, Mortovne, Bvrges, Sprint, Paybody, Andrewes, Saravia, Tilen, Spotswood, Lindsey, Forbesse, &c Particularly Confuted (n. p.: n. p., 1637), pt. 3, pp. 93, 121-22.

evidence below will show the regulative principle was the source of a major controversy between the Puritan-Presbyterian party and the Anglicans. It was particularly sensitive because worship involved every believer on every Sunday. No other Puritan-Anglican controversy confronted believers so forcefully every time they attended church.

The Definition of the Regulative Principle

The regulative principle of worship states that the only way to worship God is in the manner that He has commanded in the Holy Scripture, all additions to or subtractions from this manner are forbidden. This is consistent with the view that the Bible is sufficient for all good works and that it is the only judge in spiritual matters expressed in Chapter 1 of the Confession. The regulative principle teaches that the proper way to determine how to worship is to study the Bible to determine what acts of worship God has commanded and do only those things. Obviously, Christ fulfilled some rites of Old Testament worship, such as sacrifices, and these are not to be used in Christian worship. However, the acts of Old Testament worship that are of grace and not judgment, like singing Psalms, are still suitable forms of worship as are the New Testament acts of worship such as the sacraments. The regulative principle is the consistent application of the "Assembly's position was that nothing could be taught or required as necessary which was not found in the Bible."⁸

George Gillespie's observations are helpful in defining the regulative principle. Gillespie believed that God, by His authority alone,

⁸Wayne R. Spear, "The Westminster Assembly and Biblical Interpretation," in *The Book of Books*, ed. John H. White (n. p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978), p. 46.

bound men to believe whatever He told them to believe and, by means of the Word, He revealed what He wanted men to believe about worship.⁹

Gillespie believed that

Jesus Christ hath prescribed and fore appointed the rule according to which he would have his worship . . . of his own house to be ordered. . . . Neither ought the voice of any to take place or be rested upon in the church but the voice of Christ alone.¹⁰

Gillespie said that the use of authorities other than Jesus Christ to determine the ceremonies of worship results in the introduction of sources of authority other than God into the church. The regulative principle of worship was thus considered a defense of God's unique authority in the church, a doctrine taught in Chapter 1 of the Confession.

While critics of the regulative principle viewed it as overly restrictive, the authors of the Confession viewed it as liberating. The Divines realized that it meant, first, that they were free of the burden of the ceremonial law with its external forms. Edward Reynolds gave the position of the authors of the Confession as follows,

We have hereby a great encouragement to serve our God in Spirit and in Truth (John iv.24), being delivered from all those burdensome accessions . . .¹¹

Having been freed from the ceremonial law, the Confession's authors were uncompromising in their desire to defend worship against the

⁹Gillespie, A Dispvte against the English-Popish Ceremonies, pt. 3, p. 176.

¹⁰George Gillespie, One Hundred and Eleven Propositions Concerning the Ministry and Government of the Church (London: Evan Tyler, 1647; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), pp. 5-6.

¹¹Edward Reynolds, The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds, D. D., 6 vols. (London: Printed for B. Holdsworth, 1826), 3:120.

man-made ceremonial law of the Romanists and Anglicans. Thus they viewed the regulative principle as not a legalistic restriction, but a defence of God's worship against human interference, including the adding of adiphora. One function of it was to prevent the church or any other authority from usurping God's right to be worshipped in His way.

The Westminster Assembly did make a distinction between circumstances of worship and acts of worship, which will be discussed in more detail below. Circumstances were things surrounding the worship service, such as time and place. Acts of worship are the spiritually significant parts of worship, like Bible reading and prayer. This distinction between acts and circumstances of worship can be seen in the Assembly's directory for worship. The Directory makes a clear distinction between what is commanded by God in worship and what is recommended by men in circumstances surrounding worship. Mitchell described the Directory's distinctions in these words,

I know of no formulary of the same sort which is so free from minute and harassing regulations as to posture, gestures, dresses, church pomp, ceremonies, symbolism, and other "superfluities," as Hales terms them, which "under pretext of order and decency" had crept into the church and more and more had restricted the liberty and burdened the conscience of its ministers . . . As has been well said, "The obligation to practice is not the same when it is described in the Directory as necessary, requisite, expedient, convenient," lawful, or sufficient, or when it is directed, advised, or recommended, nor finally when it is provided "in one place that the minister is to, or shall, in another may," or in another let him, "do such and such things."¹²

The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony shows its adherence to the Westminster Confession by reaffirming the regulative principle of worship in Sections 1b and 1c. Here the Testimony departs from its usual practice

¹²Mitchell, The Westminster Assembly, p. 238. Mitchell does not give the sources of his quotations.

of signifying agreement with the Westminster Confession by silence, because this issue is still controversial. Section 1b is aimed at both those who argue that sincerity of intention without obeying God's regulations about worship is acceptable to Him, and those who argue that obedience without sincerity is enough. It also rejects liturgical worship because it is not taught in the Bible. Section 1c is a modern restatement of the regulative principle of worship.

Section 1d relates to a matter controversial within the Reformed Presbyterian Church. While many Sunday School publishers use illustrations with pictures of Christ, Larger Catechism Question 109 forbids any visible representation of the members of the Trinity. This left the Reformed Presbyterian Church with a problem with respect to the use of these materials. Section 1d gives the Reformed Presbyterian solution to the problem. In partial agreement with the Confession and Catechisms, the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony held that images of Jesus Christ cannot be used in worship. However, the Testimony moved a step back from the Catechism's position by not completely forbidding images of Christ.¹³

Proofs for the Regulative Principle of Worship

The proofs for the regulative principle and their relation to the Westminster doctrine of Biblical authority will be examined.

¹³Interview with Drs. E. Clark Copeland, Wayne R. Spear, and J. Renwick Wright, Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 1986. These seminary faculty were members of the Committee that rewrote the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony. Hereafter this will be called, Interview with the Testimony Revision Committee. The Testimony signifies its agreement with the Confession by silence. Unfortunately, no minutes of the Testimony Revision Committee were kept.

Proof for the Regulative Principle
from the Sufficiency of Scripture

Robert Harris used a major pillar of the doctrine of Biblical authority to defend the regulative principle of worship, the sufficiency of Scripture. He argued for the regulative principle from the Scriptures' description of the very gestures of Christ in God's worship. He said that the two reasons why Christians were informed of these gestures were for the instruction of believers, and because God wanted us to know that His eye is upon every worshipper. Using these two observations, he attacked the Roman doctrine of worship that taught the Bible was not sufficient for worship. The Romanists taught that the Bible contained only a partial rule that had to be supplemented by men. Harris argued that the Roman conclusions were defective and gave his reasons as follows:

What? doth God descend to circumstantials, and is he defective in the substance? . . . Doth he acquaint us with the very gestures of our Saviour, and in the meane leave out some doctrines and articles? Doth he record the Saints salutations one to another, and over slip necessarie instructions of his owne? Let bastards emplead his last Will and Testament whilst they please, as if it were imperfect, every true son will say with their elder brother, I adore the fulnesse of the Scripture.¹⁴

Here an author of the Confession used good and necessary consequence to derive the regulative principle of worship. Because the Scripture includes small details, it is sufficient for all acts of worship, and therefore, human innovations in worship imply that the Bible is insufficient and imperfect.

¹⁴Robert Harris, The Workes of Robert Harris, Bachelor in Divinity and Pastor of Hanwell, in Oxford-Shire. Revised and in Sundrie Places Corrected, and Now Collected into One Volume (London: Printed by R. Y. for J. Bartlet, 1635), p. 245.

Harris also answered those who argued God is a Spirit, and His worship is spiritual, therefore believers do not have to be concerned about the actions of their bodies. This attacks the regulative principle by saying it is irrelevant. Harris replied, yes, God is a Spirit, and men are to worship Him in spirit and truth, but He made the body as well as the soul. The body will be redeemed as well as the soul. Therefore be concerned about feet, eyes and ears, for God is concerned with gestures in His presence. And do not show poor manners and act like a clown in God's presence.¹⁵

Proof for the Regulative Principle
from Christian Liberty

From the time of the vestments controversy discussed above, the Anglican additions to worship had given a number of sincere believers serious conscience problems. They believed that these innovations were not worship, and, therefore, had problems of conscience every time they participated in worship. One goal of the Westminster Assembly was to protect believers with sensitive consciences.

In Chapter 20 of the Confession one learns that the Westminster Assembly distinguished several parts of christian liberty. These are freedom from sin and the wrath of God, free access to God, freedom from the ceremonial law, and, in section 2 freedom "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." It is the last freedom, called liberty of conscience, that authors of the Confession used to prove the

¹⁵Ibid.

regulative principle. Because God left men's consciences free from the doctrines and commands of men, the church is forbidden to teach or command anything the Bible does not. This prohibition extends to adiaphora as well as sins. In worship the church is forbidden to add rites and ceremonies to those found in the Bible, because the conscience is to be free of human requirements.

Samuel Rutherford, an author of the Confession, used christian liberty to derive the regulative principle of worship. Rutherford defined christian liberty as, 1. Freedom from the Ceremonial Law (Gal. 5:1-5) and the commandments of men, "for all these Ceremonies being now not commanded, but forbidden of God, become the Commandements of (Col. 2:18, 19, 20) men, from which the Jewes and Gentiles were freed in Christ." 2. Freedom and redemption (Gal. 3:10-13) from the moral law's cursing and condemning by Jesus who makes men free (John 8:36). 3. Freedom from the dominion of sin (Romans 6:12-14) by the spirit of grace. 4. Freedom from the necessity of being justified by the law or its works (Romans 8:15). 5. Freedom from the law-power of our enemies.¹⁶

Rutherford realized that the Anglicans did not accept his position that christian liberty was harmed by additions to worship that Anglicans believed were indifferent and voluntary. In answer to an opponent, Rutherford gave his position on christian liberty, worship, and things

¹⁶Samuel Rutherford, A Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist. Opening the Secrets of Familisme and Antinomianisme in the Antichristian Doctrine of John Saltmarsh, and Will. Del, the Present Preachers of the Army Now in England, and of Robert Town, Rob. Crisp, H. Denne, Eaton, and Others. In Which Is Revealed the Rise and Spring of Antinomians, Familists, Libertines, Swenck-feldians, Enthysiasts, &c (London: Printed by J. D. & R. I. For Andrew Croke, 1648), pt. 2, pp. 93-94.

indifferent. The opponent declared that christian liberty is not restrained by doing or not doing a thing indifferent, for no laws should be made by the church concerning things indifferent. The opponent continued, christian liberty is not hurt if the ceremonies are voluntary and are not made requirements, if they are not made necessary to salvation, and if they be held as alterable by human authority. Rutherford replied saying that the objection was incorrectly stated. The issue is not whether the use of things indifferent lays a bond on christian liberty, but whether the church has the authority to

make a law of things indifferent; when there is no intrinsecall necessitie in the things themselves, [however] when necessities of edification layeth on a tye [a rope tied to something], Christian libertie is not indeed restrained, for God then layeth on a bond.¹⁷

He continued citing Col. 2:21 and Gal. 2:18 to show men are dead with Christ to external observations and thus free from them. In other words, Samuel Rutherford attacked the right of the church to make the rules on things indifferent, rather the restraint of christian liberty. If the church had no authority from God to make rules concerning adiaphora, then there will always be christian liberty, because the church will only be requiring things commanded by God.

Rutherford gave another reason for opposing the Anglican position described above. Rutherford could not understand how the ceremonies were left free to the individual's conscience because the church could alter them. He concluded that practices like crossing and surplices signified

¹⁷Samuel Rutherford, The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication: or a Peaceable Dispute for the Perfection of the Holy Scripture in Point of Ceremonies and Church Government; in Which the Removal of the Service Book is Justified (London: Printed by John Field for Christopher Meredith, 1646), pt. 2, p. 57.

dedication to Christianity in all the world, so these cannot be called national, alterable rites, but must be called universal rites, which are therefore "at all times, and in all places doctrinall."¹⁸ In other words, these practices were so deeply imbedded into the church that they could not be considered alterable, but had to be considered doctrinal.

George Gillespie also advocated christian liberty against the Anglican additions to worship. He accused the prelates of enforcing ceremonies "after the heathenish and popish manner." In contrast Gillespie desired the "the ancient apostolical simplicity and singleness," because ceremonies distract the minds of the people "from the spiritual and inward duties."¹⁹ Here Gillespie combined the christian liberty argument with the frequently used Puritan-Presbyterian argument that the early church was the pattern for the Christian church and applied it to worship. This was his alternative to the prelates' system.

Gillespie was also aware of the adiaphora question. He observed that, although Anglican prelates called their religious innovations things indifferent, their ceremonies were a cause of great scandal among the godly who regarded the ceremonies as ungodly and contrary to the Word. To protect these people the Puritan movement had adopted the charitable position that "things indifferent ought not to be practiced with the

¹⁸Ibid., pt. 2, pp. 57-8.

¹⁹George Gillespie, A Treatise of Miscellany Questions; Wherein Many Useful Questions and Cases of Conscience are Discussed and Resolved, for the Satisfaction of Those Who Desire Nothing More than to Search for and Find Out Precious Truths in the Controversies of these Times (Edinburgh: Printed by George Lithgow for George Swintoun, 1649; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 1, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), p. 83.

scandal and offence of the godly."²⁰

Gillespie continued declaring that the way of the prelates was destructive to liberty of conscience and practice because it compelled practices by the will and authority of the prelates, an authority that God had not given them. He concluded with the Puritan-Presbyterian position, saying

We say that no canons nor constitutions of the church can bind the conscience . . . except in so far as they are grounded upon and warrantable by the word of God, at least by consequence, and by the general rules thereof; and that canons concerning things indifferent bind not . . . when they may be omitted without giving scandal, or showing any contempt of the ecclesiastical authority.²¹

It is clear that the authors of the Confession believed that the Christian's liberty from the commands of men forbid the church's adding man-made ceremonies to worship even if these ceremonies were considered matters indifferent. This limitation of ecclesiastical authority was simply an application of the Westminster doctrine of Biblical sufficiency as applied to christian liberty. The Puritan-Presbyterians saw the additions to worship as usurping of God's authority, as revealed in the Bible, as the only ruler of men's consciences and as the judge of what is allowable in worship. The principles of Biblical authority used by the authors of the Confession here are God as the author of Scripture and the Bible as the sole authoritative judge of religious disputes.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

Proof for the Regulative Principle
from the Second Commandment

The next proof to be considered is that from the Second Commandment, the prohibition against idols. The Westminster Assembly's position that the Second Commandment taught the regulative principle is clearly shown in the following Westminster Larger Catechism questions with their Scriptural proofs:

Q. 107. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve the: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous god, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Exod. 20:4-6.

Q. 108. What are the duties required in the second commandment?

A. The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances God hath instituted in his Word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; the reading, preaching and hearing of the Word; the administration and receiving of the sacraments; church government and discipline; the ministry and maintenance thereof; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God, and vowing unto him: as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.

Deut. 32:46-47; Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 6:13-14; Phil. 4:6; Deut. 17:18-19; Acts 15:21; 2 Tim. 4:2; James 1:21-22; Acts 10:33; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor 11:23-30; Matt. 18:15-17; Matt. 16:19; 1 Corinthians 5; 12:28; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 Cor. 9:7-15; Joel 2:12-13; Deut. 6:13; Isa. 9:21; Psalm 76:11; Acts 17:16-17; Psalm 16:4; Deut. 7:5; Isa. 30:22.

Q. 109. What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counselling, commanding, using, and any wise approving, any religious

worship not instituted by God himself; tolerating a false religion; the making any representation of God, of all or any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshipping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, through under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.

Num. 15:39; Deut. 13:6-8; Hosea 5:11; Micah 6:16; 1 Kings 11:33; 12:33; Deut. 12:30-32; Deut. 13:6-12; Zech. 13:2-3; Rev. 2:2, 14-15, 20; 17:12, 16-17; Deut. 4:15-19; Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:21-23, 25; Dan. 3:18; Gal. 4:8; Exod. 32:5, 8; 1 Kings 18:26, 28; Isa. 65:11; Acts 17:22; Col. 2:21-23; Mal. 1:7-8, 14; Deut. 4:2; Psalm 106:39; Matt. 15:9, 1 Pet. 1:18; Jer. 54:17; Isa. 65:3-5; Gal. 1:13-14; 1 Sam. 13:11-12; 1 Sam. 15:21; Acts 8:18; Romans 2:22; Mal. 3:8; Exod. 4:24-26; Matt. 22:5; Mal. 1:7, 13; Matt. 23:13; Acts 13:44-45; 1 Thess. 2:15-16.

Q. 110. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments; are, besides God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us, his fervent zeal for his own worship, and his revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom; accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations; and esteeming the observers of it such as love him and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.

Exod. 20:5-6; Psalm 45:11; Rev. 15:3-4; Exod. 34:13-14; 1 Cor. 10:20-22; Jer. 7:18-20; Ezek. 16:26-27; Deut. 32:16-20; Hosea 2:2-4; Deut. 5:29.

The above evidence shows that the Westminster Assembly believed the Second Commandment taught the regulative principle of worship. This application of the Second Commandment was not original. James Ussher, a major influence on the Assembly, taught that the regulative principle was

the application of the Second Commandment as can be seen from the following selections from his Body of Divinitie. Ussher said the command's meaning and purpose was,

To binde all men to that solemne forme of religious Worship which God himselfe in his Word prescribeth, that we serve him, not according to our fancies, but according to his owne will, Deut. 12.32. [Emphasis his.]²²

Ussher continued by asking, what is forbidden in the Second Commandment? He answered,

Every forme of Worship, though of the true God, Deut. 12. 31. contrary to, or diverse from the prescript of Gods Word, Mat. 15.9. called by the Apostle Will-worship, Col. 2.23. together with all corruption in the true Worship of God, 2^d King. 16.10. and all lust and inclination of heart unto superstitious Poms, and Rites in the service of God.²³

James Ussher influenced the Westminster Assembly's conclusion that the Second Commandment taught the regulative principle of worship.

Because of the above evidence from the Larger Catechism concerning the Second Commandment, it is not necessary to pursue the topic in detail among the authors of the Confession. However, one topic relating to the Second Commandment, that of "will-worship," will be considered. Following the usage of the King James Bible, the Puritans called the practice of adding human rites and ceremonies to worship services, "will-worship," from the term's usage in Col. 2:23. Anglicans and Puritans agreed that will-worship was a sin, but their definitions of this sin varied.

In the last quotation, James Ussher taught that will-worship was a sin. Naturally the Anglicans disagreed with his understanding of

²²James Ussher, A Body of Divinitie, or the Svmmme and Svbstance of Christian Religion (London: Printed by M. F. for Tho: Dovvnes and Geo: Badger, 1645), p. 222.

²³Ibid.

will-worship. One, Thomas Coleman, argued that will-worship pertained only to the essentials of worship. Gillespie replied that Coleman's view served as permission for men to add any Jewish, papist, or heathen ceremonies they wanted unless those practices could be proved contrary to the Word of God.²⁴ The difference concerning will-worship revolved around the burden of proof question. The Puritans argued that no ceremony could be allowed in worship unless commanded in the Scripture. The Anglicans argued that any ceremony in worship was allowed unless it was forbidden in Scripture. That is the key to their different definitions of will-worship. If the Puritan-Presbyterian proof of the regulative principle of worship stands, then they win the debate, otherwise the Anglicans win. The Puritan-Presbyterians evidence is emphasized in this chapter.

Proof for the Regulative Principle
from the Positive Commands of Scripture

Related also to the Second Commandment is the method of biblical interpretation that the Puritan-Presbyterians used on the law of God. The principle they used teaches that the positive command forbids the negative practice. For example, when the Bible says, Go to all the earth and preach the Gospel, it forbids the negative, here, staying in Jerusalem and being silent. Again, when God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, He forbid his going to Tarshish instead. Jonah learned by a hard experience that the negative aspect of the command did not need to be explicitly stated by

²⁴George Gillespie, Male Audis; or, An Answer to Mr. Coleman's Male Dicis (London: Printed for Robert Bostocke, 1646; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844), p. 17.

God. (See Jonah 1:2 for the command.) Here the Westminster divines again made use of good and necessary consequence in drawing implications from the Bible.

Samuel Rutherford took the position that the positive commands with respect to worship forbid any other practices of worship, even in the smallest matters,²⁵ and defended his position from the Bible. In answer to the question, "Whether or not Humane Ceremonies in Gods Worship, can consist [co-exist] with the perfection of Gods Word?" Rutherford replied,

These humane Ceremonies we cannot but reject upon these grounds;
Our first Argument is: Every positive and Religious observance, and Rite in Gods worship, not warranted by Gods Word, is unlawful: But humane Ceremonies are such: Ergo,
 The Proposition is sure, the holy Spirit useth a Negative Argument, Act. 15.24. We gave no such Commandment, Levit. 10:1. Jer. 7.30. and 19:5,6. and 32:35. 2 Sam. 7.7. 1 Chron. 15.13. The Lord Commanded not this, Ergo, It is not Lawfull.²⁶ [Emphasis and punctuation his.]

The examples used above by Rutherford concern sins not forbidden in the Bible. For example, in Jer. 19:5-6, God condemns Israel for burning its sons to Baal, "which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind." Here Rutherford used an example of the Old Testament's positive commands regarding worship forbidding all other practices of worship, an argument that uses the principle of "good and necessary consequence."

Thomas Gataker supported the above position that the positive command forbids the negative. In the following quotation, he taught that

²⁵Rutherford, Divine Right of Church-Government, p. 95.

²⁶Ibid. The emphasis and punctuation are identical to that of the original. The quoted passage is from Acts 15:24. Unfortunately, the original punctuation makes this unclear.

the positive command implies the negative and vice versa. He wrote,

there are in Gods Law as well affirmatives as negatives; yea that as every affirmative includeth a negative, so every negative hath an affirmative infolded in it: and that there is (Deut. 27.26. Gal. 3.10.) a curse imposed as a penalty as well on the breach of the one, as of the breach on the other: and that the one is as well broken by the omission of that that therein is enjoyned, as the other by the practise of that that therein is inhibited.²⁷

To understand Gataker's position better, the following example will be used. Here he applied the principle that the positive forbids the negative to the sacraments, showing how the sacraments could be abused without this principle to protect them. He observed,

And in many cases it holdeth onely therefore: For why we should use water and not wine in Baptisme: Why bread, rather than roasted flesh in the Lord's Supper, and why bread onely and not cheese too, as some haue vsed, no reason can be rendred, but because God so pleased to determine the elements in either. [His emphasis.]²⁸

Gataker believed that if the positive commands of Scripture did not forbid their negative-counter parts havoc could be done to the celebration of the sacraments.

Havoc could also be done to the church by a sloppy application of the principle that the positive command forbids the negative and vice versa. The Westminster Divines were careful in the application of this principle. For example, in the Larger Catechism quotation above, if one examines the negative and positive commands in the questions and the corresponding Scripture proofs, one finds that no negative or positive duty

²⁷Thomas Gataker, Certaine Sermons, First Preached, and after Published at Severall Times (London: Printed by John Haviland for Fulke Clifton, 1637), pt. 2, p. 51.

²⁸Thomas Gataker, A Ivst Defence of Certaine Passages in a Former Treatise Concerning the Nature and Vse of Lots, Against Such Exceptions and Oppositions as Haue Beene Made Thereunto by Mr. I. B (London: Printed by John Haviland for Robert Bird, 1623), p. 264.

is derived from the Second Commandment that the Divines did not furnish a text of Scripture for in the proofs following the answer.

The Westminster Divines also carefully limited the application of this principle to subjects that God has limited by positive or negative commandments, like worship, thus leaving others areas of life as adiaphora. For example, Thomas Gataker wrote,

an Action may haue warrant sufficient by permission without precept or practise. For where God hath not limited the vse of any Creature or ordinance, there he hath left the vse of it free. Where he hath not determined the circumstances of any action, there what he hath not prohibited, that hath he permitted, and that is warrant sufficient for it. Where therefore circumstances are determined, the argument holdeth from the negatiue to make that vnwarrantable, that is not either expresly or by good consequence inioyned. But where they are not determined, the argument is strong enough from the negatiue to proue that warrantable that is not either expresly or by iust consequence prohibited.

For this cause in the point of Gods worship the argument holdeth (Jer. 7.31 & 19.5, Coloss. 2.22,23.) from the negatiue for the substance of it, because (Deut. 12.30,31,32) God hath determined it.²⁹

While the Westminster Assembly believed the Bible taught that affirmative commands forbid their negative counter-parts, it applied this rule with great caution, and only applied the rule in areas like worship that God had authoritatively addressed; other areas were considered adiaphora. Good and necessary consequence was used in deriving and defending the rule that a positive command forbid other actions by implication.

Proof for the Regulative Principle

from Uniformity

The next proof for the regulative principle is also a implied one, the proof from uniformity. The goal of the Westminster Assembly was

²⁹Ibid., pp. 244-45.

religious uniformity in Great Britain and Ireland. The Assembly's members realized that this uniformity could only be accomplished if they derived the church's ethics, doctrines and practices solely from the Bible. With the exception of Gillespie, the authors of the Confession had little to say about uniformity. This does not necessarily mean that they were not concerned with it, since a commonly accepted idea is frequently not discussed because it is not controversial. The actions of the Westminster Assembly show its concern with uniformity in writing the Confession, the Catechisms, the directories for worship and church government, and the psalter.

George Gillespie gave a biblical proof for uniformity in the church. Gillespie first stated his love for uniformity and then condemned the Anglican ordinances as being a defective uniformity because of their human origin as "commandments of men" (Col. 2:22 and Matt. 15:9). Next he argued for uniformity from nature, and gave several Bible passages that teach uniformity in nature, such Job 38:31-33, relating to uniformity in the heavens, Gen. 8:22, on uniformity in seed time and harvest not ceasing, and Jesus' prediction of uniformity in nature found in John 4:35 (four months till harvest). Next, Gillespie gave biblical proofs from the Old Testament of "uniformity both in the substantials and rituals of the worship and service of God." Old Testament texts used to support uniformity included: Num. 9:13, commanding that the passover is to be kept at the appointed time in the appointed way; Exod. 12:49 commanding one law for home-born and stranger; the rules on sacrifices in

Leviticus 1-7; and the services of Levities in 1 Chron. 23:26.³⁰

With that as a base, Gillespie moved to the New Testament for additional proof. He observed,

Of the church of the New Testament it was prophesied, that God would give them one way as well as one heart, Jer. xxxii. 39; that there shall not only be one Lord, but his name one, Zech. xiv. 9. We are exhorted to walk by the same rule, so far as we have attained; that it, to study uniformity, not diversity, in those things which are agreed upon to be good and right, Phil. iii.16. Doth not the Apostle plainly intimate and commend an uniformity in the worship of God, 1 Cor. xiv.27, "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret;" ver. 33, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints;" ver. 40, "Let all things be done decently, and in order"? He limiteth the prophets to the same number of two or three, even as he limiteth those that had the gift of tongues, ver. 29. And was it not a great uniformity, that he would have every man who prayed or prophesied to have his head uncovered, and every woman covered, 1 Cor. xi.? Doth not the same Apostle, besides the doctrine of faith, and practical duties of a Christian life, deliver several canons to be observed in the ordination and admission of elders and deacons, concerning widows, concerning accusations, administrations, censures, and other things belonging to church policy, as appeareth especially from the epistles to Timothy and Titus?³¹

Because he believed that uniformity was taught by the Bible, George Gillespie had a deep and sincere desire for uniformity in the churches of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. To have that uniformity, worship must be based, not on human innovations, but on the practices of worship found in the Bible. This lead Gillespie to the regulative principle of worship.

Gillespie's argument on uniformity used the principles of Biblical authority taught in Chapter 1 of the Westminster Confession. These principles are Scripture as the final judge in determining the doctrine of

³⁰Gillespie, Treatise of Miscellany Questions, pp. 82-84.

³¹Ibid., pp. 84-85.

uniformity, the analogy of faith, which uses Scripture to interpret Scripture, and some use of good and necessary consequence, first, in drawing the conclusion that uniformity forbids human rites and ceremonies, and, secondly, in the application of some biblical texts, like seed time and harvest not ceasing, to this question.

In this section the proofs for the regulative principle of worship have been examined. The authors of the Confession used the sufficiency of Scripture, christian liberty, the Second Commandment, the principle that positive commands forbid their negatives, and the doctrine of uniformity as proofs for the regulative principle. The use of these arguments involved principles of Biblical authority found in Chapter 1 of the Confession, especially the analogy of faith, good and necessary consequence, the sufficiency of Scripture, and Scripture as the sole judge of religious doctrines and practices.

The Circumstances of Worship

What about the circumstances of worship? All agree that not everything connected with worship is worship, these non-worship items include the shape of the building, the length of the service, seating and other items of no religious significance. The Westminster Divines addressed this issue in Confession Chapter 1:6a which reads,

there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

George Gillespie's discussion of circumstances is commonly used

to define the distinction between worship and circumstances.³² There are three conditions must be met for a matter to be a circumstance. First,

It must be onely a circumstance of Divine Worship, no substantiall part of it, no sacred significant and efficacious Ceremonie. For the order and decency left to the definition of the Church, as concerning the particulars of it, comprehendeth more, but mere circumstances.³³

Samuel Rutherford is of great help in understanding what is meant by circumstances. By circumstances Rutherford meant things merely natural (physical), and not spiritual, which included circumstances such as time and place. Circumstances are either merely physical, or merely moral, or partly moral and partly physical. The latter class he referred to as mixed circumstances. Circumstances that are entirely physical are adjuncts of worship, things that occur concurrently other civil and religious actions performed by men, but are not part of the actions. As adjuncts they contribute no moral goodness or badness to the agent in his performance. He listed some of the physical circumstances, namely, time, place, person or agent, name, family, condition (country, family, house), garments, and gestures, as sitting and standing.³⁴

Rutherford further clarified the meaning of this rule by showing that a physical circumstance can become a moral matter by God commanding it. The examples he used were the Lord's Day (the Christian Sabbath), the temple, and the apparel of the worshipper. Time is a circumstance or

³²Examples of the use of Gillespie are Bushell, The Songs of Zion, pp. 28-31, and Presbyterian Church in the United States, Memorial Volume of the Westminster Assembly, 1647-1897 (Richmond: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1897), p. 153.

³³Gillespie, A Dispvte against the English-Popish Ceremonies, pt. 3, p. 112.

³⁴Rutherford, Divine Right of Church-Government, pp. 2-3.

adjunct to worship. "But such a time, to wit, the Lords-day, is both the time of Worship, and Worship it self." So also there is a place of worship (circumstance) and the temple as a special place of worship (command). The clothing of a worshipper is an accident of worship, but if God commanded an ephod as the priests wore, then this is not a mere circumstance. Thus while these circumstances taken in the common and universal sense are merely physical, when God restricts them, they become moral circumstances.³⁵ Mixed circumstances will be discussed below.

Gillespie's second condition is that a circumstance is not determined by Scripture. He wrote,

That which the church may lawfully prescribe by her Lawes and ordinances, as a thing left her determination, must be one such things as were not determinable by Scripture . . . because individua are in-finita.³⁶

Gillespie above deals with the things relating to worship not mentioned in the Bible. He does not mean the acts of worship but is referring to the multitude of individual details that the Scripture does not address, such as the hours of worship for the thousands of churches on earth, the sizes and types of buildings, and other such individual, infinite details. For the Bible to specify such matters for every church in Christendom would be absurd.

The final condition for a circumstance is that must be a good reason for it, because of love for brethren with a tender conscience. For example the use of pews in church is a circumstance justified on the

³⁵Ibid., pp. 3-4.

³⁶Gillespie, A Dispyte against the English-Popish Ceremonies, pt. 3, p. 114.

basis that people worship better when they are more comfortable.

Gillespie wrote,

If the Church prescribe any thing lawfully so that she prescribe no more then she hath power given her to prescribe, her ordinance must be accompanied with some good reason and warrant given for the satisfaction of tender consciences.³⁷

Here too Samuel Rutherford is helpful in understanding Gillespie. He realized that while physical circumstances were not worship, they were important to worship, and the poor planning of circumstances could destroy a worship service. Rutherford called these "mixed circumstances," because the poor implementation of circumstances could destroy the worship service, and thus become a moral matter. Thus the time for worship, must be a convenient time, not a scandalous and superstitious time. A fit place is required for private worship, not the market place. The probability of inconvenient circumstances destroying worship makes them a moral matter.³⁸

The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony agrees with the Confession on the role of circumstances. It indicates agreement by silence.

The Practices of Worship

While a detailed discussion of the practices of worship are beyond the scope of this dissertation, some observations relating to Biblical authority must be made about them.³⁹ From the list given in the

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Rutherford, Divine Right of Church-Government, p. 4.

³⁹For a more detailed discussion of the parts of worship in the Confession-Testimony see John Allen Delivuk, "The Doctrine and History of Worship in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America" (S.T.M. dissertation, Concordia Seminary, 1983), chapters 4-6.

Confession, Chapter 21:3a-5a, and the Westminster Assembly's directory for worship, a complete list of the parts of worship can be made. The ordinary acts of worship are prayer, the reading of Scripture, the "sound preaching" of the Word, the "conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God," the singing of psalms, and the administration and "worthy receiving of the sacraments." The occasional acts of worship are "religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings." To this list the Directory adds that an offering is to be taken for the poor in the section on the Lord's Supper. The Directory does not state whether the offering is viewed as an act of worship, or even if it is to be taken during the worship service.⁴⁰ Since the traditional practice of the Church of Scotland has been to collect the offering before the worship service, and, since the Confession omits the offering from its list of acts of worship, the evidence implies that the Westminster Assembly did not consider the offering a part of worship. Conspicuous by their absence are the singing of uninspired songs (hymns), instrumental music, and the celebration of holy days like Christmas and Easter.⁴¹ The Assembly found no New Testament commands for these practices.

It is in this area that the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony adds to the Confession. The primary reason for the Testimony's additions are to defend the Presbyterian doctrine of worship. Many Presbyterian

⁴⁰Leishman, Westminster Directory, p. 53. The section reads, "The Collection for the Poor is so to be ordered, that no part of the public worship be thereby hindered."

⁴¹Ibid., p. 78. The Westminster Directory reads, "Festival days, vulgarly called Holy-days, having no warrant in the Word of God, are not to be continued." Most conservative Presbyterian churches today ignore this teaching of the Westminster Assembly by celebrating holy days.

churches, including the conservative ones, have moved away from the Westminster Confession's doctrine of worship. One such church is the conservative Presbyterian Church in America. In contrast to the Confession, the Presbyterian Church in America's directory for worship considers hymns, musical instruments, and offerings to be acts of worship. Yet, at the same time, the Presbyterian Church in America has not altered the Westminster Confession's chapter on worship.⁴² Hence the additions to the Testimony are primarily to defend the original meaning of the Confession.

Two Testimony additions to the Confession, 5b and 5f, say that prayers and offerings are to be part of corporate worship. The Confession had omitted the former point, but it was included in the Westminster Directory.⁴³ The addition of the offering to the acts of worship is a result of the Reformed Presbyterian belief that it is an act of worship. Sections 5c and 5d are apologetic in nature, defending the Confession's position that musical instruments and hymns are not to be used in worship. Section 5d argues that musical instruments were tied to the Old Testament sacrifices, and hence are fulfilled in Christ. Section 5c argues that terms hymns and songs as used in the Bible refer to the biblical Psalms. At this point the Testimony departs from the both the Confession's and the Testimony's view of Biblical authority.

⁴²Presbyterian Church in America, The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America, (Decatur: The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, 1984), chapters 47-1, 51-1, 51-3, and 54. The denomination considers its directory for worship as strongly advised, but "it does not have the force of law." See the introductory paragraph preceding chapter 47-1.

⁴³Leishman, Westminster Directory, pp. 19, 37.

Section 5c needs a more detailed examination. It assumes the standard twentieth century defense of the exclusive use of the Biblical Psalms in worship. This argument goes, because the main use of the terms "hymns" and "songs" in the Septuagint is as titles of the biblical Psalms, the meaning of the terms in the two New Testament passages where they are used (Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:19), is Psalms. The problem with this argument is that hymns and songs (and even psalms) are used in the Septuagint for other portions of Scripture, and in common Greek use for non-scriptural music. The result is an argument based on probability of meaning. Chapter 1 of the Confession-Testimony teaches from the meaning of "good and necessary" consequence that "possible or probable" interpretations of Scripture cannot be used. Therefore, the uncertain is unacceptable in church doctrine, practice or morals. Therefore the Reformed Presbyterian argument cannot be considered a final argument, as it depends on probability instead of certainty, and thus fails the criteria of good and necessary consequence.

Since the Reformed Presbyterian argument fails to meet the criteria of good and necessary consequence, does it follow that the Reformed Presbyterians are wrong in teaching the exclusive singing of Psalms? Not necessarily, since a defective argument can be used to defend a correct position. Since no defenses of exclusive psalmody were found in this author's research in the writings of the authors of the Confession, the test of good and necessary consequence will now be used to examine the Presbyterian opponents of exclusive psalmody.

The opponents of exclusive psalmody admit that the Septuagint uses hymns and songs for Psalm titles and other Scripture portions,

however the wider use of the terms in Greek to mean religious music is appealed to in order to allow for the use of music with lyrics composed by men in worship. Because of the use of the two words in the Septuagint for Psalm titles, this argument also produces only a probable meaning for hymns and songs.⁴⁴ A related problem is that there are only two texts to support the use of uninspired songs. Since the standard rule of theology is that a doctrine or practice can not be proven from one Bible passage, and the opponents of psalms only have only two texts, their position is again only a probable one. Since good and necessary consequence, and its application in the regulative principle of worship, teach that the church cannot adopt any probable interpretation of Scripture, nor adopt any probable practice, the singing of hymns must be rejected, because it fails the criteria of certainty. Therefore exclusive psalms stands because the arguments for uninspired compositions in worship fail the test of certainty. Had the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony said it cannot accept our opponents position because the Septuagint use of hymns and songs makes their position uncertain, and the Westminster position on Biblical authority teaches that what is uncertain is unacceptable, then the

⁴⁴For a detailed and impartial discussion of the use of psalms, hymns and songs in the Bible, see Gerhard Delling, "Hymnos, hymneo, psallo, psalmos," in Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, 10 vols. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933-1979), 8:489-503. Footnote 73 on p. 502 concludes, ". . . Greek-speaking Judaism obviously does not make any general distinction between . . . [psalms, hymns and songs] . . . there is no sign that we have different genres of religious song." (Translation from the English ed., vol. 8, p. 499, footnote 73.)

Also giving important support to the common meaning of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is Edward A. Robson, "Kai Configurations in the Greek New Testament" (Ph. D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1979.) This discusses the use of the Greek term "kai" in New Testament phrases.

Testimony would be in accord with the Confession and with its own view of Scripture.⁴⁵

In contrast to Section 5c on exclusive psalmody, Section 5d on the use of musical instruments is in accord with the Confession's doctrine of Biblical authority. Using the analogy of faith the Testimony Revision Committee concluded that instruments were used in Old Testament worship with the sacrifice. Using the implications part of good and necessary consequence, since the sacrificial system was abolished by Christ, instruments, as part of the system, are therefore abolished. Supporting this position is the lack of commands for or examples of musical instruments in New Testament worship.⁴⁶

Summary

This chapter has examined how the Westminster Assembly applied its doctrine of Biblical authority to worship. The primary application was the regulative principle of worship which teaches that whatever the Bible does not command in New Testament worship by precept or example is forbidden. This doctrine was the logical outgrowth of the following aspects of Biblical authority: the exclusiveness of the Bible as the sole authority for the church and the sole judge of religious matters. Hence

⁴⁵For a fuller discussion of the debate on exclusive psalmody see Bushell, The Songs of Zion, pp. 64-87, and Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Minutes of the Fourteenth General Assembly (n. p.: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1947), pp. 51-66. The latter gives papers from both sides. These accounts are more partial than the essay of Delling cited above.

⁴⁶A detailed discussion of the historical Presbyterian position on musical instruments is John L. Girardeau, Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, Printers, 1888).

it is the sole authority and judge of acts of worship, and human additions are not permitted in part because they imply human authority is permitted in the church. Good and necessary consequence was used in deriving the regulative principle from the doctrines of christian liberty, uniformity and the sufficiency of Scripture. A concern for the liberty of believer's consciences lead to the conclusion that nothing in worship should be done unless the Bible commanded it. The only totally acceptable basis for obtaining uniformity in the churches of Britain and Ireland was the Bible's teaching on worship. The sufficiency of Scripture taught that nothing is necessary for worship except that found in the Bible, and that nothing is to be added to or taken away from the biblical doctrine or practice of worship. From God's generosity in giving all necessary information for worship, Robert Harris rejected human additions to worship. The Westminster Divines applied the regulative principle by deriving the acts of worship from the Scriptures. The arguments for the regulative principle give great insight into the Puritan-Presbyterians' love for their neighbor and their zeal for Scripture as the only authority in the church.

The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony follows the Confession's positions on Biblical authority and worship except at some points concerning the acts of worship. It added the offering and stated explicitly that prayer was to be a part of corporate worship. It added apologetic additions on musical instruments and exclusive psalmody. Both the latter addition, a defense of exclusive psalmody, and the twentieth century arguments again exclusive psalmody were shown to be in conflict with the Confession-Testimony's doctrine of Biblical authority. Both sides of the

modern psalmody controversy violate the test of good and necessary consequence by advocating a position that is uncertain.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions have been drawn as the result of this study.

1. The source of Biblical authority is God's authorship. The Bible is the supreme authority in the church because God is the author of it, and, therefore, it carries His authority. Hence the Bible is the authoritative will of God to His church and has divine attributes such as perfection, majesty, and truth. Because God is its author, it is to be received as the Word of God.

2. The Bible is sufficient for every need of the church and believers. Both the Confession's and the Testimony's writers believed that the Bible is sufficient, meaning the church needs no other authorities, whether traditions of men or new revelations of the Spirit, to know God's will. The sufficiency of Scripture was used to oppose human additions or subtractions from biblical teachings in the areas of doctrines, morals, and practices. The sufficiency of Scripture was also used to oppose the authorities these additions or subtractions were based upon, namely, tradition, reason and the papacy. For example, the sufficiency of Scripture was used to defend the regulative principle of worship. In turn, the regulative principle assumes that the Bible is a totally sufficient guide

to what God requires in worship. In worship and elsewhere the authors of the Confession used sufficiency to limit ecclesiastical authority to matters the Bible addressed. On these matters the church could command only as much as God commanded, and forbid only as much as He forbid.

3. The Bible has many purposes. In contrast to Jack Rogers who argued the primary purpose of the Bible was to tell men the way of salvation, and that therefore it was not an encyclopedia of answers, the evidence from the writings of the authors of the Confession was that the Bible has many purposes, none of which were called primary.¹ While the Confession favors God's glory as the primary purpose, it also listed several other purposes of Scripture, namely to reveal God's will to the church, to preserve and propagate the truth, establish the church, and reveal "all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and like" (Chapter 1:1a and 1:6a). The many purposes of Scripture and its sufficiency discussed above imply that it is a complete religious guide for all matters necessary to the Christian religion. In all other matters which God has chosen to address in the Bible, the authors of the Confession considered the Bible to be true, but not the exclusive source of knowledge. For example, in science what the Bible says about creation is true, but the Confession's authors would have seen a place for reason used in scientific investigation as an additional source of knowledge about creation. Of course, seeming conflicts between science and the Bible would be settled by the Bible's teachings.

4. The Westminster Confession teaches that the Bible is inerrant.

¹Jack Rogers, Scripture and the Westminster Confession (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966).

Rogers claimed that the Westminster Confession taught that the Bible was "infallible," but not "inerrant," that is, without any mistakes in matters such as history, chronology, and theology. (Unfortunately, Rogers did not define infallible.) This dissertation included a study of the meaning of the word infallible in its common use in the first half of the seventeenth century. Beginning with the dictionary definition of infallible, the dissertation continued with a number of examples where infallible was used by the authors of the Confession to mean inerrant. Additional evidence came from the belief of the authors of the Confession that God gave His attributes to the Bible, and the use of the term infallible to describe the claims of the papacy. This dissertation therefore concluded that the word "infallible," which is used in the Confession, meant "inerrant" (that is, without error) to the authors of the Confession. Thus, when the Confession calls the Bible "infallible truth," it is calling the Bible "inerrant truth" (Chapter 1:5a).

5. The Holy Spirit speaking in the Bible is the supreme judge in religious controversies. All other sources of authority such as decisions of councils, tradition, private spirits, and doctrines of men are to stand at the bar of the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture for judgment. The Holy Spirit, who revealed the Bible, works in men to enable them to properly understand the Scripture. To be acceptable positions or doctrines must agree with Scripture. No teaching can be allowed in the church that fails to conform to Scripture, either by adding to it, subtracting from it, or otherwise changing it.

6. Men cannot be saved by the Bible's message unless the Holy Spirit works effectually through it. The Westminster Divines realized

that unbelievers, such as Jews, could understand much of the Bible's message. However unbelievers cannot be fully persuaded of the Bible's saving truth without the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Thus the Bible is authoritative, but not effectual. The effect of Scripture comes as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

7. The Westminster Doctrine of Biblical authority includes some principles of hermeneutics. Closely related to the Doctrine of Biblical authority are the hermeneutical principles implied by this Doctrine. The first of these is the clarity of Scripture. While there are some obscure parts of the Bible, laymen can understand the way of salvation. The next principle is the analogy of faith. Because God is consistent, His Word is consistent. Therefore, the Bible is the only inerrant interpreter of itself, the clear passages enlighten the more obscure. The third principle is "good and necessary consequence." The implications of Scripture are equally authoritative with Scripture, providing that they are certain implications, and not possible or even probable implications. The authors of the Confession defended the use of implications by appealing to Jesus' and Paul's use of the Old Testament. Finally, the Confession teaches that there is one meaning for each passage, usually the literal one. This principle caused the rejection of allegorical interpretation.

8. The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony is, on the whole, in agreement with the Westminster Confession on Biblical authority. The various additions of the Testimony to the Confession reaffirm the Westminster Doctrine of Biblical authority, and apply it to the contemporary religious situation. As the writers of the Confession addressed challenges to the Bible's authority from groups that wanted to add tradition (Romanists),

reason and tradition (Anglicans), or special revelations of the Spirit (Sectarians) to the Bible's authority, the writers of the Testimony also addressed challenges from groups wishing to add the same authorities to the Bible. Indeed, two of the groups, the Romanists and Anglicans are still in existence today. The Testimony also addressed the modern issues of secularism, liberalism, neo-orthodoxy and neo-evangelicalism. Additions answering these challenges included statements on inerrancy, the relationship between Christ and the Bible, and the rejection the historical-critical method.

There is one exception to the Testimony's agreement with the Confession on Biblical authority. In the section defending exclusive psalmody, the Testimony advocates a position that is probable, rather than one that is certain, a violation of good and necessary consequence (Chapter 21:5c).

9. The Testimony adopted plenary inspiration. While the Westminster Confession does comment on the method on inspiration, the Testimony includes a section that accepts the modern evangelical position of plenary inspiration (Chapter 1:1f). Although the authors of the Confession favored the dictation theory of inspiration, they did not include this theory in the Confession. Because the Confession is silent concerning the method of inspiration, the Testimony was able to adopt a method of inspiration different from the one held by the authors of the Confession without contradicting the Confession. Thus, the Testimony addition on the method of inspiration is consistent with the silence of the Confession, but is not consistent with the belief in the dictation held by the authors of the Confession in the 1640s.

10. The Confession and Testimony are consistent in their

application of their doctrine of Biblical authority. In the study of the Confession-Testimony teaching on worship it was found that both the doctrine of Biblical authority and the related hermeneutical principles were applied consistency. The Confession writers were very consistent in rejecting every other authority but that of the Bible in their defence of the regulative principle of worship. The exception to the Testimony's consistency is the above mentioned section on psalmody.

11. The authors of the Confession used their doctrine of Biblical authority in an ecumenical manner. The goal of the Westminster Divines was to write a constitution for an united church in Britain and Ireland. They realized that the only way to do that was to stick strictly to the Bible as the sole authority for doctrine, morals, and church practices. Because it required nothing but what God required, the new national church was to be given the broadest appeal. An example of this is the regulative principle of worship, which teaches that nothing is to be done in worship, except what God requires in the Holy Scriptures.

The Westminster Divines showed a great concern for piety as well as orthodoxy, and went to pains to avoid laying any greater burden on individuals than necessary. Their desire to leave as much christian liberty in the church as possible was impressive. The Westminster Assembly's definition of christian liberty stressed the freedom of the individual believer from the commands of men. This contrasted with the Anglican view of christian liberty that saw it as meaning the institutional church's freedom to add rites and ceremonies to those commanded in the Bible.

12. The Testimony lacks the consistency of the Confession. The

Testimony is good Reformed theology, is consistent with the Confession, and does make important additions to the Confession that deal concisely and clearly with modern problems. However, the Testimony failed in its organizational objective of adding its additions to the corresponding places in the Confession. For example, inspiration in the Confession is treated in Chapter 1:2, while the Testimony treats it under Chapter 1:1. The failure to match sections limits the effectiveness of printing the two documents together. Second, the Testimony erred in its section defending exclusive psalmody by advocating a probable position. While the Reformed Presbyterian Church is to be complimented on its Testimony, the Testimony needs reworking at a few points to match the clarity and consistency of the Westminster Confession.

13. The Westminster Confession had an ecumenical goal. The Westminster Assembly had the goal of writing a constitution for a denomination that would unite the churches of Great Britain and Ireland into one church. The Assembly attempted to reach this goal by writing a Confession, catechisms, and directories for worship and church polity that contained nothing except those doctrines, practices, and moral laws which were taught with certainty in the Bible. One reason for this policy was to protect the christian liberty of believers whose consciences had been offended by the Anglican additions to the Bible's teaching in worship. The new church was to contain nothing offensive to men's consciences. While their attempt did not succeed except in Scotland, their example gives a pattern for other committees writing constitutions for merging churches.

SELECTED LIST OF FREQUENTLY CITED AUTHORS

Robert Baillie. Scottish delegate to the Westminster Assembly. Assisted in the preparation of the Westminster Confession.

Cornelius Burges. English member of the Westminster Assembly committee that wrote the Westminster Confession. A respected London minister.

Michael Bushell. Holds an M. Div. from Westminster Seminary and works as a research scientist.

Thomas Gataker. English member of the Westminster Assembly committee that wrote the Westminster Confession. A prolific writer, he declined a university professorship.

John Gerstner. Retired professor of Church History. Expert in American Puritanism and Presbyterianism.

George Gillespie. Scottish delegate to the Westminster Assembly. Pastor with respected reputation as a scholar. Assisted in the preparation of the Westminster Confession.

John Girardeau. Nineteenth century Presbyterian professor of systematic theology.

Robert Harris. English member of the Westminster Assembly committee that wrote the Westminster Confession.

Alexander Henderson. Head of the Scottish delegates to the Westminster Assembly. Assisted in the preparation of the Westminster Confession.

Alexander Mitchell. Nineteenth century church historian who specialized in the Westminster Assembly.

John Murray. Former professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary.

Robert Paul. Professor of church history at Austin Theological Seminary. Expert on English Puritanism.

Edward Reynolds. English member of the Westminster Assembly committee that wrote the Westminster Confession. He was the only member of the Westminster Assembly to become a bishop.

Samuel **Rutherford**. Scottish delegate to the Westminster Assembly. Professor of divinity at St. Andrews. Assisted in the preparation of the Westminster Confession.

Wayne **Spear**. Professor of systematic theology at Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Wrote a dissertation on the Westminster Assembly.

Thomas **Temple**. English member of the Westminster Assembly committee that wrote the Westminster Confession.

James **Ussher**. Anglican primate of Ireland. Was a major theologian and an important influence on the Westminster Assembly.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Seventeenth Century Sources Consulted

* indicates the use of this entry in a note.

*Baillie, Robert. Anabaptism, the True Fountaine of Independency, Antinomy, Brownisme, Familisme, and the Most of the Other Errours, Which for the Time Doe Trouble the Church of England, Unsealed. London: Printed by M. F. for Samuel Gellibrand, 1646.

. An Answer to Mr Fishers Relation of a Third Conference betweene a Certaine B. (as He Stiles Him) and Himselfe. (Part two of) A Replie to Iesuit Fishers Answere to Certain Questions Propounded by His Most Gratisous Matie. King James. By Francis White. London: Adam Islip, 1624.

. A Dissvasive from the Errours of the Time: Wherein the Tenets of the Principall Sects, Especially of the Independents, Are Drawn Together in One Map, for the Most Part, in the Words of Their Own Authours, and Their Maine Principles Are Examined by the Touchstone of the Holy Scriptures. London: Samuel Gellibrand, 1645.

. Errours and Induration, Are the Great Sins and the Great Judgements of the Time. Preached in a Sermon before the Right Honourable House of Peers, in the Abbey-Church at Westminster, July 30. 1645. The Day of the Monethly Fast. London: Printed by R. Raworth for Samuel Gellibrand, 1645.

. An Historicall Vindication of the Government of the Church of Scotland, from the Manifold Base Calumnies Which the Most Malignant of the Prelats Did Invent of Old, and Now Lately Have Been Published with Great Industry in Two Pamphlets at London. London: Samuel Gellibrand, 1646.

. Ladensivm AYTOKATAKPISIS, The Canterbvrians Self-conviction: Or, An Evident Demonstration of the Avowed Arminianisme, Poperie, and Tyrannie of that Faction, by Their Owne Confessions; With a Postscript for the Personal Jesuit Lysimachus Nicanor, a Prime Canterburian. 3rd ed. N. p.: Printed for Nathaniel Bvtter, 1641.

. Letters and Journals. 3 vols. Ed. from the author's manuscripts by D. Laing. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, 1841-42.

- . The Life of William Now Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbvry Examined. Wherein His Principall Actions, or Deviations in Matters of Doctrine and Discipline (Since He Came to that Sea of Canturbury) Are Traced, and Set Downe, as They Were taken from Good Hands. London: Printed for N B, 1643.
- . A Parallel or Briefe Comparison of the Liturgie with the Masse-book, The Breviarie, the Ceremoniall, and other Romish Rituals. London: Thomas Paine, 1641.
- . A Review of Doctor Bramble, Late Bishop of Londenderry, His Faire Warning Against the Scotese Disciplin. Delf: Michiel Stael, 1649.
- . Satan the Leader in Chief to All Who Resist the Reparation of Sion. As It Was Cleared in a Sermon to the Honourable House of Commons at Their Late Solemn Fast, Febr. 28, 1643. London: Samuel Gellibrand, 1643.
- . The Vnlawfvlnesse and Danger of Limited Episcopacie Whereunto is Subioyned a Short Reply to the Modest Advertiser and Calme Examiner of that Treatise. London: Thomas Vnderhill, 1641.
- *Burges, Cornelius. Another Sermon Preached to the Honorable House of Commons Now Assembled in Parliament, November the fifth, 1641. London: Printed by R. B. for P. Stephens and C. Meridith, 1641.
- * . Baptismall Regeneration of Elect Infants, Professed by the Church of England, according to the Scriptures, and Primitiue Church, the Present Reformed Churches and Many Particular Divines Apart. Oxford: Printed by I. L. for Henry Curteyn, 1629.
- . The Broken Title of Episcopal Inheritance. Or, a Discovery of the Weake Reply, to the Humble Examination of the Answer to the Nice Reasons of the House of Commons, Against the Votes of Bishops in Parliament, Their Lordly Dignity, and Civil Authority. London: J. Bellamie and Ralph Smith, 1642.
- . A Chaine of Graces: Drawne Ovt at Length for Reformation of Manners. Or, a Briefe Treatise of Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godlinesse, Brotherly-kindnesse, Charitie, So Farre Forth as They Are Vrged by the Apostle in 2 Pet. 1 verse 5, 6, 7. London: Printed by I. H. for Samvel Mann, 1622.
- * . The Fire of the Sanctvarie Newly Uncovered, Or A Compleat Tract of Zeale. London: Printed by George Miller and Richard Badger, 1625.
- . The First Sermon Preached to the Honovrable Hovse of Commons Now Assembled in Parliament at Their Publique Fast. Novemb. 17. 1640. London: Printed by I. L. for Philemon Stephens, 1641.

- . An Humble Examination of a Printed Abstract of The Answers to Nine Reasons of the House of Commons, Against the Votes of Bishops in Parliament. London: P. Stephens and C. Meredith, 1641.
- . The Necessity of Agreement with God: Opened in a Sermon Preached to the Right Honourable the Noble House of Peers Assembled in Parliament, Vpon the 29th of October, 1645. Being the Monethly Fast. London: Printed for G. Miller for Philemon Stephens, 1645.
- . A New Discovery of Personal Tithes: or The Tenth Part of Mens Cleere Gaines Proued Due Both in Conscience and by the Laws of this Kingdome. London: Printed by I. L. for William Sheffard, 1625.
- . The Second Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons, April 30. 1645. Discovering the Vanity and Mischief of the Thoughts of an Heart Unwashed. London: n. p., 1645.
- . Sion College What it Is, and Doeth Together with a Vindication of that Society from the Slanderous Diffamations of Two Fell and Fiery Satyres, the One Called Sion College Visited: The Other the Pulpit Incendiary. London: Ralph Smith, 1648.
- . A Vindication of the Ministers of the Gospel in, and about London from the Unjust Aspersions Cast upon Their Former Actings for the Parliament, as if They Had Promoted the Bringing of the King to Capital Punishment. London: Printed by A. M. for Th. Underhill, 1648.
- . A Vindication of the Nine Reasons of the House of Commons, Against the Votes of Bishops in Parliament: Or, a Reply to the Answers Made to the Said Reasons, in Defence of Such Votes. London: P. Stephens and C. Meredith, 1641.
- Gataker, Thomas. An Answer to Mr. George Walkers Vindication, or Rather Fresh Accusation. London: Printed by E. G. for F. Clifton, 1642.
- . Thomae Gatakeri Antithesis, partim Guilielmi Amnesii, partim Gisberti Voetii, de Sorte Thesibus Reposita. London: Typis I. Haviland, 1638.
- * Certaine Sermons, First Preached, and after Published at Severall Times. London: Printed by John Haviland for Fulke Clifton, 1637. This includes:

"Davids Instructor."

"The Christian Mans Care."

"The Spirituall Watch: or, Christs Generall Watch-word."

"True Contentment, in the Gaine of Godlinesse, with Its Self-sufficiencie."

"The Joy of the Just: with The Signes of Such."

"Jacobs Thankfulnessse to God, For Gods Goodness to Jacob."

"Davids Remembrancer."

"Noaes Obedience; with, The Ground of It; or, His Faith, Feare and Care."

"Englands Delivery from the Spanish Invasion."

"A Spark towards the Kindling of Sorrow for Sion."

"Gods Parley with Princes: with An Appeale from Them to Him."

"A Marriage Prayer."

"A Good Wife, Gods Gift."

"A Wife in Deed."

"Marriage Duties."

"Pauls Desire of Departure: and Deaths Advantage."

"The Benefit of a Good Name, and a Good End."

"Abrahams Decease."

"Jeroboams Sonnes Decease."

"Christian Constancie Crowned by Christ."

. A Discvssion of the Popish Doctrine of Transubstantiation: Wherein It Is Declared by Confession of Their Owne Writers to Haue no Necessary Ground in Gods Word: As Also It Is Further Demonstrated To Be against Scripture, Nature, Sense, Reason, Religion, the Iudgement of the Auncients, and the Faithe of Our Auncestours. N. p.: Printed by I. L. for William Sheffard, 1624.

. Gods Eye on His Israel Or, a Passage of Balaam out of Numb. 23.21. Containing Matter Very Seasonable and Suitable to the Times; Expounded and Cleared from Antinomian Abuse; with Application to the Present Estate of Things with Us. London: Printed by E. G. for Foulke Clifton, 1643.

- * . A Good Wife Gods Gift: and, A Wife Indeed. Two Mariage Sermons. London: Printed by Iohn Haviland for Fvlke Clifton, 1623.
- . His Vindication of the Annotations by Him Published upon These Words, "Thus Saith the Lord, Learn Not the Way of the Heathen, and Be Not Dismayed at the Signes of Heaven for the Heathen Are Dismayed at Them." Jer. 10.2. Against the Scurrilous Aspersiones of that Grand Imposter Mr. William Lillie. London: Printed by J. L. for Christopher Meredith, 1653.
- . Iacobs Thankfvlness to God for Gods Goodness to Jacob. A Mediation on Genesis 32.10 Wherein by the Way Also the Popish Doctrine of Mans Merite is Discussed. London: Iohn Haviland for Fvlke Clifton, 1624.
- . Ieroboams Sonnes Decease: A Fvnerall Sermon on Part of I Kings 14.17. London: Iohn Haviland, 1627.
- . The Ioy of the Ivst; with The Signes of Such. A Discovrse Tending to the Comfort of the Defected and Afflicted; and To the Trial of Sinceritie. London: Printed by Iohn Haviland for Fvlke Clifton, 1623.
- * . A Ivst Defence of Certaine Passages in a Former Treatise Concerning the Nature and Vse of Lots, Against Such Exceptions and Oppositions as Haue Beene Made Thereunto by Mr. I. B. London: Printed by Iohn Haviland for Robert Bird, 1623.
- . Marriage Dvties Briefely Covched Together; Ovt of Colossians, 3.18,19. London: Printed by William Iones for William Bladen, 1620.
- . A Marriage Praier, or Succinct Meditations: Delievered in a Sermon on the Praise of Eleazer the Servant of Abraham, Genes. 24.12, 13, 14. London: Iohn Hauiland for Fulke Clifton and James Bowler, 1624.
- . A Mistake, or Misconstrvction, Removed. (Whereby Little Difference Is Pretended to Have Been Acknowledged between the Antinomians and Us.) London: Printed by E. G. for F. Clifton, 1646.
- . Mysterious Cloudes and Mistes Shunning the Cleer Light, a Little Further Disclosed, in a Short Answer to Mr. John Simpsons Long Appendix, Entitled Truth Breaking Forth Through a Cloud and Mist of Slanders. London: Printed by E. Griffin, to be sold by Fulke Clifton, 1648.

- . Of the Natvre and Vse of Lots; A Treatise Historicall and Theologicall. London: Printed by Edward Griffin and are to be sold by William Bladen, 1619.
- . Pavls Desire of Dissolution, and Deaths Advantage. A Sermon Preached At the Funerall of That Right Vertuous and Religious Gentlewoman Mrs Rebekka Crisp, Together with the Testimony Then Given vnto Her. London: Printed by Edward Griffin for William Bladen, 1620.
- * . Shadowes without Substance, or, Pretended New Lights: together, with the Impieties and Blasphemies That Lurk under Them, Further Discovered and Drawn Forth into the Light: In Way of Rejoynder unto Mr Iohn Saltmarsh His Reply: Entituled Shadowes Flying away. London: Robert Bostock, 1646.
- . The Spiritvall Watch, or Christs Generall Watch-Word. A Mediation on Mark 13.37. London: Edward Griffin for William Bladen, 1619.
- *Gillespie, George. Aaron's Rod Blossoming; or The Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated. London: Printed by E. G. for Richard Whitaker, 1646; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 1, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844.
- . The Ark of the Testament Opened, or, The Secret of the Lords Covenant Unsealed, in a Treatise of the Covenant of Grace. London: Printed by R. C., 1661.
- * . An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, in the Points of Ruling Elders, and of the Authority of Presbyteries and Synods. Edinburgh: James Bryson, 1641.
- . A Brotherly Examination of Some Passages of Mr. Coleman's Late Sermon upon Job XI.20, As It is Now Printed and Published. London: Printed by F. Neile for Robert Bostock 1645; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844.
- * . A Dispvte against the English-Popish Ceremonies, Obtrvded vpon the Chvrch of Scotland. Wherein Not Only Our Owne Arguments against the Same Are Strongly Confirmed, but Likewise the Answeres and Defense of our Opposites, svch as Hooker, Mortovne, Bvrges, Sprint, Paybody, Andrewes, Saravia, Tilen, Spotswood, Lindsey, Forbesse, &c Particularly Confuted. N. p.: n. p., 1637.
- . A Late Dialogue betwixt a Civilian and a Divine, Concerning the Present Condition of the Church of England. London: Robert Bostock, 1644.

* . Male Audis; or, An Answer to Mr. Coleman's Male Dicis.
London: Printed for Robert Bostocke, 1646; reprint ed. in The
Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver
& Boyd, 1844.

. Nihil Respondes: or A Discovery of the Extreme
Unsatisfactorieness of Mr. Coleman's Piece, Published Last Week
under the Title of "A Brotherly Examination Re-examined." London:
Printed for Robert Bostock, 1645; reprint ed. in The
Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver
& Boyd, 1844.

. Notes of Debates and Proceedings of the Assembly of Divines
and Other Commissioners at Westminster. February 1644 to January
1645. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1846.

* . One Hundred and Eleven Propositions Concerning the Ministry
and Government of the Church. London: Evan Tyler, 1647; reprint
 ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle,
 and Oliver & Boyd, 1844.

* . A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons at
Their Late Solemn Fast, Wednesday, March 27, 1644. London:
Printed for Robert Bostock, 1644; reprint ed. in The
Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver
& Boyd, 1844.

. A Sermon Preached before the Right Honourable the House of
Lords, in the Abbey Church At Westminster, August 27, 1645.
 London: Printed for Robert Bostock, 1644; reprint ed. in The
Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 2, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver
& Boyd, 1844.

* . A Treatise of Miscellany Questions; Wherein Many Useful
Questions and Cases of Conscience are Discussed and Resolved, for
the Satisfaction of Those Who Desire Nothing More than to Search
for and Find Out Precious Truths in the Controversies of these
Times. Edinburgh: Printed by George Lithgow for George Swintoun,
 1649; reprint ed. in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 1,
 Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1844.

. Wholsome Severity Reconciled with Christian Liberty, or, The
True Resolution of a Present Controversie Concerning Liberty of
Conscience. London: Christopher Meredith, 1645.

Harris, Robert. Abners Funerall, or, A Sermon Preached at the Funerall
of that Learned and Noble Knight, Sir Thomas Lvcie. London: Iohn
 Bartlet, 1661.

- . A Sermon Preached to the Honorable Hovse of Commons Assembled in Parliament, At a Publike Fast, May, 25. 1642. London: Printed by M. R. for Iohn Bartlet, 1652.
- . Sixe Sermons of Conscience: viz. I. S. Pauls Exercise before the Judges of Assize, at Oxford. II. Iudas His Miserie: to the Vniuersity of Oxford. III. S. Pauls Confidence. IV. The Blessednesse of a Sound Spirit. V. The Miserie of a Wounded Spirit. VI. Daudis Comfort at Ziklag. London: Printed by H. L. for I. Bartlet, 1630.
- . True Religion in the Old Way of Piety and Charity Delivered in Sermon to the Lord Major and Court of Aldermen of this City of London, at their Anniversary Meeting on Munday (Commonly Called Easter-Munday) at the Spittle, 1645. London: John Bartlet, 1645.
- . Two Letters Written by Mr. Harris in Vindication of Himselfe from the Known Standers of an Unknown Author. N. p.: n. p., 1648.
- * The Workes of Robert Harris, Bachelor in Divinity and Pastor of Hanwell, in Oxford-Shire. Revised and in Sundrie Places Corrected, and Now Collected into One Volume. London: Printed by R. Y. for J. Bartlet, 1635. This includes:
- "Judas His Miserie." [1628]
- "Saint Paul's Exercise." [before 1635]
- "Saint Paul's Confidence." [1628]
- "The Blessedness of a Found Spirit." [1628]
- "The Miserie of a Wounded Spirit." [before 1635]
- "Davids Comfort at Ziklag." [1628]
- "Gods Goodness and Mercy." [1622]
- "Get, Keepe, and Use a Good Conscience." [1630]
- "Peters Enlargement." [1623]
- "Hezekiah's Recovery." [1626]
- "Absaloms Funerall." [1610]
- "Samuels Funerall." [1618]
- "The Drunkards Cup." [1619]

"Barzillai." [before 1635]

"The Way to True Blessednesse. In 24. Sermons on the Beatitudes." [1631-32]

"A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace." [1631]

"A Remedie Against Covetousnesse." [before 1635]

. The Works of Robert Harris Once of Hanwell, Now President of Trinity College in Oxon, and Doctor of Divinity. London: By James Flesher for John Bartlet and John Bartlet, 1654. (Part 4 was missing from this microfilm.)

Henderson, Alexander. The Declaration of M. Alexander Henderson, Principall Minister of the Word of God at Edenbrough, and Chiefe Commissioner from the Kirk of Scotland to the Parliament and Synod of England: Made upon His Death-bed. N. p.: n. p., 1648.

. The Government and Order of the Chvrch of Scotland. Edinburgh: James Bryson, 1641.

* . Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland, Cleered from Some Mistakes and Prejudices, by the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Now at London. N. p.: Robert Bostock, 1644.

. The Scotts Declaration, in Answer to the Declaration, Sent unto Them by Their Commissioners Now at London, from the Honourable Houses of Parliament of England. N. p.: Printed for Edw. Husbands and John Francks, 1641.

. A Sermon Preached before the Right Honorable the Lords and Commons Assembled in Parliament: At Margarets Church in Westminster, upon Thursday the 18. day of Iuly, 1644. London: Robert Bostock, 1644.

. A Sermon Preached to the Honorable Hovse of Commons At Their Late Solemne Fast Wednesday, December 27, 1643. Edinburgh: Evan Tyler, 1644.

. A Sermon Preached before the Right Honourable House of Lords, In the Abbey-church at Westminster, Wednesday the 28. of May 1645. London: Printed by F. N. for Robert Bostock, 1645.

. The Vnlawfvlnes and Danger of Limited Prelacie, or Perpetvall Precidence in the Chvrch, Briefly Discovered. N. p.: n. p., 1641.

Herle, Charles. Abrahams Offer Gods Offering: in a Sermon Preached before the Right Honorable, the Lord Major together with the Aldermen His Brethren; at Christ-Church on Easter-Tuesday Last, Being the Day of Their Publique Thanksgiving. London: Peter Cole, 1644.

. Ahab's Fall by His Prophets Flatteries: Being the Substance of Three Sermons, upon 1. King. 22.22. N. p.: Printed by R. A. for J. Wright, 1644.

. An Answer to Doctor Fernes Reply, Entitled Conscience Satisfied. London: Printed by Tho. Burdnell for N. A., 1643.

. Contemplations and Devotions on the Severall Passages of Our Blessed Saviours Death and Passion. London: Printed by Aug. Mas. for Humphrey Robinson, 1631.

. Davids Reserve, and Rescue, in a Sermon Preached before the Honourable, the House of Commons, on the Fifth of November. 1644. London: John Wright, 1645.

. Davids Song of Three Parts: Delivered in a Sermon Preached before the Right Honorable the House of Lords, at the Abby-Church in Westminster, upon the 15. Day of June, 1643. London: Printed by T. Brudenell for N. A., 1643.

. The Indepence of Scriptures of the Indepence of Churches: Wherein the Question of Independency of Church-Government Is Temperately, First, Stated; Secondly, Argued: Thirdly, Cleared from the Objections: and Fourthly, Appeale in, to the Judgements of Such as Stand for It. London: Printed by Tho. Brudenell for N. A., 1643.

Hoyle, Joshua. Jehoadahs Iustice against Mattan, Baals Priest: or the Covenanters Justice against Idolaters. A Sermon Preacht upon Ocasion of a Speech Utter'd upon Tower-Hill. London: Printed by M. Simmons for Henry Overton, 1645.

*Reynolds, Edward. The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds, D. D. 6 vols. London: Printed for B. Holdsworth, 1826. This Includes:

vol. 1. The Three Treatises.
 I. The Vanity of the Creature, pp. 1-100.
 II. The Sinfulness of Sin, pp. 101-353.
 III. The Life of Christ, pp. 354-475.

vol. 2. An Exposition of the Hundred and Tenth Psalm.

vol. 3. Meditations on the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, pp. 1-163.

Israel's Prayer in Time of Trouble, with God's Gracious Answer Thereunto; or an Explication of the Fourteenth Chapter of the prophet Hosea, in Seven Sermons, Preached upon so Many days of Solemn Humiliation [1645], pp. 164-430.

vol. 4. Meditations on the Fall and Rising of St. Peter, pp. 1-32.

Annotations on the Book of Ecclesiastes, pp. 33-257.

Sermons on Miscellaneous Subjects, I-VIII, pp. 259-479.

1. The Shields of the Earth, pp. 261-283.
2. The Peace and Edification of the Church, pp. 284-317.
3. Self-Denial, pp. 318-348.
4. Animalis Homo, pp. 349-377.
5. Joy in the Lord, pp. 378-407.
6. True Gain, pp. 408-433.
7. The Peace of Jerusalem, pp. 434-458.
8. Death's Advantage, pp. 459-479.

vol. 5. Sermons on Miscellaneous Subjects, IX-XXX.

9. Sions' Praises, pp. 4-24.
10. Uses of Human Learning, pp. 25-48.
11. Crown of Great Actions, pp. 49-71.
12. The Rich Man's Charge, pp. 72-105.
13. God's Fidelity the Church's Safety, pp. 106-134.
14. Brotherly Reconciliation, pp. 135-161.
15. Brotherly Agreement, pp. 162-183.
16. The Misery of a Deserted People, 205-230.
17. The Wall and Glory of Jerusalem, pp. 231-248.
18. The Author and Subject of Healing in the Church, pp. 248-270.
20. The Means and Method of Healing in the Church, pp. 271-294.
21. The Lord's Property in His Redeemed People, pp. 295-321.
22. Divine Efficacy without Human Power, pp. 322-342.
23. Preaching of Christ, pp. 343-362.
24. The Church's Triumph over Death, pp. 363-385.
25. The Pastoral Office, pp. 388-408.
26. The Staves of Beauty and Bands, pp. 409-448.
27. Moderation, pp. 449-471.
28. Preached before the King, on Easter-Day, pp. 472-489.
29. Preached before the King, pp. 490-512.
30. Preached before the Lord Mayor, pp. 513-537.

vol. 6. Treatise on the Passions and Faculties of the Soul, pp. 1-340.

*Rutherford, Samuel. "Ane Catachisme conteining the Soume of Christian Religion." In Catechisms of the Second Reformation, pp. 159-242. Edited by Alexander F. Mitchell. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886.

* . Christ and the Doves Heavenly Salutations, With Their Pleasant Conference Together; or a Sermon before the Communion in Answorth, Anno 1630. N. p.: n. p., 1660.

. Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himselfe. Or a Survey of Our Saviour in His Soule-suffering, His Loveliness in His Death, and the Efficacie Thereof. London: Printed by J. D. for Andrew Crookr, 1647.

. Christs Napkin: or, a Sermon Preached In Kirkcubright at the Communion May 12, 1633. N. p.: n. p., 1660.

. The Covenant of Life Opened: Or, a Treatise of the Covenant of Grace. Edinburgh: Printed by Andre Anderson for Robert Broun, 1654.

* . The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication: or a Peaceable Dispute for the Perfection of the Holy Scripture in Point of Ceremonies and Church Government; in Which the Removal of the Service Book is Justified. London: Printed by John Field for Christopher Meredith, 1646.

. The Due Right of Presbyteries, or, A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland. London: Printed by E. Griffin for Richard Whitaker and Andrew Crook, 1644.

* . A Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience Tending to Resolve Doubts Moved by Mr. John Goodwin, John Baptist, Dr. Jer. Taylor, the Belgick Arminians, Socinians, and Other Authors Contending for Lawlesse Liberty, or Licentious Toleration of Sects and Heresies. London: Printed by R. I. for Andrew Crook, 1649.

. Letters of Samuel Rutherford. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1984.

* . Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince; a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People: Containing the Reasons and Causes of the Most Necessary Defensive Wars of the Kingdom of Scotland, and of Their Expedition for the Aid and Help of Their Dear Brethren of England. London: John Field, 1644; reprint ed., in The Presbyterian's Armoury, vol. 3, Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1843.

- . A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Pavls Presbyterie in Scotland, or A Modest and Brotherly Dispute of the Government of the Church of Scotland. London: John Bartlet, 1648.
- . A Sermon Preached to the Honorable House of Commons: At Their Late Solemne Fast, Wednesday, Janu. 31. 1643. London: Richard Whittakers & Andrew Crooke, 1644.
- . A Sermon Preached to the Right Honorable House of Lords, in the Abbey Church at Westminster, Wednesday the 25. Day of Iune, 1645. London: Printed by R. C. for Andrew Crook, 1645.
- * . A Survey of the Spirituall Antichrist. Opening the Secrets of Familisme and Antinomianisme in the Antichristian Doctrine of John Saltmarsh, and Will. Del, the Present Preachers of the Army Now in England, and of Robert Town, Rob. Crisp, H. Denne, Eaton, and Others. In Which Is Revealed the Rise and Spring of Antinomians, Familists, Libertines, Swenck-feldians, Enthysiasts, &c. London: Printed by J. D. & R. I. For Andrew Crooke, 1648.
- * . The Trial and Triumph of Faith. N. p.: By John Field and are to be sold by Ralph Smith, 1645; reprint ed., Edinburgh: Printed for the Assembly's Committee, 1845.
- Temple, Thomas. Christ's Government in and over His People. Delivered in a Sermon before the Honourable House of Commons, at Their Late Publick and Solemn Fast, Octob. 26. 1642. London: Samuel Gellibrand, 1642.
- Westminster Assembly of Divines. The Answer of the Assembly of Divines by Authority of Parliament Now Sitting at Westminster unto the Reasons Given to this Assembly by the Dissenting Brethren, of Their Not Bringing in a Model of Their Way. London: n. p., 1646.
- * . The Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, with the Scripture Proofs at Large. N. p.: The Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1967.
- . A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards. With explanatory notes by James Benjamin Green. N. p.: Collins World, 1976.
- * . Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines (November 1644 to March 1649). Edited by Alexander F. Mitchell and John Struthers. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874. The remainder of the Minutes were consulted in a microfilm owned by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.
- . The Westminster Confession of Faith. Edited by Samuel W. Carruthers. N. p.: Presbyterian Historical Society of England, 1937. This is the critical text of the Confession.

. The Westminster Directory. Edited by Thomas Leishman. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1901. This is the critical text of the Directory.

*Ussher, James. A Body of Divinitie, or the Svmmme and Svstance of Christian Religion. London: Printed by M. F. for Tho: Dovvnes and Geo: Badger, 1645.

* . "The Principles of the Christian Religion." In Catechisms of the Second Reformation, pp. 137-150. Edited by Alexander F. Mitchell. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886. Mitchell used the London, 1645 and 1654 editions in the preparation of this edition.

Works of Modern Authors Consulted

Allison, Leon M. "The Doctrine of the Scripture in the Theology of John Calvin and Francis Turretin." Th. M. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1958.

"The Assembly-man." Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 12 (June and September 1943):133-47.

Baker, Derek. The Bibliography of the Reform 1450-1648: Relating to the United Kingdom and Ireland for the Years 1955-70. Oxford: Blackwell, 1975.

Ball, Bryan W. The English Connection: The Puritan Roots of Seventh-day Adventist Belief. Cambridge, England: James Clarke, 1981.

*Bauman, Michael. "Why the Noninerrantists Are Not Listening: Six Tactical Errors Evangelicals Commit." Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 29 (September 1986):317-24.

Beveridge, W. A Short History of the Westminster Assembly. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1904.

Bradley, Rosemary D. "The Failure of Accommodation: Religious Conflicts between Presbyterians." Journal of Religious History 12 (June 1982):23-47.

Brailsford, H. N. The Levelers and the English Revolution. Edited and prepared for publication by Christopher Hill. London: Crescent Press, 1961.

Breen, Timothy Hall. "The Non-Existent Controversy: Puritan and Anglican Attitudes on Work and Wealth, 1600-1640." Church History 35 (September 1966):273-287.

- Briggs, Charles A. "The Documentary History of the Westminster Assembly." Presbyterian Review 1 (January 1880):127-163.
- . The Authority of the Holy Scripture: An Inaugural Address.
2nd ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891.
- Brown, John. The English Puritans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910.
- *Bushell, Michael. The Songs of Zion. Pittsburgh: Crown and Covenant Publications, 1980.
- Candlish, James S. "The Doctrine of the Westminster Confession on Scripture." The British and Foreign Evangelical Review 26 (January 1877):164-79.
- Cardwell, E. Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England...from the Year 1546, to the Year, 1716. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1839; reprint ed., Oxford: Gregg Press, 1966.
- Carlson, Leland H. "A History of the Presbyterian Party from Pride's Purge to the Dissolution of the Long Parliament." Church History 11 (June 1942):83-122.
- Carlyle, Thomas. Life and Letters of Cromwell. 2 vols. London: Chapman and Hall, 1903.
- Carruthers, Samuel W. The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Historical Society and The Presbyterian Historical Society of England, 1943.
- *Carson, David. "History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America to 1871." Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1964.
- *Carson, James D. "Revising the Testimony," Covenanter Witness, January 26, 1977.
- *"The Church of Scotland to Theodore Beza." The Zurich Letters, Second Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1845.
- *Collinson, Patrick. The Elizabethan Puritan Movement. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.
- . Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism.
London: Hambledon Press, 1983.
- Coolidge, John S. The Pauline Renaissance in England: Puritanism and the Bible. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

- *Copeland, E. Clark, Wayne R. Spear, and J. Renwick Wright. Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Interview. May 1986.
- *Coppes, Leonard. Are Five Points Enough? Ten Points of Calvinism. Manassas, VA: Reformation Education Foundation, 1980.
- Cotton, J. Henry. "The Sovereign God and Human Liberties." Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 12 (June and September 1943):89-100.
- Cromwell, Oliver. The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell. 4 vols. Edited by Wilbur Abbott. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937-47; reprint ed., New York: Russell and Russell, 1970.
- Crowley, Weldon S. "Erastianism in the Westminster Assembly." Journal of Church and State 15 (Winter 1973):49-64.
- Cross, Claire. Church and People, 1450-1660: The Triumph of the Laity in the English Church. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1976.
- Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, 1881 ed. S.v. "Westminster Assembly."
 _____ . S.v. "Westminster Catechism."
 _____ . S.v. "Westminster Confession."
- Davies, Rupert E. The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers. London: Epworth Press, 1946; reprint ed., Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1979.
- *Delivuk, John Allen, "The Doctrine and History of Worship in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America." S.T.M. dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, 1983.
- Dennison, James T. The Market Day of the Soul: The Puritan Doctrine of the Sabbath in England, 1532-1700. Lanham: University Press of America, 1983.
- "Descriptions of the Westminster Assembly." Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 12 (June and September 1943):114-119.
- De Witt, John. "The Place of the Westminster Assembly in Modern History." Presbyterian and Reformed Review 9 (July 1898):369-83.
- *de Witt, John R. Jus Divinum: The Westminster Assembly and the Divine Right of Church Government. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1969.
- Dexter, Henry M. The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years. New York: Harper, 1880.

- *Dickens, Arthur Geoffrey. The English Reformation. Revised ed. London: Fonta, 1967.
- Dickie, John. "A Note on the Latin Translations of the Scots Confessions of 1560 and 1580-1." Princeton Theological Review 21 (January 1923):116-22.
- Donaldson, J. The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905.
- *Douglas, J. D. The Light in the North. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.
- Douglass, Earl L.; Loetscher, Frederick W.; and Pears, Thomas C. The Westminster Assembly: Its History, Formularies and Abiding Values. N. p.: Department of History of the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 1943.
- *Dowey, Edward A. A Commentary on the Confession of 1662 and an Introduction to "The Book of Confessions". Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968.
- Ehalt, David R. "The Development of Early Congregational Theory of the Church, with Special Reference to the Five "Dissenting Brethren" at the Westminster Assembly." Ph. D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, CA, 1968.
- Elliot-Binns, Leonard. The Reformation in England. London: Duckworth, 1937.
- *Fitzgerald, George Hanlin. "The Irish Articles of Religion and the Westminster Confession of Faith." Th. D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, VA, 1962.
- Fletcher, Anthony. The Outbreak of the English Civil War. New York: New York University Press, 1981.
- Forrester, Duncan B. and Douglas M. Murray, eds. Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984.
- Frank, Joseph. The Levellers: A History of the Writings of Three Seventeenth-century Social Democrats: John Lilburne, Richard Overton, William Walwyn. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955; reprint ed., New York: Russell and Russell, 1969.
- French, Allen. Charles I and the Puritan Upheaval. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1955.
- Frere, Walter H., and C. E. Douglas. Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt. London: SPCK, 1954.

- *Geisler, Norman L., ed. Inerrancy. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979.
- *George, Charles H. Protestant Mind of the English Reformation. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Gerrish, Brian A. "Biblical Authority and the Continental Reformation." Scottish Journal of Theology 10 (December 1957):337-60.
- *Gerstner, John H. "The View of the Bible Held by the Church: Calvin and the Westminster Divines." In Inerrancy, pp. 385-410. Edited by Norman L. Geisler. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979.
- Gimelfarb-Brack, Marie. "Puritans et Revolution Puritaine Anglaise au XVIIe Siecle: De la Politique au Moralisme." Schweizerisch Zeitschrift fuer Geschichte 30 (30):72-83.
- *Girardeau, John L. Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church. Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, Printers, 1888.
- *Glasgow, William. History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Baltimore: Hill and Harvey, 1888.
- *Godfrey, W. Robert. "Biblical Authority in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Question of Transition." In Scripture and Truth, pp. 225-50. Edited by D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983.
- Goodsir, Joseph Taylor. The Westminster Confession of Faith Examined on the Basis of the Other Protestant Confessions. London: Williams and Norgate, 1868.
- *Greaves, Richard L. "The Nature of Authority in the Writings of John Knox." Fides et Historia 10 (Spring 1978):30-51.
- _____. Saints and Rebels. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985.
- _____. Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation. Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1980.
- _____. Society and Religion in Elizabethan England. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981.
- Haller, William. Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution. New York: Columbia University Press, 1955.
- _____. The Rise of Puritanism. New York: Columbia University, 1938.
- _____. Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution, 1638-1647. 3 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1933.

- _____. "The Word of God in the Westminster Assembly." Church History 18 (December 1949):199-219.
- Henderson, George D. The Claims of the Church of Scotland. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951.
- _____. Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1937.
- Hendry, G. S. "The Exposition of Holy Scripture." Scottish Journal of Theology 1 (June 1948):29-47.
- Heron, Alasdair, ed. The Westminster Confession in the Church Today. Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1982.
- *Hetherington, W. M. History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. 5th ed. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1890.
- *Hewison, James King, The Covenanters. 2 vols. Glasgow: John Smith, 1913.
- *Hierome Zanchius to Queen Elizabeth, 10 September 1571, Zurich Letters, Second Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1845. The original is found in Epistolae Zanchii, I. p. 423, Hanoviae, 1609.
- Hill, Christopher. Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1965.
- _____. Puritanism and Revolution. New York: Schocken Books, 1964.
- _____. Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England. New York: Schocken Books, 1964.
- A History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841.
- *Hodge, A. A. Outlines of Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957.
- *Hofstadter, Richard. Anti-Intellectualism in American Life. New York: Vintage, 1963.
- *Holley, Larry Jackson. "The Divines of the Westminster Assembly: A Study of Puritanism and Parliament." Ph. D. dissertation, Yale University, 1979.
- *Hopf, C. "Bishop Hooper's 'Notes' to the King's Council." Journal of Theological Studies 44 (January-April 1943):194-99.
- Hopkins, S. The Puritans During the Reigns of Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth. 3 vols. Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1859-1861.

- Hospers, Gerrit H. The Reformed Principle of Authority. Grand Rapids: The Reformed Press, 1924.
- Huehns, Gertrude. Antinomianism in English History: With Special Reference to the Period, 1640-1660. London: The Cresset Press, 1951.
- Hunt, John. Religious Thought in England: From the Reformation to the End of the Last Century. 3 vols. London: Straham & Co., 1870.
- *Hutchinson, George P. The History Behind the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. Cherry Hill, NJ: Mack Publishing Co., 1974.
- *Hutchison, Matthew. The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland. Paisley: J. & R. Parlane, 1893.
- Hutton, W. H. The English Church from the Accession of Charles I to the Death of Anne (1625-1714). 6 vols. London: Macmillan, 1903.
- *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1915 ed. S. v. "Inspiration," by Benjamin B. Warfield.
- Jadock, Darrell. "The Impact of Cultural Change: Princeton Theology and Scriptural Authority Today." Dialog 22 (Winter 83):21-29.
- James, Margaret. Social Problems and Policy during the Puritan Revolution 1640-1660. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966.
- *Johnson, Robert C. Authority in Protestant Theology. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959.
- Johnson, Thomas Cary. "John Calvin and the Bible." Union Seminary Review 43 (October):43-53.
- Kaplan, L. Politics and Religion during the English Revolution. New York: New York University Press, 1976.
- *Kevan, Ernest F. The Grace of Law: A Study in the Puritan Theology. London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1964.
- *Kirby, Ethyn Williams. "The English Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly." Church History 33 (December 1964):418-428.
- . "Sermons before the Commons, 1640-1642." American Historical Review 44 (April 1939):528-548.
- *Knappen, Marshall M. Tudor Puritanism: A Chapter in the History of Idealism. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1939; reprint ed., Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963.

- *Knox, John. The History of the Reformation in Scotland. Edited by Cuthbert Lennox. London: A. Melrose, 1905.
- Knox, R. Buick. Reformation, Conformity and Dissent. London: Epworth Press, 1977.
- *Kuyper, Abraham. "Calvinism and Confessional Revision." Presbyterian and Reformed Review 2 (July 1891):369-399.
- Lamont, W. M. "Episcopacy and a 'Godly Discipline,' 1641-46." Journal of Ecclesiastical History 10 (April 1959):74-89.
- Leith, John H. Assembly at Westminster: Reformed Theology in the Making. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1973.
- "Lest We Forget." Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 12 (June and September 1943):72-78.
- Lingle, Walter L. "The Story of the Westminster Assembly." Union Seminary Review 54 (August 1943):321-32.
- Little, David. Religion, Order, and Law: A Study in Pre-Revolutionary England. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.
- Lowrie, S. T. "An Account of the Scriptural Proofs Attached to the Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism." Presbyterian Review 9 (July 1888):443-456.
- *Lunt, W. E. History of England. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945.
- MacGillivray, Royce. Restoration Historians and the English Civil War. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974.
- Mackintosh, Hugh Ross. "The Reformers' View of Scripture." Union Seminary Review 54 (October 1943):7-11.
- Macleod, Donal Malcolm. Hold Fast to Your Confessions. Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1978.
- Macpherson, John. "The Westminster Confession: The Character and Sources of Its Teaching." Presbyterian and Reformed Review 9 (April 1898):239-260.
- Makower, Felix. The Constitutional History of the Church of England. London: S. Sonnenschein & Co., 1895; reprint ed., New York: Burt Franklin, 1960.
- Marsden, J. B. The History of the Early Puritans. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1850-52.

- . The History of the Later Puritans. Second ed. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1854.
- Martin, Hugh. Puritanism and Richard Baxter. London: SCM Press, 1954.
- McCord, Peter J. A Pope for All Christians. New York: Paulist Press, 1976.
- M'Crie, Charles G. The Confessions of the Church of Scotland. Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1907.
- M'Crie, T. M. Annals of English Presbyterianism from the Earliest Period to the Present Time. London: J. Nisbet, 1872.
- McGinn, Donald Joseph. The Admonition Controversy. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1949.
- *Mecklin, John M. "The Personnel of the Westminster Assembly." Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review 12 (1898):72-82.
- *Mickelsen, Berkeley. "The Bible's Own Approach to Authority." In Biblical Authority, pp. 75-105. Edited by Jack Rogers. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1977.
- Miller, Perry. Errand into the Wilderness. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1956.
- *Mitchell, Alexander F., ed. Catechisms of the Second Reformation. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886.
- Mitchell, Alexander F., and James Christie, eds. The Records of the Commissioners of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland Holden in Edinburgh in the Years 1646 and 1647. Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. & A. Constable for the Scottish Historical Society, 1892.
- * . The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, 1897.
- *Morris, Edward E. Theology of the Westminster Symbols. Cincinnati, OH: The Faculty of Lane Seminary, 1911.
- *Morris, William, ed. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. Boston: American Heritage Publishing and Houghton Mifflin, 1969.
- Mullett, Michael A. Radical Religious Movements in Early Modern Europe. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980.
- *Murray, Iain. The Puritan Hope. London: Banner of Truth, 1971.

- *Murray, John. "The Attestation of Scripture." In The Infallible Word, pp. 1-52. Edited by N. B. Stonehouse and Paul Woolley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946.
- *_____. "The Theology of the Westminster Confession." In Scripture and Confession, pp. 125-148. Edited by John H. Skilton. N. p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1973.
- Neal, David. The History of the Puritans. 5 vols. A new ed., revised corrected and enlarged by Joshua Toulmin. Boston: Charles Ewer, 1817.
- *New, John F. H. Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558-1640. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964.
- *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 1912 ed. S.v. "Westminster Assembly," by David S. Schaff.
- _____. S.v. "Westminster Standards," by Philip Schaff and David S. Schaff.
- *_____. S. v. "Zanchi, Girolamo," by Johannes Ficker.
- Nichols, Robert Hastings. "The Tercentenary of the Westminster Assembly." Church History 13 (March 1944):25-41.
- *Nickerson, Ronald W. "Terminal?" Covenanter Witness, August 27, 1975, p. 2.
- Nuttall, Geoffrey F. The Puritan Spirit. London: Epworth, 1967.
- Oman, John. "The Westminster Confession of Faith." Union Seminary Review 43 (October):35-42.
- *Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Minutes of the Fourteenth General Assembly. N. p.: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1947.
- Overton, John Henry. The Church in England. 2 vols. London: Gardner, Darton, & Co., 1897.
- *The Oxford Dictionary of the Church. 1st ed. S. v. "Ultramonism" and "Gallican Articles, The Four."
- *The Oxford English Dictionary, 13 vols. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1933.
- *Palmer, Ian S. "Authority and Doctrine of Scripture in the Thought of John Calvin." Evangelical Quarterly 49 (January-March 1977):30-39.

- Parker, Harold M., comp. Bibliography of Published Articles on American Presbyterianism 1901-1980. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985.
- *Paul, Robert S. The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the 'Grand Debate.' Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985.
- Pears, Thomas Clinton. "Tercentenary of the Westminster Assembly of Divines." Religion in Life (Winter 1943-44):43-52.
- Pearson, Andrew F. S. Church and State: Political Aspects of Sixteenth Century Puritanism. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1928.
- * _____ . Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism, 1535-1603. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1925.
- Pennington, Donald, and Keith Thomas, eds. Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century History Presented to Christopher Hill. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Peter, J. F. "The Place of Tradition in Reformed Theology." Scottish Journal of Theology 18 (September 1965):294-307.
- *Pieper, Francis. Christian Dogmatics. 4 vols. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950.
- Porter, H. C. Puritanism in Tudor England. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971.
- _____ . Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1958.
- Prall, Stuart E. The Puritan Revolution: A Documentary History. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968.
- *Presbyterian Church in America. Ad Interim Committee on Inter-Church Relations. Information Introducing and Comparing the Presbyterian Church in America, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Greenville, SC: Presbyterian Church in America, 1981.
- * _____ . The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America. Decatur: The Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, 1984.
- *Presbyterian Church in the United States. Memorial Volume of the Westminster Assembly, 1647-1897. Richmond: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1897.

- *Primus, John Henry. The Vestments Controversy. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1960.
- Prince, Harold B., ed. A Presbyterian Bibliography. Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1983.
- Procter, Francis and W. H. Freere. A New History of the Common Book of Prayer. London: Macmillan, 1955.
- *Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Pittsburgh: Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1949.
- * Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Pittsburgh: Reformed Presbyterian Church, date varies. Early minutes were published as part of the denominational periodicals.
- * The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Pittsburgh: Reformed Presbyterian Church, Board of Education and Publication, 1980.
- * Guide to Private Social Worship. Philadelphia: Covenanter's Publishing Society, 1854.
- Reid, J. K. S. The Authority of Scripture: Reformation and Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible. New York: Harper, n. d.
- Reid, James. Memoirs of the Lives and Writings of Those Eminent Divines Who Convened in the Famous Assembly at Westminster, in the Seventeenth Century. Paisley: Printed by Stephen and Andrew Young, 1811; reprint ed., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982.
- Reventlow, Henning Graf. The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World. Translated by John Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.
- Richards, J. McDowell Richards. "The Contribution of the Westminster Assembly to Democracy." Union Seminary Review 54 (August 1943):332-42.
- *Robb, Alice E. Hoi Moon. Pittsburgh: Board of Foreign Missions, 1970.
- Roberts, Edward H. "Faith of Our Fathers." Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 12 (June and September 1943):101-110.

Roberts, William Henry, ed. Addresses at the Celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1898.

*Robinson, Charles K. "Philosophical Biblicism: The Teaching of the Westminster Confession Concerning God, the Natural Man, and Revelation and Authority." Scottish Journal of Theology 18 (March 1965):23-34.

*Robson, Edward A. "Kai Configurations in the Greek New Testament." Ph. D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1979.

*Rogers, Jack B. and Donald K. McKim. The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979.

*_____. "The Church Doctrine of Biblical Authority." In Biblical Authority, pp. 15-46. Edited by Jack Rogers. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1977.

*_____. Scripture in the Westminster Confession: A Problem of Historical Interpretation for American Presbyterianism. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966.

_____. "Van Til and Warfield on Scripture in the Westminster Confession." In Jerusalem and Athens, pp. 154-65. Edited by E. R. Geehan. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1971.

Rolston, Holmes. John Calvin Versus the Westminster Confession. Richmond: John Knox, 1972.

_____. "The Westminster Confession and the Bible." Union Seminary Review 43 (October 1931):73-84.

Rupp, E. G. Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949.

Schaff, David S. "The Bible Rediscovered by the Protestant Reformers." Union Seminary Review 43 (October):25-34.

Seavers, P. S. The Puritan Lectureships: The Politics of Religious Dissent, 1560-1662. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970.

Shaw, William A. A History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth, 1640-1660. New York: Longmans, Green, 1900; reprint ed., New York: Burt Franklin Reprints, 1974.

- _____. "The Westminster Assembly." In The Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 4:356-363. Edited by A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, and Stanley Leathes. Cambridge: at the University Press, 1906.
- *Smith, Alvin. Covenanter Ministers 1930-1963. Pittsburgh: Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1964.
- Smyth, Thomas. Complete Works of Rev. Thomas Smyth. Edited by J. W. Flinn. Vol. 4: The History, Character and Results of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. 1908, pp. 285-434.
- Solt, Leo F. Saints in Arms. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959.
- Spear, Wayne R. "Covenanted Uniformity in Religion: The Influence of the Scottish Commissioners upon the Ecclesiology of the Westminster Assembly." Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1976.
- * _____. "The Westminster Assembly and Biblical Interpretation." In The Book of Books, pp. 45-54. Edited by John H. White. N. p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978.
- * _____. "Why Our Denominational Testimony Needs Revision," Covenanter Witness, January 12, 1977, pp. 6-7.
- Spinks, Bryan D. Freedom or Order? The Eucharistic Liturgy in English Congregationalism 1645-1980. Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1984.
- *Sproull, Thomas. "The Reformed Presbyterian Church in America: Sketches of Her Organic History." Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter 14 (January 1876-February 1877).
- Sprunger, Keith L. The Learned Doctor William Ames: Dutch Backgrounds of English and American Puritanism. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972.
- Stearns, R. P. The Strenuous Puritan, Hugh Peter, 1598-1660. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1954.
- Stoughton, J. History of Religion in England from the Opening of the Long Parliament to 1850. 6 vols. 4th ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881.
- *Symington, William. Messiah the Prince. London: T. Nelson, 1881.
- Tavard, George H. Holy Writ of Holy Church: The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation. London: Burns and Oats, 1959.
- Thomas, John Newton. "The Contribution of the Westminster Assembly to Christian Thought." Union Seminary Review 54 (August 1943):342-51.

- *Thompson, Owen. Sketches of the Ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Pittsburgh: Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 1930.
- Tolmie, Murray. The Triumph of the Saints. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Totham, G. G. The Puritans in Power: a Study in the History of the English Church from 1640 to 1660. Cambridge: University Press, 1913.
- *Trinterud, Leonard J. The Forming of an American Tradition. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949.
- Tulloch, J. English Puritanism and Its Leaders: Cromwell, Milton, Baxter, Bunyan. London: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1861.
- "Unfriendly Accounts of the Westminster Assembly." Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 12 (June and September 1943):120-22.
- *The United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The Constitution of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Part I, Book of Confessions. 2nd ed. New York: Office of the General Assembly The United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 1970.
- Vander Stelt, John C. Philosophy and Scripture: A Study in the Old Princeton and Westminster Theology. Marlton, NJ: Mack Pub. Co., 1978.
- von Rudloff, General. "Die Westminster-Synode 1643-1649." Zietschrift fuer die Historische Theologie 20 (1850):238-96.
- Wakefield, Gordon Stevens. Puritan Devotion: Its Place in the Development of Christian Piety. London: The Epworth Press, 1957.
- Wallace, Ronald. Calvin's Doctrine of Word and Sacrament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957.
- *Warfield, Benjamin Breckinridge. The Westminster Assembly and Its Work. New York: Oxford University Press, 1931; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
- Warfield, E. "The England of the Westminster Assembly." Presbyterian and Reformed Review 9 (January 1898):44-59.
- Watson, Thomas. A Body of Practical Divinity. London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1898.

Werrell, R. S. "Authority of Scripture for the Anglican Reformers." Evangelical Quarterly 35 (April 1963):79-88.

"The Westminster Divines and Foreign Missions." Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society 12 (June and September 1943):148-159.

Williams, John. M. "The Westminster Confession of Faith." Bibliotheca Sacra 47 (October 1890):625-44.

*Willson, S. Bruce. "The Value and Purpose of a Contemporary Testimony." Covenanter Witness, January 26, 1977, p. 7.

Wilson, F. Pulpit in Parliament; Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.

Woodbridge, John D. Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers and McKim Proposal. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.

Woodhouse, A. S. P., ed. Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates (1647-9). London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1951.

*Wylie, Samuel B. The Two Sons of Oil. Bowling-Green, OH: Stephen Young, 1806.

Yule, G. "English Presbyterianism and the Westminster Assembly." Reformed Theological Review 33 (May-August 1974):33-44.

Yule, George. Puritans in Politics: The Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament 1640-1647. N. p.: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1981.