Die Mercurij, 29. Iunij, 1642.

IT is this day Ordered by the COMMONS now assembled in PARLIAMENT, That Sir *Thomas Barrington* doe returne thanks to Doctor *Gouge* for the great pains he took in his Sermon this day preach't at S^t. *Margarets* in *Westminster* at the intreaty of the COMMONS House of PARLIAMENT, this being the day of the publike Fast, and that he be desired to Print his Sermon; and that no man presume to print it, but such as he shall appoint, till the House shall take further Order.

H. Elsynge, Cler. Parl. D. Com.

I Appoint *Iosh*ua *Kirton* to Print the fore-said Sermon.

WILLIAM GOUGE.

THE SAINTS SVPPORT,

Set out in

A SERMON PREACHED Before the Honourable House of COMMONS assembled in PARLIAMENT.

At a publick Fast, 29. *Iune*, 1642.

By *William Gouge*.

Ἐν ἐκλεκτοῖς ἦν Νεεμίας ὁ ἐπιπολὺ τὸ μνημόσυνον αὐτοῦ.

ECCLUS. 49. 13.

Among the Elect was Nehemiah, *whose renown is great.*

LONDON,
Printed by *G. M.* for *Iosh*ua *Kirton* at his Shop in *Pauls* Church-yard at the Signe of the white Horse,
MDCXLII.

TO THE HONOVRABLE HOVSE of COMMONS assembled in PARLIAMENT.

Moſt worthy Patriots,

THE *Wiſe-man among his many approoved* Proverbes, *hath this choyce one,* A word ſpoaken upon his wheeles (*ſo runnes the Originall, or ſet upon his meaſures, that is, as our Engliſh not unfitly hath tranſlated it,* fitly ſpoken) A word fitly ſpoken, is like Apples of Gold in pictures

Prov. 25. 11. דְּבַר דָּבָר עַל־אָפְנָיו *Iuxta modos ſuos. Mers. Quibus modis dici debet. Vat. Tempore ſuo. Hier.*

ctures of ſilver; *pretious and pleaſant. Pretious*, as golden Apples: *pleaſant as yellow Gold curiouſly wrought and artificially wrethed in white Silver.*

This Proverbe *turned my minde to thinke of ſome ſeaſonable Theame, after notice was given me, that by your Order, which to mee is a* Law, *I was deputed to preach before your Honourable Aſſembly. And I thinke I have hit upon a fit Subject, were I fit and able to handle it as it is meet to be handled in ſuch an Aſſembly.*

It is the Patterne of a good Patriot.

A point pertinent in Generall *and* Particular.

In Generall, *a Patterne or Example regiſtred and approoved in Sacred Scripture, ſhews*

1. *What is the good and acceptable will of God.*
2. * *What in like caſe others are bound to doe.*
3. † *What may be done by ſuch as will thorowly ſet themſelves to it.*
4. *What, when it is ſo done, may be pleaded in an humble-ſelf-denying manner before God.*

* *Si inveniuntur exempla quæ nos per rectam ducant viam, ſequenda ſunt.* Hier. *ad Celant.*

† *Excitamur in ſpem, qua nos etiam ita poſſe vivere, qui homines ſumus, ex eo quod aliqui homines ita vixerant, minime deſperamus.* Aug. *de Trin. l.8. c.9.*

In

In Particular *this Example of* Nehemiah *ſhewes,*

1. *Who is a good Patriot.*
2. *How he ought to behave himſelfe.*
3. * *What difficulties and dangers attend him.*
4. *What oppoſition and contradiction hee is like to meet with.*
5. *What reſolutions become him.*
6. *On whom his confidence is to be placed.*

* Δύσκολα τὰ καλά. Plut. de Lib. inſtit.

Our times are in many things not much unlike to the time wherin Nehemiah *came to* Jeruſalem.

Grievances in State.

Corruptions in Church.

He did as much as in him lay (and that indeed was very much) for redreſſing of the one, and removing of the other.

His patterne is not onely an Inſtruction, *to teach what is to be done: or an* Incitation *to ſtir up ſuch as know what is to be done: but alſo a* Juſtification *and* Approbation *of ſuch as doe as he did.*

And they may looke for ſuch an end, as Joſephus *teſtifies that* Nehemiah *had. His teſtimony is this,* When *Nebemiah* had done moſt mag-

Πολλὰ καὶ καλὰ καὶ ἐπαίνων ἄξια φιλοτιμησάμενος ὁ Νεεμίας ἐτελεύτησεν εἰς γῆρας

ἐφικόμενος, &c. Ioseph. *Antiq. Iud.* l. 11. c. 5.

magnificently many good things worthy of praise, being an old man he died, and left behind him the name of a gracious, just and bountifull man toward his owne Nation.

The Lord encline our great Kings heart to you, as he did the heart of Nehemiahs *King to him, and so worke by you, as he did by him: that every of you may with such confidence say to your God, as he did to his,* Thinke on me, my GOD for good, *according* to all that I have done for this People. *This is, this shall be, the prayer of*

Your daily Oratour

William Gouge.

A SERMON PREACHED Before the Honourable House of COMMONS, at the celebration of a FAST 29. *June*, 1642.

NEHEM. 5. 19.

Thinke upon me, my God, for good, according *to all that I have done for this people.*

THose two motives which enduced the good Patriot *Nehemiah* to preferre this Petition to his God, have enduced me to choose it for my Text, to handle it before so many worthy Patriots as are now met together to present their humble supplications to their God.

The two motives were these,

1. The many, great, good things which he had done for the Church and State.

2. The many, great, desperate dangers which

he had met with, and knew he should further meet with in prosecuting his good beginnings.

Whether there be not at this time the like occasions for the representative body of this Kingdome, as one man, to pray and say, *Thinke upon me my God for good, according to all that I have done for this people*, let the times judge.

To this Text the more diligent heed is to be given, in that it containeth the last memorable matter which the Holy Ghost saw meet to commend to his Church in the old Testament. For the former part of it (wherein the maine substance of the
Neh.13.31. whole lyeth) is repeated in the last clause of this Booke, which is the last Booke of the old Testament. For all the Prophesies registred in the old Testament were before *Nehemiahs* time: which thus appeareth. All but the three last were before the Captivity of the *Iewes* in *Babylon*. Two of those
Ezr.5.1. Hag.1.1. Zech.1.1. --7.1. last three, *Haggai* and *Zechary* uttered their Prophesies about the time that the Temple was finished, in the foure first yeares of *Darius* his reigne. *Malachi* who is the last of all the Prophets prophecied anone after the Temple was built, as is evident by the maine scope of his Prophecy: So as he may well be thought to have uttered his Prophesie in the daies of *Darius*, or in that time of *Artaxerxes* reigne, wherein *Ezra* came first to *Ierusalem*. For *Malachi* is supposed to be *Ezra*, and called *Malachi*, because he was the Lords Messenger.

Malachi, id est Esdras, post Aggeum & Zechariam, qui sub Dario prophetaverunt, fuisse credendus est Hier. in pro. in Malach. *Lege Clem. Alex. Stromd.* 1.

As for the booke of *Hester*, though it be placed after this of *Nehemiah*, yet is it an History of many years

yeares before: for the things therin recorded were in the reigne of *Ahashuerus*, of whom mention is Hest.1.1. made, *Ezr.* 4. 6. He ended his daies fourescore yeares before *Nehemiah* came to *Ierusalem*. The compiler of the bookes of the old Testament, had more respect to the order of *matter* then of *time* in placing *Ester* after *Nehemiah*. For *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* are one continued History, which sets downe the restauration of the *Iewes* after their captivity. Both were written by *Ezra*, and of old called *the first and second booke of Esdras*: yea by the *Hebrewes* they were both brought into one Volume.

Apud Hebræos Esdræ, Nehemiæ sermones in unum volumen coartantur. Hieron in Esd. & Neem præfat.

For the foresaid end of setling the State of the *Iewes* there were three solemne commings of three famous persons to *Ierusalem*. The first was of *Zerubbabel*, who being a young man laid the founda- Ezr.1.2. --3.8. tion of the Temple in the reigne of *Cyrus*, and being an old man finished it in the reigne of *Darius*. --6.15. The second was of *Ezra*, *a ready Scribe in the Law of* Moses, whose comming was * about one hun- --7.6. dred thirty and three yeares after the first, in the seventh yeare of *Artaxerxes*. He came to instruct the *Iewes* in the Law of God. The third was of *Nehemiah*, thirteene yeares after *Ezras*. The end of his comming was to build up the City of God and the wall thereof, that Gods people might therin more freely observe Gods Ordinances, and live in safety and security from their enemies. When he came thither he found many Grievances in the State, and corruptions in the Church. *Those* he re- Neh.5.1,&c. dressed, *these* he removed: and withall setled --13.4. the

* After the returne of the Iews Cyrus raigned nine years. One Darius 36 Ahashuerus 21. One Artaxerxes &c. Another Darius 19. Another Artaxerxes 7. before Ezra came.

No 13.15, &c. the *Sabbaths Sanctification.*

To ſhew whence he received his courage to doe what he did, notwithſtanding the ſtrong and great oppoſitions againſt him, it is oft noted in this book, that his heart was on his God, to whom on all occaſions he preferred his prayer in the beginning, progreſſe and end of all.

Neh.1.4.&c. So ſoone as he heard of an occaſion of going to *Ieruſalem*, he made his prayer to God. It was the firſt thing he did. Ever and anone was his heart lift up unto God in the Progreſſe. * Eight particular inſtances therof betwixt his firſt and laſt prayer, are expreſly noted in this Hiſtory. This Hiſtory is concluded with the ſame prayer that is in my Text.

* Neh.2.4.
---4.4.
---4.9.
---5.19.
---6.14.
---13.14.
---22.
---29.

Thus you ſee how my Text is inſerted in the midſt of this Hiſtory, as a Demonſtration of the Support whereon this Patriot reſted, and whereby he was encouraged in his good, great, difficult, dangerous attempts.

May I in this Auditory have leave to give, *meo more & modo*, after my ordinary and plaine manner, the *Grammaticall* Interpretation and *Logicall* Reſolution of the Text, a more ready way will be made thereby for raiſing and proſecuting proper *Theologicall* Obſervations thereout.

First, therefore of the ſence.

זכרה
Neh.1.8.
---6.14.
---13.14.
---22.
---29.
---31.

The word tranſlated, *Thinke*, properly ſignifieth *Remember*. So it is in other places tranſlated even by theſe Tranſlators, and that ſix times in this book applyed to God.

It importeth two things.

1. To

1. To keepe and hold faſt in mind and memory what is once knowne. So it is oppoſed to forgetfulneſſe: as where the Law ſaith, *Remember and Forget not.* Deut.9.7.

2. To call againe to mind and memory what was once knowne, but after forgotten: in which ſence ſaith *Pharaohs* Butler, *I doe remember my faults this day.* He had forgotten his faults, his impriſonment, his dreame, the interpretation and iſſue therof (all which are implyed under this phraſe, *The chiefe Butler did not Remember* Joſeph, *but forgat him*) But by the wiſe mens ignorance of the meaning of *Pharaohs* dreames, hee remembred and called to mind his faults, and what followed thereupon. Gen.41.9. ---40.23.

זָכָרוֹן
Exod.28.12.
הַזִּכָּרוֹנוֹת
Eſt.6.1.

In theſe two reſpects a word derived from this root is put for *a Memoriall*: and for *Records*: by which matters are ſo kept and retained, as they are not loſt or forgotten: and by which if matters be forgotten they may be againe called to mind, as *Mordecais* faithfullneſſe to the King being forgotten, was by the Kings hearing the *Records* brought to his mind.

This act of *Remembring* is in ſacred Scripture applyed to God and man.

To man properly in both the fore-mentioned acceptions. As the two prooſes doe ſhew. For to man it was ſaid, *Remember and forget not:* and he was a man that ſaid, *I doe remember my faults.* Deut.9.7. Gen.41.9.

To God it is moſt properly applyed in the former ſignification. For he ever faſt holds in memo-

ry and never forgets what he once knowes : And
Act.15.18. *knowne unto God are all his workes from the beginning of*
the world.

Yea, also in the latter signification it is oft attri-
buted to God, as where it is said, *Did not the Lord*
Ier.44.21. *remember them ? and came it not into his minde ?*
The latter phrase sheweth that the act of remem-
bring attributed to God in the former clause, is
ment of calling to mind what was formerly known.
Iob 7,7. --- 10,9. -- 14.13. *Iob* oft calleth on God to *remember* him in this sence.
In this respect God is said to have *Remembrancers :*
הַמַּזְכִּירִים to whom he thus saith, *Put me in Remembrance :*
See Margin on Isa.62.6. and to this end he is said to have a booke of *Remem-*
Isa.43.26. *brance.* But surely these things cannot be properly
סֵפֶר זִכָּרוֹן spoken of God. They are to be taken *tropically*,
Mal.3.16. by way of resemblance, after the manner of man.
ἀνθρωποπαθῶς. When men having forgotten a friend, neglect him,
doe nothing for him, suffer him to want, to be op-
pressed, to lye in prison, or remaine in captivity,
but being put in mind that he is such and such a
friend, doe good to him and succour him, are said
to remember him : So God (when after long suf-
fering his children to want such and such a blessing,
or to lye under such and such a crosse, hee
bestoweth on them the blessing which they so
long waited for or freeth them from the crosse
under which they lay so long) though he never
forgat them, but knew and saw their want and
pressure, is said to remember them. Thus he *re-*
Gen 30.22. *membred Racheli*, who had long wanted a childe :
Exod.2.24. and the *Israelites*, who had long lien under bon-
dage.

In

In briefe *Nehemiah* by this phrase, *Thinke upon*
or *Remember*, intendeth that God would so deale
with him, as he himselfe might have assurance and
others evidence, that God did thinke upon what he
did and well remember it.

This Petition he makes, not as doubting of Gods
good-will to him, but as resting on God for some
evidence thereof. For what beleevers expect from
God they pray f.r : and what they pray for, with
confidence they expect to receive.

To give further evidence of his speciall affiance
on God, he restraineth this act of Gods good-will לִי
to himselfe in particular, by this clause, *upon me*,
and it carrieth this Emphasis, that though the Lord
regarded not them who testified no hearty affection
to himself, his house or people, yet he would thinke
upon him whose heart was set on all these. *Thinke*
on me.

The next clause, *my God*, doth yet further set אֱלֹהַי
out that his speciall affiance on God. *My*, is an ap-
propriating particle : yet such an one as admits o-
thers that are of like quality. Nor this, nor the for-
mer particle of speciality, nor *Me*, nor *My* is to be ta-
ken exclusively, as if he exempted all but himselfe
from these priviledges, for before this, he desireth
God to think on others like himself, thus, *O Lord, I* Neh.1.11.
beseech thee, let now thine eare be attentive to the [a] Neh 8,18.
prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy ser- --6.14.
vants who desire to feare thy name. And though ---7.5. 13.14,22,29, 31.
[a] sometimes he expresse the relation betwixt God [b] Neh.4.4,9, 20.
and himselfe in the singular number, *my God*, yet
[b] other times in the plurall number, thus, *our God*, ---13.18,27

yea

c Neh.8.9. d Neh.13.26. e Neh.12.45.

yea and in the second and third persons, thus, *your God*, [d] *his God*, [e] *their God*.

He useth the first person and singular number (*my God*) to testifie the full assurance he had of his own interest in God. He useth other persons and the plurall number (*His God, Our God, Your God, Their God*) to intimate the strong perswasion he had of others like interest in God. The former is *judicium certitudinis*, an assured knowledge: the latter *judicium charitatis*, a charitable belief. That these two may stand together is evident by these phrases joyned together, [f] *Thy God shall be my God*: [g] *I ascend to my God and your God*.

f Ruth.1.16. g Ioh.20.17.

By the way take notice, that the mention which I made of the singular number, hath respect to the translation, rather then to the originall, especially in the title *GOD*. For the Hebrew word is one of those ten titles which in sacred Sacred Scripture are as names attributed to God; and it is of the plurall number. As all the other titles have their significations and mysteries, so this. It importeth a plurality of persons: yet so as in construction it intimateth an unity, an unity in nature, the unity of the Deity. For it is joyned with a verbe of the singular number: as in the first sentence of the Bible, which in other languages may imply some Grammaticall incongruity; but it expresseth a true Orthodox, Theologicall Mystery: which God from the beginning would have to be knowne for his owne glory and Churches good. For (even our enemies, worshippers of false gods being Judges) our God is such a God, as no other God could ever

אלהי *De istis decem nominibus lege Hier. Epist ad Marcel.* See also the Churches conquest on Exod. 17.15. Sect.72.

ברא אלהים *Verbatim Dij creavit.* Gen.1.1.

ver be imagined like unto him. Many of Gods incommunicable properties and workes have (though most unjustly and falsly) beene attributed to false gods, as [h] eternity, [i] omnipotency, [k] creation of Heaven and Earth, [l] divine providence, and other the like. But it never came into the mind of any Idolater to imagine his God to be three in one. The *Trinity* in *Unity* is a mystery of mysteries, making much to the honour of him that is knowne and believed to be such a God.

h *O Pater, ô hominum, divumq; æterna potestas* Virg. Æneid. 10.
i *Tecum omnipotens Neptune invoco*, Cic Tusc. l 4.
k Ovid Met l 1.
l *Cuius nutu & arbitrio cœlum, terra, mariaq; reguntur*, Cic. de Fin.

By it also we know and beleeve that the *Spirit* which proceedeth from the *Father* and the *Son*, and helpeth our infirmities, enableth us to doe the will of God and establisheth us against all assaults, is true God: and that the *Sonne* of God, the only begotten of the *Father*, the *Mediatour* betwixt God and man, is true God: and that the *Father* to whom we have accesse for all needfull blessing, is true God. Thus we have not many gods for many purposes; but one God for all turnes. One to enable us to goe to the throne of grace: One to mediate for us there: One to accept us there, all one God. Is not this a comfortable mysterie?

But this by the way.

That for which he desireth his *God to thinke upon him*, is *for good*. The Hebrew word properly signifieth *goodnesse*, and is so translated in sundry places, oft in the *Psalmes* and *Prophets*. Some therefore here take it for a property in God, and the cause or ground of his faith and hope, and of all blessing: as if he had thus expressed it,

לטובה 2 Sam.7.28. 1 Kin 8.66.

Thinke on me for thy goodneſſe ſake. This is in it ſelfe a good ſence, and anſwerable to this of *Dauid, Remember thou me for thy goodneſſe ſake ô Lord.*

Pſ.25.7. But in my Text the particle of relation to God, (*Thy*) is not expreſt, and the prepoſition ל expreſſed, admits not that ſence. Therefore the LXX. Greeke Interpreters, the ancient Latine and ſundry other tranſlate it as our Engliſh, *for good*: in like manner is this very word with this prepoſition turned (*Gen.*50.20.) *unto good.* Thus it ſets downe the end why he would have God to thinke on him, namely, ſome good, benefit, bleſſing to himſelfe. That this is here intended, is further evident by that which followes, *according to all that I have done*, &c.

εἰς ἀγαθὸν. *In bonum.*

Looke upon your books and yee will finde this word, *according*, in another character, which ſheweth that it is not in the Originall, as indeed it is not. Some therefore joyne theſe two words, *good, all*, together, thus, *for good of all that I have done.* This expoſition might well ſtand, but that there is an *accent* or *pauſe* annexed to the former word, which diſtinguiſheth ſentences, or at leaſt the parts of a ſentence. Something therefore muſt be underſtood to make up the latter part of this ſentence: and ſurely our Engliſh hath hit upon the fitteſt ſupplement, as the ancient Latin, and ſundry other languages. The particle (*according*) here ſupplied, is oft on like occaſions expreſſed, as where the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith to God, *Thou rendereſt to every man according to his workes.* By this ſupplement no merit, but the kind or quality, and meaſure or quantity of reward is intended. In regard of the *kinde, whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reape.* He that ſoweth wheat ſhall reape wheat: he that ſoweth tares ſhall reape tares: *He that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reape corruption: but he that ſoweth to the ſpirit, ſhall of the ſpirit reape life everlaſting.* In regard of the meaſure, *He which ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap bountifully.*

In bonum omnium quæ feci.

אתנח *Diſtinguit mediam ſententiam, & reſpondet colon.*

Secundum omnia.

Pſ.62.12. כמעשיהו

Gal.6.7,8.

2 Cor.9.6.

Therefore he adds the next generall particle *All*, כל for All compriſeth many things under it, and excludeth not any at all.

That which he pleads of his owne doing in this phraſe (*that I have done*) is not to be taken in reference to his owne ability in and of himſelf: but to the manifeſtation of the power of Gods Spirit in him, which God himſelfe thus expreſſeth, *Not by might nor by power, but by my ſpirit*, and Saint Paul thus, *I have laboured more abundantly then they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* אשר־עשיתי

Zach.4.6. 1 Cor 15.10.

For further amplification of what he did, he ads the perſons in whoſe behalfe he did all that he did, *for this people.* He meanes hereby the *Iewes*, among whom he then was, and thereupon as pointing at them, he uſeth a double demonſtrative particle, as if to the full it had bin thus expreſſed, *for this people*, even *this.* Well might he ſet this emphaſis upon that people, becauſe at that time they were the only Church of God, a peculiar treaſure unto him above all people. עַל־הָעָם הַזֶּה

Exod.19.5.

Thus have you the plaine *meaning* of the Text.

The ſumme of all in two words is,

Saints Support.

Which is in one word *GOD.*

This *Support of Saints* is set downe in forme of a Petition.

Therein is expressed,

1. The *Person* petitioned.
2. The *Point* prayed.

The *Person* is set out,

1. By his generall title, *GOD.*
2. By his speciall relation, *MY.*

In the *Point* prayed for, ye may observe,

1. The *Kind* } of it.
2. The *End* }

The *Kinde* points at,

1. An *Act* desired of God, *THINK VPON.*
2. The speciall *Object* thereof, *ME.*

The *End* is,

1. Generally propounded, *FOR GOOD.*
2. Particularly amplified.

In the amplification are distinctly set downe.

1. The *Ground*, *THAT I HAVE DONE.*
2. The *Rule*, *ACCORDING TO.*
3. The *Extent*, *ALL.*
4. The *Restraint* or *Limitation*, *FOR THIS PEOPLE.*

Thinke upon me, my God, for good, according *to all that I have done for this People.*

The Observations hence arising are these.

I. *GOD is the Support of Saints.* This Saint by directing this his Petition to God, gives instance hereof.

II. *The LORD is a peculiar GOD to a Beleever.*

This appropriating particle, *MY*, being uttered by a beleever in reference to God, evinceth as much.

III. *GOD hath Remembrancers.* He that said to God, *thinke upon* or *remember*, was such an one.

IV. *GODS mind is soonest drawne to his owne.* He that could say, *my God*, was one of Gods owne and thereupon was perswaded to say to his God, *thinke upon ME*, in confidence that God would soon so doe.

V. *Prayer may be made for ones owne good.* This phrase *for good*, intends as much.

VI. *Workes may be pleaded before GOD.* So doth he that in his prayer to God thus pleads, *that I have done.*

VII. *Mans workes are the rule of Gods reward.* This is implied by the word fitly supplyed, *according.*

VIII. *Every thing well done shall be rewarded.* This generall particle *All*, extends to every good work, and intends such an extent of reward.

IX. *Good done to GODS people is most acceptable.* Thus much is manifested, as by the expression of *this people*, so by the emphasis added thereto, *this people*, even *this.*

These are the principall intendments of this Text.

That ye may the better discerne the true and just ground of all these points, and especially of this Patriots confidence, whereby he was enboldened to put his God in mind, to *thinke on him for good* according *to all that he had done for his people.* I sup-

poſe it will not be impertinent, nor yet unprofitable to give you a briefe view of ſuch particular acts done by him, as are in this booke diſtinctly ſpecified from the beginning to my Text. Hereby yee may have a pertinent patterne for Juſtification of what ye have done, and direction for what remains yet to be done: and withall ye may ſee in what courſes and cauſes yee may with confidence depend on your God and ſay, *Thinke on us our God for good*, according *to all that we have done for this people.*

1. The firſt particular noted of him is an inquiſitive diſpoſition after the State of the Church, how it fared with her. So ſoone as he heard that *Hanani* and others were come from *Iudah*, he *asked them concerning the Iewes, and concerning* Jeruſalem. He himſelfe was in a ſafe and ſecure place: He had the favour of the greateſt Monarch then on Earth: yet he thought not that enough: hee muſt know how the Church doth. By this enquiry he came to know what otherwiſe, it may be, he ſhould never have knowne: and then the Church might have wanted all that good which he did for it. What eye ſees not or eare heares not, heart rues not. Naturall men are in a moſt woefull plight: But becauſe they know nothing of it, they are no whit mooved with it, nor care to ſeeke any redreſſe for it. Many doe nothing for the Church, becauſe they know nothing of the Church. Be we therefore inquiſitive after it.

Neh. 1. 2.

Ignoti nulla cupido.

2. That which he heard of the Churches diſtreſſe

treſſe wrought much compaſſion in him: For he *ſate down and wept, and mourned certain dayes.* By this ſympathy he ſhewes himſelf a true member of the Church. *If one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it.* This cannot but beſeem the beſt. For of God himſelf it is thus ſaid, *His ſoul was grieved for the affliction of Iſrael.* In ſuch caſes *his bowells* are ſaid to *ſound: and his heart* to be *turned within him.* Art thou Lord ſo affected, and afflicted at our miſery, and we no whit moved with our own or others diſtreſſes? *Woe*, ſaith the Prophet, *woe to them that are at eaſe*, &c. *that ſtretch themſelves upon their couches, and eate the Lambs out of the flock: that chant to the ſound of the violl: that drink wine in bowles, and annoint themſelves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of* Joſeph. What good can be expected from ſuch ſenceleſſe diſpoſitions? That compaſſion which was wrought in this Patriot, ſet him on work, to do all that good which he did for the Church. *Let this mind be in you, which was alſo in him.*

Neh. 1. 4.

1 Cor. 12. 26.

Iud. 10. 16.

Hoſ. 11. 8.

Amo. 6. 1, &c.

3. Before he attempts any thing, he goes to God. Firſt to God, then to the King. *I prayed*, ſaith he, *before the God of Heaven.* This made all that he did ſo ſucceſſefull as it was. *Saul*, though an hypocrite, could make this apology for his overhaſty ſacrifice, *The* Philiſtines *will come down now upon me to* Gilgal, *and I have not made ſupplication to my God.* The very Heathen did uſe to begin all with their God. Should not we Chriſtians ſo doe with our God? I am confident ye ſo doe: and thereupon with confidence I may ſay, Go on, and proſper.

Neh. 1. 4.

1 Sam. 13. 12.

A love principium.

4. He

4. He added one kind of prayer to another: to his daily, ordinary prayers, he added extraordinary. Neh. 1.6. The phrase of praying *day and night*, implies his constant morning and evening prayer, wherein he was ever mindfull of the children of *Israel*. His *fasting* was an evidence of extraordinary prayer. This particle, *now*, or *this day*, prefixed before *day and night*, sheweth that in this day of extraordinary prayer helped by fasting, he omitted not his ordinary morning and evening devotion. Thus much was prefigured in the Law. For every day one Lamb was to be offered *in the morning*, and another *at even*: on their feast dayes they had other solemn sacrifices enjoyned, yet so as with those extraordinary sacrifices they joyned their daily morning and evening burnt offering. In the 28. and 29. Chapters of *Numbers*, where those extraordinary sacrifices on their severall dayes are expresly set down, this proviso (*beside the continuall burnt offering*) is fifteen times repeated. Ordinary and extraordinary prayer joyned together, will adde life and power each to other. Ordinary morning prayer may prove to be a good preparation to the extraordinary ordinance: and the evening ordinary prayer a means of calling our failings in the extraordinary to mind, of craving and obtaining pardon for the same, and procuring a blessing in all. As for extraordinary prayer quickned with fasting, it was never performed (if at least it were rightly performed) without some more then ordinary blessing. That Divell, which cannot otherwise be cast out, may be *cast out by prayer and fasting*. *What therefore God*

---4.
הַיּוֹם
יוֹמָם
וְלַיְלָה

Ex. 29 38, 39. Num. 28 3. &c.

Numb. 28. 10, 15, 23, 24, 31. & 29. 6, 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38.

Mat. 17. 21.

God hath joyned together, let no man put asunder.

I might here distinctly set out the particular branches of his powerfull prayer, as,

1. His solemn preamble, whereby he sheweth how his mind was so fixed on Gods greatnesse and goodnesse as it had wrought a mixture of feare and faith. Neh. 1.5.

2. His humble confession of sinne: of his own sins, of the sins of his fathers house, yea and of the whole house of *Israel*. This, penitently done, is the ready way for obtaining mercy and pardon. ---6. Ps 32.5. Pro. 28 13. 1 Joh. 1.9.

3. His pressing Gods own promise, whereby he testifieth on what ground his faith was founded. Neh. 1.8, 9.

4. His pleading that speciall relation which was betwixt God and them for whom he prayed, thus, *These are thy servants, and thy people*. By this he gives proof that the mark he aimes at is Gods glory. ---10.

5. His putting God in mind of his former dealing with them, thus; *whom thou hast redeemed*, &c. This shews, that by God himself, and his former dealing with them, he is put on to commend their cause to him.

6. His quickning of his own spirit, by his earnest, ardent expression of his mind. ---11.

But it being my purpose only to cull out such distinct acts of his as moved him to put God in mind of him for good, it might hinder my purpose to insist on every particular circumstance in those severall acts, that are recorded of him.

I return therfore to my principall purpose.

5. His heart was ready on the sudden to be raised to God. For when the King gave him occasion

Neh. 2. 4. to make his mind knowne to him, he instantly *prayed to the God of Heaven:* Not by turning aside and uttering any words to God, but by lifting up his heart to God. This is called an ejaculation of the spirit: when the spirit within a man casteth up a sudden desire to God. This sudden desire might be, that God would direct him in ordering his desire to the King, and that God would encline the Kings heart to grant his desire. So much was before thus expressed, *Grant me mercy in the sight of this man*, meaning the King. This may be as fervent and prevalent, as a solemne prayer uttered with the mouth, witnesse that ejaculation of *Moses* spirit, when he was in the middest of the people, and encouraging them against *Pharaohs* furious hoste that hotly pursued them: He then uttered no words of prayer, yet of that ejaculation, or inward desire, Exod. 14. 15. saith God, *why crieſt thou unto me?* which phrase implyeth great fervency. This frequently and heartily used argueth an heavenly mind, and holy familiarity with God. This is one way whereby we may pray *alway, continually*, even by the readinesse of the heart to pray at all times, in all places, on all occasions, when we are alone, or in company, in conference, reading, studying, working, or doing any other lawfull thing. Thus may I now in preaching, pray: thus may you even now in hearing, pray. Assuredly, if we were well disposed hereunto, we might have much better successe in many things we doe, then we have. What good successe had this Patriot hereupon? God mooved Neh. 2. 8. the King to grant whatsoever he desired. In sending

ding, in delivering Petitions to the King on earth, *Pray to the GOD of Heaven*, as *Nehemiah* did.

6. Together with all sorts of prayer to God, he Neh. 2. 5. useth humane helps. He gratefully acknowledgeth the Kings former *favour:* He humbly supplica- ---7. teth *leave* to goe to *Iudah:* he desireth a safe con- ---8. voy: he craveth the Kings *Letters* patent for all usefull and needfull Timber out of his Forrests. All these were lawfull meanes: and such meanes are the hand of Gods providence, whereby hee bringeth matters to passe. It is true indeed, that *man liveth not by bread alone:* meanes *alone* with- Deut. 8. 3. out Gods blessing doe no good. *Asaes* fault consisted not simply in this, that in his disease he sought 2 Chr. 16. 12. to the *Physitians*, but in this, that *he sought not to the Lord* A *woe* is denounced against those *that take* Isa. 30. 1. *counsell, but not of the Lord, and that cover with a* ---31. 1. *covering, but not of his Spirit.* But true also it is, that where meanes are meet to be used, God will not bring matters to passe without meanes. In the great danger wherein *Paul*, and all in the Ship with him were, God promised that there should be no *losse of any mans life among them:* yet *when the Ship men* (who are an especiall meanes of helpe in feare of wreck) *were about to fly out of the Ship*, Paul *said, except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved.* It will therefore be our wisdome to observe in the matters that we enterprize, what lawfull meanes may be helpefull thereto, and with prayer to use the same. By using meanes without prayer we presume: by praying without the use of means we tempt God.

Neh. 2. 11. 7. He goes himſelf to the place where he intended to doe good. *I came to Ieruſalem*, ſaith he. The deſire that he had to have the worke throughly don, moved him to goe himſelfe about it, and not to put it off to others. If men of place and power, who wiſh well to Church and State, were ſo minded, there would not be ſo many miſcarriages in weighty matters, as oft fal out. The *Shunamite* would 1 King 4 30. not leave the Prophet, till he himſelfe went to her childe. His ſervant went with his ſtaffe, but effected nothing; When he himſelfe came, the deed was ſoone done. A difference betwixt a Gentleman that holdeth his land in his owne hands, and ſcarſe raiſeth up ſo much as the ordinary rent amounts to, and the Farmer, who beſide the rent, raiſeth up a good livelihood, herein lyeth; That the Gentleman lying in bed, or following his pleaſures, ſaith to his ſervants, *Goe Sirs*, intending that they ſhould goe about his worke: But the Farmer ſaith, *Oculus Domini paſcit equum.* *Gaw Sirs*, that is, *Goe we*, together, or goe with me. This Proverbe, *the eye of the Maſter makes the horſe fat*, intendeth as much. This may be a good patterne to you Governours, to us Miniſters, and to all that have the charge of matters of moment.

Neh. 2. 13. 8. He himſelfe taketh an eſpeciall view of the ruines of *Ieruſalem*. *I went out by night*, ſaith he, *and viewed the wals of* Jeruſalem, *which were broken downe*, &c. He had heard thereof before: but now he was an eye-witneſſe; and this increaſed his compaſſion, enflamed his zeale, and ſtirred him up more diligently and throughly to repaire the ruines,

ines, and make up the breaches which he had ſeen with his owne eyes. Sight of diſtreſſe is of great force to worke on the affections, and to procure ſuccour. The Samaritan *who came where the wounded* Luk. 10. 33. *man was, and ſaw him, had compaſſion on him*, and ſuccoured him. Doe ye likewiſe what ye can, to take ſpeciall notice of the particular caſes of ſuch as are in diſtreſſe, that nothing beguile you, nothing be concealed from you. Goe to priſons, viſit the ſicke, caſt your eyes on miſerable objects. *Tu deſcende indaginis ſtudio, ne quid ſit quod lateat, aut lateat. Ambr. de Patriarch. Abr l. 1, c. 6.*

9. He puts others in mind of that which he and they ſaw: and ſtirres them up thereby to be aſſiſtant Neh 2. 17. to him, in theſe words, *ye ſee the diſtreſſe that we are in*, &c. *Come, and let us build up the wall*, &c. This he did to ſtirre up ſuch a ſpirit in many others, as he himſelfe had, and to obtaine their help: that ſo the great worke might the better goe on. For *many* *Multorum manibus grande levatur onus.* *hands make light worke.* The fruit and benefit hereof is diſtinctly ſet down in the third Chapter. Wherefore thinke it not enough (in great matters, which of and by your ſelves ye cannot to purpoſe accompliſh) think it not enough to doe, even to the uttermoſt what lyes in your owne power: ſtir up others to be aiding and aſſiſting to you. This juſtifies your Proteſtation, your Subſidies, Pole-money, Landrate, Loanes, and other meanes uſed for aſſiſtance from others in the weighty works you have in hand.

10. He manifeſteth invincible courage againſt ſuch adverſaries as ſought to blaſt all his good intents and endeavours. *When* Sanballat *and others* Neh. 2. 19 20. *laughed them to ſcorne, and deſpiſed them, he with a* confident ſpirit *ſaid, The God of Heaven he will pro-*

ſper us ; Therefore we his ſervants will ariſe and build. Behold his courage, behold the ground thereof. *We will ariſe and build.* O undaunted Spirit! *God will proſper us:* a ſure and ſafe ground. If in any thing ye imitate this Patriot, herein imitate him. Be not
1 Cor. 16. 9. diſcouraged by adverſaries. *Where God openeth a great and effectuall doore to his ſervants, there will be*
Phil. 1. 28. *many adverſaries*: But *in nothing be terrified by them*: and that ye may in nothing be terrified by them, ſo place your confidence on God, as ye may in faith ſay, *The God of Heaven he will proſper us.*

The third Chapter diſtinctly deſcribeth the aſſiſtance that was afforded by others in fencing the City, and is an expreſſe demonſtration of the benefit of helpers, ſet downe in the ninth branch. I therefore paſſe over this Chapter, that I may haſten to my Text.

11. In an holy zeale, and juſt indignation, he imprecates vengeance againſt proud, ſcornfull, implacable enemies of Gods Church, in this manner,
Neh. 4. 4 *Turne their reproach upon their owne head, and give them for a prey in the land of their captivity, and cover not their iniquity*, &c. I muſt confeſſe that the imprecations of holy men recorded in ſacred Scripture, are ſharp, two edged tooles: not for every ones handling. When Chriſts Diſciples would have
Luk. 9. 54, 55. *commanded fire* (as *Eliah* did) *to come downe from Heaven to conſume the* Samaritans, *he rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of.* Particular imprecations againſt particular perſons are not for every ſpirit; but for ſuch extraordinary ſpirits, as Prophets and Apoſtles had: Yet thus farre

farre may every faithfull ſpirit teſtifie his holy zeal in this very kind of imprecation, by an indefinite extending it againſt ſuch as are indeed miſchievous and irreconcileable enemies of the Church. But becauſe *Saul* may prove a *Paul*, and a *perſecutor* may prove a *preacher* of the Goſpell, we may not imprecate againſt any particular perſons, yet againſt their miſchievous practiſes we may.

12. Them whom he incited to aſſiſt him, he encouraged, and that by the ſame ground of encouragement whereby he himſelfe was encouraged. He was encouraged by his confidence on God; and Neh. 2. 20. thus he encourageth others, *Be not ye afraid of them,* ——— 4. 14. *remember the Lord, who is great and terrible.* To ſuch a purpoſe tends this of the Apoſtle, *God comforteth* 2 Cor. 1. 4. *us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God.* Ye that are ſtrong, doe what ye can to ſtrengthen others: Ye whoſe ſpirits are lofty and ſteddy, lift up and hold up the ſpirits of others: put courage into others, ye that are men of courage. This was Chriſts advice to *Peter, When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy bre-* Luk. 22. 32. *thren*, &c.

13. In an extraordinary caſe he uſeth extraordinary diligence and vigilancy. The manifold miſchievous plots of their adverſaries ſhewed their Neh. 4. 8, 11, 12 danger to be more then ordinary. In this caſe, *he ſet* Ver. 9, 16, 17, *a watch againſt them day and night: One halfe of his* 20, 21, 23. *ſervants wrought in the worke, the other halfe held offenſive and defenſive weapons. Every workeman wrought with one hand, and with another held a weapon,*

they

they had a trumpet to draw them all to the place of danger; they daily watched from the rising of the Morning till the Starres appeared: none of them put off their cloathes, saving that every one put them off for washing. Is not now the more then ordinary paines, watching, loosing meales meat, defensive provision, and diligence used by our Parliament, is it not every way warrantable and commendable? Have we any cause to complaine thereof? Have we not just cause to blesse God therefore?

14. He redresses home-grievances. He thought it not enough to secure the City from publike enemies, unlesse also he eased the common people from the oppression of their Governours. For *there was a great cry of the people and of their wives, against their brethren the Iewes,* who were Governours, and had power over them. The particulars of their complaints are expresly related. This good Patriot heares them all, is much offended at the wrongdoers, adviseth about redresse, and so orders the matter, that for the wrong done, restitution and satisfaction is made; and for the future, order is taken that there be no more such grievances.

Neh. 5.1, &c.

....6, &c.

Ye that justly have obtained the name of *good Patriots,* and have begun to redresse many grievances, goe on in that good worke, till through Gods blessing and your endeavours it be brought to some good perfection, as *Nehemiah's* was. Heare complaints, receive Petitions, examine Accusations, punish Delinquents, cause restitution of that which is uniustly taken away, and satisfaction for that which is wrongfully done, to be made.

Ye

Ye are now the great Judges of this land: and of old it was said, that the Altar and Iudge are as one, in that such as are wronged fly to the one and the other for succor. Such was *Iobs* practise. *I delivered,* saith he, *the poore that cryed, and the fatherlesse, and him that had none to help him.* Remembrance hereof much comforted him against his friends unjust calumnies in the depth of his great miseries.

Iudex & Ara idem: pariter enim ad utrumque confugiunt qui iniuria afficiuntur. Aristot.

Iob 29.12.

15. He relieved such as were in distresse. It was not a pharasaicall brag, but a knowne truth, which he thus professeth of himselfe, *We after our ability have redeemed our brethren,* &c. To him it seemed not sufficient to redresse the wrongs which others had done, and to take off the heavy burdens which others had laid upon the backs of their poore brethren (which was a great privitive good) unlesse also positively be relieved with money, corne, and other necessaries, and that *gratis,* such as were in need.

Neh. 5.8.

Hereby we see how farre our works of mercy ought to extend. This to the life is thus exemplified by a Prophet, in the name of the Lord: *Is not this the Fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickednesse, to undoe the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed goe free, and that ye breake every yoake?* (Though this be most properly meant of redressing such wrongs, as men themselves doe, yet may it also be extended to redressing the wrongs which others do; but for the point which we have in hand, marke what followes). *Is it not to breake thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house,* &c. This is the extent of charity.

Isa. 58.6, 7.

E

16. He

16. He brought them to a solemne covenant and oath to binde them to that good order that he had made, lest they should start from it. It is thus expressed, *I tooke an oath of them that they should doe according to their promise.* (Their promise was this, *We will restore them, and will require nothing of them: so will we doe as thou sayest.*) Yea he made a terrible imprecation against every one that performed not this promise. He feared least in his absence, when he should in the time limited returne to the King, they would returne to their former exactions and oppressions. Therefore he would hereby restraine them. A pious and prudent course. The like course we read to be taken by *Asa*, who bound his people by *Covenant* and *Oath* to remaine faithfull with the Lord.

Neh. 5 12.

2 Chr. 15 12. &c.

This is the rather to be noted for justification and commendation of the course which both Houses of Parliament have taken, about bringing most of this Land into a solemne Covenant. The Lord make men faithfull in keeping it, and give a happy issue thereto.

17. For the peoples good in their necessity he remitted of his own right. For he was by the King *appointed a Governour*; and Governours had allowances due to them, which former Governours had taken: By reason hereof they were *chargeable to the people and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver* (that is, five pounds sterling; for a shekell is halfe an ounce, which makes two shillings sixe pence: They exacted the foresaid *bread and wine*, that is, all manner of provision, (* beside

Neh 5. 14, 15. *Siclus S. Scripturæ pôndrabat stateremu un, seu semiunciam Sbind.*

(* beside the *forty shekels*, which was their set allowance) *But*, saith he, *from the time that I was appointed to be their Governour, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the Governour.* He renders this reason hereof, *because of the feare of God.*

אחר כסף שקלים *Post argenti siclos, postquam acceperint ab eis 40 siclos argenti, omnino conjuntos diebus provisio suo. Vatabl.*

They therefore that feare the Lord will be like minded: they will not over-strictly stand upon their right, especially in times of necessity, and cases of extremity. Over-strict standing upon right may prove a great oppression.

Summum ius summa iniuria. Cic. Offi. l. 1 & Orat. pro Mur.

18. He, though a Governour, did beare a part in that which he required others to doe. *I also*, saith he, *continued in the worke of the wall: neither bought we any Land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the worke.* He had done much for them through the Kings favour to him, and through that power and authority which the King had given him: For he obtained for them as much timber as was needfull out of the Kings Forrest: He drew on others that were able to help on the building of the wals: He made speciall provision for their security against their adversaries: He did many other good turnes for them; yet so long as there remained any thing which might further be done by him or his, all that he had done, though it were much, seemed to him too little.

Neh 5. 16.

Neh 2. 8.

A worthy patterne this is to such as have done much good, to observe whether yet there be any thing wherein they may doe more good, *Let us not be weary in well-doing.*

Gal. 6. 9.

19. He was *given to Hospitality*, and *used it without grudging*. For *there were at his Table one hundred*

Rom 12. 13. 1 Pet. 4. 9. Neh. 5. 17.

dred and fifty of the Jewes *and Rulers, besides those that came unto them from among the Heathen.* So

Heb.13.2. as he entertained all of all sorts: such as had their habitations thereabouts, and such as were strangers and came out of other countries. Thus hee made his entertainment not onely a worke of *courtesie* in affording it to Neighbours and Rulers, who might have provided for themselves: but also of *charity* in extending it to strangers. How bountifull he was therein is made evident by the daily provision prepared for those purposes, as *one Oxe, six choice Sheepe: also Foules once in ten daies, and store of all sorts of wine.* Hospitality to strangers as well

Gen.18.1,&c. ----19.1.&c. Heb.13.2. Mat.25.34,35. as others, is so acceptable to God, as he sent *Angels* with blessed tydings to be guests to such persons: and Christ reckons up this worke of charity in speciall and by name among those which he doth most abundantly recompence.

I will conclude this particular with that exhortation which Christ gave upon anothers act of Hos-

Luk.10.37. pitality, *Goe and doe likewise.*

20. Whatsoever hee did, hee did in respect to God. Hee expected no reward from man: nor did he propound any bie-ends to himselfe: nor did any thing on bie-respects. My Text gives a plain demonstration hereof. For therby we see that his mind was fixed on his God. On God he cals to think upon him, from God he expects his reward for all that he had done. How many *Nehemiahs*, how many good and zealous Patriots would this and other Kingdomes have, if we had many men of place and parts so minded? Every one that minds God

in every good thing that he doth, and expects his reward from him, in such a way, after such a manner as *Nehemiah* did, may with like confidence say to God, *Thinke on me my GOD for good,* according *to all that I have done for this people.*

By this recollection of the principall acts of this Patriot, you see what remarkable matters he did: what difficulties and dangers hee passed thorow, what encouraged and emboldned him to stand against so many, mighty, malignant adversaries as he met withall, and what was the happy issue of all. Hereby also you may further see what becomes worthy Patriots to doe: what dangers and difficulties they may meet withall: (for what excellent worke is not environed with many difficulties, yea and dangers too?) with what courage and constancy they ought to stand against malignant parties: on whom they may securely place their confidence: and on what ground any one may say, *Thinke on me, my GOD, for good,* according *to all that I have done for this people.*

χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά. Μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτὴν (virtutem intelligit) καὶ τρηχύς, &c. Hesiod.

Thus have I brought you againe to my Text: which (as you heard before) affords many considerable Observations. So much time hath bin spent in setting out the patterne of a worthy Patriot, as there can be no expectation of handling all the nine Doctrines collected out of this Text. The first is the chiefest of all and comprizeth the pith of all the rest within it. May I have liberty and ability to touch upon it, I will give place to my reverend Brother, that with greater strength may hold out the solemnization of this daies humiliation.

The first Observation is this,

God is the Support of Saints.

1. He is a *Support*, because he is *God*.

2. *He* is so to *Saints*, because he is a *peculiar God* to them.

3. *Saints* know it to be so, in that they are *Gods Remembrancers*, and call upon him to *thinke* upon them.

4. *Saints* with more confidence rest on God for Support, because his mind is soonest drawne to them: whereupon every *Saint* saith to God, *thinke upon me.*

5. Their expectation of *good* from God further shewes, that they take him for their Support.

6. Their pleading of their workes before God, gives further proofe to the point.

7. The rather in that their works are the rule *according* to which God rewards them.

8. And in that he rewardeth *every* good worke of theirs.

9. And finally, in that God hath most and best respect to that which is done to *his people.*

Thus you see how the eight subsequent Doctrins have an eye to the first: so as I had cause to say, that the first compriseth the pith of all the rest within it. I come now directly and distinctly to handle it by it self. It is this,

God is the Support of Saints.

Many, many Epithites attributed to him in sacred Scripture, are as so many proofs of the point: such as these, [a] *Refuge*, [b] *House of defence*, * *Shelter*, [c] *For-*

[a] Ps 14 6.
[b] ---31.2.
* ---61.3.

[c] *Fortresse, high Tower, Buckler, Rocke,* [d] *Hiding place,* [e] *Saviour, Redeemer,* [f] *Deliverer,* [g] *Helper,* [h] *Rewarder,* yea [i] *Salvation,* [k] *Redemption,* [l] *Help,* [m] *Exceeding great Reward.* These latter Epithites being in the abstract (whereby is shewed that all Salvation, Redemption, Helpe and Reward arise only and wholy from him) add much Emphasis to the point.

[c] Ps 18.2.
[d] ---119 114.
[e] Isa 49 26.
[f] Isa 40 17.
[g] ---54.4.
[h] Heb. 11.6.
[i] Ps 27.1.
[k] 1 Cor. 1. 30.
[l] Ps 115.9.
[m] Gen. 15.1.

There are two especiall grounds thereof.

1. Saints taking God to be their Support.

2. Gods undertaking to bee to his Saints, what they take him to be.

To him on all occasions they have recourse for Support: and He answerably supporteth them that have recourse to him. He never faileth them that seek him.

Three things move Saints to take God for their Support.

1. The many enemies and dangers whereunto they are here subject. This world is a wildernesse full of wild and ravenous Beasts. All sorts of wicked men are those wild and ravenous Beasts: they are as Lyons, Tigers, Bears, Wolves, and such like. Saints are as Sheepe and Lambes. In allusion hereunto saith Christ, *Behold I send you forth as Sheepe in the midst of Wolves.* This their condition in this world makes them seeke for a Support. Mat. 10. 16.

2. Their owne manifold infirmities by reason of the flesh which they carry about them. They are (to use the woman of *Tekoahs* phrase) *as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again:* 2 Sam. 14. 14.

or to use a more pertinent comparison, *They* are as

a Vine full of moſt ſweet and uſefull fruit, yet ſo weake, as it cannot ſtand of it ſelf, without a frame, or ſome other ſupport to beare it up. The weakeneſſe of Saints makes them ſeek for a ſtrong ſupport: which they know God to be.

Ezek.29.6,7. 3. The impotency and diſability of any creature to helpe and ſupport them. All creatures are as reeds, weake, brickle, full of teeth: if they be leaned upon they will ſoone breake and teare the fleſh of ſuch as leane upon them. So as it is not onely unuſefull and in vaine, but alſo dangerous and damageable to reſt on meere creatures for a ſupport.

More then three things move God to be for his Saints, what they take him to be: as

1. That ancient love which of his owne goodwill he did beare to them before they were, yea before the worlds were. This doth the Apoſtle lay downe as the ground of all thoſe ſpirituall bleſſings wherewith God bleſſeth us, Eph. 1.3,4,5,6. This

Eph.2.4,5,6. he makes the ground of Gods *quickning us together with Chriſt, and of his raiſing us up together, and making us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Ieſus.*

1 Cor 6.20. 1 Pet.1.19. Heb.9.12. 2. That price which the Sonne of God hath paid for them, which was his own *precious blood.* Hereby *he obtained eternall redemption for them.*

Rom.8 34. Heb 7.25. 3. That continuall *interceſſion* which he maketh for them at the right hand of his Father. Hereby hee procureth continuance of Gods favour to them.

Eph 1 13. ---4.30. 4. That ſtamp or impreſſion of Gods image, which the Holy Ghoſt hath ſet in them, and whereby

by they are *ſealed unto the day of Redemption:* Hereby God knoweth them to be his.

5. The many promiſes which God hath made to them of caring and providing for them, and of protecting them from all dangers and evils, and *faithfull is he who hath promiſed.* Heb.10.23.

6. Their faith in reſting upon thoſe promiſes. This makes them put God in mind thereof, as *He* did, who thus ſaid, *Remember thy word* (meaning his word of promiſe) *upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* Pſa 119.49.

This Act of Saints in taking God for their ſupport is an evidence of that *wiſedome and prudence wherein God, according to the riches of his grace, hath abounded towards them.* For ſuch as are not able to ſtand of themſelves, to ſeeke a Support, and ſuch an one as of it ſelfe can ſufficiently ſupport them, ſo as they need ſeeke to no others, is queſtionleſſe an eſpeciall part of prudence. But ſuch a ſupport the Lord is. For

1 Information in the wiſdom of Saints who take God for their ſupport. Eph.1.7,8.

1. *The eyes of the Lord runne to and fro throughout the whole Earth to ſhew himſelfe ſtrong in the behalfe of them, whoſe heart is perfect towards him:* ſo as he is not, he cannot be ignorant of the needs or diſtreſſes of any of his Saints. *I have ſurely ſeen the affliction of my People,* ſaith the Lord. 2 Chr.16 9. Exod.3.7.

2. As *the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, ſo his eares are open to their prayers.* What cry ſoever they make to him in their diſtreſſe for ſuccour and ſupport, he heareth. 1 Pet.3.12.

2. He is ready and forward to doe what he ſeeth to be needfull and uſefull for them, *I know their*

sorrowes, and I am come downe to deliver them, saith the Lord to his people that were in distresse. Many promises hath he made for granting their desires. The more to set out Gods forwardnesse in granting his Saints desires, an *Angell* sent from God to *Daniel* while he was praying, thus saith, *At the beginning of thy supplication the Commandement came forth,* &c. and the Lord himselfe, thus, *before they call I will answer, and whiles they are yet speaking I will heare.*

Psal.50.15.
Dan.9.23.
Isa.65.24.

4. He is full of compassion: in so much as *his bowels are troubled* for his children when they are in any distresse: thereupon he maketh this inference, *I will surely have mercy upon them.* Nothing sooner moves any to succour and support, then compassion. It is oft noted to be the cause of that ready succour which Christ in the daies of his flesh afforded to all that came to him, that he *had compassion on them,* and was *moved* therewith.

Psal.86.15.
Ier.31.20.
Mat.14.14.
---15.30.
Mark.1.41.
Luk.7.13.

5. Hee is able to support his in their greatest weaknesses, and to deliver them out of their greatest distresse. *Behold* (saith the Lord) *I am the Lord the God of all flesh, Is there any thing too hard for me?* *The things which are unpossible with men are possible with God.*

Ier.32.27.
Luk.18.27.

6. As God *is mighty in strength,* so in *wisedome. His understanding is infinite.* He best knoweth when to support his and how: yea and how long to continue his support to them. If at any time he seeme to leave them to themselves, he doth it purposely, prudently; for good ends to good uses. And even then when he suffers them to lye under affliction, he so

Iob 36.5.
Psal 147.5.

so wisely supporteth them, as they are enabled to endure it, and are not overburdened: Witnesse he that said, *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despaire; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast downe, but not destroyed:* Yea through his wisedome (*as at first he commanded the light to shine out of darkenesse*, so) he bringeth much good to Saints out of their troubles. *For we know that all things worke together for good to them that love God.* This by good experience he found to be true in himselfe, who said, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*

2 Cor.4.8,9.
2 Cor.4.6.
Psal.119.71.

These considerations of the notice that God hath of his peoples state and case, of his hearing their prayers, of his forwardnesse to grant their desires, of his compassion at their distresse, of his power and ability to help, and of his wisedome in ordering the season and manner of succour: These and other like considerations give a cleare and evident demonstration, that God is a safe, sure, and secure support, whereby the wisedome of Saints is manifested in taking him for their support. In this therefore respect, as in many others, it may be said of them, *Surely this is a wise and understanding people.*

Deut 4.6.

On the other side, it must needs be a part of egregious folly and plaine dotage, to confide in, or trust unto any other support then this God. Yet most in the world are such doting fooles: As,

1. Demonstration of their folly who take not God for their support.

1. *Atheists*, who *say in their hearts there is no God.* Surely they who deny him to be, will not rest on him for support.

Psal.14.1.

2. *Pagans*, who being ignorant of the one onely true

true God; place their confidence on ſuch things as never were, never had any true being, but were meere phantaſies and imaginations of mens vaine braine. Such as *Baalim*, *Aſhteroh*, *Dagon*, *Molech*, and ſuch other as are mentioned in ſacred Scripture: And *Iupiter*, *Iuno*, *Apollo*, *Diana*, *Mercury*, *Venus*, and multitudes of the like reckoned up by the heathen. One of their Poets reckoneth up about thirty thouſand of them: Others more.

Heſiod in Θεογον.

Purch. Pilgr. of Aſia, l. 4. c. 1.

3. *Indian Savages*, who make the Devil their ſupport, and adore him, that he may not hurt them and their cattell. A part of their countrey is called *Terra Diaboli*, the *Devils Land*. To retort upon theſe in their owne kinde, Not onely *no hurt*, but *good*, is to bee expected from ſuch as are adored, as it is in my Text, Thinke upon me *for good*.

4. *Papiſts*, who make the innumerable company of Angels, the bleſſed *Virgin Mary*, *Apoſtles*, *Confeſſors*, *Martyrs*, and all that their Popes have canonized: Whereof ſome may be accounted, ſuch as the forementioned Gods of the *Pagans*, meere *phantaſies* and imaginations; and others, without breach of charity, may be judged to be damned wretches in Hell.

5. *Worldlings*, who reſt on mortall men, and earthly meanes, which are all like to the forementioned weake reed full of teeth. The Prophet denounceth a *woe* againſt ſuch.

Iſa. 31. 1.

2 Sam. 16. 21, and 17. 1, &c. 1 Sam. 17. 8. &c Iſa. 10. 8, &c.

6. *Self-boaſters*, who truſt to themſelves, to their owne parts, or to that command which they have over others: As *Achitophel* who relyed on his own wit; *Goliah* on his owne ſtrength; the *Aſſyrian* on the

the great command which he had: ſo others to other things; all which turne to their ruine.

Of all theſe, and others like to theſe, I may, concerning the caſe in hand, take up the Prophets pathetical Exclamation, *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye Heavens at this, and be ye horribly afraid, be ye very deſolate, ſaith the Lord: For my people have committed two evils; they have forſaken me the fountaine of living waters, and hewed them out ciſternes, broken ciſternes that can hold no water.* *Ier. 2. 12, 13.*

As for you that have been ſo farre enlightened as to know God to be the onely ſure and ſafe ſupport, and thereupon have been moved to take him for your ſupport, be now further in the name of this God exhorted, to uſe him as a ſupport. Uſe him as a *Refuge*, *Shelter*, *Houſe of Defence*, *Fortreſſe*, *high Tower*, *Buckler*, *Shield*, *Rock*, *Hiding place*. Theſe reſemblances will affoord good help for making a right uſe of the Lord in this very point, as he is a ſupport to his Saints. 3 Exhortation to uſe God as a Support.

1. A *refuge* is a place for ſuch as are in danger to fly unto for ſuccour and ſecurity. Such were the Cities of Refuge among the Jewes. When a man was unjuſtly ſuſpected of wilfull murder, and hotly purſued by the avenger of bloud, he made all the ſpeed he could to the City of Refuge. There was his cauſe rightly judged, there might he be ſecure: Doe you alſo fly to God in all undue ſuſpicions and unjuſt accuſations. In him you may be ſure to have your cauſe righted, and your perſons ſecured.

2. A *Shelter* is for ſuch as in their journey are over-

taken with showres of rain, with haile, snow, storm or tempest: In such cases, if a traveller espy a shelter, he will make haste to it. God hath undertaken to be *a covert from storme and raine.* When the raging raine of oppression, or storme of persecution, or violent tempest of any malignant opposition fals upon you, shelter your selves under the covert of your God. (Isa.4.6.)

3. An *House of Defence*, or *Castle*, or *Fortresse*, or *High Tower*, are all for safety against armies of enemies that compasse us about, and besiege us, and would utterly destroy us, if we had not such a place of safety. Now the Lord is indeed an high and strong Tower, an impregnable Castle: abide therefore in him, and feare not, though multitudes of enemies doe on every side set against you. They are safe whom the Lord doth keep.

4. A *Buckler* or *Shield* is of singular use to keep off push of pike; stroake of sword, force of dart, arrow or bullet that shall be flung, or shot against us: So faith in God will keep off all assaults of Satan, even all the *fiery darts of the Devill*; much more the furious, envious, and malicious words and deeds of wicked men. (Eph.6.16.)

5. A *Rocke* is a firme and sure foundation. An edifice that is well erected and setled on it, cannot be overthrowne. Though *the raine descend and the flouds come, and the wind blew, and beat upon that house, yet it fals not, because it is founded on a rock* For application of this Metaphor, note what Christ saith of himselfe as he is a rocke: *Upon this rocke will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevaile against it.* (Mat 7 24,25. Mat 16.18.)

Againe,

Againe, a rock being in the Sea remains immoveable: The strongest tempests and violentest waves of the Sea cannot shake it, much lesse overthrow it. If therefore any who have suffered shipwracke lye floating on the Sea, and espye a rocke, they will make to it: so in our greatest troubles, and most desperate dangers, let us get to God the rocke of our salvation; and we may be sure to be safe.

6. An *biding place*, is that wherein many beasts doe repose themselves on all occasions: As a Connies burrow, a Foxes hole, a Lyons den: when they are there they thinke themselves safe: There therefore they use to sleep; there they use to carry the prey they get, and there to eat it: if they be hunted, or fear any danger, they wil make thither as fast as they can: If they be hurt or wounded, there they use to licke themselves whole: yea in these their hiding places they die for the most part, if at least they be not surprised, and kild when they are out of their den or hiding place. Seeing it pleaseth the Holy Ghost to attribute unto God this resemblance of safety (For the Psalmist stileth God his *hiding place*: and the Prophet a *covert*) give me leave in Christs phrase to say unto you, *Behold the beasts of the field*: Behold them in this particular, and use God your hiding place, as they use their holes and dennes. On all occasions repose your selves on him, and rest secure in him when ye sleep, when ye wake. Have ye good successe in your affairs? (as the beast thinks he hath when he gets a prey) goe to God to rejoyce in him, and to give the praise to him. Doe thy affaires succeed ill? even then also goe to God, to (Psal.119.114. סתרי *Latibulū meum.* Isa 4.6. מסתור *Absconsio.*)

mourne

mourne in him, to powre out thy ſoule into his boſome. Art thou hunted or perſecuted? fly to God for ſuccour and protection. Art thou abuſed, wronged, or hurt? To God for redreſſe and right. In peace and trouble, in hope and feare, in ſafety and danger, in all caſes, on all occaſions have recourſe to God, live in God, die in God.

Doe this the rather, becauſe as followeth in the next obſervation.

The Lord is a peculiar God to a beleever.

But my time is ſlipt out, and I find my ſtrength to faile, and you find my voice to fall, willingly therefore I give place to my reverend brother: Only let us firſt call upon God for his bleſſing upon that which hath been delivered, and give him thanks for his gracious aſſiſtance.

FINIS

HEBREWS COMMENTARY

(1655, 1866 edition, 3 volumes, 1148 pages)

by WILLIAM GOUGE

(one of the Westminster Divines)

Originally titled: "A Learned and Very Useful Commentary on the Whole Epistle to the Hebrews; Wherein Every Word and Particle in the Original is Explained, and the Emphasis Thereof Fully Shewed; the Sense and Meaning of Every Verse Logically and Exactly Analyzed; Genuine Doctrines Naturally Raised; The Manifold Types of Christ Unveiled, etc. Being the Substance of Thirty Years' Wednesday's Lectures at Blackfriars, London." Darling calls this "a labourious and valuable work, of very rare occurrence" (*Cyclopaedia Bibliographica*, p. 1295). "We greatly prize Gouge," writes Spurgeon of this commentary, "upon any topic which he touches he gives outlines which may supply sermons for months" (*Commenting on Commentaries*). Gouge's son, Thomas (himself a Fellow at King's College, Cambridge), writes in the "Epistle to the Reader," "that there is scare a point in divinity which he (i.e. his father William--RB) handled upon any portion of Scripture in the whole course of his ministry, but he hath brought the substance of it into this Commentary... wherein I conceive, thou mayest find as many points of divinity, cases of conscience and controversies, fully, clearly, though succinctly handled, as in any commentary whatsoever yet extant... At the end of this Commentary, besides a large English table of all the material points treated of by the author, I have added an Alphabetical Index of above seven hundred Greek words, which thou mayest find learnedly and dexterously explicated, either by their etymologies, synonymas, or various acceptations (if they be *polysemata*), or if not, yet thou hast the clearest and most familiar explication that each word is capable of. For it was on part of the author's excellency, that constantly in the course of his ministry he did endeavour to instill into the heads of his auditors (listeners--RB) the fullest sense of the Spirit in a familiar way, though veiled under many significant, simple, compound, or decomposite notions. Such was his depth of judgment, that after he had conferred place with place, he could suddenly methodise the different senses, and give forth the quintessence of all his collations, so as the meanest capacity might be edified by him... The author's sole aim in all his ministry being the same with Augustine's and in his Commentary like that of Jerome, to hold out clearly the meaning of the Spirit, and not his own fancies and conceits." Gouge was a respected member of the Westminster Assembly and one of its most active members. Some of his enemies vilified him as an "Arch Puritan." "At the end of his life, in 1653, he was completing a massive commentary on Hebrews, having finished all but the last half-chapter (representing nearly a thousand sermons preached at his church), when he passed cheerfully and quietly to his Lord. (Thomas Gouge completed the last half chapter of the Hebrews commentary using his father's notes--RB)... Through his long life Gouge was a leader of the Puritan clergy in London. Along with Richard Sibbs in 1626 he had led in raising funds and buying up impropriations in order to support Puritan lectureships. Toward the conclusion of the Westminster Assembly, he was a leader in establishing a Presbytery in London. On May 3, 1647 he was chosen Prolocutor at the first meeting of the Presbyterian provincial assembly of London. In 1649 he served as President of Sion College. His family represented a Puritan legacy unto the third and fourth generation... His eldest son, Thomas, (1609-1681), became a minister in London, was ejected in 1662, and eventually established Nonconformist schools in Wales," writes Barker (*Puritan Profiles*, pp. 37-38). James Begg and William Goold were on the "Council of Publication" for this edition of Gouge's commentary on Hebrews.

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A HIND LET LOOSE

Alexander Shields (1687)

Full Title: A Hind Let Loose; or An Historical Representation of the Testimonies of the Church of Scotland for the Interest of Christ with the True State thereof in all its Periods. Together with a Vindication of the Present Testimony Against Popish, Prelatical, and Malignant Enemies of that Church, as it is now Stated, for the Prerogatives of Christ, Privileges of the Church, and Liberties of Mankind; and Sealed by the Sufferings of a Reproached Remnant of Presbyterians there, Witnessing Against the Corruptions of the Time: Wherein Several Controversies of Greatest Consequence are Enquired into, and in Some Measure Cleared; Concerning Hearing of the Curates, Owning of the Present Tyranny, Taking of Ensnaring Oaths and Bonds, Frequenting of Field-Meetings, Defensive Resistance of Tyrannical Violence, with Several Other Subordinate Questions Useful for these Times (1687, 1797 edition)

Summary: First printed in 1687, we have used the 1797 edition for this rare bound photocopy because all of the Latin has been translated into English (an obvious improvement for English readers). This **rare Covenanter classic**, concerning Calvinistic political philosophy and tactics of civil resistance, is comparable to Samuel Rutherford's *Lex, Rex*; in fact it could rightly be referred to as "***Lex, Rex* volume two**." It is solidly in the line of John Knox's teachings on civil disobedience and addresses numerous topics that are relevant to today's Christian. "In *A Hind Let Loose*, Shields justified the **Camerionian resistance** to royal absolutism and the divine right of kings. He argued that government is divinely ordained, but the people are entitled to bring a king to judgement for wrongdoing. Parliament is commissioned by the people to oversee the nation's affairs, but the compact between the people and their rulers does not entail a forfeiture of the people's power to **depose tyrants** and confer authority on someone else. Government is by consent, and must justify itself to the consciences of the people. God has given men **the right of self defence**, and this extends to a a right not only passively to resist, but also to kill relentless persecutors" writes Isbell (in the *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, p. 773 [$95.96 Canadian from SWRB]). Controversial chapter titles include: "Concerning Owning of Tyrants Authority;" "Defensive Arms Vindicated;" "Of Extraordinary Execution of Judgement by Private Men;" and "Refusing to Pay Wicked Taxation Vindicated." **This book sets forth the Crown rights of King Jesus, against all usurpers in both church and state, giving a history of some of faithful sufferings endured by the elect, in maintaining this truth. It bears testimony against "the popish, prelatical and malignant enemies" of Christ and proclaims the only true basis of liberty for mankind.** "The matter is argued with a vast abundance of Biblical illustration, and with much reference to Reformation and Puritan divines. ***It should be consulted, if practicable, by all who wish fully to understand the inner spirit of the Covenanting Movement***," writes Purves in *Fair Sunshine* (p. 202). Isbell interestingly notes that Shields was once "**amanuensis to the English Puritan John Owen**." Over 750 pages, this very rare item sells for from $250-$800 on the rare book market. *Now you can have it for much less!*

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Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them (Rom. 16:17).

A short summary and sales blurb for Andrew Clarkson's *Plain Reasons for Presbyterians Dissenting from the Revolution Church of Scotland. Also, Their Principles Concerning Civil Government, and the Difference Betwixt the Reformation and Revolution Principles* (1731) follows.

This book is presently available from SWRB as a "rare bound photocopy" for $99.95 - 90% = $9.99 (Canadian funds).

An exceedingly rare and important book now back in print after 265 years! The *Contending Witness* magazine (May, 1841) described *Plain Reasons* **"as the single best volume penned defending the principles of the second Reformation."** It sets forth **"the grounds why Presbyterian Dissenters refused to hold communion with the revolution church and state,"** (Reformed Presbytery, *Act Declaration and Testimony for the Whole of Our Covenanted Reformation*, p. 154n). The biblical principles contained in this book still apply today and thus *Plain Reasons* remains one of the best books explaining why (and when) an individual (church or citizen) should separate himself (or itself) from those (in church or state) who do not hold fast to all the attainments of our *covenanted Reformation forefathers*. In this regard the session of the Puritan Reformed Church of Edmonton calls this the one book that best explains why faithful Covenanted Presbyterians must, for conscience sake, remain ecclesiastically separate from all Presbyterian denominations that have backslidden from second Reformation attainments. (This being the classic corporate Calvinistic application of such commands as "Nevertheless, whereto we have already **attained**, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" [Phil. 3:16, emphasis added]. It is also the acknowledgement that the Lord has clearly stated in his Word that he "requireth that which is past" [Eccl. 3:15]).

Moreover, the session of the PRC of Edmonton has noted that this book "clearly spells out the reasons why to unite with the Revolution Church (1689) or any of its descendants (The Free Church of Scotland, The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and American Presbyterian Churches) is to undermine and subvert the work of the Second Reformation. The argumentation is cogent (with an abundant supply of documentation). The reading can be divided up into 5-10 pages at a time. Reasons 8 and 9 (pp. 77-91) which speak to the issue of the covenants are very helpful, as is Reason 14 (pp. 138-140) which covers the matter of terms of communion. We might also highlight Clarkson's treatment of ecclesiastical dissent (pp. 172-221 wherein he discusses schism) and political dissent (pp. 221-280). **This is the best apologetic we have read defending the necessity of Presbyterians to faithfully maintain the attainments of the Second Reformation"** (emphasis added). Moreover, Clarkson's section on schism, separation and the nature of the visible church (constitutionally considered) contains over 10 pages of notes and quotes taken from numerous Reformers including: Beza, Rutherford, Gillespie, Dickson, Durham, M'Ward (Rutherford's disciple), Marshall, Watson, Cotton, Owen, Burroughs, Fraser, and Case — **demonstrating that his ideas regarding dissent from corrupt and backsliding civil or ecclesiastical governments are not new, but merely classic Reformation doctrine**. The book also answers a multitude of pertinent and realistic objections in sections conveniently located directly after each reason for dissent.

Furthermore, the days of the revolution settlement were a time of civil and ecclesiastical confusion not unlike our own day — the beast (civil and ecclesiastical) was attempting to devour the "woman in the wilderness" by a cunning mixture of half-truths that were designed to beguile an exhausted and persecution-weary remnant. The **consequences** of the actions taken in these days, by both church and state "officials," **have been amplified by time** and apply directly to our contemporary civil and ecclesiastical situation ("That which hath been is now" [Eccl. 3:15]).

The Reformed Presbytery's ***Act, Declaration and Testimony*** (p. 47) further explains the **original historical context** — so germane to the thesis of this book — regarding those deceptively trying days which followed the "killing times" and final martyrs' death of that period of persecution (being the death of the covenanted Presbyterian minister James Renwick, who sealed his testimony with his blood February 17, 1688).

Of the so-called "glorious revolution of 1688" and the overthrow of the Royalist tyranny, the Reformed Presbytery's measured and discerning comments read, "for in a few months, God in his righteous judgement and adorable providence, overturned that (Royalist—RB) throne of iniquity on which they (the persecuting popish, prelatical, Erastian, antichristian [civil and ecclesiastical] "authorities" which were then wondering after the beast—RB) depended, and expelled that inhuman, cruel monster (the duke of York—RB), from his tyrannical and usurped power, upon the Prince of Orange's (William of Orange—RB) coming over into England, in the beginning of November that same year (1688—RB). But although the Lord at this juncture, and by this means, rescued and delivered our natural and civil rights and privileges in a national way, from under the oppression and bondage of anti-christian tyranny, arbitrary and absolute power; yet the revolution, at this time, brought no real deliverance to the church of God; but Christ's rights (by these [rights—RB] are not meant the rights of Christ personal. It is not in the power of mortals, or any creature, to acquire and secure these to him; but the rights of Christ mystical, that is, of the church, or of his truth, true worship, and religion, and professors of it as such.), formerly acquired for him by his faithful servants, lay still buried under the rubbish of that anti-christian building of prelacy, erected on the ruins of his work in this land; and the spiritual liberties and privileges of his house remained, and do still remain under the bondage of Erastianism, supremacy, toleration, etc. For it is well known, that although this man

(William of Orange—RB), Jehu-like, 'destroyed Baal out of Israel, yet he departed not from the sins of Jereboam, wherewith he made Israel to sin.'"

As a second witness to the testimony also given throughout Clarkson's *Plain Reasons*, see pages 55 and following in the *Act, Declaration and Testimony* for more on "the grounds of the presbytery's testimony **against** the constitutions, both civil and ecclesiastical, at the late revolution, anno 1689; as also against the gross Erastianism and tyranny that has attended the administration both of church and state, since that memorable period; with various instances thereof, etc."

Since these momentous days Antichrist and his minions have sought to bury the covenanted Reformation and its attainments (upholding Christ's Kingship over both church and state) under the rubbish of democratic, humanistic, atheistic, toleration ism and a "detestable neutrality" in the cause of God and truth — the same "detestable neutrality" so strongly inveighed against in the Solemn league and Covenant. **Commenting on this defection from within professing Christendom**, Clarkson writes, "It is also evident from this, **that Schism from our covenanted Church consists in this**, to wit, When the Members of the Church make Defection to the contrary part, that is in plain Terms, when they associate or incorporate with, assist and defend the Parties against whom the Covenant (Solemn League and Covenant—RB) was made and sworn, viz. Papists, Prelatist and their Underlings, Hereticks, &c. the common Enemies of Reformation; and fall from the Duties of Preserving and propagating the Reformation of the three Kingdoms; and refuse to join with, assist and defend those, who adhere to the Covenants, in the necessary Work of Renewing them, for Extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Superstition, Heresy, Error and Profaneness, and whatsoever is contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness; and for re-establishing, preserving, and propagating the covenanted Reformation, once happily established in these Lands, and sworn unto by our Covenants. Furthermore, Schism from our covenanted Church consists in this, viz, When Members, Ministers or others, give themselves to a detestable Indifferency and Neutrality, in the Cause of God, namely, in the preserving and propagating the covenanted Reformation of these three Kingdoms; that is to say, When Men are like so many Gallio's in the Cause of God, preferring worldly Ease, Honour and Wealth, their own Interest to the Interest of Christ, become easy, whether the covenanted Reformation in these Lands sink or swim; and, from a cowardly Disposition in some, and a malignant, perfidious Temper in others, coalesce and accord in apostatizing from the Articles of Covenant foresaid, the Cause of God, and its honest-hearted Friends; and frighted from both, as if they thought it both Sin and Shame to have it said, that they carried any warm Side to either the one or the other. I say, All Members of this National Church, who, on Account of any Combination, Persuasion, or Terror and Fear of worldly Loss, of Sufferings of whatsoever Kind, are guilty in any of these two Cases, are also guilty of making SCHISM from the covenanted Church, as is clearly manifest by the 6th Article of our Solemn Covenant" (pp. 182-184, emphasis added).

Commenting on the common charge of schism leveled against those who would maintain the attainments of the covenanted Reformation, Clarkson writes: "Now, upon the whole of this Objection, as 'tis plain, Presbyterian Dissenters are not Schismatics, nor deserve to be so called; so 'tis a most groundless and shameless Reflection, to call them Separatists, tho' 'tis the ordinary Name of Epithet given them, especially in Print; yet to me, and I judge to many others, it is a Wonder with what Audacity, Men of Sobriety and Conscience should have the confidence to speak at such a Rate, unless they intend, in a desperate Humour, to render their Authority every where, amongst all sober persons, contemptible: For, if two Persons, walking upon a high Path-Road, on the Brink of a Puddle, the one of them by a Blast of Wind tumbling headlong into the Gulf; when weltering amidst the Glare and miery Clay, cries up to his Neighbor upon the Brink, Sir, unless you tumble over after me, I will look upon you as a Separatist: Which of the two are to be judged most insnared into the Course of Separation, whether the Person keeping the High-way, or the poor Man wallowing in the polluted Mire, Crying upon his Neighbour to unite with him in that his miserable Estate? *Est solatium miseris habere socios doloris*, ('Tis Comfort to Persons in Misery to have Companions.) **Have not this present Church thrown themselves over into the Ditch of Pollution, in complying with these dreadful Apostates of this and the former times?** And, shall these be judged Separatists, who dare not, who cannot, and may not in Conscience follow their Example? Can such as join with, and strengthen them, be able to purge themselves from the Guilt and Judgements, which accompany this shameful Defection? For an Union here (so much cried up) without Debate, is the Brotherhood of Simeon and Levi: It is an Union in the Course of Sin and Wrath, and not in Truth and Duty" (pp. 206-207, emphasis added).

For more of this strong tonic get the whole book — **it is one of the strongest and clearest calls that we have ever seen for the church to repent of its covenant-breaking and backsliding and return to its first love at the corporate level (covenantal and constitutional)**.

The only drawback that needs to be noted, regarding Clarkson's *Plain Reasons*, is that a few of the pages (the book being as rare as it is) in the only copy that we have been able to obtain for use as a master, are a little hard to read. Even so, most of the book is easily legible and contains the highest quality of Reformation thought regarding the subjects of which it deals. ***It is undoubtedly a major Reformation classic and should be studied by all those who are serious about seeing the destruction of the present tyranny (which is expressed in the modern civil and ecclesiastical Babylon erected by those that oppose the covenanted Reformation and the implementation of the Crown rights of King Jesus over the whole Earth!).***

INTERNATIONAL COVENANTED REFORMATION OR SCHISM?

A REPLY TO DOUG WILSON

The following letter to the editor was sent to Doug Wilson in response to his charge of schism against Still Waters Revival Books (cf. vol. 9, no. 4, p. 9, of _Credenda/Agenda_ magazine).

Sept. 25/97

Dear Doug:

Notwithstanding your erroneous response to Larry Birger's comments on Reformation worship, which I'll not comment on any further (at this time) than I already have in my previous responses to you in _Saul in the Cave of Adullum_ (free on Still Waters Revival Books web page at: http://www.idontkno.ab.ca/books/newslett/actualnls/Saul.htm), you will be happy to know that we have long ago abandoned our "schismatic approach to differences" (as you call them) with other Christians.

We have been promoting the covenanted uniformity set forth in the Solemn League and Covenant (and the Westminster standards) for some time now. For more information please see Greg Price's newly released book, _A Peaceable Plea for Worldwide Protestant Unity_ (also free on our web page). Greg's work is an excellent introductory answer to the questions that surround the present divided state of Protestantism.

Also, as I am sure you are now aware, the Reformers have always laid the charge of schism at the doorstep of those who have defected from the truth of Scripture (Rom. 16:17) or any previous *biblical* attainments (Phil. 3:16) -- whether the defectors are in the majority or the minority (see "The Reformed View of Schism," free at: http://www.idontkno.ab.ca/books/newslett/actualnls/Schism.htm).

Seeing that we have repented of rejecting the ***biblical*** covenanted uniformity attained internationally during the second Reformation, have returned to the truth of this Covenanted Reformation, and have been working to promote one national *divine right* Presbyterian church (in each nation) -- and national and international covenanting by the civil governments of each land -- the charge of schism can only rightly be directed toward those who continue in the path of *independent denominationalism*, rejecting the covenanted uniformity commanded ***in Scripture*** by our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:21, Rom. 15:6).

We look forward to the day when the bulk of individuals, churches and nations will repent of their schismatic behavior, in rejecting the already attained national and international covenanted uniformity (and the covenants themselves), and return to the old paths trod by our *faithful* fathers in the faith. A day when "the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9).

Your readers may be helped by noting that Calvin was promoting the same kind of covenanted uniformity which the later Reformers internationally solidified in the Solemn League and Covenant -- and which we at Still Waters Revival Books now promote. I would be happy to send anyone a free copy of my article _Calvin, Covenanting and Close Communion_ which demonstrates this. This article is also free on our web page at: http://www.idontkno.ab.ca/books/newslett/actualnls/CalvinCC.htm

"Whoever brings in any opinion or practise in this Kirk contrary to the Confession of Faith, Directory of Worship or Presbyterian Government may be justly esteemed to be opening the door to schism and sects" (July, 1648, Session 21, as cited in _The Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, From the Year 1638 to the Year 1649 Inclusive_ , p. 396).

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Paleopresbyterianism vs. Neopresbyterianism

by Michael Wagner © 1996

Since the late 1980s or early 1990s the American conservative movement has begun to break apart. The movement had been held together for many years by a common fear of Soviet expansionism. With the collapse of the Soviet empire, divergent elements within the conservative movement began to reassert their distinctive emphases. Broadly speaking, the movement has fractured into two groups, the "paleoconservatives" and the "neoconservatives" ("paleo" meaning "old" and "neo" meaning "new"). The "paleos" hold to the original position of the Old Right, namely, opposition to Big Government and support for conservative cultural morality. The "neos" are much more willing to compromise with Big Government, and have less enthusiasm for cultural conservative issues such as opposition to fetal murder (abortion) and "homosexual rights." The terms "paleoconservative and "neoconservative" are therefore helpful in making distinctions between hard core conservatives who are committed to the original conservative position, and those who are willing to water down genuine conservatism for the sake of expediency or respectability.[1]

Similarly, among the broad presbyterian movement, a type of fracture has also begun to emerge. Some presbyterians are returning to the original presbyterian position of full subscription to the Westminster Standards including obedience to the continuing moral obligations of the National Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League and Covenant. This group could accurately be labelled "paleopresbyterians" since they hold to the original conceptions of what presbyterianism means. In contrast, those presbyterians unwilling to accept full subscription to the Standards or the binding nature of the Covenants could be called "neopresbyterians" since they have effectively watered-down the original presbyterian position. Using these terms will help to clarify the issues at stake in the emerging debate between Covenanters (paleopresbyterians) and all other presbyterians (neopresbyterians).

Oaths and covenants made by men that are agreeable to the Word of God are perpetually binding.

> To covenants, the matter of which is so evidently agreeable to the unalterable precepts of the moral law, we may safely apply the inspired Apostle's language, "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto" [Gal. 3:15]. Indeed, if it can once be proved, as it has often been, in the most convincing manner, that the church, as such, as well as men in other capacities, may warrantably enter into public scriptural covenants at all, their obligation must necessarily be perpetual; inasmuch as the church, collectively considered, is still the same permanent society, which can never die; though the individuals, of whom she may have been composed, in any given period should be no more. And, if even civil deeds amongst men, when they are legally executed, bind not only the persons presently entering into them, but them, their heirs, and successors to all generations; much more must we consider these religious covenants, which are executed according to the revealed will of our heavenly Lawgiver, to be binding not only upon the generation of the church, more immediately entering into them, but also on their heirs and successors to the end of the world.[2]

This is the clear teaching of Scripture. Every presbyterian recognizes the legitimacy and obligation of one generation to bind a subsequent generation in a covenant relationship with God. This is what infant baptism is all about. But Scripturally, this phenomenon extends beyond baptism.

> It cannot be denied, that several obligations do bind to posterity; such as public promises with annexation of curses to breakers, Neh. v. 12,13. Thus Joshua's adjuration did oblige all posterity never to build Jericho, Josh. vi. 26. And the breach of it did bring the curse upon Hiel the Bethelite, in the days of Ahab. 2dly, Public vows: Jacob's vow, Gen. xxviii. 21, did oblige all his posterity, virtually comprehended in him, Hos. xii. 4. The Rechabites found themselves obliged to observe the vow of their forefather Jonadab, Jer. xxxv. 6,14, for which they were rewarded and commended. Public oaths do oblige posterity: Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, to carry up his bones to Canaan, Gen. l. 25, which did oblige posterity some hundred years after. Exod. xiii. 19. Josh. xxiv. 32. National covenants with men before God, do oblige posterity, as Israel's covenant with the Gibeonites, Josh. ix. 15, 19. The breach whereof was punished in the days of David, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. Expecially national Covenants with God, before men, about things moral and objectively obliging, are perpetual; and yet more especially (as Grotius observes) when they are of an hereditary nature, i.e. when the subject is permanent, the matter moral, the end good, and in the *form* there is a clause expressing their perpetuity.[3]

This was the unchallenged view of the presbyterians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Samuel Rutherfurd, for example, the well-known Scottish theologian, was clearly committed to this view.[4] Incidentally, the main argument for covenanting is the same argument at the foundation of theonomy: "It was obviously a duty under the Old Testament dispensation, and being *nowhere repealed*, and being moral and not typical, it is of present obligation."[5]

In 1638 the (presbyterian) people of Scotland took a National Covenant as a means of solidifying resistance against the imposition of "English Popish Ceremonies" as George Gillespie called them. Five years later, during this confusing period of British history, representatives of England, Scotland, and Ireland took the Solemn League and Covenant, binding their nations together to hold to Biblical truth and resist all error, particularly Roman Catholicism and Episcopalianism. The Westminster Assembly of Divines which had just begun meeting that year, 1643, enthusiastically ratified the Solemn League and Covenant.[6]

Aside from its political aspects, the Solemn League and Covenant committed the three nations to certain ecclesiastical goals. George Gillespie, one of the most prominent Scottish Commissioners at the Assembly, noted what these goals were:

> Yet I must needs justify (as not only lawful, but laudable) what the solemn league and covenant of the three kingdoms obligeth us unto, namely, to endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in one confession of faith, one directory of worship, one form of church government and catechism.[7]

The Westminster Standards, created by the Assembly, were thus the documents produced in fulfillment of the Solemn League and Covenant; the civil governments as well as churches of all three nations were bound to the Westminster Standards.

That the Westminster Standards were seen as part of the fulfillment of the Solemn League and Covenant is clear. As the great presbyterian historian Thomas McCrie notes,

> When the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms were agreed to, the Scottish commissioners took leave of the Westminster Assembly, and, after an absence of about four years, returned to Scotland, and gave an account of their proceedings to the General Assembly which met in August, 1647. This Assembly, of which Mr. Robert Douglas was moderator, is memorable in our history for having received the Westminster Confession of Faith as a part of the uniformity of religion to which the three kingdoms had become bound in the Solemn League.[8]

He emphasizes further,

> We may here state, once for all, that the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Propositions for Church Government, and the Directory for Public Worship, which had been drawn up by the Westminster Assembly, in conjunction with the commis-

1. Raimondo, Justin. 1993. *Reclaiming the American Right*. Burlingame, CA: Center for Libertarian Studies.

2. Reformed Presbytery. n.d. *An Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion Adopted by the Community of Dissenters*. Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books (bound photocopy); pp. 184-185.

3. Reformed Presbytery. 1880. *The Auchensaugh Renovation of the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant*. Philadelphia: William Syckelmoore (bound photocopy distributed by Still Waters Revival Books); pp. 49-50.

4. Samuel Rutherfurd. 1649. *A Free Disputation Against Pretended Liberty of Conscience*. London: Andrew Crock (bound photocopy distributed by Still Waters Revival Books); pp. 274-275.

5. William L. Roberts. 1853. *The Reformed Presbyterian Catechism*. New York: Robert R. Craighead (bound photocopy distributed by Still Waters Revival Books); p. 137.

6. William M. Hetherington. [1856] 1991. *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*. Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books; pp. 124-128.

7. George Gillespie. [1846] 1991. *The Works of George Gillespie, Vol. 2*. Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books; p. 82.

8. Thomas McCrie. [1874] 1988. *The Story of the Scottish Church*. Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications; p. 205.

> sioners from the Church of Scotland, were also received, approved, and ratified by the General Assembly, in several acts relating to them, as "parts of the covenanted uniformity." These acts of approbation by the Church were afterwards ratified by the estates in parliament; and thus, so far as Scotland was concerned, the stipulations of the Solemn League were cordially and honourably fulfilled.[9]

This shows the inseparability of the Solemn League and Covenant and the Westminster Standards. Indeed, the Solemn League is really a part of the Westminster Standards. **Anyone who would claim to strictly adhere to the Westminster Standards must also hold to the Solemn League and Covenant.**

This conclusion is clear from the Westminster Standards themselves. One of those standards is "The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government." Speaking of Ministers, this document states the following:

> He that is to be ordained, being either nominated by the people, or otherwise commended to the presbytery, for any place, must address himself to the presbytery, *and bring with him a testimonial of his taking the Covenant of the three kingdoms*; of his diligence and proficiency in his studies; what degrees he hath taken in the university , and what hath been the time of his abode there; and withal of his age, which is to be twenty-four years; but especially of his life and conversation.[10]

"The Covenant of the three kingdoms" is the Solemn League and Covenant. According to the Westminster Standards, a man cannot be ordained *unless he has taken the Solemn League and Covenant.* This, by itself, is conclusive. **It demonstrates that in the minds of the Westminster Divines, no one can truly adhere to the Standards without taking the Solemn League and Covenant.** Indeed, taking the Covenant was a necessary prerequisite for receiving communion.

> *Act for taking the covenant at the first receiving of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and for the receiving of it also by all students at their first entry to colleges.*
>
> The General Assembly, according to former recommendations, doth ordain, that all young students take the covenant at their first entry to colleges; and that hereafter all persons whosoever take the covenant at their first receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper; requiring hereby provincial assemblies, presbyteries and universities to be careful that his act be observed, and account thereof taken in the visitation of universities, and particular Kirks, and Presbyteries.--General Assembly, Church of Scotland (1648).[11]

Lest anyone question the relevance of the National Covenant of Scotland at this point, it is important to note that the Solemn League "comprehends the substance of the National Covenant of Scotland."[12]

Since that time there has always been a body of presbyterians that have recognized this truth. For obvious reasons they have commonly been referred to as "Covenanters." They did not accept the "Revolution Settlement" that resulted from the "Glorious Revolution" of 1689 because it violated the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant. They took very seriously the binding nature of the Solemn League and Covenant. As a result, they hold as a term of communion (like the Church of Scotland, as we have seen) an acknowledgement

> That public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament; that the National Covenant and the Solemn League are an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these Deeds are of continued obligation upon the moral person; and in consistency with this -- that the Renovation of these Covenants at Auchensaugh, 1712, was agreeable to the word of God.[13]

The "Renovation" of which this speaks was a re-commitment to the Covenants in the face of widespread defection from them. Most presbyterians did *defect from the Covenants* in accepting the Revolution Settlement, and *these are the spiritual forefathers of the neopresbyterians*. The Auchensaugh Renovation simply reflects the theological position of the Westminster Divines.

The Westminster Divines offer the clearest and most biblical definition yet of original, apostolic presbyterianism. They have never been surpassed in doctrinal knowledge. "Paleopresbyterians" are those who acknowledge that no one has ever been able to show any error in the Standards they produced. The Westminster Standards, including the Covenants, are completely agreeable to the Word of God. As such they are binding on all who profess the name of Christ.

There are those who are generally favourable to the Westminster Standards but who wrongly perceive weaknesses in them or are not willing to accept the binding nature of the Covenants. It is these people that deserve the name "neopresbyterians." They are "new" in the sense of being more recent historically and in the sense of having turned away from the original, apostolic presbyterian position. Paleopresbyterians see it as their task to win their neopresbyterian brethren back to the complete, unadulterated truth. The truth will ultimately prevail.

May the light of God's truth shine brightly in the hearts of all his children.

For Further Study

Act, Declaration and Testimony for the Whole of Our Covenanted Reformation, by the Reformed Presbytery (1876).

A Covenanter Primer: Selected essays, excerpts and letters upholding and exhibiting the principles and practices of the covenanted reformation in religion of our reformed forefathers, Larry Birger, ed. (1997).

Auchensaugh Renovation of the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant, by the Reformed Presbytery (1880 edition).

A Short Vindication of Our Covenanted Reformation, by the Reformed Presbytery (1879).

A Contemporary Covenanting Debate; or, Covenanting Redivivus, by Reg Barrow (1996).

An Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion, Adopted by the Community of Dissenters, by the Reformed Presbytery.

The Divine Right of Church Government (*Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*), by sundry ministers of London (1646).

The Ordinance of Covenanting, by John Cunningham (1843).

Plain Reasons For Presbyterians Dissenting..., by Andrew Clarkson (1731).

A Free Disputation Against Pretended Liberty of Conscience, by Samuel Rutherford (1649).

Alexander and Rufus: Dialogues On Church Communion, by John Anderson.

Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1649 Inclusive.

An Apologetical Relation, by John Brown (of Wamphray).

Vindiciae Legis: or, The Moral Law and Covenants, by Anthony Burgess (1647).

9. *Ibid.*; pp. 205-206.

10. "The Form of Presbyterial Church Government." [1648] 1983. *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications; pp. 412-413, emphasis added.

11. *The Original Covenanter and Contending Witness*, Vol. 4, No. 5, March 1, 1996. (Published by Covenanted Reformed Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 131, Pottstown, PA 19464 USA.)

12. Thomas M'Crie. [1821] 1989. *Unity of the Church*. Dallas: Presbyterian Heritage Publications; p. 194.

13. Reformed Presbytery. 1876. *Act, Declaration, and Testimony, for the Whole of Our Covenanted Reformation*. Philadelphia: Rue and Jones (bound photocopy distributed by Still Waters Revival Books); p. 216.

THE BINDING NATURE OF NATIONAL COVENANTS WITH GOD

Objection: "This covenant having been disclaimed by the political father, and made void by law, never again revived by authority of parliament, nor the law rescinded by which it was declared not obligatory; is therefore of no binding force upon us, who have never personally sworn it; and to renew it, and bring ourselves under the bond of it, when we are free, without the concurring or imposing authority of our rulers, is high presumption in private subjects."

Answer: If any engagements can be supposed binding to posterity, certainly national covenants to keep the commandments of God, and to adhere to his institutions, must be of that nature. It cannot be denied, that several obligations do bind to posterity; such as public promises with annexation of curses to breakers, Neh. v. 12,13. Thus Joshua's adjuration did oblige all posterity never to build Jericho, Josh. vi. 26. And the breach of it did bring the curse upon Hiel the Bethelite, in the days of Ahab. 2dly, Public vows: Jacob's vow, Gen. xxviii. 21, did oblige all his posterity, virtually comprehended in him, Hos. xii.4. The Rechabites found themselves obliged to observe the vow of their forefather Jonadab, Jer. xxxv. 6,14, for which they were rewarded and commended. Public oaths do oblige posterity: Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, to carry up his bones to Canaan, Gen. 1:25, which did oblige posterity some hundred years after. Exod. xiii. 19. Josh. xxiv. 32. National covenants with men before God, do oblige posterity, as Israel's covenant with the Gibeonites, Josh. ix. 15,19. The breach whereof was punished in the days of David, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. Especially National Covenants with God, before men, about things moral and objectively obliging, are perpetual; and yet more especially (as Grotius observes) when they are of an hereditary nature, i.e. when the subject is permanent, the matter moral, the end good, and in the form there is a clause expressing their perpetuity. All which ingredients of perpetual obligations are clear in Scotland's Covenants, which are national promises, adjuring all ranks of persons, under a curse, to preserve and promote reformation according to the word of God, and extirpate the opposite thereof. National vows, devoting the then engaging, and succeeding generations to be the Lord's people, and walk in his ways. National oaths, solemnly sworn by all ranks, never to admit of innovations, or submit to usurpations, contradictory to the word of God. National covenants, wherein the king, parliament and people did covenant with each other, to perform their respective duties, in their several places and stations, inviolably to preserve religion and liberty: Yea, more, national laws, solemnly ratified by the king and parliament, and made the foundation of the people's compact with the king, at his inauguration: And, finally, they are national covenants with God, as party contracting, to keep all the words of his covenant. The subject or parties contracting are permanent, to wit, the unchangeable God and the kingdom of Scotland, (the same may be said of England and Ireland,) which, whilst it remains a kingdom, is still under the obligation of these covenants. The matter is moral, antecedently and eternally binding, albeit there had been no formal covenant: the ends of them perpetually good, to wit, the defence of the true reformed religion, and the maintenance of the King's Majesty's person and estate, (as is expressed in the National Covenant,) the glory of God, the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; the honor and happiness of the King's Majesty and his posterity, and the public liberty, safety, and peace of the kingdoms, as it is expressed in the Solemn League. And in the form of them there are clauses expressing their perpetuity. In the National covenant it is said, that the present and succeeding generations in this land are bound to keep the foresaid National Oath and Subscription inviolable. And in the Solemn League, Article 1, That we and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love. And Art. 5, That they may remain conjoined in a firm peace and union to all posterity.

We may add also the sanctions of rewards and punishments descending to posterity, prove the obligation perpetual: Which is, alas! too visible in our case as to the punishments inflicted for the breach of our covenants, and like to be further inflicted, if repentance prevent not; so that as we have been a taunting proverb, and an hissing, for the guilt, we may look to be made a curse and an execration for the punishment of it. The distinction which some make use of to elude this obligation, "That suppose they be materially bound, yet seeing they have sworn the covenants personally, they are formally bound," is both false and frivolous; for our father's oath having all the aforesaid qualifications, binds us formally as an oath, though we have but virtually sworn it; and whether the obligation be material or formal, implicit or explicit, it is all one in God's sight, if it be real, seeing even virtual obligations have frequently brought rewards and punishments upon the head of the observers or breakers of them, as well as formal. Seeing, then, the obligation of the covenant upon us is evident to a demonstration, it cannot, in justness, be called a rebellious action against lawful authority, to declare in our station that we believe so much and resolve to practice accordingly. It is indeed too true that the wicked laws enacting the perpetual breaches of these covenants have never been rescinded; but seeing they are wicked and opposite to the commandment and covenant of the Lord, the supreme legislator, they are naturally void and null, and have been still so esteemed by us.

Excerpted from: *The Auchensaugh Renovation of the National and Solemn League and Covenant...* by the Reformed Presbytery, pp. 49-51 (a SWRB rare bound photocopy [1712], reprinted 1995 from the 1880 edition).

The Preface and Bibliography to the Rare Bound Photocopy: *The Duty and Perpetual Obligation of Social Covenanting*

The material found in this bound photocopy addresses a forgotten and neglected ordinance of God: social covenanting. God's people in times of repentance and thanksgiving, trial and blessing have been a covenanting people. In the most pure times of ecclesiastical and civil reformation throughout history, both church and state under the mediatorial rule of Christ have by the grace of God bound themselves together by covenant to promote and defend the true Christian religion. The first document adopted by the Westminster Assembly was in fact, the Solemn League and Covenant (1644). It united the kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland in a covenanted reformation of both church and state in order to preserve, promote and defend the true Christian religion (as summarized in the *Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Directory For Public Worship,* and *Form of Church Government*), and in order to expose and uproot all false teaching contrary to the Scripture and these standards. Furthermore, it was not only the desire of the Westminster Assembly to unite in covenant the three British kingdoms, but rather to include in this covenanted reformation all of the Reformed Churches throughout Europe. Consider the goal of the Assembly as summarized by Hetherington:

> There was one great, and even sublime idea, brought somewhat indefinitely before the Westminster Assembly, which has not yet been realized, the idea of a Protestant union throughout Christendom, not merely for the purpose of counterbalancing Popery, but in order to purify, strengthen, and unite all true Christian churches, so that with combined energy and zeal they might go forth, in glad compliance with the Redeemer's commands, teaching all nations, and preaching the everlasting gospel to every creature under heaven. This truly magnificent, and also truly Christian idea, seems to have originated in the mind of that distinguished man, Alexander Henderson. It was suggested by him to the Scottish commissioners, and by them partially brought before the English Parliament, requesting them to direct the Assembly to write letters to the Protestant Churches in France, Holland, Switzerland, and other Reformed Churches. . . . and along with these letters were sent copies of the Solemn League and Covenant, a document which might itself form the basis of such a Protestant union. The deep thinking divines of the Netherlands apprehended the idea, and in their answer, not only expressed their approbation of the Covenant, but also desired to join in it with the British kingdoms. Nor did they content themselves with the mere expression of approval and willingness to join. A letter was soon afterwards sent to the Assembly from the Hague, written by Duraeus (the celebrated John Dury), offering to come to the Assembly, and containing a copy of a vow which he had prepared and tendered to the distinguished Oxenstiern, chancellor of Sweden, wherein he bound himself "to prosecute a reconciliation between Protestants in point of religion.". . . [O]n one occasion Henderson procured a passport to go to Holland, most probably for the purpose of prosecuting this grand idea. But the intrigues of politicians, the delays caused by the conduct of the Independents, and the narrow-minded Erastianism of the English Parliament, all conspired to prevent the

Assembly from entering farther into that truly glorious Christian enterprise. Days of trouble and darkness came; persecution wore out the great men of that remarkable period; pure and vital Christianity was stricken to the earth and trampled under foot. . . . (William Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*, [Edmonton, Alberta: Still Waters Revival Books], pp. 337-339).

The material presented herein is commended to the reader with the sincere prayer and confidence that God will again restore the Church of Jesus Christ to a glorious covenanted reformation — one that will even surpass that one to which she had attained at the time of the Westminster Assembly. However, when the Lord brings that future covenanted reformation it will not be limited to only three kingdoms of the earth, but by the grace and power of Christ our King, it will be a covenanted reformation that will encompass all of the nations of the earth (Ps. 2:6-12; Is. 2:1-4; Mt. 28:1-20) and will bring to the church a visible unity and uniformity that (unlike pleas for unity today) is firmly grounded upon the truth.

Greg L. Price
Pastor of the Puritan Reformed Church
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
March, 1996

The material contained in this compilation was gathered together by the session of the Puritan Reformed Church of Edmonton/Prince George. Its 210 pages contain the following items, as listed in the following bibliography concerning social covenanting:

1. Samuel Rutherford, *Due Right of Presbyteries...*, pp. 130-139
2. George Gillespie, T*he Works of George Gillespie*, Vol. 2, pp. 71-88.
3. John Brown of Wamphray, *An Apologetic Relation...*, pp. 167-175, 181-207.
4. David Scott, *Distinctive Principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church*, pp. 14-90.
5. William Roberts, *The Reformed Presbyterian Catechism*, pp. 134-152.
6. The Reformed Presbytery, *An Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion*, pp. 181-187.
7. The Reformed Presbytery, *Act , Declaration and Testimony for the Whole of the Covenanted Reformation...*, pp. 11-23.
8. The Reformed Presbytery, *The Auchensaugh Renovation of the National and Solemn League and Covenants...*, pp. 115-140.
9. The Church of Scotland (1639), "The National Covenant of Scotland," pp. 345-354 in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Free Presbyterian Publications).
10. The Westminster Assembly (1644), "The Solemn League and Covenant," pp. 355-360 in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Free Presbyterian Publications).
11. The Church of Scotland (1648), "A Solemn Acknowledgement of Publick Sins and Breaches of the Covenant," pp. 361-368 in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Free Presbyterian Publications).

THE SOLEMN LEAGUE & COVENANT

THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT, for reformation and defence of religion, the honour and happiness of the King, and the peace and safety of the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland; agreed upon by Commissioners from the Parliament and Assembly of Divines in England, with Commissioners of the Convention of Estates and General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and by both Houses of Parliament, and the Assembly of Divines in England, and taken and subscribed by them anno 1643; and thereafter, by the said authority, taken and subscribed by all ranks in Scotland and England the same year; and ratified by act of the Parliament of Scotland anno 1644. (And again renewed in Scotland, with an acknowledgement of sins and engagements to duties, by all ranks, anno 1648, and by Parliament, 1649; and taken and subscribed by King Charles II., at Spey, June 23, 1650; and at Scoon, January 1, 1651.)

"We, noblemen, barons, knights, gentlemen, citizens, burgesses, ministers of the Gospel, and commons of all sorts, in the kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland, by the providence of GOD living under one king, and being of one reformed religion, having before our eyes the glory of God, and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, the honour and happiness of the king's majesty and his posterity, and the true public liberty, safety, and peace of the kingdom, wherein every one's private condition is included: and calling to mind the treacherous and bloody plots, conspiracies, attempts, and practices of the enemies of GOD, against the true religion and professors thereof in all places, especially in these three kingdoms, ever since the reformation of religion; and how much their rage, power, and presumption, are of late, and at this time, increased and exercised, whereof the deplorable state of the Church and kingdom of Ireland, the distressed state of the Church and kingdom of England, and the dangerous state of the Church and kingdom of Scotland, are present and public testimonies: we have now at last (after other means of supplication, remonstrance, protestation, and sufferings), for the preservation of ourselves and our religion from utter ruin and destruction, according to the commendable practice of these kingdoms in former times, and the example of GOD'S people in other nations, after mature deliberation, resolved and determined to enter into a Mutual and Solemn League and Covenant, wherein we all subscribe, and each one of us for himself, with our hands lifted up to the Most High GOD, do swear,—

"I. That we shall sincerely, really, and constantly, through the grace of GOD, endeavor, in our several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, against our common enemies; the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the Word of GOD, and the example of the best reformed Churches; and shall endeavour to bring the Churches of GOD in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church Government, Directory for Worship and Catechising; that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.

"II. That we shall, in like manner, without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy (that is, Church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissioners, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy), superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of Godliness; lest we partake in other men's sins, and thereby be in danger to receive of their plagues; and that the Lord may be one, and his mane one, in the three kingdoms.

"III. We shall, with the same sincerity, reality, and constancy, in our several vocations, endeavour, with our estates and lives, mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and the liberties of the kingdoms; and to preserve and defend the king's majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms; that the world may bear witness with our consciences of our loyalty, and that we have no other thoughts or intentions to diminish his majesty's just power and greatness.

"IV. We shall also, with all faithfulness, endeavour the discovery of all such as have been or shall be incendiaries, malignants, or evil instruments, be hindering the reformation of religion, dividing the king from his people, or one of the kingdoms from another, or making any faction or parties among the people, contrary to this League and Covenant; that they may be brought to public trial, and receive condign punishment, as the degree of their offences shall require or deserve, or the supreme judicatories of both kingdoms respectively, or others having power from them for that effect, shall judge convenient.

"V. And whereas the happiness of a blessed peace between these kingdoms, denied in former times to our progenitors, is, by the good providence of GOD, granted unto us, and hath been lately concluded and settled by both Parliaments; we shall, each one of us, according to our place and interest, endeavour that they may remain conjoined in a firm peace and union to all posterity; and that justice may be done upon the willful opposers thereof, in manner expressed in the precedent article.

"VI. We shall also, according to our places and callings, in this common cause of religion, liberty, and peace of the kingdoms, assist and defend all those that enter into this League and Covenant, in the maintaining and pursuing thereof; and shall not suffer ourselves, directly or indirectly, by whatsoever combination, persuasion, or terror, to be divided or withdrawn from this blessed union and conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary part, or to give ourselves to a detestable indifferency or neutrality in this cause, which so much concerneth the glory of God, the good of the kingdom, and honour of the king; but shall, all the days of our lives, zealously and constantly continue therein against all opposition, and promote the same, according to our power, against all lets and impediments whatsoever; and what we are not able ourselves to suppress or overcome, we shall reveal and make known, that it may be timely prevented or removed: All which we shall do as in the sight of God.

"And, because these kingdoms are guilty of many sins and provocations against GOD, and his Son JESUS CHRIST, as is too manifest by our present distresses and dangers, the fruits thereof; we profess and declare, before GOD and the world, our unfeigned desire to be humbled for our own sins, and for the sins of these kingdoms; especially that we have not, as we ought, valued the inestimable benefit of the Gospel; that we have not laboured for the purity and power thereof; and the we have not endeavoured to receive Christ in our hearts, not to walk worthy of him in our lives; which are the causes of other sins and transgression so much abounding amongst us: and our true and unfeigned purpose, desire, and endeavour, for ourselves, and all others under our power and charge, both in public and private, in all duties we owe to GOD and man, to amend our lives, and each one to go before another in the example of a real reformation; that the Lord may turn away his wrath and heavy indignation, and establish these Churches and kingdoms in truth and peace. And this Covenant we make in the presence of ALMIGHTY GOD, the Searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the same, as we shall answer at that great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed; most humbly beseeching the LORD to strengthen us by his HOLY SPIRIT for this end, and to bless our desires and proceedings with such success, as may be deliverance and safety to his people, and encouragement to other Christian Churches, groaning under, or in danger of the yoke of antichristian tyranny, to join in the same or like association and covenant, to the glory of GOD, the enlargement of the kingdom of JESUS CHRIST, and the peace and tranquillity of Christian kingdoms and commonwealths."

Taken from our (SWRB's) recent republication of ***The History of the Westminster Assembly*** **by William H. Hetherington, pp. 129-132.** This document can also be found in ***The Westminster Confession of Faith*** (Free Presbyterian Publications, 133 Woodlands Rd., Glasgow G3 6LE, Scotland, sixth printing 1990), pp. 355-360.

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TERMS

OF

MINISTERIAL AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNION

IN THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

1. An acknowledgment of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

2. That the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.

3. That Presbyterial Church Government and manner of worship are alone of divine right and unalterable; and that the most perfect model of these as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory for Worship, adopted by the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation.

4. That public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament; that the National Covenant and the Solemn League are an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these Deeds are of continued obligation upon the moral person; and in consistency with this—that the Renovation of these Covenants at Auchensaugh, 1712, was agreeable to the word of God.

5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, especially in Scotland, against Paganism, Popery, Prelacy, Malignancy and Sectarianism; immoral civil governments; Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow from them; and of the Judicial Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761, and adopted by this church, with supplements; as containing a noble example to be followed, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or states.

6. Practically adorning the doctrine of God our Savior, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

Queries to be put to Candidates for Ordination.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you own the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, as these were received by the Church of Scotland?

3. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus has instituted one unalterable form of government in his church, distinct from, and independent of, civil government; and that it is exclusively Presbyterial?

4. Do you own the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League?

5. Do you approve the faithful contendings of the confessors and martyrs of Jesus, especially against Popery and Prelacy; and do you own the Judicial Testimony of this church, as an abstract of said contendings?

6. Is it the glory of God and the edification of the church, and not any selfish object, that move you to undertake this sacred office?

7. Do you promise, in the strength of divine grace, to rule well your own house—to live a holy life—to watch faithfully over the members of this church—to exhort with meekness and long-suffering—to visit the sick and the afflicted; and to attend punctually the meetings of the church courts, when regularly called thereunto, judging faithfully in the house of God?

8. Do you promise subjection, in the Lord, to the judicatories of this church—to adhere to the doctrine and order which this church has solemly adopted; and finally, will you receive with meekness all fraternal counsel and admonition tendered by your fellow members?

From: *The Act, Declaration and Testimony for the Whole of our Covenanted Reformation...* ([1761] 1876 edition) emitted by the Reformed Presbytery. The complete book is available from Still Waters Revival Books at 4710-37A Ave., Edmonton, AB, Canada, T6L 3T5 ($5.99 Canadian funds).

War Against the Idols

The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin

by Carlos M. N. Eire

The destruction of an image.

THE ATTACKS of Iconoclasts upon Popish images have often been regarded as the activities of extremists on the fringe of the Protestant Reformation. Yet, the Reformation was not merely a struggle over the doctrine of justification; it was a battle for the proper worship of the living God. Carlos Eire demonstrates that the Continental Reformers issued a preeminent call to purge Romish corruptions from worship; and, thus, iconoclasm was an integral part of the program to Reform worship.

Eire gives special attention to the writings of John Calvin, showing that the call for simple, biblical worship was central to Calvin's message – not a peripheral matter. "Calvin considered the struggle against idolatry to be an unending task, and thought the situation of sixteenth-century evangelicals paralleled that of the ancient Israelites: They were the chosen few, surrounded by peoples immersed in idolatry and superstition. Like their Old Testament forebears, sixteenth-century Reformed Christians had to be prepared to deal with the contagion of idolatry. Even in a Reformed community, Calvin insisted, it was necessary to speak to the faithful about the corruption around them, lest they become complacent. As had been the case with the Israelites, purity of worship was expected to be the primary response to the covenant between God and his people; and for Calvin the true Christian church always had to be reminded of the fact that it had been rescued from idolatry. This means, of course, that Calvin regarded the Church as a sort of real, spiritual nationhood, and that he expected commitment to the purity of the covenant to eclipse any allegiances that opposed it...." (pp. 255-56).

Moreover, Calvin manifests a consistent opposition to the attitude of persons called "Nicodemites" – a term applied to compromisers who said it was permissible to attend the Mass, and other rites of corrupt worship, as long as they did not approve of these corruptions within their hearts. "Calvin was struggling against an attitude, then, that separated interior belief from outward worship" (pp. 256-57). Calvin denounces this ungodly, compromising behavior.

Additionally, Carlos Eire gives attention to the role of the laity in the iconoclast controversies. He shows that the effort to reform worship came not merely from pastors and princes, but also from the vigorous demands of laymen.

The issues treated in *War Against the Idols* are especially timely for our own era. Today, "conservative" Presbyterian churches are being inundated by attempts to modify worship. Some efforts to impose liturgical renewal, which come under the guise of "reform," are actually a return to corrupt ceremonies and rituals espoused by Rome – and rejected by the Reformers. The Popish argument that images are the "books of the laity" is but slightly modified, when professing Protestants advocate the use of "pictures of Jesus" as effective tools for teaching children about God. Other people want to make worship more "relevant" by including drama, dance, and puppet shows. Even among the most "Reformed" churches of our day, crosses are routinely displayed in places of worship. Within the last decade, we have even witnessed the sad spectacle of Presbyterian office-bearers arguing that attendance of the Mass is simply a matter of liberty of conscience.

Yes, contemporary Protestants have drifted far from the teachings of the Reformation. Eire's book helps to restore an historic perspective from which to evaluate modern trends.

Indirectly, this book also does much to dispel false assertions that a sharp distinction existed between the "Continental Reformers" and the Scottish Reformation, over the regulative principle of worship. In our own day, critics have claimed that the Westminster Standards are skewed, due to the influence of the Scottish Commissioners and Puritanism; these critics assert that the Westminster Standards embrace much stricter views of worship than the Continental Reformers. This notion is unfounded. In fact, by Eire's account, the Continental Reformation easily anticipates the doctrine of Westminster: that the law of God requires "the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry" (*Larger Catechism*, #108).

Of course, Lutheranism and Anglicanism embrace much laxer views on worship than either the Swiss or the Scots; but that is not the matter of debate. Although it is not a part of Eire's thesis to prove the point, his book illustrates the essential unity between the Swiss and the Scots, between Geneva and Westminster, as regards the scriptural law of worship.

Eire includes a discussion of the magistrate's role in reform. He also treats the right of subjects to resist tyranny, especially when tyrants seek to impose corrupt worship upon their subjects.

This is a remarkable book. Readers may quibble with a few scattered comments by the author. But on the whole, it is obvious that Eire has proven his main points. Another reviewer has written: "Iconoclasm has long been regarded merely as an unfortunate early outburst, a side-effect as it were of the Reformation in the cities. Eire has now raised it to the level of those other basic tenets which marked both the liberating strength and the disciplining rigor of the reformed tradition."

War Against the Idols contains a clear structure, as listed in the table of contents. The book contains a short index. This is a scholarly volume. Pastors and educated laymen will be able to read the main text with great profit. There are numerous footnotes, often in French or German, which provide additional resources for those given to academic pursuits.

Carlos M. N. Eire is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia.

WORSHIP

THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLE OF WORSHIP IN HISTORY

...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 (WCF 21:1).

What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it (Deut. 12:32).

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Matt. 15:9).

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 them: 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 showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments (Exod. 20:4-6).

It was an amazing discovery to read, for the first time, of the regulative principle of worship about a year ago.[1] This was over ten years after my eyes had been opened to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and also after having spent a number of years in a Bible Presbyterian Church (in which I never even once heard this great controlling principle mentioned).[2] Sadly, this was also after a number of debates had taken place in this church over music and liturgy, all of which could have easily been settled by an appeal to the confessional standards that the BP elders had vowed to uphold (i.e. the *Westminster Confession of Faith*). The sufficiency of the WCF in this area can be easily illustrated, (especially concerning the use of instrumental music in public worship), by a quotation from pages 31-32 of James Begg's book *Anarchy in Worship*,[3]

> When we come down to the Westminster Assembly, by which our present Standards were framed, it is unnecessary to repeat how clearly these Standards embody the same principle, viz., that pure and acceptable worship must be "prescribed," or "appointed" by God himself. But it may be important to bring out the clear evidence which we have, that during the second Reformation our ancestors insisted on uniformity of worship and the Commissioners at Westminster and the Assembly in Scotland, regarded their principle of worship as clearly excluding instrumental music, and all other things abolished, along with the peculiarities of the temple service. By an Act of the Assembly of Scotland, 1643, a directory for worship was appointed to be prepared and reported to next assembly, to the intent "that unity and uniformity might be observed throughout the kingdom in all parts of the public worship of God." Our Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, including the most eminent ecclesiastics then in Scotland, reported on May 20, 1644, that "plain and powerful preaching" had been set up, and "THE GREAT ORGANS AT PAUL'S AND PETER'S IN WESTMINSTER TAKEN DOWN," and "all by authority in a quiet manner, at noonday without tumult." In answer, the General Assembly here, June 4, 1644, writes to the Assembly at Westminster: "We were greatly refreshed to hear by letter from our Commissioners there with you, of your praiseworthy proceedings, and of the great good things the Lord hath wrought among you and for you. Shall it seem a small thing in our eyes that....the door of a right entry unto faithful shepherds is opened; many corruptions, as altars, images, and other monuments of idolatry and superstition, removed, defaced, and abolished; the service-book in many places forsaken; and plain and powerful preaching set up; THE GREAT ORGANS AT PAUL'S AND PETER'S TAKEN DOWN; that the royal chapel is purged and reformed; sacraments sincerely administered, and according to the pattern in the mount?" From this it is clear that the Westminster Divines, and our own Church in those days, would have made short work with the Dunse case, and with all questions of instrumental music in worship. This was certainly regarded as one of the last corruptions introduced, dating only from about the eighth century, and never having found admission into the Greek Church at all.

At this point some may be asking, What is this regulative principle? James Glasgow gives us a succinct answer,

[1]Fred DiLella, while visiting Edmonton had lent me his copy of *The Scriptural Law of Worship* by Carl Bogue (Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1988), which I eagerly devoured, my journey towards the Presbyterian/Puritan view of worship having *finally* begun.

[2]I later found out that some of the elders at that BP had never heard of the regulative principle either.

[3]As this book (first published in 1875) is not easily accessible, SWRB is stocking copies which can be obtained (postpaid) by sending $5.

That principle was substantially this, that for all the constituents of worship, you require the positive sanction of divine authority, either in the shape of direct command, or good and necessary consequence, or approved example; and that you are not at liberty to introduce anything else in connection with the worship of God, unless it comes legitimately under the apostolic heading of 'decency and order.'[4]

After citing the instance of Begg's quote concerning the Westminster Assembly (*supra*), Glasgow further illustrates this principle,

They (the Westminster Divines—RB) contended, I think unanswerably, that the truth of this principle is involved in what the Scripture teaches concerning its own sufficiency, God's exclusive right to settle the constitution, laws, and arrangements of His kingdom, the unlawfulness of will worship, and the utter unfitness of men for the function which they have so often boldly usurped in this matter.[5]

Of course, whole volumes have been written regarding this definition. But, continuing on, in that this definition has been generally accepted among Presbyterian/Puritan Christians, Cunningham sets the stage for more of our historical survey, (while at the same time excluding the charge of trifling over inconsequential matters), when he writes,

There is a strange fallacy which seems to mislead men in forming an estimate of the soundness and importance of this principle (the regulative principle—RB). Because this principle has been often brought out in connection with the discussion of matters which, viewed in themselves, are very unimportant, such as rites and ceremonies, vestments and organs, crossings, kneelings, bowings, and other such *ineptæ*, some men seem to think that it partakes of the intrinsic littleness of these things, and that the men who defend and try to enforce it, find their most congenial occupation in fighting about these small matters, and exhibit great bigotry and narrow-mindedness in bringing the authority of God and the testimony of Scripture to bear upon such a number of paltry points. Many have been led to entertain such views as these of the English Puritans and of the Scottish Presbyterians, and very much upon the ground of their maintenance of this principle. Now, it should be quite sufficient to prevent or neutralize this impression to show, as we think can be done, 1st, That the principle is taught with sufficient plainness in Scripture, and that, therefore, it ought to be professed and applied to the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs. 2d, That, viewed in itself, it is large, liberal, and comprehensive, such as seems in no way unbecoming its Divine author, and in no way unsuitable to the dignity of the church as a divine institution, giving to God His rightful place of supremacy, and to the church, as the body of Christ, its rightful position of elevated simplicity and purity. 3d, That, when contemplated in connection with the ends of the church, it is in full accordance with everything suggested by an enlightened and searching survey of the tendencies of human nature, and the testimony of all past experience. And with respect to the connection above referred to, on which the impression we are combatting is chiefly based, it is surely plain that, in so far as it exists *de facto*, this is owing, not to anything in the tendencies of the principle itself or of its supporters, but to the conduct of the men who, in defiance of this principle, would obtrude human inventions into the government and worship of the church, or who insist upon retaining them permanently after they have once got admittance. The principle suggests no rites or ceremonies, no schemes or arrangements; it is purely negative and prohibitionary. Its supporters never devise innovations and press them upon the church. The principle itself precludes this. It is the deniers of this principle, and they alone, who invent and obtrude innovations; and they are responsible for all the mischiefs that ensue from the discussions and contentions to which these things have given rise.[6]

Now we can continue to view the historical position that the Christian church has taken regarding the regulative principle (with special emphasis on instrumental music). Concerning the Early church Dr. N. R. Needham has written,

The Early church did not use instrumental music in its worship.... They considered the practice as pagan or Jewish rather than Christian. Dr. Hughes Oliphant Old, in his work *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship* says: "As is well known, the ancient church did not admit the use of instrumental music in worship. It was looked upon as a form of worship which like the sacrifices of the Jerusalem temple prefigured the worship in spirit and truth...." This concern for the distinctiveness of New Testament worship, and for spirituality as its central feature, was typical of the early Church fathers. In harmony with this, the situation in early Church worship was one of "plain" or unaccompanied singing of psalms.... The use of musical instruments was rejected as contrary to the tradition of the Apostles—a feature of sensuous pagan or Old Testament Jewish worship, but not of the spiritual Christian worship.[7]

Continuing our walk through history (and the instrument music example) we can observe how and by whom this principle has been greatly violated,

With reference to the time when organs were first introduced into use in the Roman Catholic Church, let us hear Bingham:[8] "It is now generally agreed among learned men that the use of organs came into the church since the time of Thomas Aquinas, Anno 1250; for he, in his *Summs*, has these words: 'Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize."...Mr. Wharton also has observed that Marinus Sanutus, who lived about the year 1290, was the first who brought the use of wind-organs into churches, whence he was surnamed Torcellus, which is the name for an organ in the Italian tongue....Let us pause a moment to notice the fact, supported by a mass of incontrovertible evidence, that the Christian church did not employ instrumental music in its public worship for 1200 years after Christ....It deserves serious consideration, moreover, that notwithstanding the ever-accelerated drift towards corruption in worship as well as in doctrine and government, the Roman Catholic Church did not adopt this corrupt practice until about the middle of the thirteenth century....When the organ was introduced into its worship it encountered strong opposition, and made its way but slowly to general acceptance. These assuredly are facts that should profoundly impress Protestant churches. How can they adopt a practice which the Roman Church, in the year 1200, had not admitted...Then came the Reformation; and the question arises, How did the Reformers deal with instrumental music in the church?...Zwingle has already been quoted to show instrumental music was one of the shadows of the old law which has been realized in the gospel. He pronounces its employment in the present dispensation "wicked pervicacity." There is no

[4]From *Heart and Voice: Instrumental Music in Christian Worship Not Divinely Authorized*, (Belfast: Aitchison & Cleeland, late 19th century), p. 4. This *exceedingly* rare book can also be obtained (post paid) in bound photo-copy format from SWRB for $25. This book is an exegetical treasure which demolishes what the Westminster Divines, together with the whole Puritan party (cf. Girardeau, *Instrumental Music*, pp. 137 ,138), called 'the badge of Popery,' i.e. the innovation of introducing instrumental music into Christian worship.

[5]*Ibid.*, p. 6.

[6]William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, [1862] 1989), p. 35, 36.

[7]Musical Instruments in Worship: Historical Survey" *The Presbyterian*, issue 32, May 1990, pp. 25, 26. Available from: 9 Church Road, Thornbury, Bristol BS12 1EJ, England.

[8]Girardeau cites: *Works*, Vol. iii., p. 137, ff.

doubt in regard to his views on the subject, which were adopted by the Swiss Reformed churches...Calvin is very express in his condemnation of instrumental music in connection with the public worship of the Christian church...In his homily on 1 Sam. xviii. 1-9, he delivers himself emphatically and solemnly upon the subject: "In Popery there was a ridiculous and unsuitable imitation [of the Jews]. While they adorned their temples, and valued themselves as having made the worship of God more splendid and inviting, they employed organs, and many other such ludicrous things, *by which the Word and worship of God are exceedingly profaned* (emphasis added—RB), the people being much more attached to those rites than to the understanding of the divine Word..." Whatever may be the practice in recent times of the churches of Holland, the Synods of the Reformed Dutch Church, soon after the Reformation, pronounced very decidedly against the use of instrumental music in public worship. The National Synod at Middleburg, in 1581, declared against it, and the Synod of Holland and Zealand, in 1594, adopted this strong resolution; "That they would endeavor to obtain of the magistrate the laying aside of organs, and the singing with them in the churches...." The Provincial Synod of Dort also inveighed severely against their use...The Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon, ...upholds an apostolic simplicity of worship. The great congregation which is blessed with the privilege of listening to his instructions has no organ "to assist" them in singing...The non-prelatic churches, Independent and Presbyterian, began their development on the American continent without instrumental music. They followed the English Puritans and the Scottish Church, which had adopted the principles of the Calvinistic Reformed Church...It has thus been proved by an appeal to historical facts, that the church, although lapsing more and more into defection from the truth and into a corruption of apostolic practice, had no instrumental music for twelve hundred years; and that the Calvinistic Reformed Church ejected it from its services as an element of Popery, even the Church of England having come very nigh to its extrusion from her worship. The historical argument, therefore, combines with the scriptural and the confessional to raise a solemn and powerful protest against its employment by the Presbyterian Church. It is heresy in the sphere of worship.[9]

Though our standard is unequivocally *sola Scriptura*, the historical argument illustrates how a practice which was a *very* late comer to church practice, (not to mention instituted by the Pope of Rome), has gained almost universal acceptance in our day of declension. Without strict adherence to the regulative principal, as historically exegeted and espoused by our Presbyterian and Puritan forefathers, the door to unscriptural innovation in worship is endless. This principle in worship is the equivalent of God's sovereignty in soteriology. That is, the "Christian" humanists (Arminians) try to ascribe salvation to their *own wills* and not to God's will as the Bible clearly proclaims (John 1:13, Romans 9). Similarly the Bible condemns human invention in worship as *will worship* (Col 2:23), the only acceptable worship being that which is mandated via God's own will as revealed in the scripture. Girardeau cites Calvin's commentary on the Psalms, pinpointing the error in this particular practice and also exposing *the source* of many of the ecclesiastical abuses of worship that have crept into the modern church,

> "To sing the praises of God upon the harp and psaltery," says Calvin, "unquestionably formed a part of the training of the law and of the service of God under that dispensation of *shadows and figures*; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving."[10] He says again: "With respect to the *tabret, harp, and psaltery,* we have formerly observed, and will find it necessary afterwards to repeat the same remark, that the Levites, under the law, were justified in making use of instrumental music in the worship of God; it having been his will to train his people, while they were yet tender and like children, by such rudiments until the coming of Christ. But now, when the clear light of the gospel has dissipated the *shadows* of the law and taught us that God is to be served in a simpler form, it would be to act a foolish and mistaken part to imitate that which the prophet enjoined only upon those of his own time."[11] He further observes: "We are to remember that the worship of God was never understood to consist in such outward services, which were only necessary to help forward a people as yet weak and rude in knowledge in the spiritual worship of God. A difference is to be observed in this respect between his people under the Old and under the New Testament; for now that Christ has appeared, and the church has reached full age, it were only to bury the light of the gospel should we introduce the *shadows* of a departed dispensation. From this it appears that the Papists, as I shall have occasion to show elsewhere, in employing instrumental music cannot be said so much to imitate the practice of God's ancient people as to ape it in a senseless and absurd manner, exhibiting a silly delight in that worship of the Old Testament which was *figurative* and terminated with the gospel."[12]

Once again citing a lengthy section from Girardeau, (which ends the first chapter of his *Instrumental Music in Public Worship*, the "General Arguments from Scripture"), we read,

> The principal (the regulative principle, scripturally proved in the preceeding 22 pages of this highly recommended book—RB) that has been emphasized *is in direct opposition to that maintained by Romanists and Prelatists, and I regret to say by lax Presbyterians, that what is not forbidden in the Scriptures is permitted.* The Church of England, in her twentieth article, concedes to the church "a power to decree rites and ceremonies," with this limitation alone upon its exercise, "that it is not lawful for the church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's written word." The principle of the discretionary power of the church in regard to *things not commanded by Christ in his Word,* was the chief fountain from which flowed the gradually increasing tide of corruptions that swept the Latin church into apostasy from the gospel of God's grace. And as surely as causes produce their appropriate effects, and history repeats itself in obedience to that law, any Protestant church which embodies that principle in its creed is destined, sooner or later, to experience a similar fate. The same, too, may be affirmed of a church which formally rejects it and practically conforms to it. The reason is plain. The only bridle that checks the degenerating tendency of the church—a tendency manifested in all ages—is the Word of God: for the Spirit of grace Himself ordinarily operates only in connection with that Word. If this restraint be discarded, the downward lapse is sure. The words of the great theologian, John Owen—and the British Isles have produced no greater—are solemn and deserve to be seriously pondered: "*The principle that the church hath power to institute any thing or ceremony belonging to the worship of God, either as to matter or manner, beyond the observance of such circumstances as necessarily attend such ordinances as Christ Himself hath instituted, lies at the bottom of all the horrible superstition and idolatry, of all the confusion, blood, persecution, and wars, that have for so long a season spread themselves over the face of the Christian world* (all emphases added)."
>
> In view of such considerations as these, confirmed, as they are, by the facts of all past history, it is easy to see how irrelevant and baseless is the taunt flung by high churchmen, ritualists and latitudinarians of every stripe against the maintainers of the opposite principle, that they are narrow-minded bigots who take delight in insisting upon trivial details. The truth is exactly the other way.

[9]John L. Girardeau, *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church* (Havertown, PA.: New Covenant Publ. Society, [1888] 1983), pp. 158, 159, 161, 165, 170, 179. Again this book is available in bound photocopied format (postpaid) from SWRB for $25.

[10]Calvin on Ps. lxxi. 22.

[11]Calvin on Ps. lxxxi. 3.

[12]Calvin on Ps. xcii. 1. All Calvin cited in Girardeau, *Instrumental Music*, pp. 63, 64.

The principle upon which this cheap ridicule is cast is simple, broad, majestic. It affirms only the things that God has commanded, the institutions and ordinances that he has prescribed, and besides this, discharges only a negative office which sweeps away every trifling invention of man's meretricious fancy. It is not the supporters of this principle, but their opponents, who delight in insisting upon crossings, genuflexions and bowings to the east, upon vestments, altars and candles, upon organs and cornets, and "the dear antiphonies that so bewitch their prelates and their chapters with the goodly echo they make;" in fine, upon all that finical trumpery which, inherited from the woman clothed in scarlet, marks the trend backward to the Rubicon and the seven-hilled mart of souls.

But whatever others may think or do, Presbyterians cannot forsake this principle without the guilt of defection from their own venerable standards and from the testimonies sealed by the blood of their fathers. Among the principles that the Reformers extracted from the rubbish of corruption and held up to the light again, none were more comprehensive, far-reaching and profoundly reforming than this. It struck at the root of every false doctrine and practice, and demanded the restoration of the true. Germany has been infinitely the worse because of Luther's failure to apply it to the full. Calvin enforced it more fully. The great French Protestant Church, with the exception of retaining a liturgical relic of popery, gave it a grand application, and France suffered an irreparable loss when she dragooned almost out of existence the body that maintained it. John Knox stamped it upon the heart of the Scottish Church, and it constituted the glory of the English Puritans. Alas! that it is passing into decadence in the Presbyterian churches of England, Scotland and America. What remains but that those who still see it, and cling to it as to something dearer than life itself, should continue to utter, however feebly, however inoperatively, their unchanging testimony to its truth? It is the acropolis of the church's liberties, the palladium of her purity. That gone, nothing will be left to hope, but to strain its gaze towards the dawn of the millennial day. Then—we are entitled to expect—a more thorough-going and glorious reformation will be effected than any that has blessed the church and the world since the magnificent propagation of Christianity by the labors of the inspired apostles themselves.[13]

So as not to leave myself open to the objection that little exegetical proof has been cited in this short newsletter format, I offer the following three considerations.

First, it would be ridiculous to think that all (or even a slight percentage) of the testimonies herein adduced, in favor of the regulative principle, were reached on a basis other than intense scriptural exegesis. A close inspection of the sources cited in the footnotes will amply testify of the careful and precise exegetical work that has been done in this area.

Second, the historical testimony should be recognized as coming from those who have held the highest regard for scripture. Many of the men holding to this position put their lives on the line over Scripture, while those opposing them often tried to mute their testimony with persecution and even death. Furthermore, this Presbyterian/Puritan testimony for the regulative principle (and against the use of musical instruments in public worship) makes up the most totally unanimous historical witness I have come across in any contested area of theology. At least equal in clearness to that of the sovereignty of God in *salvation*—this being the sovereignty of God in *worship*.

Third, in conjunction with all this, it is clear that many of the most abominable innovations in worship were introduced by Rome. The cavil that the Reformers were *merely* reacting to Rome *per se*, in upholding the regulative principle, is simplistic at best. It is admitted that the earlier Reformers were reacting, but righteously reacting against Rome's false and Judaizing hermeneutic. This hermeneutic, drawing from the *shadows, figures and types of the abolished ceremony* of the Old Testament (Heb. 7-10), justified not only musical instruments in public worship, but also the mass (a false sacrifice), a false priesthood, and any number of other detestable practices. Moreover, it implies that the work of Christ in fulfillment of *these shadows and types* is not satisfactory or complete. Rome's "harlot hermeneutic," being as it is, radically opposed to *sola Scriptura*—the great cry of the Reformers and the Reformation—necessitates an unbiblical deviation in worship. This is not surprising. What is surprising is that some of the Romanist innovations in worship (such as instrumental music in public worship) are now being practiced by denominations that profess to hold to the Reformed faith, Confessions and hermeneutic.

In conclusion I will simply state that any Reconstruction of the Church must begin with a thorough understanding (and the subsequent practice) of the regulative principle. To deviate here is to open the floodgates of humanistic innovation in worship, condoning worship divised by a false hermeneutic and therefore the will of man—*Arminianism in worship in short*. This is the seedbed of idolatry and a sure route to a shipwrecked church. John Knox's battle to reform Scotland and his call for purity of worship is most instructive here. Knox states,

> The matter is not of so small importance, as some suppose. The question is, whether God or man ought to be obeyed in matters of religion? In mouth, all do confess that only God is worthy of sovereignty. But after many—by the instigation of the devil, and by the presumptuous arrogance of carnal wisdom and worldly policy—have defaced God's holy ordinance, men fear not to follow what laws and common consent (mother of all mischief) have established and commanded. But thus continually I can do nothing but hold, and affirm all things polluted, yea, execrable and accursed, which God by his Word has not sanctified in his religion. God grant you his Holy Spirit rightly to judge.[14]

Will-worship has proved disastrous in the past, thus we must heed the warnings of history, a history *also* filled with testimony to the clear Biblically based hermeneutic of our Presbyterian and Puritan forefathers—proclaiming the sovereignty of God in worship and over every area of life!

[13]Girardeau, *Instrumental Music*, pp. 23-26.

[14]Knox, *Works VI:14* cited in John Knox, *True and False Worship* (Presbyterian Heritage Publications, rpnt. 1988), p. x.

PSALM SINGING IN SCRIPTURE & HISTORY

The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching, and conscionable bearing 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...*** **(Westminster Confession of Faith 21:5, 1647, emphasis added).**

It is the duty of Christians to praise God publickly, by the singing of psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family. **(The Directory for the Publick Worship of God; Agreed Upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster... as a Part of the Covenanted Uniformity in Religion... with an Act of the General Assembly, and Act of Parliament, Both in Anno 1645 Approving & Establishing the Said Directory).**

The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his word... also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry. **(Westminster Larger Catechism, partial answer to Question 108, 1648).**

The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counselling, commanding, using, and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted of God himself; tolerating a false religion... 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, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever... all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed. **(Westminster Larger Cat., part answer to Q. 109, 1648).**

The reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it... 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. **(Westminster Larger Catechism, partial answer to Question 110, 1648).**

Let the **word of Christ** ***dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in*** **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,** ***singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*** **(Col. 3:16, emphases added).**

Speaking to yourselves in **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,** ***singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*** **(Eph. 5:19, KJV, emphases added).**

This newsletter will be concerned with establishing that the only legitimate *historical, confessional* and most importantly, *Biblical* means of addressing God in public worship-song is via the Psalms.[1] I will grant at the outset that this is a tall order for one short newsletter. But if all I accomplish here is to encourage some to delve further into this important issue, a measure of success will have already been attained. Having observed that much of the Reformed community is not even acquainted with their *own heritage* of exclusive Psalmody, much less the unassailable exegetical strength of this position, I hope that this encouragement to search the Scriptures and heed the wisdom of our forefathers will not fall upon deaf ears. For great stress is laid upon the importance of discussions concerning worship throughout the works of all the maior Reformers. John Calvin's reply to the Romanist Sadoleto, in 1539, is a case in point, when he writes, "I have no difficulty in conceding to you that there is nothing more dangerous to our salvation than a twisted and perverse worship of God."[2] And John Knox, forceful as usual, sets forth the end of all those who love the lie of man-made worship, when he states that for the "avoiding of idolatry you may perchance be compelled to leave your native country and realm; but obeyers of idolatry, without end, shall be compelled, body and soul, to burn in hell."[3] These discussions were for the Reformers, and are for us, much more than just academic wrangling; in them are contained the very issues of eternal life and death. The Lord, in Scripture, constantly warns against man-made devices in worship, and His most severe judgments are brought upon individuals and nations for sins which involve the very principles herein discussed (cf. Rev. 21:8, 2 Chr. 24:18, Gal. 5:19-21). On the other hand Psalm singing is one of the great joys of the Christian life. Returning the praises of God to the Almighty in a manner

1. I am assuming throughout this newsletter that the reader is acquainted with the Presbyterian-Reformed-Covenanter-Puritan understanding of the regulative principle of worship. If you are not familiar with this Biblically controlling principle of worship (also called the *Scripturel law of worship*), which is simply the logical outgrowth of the Reformation principle of *solo Scripturo*, it was dealt with in the previous issue of *Christion Reconstruction Today*, #15-16, entitled "Worship." For more extensive treatment of the regulative principle see Greg Price's *The Regulative Principle of Worship in the NT and OT* (available from SWRB on video, cassette and forthcoming as a bound photocopy), John McNaugher's *The Psalms In Worship* (SWRB, [1907] 1992), Kevin Reed's *Biblicol Worship* (Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1995), Carl Bogue's *Scriptural Worship* (Blue Banner Books, 1993), George Gillespie's *A Dispute Against English Popish Ceremonies* (Naphtali Press, [1637] 1993), "A Vindicatioo of the Doctrine that the Sacrifice of the Mass is Idolatry," io *Selected Writings of John Knox* (Presbyterian Heritage Publications, [1550] 1995), G.I. Williamson's *Scripturol Regulotive Principle of Worship* and his *Instrumentol Music in the Worship of God* (SWRB bound photocopies, 1995), *The Auchensough Renovotion of the Notionol ond Solemn Leogue ond Covenont* (SWRB rare bound photocopy, [1712] 1995), and W.J. McKnight's *Concerning Close Communion* (SWRB rare bouod photocopy, reprinted 1995). As we will see at the conclusion of this oewsletter, the last book mentioned maintains that the violation of the regulative principle (i.e. the secood commandment), by the use of man-made, uninspired compositioos in public worship-song, is a sin which should result io the offender being barred from the Lord's table — io all churches which faithfully uphold Scriptural worship and the Westminster standards.

2. Cited in Carlos Eire, *Wor Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Colvin* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 199, footnote 18.

3. *Godly Letter of Warning*, cited in Kevio Reed, *John Knox the Forgotten Reformer: Studies in the Theology of the Scottish Reformer* (Presbyterian Heritage Publicatioos, forthcomiog), pp. 86-87.

which He has instituted (and with which He is pleased) can and has lead to great blessing upon all those who practice it.

The Historical Testimony

The historical testimony reveals to us a most intriguing picture.[4] In it our Lord shows us that at the times in which He has been pleased to visit this Earth with great light, He also has given His human light-bearers the grace to practice exclusive Psalmody in public worship. In fact this testimony is so clear that it is rarely contested and is often readily conceded even by those opposed to exclusive Psalmody. Gary Crampton, in a recent article, is one example of this when he stated that "there is little question that through the centuries of church history exclusive Psalmody has been heavily endorsed by those within the Reformed community."[5]

The Early Church

Concerning the early Church, Bushell notes that, "The introduction of uninspired hymns into the worship of the Church was a gradual process, and it was not until the fourth century that the practice became widespread."[6] G.I. Williamson further points out that a "second noteworthy fact is that when uninspired hymns first made their appearance, it was not among the orthodox Churches but rather the heretical groups... If the Church from the beginning had received authority from the Apostles to make and use uninspired hymns, it would be expected that it would have done so. But it did not. Rather it was among those who departed from the faith that they first appeared."[7] This historical testimony raises a number of interesting questions for those who claim to adhere to the regulative principle of worship and yet maintain the use of uninspired hymns in public worship. *First*, if the Psalter had been insufficient, why was there *no command* to *produce* new songs for worship, *only commands* to sing that which was *already in existence*? *Second*, if a new manual of praise was necessary, why was it that the Apostles did not write any new songs under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? *Third*, why is it that we do not find even one "hymn" fragment among all the early church writings that have survived to this day. Moreover, there is not even one mention of the use of uninspired "hymns" among orthodox Christians until they began to be written in reply to the heretical "hymns," which had not surfaced until late in the second century?[8] *Fourth*, why was there still strong opposition to the introduction of uninspired hymns well into the fifth century? The Synod of Laodicea (A.D. 343) and the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) both opposed the introduction of uninspired "hymns." In addition to this Bushell states that "as late as the ninth century we find appeals to the earlier Councils in support of a pure psalmody."[9]

The Protestant Reformation

As we reach the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century we find that "the same clericalism which denied the Bible to the common people eventually denied them the Psalter as well and replaced congregational singing with choral productions in a tongue unknown to the vast majority of the worshippers."[10] As the Reformation progressed we encounter an almost complete return to exclusive Psalmody (excluding the Lutherans, who had not extended the principle of *sola Scriptura* to their worship). Bushell states,

> The Scottish Reformer John Knox not surprisingly followed Calvin in this matter, and the Reformed Church as a whole followed their lead. "This meant that at a stroke the Reformed Church cut itself loose from the entire mass of Latin hymns and from the use of hymnody in general, and adopted the Psalms of the Old Testament as the sole medium of Church praise."[11] Hence forth to be a Calvinist was to be a Psalm-singer. For some two and a half centuries the Reformed churches as a rule sang nothing but the Psalms in worship.... The metrical Psalter was born in Geneva where it was nurtured and cherished by all who embraced the principles of Calvinism.[12]

Furthermore, the importance that Calvin placed on Psalm singing can be seen in the following account,

> When Calvin and Farel were banished from Geneva (April 23, 1538) for refusal to submit to the liturgical practices which the Council had taken over from Bern, they appealed their case to the Synod which met at Zurich on April 29, 1538. At that time they presented a paper drawn up by Calvin containing 14 articles specifying the terms upon which they were willing to return to Geneva. They admitted that they had been too rigid and were willing to concede a number of the disputed practices... But on several other points they stood firm. They insisted on... the more frequent administration of the Lord's Supper... and *the institution of the singing of Psalms as a part of public worship* (emphasis added).[13]

This was an extremely bold stand for truth, and, as we know, Calvin returned to Geneva, and Psalm singing commenced. As he *matured*, Calvin insisted on, and instituted, the *practice* of the *exclusive (acappella)* singing of Psalms in Geneva's public worship.[14] Another interesting historical note concerning the development (and strength) of Calvin's arguments against uninspired hymns is placed in context by the following conclusion reached by Bushell,

> Calvin knew, as well as we ought to know, that in the last analysis a "counsel of prudence" and a "case of conscience" amount to the same thing. In worship-song, as in other things, God deserves the best that we have to offer. No pious man can in clear conscience offer up one sacrifice of praise to God when prudence dictates that another would be better. Calvin says as much in the passage which we just quoted. How one can read Calvin's conclusion that "no one can sing things worthy of God, unless he has received them from God Himself" and yet conclude that "he had no scruples of conscience against the use of human songs" is quite beyond our comprehension. These sentiments, which Calvin borrows from Augustine (on Psalm 31, sermon 1) and takes as his own, are at the very heart of all arguments against the use of uninspired hymns in the religious worship of God. Calvin's own practice, his insistence on the inspired superiority of the Psalms, and his defense of the Regulative Principle, all point toward the unavoidable conclusion that Calvin limited himself to the Psalms... because he thought it would have been wrong to do otherwise. The Reformed Church as a whole followed him in this belief and clung to it tenaciously for over two centuries. Modern Presbyterian worship practice has no claim to Calvin's name at this juncture. Calvin would have wept bitterly to behold the songs sung today in those churches which claim to have followed in his footsteps... the fact remains that in practice the Genevan Reformer was as strict a Psalm-singer as ever there was.[15]

The "Signature of Puritanism"

Psalm singing has been called the "signature of Puritanism."[16] "The English Puritans, being Calvinists and not Lutherans, held to the view that the only proper worship-song was that provided by God once and for all in the Book of Psalms... (t)his was Calvin's conviction, and a metrical Psalm before and after the sermon was the usual practice at Geneva."[17] "[O]ur Calvinistic heritage, then, is a Psalm-singing heritage, and our Reformed churches, to the extent that they have chosen to forsake that heritage, are no longer Calvinistic in their patterns of worship.[18]

The Westminster Confession of Faith

A Survey of English and Scottish Psalmody would not be complete without a reference to the work of the Westminster Assembly. Since the Westminster standards still have creedal authority in some of the smaller Presbyterian bodies which, however, are no longer committed to exclusive Psalmody, it is worth pointing out here that *the Westminster Divines sanctioned nothing but the use of Psalms in the religious worship of God* (emphasis added).[19]

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4. For those, who, in extreme overreaction to Popery, have adopted the Anabaptistic notion of authority, and thus rejected the uninspired historical testimony of the true Church outright, (as if the Scripture was recognized in a vacuum), we submit the following rejoinder, "Nor otherwise can a Christian know the time or place of his birth, or the persons whom God commands him to honor as his father and mother, than *by uninspired testimony*; and the same is true of his covenant obligation, if baptized in infancy. Against all who ignorantly or recklessly reject or oppose *history as a bond of fellowship*, in the family, in the state, but especially in the church, we thus enter our solemn and uncompromising protest" (Reformed Presbytery, *Act, Declaration, and Testimony, for the Whole of Covenanted Reformation* (SWRB rare bound photocopy [1761, 1876] 1994), p. 178.

5. "Psalms, Hymns & Spiritual Songs" *Counsel of Chalcedon*, May 1991, p. 9.

6. Michael Bushell, *The Songs of Zion* (Pittsburgh, PA: Crown and Covenant Publ., 1980), p. 122.

7. G. I. Williamson, *The Singing of Psalms in the Worship of God* (SWRB, bound photocopy, 1994), pp. 16-17.

8. The first use of uninspired "hymns" was found among a heretical group called the Bardessanes. Cf. Williamson, *Singing of Psalms*, p. 16.

9. Bushell, *Songs of Zion*, p. 125.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

11. Bushell cites Millar Patrick, *Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody* (London, 1949), p. 9, in *Songs of Zion*, p. 131.

12. Bushell, *Songs*, p. 131, 132.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 141. Calvin allowed "a few Biblical songs" (Bushell) to be sung in his youth. However, this is a far cry from requiring *uninspired* "hymnody," and, as he grew in grace, he insisted upon the practice of exclusive Psalmody!

16. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 147. For more proof that the Westminster Assembly gave positive sanction to exclusive Psalmody see "Notices Regarding the Metrical Versions of the Psalms Received by the Church of Scotland" in *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baille* (SWRB rare bound photocopy, reprinted 1994), volume 3, pp. 525-556. Keep in mind that the Westminster Divines were required to send all their work to parliament for approval, and that besides the fact that there were no discussions of man-made hymns ever recorded of this august body, much was recorded concerning which Psalter

It is at this point that major contradictions appear for those attempting to uphold the Westminster Confession *along with* the use of uninspired "hymns" in worship. The writers of the Confession were well aware of the fact that the regulative principle of Scriptural worship demands divine institution for all *elements* in the *public worship service*. Thus, to suppose that the writers of the Confession would sanction that which they could not find divine institution in scripture for and also *did not include in the Confession* under this section, belies a misunderstanding of the regulative principle itself. It imports the Lutheran idea that that which is *not forbidden* is *permissible* in public worship, rather than the Calvinistic conviction that that which is *instituted* or *prescribed* by Scripture is *required*. This is a common error today, even among Presbyterians—who, of all people, should know better. In fact, according to all the written records, the idea that uninspired "hymns" were suitable worship-songs was not even discussed at the Westminster Assembly, "the only disputes of any magnitude being over the practice of 'lining out' the Psalms and over whether to use the Psalter version of Rous or the 'Metaphrase' of Barton."[20] Thus, it can be unequivocally stated that *one is of necessity in violation of both the spirit and letter of the Westminster Confession of Faith* outside of the practice of exclusive Psalmody (regarding public worship-song).

Bushell summarizes our survey of Reformed thought,

> It is remarkable that, in spite of the absence of any creedal constraints and in spite of the influence that must have been exerted on the Reformed Church by other communions where uninspired hymns flourished, the practice of exclusive Psalmody in the Reformed and Presbyterian churches was so uniform for two centuries after the Reformation that there exists today no undisputed evidence of ecclesiastically sanctioned hymnody in their services of worship during that period.[21]

Now, it readily can be seen, even in this short historical overview, why those with even a cursory knowledge of Reformed history concede the historical argument to the exclusive Psalm singers.

Sola Scriptura in Worship

Since Scripture, and not history (as helpful as it is), must be our *final* authority, it is to the Scripture we will go. Some positions against exclusive Psalmody can be dismissed at the outset. *First*, unless one is ready to institute the use of *literal* altars, incense, etc. in public worship, the highly symbolic and figurative nature of the book of Revelation can be no safe guide for worship (here and now).[22] *Second*, it should be noted that most (if not all) arguments against exclusive Psalmody are of a negative nature. These anti-Psalm arguments could *possibly* prove that the Psalm singer's position is incorrect, but for those holding to the regulative principle, you cannot prove the *positive institution* of uninspired hymns by a *negative* argument *against* exclusive Psalmody. I have personally requested proof for the *Biblical* institution of uninspired hymns from one prominent minister who says that he upholds the regulative principle (but still uses uninspired man-made compositions for public worship-song), and have yet to receive any answer. Can you provide this proof? This is really the crux of the matter for those espousing uninspired hymns: *Where is the Biblical institution for uninspired songs in public (New Testament) worship?* Williamson is to the point concerning this insurmountable obstacle faced by those promoting such an innovation (i.e. modern "hymn" singers):

> It is of no small importance that textual proof has never been demonstrated for the use of uninspired songs in worship. No one has yet found even a single scripture text to prove that God commands His Church to sing anything other than the psalms of the Bible in worship. And it is not because men have not searched diligently! A few years ago a Committee of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church made such a search. This Committee had a majority in favour of the use of uninspired hymns in worship. And yet, after an exhaustive search through scripture requiring a number of years to complete, such proof could not be found. The Committee Chairman admitted that it is 'impossible to prove that uninspired songs are authorized in scripture.' He even said that 'to demand such proof before one can in good conscience sing uninspired songs is to demand the impossible!' (*The Presbyterian Guardian*, Vol. 17, p. 73). This is a grave admission. But it is no more than the facts require. For the bare truth is that no one has found so much as a single text of scripture commanding the use of uninspired songs in divine worship. And remember, we are not to worship God in any other way not commanded in His word.'[23]

At this point those promoting uninspired songs in worship are probably protesting that I have forgotten about Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, but such is not the case. Having come out of a "hymn-singing" tradition, these very scriptures comprised a major part of my initial protest against the position which I now hold. So let's take a look at them. Williamson is most instructive here,

> The proper interpretation of scripture terms requires that we discover, not *what we mean* by these terms when we use them today, but *what the inspired writer meant* when he used them. And it is one of the oddities of biblical interpretation that this rule is commonly observed with reference to the term 'psalms', and commonly disregarded with respect to the terms 'hymns' and 'songs'. For the fact is that *all three of these terms* are used in the Bible to designate various selections contained in the Old Testament Psalter. In the Greek version of the Old Testament familiar to the Ephesians and Colossians the entire Psalter is entitled 'Psalms'. In sixty-seven of the titles within the book the word 'psalm' is used. However, in six titles the word 'hymn' is used, rather than 'psalm', and in thirty-five the word 'song' appears. Even more important twelve titles use both 'psalm' and 'song', and two have 'psalm' and 'hymn'. Psalm seventy-six is designated 'psalm, hymn and song'. And at the end of the first seventy two psalms we read that 'the hymns of David the son of Jesse are ended'. (Ps. 72:20.) In other words, there is no more reason to think that the Apostle referred to psalms when he said 'psalms', than when he said 'hymns' and 'songs', for the simple reason that all three were biblical terms for psalms in the book of psalms itself. We are in the habit of using the terms 'hymns' and 'songs' for those compositions that are not psalms. But Paul and the Christians at Ephesus and Colossae used these terms as the Bible itself uses them, namely, as titles for the various psalms in the Old Testament Psalter. To us it may seem strange, or even unnecessary, that the Holy Spirit would use a variety of titles to describe His inspired compositions. But the fact is that He did so. Just as the Holy Spirit speaks of His 'commandments and his statutes and his judgmentss' (Deut.. 30:16, etc.), and of 'miracles and wonders and signs' (Acts 2:22), so He speaks of His 'psalms, hymns and songs'. As commandments, statutes and judgmentss are all divine laws in the language of scripture; as miracles and wonders and signs are all supernatural works of God in the language of scripture; so psalms, hymns and songs are the inspired compositions of the Psalter, in the language of scripture itself... The New Testament evidence sustains this conclusion. On the night of the Last Supper Jesus and His disciples sang 'an hymn' (Matt. 26:30). Bible expositors admit that this was 'the second part of the Hallel Psalms (115-118)" which was always sung at the Passover. (*New Bible Commentary*, p. 835.) Matthew called this psalm a 'hymn' because a psalm is a hymn in the terminology of the Bible. To the same effect is the Old Testament quotation in Hebrews 2:12, in which the Greek word 'hymn' is quoted from Psalm 22:22. In this quotation from an Old Testament psalm, the word 'hymn' is used to denote the singing of psalms because the Old Testament makes no distinction between the two. But if Scripture itself says that psalms are hymns, and that hymns are psalms, why should we make any distinction between them? If we grant that the Apostle used biblical language in a biblical sense there is no more reason to think that he spoke of uninspired hymns in these texts (Col. 3:16, Eph. 5:19) than to think that he spoke of uninspired psalms, because hymns are inspired psalms in the holy scriptures.[24]

Furthermore, to reject Mr. Williamson's explanation regarding these verses leads to some major problems. We have already observed that no evidence exists that any uninspired "hymns" existed during the period when these verses were written. *Only* the inspired Psalms (i.e. psalms, hymns and spiritual songs) were in use as public worship-songs at that time, and *no* Biblical command is found anywhere to *produce* additional songs beyond those already contained in the *existing* book of divine praise—the Psalms. Is the regulative principle then in error? We think not. Why then were no new songs produced by the early church if these verses were understood to call for them? The Apostles themselves did not produce any such songs, either inspired or uninspired—not even one that we know of. This helps demonstrate that they *did not* interpret these verses as modern "hymn-singers" do. Moreover, to approach these verses by importing a modern meaning into the words "hymns and spiritual songs,

would be presented to parliament. Much work was also done in producing a suitable version. Given the Westminster divines *covenanted goal of uniformity in worship*, and their strict adherence to the regulative principle (as demonstrated by the citations from the *Larger Catechism* above), it is astounding indeed that there are those in our day that claim to hold to the Westminster standards who even question this point.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

22. One could even do away with marriage trying to use heaven as a guide for that which takes place here and now on earth (see Luke 20:35). Clearly the argument that runs to the book of Revelation for support of *worship practices*, by trying to transfer what is clearly symbolic and typical into that which is literal, proves too much, and if applied consistently would (and has) led to many ridiculous extremes — not the least of which is Roman Catholic idolatry. Cf. James Glasgow, *Heart and Voice: Instrumental Music in Christian Worship Not Divinely Authorized*, (Belfast, late nineteenth century, SWRB rare bound photocopy), for a refutation of this error.

23. Williamson, *Singing of Psalms*, p. 18.

24. Williamson, *Singing of Psalms*, pp. 10, 11.

not only rests on very shaky ground—leaving much room for doubt and in no way fulfilling the requirements of the regulative principle for *clear Biblical warrant* in worship practices—but would also destroy the basis for Grammatico-Historical interpretation of Scripture.[25] Therefore, we can see that Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 cannot possibly mean what those opposing the position of exclusive Psalmody say they mean, because their interpretation does not fit any of the existing Biblical (or historical) data—*while the Psalm singers interpretation fits perfectly*!

Finally and probably most importantly, Bushell has dug down to the root of the problem in the matter of human innovation in worship,

> Arrogance, pride and self-assertion are at the very heart of all attempts to find a musical replacement for the Psalter. William Romaine makes some very pointed comments in this connection, to which advocates of uninspired song in worship would do well to listen: "I want a name for that man who should pretend that he could make better hymns than the Holy Ghost. His collection is large enough: it wants no addition. It is perfect, as its author, and not capable of any improvement. Why in such a case would any man in the world take it into his head to write hymns for the use of the Church? It is just the same as if he was to write a new Bible, not only better than the old, but so much better, that the old may be thrown aside. What a blasphemous attempt! And yet our hymn-mongers, inadvertently, I hope, have come very near to this blasphemy; for they shut out the Psalms, introduce their own verses into the Church, sing them with great delight, and as they fancy with great profit; although the whole practice be in direct opposition with the blessing of God." We see, therefore, that the sufficiency and divine origin of the Psalter are in themselves adequate arguments for its exclusive use in worship. As we have pointed out a number of times already, the very fact that the Bible contains a book of inspired psalms immediately places worship-song *in the same category as the authoritative reading of the Scriptures in worship*. The former is but the musical counterpart of the latter, and as such is incompatible with the use of uninspired hymns in worship.[26]

Psalmody, Separation, and the Lord's Supper

One major practical question remains concerning exclusive Psalmody. This is where "the rubber meets the road." Can you attend worship services which practice the idolatry of "hymn" signing and be free of sin yourself. My answer would be no![27] Hymn singing is a direct violation of the second commandment. To attend such services without *at least* publicly protesting (and then bringing formal charges against the public officers who promote and maintain this sin) involves one in the breach of both the second and ninth commandments. Remember, the duties required in the second commandment include "the disapproving, detesting, (and) opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.[28] Additionally, the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment include "undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others.[29] With the *Act, Declaration, and Testimony, for the Whole of our Covenanted Reformation...* by the Reformed Presbytery we must "testify against all those who, under pretext of superior charity or liberality, fiercely clamour for union of churches (and union *within* churches—RB) by a sacrifice of divine truth."[30] There is no neutrality possible where the regulative principle is concerned. True Christian love demands that we speak out on this matter. It is not loving to hold your peace, and it is not kindness or faithfulness to forbear warning a brother when you know that he is in sin.[31] Moreover, there can be no real unity while these matters are swept under the table. There can be no real and lasting reformation where the worship of God is corrupted. Exclusive Psalmody and modern "hymn" singing cannot both be commanded of God *at the same time*. God is not the author of confusion. Moreover, if those in "power" will not hear legitimate reproof, then we must remember that the "duty of holiness toward God, engaged to in the covenant, comprehends in it a zealous endeavor to maintain the purity of the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of his institution, in opposition to all those who would corrupt it, or decline from it... by reproving (them) for sin; or upon those rejecting reproof, by withdrawing from (them)."[32] Additionally, "[w]e shall in like manner detest, and abhor, and labour, to extirpate all kinds of superstition—all rites and ceremonies superadded by human inventions to the worship of God, not enjoined and required in his Word; together with all heresy and false doctrine, and all profaneness and immoralities of every kind, and whatsoever is contrary to sound religion... We shall upon the other hand, endeavour to keep ourselves, as far as we can, from all partakings in other men's sins, by consenting unto associations, incorporations, combinations, compliance with, or conniving at, their sins."[33] The necessity of separation from those holding to different worship practices is best illustrated as it comes to a head concerning participation in the Lord's Supper. I will end this short appeal for consistency concerning worship-song with some citations bearing on communion and exclusive Psalmody:

> We think that the original Presbyterian Church of the Reformation was right, and that to abandon its position was accordingly a sin in the sight of God— a sin in fact which is serious enough to justify us *in maintaining a separate existence;* in order that, by that existence, we may consistently testify *against sin... We all accept the Westminster Standards.* These declare that the Second Commandment forbids "all devising, using and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God Himself"...Now our church holds that this interpretation of those Commandments binds people to the exclusive use of the Psalms in divine worship, and puts them under solemn obligation to sing praises, as in apostolic times, without the use of musical instruments, and requires them to renounce the system of secretism as a system of darkness altogether unworthy of such as are called of God to be "light in the world." ...If our interpretation is not right we ought to disband. If it is right, our Session ought to see that it is honored in every particular by every person who proposes to come to the Lord's table under their jurisdiction... We hold, whether rightly or wrongly, that to undertake to praise God with songs other than those which the Holy Spirit has inspired for that purpose is a sin, and such a sin as, unrepented of, should prevent a person from sitting down at the Lord's table, either in our Church or in any other... The fact is that we find ourselves under obligation, in these respects, to bear a faithful testimony not only to the world, but to such other Churches also as differ with us on these intrinsically important questions. At the communion table our testimony comes to its climax. Shall we weaken where we should be firmest? Shall we waver where we should be immovable? Shall we make it apparent on the Holy Mount that we are sincere in our conclusions and mean to maintain them to the end, or shall we choose the Holy Mount to make it apparent to other Churches and to the world, that we only half believe what we profess? Here, of all places, it would seem, we ought to aim to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48).[34]

25. It is also interesting to note that to interpret "hymns and spiritual songs" as something other than the Biblical Psalms leads to a number of other thorny problems. First you are left with a grammatical construction that is found nowhere else in Scripture (in which a separate item is listed, followed by a disparate set of two items, in a set of three items total). The "hymn-singers" interpretation also turns this verse into a mere tautology (i.e. the verse then reads Psalms, *hymns* and *hymns*). Why repeat "hymns" twice? And what is the Biblical difference between a "hymn" and a "spiritual song"? Furthermore, comparing worship-song to preaching and prayer is clearly a *false analogy*. Worship-song is comparable to the reading of Scripture in worship. Teaching Elders (or anybody else for that matter) are never told to write new Scripture or to write new songs for public worship. On the other hand Teaching Elders are often commanded (either directly or through approved Scriptural example) to expound Scripture using their own words and also to pray with words of their own composition. Calvin's comment that every man is a *little idol factory* seems to be especially applicable when it comes to worship-song. Regarding Grammatico-Historical interpretation see Milton Terry, *Biblicol Hermeneutics* (SWRB, [1895] rare bound photocopy 1993), pp. 70, 101-140.

26. Bushell, *Songs*, p. 102, emphasis added.

27. The arguments found in John Bradford's *Hurt of Heoring Moss* (SWRB [1580] rare bound photocopy 1995) could also be applied to the obligation for separating from the idolatry taking place during the singing of uninspired man-made compositions in public worship. Calvin's battle with the Nicodemites is also very instructive here (cf. Eire, "Calvin Against the Nicodemites" in *War Agoinst the Idols*, ch. 7). *A Modest Apology for the Conduct of Seceders, in Refusing to Join in Christian Communion with Sectorions, Latitudinarions, etc., who have Deported from the Purity of Reformotion Once Attoined to in these Kingdoms* (SWRB, [1773] rare bound photocopy 1995) and John Knox's *An Admonition to Flee Idolotry, Romanism ond All Folse Worship* (SWRB, [1554] rare bound photocopy 1995) should also be consulted.

28. *Westminster Larger Cotechism*, partial answer to Question 108, 1648.

29. *Westminster Larger Cotechism*., partial answer to Question 145, 1648. M'Neilly's *How Best to Secure a Return to the Use of Psolms in the Ordinance of Proise* (SWRB rare bound photocopy) should also be consulted, as it contains the practical steps to take if you find yourself in in a "hymn" singing church, having come to Psalm-singing convictions. Also see our newly published tracts "Some Comments for Those Who Attend Idolatrous Worship" by Knox, Burgess and Philpot, and "Of Separation from Corrupt Churches."

30. First emitted 1761 in Scotland and adopted by the Reformed Presbytery in 1876 (SWRB rare bound photocopy, 1994).

31. "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:5-6). "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools" (Eccl. 7:5).

32. Reformed Presbytery, *The Auchensough Renovotion of the National and Solemn League and Covenont...* (SWRB photocopy, [1712, 1880], reprinted 1994).

33. *Ibid*, pp. 118-199.

34. W.J. McKnight, *Concerning Close Communion* (SWRB photocopy, 1995). Of course we have left numerous issues regarding all of these matters untouched. Here, I have only endeavored to *introduce* what I consider some of the more important aspects of the debate over public worship-song. Therefore, I strongly encourage all Christians, whether Psalm singers or not, to obtain and prayerfully study the items listed throughout this newsletter. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (1 John 5:21).

FAMILY WORSHIP

Mr. Thomas Manton's Epistle to the Reader of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms

Christian Reader,

I cannot suppose thee to be such a stranger in England as to be ignorant of the general complaint concerning the decay of the power of godliness, and more especially of the great corruption of youth. Wherever thou goest, thou wilt hear men crying out of bad children and bad servants; whereas indeed the source of the mischief must be sought a little higher: it is bad parents and bad masters that make bad children and bad servants; and we cannot blame so much their untowardness, as our own negligence in their education.

The devil hath a great spite at the kingdom of Christ, and he knoweth no such compendious way to crush it in the egg, as by the perversion of youth, and supplanting family-duties. He striketh at all those duties which are publick in the assemblies of the saints; but these are too well guarded by the solemn injunctions and dying charge of Jesus Christ, as that he should ever hope totally to subvert and undermine them; but at family-duties he striketh with the more success, because the institution is not so solemn, and the practice not so seriously and conscientiously regarded as it should be, and the omission is not so liable to notice and public censure. Religion was first hatched in families, and there the devil seeketh to crush it; the families of the Patriarchs were all the Churches God had in the world for the time; and therefore, (I suppose,) when Cain went out from Adam's family, he is said to go out from the face of the Lord, Gen. 4:16. Now, the devil knoweth that this is a blow at the root, and a ready way to prevent the succession of Churches: if he can subvert families, other societies and communities will not long flourish and subsist with any power and vigor; for there is the stock from whence they are supplied both for the present and future.

For the present: A family is the seminary of Church and State; and if children be not well principled there, all miscarrieth: a fault in the first concoction is not mended in the second; if youth be bred ill in the family, they prove ill in Church and Commonwealth; *there* is the first making or marring, and the presage of their future lives to be thence taken, Prov. 20:11. By family discipline, officers are trained up for the Church, 1 Tim. 3:4, *One that ruleth well his own house*, etc.; and *there* are men bred up in subjection and obedience. It is noted, Acts 21:5, that the disciples brought Paul on his way with their wives and children; their children probably are mentioned, to intimate, that their parents would, by their own example and affectionate farewell to Paul, breed them up in a way of reverence and respect to the pastors of the Church.

For the future: It is comfortable, certainly, to see a thriving nursery of young plants, and to have hopes that God shall have a people to serve him when we are dead and gone: the people of God comforted themselves in that, Ps. 102:28, *the Children of thy servants shall continue*, etc.

Upon all these considerations, how careful should ministers and parents be to train up young ones whilst they are yet pliable, and, like wax, capable of any form and impression, in the knowledge and fear of God; and betimes to instil the principles of our most holy faith, as they are drawn into a short sum in Catechisms, and so altogether laid in the view of conscience! Surely these seeds of truth planted in the field of memory, if they work nothing else, will at least be a great check and bridle to them, and, as the casting in of cold water doth stay the boiling of the pot, somewhat allay the fervours of youthful lusts and passions.

I had, upon entreaty, resolved to recommend to thee with the greatest earnestness the work of catechising, and, as a meet help, the usefulness of this book, as thus printed with the Scriptures at large: but meeting with a private letter of a very learned and godly divine, wherein that work is excellently done to my hand, I shall make bold to transcribe a part of it, and offer it to publick view.

The author having bewailed the great distractions, corruptions, and divisions that are in the Church, he thus represents the cause and cure: "Among others, a principal cause of these mischiefs is the great and common neglect of the governors of families, in the discharge of that duty which they owe to God for the souls that are under their charge, especially in teaching them the doctrine of Christianity. Families are societies that must be sanctified to God as well as Churches; and the governors of them have as truly a charge of the souls that are therein, as pastors have of the Churches. But, alas, how little is this considered or regarded! But while negligent ministers are (deservedly) cast out of their places, the negligent masters of families take themselves to be almost blameless. They offer their children to God in baptism, and there they promise to teach them the doctrine of the gospel, and bring them up in the nurture of the Lord; but they easily promise, and easily break it; and educate their children for the world and the flesh, although they have renounced these, and dedicated them to God. This covenant-breaking with God, and betraying the souls of their children to the devil, must lie heavy on them here or hereafter. They beget children, and keep families, merely for the world and the flesh: but little consider what a charge is committed to them, and what it is to bring up a child for God, and govern a family as a sanctified society.

"O how sweetly and successfully would the work of God go on, if we would but all join together in our several places to promote it! Men need not then run without sending to be preachers; but they might find that part of the work that belongeth to them to be enough for them, and to be the best that they can be employed in. Especially women should be careful of this duty; because as they are most about their children, and have early and frequent opportunities to instruct them, so this is the principal service they can do to God in this world, being restrained from more publick work. And doubtless many an excellent magistrate hath been sent into the Commonwealth, and many an excellent pastor into the Church, and many a precious saint to heaven, through the happy preparations of a holy education, perhaps by a woman that thought herself useless and unserviceable to the Church. Would parents but begin betimes, and labour to affect the hearts of their children with the great matters of everlasting

life, and to acquaint them with the substance of the doctrine of Christ, and, when they find in them the knowledge and love of Christ, would bring them then to the pastors of the Church to be tried, confirmed, and admitted to the further privileges of the Church, what happy, well-ordered Churches might we have! Then one pastor need not be put to do the work of two or three hundred or thousand governors of families, even to teach their children those principles which they should have taught them long before; nor should we be put to preach to so many miserable ignorant souls, that be not prepared by education to understand us; nor should we have need to shut out so many from holy communion upon the account of ignorance, that yet have not the grace to feel it and lament it, nor the wit and patience to wait in a learning state, till they are ready to be fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. But now they come to us with aged self-conceitedness, being past children, and yet worse than children still; having the ignorance of children, but being overgrown the teachableness of children; and think themselves wise, yea, wise enough to quarrel with the wisest of their teachers, because they have lived long enough to have been wise, and the evidence of their knowledge is their aged ignorance; and they are readier to flee in our faces for Church-privileges, than to learn of us, and obey our instructions, till they are prepared for them, that they may do them good; like snappish curs, that will snap us by the fingers for their meat, and snatch it out of our hands; and not like children, that stay till we give it them. Parents have so used them to be unruly, that ministers have to deal but with too few but the unruly. And it is for want of this laying the foundation well at first, that professors themselves are so ignorant as most are, and that so many, especially of the younger sort, do swallow down almost any error that is offered them, and follow any sect of dividers that will entice them, so it be but done with earnestness and plausibility. For, alas! though by the grace of God their hearts may be changed in an hour, (whenever they understand but the essentials of the faith,) yet their understandings must have time and diligence to furnish them with such knowledge as must stablish them, and fortify them against deceits. Upon these, and many the like considerations, we should entreat all Christian families to take more pains in this necessary work, and to get better acquainted with the substance of Christianity. And, to that end, (taking along some moving treatises to awake the heart,) I know not what work should be fitter for their use, than that compiled by the Assembly at Westminster; a Synod of as godly, judicious divines, (notwithstanding all the bitter words which they have received from discontented and self-conceited men,) I verily think, as ever England saw. Though they had the unhappiness to be employed in calamitous times, when the noise of wars did stop men's ears, and the licentiousness of wars did set every wanton tongue and pen at liberty to reproach them, and the prosecution and event of those wars did exasperate partial discontented men to dishonour themselves by seeking to dishonour them; I dare say, if in the days of old, when councils were in power and account, they had had but such a council of bishops, as this of presbyters was, the fame of it for learning and holiness, and all ministerial abilities, would, with very great honour, have been transmitted to posterity.

"I do therefore desire, that all masters of families would first study well this work themselves, and then teach it their children and servants, according to their several capacities. And, if they once understand these grounds of religion, they will be able to read other books more understandingly, and hear sermons more profitably, and confer more judiciously, and hold fast the doctrine of Christ more firmly, than ever you are like to do by any other course. First, let them read and learn the *Shorter Catechism*, and next the *Larger*, and lastly, read the *Confession of Faith*."

Thus far he, whose name I shall conceal, (though the excellency of the matter, and present style, will easily discover him,) because I have published it without his privity and consent, though, I hope, not against his liking and approbation. I shall add no more, but that I am,

Thy servant, in the Lord's work,
THOMAS MANTON.

A not-well-known publication of the Westminster Assembly is crucial here — namely, "The Directory for Family Worship."An indication of the seriousness with which the Puritans viewed this duty is given by an introductory statement, added by the assembly when it adopted the measure. We read: "...the Assembly doth require and appoint ministers and ruling elders to make diligent search and enquiry, in the congregations committed to their charge respectively, whether there be among them any family or families which use to neglect this necessary duty; and if any such family be found, the head of the family is to be first admonished privately to amend his fault... after which reproof, if he still be found to neglect family worship, let him be, for his obstinacy in such offence, suspended and debarred from the Lord's Supper, as being firstly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein, till he amend." The conducting and exercise of family worship was made an object of the discipline of the Scottish Church. This is not at all out of character and harmony with the general Puritan conviction with respect to family worship. Singular in this regard was the Puritan conception of the family or household as a "little church." Perkins described the family as a little church, Gouge called it the "seminary of the Church and commonwealth..." and Baxter characterized the home as "a church... a society of Christians combined for the better worshipping and serving God." Lewis Bayly taught that "what the preacher is in the pulpit, the same the Christian householder is in his house." He was quoting Augustine. (Richard Flinn, "The Puritan Family and the Christian Economy," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction: Symposium on the Family*, [Vol. 4, No. 2, Winter, 1977-78], pp. 76-77.)

The head of the family is to take care that none of the family withdraw himself from any part of family-worship: and, seeing the ordinary performance of all the parts of family-worship belongs properly to the head of the family, the minister is to stir up such as are lazy, and train up such as are weak, to a fitness to these exercises... ("The Directory for Family Worship" [IV], bound with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland's edition of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* [1647], reprinted 1994).

See also Matthew Henry's sermon, "A Church in the House," (*Complete Works*, vol. 1, pp. 248-267), the Puritan classic by William Gouge *Of Domestical Duties* and Greg Price's two cassette set "Family Worship." *Most of the above mentioned resources are available, at discounts, from Still Waters Revival Books.*

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