"IN AN AGE SO ENLIGHTENED, ENTHUSIASM SO EXTRAVAGANT": POPULAR RELIGION IN ENLIGHTENMENT SCOTLAND, 1712-1791

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S.D.G.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporaries and strangers. Scotland is a small and poor country, as marginal to Europe's cultural life as to its geography, in spite of the more grandiose claims of popular historian Arthur Herman[1] and the boasts one hears from inebriated speakers at Burns Night suppers. Scotland covers 30,414 square miles, slightly smaller than South Carolina, or not quite a third the size of Minnesota. Those Scots who have made substantial contributions to the main stream of European intellectual life have by and large been either expatriates, like Duns Scotus in Oxford and Paris, or else ambivalent or embarrassed about their provincial background, like Hume, who, according to the contemporary joke, on his deathbed in 1776 repented not of his sins but of his Scotticisms. Scotland would therefore seem an inauspicious setting for posing large questions about the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the nature of modernity. However, in puzzling over those two critical movements in the culture of early modern Europe, Reformation and Enlightenment, it does strike me that Scotland is a useful case for studying the dynamics of the two, having undergone a powerful and fairly successful variant of each. Scotland, practically alone in Europe, saw the Calvinist wing of the Reformation able to realize its ambitions to guide and superintend a large-scale society for an extended period of time. (By contrast with city-states like Geneva, minority status in France, the unique situation of the "public" but not established church in the Dutch Republic, and the abortive rule of the saints in interregnum England.) Two centuries later, Scots made what was, in proportion to their numbers, an impressive contribution to the European Enlightenment: Hume, Smith, founders of sociology like Ferguson and Millar, philosophers like Hutcheson and Reid whose influence would extend to the nineteenth century and far from their ivory towers. But these men, though most were theists and some even Christian clergymen, seemed to bear little visible trace of the Calvinist society which the Reformation had bequeathed. In studies of the "Scottish Enlightenment," Scottish Calvinism is prominent by its absence. It had been superseded, apparently: part of an earlier stage of development, as Ferguson might say.

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[1] *How the Scots Invented the Modern World: the true story of how Europe's poorest nation created our world and everything in it* (New York: Crown Business, 2001).

The germ of this study was planted when I learned through Leigh Schmidt's marvelous book *Holy Fairs*[2] about the Cambuslang revival of 1742, which brought 30,000 pilgrims to a small town outside of Glasgow to hear the fervently conversionist preaching of George Whitefield. At once it struck me as curious that such an event should take place in such proximity, in both time and place, to men like Hutcheson (Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow 1729-46) and Smith (Professor of Logic at Glasgow 1751-2 and of Moral Philosophy 1752-63). When I was able to read the 110 conversion narratives from this event compiled by its clerical producers, I found men and women who seemed neither aware of nor at all interested in the Scottish Enlightenment. They lived in a world of wonders, of divine messages and signs, one saturated with biblical imagery and the language of the Psalms. Their problems were not Enlightenment problems. Before their "conversions" they had been disturbed, not by questions of theodicy, the injustice of imputed sin and righteousness, the contradictions of the Trinity, but by the question of whether they themselves were among the elect for whom Christ had died.

From the Cambuslang "work," and the ghetto of pietistic literature it generated from later sympathizers,[3] I learned that undiluted Scottish Calvinism did not go away during the eighteenth century. The men and women of the Cambuslang narratives seemed (at least at first glance) to live during the Scottish Enlightenment but not really to take part in it—to live under it rather than in it. As such they were of little interest to most historians of eighteenth-century Scotland, who saw them as outdated relics of Scotland's past.[4] They were obsolete if not literally superseded: though their true home was in an earlier stage of development, they had somehow hung on into the eighteenth century, no doubt until the modern thought of Hutcheson and Smith could be diffused to the plebs. As I began learning more about the world that undergirded the Cambuslang narratives, however, I came to believe that the 1742 revival was not, in Christopher

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[2] *Holy Fairs: Scottish communions and American revivals in the early modern period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[3] Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival* (1971); Couper, *Scottish Revivals* (1918); MacFarlane, *The Revivals of the Eighteenth Century* (1847).

[4] The Popular party in the Kirk is almost absent from the accounts of the eighteenth century in, e.g., Lenman (1981) and Devine (1999), though Devine does find room to discuss the presbyterian dissenters, whom he characterizes as "of rigidly puritan inclination," 73.

Smout's words, "hysterical but ephemeral,"[5] a last gasp of the old culture, but a more visible manifestation of a much larger religious world, one which thrived right to the end of the eighteenth century and beyond. Moreover, this religious culture was not one that remained static, but had its own history, and one of some significance to the larger social history of Scotland, as I learned from Callum Brown.[6] For the "age of Enlightenment" was also the age in which the modern condition of ecclesiastical pluralism came about in Scotland. In 1700, despite the presence of small Episcopalian and ultra-Covenanter minorities, the Church of Scotland was simply the Church, the only legally recognized religious body and, in the Lowlands at least, truly comprehensive. By 1766, there were perhaps 100,000 adherents of dissenting presbyterian churches which had sprung up in the last thirty years. The new churches of the Scottish dissenters, I further learned—unlike English Dissent, which was moving towards unitarianism during the same period[7]—were staunchly Calvinist and evangelical in their beliefs. So the reactionary rubes of Cambuslang and their ilk seem to have played a crucial role in the origins of religious pluralism in Scotland, a condition we normally view as constitutive of modernity. This also appeared to call for some explanation.

The image of an ocean of Cambuslang faithful swooning at the preaching of Christ crucified, mere miles from Hutcheson's lecture-hall, led me initially to imagine two cultures in eighteenth-century Scotland carrying on independently of each other: Enlightenment above, old-time Calvinist piety below, and never the twain shall meet. But how could such a thing have happened? The ideas and culture of the Scottish Enlightenment must at some point have come to the attention of the men and women in McCulloch's manuscripts, even if they apparently had not by 1742. My project then became one of trying to find out how ordinary Scots experienced the age of enlightenment, revival, and secession. The records of the Church of Scotland, painstakingly kept by generations of session and presbytery clerks at both local and

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[5] *History of the Scottish People 1560-1830* (1970), 234. In fairness to Professor Smout, he was later among the few historians of eighteenth-century Scotland to examine these events seriously in his 1982 article "Born again at Cambuslang," *Past and Present* 97.

[6] *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (1996), esp. 17-31 and 76-84; "Religion and social change," 143-60 in Devine and Mitchison (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland*, vol. 1 (1988).

[7] C.G. Bolam, Jeremy Goring, H.L. Short, and Roger Thomas (eds.), *The English Presbyterians: from Elizabethan Puritanism to modern unitarianism* (1968); Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in eighteenth-century Britain* (1996).

regional levels, emerged as my key source. Whatever else one likes or doesn't like about Calvinists, they have lots of meetings and take lots of notes, and for this the historian can be thankful. I found that the records of dozens of parishes and five presbyteries in the greater Glasgow area, archived in the National Archives of Scotland and in Glasgow's Mitchell Library, were almost unused by scholars, at least for the questions I was asking. They allowed me to construct a picture of how one European society went from Reformation to Enlightenment, and of what happens when a locality goes from having one church to having several; and, finally, to suggest some thoughts about the place of religion in the modern world.

The long Reformation and the religion of the people. In doing so, this dissertation enters into scholarly conversations in at least two ways. The first conversation I wish to engage is one in Reformation studies, about to what extent this movement was able to move beyond its origins in learned culture and engage the lives and passions of ordinary Europeans. An older view (visibly descended from Protestant confessional history) had presented the Reformation as a popular movement, eagerly welcomed by men and women oppressed by the exploitative spiritual economy of medieval Catholicism.[8] The Reformation, of course, was not simply a rejection of the medieval Church but had a positive content of its own, based on the doctrines of salvation by faith alone and the authority of the Bible alone, and from the 1970s a number of scholars turned to archival source material to paint a different picture, one of stubborn popular resistance to the doctrines and discipline of the new faith.[9] The development of the "confessionalization model" by Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard allowed historians to see that the ambitious projects of social-religious management undertaken

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[8] A *locus classicus* for England is A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964); for a recent study along similar lines, see Steven Ozment, *Protestants: the birth of a revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

[9] Gerald Strauss, "Success and failure in the German Reformation," *Past and Present* 67 (1975): 30-63; idem., *Luther's House of Learning: indoctrination of the young in the German Reformation* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); and see his response to his critics, "The Reformation and its public in an age of orthodoxy," in R. Po-chia Hsia (ed.), *The German People and the Reformation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 194-214. For the parallel debate over England's Reformation, see Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), developed in *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); J.J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984); Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: popular religion and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

by both Protestant and Catholic churches in the early modern period bore a striking similarity to each other.[10] Reformation and Counter-Reformation were in fact parallel—catechizing, disciplining, attacking popular "superstitions"—with their mutual enemy, according to a distinct but converging line of scholarship, a popular belief only superficially Christian, variously seen as syncretistic or even fundamentally pagan.[11] In spite of challenges from historians like Eamon Duffy,[12] this vision of the post-Reformation period as that of the "christianization" of Europe remains powerful, even dominant, in the field. Much scholarship continues to assume an adversarial relationship between "popular religion" and orthodox Protestantism.[13] In particular, that especially hot form of Protestantism which its critics called "puritanism," and which achieved the full victory in Scotland which was denied it in England,[14] is widely assumed to be necessarily unpopular, due both to its inherent unloveliness and the puritan's psychological need to contrast himself with an ungodly other.[15] In their influential study

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[10] E.g., see Schilling, "Confessionalization in the Empire: religious and societal change in Germany between 1555 and 1620," in *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Modern Society: essays in German and Dutch history* (Leiden, 1992), pp. 205-45; Reinhard, "Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the early modern state: a reassessment," *Catholic Historical Review* 75:3 (1989): 383-404. German scholarship on "confessionalization" is presented to English-language readers by R. Po-chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: central Europe 1550-1750* (London: Routledge, 1989).

[11] Jean Delumeau, *Le Catholicisme Entre Luther et Voltaire*; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: studies in popular belief in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971); Robert Muchembled, *Culture populaire et culture des elites dans la France moderne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978); for a similar study of a medieval incident, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Le saint lévrier: Guinefort, guérisseur des enfants depuis XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979).

[12] His magisterial study *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) argues that pre-Reformation faith in England was both more Christian and more spiritually satisfying to ordinary parishioners than had been allowed.

[13] See e.g. chapter 3 of Barry Reay's *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* (London: Longman, 1998), which recognizes a range of views but identifies the majority with "popular Pelagianism," 100.

[14] David Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 402-12; John Coffey, "The problem of 'Scottish puritanism,' 1590-1638," 66-90, *Enforcing Reformation in Ireland and Scotland, 1550-1700*, ed. Elizabethanne Boran and Crawford Gibben (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), and Todd, "The problem of Scotland's puritans," 174-85 in John Coffey and Paul Lim (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[15] See Christopher Durston, "Puritan rule and the failure of cultural revolution, 1645-1660," 210-33, in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, ed. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996). On the the need of the godly to define themselves against the ungodly, see Peter Lake's important essay "'A charitable Christian hatred': the godly and their enemies in the 1630s," 145-83 in Durston and Eales.

of an Essex parish Keith Wrightson and David Levine identified "puritanism" with village elites keen to impose social discipline on their disorderly poorer neighbors.[16]

The pessimism adopted by Gerald Strauss (for example) about the failure of the Reformation as a popular movement is probably connected to the shorter timeframe he adopts. His important and valuable study, which amply documents Lutheran pastors' dismay with their parishioners' ignorance and recalcitrance, ends in the 1590s. A provocatively titled 1998 collection of essays on English religious history, *England's Long Reformation, 1500-1800*,[17] raises the question of whether Strauss would have seen the same pattern continuing if he had continued his study into the seventeenth or even eighteenth century. A remarkable 1987 essay by Marie-Elisabeth Ducreux reveals a subculture of fervent, surprisingly literate Protestantism among eighteenth-century Bohemians. These zealous pietists, who were retaining a churchless evangelicalism based on forbidden books under the very nose of the Habsburgs, were "peasants and modest artisans."[18] In the study of English Protestantism, the revisionist scholarship of Haigh and Scarisbrick, who persuasively showed that Protestant doctrine was not welcomed at the popular level in the first generation,[19] is now receiving important qualifications from I.M. Green and Christopher Marsh, who depict a more successful project of protestantization over the long term,[20] while Margaret Spufford and Tessa Watt have argued convincingly that even the hotter forms of Protestantism could find a humble

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[16] *Poverty and Piety in an English village: Terling, 1525-1700* (London: 1979); cf. Margaret Spufford, "Puritanism and social control?", in A.J. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (eds.), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: 1985), 41-57.

[17] Ed. Nicholas Tyacke (London: UCL Press, 1998), based on the 1996 Neale Colloquium in British History. See esp. Tyacke's Introduction, 1-25, and Jeremy Gregory's "The making of a Protestant nation: 'success' and 'failure' in England's long Reformation," 307-24.

[18] "Reading unto death: books and readers in eighteenth-century Bohemia," 191-221 in *The Culture of Print: power and uses of print in early modern Europe*, ed. Roger Chartier (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[19] Though Dickens has continued to fight a rearguard action for Tudor Protestantism as a popular movement: see esp. his essay "The early expansion of Protestantism in England," 157-74, *Reformation to Revolution: politics and religion in early modern England*, ed. Margo Todd (London: Routledge, 1995).

[20] Green, *The Christian's ABC: catechisms and catechizing in England, c. 1530-1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); idem., *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England: holding their peace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); idem, " 'Common prayer' in England 1560-1640: the view from the pew," *Past and Present* 171 (2001): 66-94; "Order and place in England, 1580-1640: the view from the pew," *Journal of British Studies* 44:1 (2005): 3-26.

constituency.[21] In Scotland, despite the seemingly interminable family quarrels of seventeenth-century Protestants, the Reformation appears by the middle decades of the century to have created a Protestant culture in which strong attachment to Reformed doctrine and piety was widespread, a culture most fully portrayed by Margo Todd and sensitively explored by Leigh Schmidt.[22] Christina Larner, persuaded by Delumeau's thesis of christianization, sees this process as largely successful in Scotland, though accompanied by some distinctly sinister repercussions.[23]

But if both Reformation and Counter-Reformation could be successful in the longer term, as a number of studies have suggested, the impression may be left that these were still something done *to* the people of Europe, in which they are the passive object of elite "acculturation."[24] Marc Forster's important 2001 study *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque* presents a different model for studying these changes, one in which "negotiation," "compromise," and "convergence" better describe the reality of post-Reformation religious change.[25] My own work is a contribution to the study of Protestantism and popular culture, especially over the longer term, adapting the notion of a "long reformation"[26] and Willem Frijhoff's insistence on seeing ordinary people as agents in their own reformation, "appropriating" the ideas and rhetoric of Protestantism

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[21] Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English villagers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974); idem., *The World of Rural Dissenters: 1520-1725* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); idem., *Figures in the Landscape: rural society in England, 1500-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[22] Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Schmidt, *Holy Fairs* (1989).

[23] See her essay "Pre-industrial Europe: the age of faith," 113-26 in *Witchcraft and Religion: the politics of popular belief* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984). "The successful instruction of the peasantry" in this period made Christianity, in Larner's view, "the world's first political ideology," by which she means "a total world view which serves to mobilize political action or to legitimize governments," and of which seventeenth-century Scotland's witches, her chief subjects, were a casualty. Unfortunately Larner's early death prevented her from developing her thoughts on these issues more fully.

[24] The phrase is Muchembled's, from his *Culture populaire et culture des elites* (1979).

[25] *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: religious identity in southwest Germany, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); cf. David Gentilcore on southern Italy, *From Bishop to Witch: the system of the sacred in early modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester: , 1992).

[26] In addition to the essays in Tyacke's collection, cited in n18, see W.J. Jacob's fine study *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), which argues that the early eighteenth century in the Church of England represented the "culmination" and "fulfillment of the ideal of" the English Reformation (227).

rather than merely enduring acculturation by official religion.[27] The Scottish Reformation, I would contend, ends neither in 1638 with the National Covenant nor in 1690 with the final defeat of episcopacy, but continues into the eighteenth century, whose dramatic and little-studied ecclesiastical disputes represent a product of Reformation teachings as appropriated by the common people of Scotland. This narrative is a reminder that, in Natalie Davis's fine words of some years ago, "Religious cultures are not merely inherited or imposed; they are also made and remade by the people who live them."[28]

For another eighteenth century. In addition, within the field of eighteenth-century studies, part of this project is an attempt to bring the history of religion, especially the lived religion of ordinary Europeans, out of a ghetto of "church history" and into the main stream of scholarship. While there exist a number of important studies of eighteenth-century religion in the mode of intellectual history,[29] few scholarly works look at how European Christians experienced religion in their daily lives during this century.[30] Especially since this is the period in which, we are told, secularization has its

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[27] Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief* (2002), 284-8. For the concept of appropriation see also Roger Chartier, "Culture as appropriation: popular cultural uses in early modern France," 229-53 in Steven Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century* (Berlin: Mouton, 1984). cf. Tim Harris's remarks on a related subject in the fine introduction to his *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500-1850* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995): "There has been a tendency to see what has been labeled as popular culture as the passive victim of the historical process, undermined and impoverished by various attempts at reform or suppression. . . .Rather than seeing culture as a structure, we should see it as a process, constantly adapting itself to new developments and new circumstances. Some older customs and pastimes might have disappeared because they were willingly abandoned by the lower orders in a changing world," 23.

[28] Davis, "From 'popular religion' to religious cultures," 321-36, in *Reformation Europe: a guide to research*, ed. Steven Ozment (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1982).

[29] Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: a study of the language of religion and ethics in England, 1660-1780*, 2 volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 and 2000); B.W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: theological debate from Locke to Burke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Andrew Starkie's very valuable *The Church of England and the Bangorian Controversy, 1716-1721* (Woodbridge: the Boydell Press, 2007); David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from Paris to Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[30] The great exception here is the work of John McManners. In addition to his encyclopedic *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), see his very fine study *Death and the Enlightenment: changing attitudes to death among Christians and unbelievers in eighteenth-century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981). Two important works for England should also be mentioned: W.M. Jacob's *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century* (1996), and Donald Spaeth's *The Church in an Age of Danger: parsons and parishioners, 1660-1740* (2000). These, however, like Marc Forster's fine study of southwest German Catholicism, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque* (2001), end in the first half of the century and show us popular piety "beneath" the Enlightenment, not engaged with it.

roots, studies of how this did (or did not) in fact happen at the local level would be welcome, and the shining exceptions (especially for France, where the question is backlit by the Revolution and also influenced by the "religious sociology" of Gabriel Le Bras) do something like this.[31] In the main, however, despite some important recent work on British Methodism,[32] there is a striking dearth for the eighteenth century of the detailed studies of religious culture which are so rich and so informative in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century studies. For Scotland in particular, there is no successor to the post-Reformation studies of Parker, Bardgett, and Sanderson,[33] and Margo Todd's outstanding *Culture of Protestantism* ends at 1640. The abundant and meticulous notes kept by the Church of Scotland at both the local and regional levels, of which Reformation historians like Todd, Parker, and Michael Graham have made such good use,[34] continue up to the present, but have been almost entirely unexplored for the eighteenth century.[35] Scholarship on eighteenth-century Scottish religion tends to fall into one of three categories: explicitly pietistic works, often lacking in scholarly rigor;[36] works which deal

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[31] The pioneer was Michel Vovelle, whose *Piété Baroque et Dechristianisation en Provence au XVIIIe Siècle: les attitudes devant la mort d'après les clauses des testaments* (Paris: Plon., 1973) provides a crucial foundation, though further research is required to examine regional and national variation from the move away from baroque Catholic piety Vovelle finds in Provençal wills. More recently, Timothy Tackett's work is also exemplary: his *Priest and Parish in Eighteenth-Century France: a social and political study of the curés in a diocese of Dauphiné, 1750-1791* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977) is a collective biography of the parish pastors of Gap in the decades leading up to the Revolution, while his *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France: the ecclesiastical oath of 1791* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) is explicitly framed around the revolutionary controversy of France's "Constitutional clergy," seeking to explore which areas and clergymen adhered to the new Constitutional church and which remained "refractory" (papalist) Catholics.

[32] David Hempton, *The Religion of the People: Methodism and popular religion c. 1750-1900* (London: Routledge,1996); idem., *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: gender and emotion in early Methodism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[33] Geoffrey Parker, "The 'kirk by law established' and the origins of 'the taming of Scotland: St. Andrews 1559-1600," in Leneman (ed.), *Perspectives on Scottish Social History: essays in honour of Rosalind Mitchison* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), pp. 1-19; Frank Bardgett, *Scotland Reformed: the Reformation in Angus and the Mearns* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989); Margaret Sanderson, *Ayrshire and the Reformation: people and change, 1490-1600* (East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 1997).

[34] Graham, *The Uses of Reform: "godly discipline" and popular behavior in Scotland and beyond, 1560-1610* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1996).

[35] Mitchison and Leneman's important study, one of the few to make extensive use of church archives for this period, is limited to questions of sexuality, marriage, and illegitimacy, and does not touch on religious life *per se* or relations between clergy and laity: Rosalind Mitchison and Leah Leneman, *Sexuality and Social Control: Scotland 1660-1780* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

[36] Duncan MacFarlan, *The Revivals of the Eighteenth Century, especially at Cambuslang* (Wheaton, IL: Richard John Owens, 1980 [originally 1847]); Couper, *Scottish Revivals* (1918); Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival* (1971).

almost entirely in high intellectual history with a narrow focus on clerical leaders;[37] and some strong recent studies by American historians principally interested in the Scottish background of American revivalism, which, while illuminating, tend to lose interest in the Scottish context as soon as they can move on to the American main event.[38] Callum Brown, whose labors in the historical sociology of religion in Scotland commence with the eighteenth century, provides the essential groundwork for study of religion in Scotland in the modern period, but his scholarship has attracted surprisingly little attention from historians of the Scottish Enlightenment and of Scotland's eighteenth century generally.[39]

At the same time, historians focusing on Scotland's eighteenth century seem as eager as Hume and Hutcheson themselves to escape from the fanaticism of the seventeenth-century "puritan nation." Even one of the few studies to explicitly examine the relationship between the Scottish Enlightenment and Scotland's Calvinist culture, Roger Emerson's 1992 essay "Calvinism and the Scottish Enlightenment," treats Calvinism as a matter of legacy or genealogy rather than a live alternative for eighteenth-century Scots.[40] In most scholarship, the transition from Covenanting enthusiasm to politeness and Enlightenment seems almost effortless, and opposition to the brave new cultural world, if acknowledged at all, is quickly dismissed. Richard Sher's important 1985 monograph on the "Moderate party" of clergy around William Robertson identifies their divinity with "a distrust of religious enthusiasm and superstition,"[41] terms he never parses or defines; Sher analyzes the political maneuverings of the rival "Popular party" in the church courts but not their theological critique of the Enlightenment clerics.

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[37] Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (1985); John McIntosh, *Church and Theology in Enlightenment Scotland* (1998); Anne Skoczylas, *Mr. Simson's Knotty Case* (2001).
[38] Marilyn Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity* (1988); Schmidt, *Holy Fairs* (1989); Michael Crawford, *Seasons of Grace* (1991).
[39] Brown, *Religion and Society* (1997), a revision of 1987's *Social History of Religion in Scotland*. See also Brown's 1990 essay "Protest in the pews: interpreting Presbyterianism and society in fracture during the Scottish economic revolution," in *Conflict and Stability in Scottish Society, 1700-1850*, ed. T.M. Devine, 83-101.
[40] In Schwend, Hagemann, and Völkel (eds.), *Literatur im Kontext—Literature in Context* (1992), pp. 19-27. The essay consists mostly of finding antecedents for avant-garde eighteenth-century thought in the Reformed tradition, e.g., connecting Calvin's *sensus divinitatis* to the Enlightenment tendency to look inward to find truth about humanity and God. The fact that enlightened Scots made use of intellectual tools from the Reformed heritage should not be surprising, but does not justify Emerson's claim here and elsewhere (which his student Skoczylas repeats with regard to John Simson) that Scottish Enlightenment thought "remained Calvinist."
[41] Sher, *Church and University*, 8.

(Moderates have ideas, we infer; Popular men have superstitions.) The same author's 2006 study *The Enlightenment and the Book*, an impressive and informative work, similarly occludes the culture of living Scottish Calvinism. Sher informs us in Chapter 1 that "A book *per se* is not necessarily enlightened; indeed, eighteenth-century Scotland generated large numbers of pious works that did not embrace, and sometimes explicitly ridiculed or rejected, enlightened values." John Witherspoon's 1753 satire of the Moderate clerics, *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, is cited as "a model of this kind of anti-Enlightenment thinking."[42] In his 2008 *Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment*, Roger Emerson's identification with the Whig political elites is so complete that he adopts wholesale their terminology for their ecclesiastical opponents.[43] In fact, in places it is difficult to tell whether Emerson is speaking in his own voice or articulating the views of his Moderate and secular subjects. (E.g., when he contrasts "right-thinking" with "evangelical-leaning," and on p. 109 where we learn that "all sensible moderate men and clerics had opposed" the 1742 Cambuslang revival "and regarded [it] as a frightful manifestation of enthusiasm.") Anne Skoczylas, who has made a major contribution to the study of religious Enlightenment in Scotland with her monograph on John Simson's career and trials, *Mr. Simson's Knotty Case*, follows Sher and Emerson in this regard. Simson's critics are driven by "zealotry," "enthusiasm," and "fanaticism," terms which Skoczylas uses quite uncritically.[44] It is also noteworthy that, in Skoczylas's narrative, based on official papers of church courts and Glasgow University, these dark forces are passing away by the time of Simson's death in 1740.[45] The continuing existence and even flourishing of popular Calvinism is invisible to institutional, top-down studies like those of Sher, Emerson and Skoczylas.

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[42] *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish authors and their publishers in eighteenth-century Britain, Ireland, and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 81.

[43] Traditional Calvinism of any kind is indexed in *Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment* under "High-flyers" (p. 636), a pejorative originally used by English Whigs to describe high-church Anglican Tories and borrowed by Scottish elites to identify opponents of the government's control of the Kirk. This facile equation of high-church Anglicans with evangelical Calvinists tells us more about those who used the term than it does about the so-called "high flyers" themselves, but is nowhere problematized by Emerson. See esp. n5 on p. 74, a digest of stereotypes about the Popular party held by the Moderates and their political sponsors, without quoting or citing any sources. The remark that "high flyers" "did not generally dwell on the love of God" suggests that Emerson has not actually read many sermons of eighteenth-century Scottish evangelicals, and one notes the absence of Erskine, Witherspoon, Willison, John McLaurin, Boston, Gillespie, McCulloch, and Robe from the bibliography.

[44] *Mr. Simson's Knotty Case*, 341-3, 353-4, inter alia.

[45] Ibid., 345-6.

But as Sher hints in his history of enlightened publishing, the eighteenth century in Scotland was a century of piety (or, if you will, "enthusiasm") as much as a century of Enlightenment. Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, an "enthusiastic" devotional manual dwelling on creation, fall, redemption, and sanctification, was reprinted eighteen times in Edinburgh and seventeen times in Glasgow between its original 1720 publication and the end of the century. The seventeenth-century English puritan John Bunyan, it would appear, outsold the Scottish literati in Scotland during the Scottish Enlightenment. The eighteenth century saw eighteen Scottish editions of Bunyan's *Holy War* published, and thirty-three editions of *Pilgrim's Progress*, with six Scottish reprintings of his autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.[46] Ralph Erskine, the arch-traditionalist founder of the Secession church whom Sher groups among "rigid Calvinists" opposed to his clerical Enlightenment, was also the author of *Gospel Sonnets*, a devotional work which went through twenty-seven Scottish editions before the century's end, in addition to eight American editions and eight reprintings in London.[47] By contrast, the century saw eight editions of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, all published in London by Scottish expatriate William Strahan, though accessible to Scottish readership through booksellers in Edinburgh and elsewhere.

What if these pious eighteenth-century readers were not ghettoized in a subdiscipline of "religious history," but integrated into the study of the main stream of eighteenth-century Scottish life?[48] Such a reframing of Scotland's eighteenth century

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[46] English Short Title Catalog. Nor was Bunyan's popularity with Scottish readers a phenomenon of early in the century which waned when Enlightenment got going properly. Nineteen works by him were printed in Glasgow in the last quarter of the century.

[47] ESTC. Again, it does not appear the popularity of Erskine's work declined gradually as the century progressed; sixteen of the Scottish editions were published in the last quarter of the century, and included some printings for provincial markets in Kilmarnock, Falkirk, and Berwick as well as the big publishing centers of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

[48] One of very few scholars who has begun to do this is Ned Landsman; see his essay "Presbyterians and provincial society: the evangelical enlightenment in the west of Scotland 1740-1775," 214-24 in *Sociability and Society* , ed. Dwyer and Sher (1993), and an essay of 1995, "Liberty, piety, and patronage: the social context of contested clerical calls in eighteenth-century Glasgow," 214-24 in *The Glasgow Enlightenment,* ed. Hook and Sher. Here, almost alone among historians of Enlightenment Scotland, Landsman is able to resist Moderate descriptions of their opponents to recognize something other than mere obscurantism and backwardness in Scotland's religious traditionalists: "In the middle years of the century, Glasgow was both the most rapidly developing commercial city in Scotland and the most evangelical, and defenders of piety and orthodoxy there derived from some of its most innovative groups, including merchants involved in the American trade and some powerful artisans," 215.

would require an adjustment comparable to that which has occurred in recent decades in French history through the rediscovery of the contemporary importance of Jansenism.[49] Monique Cottret's remarks about the place of Jansenists and *lumières* in France are applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to "enthusiasts" and literati in Scotland:

> C'est toute notre vision du XVIIIe siècle qui semble à revisiter. Un marxisme schématique, plus ou moins implicite, en a obscurer des pars entiers, pour mieux en célébrer d'autres. Le providentialisme hégélien retourné nous montrait des Lumières sans cesse plus fortes, plus vives, plus convaincantes qui illuminaient le ciel des idées des hommes au XVIIIe siècle. . . .Dans cette perspective, *quid* des jansénistes? Relégués au sein de l'obscurantisme.[50]
>
> It's our entire vision of the eighteenth century which it seems we must revisit. A schematic Marxism, more or less implicit, has obscured in it an entire part, the better to celebrate others. A renewed Hegelian providentialism has shown us—constantly stronger, more vivid, more convincing—the Enlightenment, which illuminates the height of human ideas in the eighteenth century. . . .In this perspective, what are the Jansenists? Relegated to the bosom of obscurantism.

Study of Scotland's eighteenth century has similarly obscured the religious culture of many, perhaps most Scots, a culture which continued to flourish to the end of the century and beyond, and which needs to be integrated into any understanding of the period.

One reason why these men and women have not been studied is the assumption of most scholars, who seem to have received uncritically the views of their contemporary adversaries, that they represent simply a reservoir or recrudescence of Covenanting fanaticism, and in no sense participate in the new world of thought. The intellectual and cultural action of the century, surely, is the work of the Moderate literati and their more secular friends, against which the garish piety and sterile orthodoxy of the "rigid Calvinists" can only react. Popular Christianity in eighteenth-century Scotland, however, had its own dynamic, and changed in significant ways over the course of the century, participating in the cultural currents of the period even as it rejected Sher's clerical

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[49] Dale Van Kley's scholarship has been critical in rehabilitating Jansenism as a movement of continuing vitality which had a profound effect on eighteenth-century French political and cultural life: *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits from France: 1757-1765* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); *The Damiens Affair and the Unraveling of the Old Regime, 1750-1770* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: from Calvin to the civil constitution, 1560-1791* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). cf. Catherine Maire, *De la Cause de Dieu à la Cause de la Nation: le jansénisme au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).

[50] Cottret, *Jansénismes et Lumières: pour un autre XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998), 303.

Enlightenment as sub-Christian. Closer attention to the interaction of "Moderates" and traditionalists in the Church of Scotland during the eighteenth century, moreover, reveals something more complicated than a facile opposition between Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment. In arguing for a less adversarial relationship between Enlightenment and "hot" religion in the eighteenth century, this study contributes to a recent reassessment of the overlap between Enlightenment and revivalism.[51] Moderate and secular opponents of Scottish "enthusiasm," meanwhile, whom so many observers have cited as the representatives of an enlightened age, employed in their dealings with unruly popular piety an authoritarianism and intolerance that would seem inappropriate to a movement Sher identifies with "humanity. . . sympathy. . .adherence to basic liberties of worship, speech, and written communication."[52] This dissertation aims neither to recount Scotland's "high Enlightenment," which is amply treated elsewhere, nor to examine Scottish Covenanters and evangelicals as a Counter-Enlightenment, but to look at the lived religion of Church of Scotland laity during the eighteenth century in a particular region, the rural hinterland of Glasgow, which I have referred to for convenience as the Strathclyde. These men and women, though disdained by canonical Enlightenment figures and by a number of modern scholars as "enemies of the Enlightenment," appropriated tools and discourses of the Enlightenment (rather as their forebears had appropriated the message of Reformed Christianity), even as most declined to accept the whole package, or what clerical literati like William Robertson and James Wodrow regarded as the most important aspects of Enlightenment. To tell their story is to shed light on another eighteenth century, and perhaps also to illuminate a modern world still shared, two centuries later, by both the devout and the enlightened.

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[51] See Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment*; Frederick Dreyer, *The Genesis of Methodism* (1999), esp. chapter 4; Catherine Brekus, "Sarah Osborn's enlightenment: reimagining eighteenth-century intellectual history," 108-32 in *The Religious History of American Women* (2007); Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the rise of Methodism* (1989); David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (1989), 1-50.

[52] *Enlightenment and the Book*, 16.

CHAPTER 1. FOLK CALVINISM IN THE WEST OF SCOTLAND

Scholarship on religion in early modern Europe has for several decades past been framed in terms of an opposition between "popular religion" and "official religion." This narrative has depicted the people of Western Europe at the time of the Reformation as only superficially christianized, shaped by a popular belief which diverged widely from clerically-defined orthodoxy and would be condemned by both Catholic and Protestant reformers as "superstition." In this "two-tiered" understanding of early modern belief, the religious history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is thus the history of the warfare of "official religion" against "popular religion," in the use of discipline by clerical and lay elites to curb unruly popular practices, and in the effort, in both Catholic and Protestant lands, to re-educate an essentially pagan population through catechesis. The "two-cultures model" of early modern religion is being increasingly challenged, however. Eamon Duffy in his controversial magnum opus *The Stripping of the Altars* (1992) refused to use the terminology of popular and elite religion to describe English religious practice c. 1500, insisting that "no substantial gulf existed between the religion of the clergy and the educated elite on the one hand and that of the people at large on the other."[1] Willem Frijhoff among others has argued for a concept of "folk belief" as an alternative to the older binary of official and popular religion,[2] since "the common folk and their betters often shared the same religion, even if each locality preserved usages frowned on by church authorities."[3] In framing religious change in the generations after the Reformation, Frijhoff has proposed the term "appropriation" to express the idea that the people of Western Europe were not merely the passive objects of elite acculturation (or, in some versions, recalcitrant resisters[4]) but actively participated in shaping their

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[1] Duffy, 2.
[2] In Tracy and Ragnow (eds.), *Religion and the Early Modern State*, 93-4.
[3] Stanford Lehmberg and James Tracy, Introduction, in Tracy and Ragnow (eds.), 3. cf. William Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment* (1989).
[4] Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning* (1978), and, in a rather different form, Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

religious experience.[5] Appropriation, Frijhoff writes, "means more than reception, and is different in nature. It is the process of giving meaning to a message that individuals or groups receive from others…allowing them to fill in their own meaning."[6]

By the middle of the seventeenth century a culture of folk Calvinism had taken shape in Scotland. This religious culture is not best characterized in terms of "official religion" and "popular religion." Rather, it combined popular appropriation of core Reformed teachings (especially justification by faith) with elements not usually associated with Calvinist scholasticism: an all-pervasive supernaturalism in which "prophets" of the Reformed Kirk exercised what might in other hands be described as magic; a spontaneity in prayer and preaching that was believed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost; and a scorching emotionalism in which the Christian's cultivation of mystical intimacy with Christ became as important as theological orthodoxy. Although in Scotland, as in England, it is difficult to quantify the godly and the profane,[7] a wide range of anecdotal evidence suggests that the leading preachers of the Strathclyde enjoyed popular adulation at mid-century. Even as the commons of England rejected interregnum puritanism in 1660 to welcome back king, maypole, and prayer book, simultaneous efforts to restore episcopacy in Scotland were met by ferocious and sustained resistance in the villages, especially in the west—a phenomenon described by friend and foe alike. The remarkable legends compiled by Robert Wodrow, James Kirkton, and Robert Fleming in the decades around 1700, allow us a window into the folk belief of western Scotland, in which the message of salvation by grace was fused to a kind of charismatic or magical Calvinism.[8] In the bitter ecclesio-political turmoil of Restoration Scotland, the laity of the west demonstrated fierce loyalty to the clerical heroes of this folk Calvinism, who were seen as both preachers of the Word and channels of divine power. Far from being passive objects of acculturation, these women and men in doing so

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[5] See esp. Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief* (2002), 284-8. cf. Roger Chartier, "Culture as appropriation," in Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture* (1984).
[6] Frijhoff, 286.
[7] cf. Margaret Spufford, "Can we count the 'godly' and the 'conformable' in the seventeenth century?". *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985).
[8] Fleming, *The Fulfilling of the Scriptures* (Rotterdam: 1669); Robert Wodrow, *Analecta: or, Materials for a history of remarkable providences* (Edinburgh: 1843); W.K. Tweedie (ed.), *Select Biographies: edited for the Wodrow Society, chiefly from manuscripts in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates* (Edinburgh: 1845-7).

rejected Charles II and his bishops and "curates," honing their ability to distinguish true from false shepherds.

The christianization of the Scottish peasantry. The religious experience of post-Reformation Scotland has most often been framed in terms congruent with the acculturation thesis.[9] The pre-Reformation parish clergy was in large part poorly educated and non-resident; Christina Larner articulates a widely-shared view that the generations after the Scottish Reformation were characterized by a profoundly novel "systematic exposure of the laity to Christian instruction and moral exhortation through vernacular preaching."[10] The instruction of the population through catechesis and the creation of a Christian community through godly discipline were key goals of Scotland's Reformed clergy. At the parish level the crucial agency of discipline was the kirk session, a council made up of the minister and lay elders. The sessions kept a watchful eye on parishioners, and their campaigns against fornication, Sabbath-breaking, and traditional revelries like May Day and Christmas seem a textbook example of what Peter Burke has called "the reform of popular culture."[11] The other great change in Scottish religious life was the presence in the parishes of a resident, preaching clergy. Such an accomplishment could not be achieved overnight; many "landward" (or rural) parishes had "readers" rather than educated and ordained clergymen in the decades immediately following the legal establishment of the Reformed faith in 1560. But James Kirk suggests that dramatic progress had been made before 1600, even in the smallest rural parishes.[12] In some regions progress came even faster: in Ayrshire, to the south of Glasgow, Margaret Sanderson estimates that 38 of 44 parishes had a resident minister by 1570; she characterizes Ayrshire's Reformed clergy as "new men, university-trained and often from outside the parish."[13] The disciplinary regime of the sessions and frequent preaching of the Word by educated, resident ministers appear part of a successful project

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[9] Bruce Lenman, "The limits of godly discipline in the early modern period," in Von Greyerz (ed.) *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe* (1974);Geoffrey Parker, "The 'kirk by law established' and the origins of 'the taming of Scotland,'" in Leneman (ed.), *Perspectives in Scottish Social History* (1988); Michael Graham, "Social discipline in Scotland, 1560-1610," in Mentzer (ed.), *Sin and the Calvinists* (1994), and *The Uses of Reform* (1996).
[10] Larner, *Enemies of God*, 157.
[11] *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978).
[12] See his "Recruitment to the ministry at the Reformation," pp. 96-153 in *Patterns of Reform* (1989).
[13] Sanderson, 110.

of christianization. By mid-century Scotland seemed to be not merely a Protestant but "a puritan nation";[14] the National Covenant of 1638 and the Solemn League of Covenant of 1643, which dedicated the subscribers to God and to resisting "popish" practices like bishops and liturgy, appear to have aroused widespread popular support and were "sworn" by many thousands across the land, from devout aristocrats like the Earl of Montrose (who signed in his own blood) to peasants who, unable to sign their names, affirmed the Covenants with their "mark."[15]

On a first reading, the hagiographies of the great ministers of western Scotland, which circulated widely in the later seventeenth century, seem to confirm a narrative of clerical initiative in transforming the "ignorant" and "superstitious" people of the west. The lives of these mighty men of God, as chronicled by Fleming and Wodrow, begin in terms that would be familiar to their English puritan brethren, with an opposition between "the godly" and "the multitude." Yet they frequently culminate in a strikingly different way. Whereas English puritans like Richard Baxter continued to see themselves and the true saints as a righteous remnant in the midst of a profane multitude, the apostles to the west of Scotland are described as leaving at their death or imprisonment a godly multitude almost without English equivalent. A number of the biographies of this generation of ministers speak of them as "converting" their parishes from ignorance or indifference to unusual zeal. David Dickson's ministry at Irvine, according to Robert Wodrow, was "singularly countenanced by God. Multitudes were convinced and converted."[16] When William Guthrie arrived as minister of Fenwick in Ayrshire, the "rudeness and gross ignorance" of most of the parishioners had led to "too general neglect of God and religion." But his fervent preaching and patient catechizing soon turned Fenwick into a virtual Jerusalem. Before long, his parishioners "were almost all persuaded to attend the public ordinances, to set up and make the stated worship of God

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[14] Todd, 402.

[15] On the Covenanting era in Scotland, see David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-1644: the triumph of the Covenanters* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973); Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Scotland, 1644-1651* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977); Walter Makey, *The Church of the Covenants, 1637-1651: revolution and social change in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979); John Morrill (ed.), *The Scottish National Covenant in its British Context, 1638-51* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990); Allan MacInnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement, 1625-1641* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1991).

[16] Tweedie, 2:7.

in their families; and scarce was there a house in the whole parish that did not bring forth some fruits of his ministry, and afford some real converts to religious life."[17] Interestingly, unlike the more censorious of the English godly, Guthrie also participated with his parishioners in common recreations like fishing and fowling. Guthrie's hagiographer William Dunlop, though he shows some embarrassment over this, hints that it may have been crucial to the minister's success: for "he made them the occasion of familiarizing his people to him, and introducing himself to his affections; and, in the disguise of a sportsman, he gained some to a religious life, whom he could have little influence upon a minister's gown."[18] By century's end James Kirkton could contrast France and Poland, where very few had believed the gospel, and England, Germany, and the Low Countries, where "the magistrate and greater part of the people" were Protestants, with Scotland, where "the whole nation was converted by lump."[19]

Evidence from mid-century suggests the Reformed Kirk's educational and catechetical program had also achieved remarkable success. Despite his distaste for the Covenanting clergy, the episcopalian Gilbert Burnet, who lived in Strathclyde during the Restoration, concedes that "They had brought the people to such a degree of knowledge, that cottagers and servants would have prayed extempore. I have often overheard them at it: and though there was a large mixture of odd stuff, yet I have been astonished to hear how copious and ready they were in it." In the Sunday evening religious meetings at the minister's house, which Burnet depicts as common and well-attended in this region, the laity were eager and active participants: "every one, women as well as men, were desired to speak their sense and their experience: and by these means they had a comprehension of matters of religion, greater than I have seen among people of that sort any where."[20] Because of their "great show of zeal," and because they "lived in great familiarity" with the common people, Burnet concludes, "It can hardly be imagined to what a degree [the Covenanting ministers] were loved and revered by them."[21]

Between Knox's triumph in 1560 and the swearing of the Covenants in 1638-43 Scotland underwent a dramatic program of protestantization, that included widespread

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[17] Ibid., 2:36.
[18] Ibid., 2:39.
[19] *Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland*, 21.
[20] Burnet, 102.
[21] Ibid., 102-3.

preaching of salvation by faith, parish-level discipline by the elders of the sessions, catechesis and indoctrination of adults and children, and reform of popular pastimes.[22] The Reformed preachers sent to the villages by the Kirk's divinity schools reshaped Scottish popular culture in a profound way. But other sources indicate the preachers themselves were also reshaped. The lived religion of the Scottish west—a religious culture in which clergy and parishioners shared—diverged in some important ways from the scholastic Calvinism of divinity textbooks.

The vernacularization of the Reformed clergy. Clerical biographies' language of a successful campaign to "convert" the people may suggest the triumph of a Calvinist program of acculturation. But a closer reading of the devotional literature of seventeenth-century Scotland suggests a somewhat different story. The extraordinary set of Reformed folktales collected by Robert Wodrow and other contemporaries, which Margo Todd has called "a Golden Legend for the Reformed Kirk,"[23] raise the question of who converted whom in the west of Scotland. The great ministers still function here as preachers and teachers, though the world of the *Analecta* is not doctrinally precise: they preach "Christ," "the cross," or "godliness," rather than details of Reformed theology. The basic Reformation message of Christ's death for sinners and the need to trust in him for salvation remains central. However, the godly ministers here appear not primarily as proclaimers of doctrine but as wonder-workers, led by the Holy Spirit in inspired prayer, preaching, and prophecy.

Observers from Weber to Keith Thomas have identified Protestantism and especially Calvinism with "disenchantment," the replacement of the supernatural power of the medieval Church with the Word preached. There is little evidence of disenchantment, however, in the extraordinary notebooks kept by the Rev. Robert Wodrow around 1700 and published in the nineteenth century under the title *Analecta*. This document shows the degree to which a university-trained clergyman, who understood himself as a champion of Reformed theology, could participate in the enchanted cosmos of folk religion in the decades around 1700. Ministers of landward parishes also lived closely with the peasants whom they pastored, and worked closely

[22] Todd, 183-226.
[23] Todd, 394.

with lay elders, who, while customarily from more established backgrounds, often came from "the lesser folk" in the area around Glasgow.[24] And if popular sermons and devotional chapbooks suggest that the fundamental message of Reformed belief (that of salvation by grace through Christ's death for sinners) came to be shared by minister and peasant alike, the clerical hagiographies and the journals of the Rev. Mr. Wodrow also indicate that Scottish clergy shared with their rural parishioners a folk world of marvels, visions, prophetic dreams, even ghosts. His pastoral work presented Wodrow with dilemmas not discussed at the University of Glasgow. In Eastwood he needed to counsel a villager "of noe great knouledge, but very much kindly exercise," troubled by visions of demons who taunted her that she was predestined to damnation.[25] Another parishioner on his sickbed offered as evidence that he was in God's favor an incident from his childhood, when the Lord had answered his prayer as a young shepherd, resurrecting a sheep he had accidentally killed.[26] When another of his parishioners, one Margaret Muir, reported seeing a vision of "glorious light" while praying, which "continoued near a quarter of ane hour," Wodrow warned her of the possibility of "delusion and imagination," but in his journal he remained uncertain about the authenticity of her reported vision.[27] On the other hand, Wodrow seems cautiously to affirm contemporary wonders reported by other parishioners, like a woman who experienced "joy, confidence, and assurance" at communion when God spoke audibly to her the verse "Fear thou not, for I am with thee" from Isaiah 41:10, and the 13-year-old boy who experienced a vision of angels.[28] Neither the Eastwood parishioners nor, significantly, the minister himself believed that he was the only conduit of divine power.

If Wodrow conceded the possibility of marvels and visions even among humble laity, he expected them among the great clerical leaders of Scotland's past. The notes on the lives of the Covenanting ministers which Wodrow collected, like similar legends that occur in other later seventeenth-century Scottish hagiographies, portray a world suffused with divine power and activity, in which Reformed divines frequently foretell future

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[24] Mitchison, *Lordship to Patronage*, 56.
[25] *Analecta* 1:93-4. Wodrow told her that "[it] was not God's way, now, of revealing a person's state and that, if it was as she relates it, it has come from the Divil," and "gave her some comforts from Christ's being attacked from diabolicall injections; and she seemed satisfied."
[26] Ibid., 1:62.
[27] Ibid., 1:94-5.
[28] Ibid., 1:110, 1:51-2.

events and wonders authenticate the truths of the Reformation. Robert Fleming, the minister of Cambuslang outside Glasgow, produced the remarkable *Fulfilling of the Scriptures* from his Dutch exile in the 1660s. Fleming, who recounts many miracles wrought by Reformed divines, sharply distinguishes these from the "*lying wonders*" of popery, which "cannot *stand with the Word*." But though not "the Lord's usual way," it should be no surprise that He make use of "such a solemn testimony" in exceptional circumstances, such as "when the Gospel cometh first to a land that hath been long overspread with darkness," or indeed "in time of great opposition, when the commission of his Servants needeth some external seal."[29] Many ministers in seventeenth-century Scotland foresaw the future—a practice curiously similar to the "superstitious" Gaelic belief in "second sight."[30] John Welsh, the great preacher of western Scotland and northern Ireland, was a prophet of some renown. Welsh warned his parish to refuse admittance to two passersby whom he foresaw were infected with plague (a prophecy which proved true when the next town admitted them).[31] Imprisoned for his resistance to Charles I's religious policies, Welsh told a jeering captor that "*ere a little God shall smite him with a remarkable stroke of his judgment*. Which accordingly fell out, to the astonishment of the company; for *that man did presently drop down to the ground, and died*."[32] Welsh and his god could be valuable friends as well as dangerous enemies, as he showed when he revived the dead son of Lord Ochiltree.[33] Likewise the great Reformed minister Robert Bruce "did *prophetically* speak of many things which afterwards came to pass," and in his parish sick persons "were brought to Mr *Bruce*, and after prayer by him in their behalf were fully covered."[34] Robert Blair, another revered minister of western Scotland, also healed the sick.[35] The very birth of David Dickson of Irvine, as Wodrow recounts, was miraculous: his pious parents, childless after many years of marriage, had "entered into a solemn vou, if the Lord would give them a child, if a son, they should dedicate him to the service of his Church," and soon conceived Dickson, a latter-day

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[29] Fleming, 446-7.
[30] *Analecta*, 1:25, 42-3, 132ff., Fleming 410-11, inter alia.
[31] Fleming, 422-3.
[32] Ibid., 402.
[33] In Tweedie, *Select Biographies*, 1:35-6.
[34] Ibid., 407.
[35] Wodrow, *Analecta* 1:26.

Samuel.[36] The great Samuel Rutherford, as a four-year-old child, had fallen into a deep well, from which he had been rescued by an angel.[37] Visions, angels, and prophecies litter the accounts of the mighty men of the west, indicating that these deeds of power may have been at least as central to the triumph of hot Protestantism in the region as the preaching of Reformed doctrine. By these feats, which might seem more appropriate to a medieval Catholic saint or even a "cunning man,"[38] Welsh, Bruce, and the other Reformed wonder-workers of the Strathclyde proved to their parishioners their superiority as conduits of divine power and therefore the truth of their message. During a time of widespread fear (and persecution) of witchcraft,[39] Reformed clerics who were able to draw on supernatural power could offer their followers the protection from insecurity which Keith Thomas suggested Protestantism could not provide.[40]

"Experienced Christians." Most of the sermons that survive from the Covenanting era—including the most popular, frequently reprinted sermons, like those of Andrew Gray[41]—are variations on a common trope. In this classic model, the preacher moves from emphasis on the seriousness of sin and the inevitable judgment of an infinitely holy God, to the mercy of Christ who died to take away the guilt of sinners otherwise liable to strict judgment. "What a divine surprisal was this," Gray (d. 1656) told his Glasgow congregation, "that Heaven should have preached peace to earth, after that earth had declared War against Heaven? Was not this a step of condescendancy? To behold an offended God preaching peace and goodwill to a guilty sinner?"[42] This standard Reformation theme was in Gray's hands conveyed with vivid descriptions of the danger of hell, the sufferings of the innocent Christ in the place of the hearers, and the joys of salvation thereby won for believers, in a style his parishioners praised as "very

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[36] Ibid., 1:85. cf. I Samuel 1.
[37] Ibid., 1:57.
[38] cf. Todd, 398-400.
[39] Though Larner's study of witch-hunting in Scotland, *Enemies of God*, does not address wonder-working clergy, it illuminates this likely competition. See esp. pp. 142-3.
[40] *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971).
[41] *The Mystery of Faith Opened Up* (Glasgow: Robert Sanders, 1665), and nine subseqeuent Scottish editions before 1700; *Great and Precious Promises* (Edinburgh: Society of Stationers, 1663), followed by eight Scottish re-printings before 1700; *The Spiritual Warfare* (Edinburgh: George Swinton, James Glen, and Thomas Brown, 1672), the first of six seventeenth-century editions from Scottish presses.
[42] Gray, *Mystery*, 2.

warm, rapturous and heavenly,"[43] and which Todd calls a preaching style "designed to elicit affect, not just understanding."[44] Indeed, affect became in Scottish folk Calvinism the answer to the dilemma that faced many Calvinists in post-Reformation Europe.[45] Christ had died for the elect; but how was a particular individual to know whether she was among the elect? To his correspondent James Lindsay's questions on faith and assurance, Samuel Rutherford wrote, "Look first to your own intention & soul, if ye find sin a burden, and can, and doe rest, under that burden upon Christ; if this be once, now come and beleeve in particular or rather apply by sence. . .& feeling the goodwill, intention, and gracious purpose of God anent your salvation."[46] Though not a work that earned salvation, feelings of horror at one's own sins and the experience of intense joy and love for Christ were signs that one was elected by God for salvation.

The true Christian, according to Fenwick's beloved William Guthrie, "not only must be persuaded that Christ is the way, but affectionately perswaded of it, loving and liking the thing. . .It must not be simply a fancy in the head, but it must be a heart business, a soul business."[47] The centrality of religious feeling in Scottish Calvinism, which can be seen as part of a wider movement in post-Reformation religious culture from dry or (in its critics' eyes) "dead" scholasticism to "religion of the heart,"[48] was shared by clerical and popular Christianity. When Scottish Reformed divines spoke of the sort of Christians they hoped to see amongst their parishioners, they referred not to well-informed or well-disciplined Christians but to "lively and experienced Christians."[49] The surviving sermons of seventeenth-century Scotland almost always culminate in an evangelical appeal, but this is not an appeal to move from disbelief to belief. Rather, it is an appeal to move from mere intellectual assent to the propositions of Reformed teaching to a "warm" and "lively" faith, by "embracing" or "closing with" Christ.[50] This all-important move from "formal" to emotional belief can be seen by the few spiritual

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[43] Gray, *Select Sermons*, v-vi.
[44] Todd, 52.
[45] See, e.g., Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
[46] *Joshua Redidivus*, 141.
[47] Guthrie, 165.
[48] Ted Campbell, *Religion of the Heart* (1981).
[49] John Livingstone in Tweedie, 1:144, but both these descriptors are extremely common.
[50] Examples abound, but see e.g. Andrew Gray's "Sermon concerning the great salvation," in *Mystery*, 106-37.

autobiographies of lay people that survive from the period. Mrs. Goodal, the wife of a tenant farmer in western Scotland, was already convinced of the truth of Christ's divinity and atonement, though she feared that "it did not belong to me." But one day on reading Isaiah 54, "my heart began to warm," Mrs. Goodal recounts, and she "embraced Jesus Christ" in an experience of spiritual ecstasy that recalls the letters of the great minister Rutherford: "I was not able to bear the weight of love that the Lord did manifest to me. O! the height; O! the depth; O! the length, and the breadth, of the eternall love wherein he loved his own before the world was!"[51]

Mrs. Goodal's memoir shows that she understood the key moment in her salvation to be neither her baptism, nor one of the many times she had heard the basic message of Reformed Christianity preached, but an experience of intimacy with Christ facilitated by her solitary reading of the Scriptures. What might seem to be radically individualistic and extra-institutional tendencies here, however, did not become manifest in seventeenth-century Scotland. Although it was possible for the vital religious experience to happen almost anywhere, it was most commonly experienced in certain institutional settings. It was hearing the Word preached, and especially the festivals of "lively" preaching that came to accompany communion in Scotland, that became the usual and even expected setting for experiences like Mrs. Goodal's. The festal communion came by the early 1600s to play a vital role in the religious culture of Scotland.[52] Most parishes celebrated communion only once per year—often, Margo Todd finds, at or around Easter, which she notes as an interesting element of continuity from the Easter duties of the old religious regime.[53] Communion was a moment of great solemnity throughout Scotland: announced by the minister weeks in advance to allow the parishioners time for preparation, it was preceded by communal fasting, by an emphasis on reconciling all quarrels in the community, and by spiritual examination of those intending to receive by the elders.[54] But it was in the Scottish west and southwest in particular, Leigh Schmidt suggests, that, under the leadership of the great Reformed holy men like John Welsh and Robert Bruce, the Reformed communion developed into the

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[51] In Tweedie, 2:482-3. A manuscript version of Mrs. Goodal's memoir was found with the papers of Robert Wodrow, and it was first published in the nineteenth century.
[52] See esp. Schmidt, *Holy Fairs* (1989).
[53] Todd, 87.
[54] Ibid., 91-3.

"sacramental occasions" which would figure so largely in folk piety for almost two centuries. Gilbert Burnet, a skeptical eyewitness of the west's religious culture during the Restoration, described the festal communion in its mature form:

> On the Wednesday before they held a fast day with prayers and sermons for about eight or ten hours together: on the Saturday they had two or three preparation sermons; and on the Lord's day they had so very many, that the action continued above twelve hours in some places, and all ended with three or four sermons on Monday for thanksgiving.

The requirements for such a festival exceeded the capacities of any one preacher, so it became typical for ministers from neighboring parishes to assist each other at such communions. John Livingstone in his autobiography recalls that, when the minister of Cumbernauld in the 1620s, he had also frequently preached at Lanark, Irvine, Culross, and Shotts, "especially at communions."[55] The laity as well as the clergy began taking part in the communions of other parishes at least as early as the 1620s. The most celebrated of the Reformed holy men drew crowds of admirers from other parishes: Livingstone recalls that David Dickson "was resorted to by such as from all parts, yea, Christians from many other places of the country resorted to the communions at Irvine."[56] Burnet, who regarded these festivals with distaste, concedes that they were extremely popular: "The crowds were far beyond the capacity of their churches, or the reach of their voices: so at the same time they had sermons in two or three different places: and all was perfected with great show of zeal. They had stories of many signal conversions that were wrought on these occasions. It is scarce credible what an effect this had among the people."[57] While the experience of intense intimacy with God could take place elsewhere, the preaching of the Word, especially at communion, became the ordinary and even expected setting. Seventeenth-century Scotland's popular religious print shows little theological breadth; instead, almost all the bestselling devotional works hammer on one theme, the death of Christ to atone for sinners. What zealous lay Scots wanted from the clergy was not advanced theological teaching, in which they displayed little interest, but a re-narration of their basic beliefs—the gravity of sin and the danger of hell, Christ's

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[55] Tweedie, 1:136.
[56] Ibid., 1:316.
[57] Burnet, 41.

love for sinners and his death in their place—in a style sufficiently dramatic, "warm," and "moving" to elicit the emotional response that assured them they were among the elect.

The strange events in western Scotland in 1625-30, which have recently been read by American historians as a taproot of American revivalism,[58] must be understood in this context of individual ecstatic experience facilitated by "lively" preaching in an institutional setting. Although no contemporary accounts survive of the boiling over of popular religious fervor at Stewarton in 1625 and Shotts in 1630 (both small towns in the Strathclyde), the events cast a long shadow over the region, remembered by the godly in a later generation as a great move of God's Spirit. In 1660s work *The Fulfilling of the Scriptures*, Robert Fleming (the exiled pastor of Cambuslang in the same area) told the story of God's mighty works from Pentecost to seventeenth-century Scotland. In what Fleming calls "a very solemn and extraordinary *outpouring* of the SPIRIT… about the year 1625…in the West of *Scotland*," first in Stewarton and thereafter in a number of nearby parishes,

> for a considerable time, *few Sabbaths* did pass without some evidently *converted*, and some convincing proofs of the *power of God* accompanying his word: yea, that many were so *choaked and taken by the heart*, that through TERROUR (the SPIRIT in such a measure convincing them of *sin* in *hearing the word*) they have been made to FALL OVER and thus CARRIED OUT OF THE CHURCH, who after proved most *solid* and *lively* Christians.[59]

After the events at Stewarton in 1625, what Fleming styles the "great spring-tide of the Gospel" continued for years in the Strathclyde: "like a spreading moor-burn, *the power of Godliness* did advance from one place to another, which put a marvellous lustre on these parts of the country."[60] Robert Wodrow, in his "Life of Mr David Dickson," credits the minister of nearby Irvine with a key role in the events. In response to Dickson's preaching, widespread religious excitement "spread from house to house for many miles in the Strath, where Stewarton water runs, on both sides of it," and though Satan sought to disgrace this "work of the Spirit" by leading some excited layfolk to "excesses" (about which Wodrow gives no further detail), "solid serious practical religion flourished

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[58] See esp. Marilyn Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity* (1988).
[59] Fleming, 393.
[60] Ibid., 394.

mightily in the West of Scotland about this time."[61] A similar outbreak of popular religious excitement occurred in the same vicinity about five years later, centered on the village of Shotts. John Livingstone, who as a young man had been one of the chief preachers at Shotts, recalled much later, "In that place I used to find more liberty in preaching than elsewhere. Yea, the one day in all my life wherein I got most presence of God in publick was on a Monday after a communion, preaching in the churchyard of the Shotts, the 21st of June 1630."[62] Livingstone gives little description of the reaction of his audience, except to note that there was much "melting of heart." Fleming, writing some thirty years after the events, records that Livingstone's preaching evoked

> a *strange unusual* MOTION *on the hearers*, who in a great multitude were there converted of divers ranks; that it was known (which I can speak on a sure ground) near five hundred had at that time a discernable *change* wrought on them, of whom most proved lively Christians afterward: it was the sowing of a seed through *Clidesdeal*, so as many of most eminent Christians in that country, could either date their *conversion*, or some remarkable *confirmation* in their case, from *that day*.[63]

The absence of contemporary and especially lay sources for these events make it difficult to separate the events at Shotts and Stewarton from later mythology. The existing sources indicate, however, that at least by the 1620s the peasants of western Scotland were not passive objects of christianization but active participants in religious fervor.

Popular religious loyalties in the Restoration. The commitment of the laity of western Scotland to this vernacular Calvinism would be tested during the Restoration. The reaction of the Scots, and of this region in particular, to the religious changes under the restored Stuarts presents a striking contrast to reception of parallel changes in England.[64] The restored King Charles II—who had been scarred by the dour sermonizing he had been forced to endure during his abortive alliance with the Covenanters in 1649-51, and who considered presbytery "not a religion for gentlemen"—insisted on episcopal government for the Church of Scotland. Widespread hostility to royal religious policy

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[61] Tweedie, 2:8.
[62] Ibid., 1:138.
[63] Fleming, 394.
[64] See Claire Cross, *Church and People, 1450-1660: the triumph of the laity in the English church* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); I.M. Green, *The Re-establishment of the Church of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Christopher Durston, "Puritan rule and the failure of cultural revolution," in Durston and Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism* (1996).

would destabilize Scotland for a generation, despite increasing government repression of religious dissidents.[65] The older mythology of unanimous Scottish opposition to episcopal polity has been discredited by modern scholarship;[66] episcopacy did have support in some parts of Scotland, especially in Aberdeen and the northeast. In the west, however—the heartland of folk Calvinism, where almost all of the mid-century "saints of the covenant" had pastored and where the popular excitement of Shotts and Stewarton had taken place—resistance was apparently vigorous and common even in the most modest social strata. Two-thirds of the ministers of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr were ejected for opposition to the King's religious policies in the early 1660s.[67] Among the rural parishes of the Strathclyde whose ministers were forced out at this time were Cambuslang, Campsie, Kirkintilloch, Cumbernauld, Cathcart, Rutherglen, and Baldernock.[68] Nor was anti-episcopal sentiment limited to a clerical elite: indeed, Wodrow depicts Strathclyde parishioners as actively urging their ministers to resist the King and his bishops: "The most solid and judicious, and far greater part of their people, encouraged ministers at this time to enter upon sufferings: so far were they from censuring them for quitting their charges, that they rejoiced in their honesty and firmness to the principles and covenants of this church."[69]

Wodrow's exhaustive four-volume *Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution* is dedicated primarily to the glorification of the godly clergymen who suffered persecution for presbytery during this period. Yet throughout his work the common people of the Strathclyde appear in the background, and their loyalty is never in doubt: in vivid contrast with the English puritans, who set "the godly" against "the multitude," Wodrow everywhere identifies "the most solid and judicious" with "the far greater part of the people." The faithful of the Strathclyde villages here

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[65] See Jackson, *Restoration Scotland* (2003), esp. chapters 5 and 7; Hyman, "A church militant," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 26:1 (1996); Buckroyd, *Church and State in Scotland, 1660-1681* (1980); Cowan, *The Scottish Covenanters* (1976). In contrast to the recent wealth of secondary literature on the immediate post-Reformation period and the interregnum Covenanters, the conflicts of Restoration Scotland remain relatively unexplored by modern scholars.
[66] See Gordon Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); *Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985).
[67] Cowan, 54; Hyman, 55.
[68] *Sufferings*, 1:324-9.
[69] Ibid., 1:330; cf. Elizabeth Hyman's conclusion in her 1995 study: "In the western synods the mass departure of clergy from parish pulpits made an immediate and resounding impact on congregations that regarded them as their only properly ordained ministers," 56.

appear as both tenacious in their loyalty to their former pastors, and implacably hostile to the new episcopal ministers imposed upon them, whom they disdainfully labeled "the king's curates." To fill the dozens of parishes now vacated by ministers stubbornly loyal to the Covenants and the presbyterian polity, according to Gilbert Burnet, "a sort of invitation [was] sent over the kingdom, like a hue and cry, to all persons to accept of benefices in the west."[70] Wodrow describes the new pastors as "mostly young men from the northern shires [of Scotland], raw, and without any stroak of reading or gifts. . . .To such the common people were ready to ascribe all the character of Jeroboam's priests."[71] But Burnet's memoir is scarcely less negative about these men. The closest thing available to a neutral observer in the intensely polarized world of Restoration Scotland, Burnet was a contemporary episcopal clergyman who criticized both the heavy-handed, "inquisitorial" tactics of the Scottish bishops and the "stiff and peevish" Covenanters.[72] He would ultimately defect to the Church of England where he would associate himself with the "latitudinarian" moderates.[73] The new "curates" sent to western Scotland in the 1660s, Burnet recalls, were "generally very mean and despicable in all respects. They were the worst preachers I have ever heard; they were ignorant to a reproach; and many of them were openly vicious. They were a disgrace to their orders, and the sacred function; and were indeed the dreg and refuse of the northern parts."[74] It seems implausible that the common folk of the west were deeply invested in the more abstruse debates over church polity, though some sources suggest interest in these details extended remarkably far down the social scale. But even the less well-informed or committed among the villagers may bitterly have resented this outside interference with their religious community. Both Burnet and Wodrow identify the "curates" as coming mostly from the far north, the least protestantized region in seventeenth-century Scotland. This new clergy, evidently themselves not well-trained in Reformed doctrine, did not

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[70] Burnet, 102.
[71] *Sufferings*, 1:331.
[72] On difficulties with the nomenclature of the presbyterian resistance during the Restoration, see esp. Cowan, "The Covenanters: a revision article," in *Scottish History Review* 47 (1968), 45-6. I have nonetheless retained the term Covenanter, as both the self-designation for these presbyterian nonconformists and a label used by their enemies.
[73] For Burnet's self-identification with Archbishop Tillotson and the "latitude men" in Anglicanism, see *History*, 128-31, 605.
[74] Burnet, 103.

emphasize the basic message of salvation through Christ's death which the laity of the west regarded simply as "the gospel," and they were unable to preach in the "warm" and dramatic style needed to elicit the religious emotions so central to folk Calvinism. They were therefore rejected by the parishioners of the west as "false shepherds."

As described by Burnet, the laity's animosity toward these new episcopal ministers was as striking as their reverence for their Covenanting predecessors: "The people complained of the new set of ministers, that was sent among them, as immoral, stupid, and ignorant. . . .The people treated them with great contempt, and with an aversion that broke out often into violence and injustice."[75] Wodrow too describes a laity not passive but vigorous and articulate in their resistance to the new clergymen:

> In some places [the new episcopal ministers] were welcomed with tears in abundance, with entreaties to be gone: in others with reasonings and arguments, which confounded them; and some entertained them with threats, affronts, and indignities, too many here to be repeated. The bell's tongue in some places was stolen away, that the parishioners might have an excuse for not coming to church. The doors of the church in some places were barricaded, and they made to enter by the window literally. . . .In some places the people, fretted with their dismal charge, gathered together, and violently opposed their settlement, and received them with showers of stones.[76]

In Wodrow's narrative it is frequently the humble of the western villages, and especially women, who lead public protests and riots against the "intruded" ministers. In Irongray, where the mighty John Welsh had once been pastor, "The curate, at first not finding peaceable access, returned upon them with an armed force. None ventured to appear openly save women, and those of the meaner sort. However, the women of Irongray, headed by one Margaret Smith, opposed a party of soldiers who were guarding the curate, and fairly beat them off with stones."[77] Both Wodrow and Burnet depict the Strathclyde laity as abandoning the parish churches virtually *en masse*, leaving the curates to preach to "bare walls," while the laity flocked to their ex-ministers' homes in what the government labeled "conventicles." When a new law forbade ejected ministers to live within twenty miles of their former parishes, large numbers of parishioners still preferred

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[75] Ibid., 143.
[76] *Sufferings*, 1:333.
[77] Ibid., 1:363-4.

to travel for miles rather than hear the episcopal incumbent—so many that the illegal counter-chuches had to move from houses and barns into the open fields.[78]

Popular hostility to the Restoration religious settlement in the west became an intractable problem for successive Scottish administrations under Charles II and James VII, despite escalating efforts by royal ministers to exile or imprison the "field preachers" and coerce layfolk back into the parish churches. The Scottish privy council, "finding the body of the west and south of Scotland most dissatisfied with the late change in the church," quartered a large number of troops in the west to impose fines on those who refused to attend the parish churches. Near-constant harassment by government troopers over a quarter century left deep and bitter memories among the people of this region. Robert Wodrow, who became minister of a rural parish of this region in 1703, based his history of the period partly on the memories of his parishioners. "The soldiers really carried as if they had been in an enemy's country," according to Wodrow, "and the oppression of that part of the kingdom was inexpressible. . . .Multitudes were cruelly beat, and dragged to church or to prison with equal violence. By such methods hundreds of poor religious families in the west and south were scattered, and reduced to extreme necessity."[79] The account of Burnet, an eyewitness and an episcopal minister, largely agrees. Colonel Dalziel, the commander of the troops quartered in the Strathclyde in the 1660s, "acted the Muscovite too grossly," Burnet writes. "He threatened to spit men, and to roast them: and he killed some in cold blood, or rather in hot blood; for he was then drunk." As for the curates, "They never interceded for any compassion to their people," but "looked on the soldiery as their patrons."[80] When this conventional army of Lowland Scots and English failed to break the resistance of the west, the King's ministers in the late 1670s quartered the hated "Highland host" in the homes of the region.[81] Gaelic-speaking and culturally alien to the Lowlanders, this "barbarous savage people, accustomed to rapine and spoil" imposed heavy fines, beatings, and imprisonment on religious dissenters, in what Wodrow portrays as the privy council's scheme "to waste

[78] Ibid., 1:331-41;
[79] Ibid., 1:374.
[80] Burnet, 161.
[81] For a modern discussion, see Hyman, 64-5.

and depopulate the western shires of Scotland, where the greatest number of presbyterians were."[82]

As the crisis in the west escalated, a series of revolts against the Restoration government broke out in the region. The Covenant of 1638, which the government understood as seditious, was identified by these lay zealots with commitment to the gospel itself. Burnet recounts the execution of forty-five godly rebels with a mixture of exasperation and awe:

> They might all have saved their lives, if they would have renounced the covenant; so they were really a sort of martyrs for it. They did all at their death give their testimony, according to their phrase, to the covenant, and to all that had been done pursuant to it: and they expressed great joy in their sufferings. Most of them were mean and inconsiderable men in all respects.[83]

Ultimately the most extreme faction among the Covenanters, the "Cameronians" or "Cargillites" (so called from the last names of two clerical leaders), formally renounced Charles II as king, damning him as an enemy of Christ. Burnet, describing another mass execution in the 1680s, records that the victims

> suffered with an obstinacy that was so particular, that when the duke [of Monmouth, the government commander] sent the offer of pardon to them on the scaffold, if they would only say, 'God bless the King,' it was refused with great neglect. One of them, a woman, said very calmly, 'she was sure God would not bless him, and that, therefore, she would not take God's name in vain.' Another said more sullenly, that she would not worship that idol, nor acknowledge any other king but Christ. And so both were hanged. About fifteen or sixteen died under this delusion, which seemed to be a sort of madness; for they never attempted anything against any person, only they seemed glad to suffer for their opinions.[84]

Though few went so far as to renounce the King's legitimacy, this kind of zealotry made the west of Scotland ungovernable until the revolution of 1688, which restored presbyterian government in the Kirk. King William III was predictably viewed by Covenanters as "that glorious deliverer of these lands from popery and slavery, and qualified instrument in the hand of Providence."[85] In April 1690 the survivors among the

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[82] *Sufferings*, 2:370-5.
[83] Burnet, 160.
[84] Ibid., 338.
[85] *Sufferings*, 4:469.

ministers ejected at the Restoration were restored to their parishes.[86] Burnet records, as the Covenanting apologist Wodrow does not, the widespread revenge the parishioners of the west inflicted on the "curates" at this time: "They generally broke in upon the episcopal clergy with great insolence and much cruelty. They carried them about the parishes in a mock procession: they tore their gowns, and drove them from their churches and houses."[87] Burnet, who found the "wretched haranguing" and "frantic enthusiast notions" of the triumphant Covenanters intolerable, would decline to return to his homeland, eventually to become bishop of Salisbury south of the border. The persecuted field-preachers who had been last during the Restoration, like Wodrow's father James, would be first in the new post-revolutionary Scotland.

R. Po-chia Hsia has expressed a view common to many scholars of early modern culture that Calvinism "proved in the long run to be an abstract, intellectual religion of the elite."[88] Whatever may have been the case elsewhere, this does not describe early modern Scotland. Especially in the western Lowlands, by the mid-seventeenth century Scottish Calvinism was deeply interwoven with popular culture and was the object of tenacious loyalty, apparently on all levels of society. This was so partly because the folk belief of the west was a curious hybrid form of Calvinism, combining what was evidently a high level of literacy and theological sophistication, centered on the fundamental Reformation teaching of salvation by faith in a crucified Redeemer, with a vibrantly supernatural, almost magical worldview and with blistering emotionalism. Sent by the Restoration leadership to persuade the laity of this area to accept the new episcopal polity in the 1660s, Burnet marveled at the obstinacy and theological savvy of the villagers:

> We were, indeed, amazed to see a poor commonalty so capable of arguing upon points of government, and on the bounds to be set to the power of princes in matters of religion: upon all these topics they had texts of scripture at hand, and were ready with their answers to any thing that was said to them. This measure of knowledge was spread even among the meanest of them, their cottagers, and their servants. They were, indeed, vain of their knowledge, much conceited of themselves, and were full of a most entangled scrupulosity.[89]

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[86] Ibid., 4:485n.
[87] Burnet, 510.
[88] Hsia, *Social Discipline*, 154.
[89] Burnet, 196-7.

Reformed Christianity came to the peasantry of this area in the late sixteenth century from outside, from the learned culture of intellectuals like Knox and Melville. But by this time the parishioners of Strathclyde had appropriated for themselves its central elements, and they showed themselves ferociously committed to "the gospel" as they understood it, refusing to accept re-education from king, privy council, or clergymen like Burnet. At the turn of the eighteenth century in western Scotland, lay Christians, even remarkably humble ones, were not passive or indifferent, but were both intensely interested and strongly opinionated in matters of faith, and well-practiced in distinguishing true from false shepherds.

CHAPTER 2. LIVED RELIGION IN THE PARISHES OF THE STRATHCLYDE

The bitter disputes in Restoration Scotland between church and state, presbyterian and episcopalian, were so fraught in the west that this period became known as "the killing times." For some parishes in the region the Restoration troubles are marked by a gap of decades in the parish records, which resume after the revolution of 1688-90; in others, the parish records begin at 1690, earlier registers having evidently been lost or destroyed. By the early eighteenth century, however, the clerks of most parishes in the Strathclyde had resumed taking meticulously detailed notes at the weekly meetings of the session, an invaluable source that lets us go beyond the anecdotal evidence of Burnet and Wodrow for the Restoration and glimpse daily life in a parish of Scotland's western Lowlands. This chapter will draw together a wide range of evidence from archival and print sources to present a thick description of lived religion in rural Strathclyde in the early eighteenth century, a religion that was, to a great extent, an undertaking of the entire community, retaining many of the characteristics of the corporate Christianity John Bossy has identified with the pre-Reformation period,[1] even as it exhorted the flock to an intensely personalized and individualized devotional life.

Close study of eighteenth-century Strathclyde's parish and presbytery records reveals the dual nature of the Scottish parish. On the one hand it was the primary unit of local life, especially in "landward" or rural areas, invested with a host of functions we would judge secular. The parish was, as one Strathclyde session would observe at mid-century, "a legal Court," obliged by the law of the land to provide education and charity to all residents of the parish, its personnel and buildings paid for by all who owned property within the parish bounds. The session provided what was in effect marital and divorce counseling, handled child-custody disputes, mediated disputes between spouses and between neighbors, sometimes funded public works like bridges and roads, and punished a variety of petty crimes from public drunkenness and fighting to slander. The minister was the symbolic head of the community and a crucial mediator between life in the localities and the larger social and political structures of early modern Scotland. But

[1] *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (1985).

the parish was also "an Ecclesiastical Society," the primary expression of a specific religious culture, which I have called folk Calvinism. As such it held out to its members, through sermons, catechizing, and the godly books it encouraged Scots to read, an extremely high ideal of *virtuoso* spirituality centering on personal intimacy with the crucified Redeemer—what preachers called "closing with Christ." The parish's self-understanding as an ecclesiastical society also colored its approach to its assigned tasks as a legal court: in dispensing charity and dealing with petty crimes in the locality, parish leaders were concerned not just to prevent disorder but to form souls, going to great lengths to try to inculcate Reformed teachings and sincere penitence in local malefactors, not just restrain or fine them. The Scottish parish exercised an extraordinary scrutiny over the personal behavior of eighteenth-century Scots, and has therefore been construed by scholars like Callum Brown as a petty theocracy.[2] If this description is not entirely wrong, however, it is incomplete: for, at least in the west, the parish also allowed a substantial role for popular participation in the choice of its leaders, both clerical and lay. Church records show that parishioners in early eighteenth-century Strathclyde both exercised and deeply valued an ability to affect who was selected as pastor, and humble "inhabitants" as well as elders and property-owners vigorously participated in pastoral calls, arguing over rival candidates, passing petitions, and traveling to presbytery meetings to express their views. In a society in which a parish was a legal court as well as an ecclesiastical society, this constituted a species of popular politics, and it was an opportunity virtually unique in the closed and hierarchical world of early modern Scotland, as scholars of the period have not appreciated. In the choice of their parish pastor, as almost nowhere else, Scottish villagers could exercise a degree of control over their own lives, an ability valued by both the godly and the conformable.

THE WORLD OF THE PARISH

[2] *Religion and Society*, 73.

"Public ordinances." Scottish Calvinism was, like other forms of the Reformed tradition, a religion of the Word.[3] The public worship of the Church of Scotland was characterized by an austere simplicity, its churches stripped of any color or decoration that might distract from preaching. The Sabbath was the occasion of long sermons in the forenoon and afternoon, with an interval to allow hearers a mid-day meal; the minister's public prayers were *ex tempore*, following no set liturgy, which was disdained as popish. Also central to public worship was the singing of metrical psalms.[4] The 1650 *Psalms of David in Meter* was the basis of church music in Scottish Calvinism; though the metrical translation would later be much-criticized as clumsy and unpoetic, it was, as Millar Patrick remarks, "suitable for its purpose," namely "to enable a largely illiterate and musically uninstructed people to memorize the psalms and to sing them."[5] In the Scottish Reformed tradition, which derived from the Genevan,[6] no musical instruments, choirs, or professional musicians were used; a small number of common tunes replaced the custom of having a proper tune for each psalm as easier for the congregation to remember. Both the metrical texts and the small number of simple tunes were designed to enable popular participation, and both words and music entered deeply into Scottish folk culture.[7] In the absence of instruments or choirs, psalm singing was led by a "precentor." The precentor sat at the front of the church to lead the congregation in song, explaining which psalms were to be sung and to which tunes, and setting the pitch and tempo; a "reader's desk," at which the precentor sat and from which he led the psalm-singing, was often affixed to the higher and more ornate pulpit of the minister. The precentor's position *per se* carried no salary; in the parishes of the west it was common, however, for the village schoolmaster to take on the additional duties of precenting and serving as clerk to the session.[8] A man

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[3] cf. Catharine Davies's study of the Reformation in Edwardian England, *A Religion of the Word* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).
[4] "Psalms, metrical," in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 20 (2001); Millar Patrick, *The Story of the Scottish Psalm Tunes* (1931); idem., *Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody* (1949); Michael Chibbett, "Sung psalms in Scottish worship," in David Wright (ed.), *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1988); Todd, 70-3.
[5] Patrick, *Story*, 2.
[6] Francis Higman, "Music," in Pettegree (ed.), 491-503; Millar, *Story*, 2-4.
[7] David Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (1972); Landsman, "Evangelists and their hearers," *Journal of British Studies* 28:2 (1989), 144-5; Edward Wolf, "The convivial side of Scottish psalm tunes," *American Music* 14:2 (1996).
[8] The parish of Cathcart in 1717 reported to the Presbytery of Glasgow that "they had a school-master, who is also precentor, and session-clerk" CH2/171/9/1/58; West Kilbride in 1731 had a schoolmaster "who is

who held this triple office of schoolmaster-precentor-clerk was an important figure in the parish community.

The Church of Scotland in the eighteenth century was an established national chuch, and all Scots were presumed to belong to it. In spite of the 1712 Toleration Act—passed by the Westminster Parliament over the Kirk's objections to protect the minority of Scottish Episcopalians—the Church of Scotland's ministers and elders continued to regard the entire community as being under their spiritual supervision. Church records for the Strathclyde region indicate that attendance at the Kirk's lengthy Sabbath services, though not universal, was general. In the minutes of the kirk sessions, which deal mostly with discipline at the parish level, citation of parishioners for not attending "public ordinances" is frequent enough to show that the sessions concerned themselves with such offenses, but uncommon enough to indicate that these cases were exceptional.[9] In one of the few absences from Sunday sermon that appears in the records of New Monkland parish, Thomas Anderson, John Archibald, and Mary Galloway seem to have missed afternoon sermon by accident: "for having stayed too Long [at a tavern where they were having lunch] betwixt sermons, they were ashamed to come in to the kirk [i.e., late] and ashamed to depart." With the testimonial of the elders that they were "sober Persons, and not known to have any miscarriage of that nature formerly," they were let off with a warning.[10] In the region's lively larger towns like Kilmarnock and Irvine, the session sometimes found it necessary to take action to compel attendance at Sabbath worship: in 1722, Kilmarnock elders were assigned to survey the town to apprehend truants during time of sermon; the Irvine session in April 1734 resolved to censure those guilty of "unnecessary traveling, and wilfull remaining from the Church in time of divine worship."[11] But even here this seems not to have been a regular practice, and smaller parishes in the Strathclyde show little evidence of concern about non-attendance. In

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also session clerk & precentor" CH2/197/4/27. Govan in 1715 "had a Schoolmaster att the Kirk, who taught Latine, and was also precentor" CH2/171/9/1/8. Irvine kirk session in March 1724 sought "a young man that may be sufficientlie qualified for being Doctor to the Grammer School, Precenter and Session Clerk, it having been the usuall custom of this place to have one man to officiat in the sd places" CH2/1505/1/245.

[9] e.g., Margaret Smith, who was called before Cathcart's session in 1714 as "a habitual neglector of publick ordinances," CH2/732/1, pp. 98-9; CH2/216/2/120.; David Adam in Kilsyth was described as one who "seldom or never come to this Church," CH2/215/2, p. 120.

[10] CH2/685/2, p. 119.

[11] CH2/1252/3/175; CH2/1505/2/89.

December 1742 the Kilwinning session treated the behavior of James Leitch, who was absent from public worship on four successive Sabbaths, as a grave scandal.[12]

Another intriguing source is the presbyterial visitations which committees of clerics made to neighboring parishes in the early eighteenth century, similar to the Lutheran visitations studied by Gerald Strauss and others in Protestant Germany.[13] Visitors from the presbytery examined the spiritual health of the community by meeting successively with the minister, with the elders, and with the heads of families in the absence of the others, asking (e.g.) the minister about the diligence of his elders and the faithfulness of his parishioners and the parishioners whether they were satisfied with their pastor and elders. Most ministers reported favorably of their parishioners in the first half of the eighteenth century. The Rev. Mr. Thomas Houston, pastor of Kilmaurs in 1712, was atypical in the profound discouragement he signified to his colleagues. Houston complained that his parishioners refused to build him a new manse and attended visiting preachers on special occasions in greater numbers than his own sermons. Only ten people regularly attended his weekday sermons, he lamented. A delegation of Houston's parishioners, however, promised better behavior and more regular attendance in the face of his threats to demit his office.[14] Presbyterial visitations, however, were not only supervision of the laity. They also included the removal of the minister while all the heads of families of the parish were invited to give their opinion of the pastor's "Doctrine, Life, and Conversation." Presbytery records suggest parishioners were generally satisfied with their pastors in the early eighteenth century; typical is the September 1719 visitation of Rutherglen, at which the heads of families told Glasgow Presbytery that the Rev. Mr. Maxwell was "painfull and diligent in the exercise of the whole Ministeriall duties amongst them."[15] Complaints about clerical deficiencies during these visitations, though rare, are enough to establish that the process was not an empty

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[12] CH2/591/5, p. 20. Appearing before the session to explain his absences, Leitch claimed he was ashamed to come because he lacked shoes, an excuse the Kilwinning elders found "tryfling and ridiculous." He was "rebuked for his Disorder."

[13] Strauss, "Success in failure in the German Reformation," *Past and Present* 67 (1975); Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning* (1978); Susan Karant-Nunn, *Luther's Pastors* (1979). cf. Strauss in Hsia ed., *The German People and the Reformation* (Ithaca: Cornell Univeristy Press, 1988) and Geoffrey Parker, "Success and failure during the first century of the Reformation," *Past and Present* 136 (1992): 43-82.

[14] CH2/197/3, pp. 65-6.

[15] CH2/171/9/1, pp. 102-3.

formality.[16] While presbyterial visitation records evidence very few clerical complaints about absent or indifferent parishioners, they do show occasional lay demands for *more* preaching and teaching. Surprising though it may seem to the twenty-first-century reader, the two long Sunday sermons standard in the Scottish parish were not enough for some Scots. In the island parish of Cumbrae in July 1727, parishioners told visitors from the Presbytery of Irvine that they were satisfied with their minister, "except his not giving…week-day sermons And said that they would attend week-day sermons once in the 14 days if they had them except in the seed-time and Harvest." The minister, called in by his colleagues, "had it Recommended to him to preach on week-days."[17]

The session and the disciplinary regime. If the minister's preaching and communal psalm-singing dominated Sunday's "public ordinances," daily life in the parish was guided by that distinctively Reformed church body, the session.[18] In the session the minister as permanent moderator chaired a committee of "ruling elders" charged with overseeing godly discipline of the community, which Scottish Calvinism since 1560 had seen as an essential mark of the true Church. Scotland's kirk sessions have been best known for their disciplinary function, and close study of extant kirk session records show their reputation as nearly obsessive monitors of (especially sexual) sin is deserved. The sessions' duties went beyond discipline: their heavy involvement in charity and social welfare, in mediating neighborhood disputes, and in providing and subsidizing education probably made parishioners more willing to accept their disciplinary function.[19] At the same time, the records of several parishes indicate that elders in this part of Scotland were drawn from quite humble social strata, perhaps making them more acceptable to the village as a form of self-policing rather than an alien intrusion. By law each parish was obliged to maintain a school and schoolmaster, and the records show that by the eighteenth century almost all Strathclyde parishes, even the most rural, did so, though church authorities often had to undergo legal wrangling with the heritors (parish property-owners) to ensure that they paid the schoolmaster's salary as

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[16] In Kilwinning in 1742, some parishioners complained that the Rev. Mr. Alexander Fergusson did not visit homes to provide informal pastoral counseling nor pray with the sick, and regarded him as too lax in discipline: CH2/197/4, p. 511.
[17] CH2/197/3/583.
[18] Equivalent to the *consistoire* in francophone Calvinism and the Dutch *kerkeraad*.
[19] Michael Graham's research suggests this is an early development in the Scottish system; see his *Uses of Reform* 257.

Scots law obliged them to do.[20] Schooling was common for both and girls,[21] and though not free was often subsidized by the session. The parish of Carmunnock seems to be have been either unusually generous with its scholarships or unusually careful in recording them: among the poor children in Carmunnock whose education was funded by the session in 1728 were Robert and George Reid, John Findlay, and Jean Rankin, while in 1730 the session funded a quarter of a year's schooling for Marion and Isabel Mitchell.[22] Education and literacy, of course, were valued by kirk sessions preeminently because they enabled lay people to read the Bible, and session minutes also record frequent gifts of the Bible to "poor scholars."[23] The sessions were responsible under Scots law for poor relief, and many members of the community "in distress" received gifts of cash from their parish session,[24] though elders were careful to enquire into an applicant's case to ensure that she was "a real object of Charity."[25] Parish charity was funded primarily by voluntary contributions from the congregation, though the session had the legal right to "stent" (tax) parish property-owners if these proved insufficient. Both fathers and mothers whose spouse might be regular recipients of parish charity.[26] Shoes and coats for needy parishioners, especially children, were another common donation.[27] In addition to regular gifts to the parish's dependent poor, the sessions also made large donations to parishioners in a momentary crisis. Carmunnock session in 1713 gave sixteen pounds to Thomas Urrie "for to help pay doctor Millar for curing of his wifs eyes."[28] In 1717 Bothwell's elders paid a chirurgien to amputate and cure the leg of a poor parishioner.[29] John Millar in Cumbernauld received a cash gift "to help to purchase an Horse for earning his Bread" in 1734, while Katherine Arnoll in Dumbarton ten years

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[20] e.g., Cathcart (December 1717) CH2/732/1, p. 18; Inchinnan (September 1723), CH2/294/8, p. 16; Eastwood (November 1728), CH2/119/1, pp. 155-6; Glasford (February 1730), CH2/393/3, p. 193; Cumbernauld (May 1732), CH2/79/1, p. 69.

[21] References to "female scholars" at the village school abound in the kirk session minutes. Agnes Mackeron and Gabriel Mitchell's two daughters were among the village children whose schooling was paid for by the Carmunnock session (CH2/58/3, p. 121). One unpleasant source of evidence for female education is the case of Geoge Hay, the abusive schoolmaster of Beith who came before Irvine Presbytery in 1755: all of the scholars whom he was accused of molesting were girls: CH2/197/5, pp. 513-7

[22] CH2/58/3, pp. 106, 146.

[23] CH2/58/3, p. 121; CH2/97/4, p. 355; CH2732/1, p. 145; CH2/872/1, p. 51-2, 55.

[24] CH2/58/3, p. 89;

[25] CH2/58/3, p. 155.

[26] CH2/58/2, pp. 256-7.

[27] CH2/58/3, pp. 135, 139; CH2/97/4, p. 355; CH2/216/2, p. 87.

[28] CH2/58/2, p. 219.

[29] CH2/556/1, p. 191.

later was given a one-time donation by the elders "to help to Buy her houses rent."[30] Parishioners who had been the victims of catastrophe like fire or hail received special attention from the community, with elders going door-to-door to solicit additional funds from their neighbors.[31] Those left without family, whether very old or young, were cared for at the expense of the parish. In June 1718 Irvine's session recorded that "It being represented that Robert Mure is in a dying condition, and has none to take care of him the session appoints Provost Marshall and David Kennedie [two of the elders] to agree with a woman for that end."[32] An infant who had lost both parents in Cumbernauld in 1732 was given by the session to Agnes Smellie, "to be nursed & kept by her, at the rate of £8. Scots p^{r}. Quarter."[33]

The Kirk's elders were concerned with the spiritual as well as the physical health of the community, and it was in these terms that they would have seen their relentless vigilance against sin.[34] The disciplinary regime of the Church of Scotland has received much attention from scholars, especially in its earlier phases, but also in eighteenth-century social history, and it continues to have a fearsome reputation among modern scholars.[35] Close study of parish records in the Lowland west confirms that the sessions' remarkably thorough supervision of community life, and especially sexual misbehavior, persisted into the eighteenth century. In their study of sexuality and church discipline in eighteenth-century Scotland, Mitchison and Leneman note that the Kirk was much more effective than was the Church of England in disciplining deviant sexuality. Unlike in England, offenders could not escape church discipline by leaving the parish, because of the rigidly observed Scottish requirement for a "testimonial" when moving from one parish to another.[36] People moving into the parish without such a testimonial found

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[30] CH2/79/1, p. 88; CH2/97/5, p. 59.
[31] CH2/982/5, p. 88; CH2/58/3, p. 142; CH2/415/2, pp. 80-1; CH2/79/1, p. 169. This last case (the 1740 hailstorm in Cumbernauld) indicates the shame many parishioners felt at receiving parish charity, however: the elders authorize the minister to give out funds to hail victims privately, so that "it will not be divulged to the Damage of their Credit."
[32] CH2/1505/1, p. 134.
[33] CH2/79/1, p. 70. cf. a similar case in Kirkintilloch in 1741, CH2/1027/1, p. 219.
[34] On the methodological limitations of records of church discipline as a source, see Judith Pollmann's important study "Off the record: problems in the quantification of Calvinist church discipline," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 33:2 (2002).
[35] See, e.g., Callum Brown: "In over a thousand parish theocracies kirk sessions imposed a compulsory culture of conformism…" *Religion and Society* (1997), 73;
[36] Mitchison and Leneman, *Sexuality and Social Control*, 33-4.

themselves swiftly removed from the community, as an entry in Cadder's session minutes in August 1730 shows: "The session being informed that John Anderson of Bishopbridge had a woman quartred in his family that Did not belong to this parish and was well knoun to be under scandall therefore they appoint two of their number to goe to the said John and Desire him to put that woman out of his family."[37]

The supreme goal of the sessions of Scotland's parishes was to bring about not just an external performance of repentance but a sincere inward sorrow for the sin committed. It is impossible to know how successful they were in achieving this goal; as the important work of James Scott has emphasized, dissimulation and false compliance are crucial "weapons of the weak" in a variety of cultural settings,[38] and what appears in kirk session registers to be an impressive level of submission to discipline may be understood in these terms. This must remain a matter of speculation, however, for these documents reveal little gap between parishioners' and elders' visions of Christian living and appropriate behavior, and can also be read in support of Mitchison and Leneman's conclusion that the Kirk's morality had been largely internalized by the Scottish laity.[39] The standard interpretation of discipline as imposed from above is being challenged in recent scholarship by the recognition that pressure from social equals also played an important role.[40] Scottish church discipline cases, in which violations are often brought to the session's attention by reports from below, confirm this view.[41] Most Christians of the Strathclyde appear to have sinned more out of weakness than a conscious rejection of Reformed Christianity's moral teachings. When the heat of passion had subsided, most such men and women repented promptly, sometimes abjectly, before the session. John Brown, called before Kirkintilloch's session in May 1730 for drunkenness on the

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[37] CH2/863/2, p. 114-5.
[38] *Weapons of the Weak*, esp. 284ff.
[39] *Sexuality and Social Control*, 238.
[40] See Charles Parker, *The Reformation of Community: social welfare and Calvinist charity in Holland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: a social history of moral regulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Parker, "Pilgrims' progress: narratives of penitence and reconciliation in the Dutch Reformed Church, *Journal of Early Modern History* 5:3 (2001); W.M. Jacob, "'In love and charity with your neighbours…': ecclesiastical courts and justices of the peace in England in the eighteenth century,' in Cooper and Gregory (eds.), *Retribution, Repentance, and Reconciliation* (2004), pp. 205-17.
[41] Usually recorded in kirk session minutes anonymously, with formulae like "It was Reported to the Session that…" or "the Members being informed that…" See e.g. CH2/1252/3, p. 16; CH2/58/2, p. 230; CH2/31/2, p. 167; CH2/982/5, p. 138.

Sabbath, impressed the elders with his "frank acknowledgment and seeming penitency."[42] John Urie was cited to Cathcart's session in February 1732 for having in passionate anger used "most unaccountable and Blasphemous expressions which are stumbling to others"; when bystanders warned him in the midst of his cursing that he would be disciplined by the elders, he spoke dismissively of their authority, but when actually called before the session some time later Urie was contrite, admitting the wickedness of his conduct and promising better behavior in the future.[43] Margaret Montgomerie, cited for outrageous slander against her neighbor Janet Porter in October 1738,[44] told the Beith session she did not remember making the remarks the witnesses described, but that "if she had so spoken it was in her passion" and meekly "confessed her sin & promised never to be guilty of the like in time coming."[45] It was rare for a parishioner, like Cumbernauld's Betthia Gray in August 1727, to argue back to the session: "she owned herself a Sinner but was as good a Christian as her Neighbours, & that there needed be no such Dinn about her, for she knows the Session are but Men & the Scriptures saith to them, Judge not lest ye be judged."[46] Even parishioners who initially resisted the session's discipline—like Jean Miller in Dumbarton in 1723, who "had the Impudence to send to the Minister to tell that she would not Compear"—usually later appeared before the elders professing sorrow for their "contumacy."[47] In a small community like a Strathclyde village, "lying under scandal" meant social notoriety as well as religious sanction, and few villagers were willing to accept the marginalization this entailed over the long term. Even sinners who declined to "satisfy" the session's discipline for years often changed their minds when they became parents. Kirk session records show that baptism, though not, in Reformed theology, strictly necessary for salvation, was highly valued by parishioners. Parents under censure were not permitted by the Kirk to present their children to baptism, a

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[42] CH2/1027/1/111.
[43] CH2/732/1/186-7.
[44] Inter alia, that Porter "had filled her self drunk and then lay with four men one after another," that she was "following sojours [soldiers]," i.e., as a prostitute, and "had been scourged out of a [military] camp."
[45] CH2/31/3/
[46] CH2/79/1/9-11. Gray seems to have been part of Peter Laslett's "bastardy-prone subculture": in addition to the illegitimate child who was the subject of her 1727 dispute with Thomas Miller, she was again cited to the Cumbernauld session for fornication in 1732 (p. 65) and in 1735 (pp. 105, 112), having evidently born children to Alexander Leech, "workman in Irving."
[47] CH2/97/4/23-4. In Miller's case, the session's cozy working relationship with the Dumbarton magistrates obviously helped change her mind.

policy which motivated many estranged parishioners to actively seek a "course of discipline" for an old but not forgotten lapse.[48]

Although some minor offenses were disciplined by "sessional rebuke," administered by the minister before the elders alone, the session sought to discipline graver sins—almost all sexual misconduct as well as Sabbath-breach and some public quarreling and cursing—by a graphic public repentance before the congregation during Sunday worship.[49] In Scottish Calvinism "making one's repentance" was in many ways the successor to Catholic penitential practices, as Margo Todd has argued.[50] Public repentance was a carefully scripted rite, in which the penitent's garb (sackcloth) and position (on a special "stool of repentance" at the front of the church) were assigned. The problems Todd cites in the early history of this ritual—reluctant penitents covering their faces, laughing during the sermon or their own confessions, or needing to be fed lines by the minister[51]—are, however, vanishingly rare in the church records of eighteenth-century Strathclyde.[52] Ministers and elders took great care that an internal attitude of repentance correspond to the external rite. Rather than permit a reluctant or insincere performance of repentance, as Todd finds sometimes took place in the early seventeenth century, sessions were prepared to leave a hardened sinner "under scandal" for years. Session records show that both clergy and elders in the early eighteenth century devoted

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[48] e.g., William Baird in Kilmarnock in 1712, CH2/1252/3/16; Jean Anderson in Beith in 1713, CH2/31/2/104-5; John Young in Kilsyth in 1719, CH2/216/2/48; John Dunlop in Fenwick in 1720, CH2/982/5/84-6. cf. Ann Niel who in 1752 "craved of [the Beith elders]…they would consider what was proper to be done in order to get her Child baptized" CH2/31/2/210. Several episodes in the session registers, which show parental anxiety about infants dying unbaptized, suggest Reformed doctrine on baptism had not found popular acceptance; see e.g. the case of John Livingstone in Eastwood in February 1730: "the child was weakly and seemingly near death, and the father insisted for baptism," CH2/119/1, p. 165.

[49] For comparable practices in among the French Reformed, see Raymond Mentzer, "Notions of sin and penitence within the French Reformed community," and among the Dutch Reformed, Charles Parker's "Rituals of reconciliation," both in Lualdi and Thayer (eds.), *Penitence in the Age of Reformations* (2000).

[50] *Culture of Protestantism*, Chapter 3 "Performing Repentance," 127-82. A broader discussion of rituals of repentance in Reformation Europe see Chapter 4 of Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual* (London: Routledge, 1997).

[51] Ibid., 127.

[52] A rare exception in the records I examined was the case of James Somervell in Cadder in May 1726. Sentenced to public rebuke for drunkenness and swearing, Somervell seemed penitent to the session, but waited until he was absolved and then publicly "broke out in Rude passionat expressions in the face of the whole congregation, against the Min^{r} and session, as Censureing him for his faults and overlooking off and passing by others guilty of the like fault." Invited to name those guilty of but unpunished for the same sin, Somervell admitted he could not and then sentenced to another round of rebuke for slandering the congregation: CH2/863/2, pp. 68-9.

large amounts of their time and energy to private pastoral counseling of sinners high and low, to "deal with their consciences" and bring them to a sincere repentance. In a typical case in Beith in 1717, different elders met privately with Barbara Ranken and Robert Shedden after both had admitted being guilty of fornication, to report to the session that the accused "had attended on them and seemed affected with their sin. After which they were called in, and seriously dealt with to Repent. Both of them professed their hearty sorrow for their guilt." Only then was the public performance of repentance allowed to go forward.[53] In many parishes, the third and final of the "appearances" mandated for fornication (to be followed by absolution and reconciliation with the congregation) seems not to have taken place on any set schedule, but only when the penitents themselves persuaded the session they were spiritually ready.[54] James Craig's final rebuke and absolution was contingent on his "having given evidences for his sorrow & repentance" for his fornication (Carmunnock 1712); a course of discipline for fornicators Janet Allan and William Gowdie was postponed indefinitely since neither "seemed affected with their sin" (Beith 1721); by contrast, when John Blackwood and Jannet Brown were "interrogat as to the sence of their [sin], they seemed penetent professed Grief and Sorrow for the same," and were appointed to be absolved (Fenwick 1719).[55] Even a parishioner who professed repentance and actively pursued discipline might be refused by the session, if it was believed he was motivated only by a desire for worldly respectability or did not fully understand his sin. Janet Armour voluntarily appeared before the Kilmarnock session in 1715 and requested a course of discipline, wanting to be absolved from the "scandal" of "fighting with her husband, cursing & swearing," but the elders declined to allow her public rebuke, finding that she "could give but little evidence for her sense & repentance for the said great Sins."[56] Again, it is impossible to know to what extent the repentance professed by accused sinners like Armour was sincere rather than dissimulation. Kirk session registers do show, however, how important an inward attitude of sincerity was to the parish leadership—who, in many cases, questioned the wayward parishioner at length and sometimes on multiple occasions trying to discern the

[53] CH2/31/2, p. 137.
[54] See, e.g., the case of John Brown and Margaret Millar in Kilmarnock in 1712, CH2/1252/3, p. 12-3.
[55] CH2/58/2, p. 210; CH2/31/2, pp. 184-5; CH2/982/5, p. 83.
[56] CH2/1252/3, p. 55.

seriousness of his conviction. It also shows the power of Calvinist hegemony in the Strathclyde, requiring not just lip service but a performance of repentance much more detailed and convincing than those some other cultures accepted.

The private meetings with minister or individual elders which often followed admission of guilt to the session sought to establish not only the sincerity of the sinner's repentance but also his understanding of why the admitted act was sinful. Jean Anderson, who admitted to "antenuptial fornication" in Beith in 1712, professed her sorrow, but the elders recorded that "they perceive she is very Ignorant, and therefore move that some others might be appointed to take pains to instruct her."[57] When Bessie Taylor appeared before the Kilmarnock session in November 1713, seeking absolution from a long-standing scandal of adultery, the elders remarked that "of late she seemed to be sensible of her sin, & had been at more pains to be instructed in the principles of religion," and agreed to absolve her.[58] In a number of cases, a course of discipline was the occasion of further catechesis in Reformed doctrine. In April 1721, the elders of New Monkland found that Jean Moffat "needed to be further Instructed, both anent her Sin and in the principles of Christianity," appointing her to "wait on the min^{r}, Ja: Shaw, and John Robertson elders nixt to her, for that purpose."[59] When Margaret Shearer, an "extremely ignorant" quadrilapse in fornication in Cumbernauld, professed her repentance to the elders in 1727, they ruled that "all Care should be taken to instruct her," appointing her to wait on the minister one day each week for private instruction.[60] In like manner Margaret Naesmith, who impressed the elders of the same parish as "extremely ignorant" in 1737, "was appointed to converse with the Members of the Session for her Instruction in the common Principles of Religion that she may be in a Capacity, thro' the Divine Blessing of reaping some suitable Advantages by Church Censure."[61] Elders' complaints about "ignorant" parishioners were overwhelmingly directed at women, although more rarely a male parishioner might also be singled out as ignorant and needing further instruction.[62]

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[57] CH2/31/2, p. 103.
[58] CH2/1252/3, p. 39.
[59] CH2/685/2, p. 112.
[60] CH2/79/1/, pp. 14-7.
[61] Ibid., p. 132.
[62] As was James Crumie in New Monkland in October 1721, CH2/685/2, p. 115. See also the interesting counter-example of James Scot in Kilsyth: in January 1721 his wife was instructed by the session to "be at pains to Instruct him, being she can read, and has some Measure of knowledge," CH2/216/2, p. 52.

Such remarks, which occur in kirk session records across the western Lowlands, indicate that by the eighteenth century church authorities demanded a very high level of christianization and internalization of Reformed belief among parishioners. Beyond external submission to the rite of repentance, or even a verbal profession of sorrow, sinners were expected to be able to articulate the reasons their conduct was regarded as sinful. That only a minority of penitents were labeled as "ignorant" and appointed to further instruction shows that the Kirk had already achieved impressive success in this ambitious goal.

A number of scholars have noted Scottish church discipline's relative even-handedness towards male and female fornicators.[63] In every case of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, the elders made it a high priority to identify and discipline the father. In an age before paternity tests, it is striking how many accused fathers in such cases confessed immediately, possibly indicating of lay internalization of Calvinist norms.[64] Those who denied a pregnant woman's accusation would be subject to repeated summons and private interviews by the elders, with exhortations to "an ingenuous confession." William Fleming at first denied Janet Knox's claim in June 1727 that he was the father of her child; the Cumbernauld session minutes record that "being much dealt with, & urged to a Confession, he at Length owned his Guilt with her."[65] Although the elders seem normally to have presumed the guilt of the man named by the pregnant woman, it was crucial for satisfactory performance of the penitential rite that he confess. In cases of sexual sin, session minutes suggest a strong preference for both man and woman to be rebuked together, and the woman's public rebuke was often postponed for months or even years, while the elders pressured her partner into "ingenuity,"[66] so that the desired double-repentance could take place.[67]

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[63] Thus, e.g., Mitchison and Leneman, *Sexuality and Social Control*, 230; Todd, 178-9.
[64] See inter alia CH2/1252/3, p. 10 (Kilmarnock 1712); CH2/58/3, p. 282 (Carmunnock 1737); CH2/460/2, p. 125 (Shotts 1756).
[65] CH2/79/1, p. 3.
[66] For a particularly dramatic example, see the 1719 case of James Thompson in Beith. After steadfastly denying Jean Craig's accusations and resisting for months the elders' "serious working with him," Thompson was forced by the session to attend Craig's death-bed where she continued to accuse him: "Upon which James Thompson with Tears confessed his guilt that he had wronged her, and done dishonour to God, he wished God might forgive him, and she might forgive him, and he would take care of the Child born by him, while he and the Child should live," CH2/31/2, pp. 158-9.
[67] e.g., CH2/31/2, p. 105

The Christian community and its leadership. The eighteenth-century Scottish parish was thus in part an ambitious effort to realize that long-cherished Reformed goal, the godly community. Sin was not only a matter of danger to the individual's soul, but was also an offense to the community. Session clerks often described particular sins as "giving great scandal in this place," causing "great offence to their neighbours," or as "stumbling to others,"[68] language which should not hastily be dismissed as conventional. Absence from the community's public worship in particular was often labeled as "offencive to the Congregation."[69] Discourse about the good of the community also figured frequently in decisions by either the session or the presbytery (the next court of appeal in Scotland's church hierarchy) to mitigate the penance typically prescribed for an individual. When in 1712 Jannet Jamison applied to the Presbytery of Paisley to have her excommunication lifted, her minister both noted Jamison's penitent attitude and remarked that "he judged it would no longer be for the edification of his people to continue her under that dreadfull sentence."[70] A fornicating couple in Eastwood in 1725 was also absolved early because the session judged that further public rebuke would be "no better for them or edifying to the congregation."[71] The parish records of western Scotland indicate an "aspiration to oneness" similar to that found by Christopher Marsh in early modern England, and similarly "articulated in a variety of contexts, but most powerfully and regularly in and through the parish church."[72] This might at first sight seem counter-intuitive. For if the species of Calvinism that had triumphed in seventeenth-century Scotland was indeed "Scottish puritanism,"[73] and if puritanism entailed "a view of the world so polarized and polarizing, a vision of the community of the godly so exclusivist and aggressively self-righteous," as Peter Lake has eloquently argued of the English strain, the Kirk's parish regime must likewise have created "division, controversy, and conflict."[74] The purpose of the Kirk's discipline was not, however, the separation of the godly from the ungodly. Its desired goal, and one usually realized, was the reconciliation of the sinner to the godly community. It was to this end

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[68] e.g., CH2/97/4, p. 4; CH2/58/3, p. 93; CH2/1252/3, p. 17; CH2/732/1, p. 186;
[69] Andrew Kenwick in Cathcart (1721) CH2/732/1, p. 129
[70] CH2/294/7, p. 131-2.
[71] CH2/119/1, p. 139. cf. CH2/732/1, p. 175 (Cathcart 1729)
[72] Marsh, "'Common prayer' in England," 71.
[73] The title of David Mullan's 2000 book.
[74] Peter Lake, "The godly and their enemies," in Durston and Eales (eds.), 182.

that ministers and elders spent countless hours privately counseling and "dealing with the consciences of" wayward parishioners. Decisive separation from the godly community by excommunication appears in church records as very rare; church leaders showed extreme reluctance to permanently exclude a member of the flock in this way,[75] and even sinners who had previously appeared indifferent to the Kirk's sanctions often sought reconciliation when it was threatened.[76]

Parish community and godly discipline have often been seen as a cover for parish elites,[77] and Scotland's presbyterian system, with its crucial role for the "ruling elder," has also been seen as an instrument of the lay elite's interests.[78] Whatever may have been the case with eldership elsewhere, in the Strathclyde region the session seems to be have been constituted not by lairds or their factors but by men more or less representative of the community. Men of some standing in the village were preferred, but some elders barely qualified as part of the "middling sort."[79] Those parishes which list the occupations of elders and deacons suggest that rural artisans and substantial tenants made up the session in most Strathclyde parishes. The new cohort of elders ordained in Kilmarnock in 1716 included two merchants, two weavers, an apothecary, and a bonnetmaker.[80] Five tenants, two portioners, and a wright were added to the Cumbernauld session in 1730; the 1734 cohort in Kilmarnock included a mason, a cooper, a glover, and three weavers.[81] New elders at Cambuslang in 1742 included three weavers and a shoemaker; elders in Greenock included a surgeon and three merchants,

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[75] See e.g. the Presbytery of Paisley's seven months of warnings and "dealing with" the "obstinate and Disobedient" William and Katherine Hamilton before the pair were excommunicated in August 1713, CH2/294/7, pp. 158-73.

[76] See e.g. the case of Agnes Leck: about to be excommunicated by Glasgow Presbytery for infanticide in March 1721 after ignoring several admonitions at the parish level, Leck appeared before the higher church court and "earnestly desired the presbytery would not proceed further towards the Sentence," CH2/171/9/1, p. 142. cf. similar cases CH2/171/9/1, p. 111; CH2/294/7, pp. 438-9; CH2/393/3, pp. 65-6. e.g., Margaret Robertson (January 1720), John Wylie (April 1722), Helen Tennent (May 1723),

[77] Wrighton and Levine, *Poverty and Piety* (1979). See also Wrightson's rejoinder to critics in the postscript to the 1995 edition, "Terling Revisited."

[78] E.g. Graham, 66; Mitchison, *Lordship to Patronage* (1983), 44-5. *N.b*. however her remark that "in some districts, notably Glasgow, the lay power was inactive [in eldership] and the lesser folk dominated" 56.

[79] The weaver James Jackson, elder in Cambuslang, seems to have fallen on hard times in the 1740s, and became himself a regular recipient of parish charity (e.g., CH2/415/1, p. 218). He seems to have stepped down from the session during these years, perhaps to prevent a conflict of interest.

[80] CH2/1252/3, p. 77.

[81] CH2/79/1, p.41-2 ; CH2/1252/3, pp. 317-8.

but also a hammerman, a tailor, a maltman, a joiner, and two shoemakers.[82] In more urban parishes like Kilmarnock and Dumbarton it was common for at least one or two of the elders to be magistrates—a practice which facilitated cooperation between church and state—but if session and town council overlapped, they were never coterminous. New elders were nominated by the existing session, making the body potentially a self-perpetuating oligarchy. In the early eighteenth century, however, nominations for eldership were announced weeks in advance to the congregation, with a set time and place at which parishioners might object to a nominee, a practice which seems not to have been an empty formality. The Cathcart minutes note that at the date and time announced to receive objections in April 1730, the session "waited to see if any did compeer"; in 1732 the Cambuslang session waited five hours at the day and time intimated to allow parishioners to object to nominees.[83] Though rare, objections to a nominee for eldership during this interval were taken seriously. When two Kilmarnock parishioners objected to Peter Thomson as "unfit to be an Elder" because of what they called his "living in Discord & fighting with & abusing Marion Smith his Mother-in-Law," Thomson was cleared, but only after an extensive investigation in which many witnesses, including Smith herself, testified to his innocence.[84]

Kirk session minutes reveal that complaints against the sitting parish leadership were also treated seriously. In October 1714 a man named Turner in Irvine complained to the session that Robert Hastie, one of their number, had slandered his wife as "a Damn'd drunken Bitch and whore." The elder admitted calling Mrs. Turner a whore, pleading in his defense that she had called him "Rascal Villain and Vagabond." Hastie was sentenced by his fellow elders to public rebuke before the congregation for slander, while Mrs. Turner for her less offensive remarks was privately admonished by the minister to "guard against all such expressions as above and rather return good for evil according to th^e^ Gospel Rules."[85] Parishioners sometimes took their objections to parish leadership to the presbytery, especially during the periodic presbyterial visitations, if they were not satisfied with the session's response. Disgusted parishioners of Kilbirnie in

[82] CH2/415/2, p. 95; CH2/872/1, pp. 2, 10.
[83] CH2/732/1, p. 178; CH2/415/2, p. 63.
[84] CH2/1252/3, p. 232ff.
[85] CH2/1505/1, pp. 97-9.

1725 petitioned Irvine Presbytery to remove Archibald Steel, their schoolmaster-precentor-clerk, accusing him of drunkenness and also of "neglecting both Instruction and discipline Either sleeping in bed or working some handy-work or going to the alehouse even when the children were in school."[86] The beadle or kirk-officer, whose duties included summoning accused sinners to the session, keeping the keys to the church, and ringing the bell for worship, was also the subject of complaints in several parishes. Bruce Cunningham in Kilwinning was accused at the presbytery's 1726 visitation of being "frequently drunk," and in consequence warned that "if he did not ament, he would be turned out of his office."[87] A fall from grace by the minister himself was more rare and more traumatic. Robert Maxwell, the minister of Kilmacolm, was in 1720 accused by some of his elders and a major parish landowner of drunkenness and coarse flirtation with a widow in the parish. A detailed investigation by the Presbytery of Paisley revealed conflicting testimony, division in the session, and what seems to have been a running feud between the minister and his principal accuser, the Laird of Porterfield; Maxwell was cleared of drunkenness and received a "sharp rebuke" for his behavior with the Widow Fleming.[88] Less ambiguous evidence of clerical sin might lead to a more decisive response. In October 1746, when the housekeeper of Cathcart's single minister George Adam became visibly pregnant, the elders held a special session in the pastor's absence, moderated by the minister of a neighboring parish. Isobel Gemmel, having confessed herself with child, "being further asked who was the father of the Child she thought her self with Answered Mr George Adam Minister of the Gospel in this place her forsaid Master." The disgraced cleric was then called in, "and being asked if he had been guilty of uncleanness with Isobel Gammel answered with much Sorrow he had."[89] The elders referred their fallen pastor to the Presbytery of Glasgow, where Adam, with "most humble and abased manner & in most moving and feeling terms exprest & confest his s^{d}. Guilt…with great Contrition and many Tears." He was deposed from his office by the Presbytery, and, in a striking reversal of fortune, the Rev. Mr. Adam was sentenced to appear on Cathcart's "stool of repentance" to be rebuked before the congregation by

[86] CH2/197/3, p. 528.
[87] CH2/197/3, p. 538.
[88] CH2/294/7, pp. 326-404.
[89] CH2/732/1, p. 274.

another minister.[90] But if slandering elders and fornicating ministers were subject to the same standards as ordinary parishioners, the Kirk's efforts to bring the local gentry under discipline were much less successful.

The parish and popular culture. If, as appears from church records, Scottish Calvinism found more popular acceptance than Reformed churches elsewhere, it may be partly because of an approach to folk culture that was more accommodating in some respects. While the Kirk's efforts to discipline disorderly sexuality was relentless, and cursing, slander, and Sabbath-breaking also met with a heavy hand, the sessions appear to have tolerated certain popular festivities which their brethren on the continent sought vainly to eradicate. In his study of Huguenot discipline in Nîmes, Philippe Chareyre describes dancing as the second most common infraction, subject to a veritable crusade by the French Reformed church, one which was ill-received by the Reformed laity: "In no other area," Chareyre concludes, "was there so wide and enduring a gulf between the faithful and the consistory."[91] By contrast, I found no cases of discipline for dancing in early eighteenth-century Scotland; probably, kirk sessions tolerated dancing unless it led to "scandalous carriage" or illicit sexual behavior. The Kirk officially disapproved of that favorite pastime of popular culture in Scotland, the "penny wedding"—a wedding feast for the humble, at which each guest contributed a small amount—yet cases of discipline for attendance at penny weddings are extremely rare in session records. Whatever the formal policies of the higher church courts,[92] the practice at the parish level seems to be one of tolerance as long as the festivities did not get out of hand. The elders kept an eye on local fairs "to see there be no disorder,"[93] but did not attempt to ban them, or the moderate merry-making that surely accompanied them.[94] While "scandalous drunkenness" and carousing at "unseasonable hours" might lead to trouble with the elders, the Kirk seems not to have declared war on the alehouse, nor is there evidence in kirk session records of an alehouse counterculture. A Beith changekeeper in 1717, interviewed about the unruly conduct of some of her customers, seems positively eager to

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[90] CH2/171/11/2, pp. 219-20.
[91] "Morality at sixteenth-century Nîmes," in Mentzer (ed.), *Sin and the Calvinists*, 85-91.
[92] See, e.g., the condemnations of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr in October 1743, CH2/463/3.
[93] Irvine 1718, CH2/1505/1, p. 137. The Irvine elders reported "nothing censurable" took place at the fair.
[94] At Fenwick's 1722 fair, the session ordered alehouses to stop selling alcohol after 10pm and to dismiss customers not staying the night, obviously indicating that drinking before that hour was acceptable, CH2/982/5, p. 98.

cooperate with the elders: "[She] professed her sorrow. . .and promise that henceforth she shall guard against the like for the time to come, and if no better can be, she will rather give up brewing any more than offend God, grive good people, or anger her neighbours."[95] Moderate enjoyment of alcohol was allowed even on the Sabbath: when two Cumbernauld men were accused by neighbors of "drinking immoderately" during the break between Sunday worship services, they were cleared after investigation, "it not appearing to the Session that they had drunk in any Degree to Excess."[96] The Kirk seems at the local level to have combined a vigorous and ambitious program of catechesis with *de facto* toleration of traditional revelries.[97] The local church authority's approach is best seen as one of discernment rather than resignation, however: practices like fortune-telling and popular magic met with fierce hostility from the elders. References to such activities can be found in the records of several Strathclyde parishes, suggesting that the Kirk never succeeded completely in stamping them out.[98] Both the infrequency of the offence and the immediate and abject penitence of the offenders, however, indicate that even parishioners who were tempted to such practices (in the cases I encountered, mostly for the purposes of recovering stolen goods) had internalized the Kirk's judgment that they were wrong.[99] Local church authorities therefore combated what it saw as the most heinous aspects of traditional culture, while accommodating itself to traditional folkways seen as innocuous, including some (like penny-weddings) of which superior church courts formally disapproved.

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[95] CH2/31/2, p. 134.
[96] CH2/79/1, p. 192.
[97] cf. Chapter 4, "Profane Pastimes," in Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, 183-226: "protestantism may have succeeded in part *because* the sessions enforced their legislation against festivity lightly, flexibly and sporadically" 221.
[98] CH2/216/2, p. 150; CH2/97/4, p. 47-9; CH2/982/5, p. 111.
[99] e.g. the case of Matthew Armour elder and younger, a father and son cited to Fenwick session in January 1742 for consulting a "soothsayer or necromancer" to recover stolen goods. The son "confest that he gave consent to one William Wilson that is now not in this parish to go to Glasgow to consult that person and that they went out and searched in conseqeuence of the Information they got They both professed grief and sorrow for the same and promised to walk more orderly in time coming." The Armours were "passed with a Sess:[ional] Rebuke," CH2/982/5, p. 178. In his important essay on religious cultures in early modern England, Martin Ingram argues that white magic and counter-magic like this slowly declined: "Certainly magical practitioners continued to operate throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth cengturies, though not necessarily in great numbers: about forty have been identified from Essex records for the period 1560-1600, but only half that number were named in the following eighty years. It would seem that official hostility gradually made people self-conscious and perhaps uneasy about resorting to them," 107, in Harris (ed.), *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500-1850*.

Historians have often depicted the Reformed tradition as abolishing sacred time and the rhythms of the church year.[100] Christopher Durston describes the English puritans' assault on the traditional calendar and festivities as no less than a "cultural revolution," inhuman in its demands for a community life purged of any worldly enjoyment and thus inevitably (and happily) a failure.[101] Here too, the Scottish brethren appear to have taken a slightly different tack. Though the traditional liturgical year was abolished, and "popish" festivities like Christmas appear to have disappeared from the highly presbyterian western Lowlands at least,[102] the Scottish communion festivals seem to have provided an alternative less dour than the round of fast days prescribed by Reformed divines on both sides of the border. These "sacramental occasions," which have been the subject of a rich study by Leigh Schmidt,[103] gave Reformed church life in Scotland a liturgical rhythm of its own, and allowed villagers to combine sacred and secular celebration each summer in a truly unique flower of Scottish Calvinism, a kind of marriage of Lent and Carnival. The communion seems to have taken place in most parishes in the region once annually during the summer months. It was preceded by a season of spiritual preparation, in which the minister exhorted hearers to self-examination and met with first-time communicants to offer instruction and spiritual advice[104] while the elders carefully reviewed parishioners' outward "walk and conversation" and distributed communion tokens to communicants.[105] A marathon of preaching and prayer preceded the sacrament, and ordinary life and work ceased in the village for a long

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[100] See Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 62-86, 202-45; Hutton, *Rise and Fall of Merry England: the ritual year, 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[101] Durston, "Puritan rule and the failure of cultural revolution, 1645-1660," in Durston and Eales (eds.), pp. 210-33.

[102] I encountered no cases of discipline for celebrations of Yule as Parker and Graham discuss for earlier periods. Whether this is because the Kirk was successful in stamping them out, or because session chose to overlook such festivities as it did moderate drinking and penny weddings, is impossible to say.

[103] *Holy Fairs* (1989). cf. also the discussion in Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, 85-119.

[104] At Kilmarnock before the 1726 communion, for example, "the Modr did briefly put them [young people communicating for the first time] in mind of their duty with respect to their participating of the sacrament of the Lords Supper, and Interrogat them upon several heads of their knowledge and belief, and of their desire to be admitted to this ordinance, and having received their satisfactory answer, Declared their being capable to be admitted, and gave them several pertinent and seasonable advices and directions," CH2/1252/3, p. 221.
CH2/58/3, p. 273. cf. Carmunnock 1716 (CH2/58/2, pp. 255, 284).

[105] Kilmarnock 1712, CH2/1252/3, p. 15; Carmunnock 1712 (CH2/58/2, p. 207); Fenwick 1721,CH2/982/5, p. 90.

weekend, with Thursday or occasionally Friday being observed as a fast day, Saturday as "preparation day," the communion itself on Sunday, to be followed by Monday as a day of thanksgiving. Each day involved two or sometimes three sermons, a feat of homiletic stamina which proved too much even for the hardy Scottish Reformed pastor, so that in almost all parishes communions featured four, six, or even more ministers preaching in rotation.[106] Assisting ministers were usually colleagues from a neighboring parish, and parishes staggered their own communions to accommodate this system; thus if Rutherglen celebrated the sacrament in June, Blantyre would do so in July, etc. The absence of one's own parish pastor (assisting at a neighbor's communion), of course, meant that regular worship would not be offered in the parish that Sabbath; many parishioners, however, apparently took such absences as opportunities to participate in the communion festival of another parish, and some appear to have spent all summer "gadding to communions" across the region.[107] The crowds at communions were often so large that the churches could not contain the additional hearers; many parishes maintained a special "tent" for communions[108] (a collapsible booth from which the minister preached to outdoor crowds), and sometimes preaching took place "in the church" and "at the tent" simultaneously. The spiritual climax of the festal communion took place on Sunday morning, when the parish pastor preached an "action sermon"[109] exhorting hearers to "close with Christ," and the communicants received the Lord's Supper.

The popularity of these communions—what Robert Wodrow called "fair-days of the gospel" can be seen from kirk session records from sundry contemporary testimony. They were the most crucial ritual of Scottish Calvinism,[110] combining the purification and asceticism of the communal fast day, a rite of passage for the young and the

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[106] The visiting ministers and who preached which sermon is often, though not always, noted in kirk session minutes, as e.g. Kilmarnock 1712, CH2/1252/3, p. 15; Carmunnock 1726, CH2/58/2, p. 85, and 1728, Ibid. pp. 109-10;

[107] See e.g. the perambulating piety of Elizabeth West, 21, 24, 27, 41, 55, 56, 77, 104; and of many of the Cambuslang converts, e.g.

[108] e.g. Kilsyth, CH2/216/2, p. 176; Cumbernauld, CH2/79/1, p. 56; Dumbarton, CH1/97/5, p. 301.

[109] This term is often used in kirk session records and other contemporary sources to describe the final sermon preached before the communion: see CH2/1252/3, p. 15 (Kilmarnock 1712), CH2/58/3, p. 85 (Carmunnock 1726). The action sermon was always preached by the minister in whose parish the communion was taking place and never by a visitor.

[110] For the Scottish communion as ritual, see Schmidt, 69-114. cf. Susan Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual* (1997); Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (2005).

spiritually reborn, and the joyful celebration of Sunday and Monday. A "sacramental occasion" was often a climactic spiritual expeience for the devout laity, as can be seen in the writings of Elizabeth West and other Scottish devotional writers of the time. For the less devout, they were occasions when spiritual concern mixed with leisure and entertainment. Temporal and spiritual interest need not be mutually exclusive, and for many parishioners, communion festivals were likely the occasion of both: travel to other towns, the fervent preaching of unfamiliar ministers (whom the laity clearly compared and evaluated), and, after the Supper, merriment not strictly religious. The convivial side of the communion festival must largely be inferred from the laconic accounts of kirk session minutes. Session records occasionally note discipline of a parishioner "drunk after the Communion";[111] though this seems not to have been common in the Strathclyde, more moderate drinking and feasting probably were. Piping, fiddling, and dancing, which local church authorities evidently overlooked at penny weddings, may have taken place on communion Sunday and thanksgiving Monday as well.

Session and presbytery records from early eighteenth-century Strathclyde, therefore, reveal a world in which the older ideal of a parish community to a large extent had been made to cohere with an ambitious program of Reformed catechesis. The sessions had reshaped Scottish folk culture in some ways while accommodating it in others, and by drawing elders from a cross-section of the population may have made the Kirk's strict discipline more acceptable to the majority. The supreme ritual of the parish community, the distinctive Scottish communion, was, as Schmidt emphasizes, preeminently a ritual of community: "the Union and Communion of Christians one with another."[112] As parishioners sat together on benches around the Table to eat the common meal, social distinctions—held by Scottish Calvinism to be part of God's plan for the temporal order but without spiritual significance—were momentarily erased: "All feasted at the same tables, drank from the same cups, and broke bread from the same loaves. The same spiritual benefits—communion with Christ at his table—were available

[111] e.g., at Kilsyth 1717, CH2/216/2, p. 83; at Fenwick 1733, CH2/982/5, p. 147.
[112] On the communal aspects, see esp. Schmidt, 94ff. cf. Miri Rubin on the summer festival of late-medieval Catholicism, Corpus Christi in *Corpus Christi: the eucharist in late medieval culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

to all. God in this feast was indeed no respecter of persons."[113] A remarkable illustration of the communal aspect of Scottish Calvinism was the baptism of Jean Anderson's child in Beith in 1719. Fatherless at birth, the infant lost its mother soon afterwards. The Beith session unanimously ruled "that the said Child shall be Baptized upon Sabbath next, and that the whole Session shall undertake for the Christian Education as Sponsors."[114] The responsibility of the Christian community to its members was the obverse of the extraordinary regulation of personal and especially sexual matters for which Scottish Calvinism has been better-known.

THE INNER WORLD OF FOLK CALVINISTS

The parishioners of eighteenth-century Strathclyde were to be found at various sites along a continuum of spiritual fervor. The structures of parish life, rites of passage like baptism, and the curious mix of religious and worldly excitement in the summer communion festivals may have marked the limits of religious interest for some lay people. Together with the sermon-attending majority and the small minority which rejected the godly community entirely[115] were a significant number of parishioners whose understanding of Reformed Christianity shaped their inner lives and personal identities. In Scotland, as south of the border, it is difficult to quantify the godly and the conformable.[116] But evidence from early eighteenth-century popular print, from church records, and from the remarkable collection of spiritual autobiographies collected at Cambuslang in 1743 allow us a glimpse at the inner world of Scottish folk Calvinists in the early eighteenth century, a religious culture which penetrated far below village elites to include cottars, farm servants, and journeymen.

The religious culture of Scotland's vernacular Calvinism bridged oral and literate modes of communication and included layfolk and their parish pastors. Several recent studies of early modern religious cultures have undermined the notion of a popular

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[113] Schmidt, 104-5.
[114] CH2/31/2, p. 153.
[115] See e.g. Thomas Marshall of Kilsyth: urged by two elders in 1720 to "come to the session, to be at all pains to be instructed in our Holy Religion," he refused: CH2/216/2, p. 61.
[116] Spufford, "Can we count the 'godly' and the 'conformable' in the seventeenth century?", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985).

culture sealed off from the culture of elites, and likewise the classic interpretation of Calvinism as excessively abstract faith for the elite, or as an engine of "disenchantment."[117] Protestants in early modern Britain, New England, and the Netherlands did not live in a disenchanted universe, but in a world of providences, prophecies, signs and wonders,[118] in which an angelic vision might recruit a Dutch orphan to the ministry and a Boston magistrate might be constantly on the lookout for God's will as expressed in portents and prodigies. The folk Calvinism of the villages shared with the official doctrine of the Kirk a heavy emphasis on salvation by grace through faith in Christ's death, but it was much more vibrantly supernaturalist, looking for divine activity in daily life. The Bible was revered not as a closed set of universally true propositions, but as "living and active," with the believer's sudden recollection of a passage providing specific guidance for a particular situation.

Oral and literate Calvinism. Many scholars, assuming that a "religion of the book" could not appeal to an unlettered peasantry, have concluded that Reformation preaching must have met with apathy in the villages.[119] Recent scholarship increasingly has challenged the older schema of Walter Ong and Eric Havelock that posited a profound gap between oral and literate ways of thought,[120] and Scottish folk Calvinism was a movement that bridged this divide, making use of media, such as the sermon and catechizing,[121] which were accessible to the illiterate and the semi-literate, even as it

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[117] See especially Bob Scribner's critique of this familiar Weberian trope, set forth in his essays "The Reformation, popular magic, and the 'disenchantment of the world,'" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23:3 (1993), and "Reformation and desacralization: from sacramental world to moralized universe," in Hsia and Scribner (eds.), *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe* (1997).

[118] A number of important studies have highlighted this aspect of the lived religion of early modern Calvinists in recent years. See David Hall's *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment* (1989) on New England; Willem Frijhoff's *Wegen van Evert Willemsz*. (Nijmegen: SUN, 1995) and his essays "Signs and wonders in seventeenth-century Holland" and "Prophecies in Society" (published in *Embodied Belief*, 2002) on the Netherlands; and on England, Alexandra Walsham's "Miracles in post-Reformation England" in Cooper and Gregory (eds.), *Signs, Wonders, Miracles* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 2005) and Jane Shaw's *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

[119] Examples abound, but see e.g. Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations* (1993 2nd ed.) and *The English Reformation Revised* (1987).

[120] See Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (2000); Gerd Baumann (ed.), *The Written Word: literacy in transition* (1985), esp. Keith Thomas's essay "Literacy in early modern England"; Richard Enos (eds.), *Oral and Written Communication: historical approaches* (1990).

[121] On catechisms and catechizing in early modern England, see Ian Green's magisterial work *The Christian's ABC* (1996). For Green's conclusions on the effectiveness of catechesis over the long seventeenth century, notably more optimistic than Strauss's for sixteenth-century Germany, see his Conclusion, 557-70.

promoted reading and lay access to Scripture. The favored style of preaching in Scottish Calvinism was filled with vivid imagery, famously fervent and emotional—infamous to English visitors who preferred a more restrained style—and may have contained an element of call and response. Margo Todd argues in her *Culture of Protestantism* that the many questions which the modern scholar reads as rhetorical may have actually sought an audible answer.[122] Psalm-singing also bridged the gap between oral and literate Calvinism in the early eighteenth-century parish: in their easily-remembered if ungraceful metrical translation, sung to twelve simple tunes, the texts of the psalms became deeply ingrained in the memories and mentalities of eighteenth-century Scots.[123]

The rate of literacy in early modern Scotland remains subject to much dispute,[124] but by the eighteenth century literacy seems to have been widespread even in the lower social strata in the Strathclyde. Parish schools existed in almost all parishes in this area, and parents were seen as responsible for ensuring their children were educated. James Finlay was called before the Kilmarnock session in 1713 and asked "why he did not put his Children to school to learn to read"; Finlay "gave his promise to educate his Children" and was dismissed.[125] The conversion narratives compiled after the revival of 1742, in which 110 converts from the area described their lives and spiritual experiences to the minister of Cambuslang, show that many parishioners were taught to read by their parents even before attending the village school. Janet Jackson, a weaver's daughter from Cambuslang born about 1720, recalled that "I was taught to read my Question [i.e., catechism] and Psalm-Books at the Publick School, and learned to read my Bible by my Parents at home."[126] A number of other converts from the mid-century revival make

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[122] Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, 53-4.

[123] The middle-aged shoemaker Alexander Birsland recounted that his overwhelming spiritual experience at Cambuslang in 1742 was prompted by hearing the singing of the 45th Psalm, which left him "greatly melted & warmed," surely because of prior familiarity with and emotional associations with it. Great familiarity with the texts of the psalms is noteworthy throughout the Cambuslang narratives, e.g. 1:10, 501, 543-4, 556; 2:12.

[124] Much of the older debate took ability to sign one's name as evidence for literacy: see e.g. David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order* (1980), and Rab Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity* (1985), but this has been shown to be methodologically problematic, as many early modern people could read but not write. See esp. Margaret Spufford, "First steps in literacy," *Social History* 4 (1979); T.C. Smout, "Born again at Cambuslang," *Past and Present* 97 (1982); Keith Thomas, "Literacy in early modern England," in Baumann (ed.), *The Written Word* (1986), pp. 97-122.

[125] CH2/1252/3, p. 36.

[126] Cambuslang MSS., 1:17.

reference to reading the Scriptures.[127] Even those who were not themselves literate could easily find a peer able to read to them.[128] In the parishes of this region inability to read was, as Ned Landsman has discussed, a source of shame[129]—a day-laborer's spouse admitted that she was "much ashamed that I could not make use of my Bible in the Kirk, as others about me did"[130]—and those who had not learned to read as children frequently sought to acquire reading skills as adults, often prompted by desire for access to the Scriptures.[131] A table at the back of the Cambuslang narratives' second volume listing the converts by age, place of residence, and occupation (or, for most women, father's or husband's occupation) show these avid Bible-readers not to be members of the "parish elites" but tailors, coopers, tenants and portioners, daughters of weavers and carters; details of several narratives indicate that the subject was working as a household servant at the time of her conversion.[132]

The religious bestsellers of eighteenth-century Scotland. If the Bible and the Westminster catechisms were the daily bread of this surprisingly literate rural population, many Strathclyde parishioners hungered for devotional reading beyond these. The narratives of the Cambuslang converts reinforce a growing scholarly consensus, based on the research of Margaret Spufford and Tessa Watt, that a popular market for "small godly books" did exist.[133] The converts from the 1742-3 revivals describe reading a number of small godly books and even a few large ones. Vincent's Catechism and William Guthrie's *Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ* are the most frequently mentioned,[134] while other converts mention Andrew Gray's sermons, the somewhat hefty theological writings of James Durham and Thomas Watson, and "Elizabeth Wastes Book" as influences on

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[127] Ibid., 1:144, 208, 362, 398, 569; 2:4, 162, 442, 455, 471.
[128] See the testimony of Elizabeth Brechem. After the text of Psalm 45:10 came to Brechem in a dream, "having told my Neighbour of it, who taking the Bible finding the place and reading it, I heard it read over and over again with great pleasure & sweetness," Cambuslang MSS., 1:25.
[129] "Evangelists and their hearers," pp. 140-1.
[130] Cambuslang MSS., 2:447.
[131] See e.g., Cambuslang MSS. 1:76, 218, 398, 569; 2:447, 557.
[132] e.g., Mary Lap, Ibid., 1:9 ("I told my Master…"); Jean Hay's discussion of how her spiritual practices varied depending on the "Family" with whom she lived, 1:254; John Aiken, 1:464 ("I got much good at family worship in my Masters House"); J. Dickison, 1:569 ("I was taught to read some in some private houses where I served").
[133] Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories* (1981), esp. 197; Eamon Duffy, "The godly and the multitude," *Seventeenth Century* 1:1 (1986); Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (1991); Spufford ed., *The World of Rural Dissenters* (1995), esp. Watt's essay "Piety in the pedlar's pouch"; Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism* (2000).
[134] Cambuslang narratives volume 1: 60, 24, 313, 359.

their piety.[135] So substantial was the village market for some of these works that apparently special editions were printed specifically for rural distribution. A 1720 edition of the perennial bestseller by Guthrie notes that "This Book is to be sold at the Booksellers Shops in Edinburgh and Glasgow, so as Chapmen may sell a single Copy unto Country People for Half a Merk Scots."[136] A catalog in the back of the 32-page "penny godly" *True Christian Love*, though dating from somewhat later in the century, shows the kind of books favored by the folk-Calvinist reader; many of the same titles are mentioned by the Cambuslang converts at mid-century:

> Bibles of several sorts plain or gilded
> Large Quarto Bibles
> New Testaments and Psalm-Books
> *Guthrie*'s Treatise, with his Life
> *Boston*'s Four-fold State
> Marrow of Modern Divinity, with Boston's Notes
> *Boston* on the Covenant
> *Marshel* on Sanctification.[137]

The best-selling devotional material of eighteenth-century Scotland, like the works of Thomas Vincent and William Guthrie, expresses a piety intensely focused on Christ and his death on the cross in the place of sinners. By the "happy exchange" at Calvary, the sinless Christ suffered the penalty deserved by all human sin, while his own righteousness and eternal life were given to Christians. The *Short and easie catechism*, printed in Glasgow in 1719, sought to explain Christian theological language about atonement and redemption to humble readers: "Q. *What mean you by a Redeemer?* A. One that buys us back again. Q. *What doth he buy us back from?* A. The slavery of Sin and Satan, and Eternal Death. . . .Q. *And what price did he give for us?* A. The price of his own blood."[138] Other Scottish penny godlies reduced this core message of folk Calvinism to verse, like Patrick Tait's *Poem on the creation of the world*:

> Who can express, or yet conceive the Pain
> And Grief our Saviour did now sustain!
> When JESUS CHRIST the holy sinless one,

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[135] Ibid. volume 1: 3, 487, 514, 305; 2:315.
[136] Note at back of Guthrie, *Christians Great Interest* (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1720), held at NLS, Edinburgh.
[137] David Dickson, *True Christian Love* (Glasgow: printed for and sold by James Mewross, book-seller in Kilmarnock, 1765), 32.
[138] *Short and easie catechism* (Glasgow: Robert Sanders, 1719), 9-10.

> Had for the Sins of Thousands to atone!...
> What Love is like the Love of Jesus, who
> So much Concern doth for his people show?
> The Shepherd good, that he his Sheep might save,
> His Life a Ransom for his sheep he gave.[139]

Scottish folk piety, while affirming the Trinity, was emotionally centered on Christ rather than on God the Father. It was God the Son, by voluntarily dying to atone for human sins, who had made the salvation of Christians possible, and fervent descriptions of Christ's love for humankind (evidenced supremely in his death for their redemption) constitute the climax of almost all of Scotland's best-selling small religious books. "Astonishing Love!" John Willison exclaims in the rhapsodic conclusion of his *Sacramental Meditations and Advices*: "That the eternal Son of God, intreated by no Man, but hated of all Men, should in his Love and Pity intreat for Men; yea, undertake to die for them, when Enemies to God and all that is good!" As Willison makes plain, it is this self-sacrificing love of the crucified Savior that grounds the intensely emotional love for Christ expressed in the Scottish penny godlies: "Can I be but ravished with Love to him, when he comes to communicate his Love to me. . .and say, Behold how I have loved you, and given myself for you!"[140] *The Riches of Christ* by John Bunyan, another favorite of eighteenth-century Scottish readers, frames Christian love for Christ in the same way: "How great ought our Veneration to be for so transcendent a love and favour as this, when the Innocent submitted to die to save the Guilty from the Power of the second Death!"[141] Scottish folk piety would often be described by its eighteenth-century opponents as "gloomy" and "melancholy," but this is only a half-truth. The Christianity of such writers as Willison and Guthrie took an extremely dark view of human sinfulness and corruption, but equally emphasized the overwhelming love of Christ. Indeed, the two emphases of Scottish Calvinism are correlative: the more dire the human condition apart from Christ's redeeming work and the more depraved the sinners whom he came to save, the more shocking and wonderful were his love in dying for humanity.

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[139] Edinburgh: 1751, p. 47.
[140] Willison, *Sacramental Meditations and Advices*, 16, 19.
[141] Bunyan, 6. Before 1750 Scottish publishers had printed eight editions of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, five editions of *The Holy War*, four of *Sighs from Hell*, and three of *Grace Abounding*.

In pious bestsellers, an emphasis on the cross and the atonement, essentially consonant with core Reformation teaching, was typically expressed in intensely personal terms. Christ is depicted not as dying for humanity in general but for the reader in particular, as can be seen in another frequently reprinted work, Dickson's *True Christian Love*:

> For me thou emptied thy self,
> And stood in Fathers Law:
> For me thou emptied thy self
> And stood in Fathers aw:
> For me thou took on Thee the Curse,
> And felt thy Fathers wrath
> For me oft plung'd was thy Soul
> And heavy to the death.[142]

Willison invites his readers to imagine Christ saying to them, "It was for you I was betrayed, reviled, condemned and crucified; for you my Hands and Feet were nailed to the Tree, my Head crowned with Thorns, and my Side pierced with a Spear: And all this I suffered, that you might be saved from Hell, and get Sin forgiven, and God reconciled to you for ever!"[143] For shoemakers, farm servants, and weavers in rural Scotland, the message that the divine Christ had foreseen, loved, and died for them personally may have been a very powerful one. It imbued their lives with worth and dignity of a cosmic dimension, regardless of their status in the Scottish social order.

The salvation won by Christ on the cross, however, was not infused into the entire parish community by the sacraments of baptism and communion. Instead, it was made efficacious only by the faith of the individual Christian. This intensely personalized understanding of salvation sat uneasily alongside the parochial forms maintained in Scottish Calvinism. Samuel Rutherford's *The Door of Salvation Opened*, which saw perennial eighteenth-century reprints, urged readers to go beyond outward participation in parish life to an inward self-dedication: "O Sinner! Now Christ is standing and calling to thy Soul. . .I will receive thee unto Mercy, I will forgive all thy Sins, I will accept, I will heal, I will save thy Soul, if thou wilt open thy Heart this Day unto me, and let me

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[142] Dickson, *True Christian Love* (Edinburgh: 1701), 27.
[143] Willison, *Sacramental Meditations and Advices*, 19-20.

in."[144] William Guthrie, the author most frequently mentioned by the Cambuslang converts, told his readers that

> *Believing in Christ must be Personal*; a man himself, and in his own proper person must close with Christ Jesus. . . .It will not suffice for a mans safety and relief, that he is in Covenant with God, as a born member of a visible Church by vertue of his parents subjection to Church Ordinances, neither will it suffice that the person had the *initiating seal of Baptism* added.[145]

It was in part a steady consumption of calls to personal commitment like Guthrie's *Trial* and Allein's *Alarm to the Unconverted*, and of the proliferating spiritual autobiographies of the early eighteenth century, that prepared tenants and shoemakers to narrate their spiritual lives at Cambuslang in 1743.

The remarkable *Memoirs, or Spiritual Exercises of Elizabeth West* are a depiction of one Scottish lay woman's religious life around 1700; given the book's status as a bestseller in the following century, they are also a template, as West was taken by the many purchasers of the book's eighteenth-century editions as a model of the godly life. West was given a religious upbringing by her mother and aunt, but her spiritual autobiography is not marked by continuous spiritual growth from her baptism through catechesis in the parish but instead by cataclysmic discontinuity, in which the key moment is a personal self-dedication facilitated by the fiery preaching of a new parish minister, George Meldrum.

> He told us, Christ was willing, and the fault would ly at our own door, if we would not give our consent. . .in which place I took heaven and earth to witness, angels and men, the very place where I was, that I was made willing and content to take Christ on his own terms, as he was offered in his natures and offices, as a Prophet to teach me, as a Priest to reconcile me to God, as a King to rule and govern me.[146]

West was no deliberate subverter of early modern Scotland's social hierarchy. But her experience of religion did relativize horizontal relationships of all kind, as her relationship with her God took precedence over deference to parents, masters, and the formal structures of human religious institutions. West judged her father as lacking in spiritual depth, "nothing but a moral man, no ways taken up with the duties of religion,"

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[144] 3-4.
[145] Guthrie, 164.
[146] West, 18-9.

and she criticized his spiritual shortcomings to his face.[147] Later, West refused to obey her mother's instructions to hire herself out as servant to a family she regarded as not sufficiently godly: "to obey them [parents], when their commands are contrary to the Lord's, is not allowable."[148] West's memoir taught village Calvinists not to challenge or reject social hierarchy but to regard it as penultimate. While preachers played a crucial role in West's spirituality by facilitating religious emotion, their influence derived not from their office but from personal charisma. West traveled to hear many ministers,[149] and implicitly and explicitly compared them; of one man's preaching she says "I found a great deal of the spirit and power of God in this sermon,"[150] while others fail to impress. Her access to God was essentially unmediated and, while not necessarily antisocial, transcended the social and ecclesiastical order. To those most invested in the social order of the *ancien régime*—to all fathers and masters who did not want their spiritual fervor assessed by pious inferiors—immediate religion like West's was obnoxious and possibly dangerous.[151] It is for this reason that the style of piety she practiced and exemplified for eighteenth-century readership would be branded as "enthuasism."[152]

Charismatic biblicism. The lived religion of Elizabeth West transcended social hierarchy and even, to a great extent, the institutional church. It was, nonetheless, recognizably Reformational in centering on the atoning death of Christ for sin and in its biblicism. All the godly bestsellers of eighteenth-century Scotland uphold an extremely high view of the written Scriptures as God's Word. The highest authority of all, however, lay in the convergence of Scripture and feeling, in a phenomenon which we may call charismatic biblicism. In this phenomenon, which features prominently both in West's *Memoirs* and in the narratives of the Cambuslang converts decades later, a sudden or vivid recollection of a particular passage in Scripture is understood to be a direct communication from God. West describes such an experience in the midst of a spiritual struggle in 1702: while she was at prayer,

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[147] Ibid., 25-6.
[148] Ibid., 90.
[149] Ibid., 27, 41, 55, 77, 104.
[150] Ibid., 113.
[151] J.G.A. Pocock, "Enthusiasm: the antiself of enlightenment," 7-28 in Klein and La Vopa (eds.), *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment*; Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion* (1999).
[152] Michael Heyd, *"Be Sober and Reasonable"* (1995); Klein and La Vopa (eds.), *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment* (1998); Ann Taves, *Fits, Visions, and Trances* (1999).

> [there] darted in these two scriptures with light, life, and power: 'I will be your God and guide even unto death. I will guide you by my counsel, and afterwards bring you to glory.' Now who can think or conceive what a change this wrought me, in the twinkling of an eye? My dull, lifeless and frozen heart was in a moment turned into a flame of love and admiration, that he Lord should be so condescending to such an unworthy creature.[153]

Though the infallibility of the Word was always asserted, it had most authority for West not at first reading but when it returned to her from her own memory—an experience she understood as God's bringing it to her mind, and which later folk Calvinists in Cambuslang would refer to as the word "coming with sweetness" or "with power." The sudden and powerful recollection of a biblical text, believed to be a divine message to the recipient, was experienced by ordinary parishioners as well as classic devotional writers like West.[154] Robert Wodrow records in his *Analecta* that a woman in Eastwood parish was persuaded to participate in communion when the words of Isaiah 41:10 came suddenly to her mind ("Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God"). A female servant in his parish, Wodrow recounts elsewhere, had feared that she was among the reprobate, but was reassured when "that Scripture, Hos. xiv. 'I'le heal thy backslidings, and love thee freely,' was brought to her mind."[155] The pastor's apparent approbation of these experiences as supernatural messages show to what degree a vernacular Calvinism was shared between pastors and people in the rural parishes of the west. Janet Ried, a middle-aged married woman involved in the 1742 revival, described her climactic spiritual experience this way: "After I had got up and was essaying prayer in secret, that word came into my heart, In ane acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee."[156] Elizabeth Dykes's experience of conversion was similar: "That word came into my Mind, I will heal your backsliding, I will love you freely: This word was with power: and I thought the Lord had said it to me."[157] James Jack likewise would credit his conversion not to a powerful sermon he had heard, but to a

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[153] West, 116. Scripture quotations from Psalm 48:14 and Psalm 73:24.
[154] The many instances of this practice in West and among Wodrow's parishioners show that, *contra* Landsman's 1989 article "Evangelists and their hearers," the "application of such providences to questions of individual salvation rather than to national and clerical causes" (p. 135) was traditional, not an innovation of the 1742 revival, and that it was accepted by parish pastors who shared in parishioners' folk Calvinism.
[155] *Analecta*, 1:110, 3:136-8.
[156] Cambuslang MSS., 1:89. Scripture quotation from II Corinthians 6:2.
[157] Ibid., 1:209. Quotation from Hosea 14:4.

supernatural recollection of the preacher's text the next day: "That word came into my heart with power, 'Whom have I in Heaven but thee, O lord: And there is none on earth,' at which I felt my heart filled with love to God & Christ and to man; and as much joy as I was able to contain."[158] It was crucial, however, that the inner Word correspond with the outer Word of Scripture. Jean Dickieson at first believed herself to have received a message from God, when "these words were spoken to my soul…w^{t} great sweetness and pleasure and delight: 'Thou art one of my Elect whom I have chosen.'" Dickieson soon doubted whether this was a message from God, however, "seeing I could not find [these words] my self in my bible." She asked a minister to help her locate the passage in the Bible, who told her it was not to be found there: "which increased my doubts." She remained hesitant about whether the message had truly been a supernatural communication, but consoled herself that "tho' this very words were not in the Bible, yet there was nothing in them inconsistent with what the Bible teaches, and I think there is the same doctrine in the Bible."[159] Dickieson's testimony shows the curiously hybrid nature of this practice in Scottish folk Calvinism. On the one hand, God was believed to be active in communicating directly to the faithful today, offering to the humblest Christians guidance and encouragement through immediate revelation. On the other, the authority of the written Bible was strongly professed; immediate revelation was expected to take place only through the very words of Scripture, now given a personal application or a different context, and alleged revelation not couched in the words of Scripture was doubted by the recipients themselves as well as by clerical authorities.

Ill at ease in Zion. Popular piety in the west of Scotland was highly literate and fiercely loyal to the Westminster standards of orthodoxy, committed to the rigorous devotional life of "family worship" and "secret prayer" the Kirk urged on lay Christians.[160] Yet both Scotland's most popular printed works in the early eighteenth century and clerical sources indicate that the relationship of the folk-Calvinist laity to the parishes of the west was probably always a somewhat uneasy one. Many ministers in the Strathclyde faced the somewhat curious problem of a laity—or at least the inner circle of

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[158] Ibid., 1:501, quotating Psalm 73:25. cf. Thomas Walker, 1:547; John Wier, 1:556; Margaret Shaw, 2:147; Agnes Buchanan, 2:190.
[159] Ibid., 1:612-3.
[160] See e.g., CH2/48/2, p. 226 (Carmunnock 1714); CH2/216/2, p. 48 (Kilsyth 1719).

their most active and most zealous "hearers"—who distrusted the Kirk and its clergy as not godly enough. These parishioners, though usually regular in their attendance upon "public ordinances," supplemented their spiritual lives with short printed pamphlets that criticized the eighteenth-century Kirk for compromise, mediocrity and "backsliding." Through such works and their lay-led "societies for prayer," the region's Calvinist laity maintained a habit of criticism and a sensitivity toward the possibility of clerical failure and even apostasy, a habit that looked backwards towards the difficult years of the Restoration, but would also prepare layfolk for the rise of evangelical dissent later in the eighteenth century.

While many of the religious bestsellers of eighteenth-century Scotland, like Guthrie and West, had the full approval of the religious establishment, and others were written by Church of Scotland ministers in good standing, like John Willison of Dundee, another genre of the popular "penny godlies" sharply criticized the eighteenth-century Kirk for betraying its Covenanting heritage. A number of short biographies celebrated alternative "saints of the covenant," not canonized by the Kirk's official historians like Robert Wodrow, and thus offered pious readers a rival account of the Restoration crisis and the revolutionary settlement. The heroes of Wodrow's history were the moderate Covenanters, like his father James, who had patiently endured the oppression of the bishops and their "curates," had accepted the Stuart kings' "indulgence" to preach,[161] and had forged the 1690 settlement. In the counter-narrative of radical print works in the early eighteenth century, however, the Kirk's post-1690 leaders were cowards and collaborators, who had abandoned the Covenants and accepted an "Erastian" compromise with non-Calvinist monarchs and prelatical England. The most extreme Covenanting preachers of the "killing times," condemned in Wodrow's official *History* as violent fanatics—Alexander Peden, Donald Cargill, and Richard Cameron—though *personae non gratae* to the Kirk's establishment, remained folk heroes in the west, where they had

[161] See Hyman, 58: those clergymen who accepted this government compromise "would not be silenced and removed to a distance from their old parishes as originally decreed. Instead they would be placed under a kind of quarantine, each within a designated parish. Where his old church stood vacant, a minister would be restored. Otherwise, he generally would be assigned to a charge available in the same or a neighboring presbytery." On the reproach cast by extremists on presbyterians who accepted indulgence, see Hyman, 72-3.

preached and organized armed resistance to the Stuarts.[162] Despite ecclesiastical disapproval, a steady stream of Calvinist "saints' lives" of these men continued to be printed through the eighteenth century,[163] sometimes criticizing Wodrow and the Kirk's official history in detail.[164] These works exhibit the strong anticlerical streak of Scotland's folk Calvinism: clerical heroes like Peden serve to point out the mediocrity of the clergy more generally. Unlike Wodrow's account, which focuses on ministers who lost their livings under episcopacy, here the godly laity of the west and south suffer the full brunt of oppression during the "killing times." Clerics had (like Robert Fleming) abandoned their flocks for a comfortable Dutch exile, or (like Wodrow's father James) compromised and accepted an "indulgence" from the popish Antichrist to preach a truncated gospel. The true faithful of the western villages could not escape to exile and would not "make Peace with the Enemies of God"[165] as did the accommodationist James Wodrow. A 1739 life of Alexander Peden shows that lay bitterness from this period still persisted generations later, putting these words in the mouth of the folk hero Peden as he addressed a crowd of Restoration lay faithful:

> Ministers and Professors. . .have fled and left their dying Mother [the Church], they have fled to other Places for shelter, and fled in under Indulgence, and fled to other Nations with a Pretence to preach the Gospel: But the Truth is, I am afraid that it be said by God at length, that it was for the Back and the Bellie that manie of them hath done so, and to shun Suffering for Christ.[166]

Similarly, an anonymous *Life* of Peden, probably edited by Patrick Walker in the 1720s, recalls that while the pious laity were suppressing persecution, "The most Part of all the Ministers. . .deserted the publick Standart of the Gospel. . .and left People to be destroyed, both Soul and Body, by the Foxes, Wolves, Snares, and Sins of that Day. .

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[162] On this split between moderate and extremist presbyterians during the Restoration, see Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, 124-9.
[163] Five editions of Peden's life were published before 1750, six editions of his supposed sermon *The Lord's trumpet sounding an alarm against Scotland*, and three editions of his reported prophecies. James Renwick's ultra-Covenanter critique of the Kirk's accommodationism, *The saint's duty in evil times*, went through four editions by mid-century, and Scottish presses also printed seven other works by Renwick, one collection of his alleged prophecies, and three editions of the *Elegie* on his death. Four works by or hagiographic lives of Donald Cargill, the leader of the "Cameronian" extremists, were also published in the first half of the eighteenth century.
[164] *Passages from the life and death of Alexander Peden* (1760), 8.
[165] *Life and death of Alexander Peden* (n.d.: Walker, ed?), 48.
[166] *The Lord's trumpet sounding an alarm against Scotland* (Glasgow: Alexander Miller, 1739).

.and went to *Holland*."[167] In the pious legends Robert Wodrow had collected about the mighty men of the early and mid-seventeenth-century Kirk, ministers like Robert Bruce and John Welch prophesied the future, performed healings, and even smote down the ungodly with supernatural power; but Wodrow describes no one in recent generations as doing so. In the short lives of Peden, Cargill, and Renwick which proliferated in Scottish print culture, these men—rejected by Wodrow and the establishment as extremists—are described as performing similar feats,[168] vindicating them against the lukewarm clerical establishment. Other pamphlets appealed to the same ultra-presbyterian lay readership, rebuking the eighteenth-century Kirk for having abandoned the Covenants, for allowing (repentant) episcopal ministers to participate in the new presbyterian order, and (after 1712) for the restoration of lay patronage in the Kirk.[169] In an 8-page 1710 verse pamphlet, the personified Covenants lament their betrayal by the Kirk, and a similar 1725 *Mournfull Song, upon the breach of National, and Solemn League, and Covenant* takes an explicitly anticlerical turn, singling out the treachery of "the Sons of *Levi*" (i.e., the priesthood).[170]

Popular piety in the west of Scotland found corporate expression not only in the parish, but also in smaller "societies for prayer." These apparently dated back to the Restoration period, when lay presbyterians, bereft of presbyterian preachers, had begun meeting together for fellowship and prayer.[171] Although contemporary references to these societies abound, most did not keep records, and their extra- or para-institutional nature makes information about their practices rare. A late Directory for establishment of such a society calls them "particular societies of a private nature, not for the celebration of the public ordinances of Christ, but for the practice of private personal duties." The members of such a society "behove voluntarily and explicitely to agree and consent to meet together, weekly, at a certain stated time and place," where their activities included

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[167] *Life and death of Alexander Peden*, 89.
[168] See the undated *Life and death of Alexander Peden* (possibly edited by Patrick Walker in the 1720s), pp. 41-31760 *Passages from the life…of Alexander Peden* 5-6.
[169] e.g., 1723's *Last testimony of the reverend, pious, and painful servant of Christ Mr John Hepburn*.
[170] *To the ministers and elders met at Edinburgh, April 26, 1710. The just complaint and remonstrance of the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant* (1710); *A Mournfull Song, upon the breach of National, and Solemn League, and Covenant* (1725). cf. Patrick Walker's preface to the 1727 *Some remarkable passages of the life and death of Mr Alexander Peden* on "this backslidden and upsitten church" viii.
[171] "United Societies," in Cameron ed., *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, 785-6.

"Singing God's praise, reading his word, prayer, and Christian conference on divine and spiritual subjects."[172] Twelve to fourteen members was thought to be about the right size (some parishes had several different societies); some praying societies were separated by sex, while others contained both women and men.[173] Another late example, the minutes of the Cameron Praying Society, show that their biweekly meetings opened and closed with psalm-singing, involved reading "some portion of Gods word," and consisted mostly of the members praying by turns.[174] Instructions for the several praying societies in Kilsyth instructed members to open with psalm-singing and Bible-reading, recommended the use of Vincent's Catechism, discouraged "curious questions" not tending to "practical Religion." "If any present desire the advice of the Meeting anent their own spiritual state," the Kilsyth directions remark, "or anent what may be sin or duty in any particular concerning them, let it be kindly given, and if the Society observe any thing exceptionable in any member, let them admonish the said member thereof in tenderness and love."[175] Members of the early eighteenth-century societies for prayer, in all but a few cases, continued to be active in the parish; in some praying societies, such as that at Radernie, the minister was an active participant.[176] But most were organized and led by the laity, and many were apparently fertile ground for criticism of the eighteenth-century Kirk as lukewarm and accommodationist. Whether the praying societies were viewed as an "inner church" or as a "counter-church" might depend on their relationship to the minister.

Very few devout villagers, however critical of the Kirk's trimming and compromises, removed themselves from the parish community entirely, though there was no civil penalty for doing so after the Toleration Act of 1712. The ideal of the godly

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[172] "Short Directory for Religious Societies" (filed under CH3/269/71 in the National Archives of Scotland), 6, 24. This Directory was produced by the Reformed Presbytery (the institution that evolved out of the "hill-men" or Old Dissenters); it is unclear how similar or different praying societies in the established Church would have been, though they certainly existed.

[173] Ibid., 48; 25.

[174] New College Library 7.7.2. Though not completely clear, these records seem to date from about 1790 and the members seem to be affiliated with one of the dissenting churches, probably the Reformed Presbytery.

[175] CH2/216/2, pp. 100-2. cf. the later *Inquiry into the nature, obligation, and advantages of religious fellowship* (Glasgow: 1764), which advises time be divided equally between "Prayer and Praise" and "Christian Conference," for example, "Question to propose about which their Souls have been, or are specially exercised," or anything "edifying, confirming, or comforting…in the Course of their Experiences," 52.

[176] New College Library 7.7.1: see the note under May 7 1731, "the minister being at the Assembly…"

community was deeply ingrained in the Scottish Reformed mindset, and disillusioned folk Calvinists may have hoped for a reformation in the future to restore what they imagined as the golden past of a covenanted nation in the 1630s and 40s. Moreover, the intense religious feelings held out by Guthrie as signs of elect status—"desire" and "hunger after Christ," "the hearts satisfaction" in redemption by the sufferings of the innocent Savior—typically needed to be maintained, as they had first been aroused, by passionate preaching. If these religious emotions cooled, even the most devout might question their salvation. Well after what she describes as her initial conversion, Elizabeth West in times of "dryness" was bothered by anxieties that she might be but an "an outside Christian," with "nothing but a bare profession."[177] Educated clergymen, who shared in the culture of folk Calvinism, were prone to the same anxieties. The young pastor William McCulloch of Cambuslang sought counsel from his senior colleague Robert Wodrow in 1731: in the midst of preaching a sermon series on conversion, McCulloch had been overwhelmed by fears that he was himself "a hollou hypocrite."[178] Twelve years later, a number of the converts whose stories McCulloch recorded found that anxieties about their salvation recurred as the emotion of their initial experience faded. "I fell into great darkness and doubtings of My interest in Christ," Jean Dickieson notes of post-conversion anxieties.[179] Many of the Cambuslang narratives have this unfinished feel; there was no final, decisive experience of assurance for folk Calvinists.[180] Theodore Bozeman has called anxiety and assurance "the crucial axis" of puritan spirituality,[181] and by my reading of West's *Memoirs*, the Cambuslang narratives, and Wodrow's pastoralia I would regard it as being the fundamental dynamic in Scottish folk Calvinism as well. The danger of unworthy reception of the Lord's Supper was a trope of popular devotional writing and sacramental manuals, and even extremely devout Scots might refrain from

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[177] Ibid., 14, 19-21,

[178] *Analecta* 4:280-1. Wodrow, who thought young McCulloch's trouble "a mixture of bodily and heavy spirituall distress," advised him to "riding-exercise [and] conversation." Wodrow concludes, "I hope the Lord has good to do by Mr M'Culloch, and is training him to be usefull; but he is, at present, in great hazard, and has bodily melancholy mixed in."

[179] Cambuslang MSS., 1:603.

[180] Charles Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety* (1982); Charles Lloyd Cohen, *God's Caress: the psychology of puritan religious experience* (1986); Jerald Brauer, "Types of puritan piety," *Church History* 56:1 (1987); Michael Winship, "Weak Christians, backsliders, and carnal gospelers: assurance of salvation and the origins of puritan practical divinity in the 1580s," *Church History* 70:3 (2001).

[181] Review of Cohen's *God's Caress* in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 55:2 (1987): 382-4.

the Lord's Table from fears of communicating unworthily.[182] For West, as surely for the many pious readers who emulated her, the reviving of the intense religious feelings that assured her of her salvation came through further hearing of "warm" and "lively" preaching. "After sermons were over," West writes after attending a communion festival, "when I came home, I retired to the fields, where the Lord himself preached a sermon of love to my soul, both affectionately, convincingly, and distinctly."[183] Lively preaching, especially at communion festivals, was thus the crucial link between a style of piety which was intensely personal and (potentially) almost entirely inward, and the institutional Church.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE FLOCK

The man who mounted the pulpit each Sabbath was thus a unique figure in Scottish social, cultural, and political life. As permanent moderator of the session, he was head of the parish as a legal court. He was responsible for the entire community, for charity, education, settling local quarrels between spouses or neighbors,[184] and his salary would be paid by all who owned property in the parish. He was thus—especially in view of the infrastructure of Scottish local government, so minimal as to be almost nonexistent—a man of some significance in secular life. But as preacher of the Word and shepherd of souls, the minister was also head of the parish as an ecclesiastical society. In the eyes of his most zealous parishioners, and almost certainly in his own, his primary function was a spiritual one, that of exciting and maintaining religious affect through a lively preaching of Christ crucified for sinners. Preaching in Scottish folk Calvinism, though so vital to the spiritual lives of the hearers, was not effective simply by the working of the work; ministers were not interchangeable, as parishioners found from visiting neighboring parishes and hearing "stranger ministers" at their own communion festivals, and some sermons had more of the "spirit and power of God" than others. The

[182] e.g., *Analecta* 1:93, 110; Ibid., 3:136-8; Cambuslang MSS., 2:158, 183, 307, 479.
[183] West, 134.
[184] For examples of this mediatorial role see CH2/1252/3, p. 84-5; CH2/97/4, p. 4; CH2/79/1, pp. 8-10; CH2/58/3, p. 156.

identity of the parish pastor was thus a matter of great, perhaps eternal, importance for the Scottish parishioner. Both local church records and presbytery minutes from the early eighteenth century show ordinary parishioners went to great lengths to get and to keep the right man in their pulpit. Their energetic participation in pastoral calls was not a purely religious activity but a form of local politics; given the close control of parliamentary elections and government offices by the British cabinet's political managers, it was virtually the only opportunity for ordinary Scots to participate in their own government at any level.

The Kirk's Second Book of Discipline directed that the choosing of a parish pastor take place "by the judgement of the Eldership, and consent of the Congregation," and insisted that no pastor "be Intruded in any offices of the Kirk, contrary to the will of the congregation to which they are appointed,"[185] and from this basis the process for choosing ministers had evolved by 1712 into one apparently genuinely responsive to parish opinion. During a "vacancy," after the death or transportation of the parish minister, the presbytery assigned neighboring ministers or probationers (young men preparing for the ministry) to preach in the vacant parish but did not choose a successor, a choice presbyteries clearly regarded as belonging to the congregation. Often, parishioners would request a "hearing" of particular preachers, men whose parishes they may have visited, or whom they might have heard as "stranger ministers" at their own communion. When Kilmarnock became vacant in 1710, a member of the session appeared before Irvine Presbytery "and presented a written Petition from the said Session, to represent it as the unanimous desire of that Session that the presbyterie invite Mr George Pedin probationer into their bounds & invite him to preach at Kilmarnock," which the Presbytery granted.[186] A petition from Carmunnock to the Presbytery of Glasgow in 1742 named three probationers the vacant parish wanted to hear before making their choice.[187] Parishioners were discerning and took their time to decide whether they found a preacher "edifying" or not. In 1722, the session of Paisley, having heard Robert Mitchell preach once, asked to hear him again and also to hear another man,

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[185] *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*, 81.
[186] CH2/197/3, p. 10.
[187] CH2/171/11/1, p. 146.

George Reid.[188] In 1716 the parish of Port-Glasgow, after hearing John Anderson preach, told the Presbytery they were not yet ready to call a minister, "but desired a further hearing of Mr Anderson, & that he might stay some few days among them, that they might have the opportunity of his converse."[189] In the vacant parish of Kilbirnie in 1732, the elders actively pursued Malcolm Brown, a probationer who had preached in the parish during the vacancy, to be their new minister, telling the Presbytery of Irvine that "Mr Browns gifts are most suiteable and edifying to them."[190]

Once ordained minister of a particular parish, Scottish pastors usually served for life, but not always. Small congregations might find their pastor "transported" to a larger or more significant parish, while an ambitious parish might try to call a popular minister settled elsewhere. Church records show that the most popular preachers could be subject to a tug-of-war between two parishes equally determine to obtain or retain their favorite, disputes which were settled by the higher church courts. In 1733 the vacant parish of Kirkintilloch fought a determined campaign to snatch the pastor of a neighboring parish, James Robe. At a special meeting of the congregation, the Presbytery's representative "enquired for a Lite [ballot of candidates for pastor] whereupon the Reverend Mr James Rob Min^{r} of the Gospel at Kilsyth was the only person named & unanimously voted by Heritors & Elders present. . .& likewise heads of familys then present signed a paper apart signifying their assent to the said Call."[191] Even before the Kirkintilloch call was official, Robe's parishioners at Kilsyth had sent a petition to the Presbytery of Glasgow "Humbly requesting the Reverend Presbytery would continue their Minister with them, and not give Ear to any Call for taking him from them"; the lively September meeting of Presbytery involved groups from the rival parishes appearing in person to demand the popular minister: "a good number of [Robe's] said parishioners [at Kilsyth] appeared; Also, there appeared many of the Heretors, and Members of the Session of the vacant parish of Kirkintilloch, and insisted in the said call, and opponed their Reasons of Transportation, To which the parish of Kilsyth gave in their answers."[192] Kilsyth even

[188] CH2/294/7, p. 432.
[189] Ibid., p. 241.
[190] CH2/197/4, p. 122.
[191] CH2/1027/1, p. 158.
[192] CH2/171/11/1, p. 9.

hired a lawyer, William Grant, to assist them in the church courts.[193] In the event the church courts continued Robe at Kilsyth (probably taking the pastor's own preference into account; presbytery records note that Robe submitted his own "paper of answers," though it does not remark on their contents).

The elders appear normally to have taken the lead in seeking a new minister for a vacant parish. The elders' customary self-description as spokesmen for parish opinion might be dismissed as a rhetorical ploy by a Wrightsonian parish oligarchy. There are a number of indications, however, that elders actively solicited input from the rest of the parish. In 1717, the elders of Dreghorn refused to opine about a particular candidate until they had conferred with the parish: when Irvine Presbytery suggested James Semple as a possible pastor, "they answered, they could come to no resolution at this time till they try the minds of the people and if the people consent to it, they shall be content."[194] At the April 1721 meeting of the Presbytery of Hamilton, the elders of vacant Blantyre parish asked for another month to make a recommendation regarding a new minister, so that they could "go through the Paroch and try the inclinations of the people and report to the Presbytery."[195] Church records suggest that parishioners were not passive or indifferent to the identity of a new minister but profoundly concerned, even willing to travel to a presbytery meeting several towns away to express their choice. "Several heads of families" accompanied the Cardross session in 1725 to ask the Presbytery of Dumbarton to settle John Edmonston as their minister.[196] In 1736 the Presbytery of Paisley noted that "a body of the people" appeared with the elders of Kilmacolm seeking settlement of their favorite John Fleming.[197] During the debate over the settlement of Cambuslang in 1731, Hamilton Presbytery was informed that "severals of the Paroch were attending desirous to be heard," most of whom appeared to plead for William McCulloch as their new minister, though others dissented.[198]

A prominent feature of all ministerial calls in the early eighteenth century is the rhetoric of unanimity, consensus, and harmony. In 1713, the session of West Kilbride

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[193] Ibid.
[194] CH2/197/3, p. 233.
[195] CH2/393/3, p. 29.
[196] CH2/546/8, pp. 269-70.
[197] CH2/294/9, p. 31.
[198] CH2/393/3, p. 202.

told the Presbytery of Irvine "th^{t} the whole Residenting Heritors, Eldership & Commonalty are intirely of the same mind and th^{t} there is the same unanimity & Concord amongst all of them with respect to their having Mr George Carlisle settled in this parish."[199] In 1720 the Inchinnan elders, in calling Patrick Maxwell as their minister, insisted that "the Session and whole of that Parish did unanimously incline to have him as their Minister."[200] The desire for consensus indicated by this language seems to have been more than a matter of rhetoric. Presbytery records show that when vacant parishes were divided, with two or three rival favorites instead of the desired "Unity and Harmony," the higher church courts were willing to devote considerable time and resources to bringing about a "comfortable settlement," sending different ministers to counsel rival groups of parishioners and mediate in the parish. The presbytery might also recruit lairds or other figures of local significance to try to reconcile disagreements over a new minister. Division in the vacant parish of Neilston caused Paisley Presbytery to send some of their members in 1732 "to confer with with some of the people. . .in order to bring them to a Unanimity."[201] A parish which was not "ripe for settlement," that is, in which consensus could not be reached, might be left vacant for months or even years. In cases where a legal call would be possible but where a sizable or influential minority would object to the new minister likely to be called, presbyteries and elders preferred to wait and seek to bring about an accommodation. In 1724 the Presbytery of Hamilton delayed several times to moderate a call in Glasford parish, "judging them not yet ripe for calling a minister."[202] The failure of presbyterial efforts at mediation could lead to bitter and long-lasting factionalism in the parish, as in Inchinnan in 1709-1715. Such divisions were most damaging when members of the session or several local lairds were ranged against each other. In Mearns in 1732, the Presbytery of Paisley found the local gentry, the elders, and the heads of families sharply divided, with Sir Michael Stewart of Blackhall leading a coalition strongly in favor of George McVey, while another laird, John Pollock of Dressenberg, had organized a party against him. The presbytery's

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[199] CH2/197/3, p. 109.
[200] CH2/294/7, p. 420.
[201] CH2/294/8, p. 380.
[202] CH2/393/3, p. 79. Examples of this in the first half of the century abound. See inter alia CH2/294/7, pp. 59-60 (Inchinnan 1709); CH3/393/3, p. 169 (Shotts 1728); CH2/393/3, p. 376 (West Monkland 1741); CH2/171/11/2, p. 214 (Calder 1746).

mediation proved ineffective, and parish factionalism became so heated that, when the candidate was visiting the parish as guest preacher, anti-McVey parishioners rioted outside the house where he was staying.[203] Few local disputes were as intractable as that at Mearns, however; with diligence and patience, the presbyteries of the Strathclyde seem to have been able to broker a compromise in most disputes and bring about the "comfortable settlements" so highly desired in the early eighteenth century.

The calling of a new minister was a great day in the public life of the parish community, in which a committee of several ministers from the presbytery "moderated" an election in the parish church, in which all the parish "heads of families" took part, by subscribing a written call, either by signature or by making their "mark." In a typical call, at Glasford in November 1731, ministers from Hamilton Presbytery recorded, "The Paroch being called in and a Lite [list or ballot] of Probationers whom they had heard preach being made up Mr John Muirhead was chosen to be their Minister by a great Plurality."[204] Though the law of 1690 gave the parish elders and heritors (property-owners) the legal right to name the candidates, acclamation by the "heads of families" was viewed as an essential part of the process. Women (presumably widows) occasionally participated in the elections as heads of families, though this was controversial: a minister from the Presbytery of Dumbarton in 1731, in certifying one parish's election, remarked that his role in the moderation "does not Import that it is his Judgement that Women are to be admitted to Sign Calls to the Ministry of the Church."[205] A separate but equally dramatic public occasion in parish life was the ordination of the new pastor elected. Before the assembled congregation, clerical representatives of the Presbytery consecrated the new minister by prayer and laying on of hands. The ritual reception of the new pastor by the congregation followed: after John Erskine's ordination at Kirkintilloch, the Presbytery records note, "the Heretors, Members of the Session, and many Heads of families of the said parish took him by the Hand, in token of their Receiving him to be their Minister,"[206] a ritual welcoming that seems to have been an accustomed part of the ordination ceremony in many parishes.

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[203] CH2/294/8, p. 378.
[204] CH2/393/3, p. 215.
[205] CH2/546/8, p. 97.
[206] CH2/171/11/2, p. 175.

An act passed by the new Union Parliament in 1712 restoring church patronage changed the law but not the practice of clerical appointments in the western Lowlands. Legally, Scottish aristocrats would now, like their English counterparts, have the right to "present" the cleric of their choice to benefices "in their gift," as they had done in the bad old days of the Restoration. Presbytery records, however, show that patrons in this region did not attempt to make use of their legal right after 1712. Since the abolition of patronage in 1690, elders and ordinary parishioners had clearly become accustomed to choosing their own minister, and many were able to cite arguments to support their practice from Reformed confessional documents like the Second Book of Discipline. After 1712, parishioners continued the habits they had acquired over the previous generation, though savvy ones sought to involve patrons *post facto*. After having sought out, heard, and selected George Carlisle as the minister they desired, Kilbirnie's elders in 1713 asked Irvine Presbytery to "appoint some of their number to waite upon the Right Honourable the Earl of Eglinton & to represent to his Lordship the Unanimity & constancy of this parish with respect to the present settlement."[207] For several decades after 1712, very few patrons made any effort to use their right to present under the new patronage act. Rather, many legal patrons were positively compliant, announcing their intention to support whatever candidate the community consensus settled upon. In 1729 the Earl of Glasgow, legal patron of Cumbrae, sent a letter to the Irvine Presbytery "Declaring it was his Resolution to allow the people their free choice of a person to be their Minister."[208] When patrons in the first half of the century sought to use their legal right to present, the higher church courts refused to cooperate, insisting in formulaic language that patronage was "a grievance to this church." The Earl of Dundonald's attempt to use his right to present to Dreghorn in 1714 was blithely ignored by the Presbytery of Irvine, despite his protests.[209] The canny and well-educated clerics at the presbytery used several legal maneuvers to avoid recognizing presentations, claiming that the right devolved to them if the patron did not present in a timely manner, and questioning which aristocrat held patronage over a particular parish, which (after a lapse

[207] CH2/197/3, p. 109.
[208] CH2/197/3, p. 616.
[209] CH2/197/3, pp. 111, 142.

of some decades) was not always legally clear.[210] The most dramatic illustration of the gap between theory and practice in early eighteenth-century ministerial appointments would come in Cambuslang after 1725, when determined and "harmonious" parishioners clashed with the most powerful of aristocratic patrons, the blue-blooded Duke of Hamilton. In December of that year, the Presbytery of Hamilton's minutes recorded "a Petition from the Heretors and Elders of the Paroch of Kambuslang, given in wherein they desire the Presbytery to deal with his Grace the Duke of Hamilton to concur with them for a Comfortable Settlement of the Paroch." The Presbytery's letter to the Duke went unanswered, and when two ministers called on his Grace in person in February 1726, he "declared himself firm in his first choice of Mr. Thomas Findlater to be Minister of Kambuslang."[211] The Presbytery, at the Duke's insistence, did appoint Findlater to preach in the vacant parish, but at the same time agreed to parishioners' requests to hear several times the young William McCulloch.[212] Reluctant to flout openly the right of so distinguished a patron, the Presbytery hesitated to settle the parishioners' choice against the Duke's will but steadfastly refused to allow Hamilton to override parochial consensus. The result was an impasse that left the parish vacant for years until the Duke finally acquiesced to McCulloch in 1731.[213]

Parishioners could be extremely loyal to a minister they favored. The remarkable fate of the disgraced George Adam, deposed as minister of Cathcart in 1746 for fornication with his servant Isobel Gemmel, is a case in point. Presbytery and synod records show quite clearly that the drive to restore Adam to his parish came not from his fellow clerics in the higher church courts, who were skeptical of their fallen colleague, but from the congregation, whose repeated petitions appealing to Christian charity and forgiveness are preserved with the General Assembly papers. Even as Adam was being deposed, elder Thomas Thomson told Glasgow Presbytery that the session "were most sensibly convinced & affected of & w^{t} the s^{d}. Mr George Adam" and "desired the most tender methods might be used to restore him in the Spirit of Meekness."[214] John

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[210] See the January 1715 meeting of the Presbytery of Irvine, at which the members consult by letter with "several Lawers in Edenburgh" in preparing legal arguments for ignoring presentations, CH2/197/3, p. 145.
[211] CH2/393/3, pp. 129-31.
[212] Ibid., 135, 165, 167-8, 174, 183.
[213] Ibid., 203, 207.
[214] CH2/171/11/2, p. 220.

McLaurin, who mounted the Cathcart pulpit to rebuke Adam before his flock in December 1746, reported to the Presbytery how the penitent pastor "Expressed in most moving and feeling Terms at great length, his great abhorrence of his guilt, & deep sorrow & Regret and Repentance for his sin, whereby the whole Congregation were much affected, & many of th^{m}. . .[with] tears expressing th^{r} great Sympathy and Satisfaction as to the s^{d} Mr George his sincere Repentance."[215] Only a month later, the Cathcart elders appeared before the Presbytery with a petition to restore Adam as their pastor, signed by sixty heads of families, citing his "unfeigned and Exemplary piety, his uncommonly affecting and Edifying gift of preaching, his incessant painfull and we hope successful Labours amongst us," which it was claimed "have Endeared him in the highest degree to all Ranks of persons in this parish." Though his crime was great, the petition acknowledged, the disgraced minister had also given "much abounding Evidence of Godly sorrow for it."[216] A second petition to the same effect, preserved in an Edinburgh archive, bears sixty-three signatures and the "marks" of thirteen additional parishioners unable to sign their names.[217] After over a year of petitioning and agitating by the Cathcart parishioners, the church courts agreed to restore the penitent Adam. In August 1748 he returned to the Cathcart manse as pastor; the same autumn, the Rev. Mr. Adam married his erstwhile partner in crime, Isobel Gemmel, likewise rebuked and absolved.[218]

Cathcart's clerical couple were an object illustration for the faithful of the Christian theme of fall and redemption. If a minister fell into sin without displaying Adam's edifying repentance and meekness, however, wrathful parishioners might organize and petition for swift punishment instead of for forgiveness. Unlike the "ingenuous" and penitent Adam, George Buchanan, the minister of Drymen, long denied accusations of paternity by Margaret Simpson. Cornered by convincing testimony, he finally confessed to the Presbytery of Dumbarton in March 1741, but even after months of deceit did not make the abject, tearful repentance which had so pleased Adam's flock, nor marry the woman with whom he had confessed guilt. Buchanan's parishioners energetically campaigned in the church courts for his removal. The petition they

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[215] Ibid., p. 225.
[216] Ibid., p. 228.
[217] CH1/2/89 f. 184.
[218] CH2/171/11/2, p. 269; *Fasti ecclesiae scoticanae* 2:61.

submitted to the Presbytery in March 1741 is an illustrative document of folk-Calvinist ecclesiology. Here the true, spiritual bond between pastor and flock is formed by the voluntary submission of the faithful to the pastor of their choice, a bond recognized but not created by the Kirk's official procedures: "Many of us did Sign his Call and others of us have Submitted to his Ministry by Receiving Word and Sacrament and other Means of Grace and Salvation dispensed by him and so a Ministerial Relation made up betwixt him and us." This spiritual bond has already been broken by Buchanan's misconduct, the petition implies, a reality it asks the Presbytery to acknowledge: "We cannot help thinking that the said Relation is broken and so we have no freedom in our Consciences to own him as our Pastor."[219] Outraged parishioners flocked from the village to the meetings of presbytery in Dumbarton to testify against the impenitent pastor: Buchanan's own beadle and the village schoolmaster, but also weavers, smiths, and shoemakers, keen to have Buchanan removed for his "Uncleanness, Lying, and gross prevarication."[220] In a similar case later in the century at Old Monkland, Robert Park's parishioners pursued their crusade against him all the way to the national Assembly in Edinburgh. The flock found their pastor's behavior suspicious in the extreme: first denying any relationship with the wealthy widow Margaret Robertson, then insisting she had long been his wife through a clandestine marriage; first calling a young boy in Glasgow whom he was supporting his nephew, then admitting the child was his son. Even if he was not a fornicator, as many in Old Monkland clearly suspected, the Rev. Mr. Park was at least guilty of prevarication and of irregular marriage (which the Kirk disciplined in ordinary parishioners), and, his elders told the higher church courts, "many of the Congregation are much offended thereat."[221] Where Adam had won favor by meekly climbing the "stool of repentance," Park continued to excuse and justify his behavior, and even did so from the pulpit—a venue which parishioners evidently found especially offensive.[222]

Church records show that tenants, cottars, and rural artisans in western Scotland in the early eighteenth century had a voice in who occupied the parish pulpit, and that this mattered to them. For the most godly in every parish, "savoury" preaching was the key

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[219] CH2/546/10, pp. 36-7.
[220] Ibid., pp. 53-4.
[221] CH1/2/106, f. 274.
[222] Ibid.; cf. Park's version of the scandal, which he printed for the General Assembly in *The Case of the Reverend Mr Robert Park minister of the Gospel in Old Monkland, appellant* (Edinburgh: 1765).

to spiritual health, for it aroused or revived the religious affections which assured them of their salvation. But even for those more concerned with the mundane functions of the parish community, the minister played a significant role in local life, and the right to hear and opine on different preachers, to take part in the pomp of subscribing a call, and of acclaiming and "receiving" the new pastor at his ordination, were a matter of considerable local pride. This ability to influence the selection of the parish minister was a unique pocket of local autonomy in what was otherwise an extremely rigid and oligarchic society. In Scotland, much more than in England, electoral politics was inaccessible to the emerging middle classes; political power in the conventional sense was monopolized by a tiny group of "managers" in London and Edinburgh.[223] Once the parish is understood to constitute the primary unit of local government—overseeing local education and charity, punishing petty crimes, mediating local disputes—the election of a new minister appears as a unique opportunity for ordinary Scots to influence the decisions that affected their lives. Involvement in this process was not limited to parish elites but included those the presbytery called "the people" or "the inhabitants" to distinguish them from elders and property-owners. Almost nowhere else in eighteenth-century Scottish society could people of this social stratum make their voices heard, but in the selection of their pastor weavers and cottars could even frustrate the will of the mighty Duke of Hamilton. The parish community would come under increasing strain from mid-century, however, as a growing number of Scots obligated to the parish as a legal court withdrew from it as an ecclesiastical society.

[223] Alexander Murdoch, *"The People Above": politics and administration in eighteenth-century Scotland* (1980); John Shaw, *The Management of Scottish Society, 1707-1764* (1983); Ronald Sunter, *Patronage and Politics in Scotland 1707-1832* (1986).

CHAPTER 3. THE FRAYING OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY

The lived religion of the parishes of the Strathclyde in 1700 was characterized by remarkably little disparity between "popular culture" and "elite culture." The folk Calvinism of the parish was substantially shared by layfolk and pastor, and by farm servants and devout gentry like Hamilton of Aikenhead. Tensions in the parish community, however, were already visible at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The extreme reluctance of the Scottish gentry and aristocracy to be subjected to discipline by a session often manned by their social inferiors, and the undercurrent of disapproval amongst godly layfolk for the established Kirk as too worldly, too lukewarm, "Erastian" in its submission to non-Calvinist secular authority, frayed the fabric of the Christian community. Political union with England in 1707, and the cultural processes of anglicization and integration into a wider world of polite sensibility, would bring these tensions to the breaking point by mid-century.

Gentlemen delinquents and wild parishioners. The early eighteenth-century Scottish parish emerges from study of extant church records as remarkably successful in its efforts to foster a well-catechized and well-disciplined laity in the Strathclyde, but two persistent problems recur in kirk session and presbytery minutes. One is the unwillingness of members of the elite, when caught in public scandal, to participate in the process of discipline to which the rest of the community (including elders and ministers) was subject. The other is the ongoing temptation of the most devout layfolk to practices the establishment labeled as "wild," that is, to rejection of the Kirk as not pure enough or as unfaithful to its own Covenanting heritage.

Asked for advice on dealing with "gentlemen delinquents" in 1735, the Presbytery of Paisley encouraged sessions to "proceed Against such persons in common form if they find the same to be for Edification."[1] This was easier said than done. Many of the sessions in the first half of the century show a real desire to apply discipline to the local gentry, but also a willingness to compromise and accommodate through special treatment

[1] CH2/294/9, p. 2.

which ordinary parishioners would never have received. Beith session spent over two years "dealing with" Hugh Hamil of Rochwood, a local laird accused by the pregnant widow Jean Anderson. When Rochwood finally admitted guilt with her in May 1714, the session resolved that he should be publicly rebuked but also determined "to shew all condescension with him, that the place of his appearing may be in his ordinary seat in the kirk [i.e., instead of the "stool of repentance"], and the time left to his own choosing, providing it be within a moneth from this date."[2] Likewise the Laird of Bartanholm, accused by Isobel Boyd as guilty with her, finally appeared before the Irvine session in July 1719 after repeated summons but refused either to admit guilt or to swear the solemn "oath of purgation" offered in cases without witnesses: "And being also asked if he would be guiltie of so manifest contempt of Church discipline answered I do not care make of it what ye will and went off." Such contumacy in an ordinary parishioner would hardly have been tolerated, but with the laird the session resolved to "take mild methods. . .being probablie the best way to prevail with him," and appointed the minister and an elder of somewhat higher social status to deal privately with him.[3] The session's persistence and Bartanholm's refusal to undergo discipline continued for years before the case disappears from the session minutes, the laird apparently undisciplined and unabsolved. James Robertson of Bedlay received a private visit from Cadder's minister in his home rather than being summoned to the session when he was accused of fornication in 1725. Declining to appear before the congregation like an ordinary penitent, Bedlay sought to negotiate with the session, offering to "come before the session and acknowledge [his sin] there; but further he would not go be the event what it would: and further said, that there were other Gentlemen guilty of the like sin who did not appeare at all."[4] The Cadder elders, not inclined to accommodate Bedlay in this way, referred him repeatedly to the presbytery, but there is no evidence in church records that they were ever able to bring the laird to heel. The problem of "gentlemen delinquents" evading discipline, a thorn in the side of many sessions early in the century, was probably exacerbated by the very strategies that won Scottish Calvinism popular acceptance in Strathclyde. The prominence of men of humbler social strata in the eldership in this

[2] CH2/31/2, p. 115.
[3] CH2/1505/1, pp. 135-6.
[4] CH2/863/2, pp. 50-1.

region—with substantial tenants and rural artisans making up the plurality of elders in parishes which recorded their occupations—may have made villagers more likely to accept discipline, but it alienated the gentry.

Friction with parishioners inclined to "wildness" also appears in kirk session minutes early in the century, an ongoing source of frustration in what appear to have been relatively harmonious parishes. The label "wild" was used by the Kirk's representatives as a catch-all category for ideas and behaviors which rejected the eighteenth-century establishment as not Reformed enough. Examination of religious pamphlets and penny godlies from early in the century suggest that many layfolk were exposed to a world of "wild" religious print, lionizing ultra-Covenanters like Alexander Peden (condemned in the Kirk's official history) and critiquing the clerical establishment for collaboration with episcopal England. Robert Wodrow's correspondence indicate that such opinions were present and overtly expressed by some of his most active parishioners in Eastwood.[5] Few in the Strathclyde rejected the parish community entirely, but those who did so were less likely to be motivated by apathy or by rustic pelagianism than by a "wildness" in which they saw themselves as *plus calviniste que le pasteur*. During a 1717 visitation by the Presbytery of Glasgow, the Rev. Mr. Love reported well of his congregation at Cathcart, "Except that two or three families do not attend publick ordinances, In respect of their wild principles, and that he uses pains to reclaim them, In which he was desired to continue."[6] Though there was no organized alternative to the Church of Scotland in the early eighteenth century, there were incidents of individual clerics breaking with the Kirk and becoming renegade preachers, condemning the establishment's compromises and backsliding. The Rev. Mr. John Macmillan, deposed by the Kirk in 1703, traveled Scotland preaching up the Covenants and the purity of the seventeenth-century Kirk and condemning the contemporary establishment.[7] His visit to the Strathclyde in 1712 created a sensation; Robert Wodrow wrote in a private letter of the "very great multitude" who assembled to hear Macmillan blast the Kirk's unfaithfulness, "some say one

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[5] *Correspondence*, 1:30, 41, 260; 2:111-3.
[6] CH2/171/9/1, p. 58.
[7] Cameron (ed.), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, "United Societies," 785-6; "John Macmillan," 533-4. Macmillan, who accepted a call to be minister to the Covenanting Societies who refused to accept the 1690 settlement, and would later be counted as the first minister of the Reformed Presbytery.

thousand, some say seventeen hundred."[8] Macmillan's message was politically as well as ecclesiastically subversive: according to Wodrow, among the sins he urged his hearers to repent of were accepting the uncovenanted William and Mary as lawful sovereigns.[9] John Adamson, whom the Presbytery of Perth had licensed to preach but never ordained,[10] in 1717 likewise went renegade and adopted a ministry of itinerant ultra-presbyterianism. Wodrow's letters describe how Adamson's preaching at Hamilton that year "mightily pleased the people. He was preaching upon the blind man's coming to Christ and casting away his garments; and fell to tell them, what garments they behoved to cast away; [and] began with the garment of the Union, that of the Patronages, that of the Tolleration [of Scottish Episcopalians]. . . .These are his common topicks, and render him very popular."[11] Strathclyde layfolk who heard Macmillan and Adamson preach, or who chose to have their children baptized by them instead of by the parish pastor, are among the very few cases in kirk session minutes in which parishioners steadfastly refuse to admit sin or accept discipline from their elders. The Presbytery of Hamilton, to which local churches referred such "wild" parishioners in 1717, had no more success. "Allan Bar called compeired and owned he had applied to and received Baptism to his Child from Mr John Adamson," the Presbytery noted at its April meeting, "but refused to confess a fault in doing so." Robert Calhoun, referred to the Presbytery by Old Monkland for the same infraction in May, likewise could not be brought to confess fault.[12] In July, Hamilton Presbytery's minutes record, "The wholle adherents to Mr John Adamson being called one by one and nonne compeiring the Presbytry refer their affair till next dyett." In August, after they had been further "dealt with" by their ministers, the Presbytery sentenced the wild layfolk to the lesser excommunication.[13] Such contumacy is rarely seen in the church records for other sins. Despite the Kirk's efforts to have Adamson "restrained" by the civil magistrate, he was back causing trouble in the region in 1721, when the Presbytery of Irvine mandated that "Ministers should first call before their Sessions those in their parish who have presented their children to the sd. M^{r}

[8] *Correspondence*, 2:76.
[9] Ibid., 2:77.
[10] CH2/393/3, p. 520.
[11] *Correspondence*, 2:242-3.
[12] CH2/393/2, pp. 523-4.
[13] Ibid., 526-7.

Adamson for Baptism," and explain that the ordinance administered by the renegade was invalid: "And if these means of Restraining them from so great an irregularity do not prevail and they be Contumacious to certify them, that the presbyterie will proceed with them."[14]

Macmillan, Adamson, and later similar renegades like John Hepburn won much popular sympathy with their periodic visits and fiery condemnation of the lukewarm establishment. They remained itinerants, however, setting up no parallel church structures, and the need of Strathclyde's folk Calvinists for regular preaching and other ecclesiastical services made it difficult for even the Kirk's fiercest Calvinist critics to sever ties with the parish. An illustrative case is that of Hugh Wallace in Fenwick, who was accused of fornication with Margaret Faulls in June 1723. Wallace acknowledged his sin but was hesitant to accept the discipline of the backslidden Kirk, as the Fenwick session minutes record: "The Minister acquainted the session that knowing the said Hugh to be one of the wyld people that follow Mr Hepburn and Mr Taylor, he had sent for him And he heard three Elders had long converse with him that he pretended difficultis and unclearness in subjecting himself to Discipline."[15] By September Wallace, wanting badly to be absolved, was willing to accept discipline from the parish, but the elders "could not Convince him of the sin of his former separation." The minister too, after a private meeting with Wallace, reported that "he Refused Expressly to Acknowledge his fault in not hearing formerly or come under any Engagement to hear in time to come."[16] By the end of November the session and the scrupulous parishioner had worked out a compromise. Wallace had now been for three months an "ordinary hearer" in the parish church and earnestly desired absolution from the sin of fornication. Some members reported that "the people of this place are satisfied with him and are desirous he should be absolved without insisting any further with respect to his former wyldness," to which the Fenwick session agreed.[17] The Wallace case shows how, without an alternative ecclesiastical structure to provide the preaching and discipline folk Calvinists regarded as so significant, even strong dissatisfaction with the Kirk could be contained.

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[14] CH2/197/3, p. 344, 347.
[15] CH2/982/5, p. 100.
[16] Ibid., 102.
[17] Ibid., 106.

The twin problems of the early eighteenth-century parish, gentlemen delinquents refusing to accept discipline and "wild" critics of the Kirk's accommodation to an ungodly British social order, were vexing but manageable. In the early eighteenth century, Calvinist dissenters had no real alternative to the parish church, except the occasional visits of an incendiary maverick like Adamson. And in spite of the recurrence of the issue of "gentlemen delinquents" in many Strathclyde parishes, it is more remarkable how many of the elite were willing in the first half of the century to participate in a religious world they did not effectively control. The gentry and aristocracy in early eighteenth-century Strathclyde also shared in the culture of folk Calvinism, showing deep respect for the parish clergy and a surprising willingness to negotiate with humbler "hearers" in matters of concern to the parish community.[18] As the century progressed, however, these two problems presented Scottish clerics with the horns of a dilemma, for efforts to placate and defer to lay elites would be read by zealous villagers as defection and "Erastianism," while traditional folk Calvinism was increasingly regarded by the gentry with distaste.

THE WITHDRAWAL OF LAY ELITES

Scottish Calvinism in the seventeenth century had been led by some of the kingdom's most prominent nobility, and in the south and west in particular the religious passions of the age seem to have been broadly shared among the lofty and the humble. Viscountess Kenmure, Lady Boyd, and the Laird of Cally were among the regular correspondents of Samuel Rutherford and seem to have been participants in the same culture of supernaturalism, anxiety, and mystical intimacy with Christ.[19] Such Calvinist aristocrats of the southwest as the Countess of Wigton and Sir John Houston appear in Wodrow's *History* sharing the suffering of their tenants, and it is the Laird of Preston's

[18] See e.g. Lord Blantyre's role in the 1721 settlement of Blantyre (CH2/393/3, p. 33), clearly passive and ready to support parish consensus; the Earl of Kilmarnock's conduct in the settlement of Kilwinning in 1720 (CH2/197/3, p. 320-9), more active but willing to compromise with parishioners; and the acquiescence of Lord Blantyre and the Laird of Succoth in the 1728 settlement of Old Kilpatrick with what is clearly an already existing parish consensus (CH2/546/8, p. 396).
[19] See e.g., *Joshua Redidivus* 22, 27-8, 32, 257, 348, 416, 503.

brother who leads the Strathclyde Covenanters in armed resistance.[20] Mitchison has argued that the abolition of patronage in 1690, effectively removing parish life from aristocratic control, marked the beginning of elite disaffection from the Kirk,[21] though in the Strathclyde a "puritan gentry" persisted well into the eighteenth century. As late as the 1720s William McCulloch, the young firebrand who was the darling of Cambuslang parishioners, could find elite sponsorship: he was serving as chaplain to James Hamilton of Aikenhead, a prominent local laird, at the time of his settlement.[22]

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the local gentry appear as members of the parish community, expecting and receiving a certain deference due their station, but never seeking to unilaterally override the views of humbler members of the community. Most pastoral appointments in the decades after the restoration of patronage in 1712 involved some degree of negotiation between patrons and local opinion. In some cases initiative seems to have come from the parish, which then typically sought the "concurrence" of the patron who legally had the power to present, sometimes asking the presbytery to "use their influence with" the patron.[23] In other cases patrons were more active, with a particular candidate in mind, but were still careful to involve elders and heritors (property-owners) in the process, and showed willingness to compromise. The kirk session minutes of Kilmarnock parish show the Countess of Kilmarnock's personal involvement in local life in 1722-4 and a rather remarkable patience in negotiating pastoral appointments with her social inferiors. After the Countess proposed John Edmiston as pastor of Kilmarnock, the session minutes record, "A Committee was appointed to wait upon her and Informe her La[dyshi]p: that several of the elders and people are not very clear for Mr Edmiston, 1mo. because they are afraid, his bodylie weakness will not answer this great charge, 2do. because they are afraid his voice will not answer this place." Her Ladyship withdrew her nomination, and Patrick Paislay, a preacher the congregation preferred, was eventually settled in Kilmarnock with the Countess's support.[24] In 1722 the Earl of Eglinton hoped to settle John Montgomerie in Eaglesham, but finding the parish "adverse to it," and being asked by the elders to "think

[20] Wodrow, *History*, 2:143, 431, 66.
[21] Mitchison, *Lordship to Patronage*, 137-8.
[22] CH2/393.3, p. 135.
[23] CH2/197/3, p. 109; CH2/197/4, p. 103-4.
[24] CH2/1252./3, pp. 189-90, 195-6.

upon some other person to supply that vacancy," his Lordship agreed to seek a different minister to the satisfaction of the congregation.[25]

The local religious culture of rural Strathclyde, in which the devout gentry enjoyed honor but not control, would be steadily eroded, however, as Scotland was integrated into a wider world. The horizons of the Scottish elite were widening even before political union with England, as Roger Emerson has noted.[26] The expansion of print culture and the development of a public sphere made non-Calvinist alternatives increasingly accessible to Scottish readers. Though some members of the Scottish landed and professional classes, like Robert Wodrow's correspondent Colonel Erskine of Carnock and the devout Lanarkshire gentleman James Hamilton of Aikenhead, continued to find Scotland's folk Calvinism deeply satisfying, others began to find this culture cramped and stifling, turning to a new cosmopolitan world available through new print sources and, increasingly, in Edinburgh.[27] The Union of 1707 also brought Scotland and its elites into a fundamentally different relationship with England.[28] The abolition of the Edinburgh Parliament and the loss of political autonomy meant that Scottish affairs would now be "managed" from London. The Union also accelerated a process of anglicization,[29] especially of the elites, that was already underway. English trends and tastes would increasingly set the tone for the upwardly mobile in the "cultural provinces" of the first British empire.[30] The early eighteenth century was characterized by a steady

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[25] CH2/171/9/1, p. 164.

[26] "Scottish cultural change 1660-1710 and the Union of 1707," 121-44 in Robertson (ed.), *A Union for Empire* (1995).

[27] For the notion of cosmopolitanism, see esp. Margaret Jacob's fascinating *Strangers Nowhere in the World: the rise of cosmopolitanism in early modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), and also see Thomas Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought* (1977), esp. xi-xxv, 1-24, and 73-96.

[28] See esp. the essays edited by John Robertson in *A Union for Empire: political thought at the British Union of 1707* (1995).

[29] Nicholas Phillipson, "Politics, politeness, and the anglicization of early eighteenth-century Scottish culture," pp. 226-44 in Mason (ed.), *Scotland and England* (1987); Phillipson, "Politics and politeness in the reigns of Anne and the early Hanoverians," pp. 211-45 in Pocock (ed.), *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500-1800* (1993).

[30] J. Clive and B. Bailyn, "England's cultural provinces: Scotland and America," in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 11 (1954), 200-13; Phillipson, "Culture and society in the eighteenth-century province: the case of Edinburgh and the Scottish enlightenment," 407-48 in Stone (ed.), *The University in Society* vol. 2 (1974); Bailyn and Morgan (eds.), *Strangers Within the Realm: cultural margins of the first British empire* (1991), esp. Eric Richards, "Scotland and the Uses of the British Empire," pp. 67-114; Colin Kidd, "North Britishness and the nature of eighteenth-century British patriotisms," in *Historical Journal* 39:2 (1996), 361-82

homogenization of Britain's elites. Physical mobility[31] and a press which focused on the metropolitan and studious ignored the local[32] contributed to broader cultural horizons and meant that the landed elites throughout the kingdom had more in common with each other and less with their tenants. Absentee ownership and decreased participation in local affairs were long-term trends in Britain's landed elites during this period, bringing about subtle but significant cultural changes in the countryside. For Scots with means, all roads led to London; the lesser gentry were able, through publications like the *Tatler* and *Spectator* and their Scottish reprints and knock-offs,[33] to combine a metropolitan mentality with provincial residency.

Well before mid-century, a number of the Strathclyde's greater nobility resided primarily in London. In 1722 the Presbytery of Dumbarton, "understanding that his Grace the Duke of Argyll will shortly be in this Countrey," sent a fawning delegation "to Congratulate his safe Arrival."[34] In the 1730s presbyteries consulted the Countess of Eglinton and the Earl of Glencairn on local church affairs by letter, as they were also "out of the country."[35] The Hamiltons of Hamilton, perhaps the region's wealthiest proprietors, were not resident in the Strathclyde after the death of Duchess Anne in 1716.[36] Though they maintained an impressive estate at Hamilton Palace, the family divided its time between Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh (of which, as distant cousins of the royal family, they were hereditary keepers) and London. As Scottish peers increasingly settled in England in the first half of the century, their children were brought up there, educated at the same schools as the English aristocracy,[37] and intermarried with their English counterparts at a significantly higher rate than they had done during the

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[31] Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 630-41; Rosenheim, 195-8, 215-52.
[32] Rosenheim, 146-9. cf. Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987); G.A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).
[33] *The Tatler* (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1710); *The free-holder* (Edinburgh: George Steuart, 1716); *The Mercury: or, The northern reformer. By Duncan Tatler esq*. (Edinburgh: William Brown and John Mosman, 1717); *A collection from the Spectator* (Edinburgh: John Warden, 1737); *The Spectator* (Glasgow: John Urie, 1745); *The Guardian vol. I* (Glasgow: Robert Foulis, 1746); *The lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq*. (Glasgow: Robert Foulis, 1747-9); *The Spectator* (Glasgow: 1750).
[34] CH2/546/8, p. 87.
[35] CH2/197/4, p. 129; CH2/294/9, p. 31.
[36] Rosalind Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne: life in the household of the Duchess of Hamilton, 1656-1716* (1974).
[37] Geoffrey Holmes and Daniel Szechi, *The Age of Oligarchy* (1993), 218.

seventeenth century.[38] As early as the 1710s the Hamiltons of Hamilton were educating their progeny in England: the 5th Duke graduated from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1719; his son, also Oxford-educated, married an English heiress in London in 1752 and died in Oxfordshire two years later. Where the 9th Earl of Eglinton (d. 1729) had been educated in Scotland, his son the 10th Earl spent his adolescence at Winchester, the prestigious boarding school favored by the English aristocracy.[39] From the 1740s the 10th Earl lived mostly in London, maintaining his economic and political interests in the region through a network of factors and managers;[40] after 1742 he also spent a great deal of time in Paris.[41] By mid-century the heirs of Scotland's great aristocratic houses were raised almost entirely in England and were Scots in lineage and estate only.

The ability to maintain residence in London was limited to the most wealthy, but some degree of physical withdrawal from the parish community was not. Many minor aristocracy and gentry became less familiar to their social inferiors in the parishes during this time, withdrawing to Edinburgh during part or all of the year. The absenteeism and disengagement with local life which Rosenheim and Langford have argued was typical of English landed elites at this time[42] seems to have been a trend in Scottish social life also; where earlier lairds and even aristocrats like the Earl of Eglinton had interacted with the local community personally, managers for absentee landlords—often called "factors" or "doers"—proliferate in archival records in the early eighteenth century.[43] Even residing gentry often withdrew to newly-built, grandiose country homes. The decades 1690-1720 saw a flurry of building among the English gentry and aristocracy, and Scottish elites strove to imitate their wealthier English counterparts as they could afford to. James Rosenheim's important study *The Emergence of a Ruling Order* also describes this period as characterized by "a turning from the use of the [gentry] house as a neighborhood focal point." Entertainment and hospitality at the country estates became more exclusive, narrowing to kin and other gentry families.

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[38] John Cannon, *The Aristocratic Century* (1984).
[39] *Dictionary of National Biography*, 37:300-1.
[40] See the letters in NLS MSS. 1395 and 1396.
[41] *DNB*, 37:301.
[42] Beckett, 362-73; Rosenheim, esp. 68-73 and 115-24; Langford, *Public Life*, 367-436.
[43] CH2/197/4, p. 153 (1734);

> By the mid-eighteenth century, the country house served relatively rarely as a gathering place of those of lesser ranks or a site for the intentionally awe-inspiring reception of tenants and charity-seekers. House owners built or set aside separate stewards' rooms and tenants' halls to accommodate those who came to the country seat on business and with whom the landed might once have mingled.[44]

The early eighteenth century, Mark Girouard has remarked, was characterized by "a growing gap between the polite world of the gentry and the impolite world of servants, farmers and smallholders."[45] The whole period, Rosenheim agrees, was characterized by a gradual distancing of landed elites from the social and cultural life of the countryside, a "mental disengagement and diversion of elite energy into pleasure and leisure" which he styles "the occlusion of the aristocracy."[46] A new desire for privacy reversed the older pattern whereby the elites had displayed themselves to their inferiors: now the lower orders saw their grand houses, parks, servants and managers, but seldom the masters themselves. In Scotland, changes in elite accommodation in churches were part of this trend. Ornate private balconies for parish grandees, which had been common in other parts of Scotland in the seventeenth century, were not unknown in Strathclyde in 1700, but thereafter they proliferated noticeably.[47] Some lairds, already isolated from ordinary parishioners in private lofts, further withdrew from common life by installing private stairs by which to enter the loft from outside the church.[48] By the third quarter of the century lairds were installing private rooms in the church: Mr. Allen in Baldernock wanted "a burning place below" in his aisle, for warming himself in the winter and eating lunch between sermons, "and a loft and sate above."[49] Glasford of Dougalston in the same parish added an outside stair to his loft and a "room or house for his Accomadation on the north side of the Church" a few years later.[50]

For both the increasingly London-based aristocracy and the lairds, whether "residing" or "non-residing," cultural withdrawal accompanied the physical and distanced

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[44] Rosenheim, 95-6.
[45] Girouard, 184.
[46] Rosenheim, 174, 118, 184. Chapter 6, "Cultural separation and cultural identity," 174-214, is worth reading in its entirety.
[47] HR410/1, p. 5; CH2/171/9/1, p. 77; CH2/197/4, p. 247; CH2/393/3, p. 90;
[48] See, e.g., Hamilton of Newton's 1751 demands for "an entry to his Loft by an out-stair" in Cambuslang, HR410/1, p. 22.
[49] HR195/1, p. 7.
[50] Ibid., p. 13.

the elites from the customs and mentalities of the Strathclyde.[51] Holmes and Szechi remark that

> Scottish imitation of English refinement, in terms of mores, dress, manners and social customs became avid and persistent from the 1720s. Every Scottish laird, it seemed, wanted to be able to dress himself and his family according to the latest metropolitan fashions, build a fine house in the latest style . . . , maintain a suitable separation from his social inferiors, drink tea rather than beer and so on.[52]

Scottish imitations of the polite periodicals *Tatler* and *Spectator* began as early as 1710; though most such projects were abortive, in 1739 the *Scots Magazine* began publication in Edinburgh. The first successful home-grown magazine on the *Spectator* model, it combined literary and philosophical essays, national and international news, and Scottish high-society gossip. This kind of cultural anglicization inevitably included religious culture. Scots Presbyterianism was derided in the metropole as provincial, backward, uncouth,[53] a judgment many Scottish lairds and aristocrats came to share as they emulated English mores in other areas. Even the English word "cant," which made its debut during this period[54] as a pejorative term for affected or ostentatious religiosity, seems to have been derived from the name of one of seventeenth-century Scottish Calvinism's beloved preachers, Andrew Cant of Aberdeen. The term, Steele wrote in the *Spectator* in 1711,

> is by some People derived from one *Andrew Cant* who, they say, was a Presbyterian Minister in some Illiterate part of *Scotland*, who by Exercise and Use had obtained the Faculty, *alias* Gift, of Talking in the Pulpit in such a Dialect, that it's said he was understood by none but his own Congregation, and not by all of them. Since *Master Cant*'s time, it has been understood in a larger Sense, and signifies all sudden Exclamations, Whinings, unusual Tones, and in fine all Praying and Preaching like the unlearned of the Presbyterians.[55]

James Forrester's *Polite Philosopher*, whose publication in Edinburgh in 1734 was another milestone in the growth of the polite idiom in Scotland, already assumed that his

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[51] See R.H. Campbell, 91-106 in Devine and Mitchison (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland*, vol. 1 (1988).
[52] Holmes and Szechi, 218.
[53] *Scots Presbyterian Eloquence Displayed*, originally published in London 1693 and republished in London and Dublin in several editions 1702, 1719, 1732 and 1738.
[54] *n*. 4.c., "The peculiar phraseology of a religious sect or class"; 5.b., "Affected or unreal use of religious or pietistic phraseology; language (or action) implying the pretended assumption of goodness or piety," *Oxford English Dictionary*.
[55] *Spectator* No. 147 (August 1711), ed. Bond, 1:80.

audience would view religion with distaste: "Religion, say they with a sneer, is the companion of melancholy minds; but, for the gayer part of the world, it is ill manners to mention it amongst them." Forrester assured his readership that properly understood, as a serene reverence for the Creator, religion was not impolite; but though he urged the polite gentleman to avoid offending those "warm" in the tenets of a "particular religion," it is assumed that he has little religious ardor himself.[56] "A Polite Man may yet be Religious," Forrester concludes, "provided that he thus far conforms to our system, that, on no occasion, he troubles others with the articles of his religious creed."[57] Forrester's polite but religious gentleman, we may safely infer, would have had little relish for the hours of fervent, conversionist preaching in the parishes of the Strathclyde.

Lack of participation in public worship by local elites was already beginning to be a concern before the Act of Union, and clerical concern at gentry disaffection rose in the following decades. In 1709 Robert Wodrow lamented "an undervaluing of the ministry by persons of note and distinction," remarking, "Many of the nobility and gentry pay not that deference to the office that once in a day was given."[58] The gentry's increasing absence from the public worship of the community was often concealed or excused by periodic residence in Edinburgh. Other lairds avoided addressing more serious lapses in the same way. The Laird of Bartanholm, a major land-owner in the parish of Irvine, was living in Edinburgh when Isobel Boyd accused him of fathering her child in 1719; although he promised the session he would "see to clear himself" the next time he "came West," he was usually too busy dealing with pressing estate business on his short visits to the parish, and answered the session's persistent letters with replies explaining that he was "called to be elsewhere upon Business."[59] Others in the elite, whether resident in England or in Scotland, were drawn to the worship of the Church of England and its Scottish offshoots, which carried a higher cultural status and were seen as more genteel and decorous than the severely plain psalm-singing and vulgar, impassioned preaching of the Kirk. The Laird of Glenhoove, accused of fornication in New Monkland in 1723,

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[56] Forrester, 12.
[57] Ibid., 14.
[58] *Correspondence*, 1:51. Wodrow in several places contrasts a "lax gentry and nobility" with an ultra-presbyterian laity; cf. 1:83, 245-6,
[59] CH2/1505/1, pp. 132, 283. After two years of dogged pursuit by the session, Irvine's minutes in 1720 record that Bartanholm "hath purchased a Captain's Commission & is gone to the Regiment to which he belongs, now Lying in Dubline," p. 306. His case does not reappear in the minutes.

declined to appear before either the session or the Presbytery of Hamilton when cited; instead, "there was produced a letter from him bearing that he was not of our Communion and that he was absolved from his scandal by the Church of whose Communion he is." The Presbytery found this "not satisfying," but Glenhoove never appeared before the Kirk's courts.[60] "Gentlemen delinquents," who at the beginning of the century had been at least prepared to appear before and negotiate with church leadership, by mid-century often ignored the Kirk entirely.[61] Matthew Stewart of Newton, a laird in Mearns parish, was named by Mary Stevenson as the father of her child in 1738, and the Presbytery of Paisley seems to have given credence to her further charges that he had offered her hush money and threatened her; but years of clerical cajoling and "dealing with" the laird failed to produce any response at all. When the Kirk proceeded to discipline Stevenson alone, she loudly accused the absent laird as guilty with her from the "stool of repentance" in July 1743, a scandal that the presbytery clerk some months later called "still flagrant in the Parish."[62]

Folk Calvinism as disorderly religion. The growing reluctance of the Scottish gentry and aristocracy to participate in folk Calvinism, however, was based on more than fashions in the metropole. Sociologists have noted the "double function" of religion, which can be both a "world-affirming" and a "world-shaking" force.[63] The century after the Restoration was one in which British elites were keenly aware of the latter possibility, haunted, as John Seed has described in a fine article, by the spectre of puritanism.[64] Religion was, of course, necessary for social order. The belief in an all-seeing god and in eternal rewards and punishments safeguarded social morality. The crises of the seventeenth century had also revealed, however, that Christianity could be very dangerous to the social order. As post-puritan British elites learned to distinguish good from bad religion, traditional Scottish folk Calvinism was increasingly identified as disorderly, unsociable, and potentially dangerous to social hierarchy.

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[60] CH2/393/3, p. 77.
[61] See e.g. the case of Laird Milncroft, who excited the Presbytery of Hamilton's wrath by routinely operating his mill on the Sabbath but totally ignored its protests and eventual excommunication, CH2/393/3, p. 87.
[62] CH2/294/9, pp. 53, 183-4.
[63] Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (1967).
[64] John Seed, "The spectre of puritanism," *Social History* 30:4 (2005).

Good religion, in post-puritan discourse, was "sociable," bad religion "unsociable." Unsociability did not mean isolation, however, as Lawrence Klein explores in an important essay: disorderly religionists like the Quakers, or the "sour" covenanters of southwest Scotland, could be very sociable indeed—with each other. Rather, language about the unsociability of such believers meant "incivility—a refusal to conform to, or a negligence about practicing the rules of, decorous behavior."[65] For propertied Britons harassed by reminiscences of the civil wars, religion which was unsociable in this sense—not properly subordinate to the social order—was deeply threatening. Both "superstition" and "enthusiasm," two forms of bad religion repeatedly paired in the first half of the century, [66] provoked unease because they were forms of spirituality that could not be controlled by lay elites. Superstition was a form of religion based on fear and a sense of helplessness, obsessed with external, ceremonial actions; it undermined the social order by giving too much power to an independent priesthood (alone able to perform the rituals believed to be necessary).[67] Enthusiasm, by contrast, posed an equal but opposite threat to social stability: by imagining himself to have a direct relationship to God and thus his own source of spiritual guidance, the individual religious virtuoso could potentially challenge authority, as "enthusiastic" puritans had done in 1640-60. The religious politics of post-puritan elites therefore sought to contain religious devotion securely within an institutional framework controlled by themselves, eschewing both "superstition" (a sacerdotal priesthood) and "enthusiasm" (extra-institutional religious feeling, especially that viewed as out of control). Good religion in this understanding focuses primarily on human behavior in God's created world rather than redemption from it, and God's major assignment is to reinforce human sociability through supernatural sanctions. The intensely personal piety fostered by folk Calvinism is almost inherently enthusiastic. No matter how apparently innocuous, the claims of

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[65] Klein, "Sociability, solitude, and enthusiasm," in Klein and La Vopa (eds.), *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe* (1997), 160-2.

[66] See esp. *Spectator* No. 201 (October 1711) and Hume's "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm," in *Essays Moral and Political* (1741). The recent work of John Pocock has very ably analyzed the discourse of superstition and enthusiasm; see e.g. "Post-puritan England and the problem of the enlightenment," in Zagorin (ed.), Culture and Politics (1980), "Enthusiasm: the antiself of enlightenment" in Klein and La Vopa (eds.), and *Barbarism and Religion* vol. 1 (1999).

[67] On the firmly Erastian nature of the Church of England after the mid-seventeenth century and its control by lay elites, see Leo Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England* (1991).

(especially humble) individuals to have direct experience with the divine leaves open the possibility that the social order might be challenged.

While the parochial forms of Scottish presbyterianism were compatible with these post-puritan sensibilities, its folk-Calvinist content was not, and Scotland's traditional religious culture was stigmatized in the wider British public sphere as impolite and enthusiastic. The most detailed and vitriolic attack on Scottish Calvinism in the Augustan age, the *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Displayed*, is an interesting illustration of the confluence of anglicization, politeness, and elite anxieties about disorderly religion. First published in London in 1693, apparently by a disaffected Scot, and repeatedly reprinted in the first half of the eighteenth century, the pamphlet combines a cultural critique of Scottish religious practice as vulgar and impolite with an emphasis on its social and political subversiveness. The lively and passionate preaching style of the Scottish pastor is disdained as "raving in pulpits," as "nonsensical raptures, the abuse of mystick divinity," whipping up uneducated crowds into a frenzy through "a loud voice, and whining tone. . .especially if he can but drivel a little, either at mouth or eyes."[68] The Scottish preacher's use of examples and analogies accessible to rustic or mechanic hearers is also mocked as a "familiar way of preaching," making use of "impertinent and base similies and always with homely, coarse, and ridiculous expressions, very unsuitable to the gravity and solemnity that becomes divinity."[69] Nor does the message of Scottish preaching receive more approval than the style. Instead of emphasizing the moral duties of their humble hearers, presbyterian preachers dwell too long upon faith and imputed righteousness, which the author frets will lead sour village Calvinists to neglect their obligations.[70] Presbyterian sermons "are for the most part upon *believe, believe*," the author remarks, regarding these repeated exhortations to self-dedication with puzzlement and irritation.[71] The constant depiction of Christ's taking a personal interest in the hearers, especially in the nuptial imagery beloved by Rutherford and other traditional favorites, is especially distasteful: "When they speak of Christ, they represent him as a

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[68] *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Displayed*, 34, 19, 6.
[69] Ibid., 19. cf. 90ff. for many examples of what the author regards as vulgar, excessively popular expressions in sermons, which he explicitly criticizes as a "common-manny" not a "gentle-manny" way of preaching.
[70] Ibid., 4, 19-21.
[71] Ibid., 19.

galant, courting and kissing, by their fulsome amorous discourses on the mysterious parables of the Canticles."[72] But the bulk of the *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence* is given over to bitter denunciation of the social and political danger of Scottish presbyterianism. Despite the efforts of Robert Wodrow to distinguish "sober" from "wild" presbyterians, the political disloyalty of the extreme Covenanters is here used to smear Scottish Calvinism as a whole.[73] Fervent Calvinism is associated with the "*West-country rabble*," the covenanting movement described as "our rabble-reformation," and the insolent behavior of Scottish clerics toward "those of the highest rank and quality" is a repeated complaint.[74] The pamphlet's dedication, to an anonymous Calvinist gentleman, mocks him for participation in a culture inappropriate to his status, ironically praising him for a zeal in which he has "no equal, but one reverend ruling-elder, a bonnet-maker in Leith-Wynd."[75] Scottish Calvinism is a religious culture of and for a fanatical, "enthusiastic" plebs: it is they who are "the guides, and their pastors must follow them, whom they pretend to conduct"; the clergy, the author concludes elsewhere, are "wholly enslaved to the humours of their people," and it is no wonder Scottish preachers should be so impolite and coarse, when they are "meerly preachers set and call'd by the people, who are generally but very ill judges of mens qualifications for the ministry."[76]

The role of "the people" in calling parish pastors, which the *Scotch Presbyteiran Eloquence* blamed for clerical impoliteness, would after 1730 become a controversial issue in Scottish religious life. For some decades after the formal restoration of lay patronage in the Church of Scotland in 1712, many Scottish aristocrats shared the view of parishioners and the Kirk's Second Book of Discipline that the consensus of the congregation was an indispensable part of a ministerial call. But as Scottish lay elites came to share social, educational, and marriage networks with their English counterparts, it was natural that they came to envy or to regard as normal the practice of church patronage in England.[77] Church patronage was useful to English aristocrats in several

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[72] Ibid., 20.
[73] Ibid., 79ff.
[74] Ibid., vi, 19, 22.
[75] Ibid., iii.
[76] Ibid., 2, 14.
[77] On advowsons in the eighteenth-century Church of England, see Cannon's *Aristocratic Century*, 63-70, and D.R. Hirschberg, "The government and church patronage in England, 1660-1760," *JBS* 20:1 (1980): 109-39.

ways, as Cannon notes, from providing for kin who otherwise would need to be privately supported, to advancing friendly clerics who might be "valuable political allies as pamphleteers or agents."[78] To the anglicized, polite generation of Scottish peers that came of age at mid-century, church offices were little different from secular offices, and these in Scotland were universally dispensed through networks of patronage—preeminently that controlled by the 3rd Duke of Argyll in London and his agent Milton in Edinburgh, the cabinet's Scottish managers.[79] A parade of Scottish gentlemen and professionals march through Lord Milton's voluminous correspondence, preserved in the National Library of Scotland, soliciting for themselves and their kinfolk offices at every level, from sheriff and inspector-general of his Majesty's customs to church history professor to apprentice at Milton's bleach fields.[80] For the Surrey-born and Eton-educated Argyll, who came to hold almost viceregal powers in Scotland, the institutional church was simply another car in the gravy train and strong religious passion of any sort a matter of contempt.[81] From the 1730s Argyll and men like him began to inherit the rights to church patronage that had lain mostly unused since 1712, with results that would be irritating to Scottish elites and catastrophic for Strathclyde parishioners.

QUANTIFYING DEFERENCE

The gentry in the Strathclyde, as throughout early modern Europe, expected to be treated with deference by their social inferiors, and the parish church, which was in many rural areas the only major public building, was naturally a venue in which they expected authority and deference to be enacted. Already before the start of the period under study, most of the region's leading landowners had a private "Seat" or "Desk" in the parish church, often elaborately carved or decorated, to display their importance in the community,[82] while the aristocracy or the greater gentry might have a private loft for

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[78] Cannon, 65.
[79] John Simpson, "Who steered the gravy train? 1707-1766", in Phillipson and Mitchison (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement* (1970); Alexander Murdoch, *The People Above* (1980); John Stuart Shaw, *The Management of Scottish Society* (1983); Ronald Sunter, *Patronage and Politics in Scotland, 1707-1832* (1986), esp. 68-72.
[80] NLS MSS. 16679 ff. 52, 66, 84, 232, 241; 16692 f. 22, 162, 172.
[81] For Argyll as patron, see esp. Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 140-1, 538-9 and 540.
[82] CH2/197/3, p. 12; CH2/171/9/1, p. 8; CH2/982/5, p. 108.

their family and entourage, carved with their arms and other symbols of their power, or an "aisle," a private section of the church which often combined lordly seats with a private burial vault.[83] This set the community's most distinguished members off from other parishioners, who, in most Strathclyde parishes in the early eighteenth century, still brought their own stools or folding-chairs to public worship. The early eighteenth century saw a new impulse, however, to quantify and measure the deference due to parish grandees, based directly on the amount of property each owned in the parish.[84] Intangible measures such as honor, longevity or distinction of lineage—even the royal descent which marked off the Hamiltons of Hamilton from other Strathclyde aristocrats, and the Calvinist zeal and godly leadership in national politics which had won the Campbells of Argyll the adulation of social inferiors in the seventeenth century—declined in significance. Property ownership in elite understandings would increasingly trump all these older measures of prestige.[85] And ownership of land in the parish, neatly quantifiable, ought also to be easily convertible to proportionate influence in parish life.

"Conform to their several Valuations." The "division" of the church nave between parish property-owners was a significant event in the life of the parishes of Strathclyde, one which must have represented a noticeable change in the experience of public worship for ordinary parishioners. Division took place very gradually across the region, in some parishes as early as the 1710s, in others apparently not until the 1770s. The body of the church, hitherto open for the shared use of all parishioners, was divided among those who owned land in the parish, with space in the church being distributed in proportion to the amount of land each laird owned. Division was normally accompanied by the installation of fixed seats, and each landowner's tenants assigned a set place in his division. An early division took place in Stevenston in 1716, where in the presence of three ministers from Irvine Presbytery the heritors agreed "tht that Body of the Church should be divided Conform to their several Valuations." According to their plan of division, "Their proportions of the floor of the Church shall begin from the outside of the Eastside Wall of the Isle to the East Gabel of the Church & extend itself alongst the sd

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[83] cf. George Hay, *The Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches* (1957).
[84] cf. Alfred Crosby, *The Measure of Reality: quantification and Western society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[85] See Paul Langford's outstanding study of the importance of property in eighteenth-century Britain, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman* (1991), esp. 1-70.

Gabel and the Southside of the Church, so far as their Valuation extends."[86] Many landowners in the first half of the century, like Maxwell of Williamwood in Carmunnock parish, regarded it as only fair that they have space in the church equal to the "proportional Burden" they contributed to repair of the church buildings, schoolhouse, and manse (minister's house), which were paid for by parish property-owners in proportion to their land.[87] A 1731 petition to Irvine Presbytery from James Montgomerie of Pearstonhall complained of his insufficient space in Dreghorn parish church, considering his £846 valuation there, lamenting that "there never was any Legal Division or Partition but that many Heritors and Tenants have at their own hand & without Warrand of patron presbyterie & Heritors built & Erected seats for more than they ought to have done Conform to their Valuation; by which they have taken up the whole floor and Area of the Church." The Presbytery agreed to his request that there be "a division of the Church in proportion to every Heritors Valuation."[88] Church division spread to other parishes in the region during the 1730s and 40s. In 1745 the leading landowner in Campsie parish, Daniel Campbell of Shawfield, complained to the Presbytery of Glasgow that the church was "still undivided among the Heretors, many of whom have no seats, and the area mostly voyd, and that what any of the Heretors possess is without regard to proportion, or any Rule." The Presbytery recommended that Shawfield and other heritors "make up a list of the whole Heretors, and of their several valuations, and to chuse proper skilled persons to measure the church, and report a scheme of division of the same amongst the several Heretors or Lairds according to the valuation or extent of the respective Lands."[89] In some parishes division proceeded in stages, with earlier divisions (as in Kilbarchan in 1725) leaving a significant amount of room in the nave of the church still open "for common People and Strangers to sit in at ordinary Occasions,"[90] before further meetings of heritors decades later decided "to divide the whole of the Church."[91]

Where before humble parishioners had brought a stool or chair and chosen their own place in the church, the division of the church by the gentry, even when some

[86] CH2/197/3, p. 213.
[87] CH2/171/9/1, pp. 77-8.
[88] CH2/197/4, p. 27.
[89] CH2/171/11/2, p. 195.
[90] CH2/295/8, p. 52.
[91] HR195/1, p. 15.

"common area" was allowed to remain, left less and less room for the portable seats of the humble. In the last stage of division in Dumbarton parish, Thomas Connell's plan to install an impressive pew for himself in what he called a "piece of vacant Ground" elicited a remark from the session that "as some have a Chair in the same Room," they hoped he had "procured their Consent for the Removal thereof."[92] Most parishioners, however, as tenants to one or other of the gentry, were formally assigned a particular place in the division, in the new fixed seats belonging to their landlord, a practice which was also an innovation in this region. In 1724, at the same time as he installed a loft in East Kilbride church, Sir William Maxwell of Calderwood arranged to "provide all His Vassals in the laigh room [i.e., under his loft] on the floor which he now possesses and above also if it be necessary according to their Valuations."[93] The shift from a parish church that belonged to all to a church neatly divided in proportion to property value, with assigned seats for tenants under the watchful eye of their landlord (or, more likely, his factor), must have been a striking change in the lived religion of the Strathclyde. Spreading gradually in the second quarter of the century and culminating in the third, this process overlapped substantially with the enclosure of common lands in Lowland Scotland, and may be considered as a kind of "spiritual enclosure." Perhaps surprisingly, there is little evidence of overt resistance to the process in church records. The Strathclyde region had a significantly higher percentage of independent smallholders than the rest of Scotland, and these modest heritors may have been eager participants in the process. In the urban parish of Dumbarton, craft guilds built their own lofts, as lairds did in rural areas, and competed with one another in their decoration.[94] In several parishes the elders were clearly active proponents of the division and seating process, building at the session's expense pews which were then let out to middling parishioners, usually on an annual basis, to raise money for the parish poor.[95]

Property versus participation. In spite of apparent acceptance of church division in the Strathclyde, its underlying concept, the equation of land ownership with a right to proportionate influence in the parish, would meet with hostility when applied

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[92] CH2/97/5, p. 342.
[93] CH2/393/3, p. 90.
[94] CH2/97/4, pp. 92, 104-5, 116-7.
[95] e.g., in Kilmarnock, where seat-renting appears to have begun in December 1736: CH2/1252/3, p. 348, and CH2/1252/4, pp. 10, 25, 36.

elsewhere. Lesser parishioners showed resentment when the aristocracy tried to treat the entire parish church building as their private property. In 1715 other heritors in Kilwinning complained to the Presbytery of Irvine about the Earl of Eglinton, claiming that the noble family "used the sd Church as their property, putting in & out Seats and refusing some who had good right to claim room in the sd Church."[96] In 1724 the same Earl provoked discord in Glasford parish when he unilaterally decided to build a new church at some distance from the old one; Eglinton's "Removing the Kirk" without consulting the rest of the parish community was the subject of repeated complaints to the Presbytery of Hamilton.[97]

The most serious conflicts over the new drive to quantify deference in the parish, however, would come in disagreements over pastoral appointments. Here too, beginning in the 1730s, Strathclyde landowners showed a new desire for an influence "conform to their valuations." But elders and other parishioners who had conceded that wealthier members of the parish community were entitled to more space in the church refused to concede that they were likewise entitled to a larger vote in the election of a pastor. Arguments that wealthier heritors ought to have more say in the choice of a minister grow increasingly common in settlement disputes during the 1730s. In 1733, in a controversy over the settlement of Dunlop, the Laird of Dunlop refers to "those who have the Chief Intrest in the parish," suggesting that they should overrule lesser heritors even if their numbers are fewer.[98] In the settlement of Beith in 1736, it was pointed out that "the most considerable heritors" were for William Leechman.[99] But many refused to accept the equation of property with influence, continuing to hold the view which Robert Wodrow had applied to pastoral calls in 1717, that *Quod ad omnes pertinet ab omnibus tractari debet*, "What pertains to all ought to be decided by all."[100] At the same time, other parishioners began to articulate a different criterion for weighing disagreements over a new minister, one of participation in the parish community. It was absurd, these men and women asserted, to allow absentee landlords to determine the pastor for a parish in which they were not themselves "ordinary hearers." These two standards, one based

[96] CH2/197/3, p. 159.
[97] CH2/393/3, pp. 101-3.
[98] CH2/197/4, p. 122.
[99] Ibid., p. 254.
[100] *Correspondence*, 2:328

on property and one on participation in the parish community, would clash in an increasing number of controversial settlements in the 1730s and 40s.

The settlement of Mearns parish, which proved impervious to the Presbytery of Paisley's attempts at mediation in 1732, set the tone for controversies to come. The dispute here seemed to an uncomfortable degree to set the parish's wealthiest parishioners against its spiritual leadership and the majority of parishioners.[101] Sir Michael Stewart of Blackhall and John Wilson of Maidenhill hint, though they do not argue outright, that the votes of the propertied (and not the traditional consent of the heads of families) constitute the crucial matter, and that fewer heritors with more property should prevail over many smallholders. The complaints of other parishioners, who questioned whether some owners of land in the parish ought to have a vote in electing a minister, are not recorded in detail in the presbytery minutes; here as in other parishes, some landowners were absent or Anglican, and their role in choosing a minister they did not themselves hear was perhaps already being questioned.[102] As absentee landlords began to assert themselves in parish elections, parishioners began to argue explicitly that heritors who did not reside in the parish or were not active in public worship should not receive the same regard as those who participated in the spiritual life of the parish. The determined efforts of Susanna, Countess of Eglinton, to settle William Coats in Kilmaurs in 1735-9 produced the most widespread, organized, and articulate opposition from ordinary parishioners to that date. In the election of January 1737, nineteen heritors and heads of families voted for Coats, but twelve of them did not reside in the parish.[103] Seven elders, 46 smaller heritors, and 94 heads of families in Kilmaurs signed a petition of protest, insisting that the shepherd of their flock ought not be determined by "some non resideing heritors as if these were to make up a congregation to the presentee."[104] The petition draws a stark contrast between active, zealous hearers, whose interest in the choice of minister is the glory of God and their own spiritual benefit, and distant landlords concerned only with worldly networking. The sole purpose

[101] CH2/294/8, pp. 366-8.
[102] Ibid., p. 368.
[103] CH2/197/4, p. 276.
[104] Ibid., p. 282.

of the parish ministry is the spiritual good of the flock, not placement for kin or protégés, networks of patronage, nor a living for well-connected divinity graduates:

> We are of opinion that if Zeal for the Glory of God Love to Jesus Christ and a Desire of Saveing Souls are the only Motives and Chief Inducements for any man to enter into the function of the Holy Ministry and a principle of love and esteem from the people to their pastor where these are wanting it cannot be expected he can be edifying or his Labours be followed with success and be blest.

The conduct of the noble patron, and indeed of the candidate in accepting her presentation, "makes it plainly appear to us that there is more private interest in it and the honour of some person than real religion or the Glory of God."[105] Regardless of the property owned in the parish by the Countess and her allies, the right to determine the minister properly belonged to those who would benefit from his ministry. As the settlement dispute in Kilmaurs reached a contentious climax in February 1738, it was explicitly framed by both sides as a question of property versus participation in the parish community. Mr. Crawford, Eglinton's agent, repeatedly emphasizes how "the unjust opposers of this Presentee are. . .far inferior in interest and valuation to those who appear for."[106] The Presbytery of Irvine based its ultimate refusal to concur in the presentation on the fact that "the far greater number of these [pro-Coats heritors] do not live in the paroch" and "not only a great number of heritors, but all the Session save one with the body of inhabitants are against him."[107] The national Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, however, to which the patron appealed, ruled in her favor, and Coats was installed as pastor of Kilmaurs in May 1739, an "intrusion" without precedent in this region.

A similar opposition between property and participation as criteria in a call divided the parish of Cambusnethan in the Presbytery of Hamilton about the same time. When the Presbytery's representatives arrived to moderate a call in January 1737, Lockhart of Castlehill, Hamilton of Wishaw, and "several other Gentlemen" eagerly pressed for a call to William Craig, while the presbytery records note that "most of the Elders with a great many of the People had not concurred therewith."[108] The

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[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., 342.
[107] Ibid., 345.
[108] CH2/393/3, pp. 298-9.

Presbytery's decision to count the votes of absentee landlords and to treat the customary acclamation by the heads of families as not legally required provoked an outraged written protest from the elders of Cambusnethan. According to their dissent, "The Presbytery did in a most AntiScriptural way and manner deny to the Heads of Families a Vote free Consent or Absent and admitted several Gentlemen to Vote in the said Settlement of our said Paroch who have neither Heritage nor residence therein."[109] A like pattern can be found in a number of contested settlements in the 1730s and 40s. In the presentation of James Campbell to the second charge at Paisley in 1747, the patron's lawyer McGilchrist is at pains to emphasize the superior property of those in favor of the presentee, while opponents note that some of the gentlemen voting for Campbell are "not of Our Communion" and that "many of the residing Heritors, Elders, and people in the parish [were] very averse from having Mr Campbell the presentee settled."[110] The settlement of Govan parish in 1747 likewise turned on property and residence: nineteen men owning land in the parish voted for the presentee William Thom, "six of whom only Reside in the parish," while thirty-five smaller heritors voted against him, "twenty-three of whom do Reside."[111] The Presbytery of Glasgow refused to sustain such a call, but again the patron's appeal to the General Assembly in Edinburgh upheld the rights of property in settling ministers.

"Part of his estate": church patronage as a commodity. In cases like these in the second quarter of the century we see a new understanding of the right to present crystallizing in elite understandings. Long after the legal restoration of patronage in 1712, some well-catechized Scottish aristocrats refused to make use of their right at all, agreeing with the Kirk's official judgment that patronage was "a grievance to this church." Other patrons were active but accommodating, promoting a particular candidate but willing to back down in the face of strong opposition from the parish. By the 1730s, many in the Scottish elite had come to believe that patronage entailed not a right to propose to the free choice of the elders and heritors (like the Countess of Kilmarnock in 1723) but a right to appoint. Elites now regarded the traditional acclamation of the heads of families (based more on custom than on the letter of Scots law) as not necessary at all,

[109] Ibid., 300.
[110] CH2/294/9, pp. 291, 272-3.
[111] CH2/171/11/2, p. 236.

and even the concurrence of elders and heritors as a formality. Non-concurrence by the elders and heritors, in the new view, required justification. Lord Milton, in a letter supporting the presentee to Kilmaurs in 1736, complained to Irvine Presbytery that "the opposition does not so much proceed from any objection to the Presentee or even a Dislike to him as from an intention and belief to make another freind of theirs profit at his expence."[112] This would have made little sense to the parishioners of Kilmaurs; they viewed their preference for another candidate over the presentee as its own justification.

In the polite and commercial world of eighteenth-century Britain, an older style of local politics, in which long-established grand families received respect from but also compromised with parish sensibilities, was giving way to a new order in which patronage was a commodity. The desperate need for cash, in feverish efforts to fund the lavish lifestyle typical of their English counterparts, was the shaping force in the lives of the Scottish landed elite in the eighteenth century; land, honors, and local reputation became valuable only as means to fund the next social season in London.[113] Several of Scotland's aristocratic families raised cash by selling their traditional right of patronage on the open market. Hew Crawford, the patron in the 1747 settlement dispute in Paisley, had bought the right from the tutors of the young Earl of Dundonald, who were desperate to settle his Lordship's debt. Not only was Crawford non-resident in the parish, but he was also a man of no local history or reputation, apparently a wealthy merchant or professional in Edinburgh. He had understood himself to have bought a benefice at Paisley, not the right to negotiate with weavers and bonnetmakers, and his lawyer McGilchrist's cavalier dismissal of the role of elders, heritors, and heads of families in the process is the most stark expression of the new view that patronage was a commodity: "to pretend that a Settlement should proceed by a plurality of votes," he told the Presbytery of Paisley, "was an invention for eludeing the publick law a Violation of Order and a robbing in a kind of Judiciall Manner the patron of part of his estate."[114]

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[112] CH2/197/4, p. 269.

[113] See the young Earl of Eglinton's letter of 11 January 1752 from London to his sister Lady Frances Montgomerie, minding the family estates in Strathclyde: "I do not see how I can support the expence of a spring campaign in London. I wish to God you could regulate matters so with Sir John [the Earl's factor] that I could have my remittances regularly every quarter, you cannot immagine what an advantage it would be to me….I beg you and Sir John will lay your heads together," NAS, GD3/5/1044/1. Enclosure and agricultural "improvement" was motivated by similar needs from mid-century.

[114] CH2/294/9, p. 289.

From mid-century, Scotland's patrons, whether anglicized aristocrats like Countess Eglinton or speculating professionals like Crawford, would no more negotiate over their presentees than consult with tenants over a new garden.

TURBULENT PEOPLE AND SCRUPULOUS ELDERS

The contested settlements of the 1730s and 40s illustrate a widening cultural gap between parishioners and anglicized elites, as older notions of popular participation in a call were increasingly seen by patrons and their lawyers as a lack of deference. Session and presbytery records show that outspoken opinions and vigorous politicking in pastoral elections were common in parishes throughout the Strathclyde, not only at the level of the session and heritors but even among humble "inhabitants." In 1737, however, the Countess of Eglinton was shocked by Kilmaurs parish's "obstinate" resistance to her man William Coats. Patrons, increasingly based in Edinburgh or London and estranged from the religious culture of the Strathclyde, would now expect parishioners to be passive in the process of a call, and the rough and tumble of parish politics, with different groups of parishioners organizing for or against particular preachers or drawing up petitions, was seen as outrageous impudence. The efforts of Kilmaurs to obtain a call to James Halket instead of the presentee was well within the bounds of traditional practice in the region, but it horrified Countess Eglinton's lawyer. In February 1738 he told Irvine Presbytery that "It is exceedingly obvious that the opposers of this Presentee have been guilty of preposterous manadgement by their entering into a very undue combination and by their own authority without any warrand from the Reverend Presbytery making up a call in favours of a Rival of their own."[115] For a patron to write to other aristocrats or gentlemen to solicit support in a call, as the Countess did in the same case,[116] was of course fair play, but for parishioners to organize to express their views was now seen as an "undue combination."

The disputed settlement at Paisley in 1747 was the scene of another illustrative case of the elite's new intolerance of popular involvement. When the elders of Paisley

[115] CH2/197/4, p. 342.
[116] NAS, GD21/350.

submitted a written dissent from the presentation, the patron's agent, McGilchrist, tried to convince Paisley Presbytery not to receive the petition at all. Mr. McGilchrist, an urban lawyer unfamiliar with the religious culture of the Strathclyde, attended the election in Paisley Abbey and was horrified by the raucous, disorderly scene. As he described the event to the Presbytery, "a confused Noise and clamour began in Sundry parts of the Church and several people standing up craved that the Vote of Dissent of the Heads of families might be taken." So offensive was this lack of deference to McGilchrist that he demanded the Presbytery censure "the guilty" and disqualify the votes of heritors who had participated in the unruly debate, which he interpreted as a riot and claimed had intimidated voters allied to the patron.[117] Paisley parishioners were baffled by the lawyer's interpretation. Witnesses called in the Presbytery's investigation testified that they had seen "people chattering as if they were disputing," but denied seeing any violence or intimidation of voters. Robert Clark reported that he had "heard a noise made in the Church, and it was a great noise, and saw severals lifting staffs & shaking them, and heard them say that they would tear Mr Campbell [the presentee] out," but he saw this as a legitimate expression of protest. Peter Scot testified that he had been told by opposers of the presentation that they intended to create "a tumult at the Moderation of the Call," but did not understand why this was regarded as inappropriate.[118] McGilchrist's accusation that parishioners were circulating a petition against the patron's candidate also puzzled the Paisley faithful. Clark, who freely admitted doing so, opined that "solliciting others by honest Means was rather his duty instead of being a Crime."[119]

Presbyteries in the 1730s continued to formally protest presentations as a "grievance to this church," and continued to idealize and pursue "comfortable settlements" based on consensus. But as patrons began to exert their right, backed by teams of lawyers, the ministers of the ecclesiastical courts had to recognize church politics as the art of the possible. In several parishes, however, the elders refused to follow the clerical lead and compromise their presbyterian principles, and the same strategy which had helped the Kirk win popular acceptance in the region, choosing elders who were representative of the parish community, proved problematic. Even the

[117] CH2/294/9, pp. 276-7.
[118] Ibid., 280-1.
[119] Ibid., p. 281.

Presbytery of Paisley, which had a much higher tolerance for expressions of parish opinion than did Mr. McGilchrist, took exception to the protest of November 1732 in Mearns, when a crowd hostile to the landlords' candidate, McVey, attacked the house where he was lodging, shouting and throwing stones. The Presbytery ordered the Mearns elders to "make inquiry into the Authors of that ryot & to Report"; even after several months, however, the elders were unable to identify a single participant—or, more likely, unwilling, as they themselves implied to the Presbytery in January 1733.[120] Instead of being instruments of clerical authority in the villages, elders functioned as spokesmen for or protectors of "these turbulent people," as the patrons labeled Kilmaurs parishioners in 1738, and their opposition to a patron's presentee might persist even after his ordination.

While the Kirk had long experience dealing with individual "wild" parishioners, stubbornly rejecting the church establishment as insufficiently Reformed, the new settlement disputes presented the presbyteries with the awful prospect of entire sessions going "wild." The Presbytery of Paisley's visitation of Mearns in October 1736 revealed the persistence of an extraordinary schism in the parish, three years after the ordination of the controversial George McVey. Asked the usual questions about his elders, McVey told his brethren that the Mearns elders would not sit in session with him or attend his preaching, that the clerk and elders allowed him no oversight of parish finances, and that he also had no access to the session minutes and communion cups, which were kept by one of the renegade elders, Robert Sym.[121] The stunned presbytery spent months "dealing with" the Mearns session in order to persuade them to cooperate with their pastor, assigning ministers to meet with each elder one on one, but after much deliberation the elders turned in a paper in July 1737 refusing either to work with the Rev. Mr. McVey or to resign the eldership:

> We have (tho' in much Weakness) aimed at following forth the duties of our Calling as Elders in as far as we could do it with a good Conscience, it would no doubt be for our personal ease to demitt considering the present Melancholy Situation of the parish, But as our oun ease Ought not to be the Rule of our practice, We are resolved (thro' Divine Aid) to Officiat so far as we can Do it with a good Conscience in consistance with the Principles of the Church of Scotland to which we came engaged when we were ordained Elders.[122]

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[120] Ibid., pp. 378-9, 383-4, 389.
[121] CH2/294/9, p. 28.
[122] Ibid., 42.

Futher, the presbytery clerk records, "They declared viva voce As they could never Oun M^{r} M^{c}vey to be Minister of the parish of Mearns, so they could not now agree to sit in session with him, but would sit in session with another other Minister of this Presbytery that has been legally called & Ordained."[123] The clerics of Paisley Presbytery, insisting that "there must be some yielding on both sides between the Minister & people who do not Adhere to him," sought several methods to bring about a compromise and convince the elders to work with McVey, even asking "the dissenters in Mearns" to turn in "any Terms or proposals of Accommodation they have to offer."[124] None was offered, however; the scrupulous elders, who regarded McVey as an "intruder" foisted upon them by non-resident landlords inactive in parish life, declined to consider any arrangement leaving him in place as pastor. In October 1737, after "much pains had been taken" with the Mearns elders "to bring them to a dutyfull exercise of their Office," the Presbytery of Paisley formally declared that "the said persons cannot be regarded as Elders."[125] It was 1741, however, before the Rev. Mr. McVey could find other members of his parish willing to replace them as elders, and the protesting old session still refused to hand over to the new parish regime the communion cups, poor's box, and session minutes. Robert Sym, who retained these, declined to surrender them even when shown a written order from the Presbytery of Paisley; the Rev. Mr. McVey found it necessary to sue the former elders before the Sheriff of Renfrew to recover them.[126]

The boycott of the Mearns elders, who refused either to treat the "intruded" minister as their true pastor or to give up their office, was a tactic used by sessions in like disputes in Cambusnethan and Kilmaurs. In 1737 the Presbytery of Hamilton certified the call of William Craig at Cambusnethan, with the support of several local lairds, but over the objections of the session and "a great many of the People" who wanted to hear other preachers before making a call. The session submitted a written Protestation to the Presbytery, denouncing their "AntiChristian way of intruding ministers upon Parochs contrary to their declared dissent." Nor had the clergymen of the Presbytery won any favor from Cambusnethan parishioners by their long efforts to persuade them to concur

[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., 43.
[125] Ibid., 50.
[126] Ibid., 116, 117.

with the lairds' candidate: the protest condemned these efforts as "that unwarrantable method of practicing upon Persons by insinuating again and again to consent." In view of this tactic, the Cambusnethan elders conclude, "We cannot look upon Mr Craig's settlement in this Paroch but as a Violent intrusion which can constitute no relation betwixt him and us as our Pastor." The elders further announce in advance their intention of continuing their resistance to Craig after his ordination and forming an alternative authority in the parish. Their protest, they insist, "shall not be construed as a Demitting of our office but that we shall be at Liberty to serve the Congregation at all times when need shall require, give them testimonials [i.e., when moving to another parish] and exercise every part of our office as Elders with those with whom we in Conscience can Joyn."[127] The ministers of the Presbytery spent June 1737 trying to repair the breach in Cambusnethan, with several clerics assigned to "deal with them [the elders] to return to the Exercise of their office"; the session continued its boycott, however, and the three new elders ordained to replace them later that summer were the same landowners who had wrangled the Rev. Mr. Craig's settlement in the first place—Lockhart of Castlehill, Hamilton of Wishaw, and Stuart of Newmains.[128]

The elders of Kilmaurs, where presentee William Coats was ordained in the face of much local resistance in May 1739, waged a similar scorched-earth campaign against the "intruder." In 1740 the Presbytery of Irvine sent six ministers to Kilmaurs to "Deal with the Elders to Countenance Gospel Ordinances and Institutions as Regularly dispensed by Mr Coats in that Paroch."[129] All the elders but one refused to meet with the Presbytery's representatives at all, while the session treasurer, Baillie Smith, frankly refused to turn over the parish funds and records, "alledging that he was discharged [i.e. forbidden] to quitt with them by their Session or the Rest of the Elders." The Rev. Mr. Coats, like the Rev. Mr. McVey in Mearns, had to sue elder Smith at law in order to recover "the said money, Bills, Papers, Books Communion Cups and all utensils of the Church in his hands."[130]

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[127] CH2/393/3, pp. 300-1.
[128] Ibid., pp. 308-9.
[129] CH2/197/4, p. 426.
[130] Ibid., pp. 429, 455-6.

In a religious culture such as Strathclyde's, in which parishes shared in the experience of worship through communion festivals and guest preachers, the resentment of scrupulous elders at such an "intrusion" could even spill over into a neighboring parish. The settlement of Mearns provoked such outrage in nearby Cambuslang that the Presbytery of Hamilton had to intervene in the resulting dispute. When John Bar, a member of the Cambuslang session, assisted at the Mearns communion in May 1739, his fellow elders began to shun him. By serving communion for the "intruder" George McVey (which would ordinarily have been the office of Mearns's protesting elders), Bar was in the eyes of his brethren an ecclesiastical scab, undermining the Mearns elders' strike. The other Cambuslang elders refused to sit in session with him and forbade him to assist at Cambuslang's own communion.[131] Summoned before the Presbytery in March 1740 and ordered to reconcile with Bar, the rest of the session forthrightly refused to accept correction by the clergy unless they could be shown that "Patronage is agreeable to the word of God." Interestingly, the pastor of Cambuslang, William McCulloch, is almost invisible in the midst of the ferocious squabble dividing his session. Where the elders stride through the presbytery records as articulate, confident, coolly dismissive of clerical opinion they deem not consonant with Scripture, the parish pastor appears on the sidelines as hapless, passive, weakly supporting Bar but impotent in the face of his lay leadership.[132] Indeed, the testimony of elder James Jackson suggests that even the elders may have been responding to pressure from below. Jackson confessed privately to the Presbytery that "in his own mind he had no difficulty as to the sitting in session with James Bar yet being afraid of the Clamour of the People of the Parroch he declined to sit in session with him at this time."[133]

According to the presbytery minutes, "after having dealt with the said Elders at great length to convince them of their mistakes as to their conduct," the ministers to whom the matter was delegated "reported that the said Elders were still of the opinion that their said conduct. . .was right and justifiable." The Presbytery of Hamilton, having ruled that the session of Cambuslang should receive a "particular rebuke," found to its further astonishment that the elders "Refused to Submit to the Rebuke and Appealled to

[131] CH2/393/3, pp. 351, 355-6.
[132] See, e.g., Ibid., p. 358.
[133] Ibid.

the Tribunal of Christ."[134] In June 1740 the exasperated Presbytery formally deposed the elders of Cambuslang. In response, the session submitted a remarkable paper, lecturing the clergymen of Hamilton Presbytery at great length about their own duties and Reformed theology.

> We the Elders of Cambuslang being sensible that we are under obligations to our own Confession of Faith and to both our National and Solemn League and Covenants. . .and if we should deviate into these things that now seem to some customary we must go contrary to the light of our own conscience and likewayes to the opinion of our late sufferers and even to any at present whether Ministers or Christians that are setting up for reformation principles and therefore as we desire to live and dye at peace with God and our own Consciences so we desire to own Christ's Headship and sovereignty in His Church.[135]

Settlement of ministers without the congregation's consent, the elders reminded the clerics, was unbiblical and contradicted the Second Book of Discipline. Therefore the Presbytery's ruling deposing the session was "unscriptural," and the elders candidly declared their intention to ignore it: "This unwarrantable sentence shall no wayes alienate our office and character as Elders. . .we have as full liberty and power to exercise the same when called thereto as if no such sentence had been passed." The statement ends with the elders' virtual excommunication of their clerical superiors, declining to further accept the Presbytery's authority or "inspection," though it graciously invites them to repent and "come to our Reformation Principles."[136] The astonishing behavior of the Cambuslang elders in 1740 was a harbinger of trouble to come for the Church of Scotland. Patrons were becoming more inclined to exercise their long-unused powers of presentation. At the same time, the behavior of parish lay leadership shows that a well-catechized laity was not necessarily a pliable one. The elders of the Strathclyde, having been taught that the Bible was above every human authority, refused to accept clerical decisions they deemed in conflict with it.

The tensions between pious elders and absentee patrons around 1740 reflected the dual nature of the Scottish parish. The Scottish Reformation, in its ambition to bring all of society under the direction of the true faith, had created a religious system that was communal and public—offering services like education and charity to all, seeking to

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[134] Ibid., pp. 356-7.
[135] Ibid., p. 362.
[136] Ibid., p. 363

bring all under discipline, and funded by all property-owners—but it also aimed to foster in individual Scots intense personal spirituality of a very specific kind, based on particular doctrines of fall and redemption. Alternative views of natural religion, reasonableness, and a middle way between superstition and enthusiasm, which the new public sphere was making available to Scots, also facilitated a possible critique of this religious virtuosity as unnecessary. Church records include little evidence of estrangement from traditional belief and piety among ordinary parishioners in mid-century Strathclyde, but Scottish gentry, aristocracy, and professionals were becoming increasingly alienated from the traditional religious culture. With their defection, which accelerated during the second quarter of the century, we already must cease to speak of a folk Calvinism shared between villagers, pastors, and godly landowners like the Countess of Kilmarnock and Hamilton of Aikenhead. Instead the west of Scotland at mid-century was divided between adherents of a cosmopolitan mentality—turning to new currents of thought from England and the continent to escape what it experienced as the smothering parochialism of Scottish life—and those loyal to a provincial culture of fervent Calvinism and vigorous popular participation in parish life. This division was not simply one between elite and popular, though it was at first strongly correlated with social status. In the middle decades of the eighteenth century, this clash of provincial and cosmopolitan cultures manifested itself as a fissure within Scotland's elites. Absentee landowners and gentlemen—those who made their primary residence in Edinburgh or London—were much less likely to share in the traditional religious culture and instead to orient themselves to a cosmopolitan, post-Calvinist world of thought, while elite men and women resident in the parish often continued to share in the old folk Calvinism. A division in the Church of Scotland's clergy began to emerge around the same time between those loyal to the old piety and divinity and those attuned to broader cultural shifts, who felt keenly the need to adapt to the times, to continue to reform and to achieve the progress in divinity which the era had seen in so many other fields. Clerical academics and clergymen who moved in urban and genteel circles were the first to seek to forge a new, more cosmopolitan divinity, while parish pastors remained, well into the third quarter of the century, participants in their parishioners' provincial Calvinism.

CHAPTER 4. "REFORMED AND ALWAYS REFORMING": THE NEW SCHEME OF DIVINITY

Parish life in the Strathclyde in the second quarter of the century was already showing ominous signs of strain. The gentry and aristocracy, always reluctant to submit to discipline like ordinary parishioners, increasingly oriented themselves to London and to the cosmopolitan culture of the first British empire rather than to Scotland's folk Calvinism, which publications like the *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence* derided as fanatical and vulgar. The Church of Scotland's clergy would also feel the influence of the wider world into which Scotland was now integrated, though at first slowly. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Scottish clergy had a reputation in the broader British culture for rigid Calvinism, "sour" and unsociable manners, and a frenzied, "enthusiastic" preaching style which appealed to the plebs but not to gentlemen. Polite Scots had come to disdain "popular clergymen" and their "Whinning and Canting to please a Rable," characterizing their style of piety as "nonsensical raptures" and "wild notions."[1] A generation or two later the Kirk's clergy had acquired a very different reputation, one revived in recent historiography by the scholarship of Richard Sher. The Moderate clergy who dominated the Kirk from mid-century were polite men of letters, benignly Christian but undogmatic and free from cant and enthusiasm. They were (like Edinburgh's Professor of Rhetoric Hugh Blair) smooth, internationally-respected orators, and (like best-selling historian William Robertson) better-known for their achievements in the liberal arts than for strictly pastoral or theological work. These clerics, unlike the canting firebrands criticized in the *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*, mixed genially with gentlemen and literati, even with that famous skeptic David Hume, who called the Rev. Dr. Robertson and his circle "my Protestant pastors."[2] By 1768 the Church of Scotland's clergy were being called "perhaps the most learned & sensible body of men in Europe," in Oxford no less.[3] Even more than in England, Enlightenment in Scotland was "clerical

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[1] *A review of ecclesiastick patronage*, 13; *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*, 19.
[2] *The Letters of David Hume*, ed. J.Y.T. Greig (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1932), 1:495.
[3] Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence, Letter 44 (Kenrick to Wodrow, 6 October 1768).

and conservative,"[4] the product not of alienated *philosophes* but of ordained literati and tenured professors under the sponsorship of an established church.[5]

The rise of clerical politeness in eighteenth-century Scotland, only a generation after the Kirk had been reputed a swamp of Calvinist fanaticism, was a remarkable development in British cultural history.[6] It must be understood in the context of wider changes taking place not only in European culture but in Christian theology and the Reformed world in particular, a "religious Enlightenment" which David Sorkin has argued cut across regions and denominations in eighteenth-century Europe.[7] The transformation of Scottish divinity reflected and participated in larger trends among the Reformed of Geneva and English and Irish Dissenters, with whom the Church of Scotland's clergy, especially its academic elite, shared intellectual ties, and was in part an effort to be responsive to the spirit of the age. But it also prepared a further fraying of the parish community in the Strathclyde. For the new divines, who were prepared to refute Toland and to enter into dialogue with Newton and Locke, were quite unprepared to counsel parishioners who received messages of divine invitation to receive communion, demonic harassment, or visions of angels, as Robert Wodrow had to do in his parish ministry.[8] The new divinity was so different from the old that it constituted an intellectual withdrawal of clerical elites from the parish community, and Wodrow's

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[4] John Pocock's recent work here is essential in re-conceptualizing enlightenment, particularly as it took place in Britain. See esp. "Clergy and commerce: the conservative enlightenment in England," 525-62 in *L'Età dei Lumi* vol. 1 (1985) and *Barbarism and Religion* vol. 1 (1999),

[5] Francis Hutcheson was licensed to preach by the Church of Scotland in 1716, though never ordained to a parish. Hugh Blair was ordained in 1743. Adam Ferguson was licensed to preach as a military chaplain in 1745. William Robertson, author of the international bestseller *The History of Charles V* (1769), was ordained in 1743 and became Principal of Edinburgh University in 1762; after 1752, as the recognized head of the "Moderate party" in the General Assembly, Robertson dominated the church politics of Scotland's established Church at the national level.

[6] The crucial work is Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (1985). cf. Ian Clark, "From protest to reaction: the Moderate regime in the Church of Scotland," in Phillipson and Mitchison (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement* (1970), pp. 200-23; Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church 1688-1843: the age of the Moderates* (1973); Peter Jones, "The polite academy and the Presbyterians," pp. 156-76, and John Dwyer, "The heavenly city of the eighteenth-century Moderate divines," 291-315, in Dwyer, Mason, and Murdoch (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (1982); Campbell and Skinner (eds.), *Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment* (1982); Henry Sefton, "'Neu-Lights and preachers legall': some observations on the beginnings of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland," 185-94 in MacDougall (ed.), *Church, Politics, and Society* (1983); David Allan, *Virtue, Learning, and the Scottish Enlightenment* (1993); Thomas Kennedy, "William Leechman, pulpit eloquence and the Glasgow enlightenment," 56-70 in Hook and Sher (eds.), *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (1995)

[7] See David Sorkin's fine work *The Religious Enlightenment* (2008),

[8] *Analecta*, 1:93-4; 1:53-4.

misgivings about its first representatives foreshadow the friction that would follow a generation later when the clerical Enlightenment collided with parish Calvinism across the Strathclyde.

THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT OF THE NEW DIVINITY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTLAND

"The Right of private Judgment, which belongs to all Christians": the Reformation redefined. Scotland's connections to the international Reformed world were longstanding; advanced theology students, including the professors of divinity, had long studied at either Leiden or Utrecht in the Netherlands, while close ties were also maintained with the Dissenters in England and Ireland, who shared theology and piety with the Church of Scotland though not its status as an established church. When profound cultural and theological changes began to transform the Reformed intellectual world at the turn of the eighteenth century, therefore, it was no surprise that these affected the Scots also, beginning with the academic and clerical elites. In Geneva itself, from which John Knox had once brought orthodox Calvinism to Scotland, Jean-Alphonse Turretin and his successor Jacob Vernet began to modify and soften Reformed theology in what historians have called "rational orthodoxy."[9] Among the English-speaking Reformed, the harbinger of the great changes in presbyterian divinity was Richard Baxter. Impeccably puritan in his pedigree, Baxter began as early as 1649, in the troubling circumstances of the civil wars, to recoil from the extremism of classical Calvinist soteriology. The insistence of radical Calvinists like Tobias Crisp that the operation of grace was conditional on no action on the part of the sinner seemed to Baxter to be antinomian. In the second half of the century he and his protégé Daniel Williams sought to establish a Reformed alternative, according to which "the covenant of grace

[9] Linda Kirk, "Eighteenth-century Geneva and a changing Calvinism," pp. 367-80 in Stuart Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982); Martin Klauber, *Between Reformed Scholasticism and Pan-Protestantism: Jean-Alphonse Turretin (1671-1737) and enlightened orthodoxy at the Academy of Geneva* (Selingsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1994); Graham Gargett, *Jacob Vernet, Geneva, and the Philosophes* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1995); cf. the relevant sections of Roney and Klauber (eds.), *The Identity of Geneva: the Christian commonwealth, 1564-1864* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998).

was conditional on man's repentance from sin and faith in Christ."[10] This was and remained quite controversial—"It was cried abroad among all the party," Baxter recalled, "that I preached Arminianism and free will and man's power, and O! what an odious crime was this"[11]—but Baxter insisted that his was a biblical and Reformed position. (The habitual use of the term "Arminian" in England for the high-church ritualism and sacramentalism associated with Archbishop Laud probably helped to confuse the issue.) In the insistence of Baxter and especially his successor Williams on good works as a condition of justification, revisionist Dissent converged with a parallel movement within Anglican theology, likewise rooted in revulsion from the stark Calvinism of the interregnum.[12] Aainst his antinomian *bête noir*, Baxter similarly initiated a new emphasis on reason in theology, which bore a striking affinity to the Anglican latitudinarians.[13] By the early 1700s most English Presbyterians had, according to Roger Thomas, passed through Baxter's "Middle Way" to explicit Arminianism. By 1721 a Presbyterian minister in Somerset could declare from the pulpit,

> Many, or most of them [our predecessors], were brought up, and lived and died in what they called Calvinism. But for my part I cannot persuade myself that this did in its nature contribute to the piety or usefulness of those reverend fathers….Had they preached nothing but the Calvinistical doctrine of the Decrees, with all the natural consequences of it…it is my opinion that in that case, instead of bringing people to repentance and the love of God, they would have hardened them against it and driven them to presumption or to despair.[14]

By this time the doctrine of the Trinity, which Calvin and the Westminster divines had shared with the Catholic church, was also under challenge. Samuel Clarke's 1712 bombshell *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity* created a furor by claiming that the Nicene doctrine of God as Three in One was without biblical basis;[15] though Clarke was

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[10] Watts, vol. 1, 294.
[11] qtd. Bolam et al., 105.
[12] See Neil Lettinga, "Covenant theology turned upside down: Henry Hammond and Caroline Anglican moralism: 1643-1660," in *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 24:3 (1993), and C.F. Allison's dated and opinionated but still useful *The Rise of Moralism* (1966).
[13] See Thomas, "Parties in Nonconformity," pp. 104ff. On the latitudinarians see chapter 2 of Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of Enlightenment* (1989); Beiser, *Sovereignty of Reason* (1996); Spellman, *The Latitudinarians and the Church of England* (1993); Spurr, "'Latitudinarianism' and the Restoration church," *Historical Journal* 31:1 (1988).
[14] Nicholas Billingsley, *Rational and Christian Principles the Best Rule of Conduct*, qtd. 136 in Thomas, "Presbyterians in transition," pp. 113-74 in Bolam et al.
[15] See chapters 4 and 5 of Gascoigne.

an Anglican, his views quickly gained attention in Reformed circles as well. It was perhaps no accident that Clarke had been a close colleague of Isaac Newton, who may have shared his views. H.L. Short opines,

> Newtonian cosmology naturally led to an Arian view of Christ. The Author of Nature (the phrase is typically Newtonian) must be one divine person, the maker and ruler of all; Christ is his lieutenant and messenger, subordinate but pre-existent and divine, whom he sent to reveal those truths of existence and morality which the human reason already guessed at in more general terms.[16]

But in their flight from Calvinist soteriology, and in the challenges to Trinitarian theology that followed a generation later, Reformed intellectuals insisted that they were not less but more Protestant than their forebears—fulfilling that venerable motto of their tradition, "Reformed and always reforming under the Word of God." They refused a narrative of declension to depict their changing views as a story of Protestant progress, and throughout the eighteenth century attacks on the old orthodoxy of Westminster were couched in Protestant rhetoric. In fact, Calvin and the Westminster divines had themselves remained shackled by popish remnants without scriptural basis, and a more thorough reformation of doctrine was the task of the eighteenth-century Reformed. The rejection of "man-made creeds" and new scrutiny of received views in light of a traditionless Scripture were shared by avant-garde Protestant thinkers across Europe. The Geneva clergy in 1706 eliminated the requirement for pastors to subscribe to the Formula of Consensus, with its strict predestinarian interpretation of Scripture.[17] Among the English and Irish Reformed, two parallel controversies, the Salters' Hall controversy in London in 1719 and the debate in the Synod of Ulster in 1720-22, were ostensibly not over doctrine but over the necessity of "man-made creeds" like the Westminster Confession.

According to the view gaining prominence among the avant-garde Reformed, the great confessions of the post-Reformation age were unnecessary and even un-Protestant. They framed the issue as one of the "sufficiency of Scripture." Richard Baxter early came to agree with the maverick interregnum theologian William Chillingworth that

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[16] Short, "Presbyterians under a new name," 222, in Bolam et al.
[17] Kirk, 368-9.

"The BIBLE, I say, the BIBLE only, is the religion of Protestants."[18] To demand that ministers swear to the words of men, even godly men like the Westminster divines, when these differed from the very words of Scripture was an "imposition," and by raising human interpretations to the level of divine authority, a species of "popery." Why not simply affirm the Bible, without placing a papistical "implicit faith" in the theologians of Westminster or Dordt? For others in the Reformed tradition, however, this line of argument seemed dubious, especially when many ministers were diverging from the message of free grace they regarded as the core of the gospel. As rumors of heresy among the students at Exeter's Dissenting Academy swirled, Exeter Presbyterians pressed their teachers and pastors to profess the Trinity and the divinity of Christ clearly and to refute Samuel Clarke. James Peirce refused to do so, railing against terms like "*Co-essential*, *Co-equal*, and *Co-eternal*…Terms no where found in Scripture,"[19] which only increased the suspicion of his flock. In Peirce's view, the demand for subscription to the Westminster Confession was "an Inquisition…as truly set up, to rack our consciences, and search out the secret sense of our minds, as ever there was any in *Spain* or *Portugal*."[20] The debacle at Exeter Academy led to nationwide controversy among the English Presbyterians, which typically pitted suspicious, traditionalist congregations, demanding subscription to the Westminster Confession, against avant-garde ministers.[21] A meeting of the Presbyterian ministers at Salters' Hall in London in March 1719 resolved 57 to 53 that "no human compositions, or interpretations of the doctrine of the Trinity," should be required of ministers.[22] The "non-subscribers" at Salters' Hall (as the opponents of "human compositions" came to be known) disowned Arianism and affirmed the deity of Christ, insisting that the issue was one of Scripture sufficiency and Christian liberty.

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[18] *The Religion of Protestants* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1888), 463.
[19] *The Innocent Vindicated*, 4.
[20] Peirce, *Case of the ministers ejected at Exon*, 3.
[21] [Barrington,] *Account of the late proceedings of the Dissenting Ministers,* 3-7. cf. the pamphlets from the Exeter controversy, *Account of the reasons why many citizens have withdrawn from the ministry of Mr. Joseph Hallet and Mr. James Peirce* (1719), and *Arius detected and confuted* (1719).
[22] Watts, volume 1, 375; cf. the fine discussion in Thomas, "Presbyterians in transition," in Bolam et al., 151ff.

A similar controversy was breaking out at almost the same time among Presbyterians in Ireland.[23] The leader of the Irish "non-subscribers," John Abernethy, a clerical prodigy of Scottish stock and education, became the most articulate exponent of the new Protestant theology taking shape among the post-confessional Reformed. Like the non-subscribers at Salters' Hall, Abernethy steadfastly denied that his refusal to subscribe the Westminster Confession was due to heterodoxy on the Trinity, as his enemies suspected.[24] The issue instead was one of "the Imposing of Subscriptions to Confessions drawn up by Uninspired and Fallibile Men."[25] Yet an important theological shift was taking place, even among non-subscribers who were not moving toward Clarke's Arian Christology. Though there were few Arians and even fewer Socinians among early eighteenth-century Dissenters, many had decided that the doctrine of the Trinity was not of great importance for Christianity. Abernethy, who made much use of the old notion of *adiaphora*, things indifferent to salvation, took every opportunity to urge latitude and charity about "Doubting and Disputable Points" and "things of an inferior Nature," as against the "Fundamental Doctrines and the Great dutys of Religion."[26] But he declined anywhere to specify which doctrines were fundamental and which indifferent (one reason why Christians have drawn up confessions), and both the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity and the Calvinist doctrine of election seem implicitly to be included by Abernethy under disputable points.[27] Roger Thomas has argued persuasively that if one side in the controversy can thus be noted Trinitarian and Calvinist, the other should not be labeled Arian or Arminian, for their cause was not an alternative dogma but what they saw as free inquiry and individual conscience.[28] The non-subscribers were not

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[23] See A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground* (1977), pp. 96-101; Peter Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism* (1987), pp. 83-92; E.W. McFarland, *Ireland and Scotland in the Age of Revolution* (1994), pp. 11ff.; I.R. McBride, *Scripture Politics* (1998), pp. 41-61. For an overall narrative linking the Irish controversy to the Exeter and Salters' Hall disputes among English Presbyterians, see Roger Thomas, "The non-subscription controversy among Dissenters in 1719," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 4:2 (1953): 162-86.
[24] See e.g. his *Seasonable Advice to the Protestant Dissenters, in the north of Ireland* (1722): the conflict is not over "different Sentiments (as some wou'd most groundlessly & uncharitably suggest) about any important Doctrines of the *Christian Religion* (in which we are persuaded there is a happy Agreement) but about the *Expediency* of the *Methods* to be us'd for securing those important Doctrines," iv.
[25] Ibid., xviii.
[26] *Religious obedience founded on personal persuasion* (Belfast: James Blow, 1720), 6-7, 20, 17.
[27] cf. Peter Brooke's analysis: "Whether they actually believed in the doctrine of the Trinity or not, they certainly had a different attitude towards it from that of the Subscribers. They regarded it as a point of speculative theology, an area of secondary importance, in which precise knowledge was impossible," 85.
[28] Thomas, 168-74 in Bolam et al.

passionate Arminians or dogmatic unitarians but were uninterested in these issues, which they regarded as peripheral.

Perhaps the finest early summary of the new divinity was John Abernethy's 1719 sermon "Religious obedience founded on personal persuasion." Here Abernethy radically redefines the core message of the Reformation—not faith alone and grace alone, as Luther and Calvin had imagined, but "the Right of private Judgment, which belongs to all Christians" constitutes "the ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE of the REFORMATION,"[29] and the Christian is justified before God not by trust in Christ's death nor by belief in specific doctrines but by sincerely following his conscience. "Sincerity or following our *own Persuasion*…will render us acceptable to God, even though *that Persuasion* should be in it self wrong," Abernethy informed his congregation: "It is the subjection of the soul to the Light of Conscience, that is, the Laws of God as we understand them, and regulating our actions by it, that pleases God."[30] In England, James Peirce of Exeter agreed: "It seems to me very hard to assert, that a Man shall be damn'd merely for his falling into a Mistake, while he sincerely searches after Truth, and his Mistake does not in the least influence his Life," Peirce wrote anonymously, with explicit reference to the "abstruse" and incomprehensible doctrine of the Trinity.[31] These views, which alarmed and disoriented traditional Calvinists, were labeled "New Light" in Ireland and "the New Scheme" in England.

Despite Abernethy's slightly patronizing professions of respect toward the Westminster divines and his insistence that all parties agreed on essentials, this Christianity was so different from traditional Reformed divinity as to provoke widespread upheaval among the Reformed laity in England and Ireland, who evidently did not regard the issues as abstruse or irrelevant. Many English Presbyterian ministers who would not subscribe to the Westminster Confession found themselves deposed or abandoned by their less enlightened congregations, James Peirce of Exeter first of all.[32] In Ulster, John Abernethy railed against "the Popular Humour" and "the Prejudices of the People," complaining of "the utmost License the People take in despising, reflecting upon, nay and

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[29] Abernethy, *Religious obedience*, 42.
[30] Ibid., 18-19.
[31] *Letter to a Dissenter in Exeter*, 8.
[32] See John Barrington's anonymous *Account of the late proceedings of the Dissenting Ministers at Salters-Hall* (1719), pp. 4-7.

deserting their [non-subscribing] Ministers."[33] The same impression of "a clamorous indiscreet Zeal for Orthodoxy" among the laity is given by the notebooks of Robert Wodrow of Eastwood, who kept abreast of affairs in Ulster through Irish Presbyterian friends. In 1727 his Irish contacts informed Wodrow of one non-subscribing minister: "all his people forsake him; so that nou he hath but ten or twelve familys hearing him." Of another non-subscriber Wodrow hears that "more than eighty familyes have given over hearing him," and John Abernethy himself is reported as "much deserted" by former hearers.[34] On the other hand, Wodrow also heard that in larger towns like Drogheda the non-subscribers "get the gentry and rich people, who are favourable to their sentiments, to contribut liberally."[35] The 1720s and 30s were an era of ferocious church splits in English Dissent, in which, according to Jeremy Goring, "the unorthodox element" typically consisted of "the more prosperous and better educated members…while the orthodox element was made up of humbler, less influential folk."[36] The buildings typically remained with the non-subscribing ministers and their wealthier lay allies, but the numerical decline of English Presbyterianism was marked.

John Taylor of Norwich. If the new divinity in its negative aspect received its classical statement from John Abernethy—rejection of "man-made creeds," freedom of thought and individual conscience—it had to wait another generation to receive a definitive statement of its positive content. For despite the insistence of many liberal Dissenters that their only commitment was to free inquiry, and the claim of sympathetic historians like Thomas that they adhered to no alternative dogma but rejected all dogma, the contours of a shared body of belief become visible by mid-century. The ablest and boldest spokesman for the positive content of "the New Scheme" was John Taylor, pastor to the Presbyterian congregation in Norwich from 1733 to 1757, a crucial founder of what historians have styled "Rational Dissent." Inexplicably neglected by modern

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[33] *Seasonable Advice*, 16, 33. This entire piece, written in 1722, opposes the reasonable charity of the clergy to the "clamorous indiscreet Zeal for Orthodoxy" of the Presbyterian laity. "The Ministers left Subscription free, the People will impose it," Abernethy fumes: "the Ministers practice and receive mutual Forbearance, the People will make a Schism," 35.
[34] *Analecta*, 3:467 (Michael Bruce of Holywood); Ibid., 468 (Niven of Downpatrick).
[35] Ibid., 468.
[36] Goring, 199, in Bolam et al. See his further discussion 197-203 and 217-8.

scholarship in favor of the later and politically sexier Priestley and Price,[37] Taylor's notoriety in his own time extended throughout Britain and to New England, where Calvinists like Jonathan Edwards sought to refute him,[38] and as late as the 1780s, when Robert Burns cited him as the paragon of rational religion.[39] Taylor understood himself to be part of a movement that was Reformed and always reforming, and he makes clear that progress is to be expected in divinity as surely as the eighteenth century expected it in natural philosophy, agriculture, and other fields. "Our first Reformers," though progressive in their own time, cannot be presumed to have the final word: "Having been born and educated in the Error and Superstition of *Popery*, we cannot suppose, at their first emerging out of that profound Darkness, their Minds were at once completely illuminated. Many gross Errors they rejected, some they retained."[40] These Taylor undertook to correct in a series of writings that overturned the foundations of Calvinist orthodoxy, and claimed to do so (like Clarke's book on the Trinity) on the basis of "Scripture-doctrine." But if part of Taylor's method was a refusal to accept any postbiblical traditions in interpreting Scripture, a robust confidence in natural reason and a very optimistic assessment of human nature were equally central. In interpreting the Bible, Taylor insists, "we ought not to admit any thing contrary to the common Sense and Understanding of Mankind."[41] The concept of truths above or beyond reason is derided as superstition and obscurantism, concocted by popish priests in times of darkness: "When Inconsistencies proved too glaring and intractable, then, to ease themselves, and silence importunate Enquiry, *Mystery* was made a convenient Name and Cover for Absurdity; and People were taught it was their Duty to believe what they could not understand."[42] Human nature, despite some "Infirmities," is obviously good, because created by God: "consequently the Nature of every individual Person, when brought into

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[37] Knud Haakonssen's otherwise strong collection *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in eighteenth-century Britain* (1996), contains only a passing reference to Taylor on p. 133. A 2003 biography by G.T. Eddy, *Dr Taylor of Norwich: Wesley's arch-heretic*, was published by the Epworth Press, takes practicing Methodists as its primary audience, and, though helpful, leaves some scholarly rigor to be desired.
[38] *The Doctrine of Original Sin Defended, evidences of its truth produced, and arguments to the contrary answered: containing in particular, a reply to the objections…of Dr. John Taylor* (1758)
[39] E.g., in his 1785 "Epistle to John Goldie" and in the original note 12 to his 1787 poem "The Ordination."
[40] *Narrative of Mr James Rawson's Case* (1742), 7.
[41] *Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin*, 3.
[42] *Rawson's Case*, 5.

Being, cannot but be just what the Wisdom and Goodness of God sees fit it should be," and indeed to call human nature innately wicked is "Blasphemy against our good and bountiful Creator."[43] Human intuitions about God and what would be suitable to Him are basically reliable, so much so they should trump the apparent meaning of the Bible should the two conflict: "Nothing ought to pass for divine Revelation which is inconsistent with any of the known Perfections of the divine Nature."[44] In a number of places, Taylor insists that the plain sense of a text "cannot mean" what it appears to mean, where this would be "infinitely absurd."[45]

In his three most important works, *The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin* (1737), *The Paraphrase with Notes on the Epistle to the Romans…[with] Key to the Apostolic Writings* (1745), and *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Atonement* (1751), Taylor mustered his considerable erudition against the two linked ideas he considered the chief "gross errors" retained by the Reformed, the notion of original sin and the substitutionary atonement of Christ. The traditional understanding of original sin, that God imputed the guilt of Adam's rebellion to all of humanity, is unacceptable, because incompatible with justice, which we know characterizes God. The guilt Adam and Eve earned by their sin

> could not, by the Nature of things, belong to any other Persons whatever….As the evil Action they committed was personal, done only by them; so also must the real Guilt be personal, and belong only to themselves; that is, no other could, in the Eye of Justice and Equity, be blameable and punishable for their Transgression, which was their own Act and Deed….This also must be true, or we cannot understand how any thing can be true, or just, or equitable.[46]

If men were innately sinful, we could have no moral responsibility, Taylor insists: for if sin were natural to us, it would be necessary, and if necessary, then no sin.[47] The dark mystery of a humankind unable not to sin but still morally responsible for their sin, passed down from Augustine to the Reformers, is rejected out of hand as absurd. With mankind's need for rescue radically revised, equally striking reforms of the concept of redemption and the meaning of Christ's death naturally follow. To make the idea of redemption "stand in a very clear or rational Light," Taylor redefines it as not Christ's

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[43] *Original sin*, 112.
[44] Ibid., 3.
[45] E.g., Ibid., 106, 112,
[46] Ibid., 14, 13-4.
[47] Ibid., 127.

deliverance of passive sinners but as his work "to influence our Minds, and ingage us to forsake what is evil, and to choose that which is good and holy and pleasing to God."[48] Thus not Christ's death, as in the old orthodoxy, but his righteous living and good example, are redemptive ("as if mere Death of Suffering were in itself of such a Nature, as to be pleasing and acceptable to God"[49]). Scriptural language about redemption coming by Christ's blood is metaphorical: "The *BLOOD* of *CHRIST* is the perfect *OBEDIENCE* and *GOODNESS* of Christ."[50] Christ's righteousness does indeed "redound to the Good of others," but by example, not by imputation: "For an unactive, unobedient Righteousness, upon the Merit of another is absurd."[51] As Taylor concedes, this means that the difference between Christ's righteousness and our own is one of degree rather than one of kind.[52] Taylor's work shows a remarkable dexterity and determination in retaining the language of classical Christian theology after radically changing the substance. Taylor insisted in a 1741 supplement to *The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin* that he did not deny the doctrine of Christ's atonement; rather, his teaching that redemption comes by Christ's good example constitutes "the most proper, perfect, and extensive Sense of Atonement."[53] Christ's sacrifice means his moral conduct, which we can emulate.[54] Regeneration means "the gaining of those Habits of Virtue and Religion, which give us the real Character of the Children of God," a process described by Taylor as entirely natural and within our own power, not "some uncertain, arbitrary, and irresistible Workings of the Spirit of God."[55] The role of the Holy Spirit is here "to assist our sincere Endeavours after Wisdom, and the Habits of Virtue."[56] The Christian life in Taylor's theology is therefore preeminently one of moral striving and virtuous living, which are understood to be within our power, and for which we may expect a just reward in the afterlife.

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[48] *Romans…Key to the Apostolic Writings*, 47.
[49] Ibid., 44.
[50] Ibid., 44, 46; cf. 54.
[51] Ibid., 50.
[52] Ibid., 51.
[53] *Original Sin*, "Supplement," v.
[54] *Romans…Key*, 46.
[55] *Original Sin*, 257-8.
[56] Ibid., 267.

The new Protestantism taking shape in Taylor's divinity has been variously described as Arminian, Arian, or Socinian, but none of these seems quite right. In their emphasis on the role of good works in salvation, Taylor in fact went much further than Arminius and the Dutch Remonstrants, whose protest against double predestination was rather modest.[57] Though many divines of the New Scheme came to doubt, reject, or regard as "incomprehensible" the formulae of Nicaea and Chalcedon, their movement was not fundamentally concerned with Christology.[58] Rather, the New Scheme was most concerned with human nature, with its capacities and need for restoration, and the primary difference from Calvinist orthodoxy is to be found there. The new divines found human nature to be limited and sometimes weak but basically sound; God's goodness as Creator was therefore emphasized, with Christ a legislator and example rather than Redeemer, in spite of the retention of redemption language. (Jeremy Goring contrasts the old divinity and the new by juxtaposing the titles of *Christ the Great Propitiation* by Samuel Wilson and *Christ the Pattern* by Samuel Chandler.)[59] Rather than a desperate design to rescue doomed sinners, Christianity was, in Taylor's words, a "*SCHEME*…for *PROMOTING VIRTUE* and *HAPPINESS*."[60] Revisions to the traditional understanding of Christ's nature and function followed from this rather than being the primary concern. Since human beings were capable of righteousness and the absurd notion of the imputed righteousness of another was unnecessary, the primary task of the Christian preacher was to exhort his congregation to the good works that they were able to do. This is what a sympathetic historian like Roger Thomas has in mind when he makes one of the chief marks of the movement a "stress on the practical aspect of Christianity,"[61] and it was this that led preachers of the New Scheme to be labeled by their opponents as "legal preachers" or "moral preachers." For the doctrines of Christ's divinity and atonement by

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[57] Carl Bangs, *Arminius: a study in the Dutch Reformation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971).
[58] It is unclear to me, for example, whether Taylor is best considered as Arian or Socinian, though he is clearly not Nicene: see *Rawson's Case*, 13-4, and his 1750 *Catechism*, 23-4. A Scottish scion of the new divinity a generation later, James Wodrow, professed himself in an April 1784 letter to have "no decided opinion" about Christ's divinity, though "the S-c-nian appear to me to have a considerable advantage over all other sects in urging the Example of X upon his followers as a motive to virtue." "Like many other disputed points," Wodrow writes, "It is of little consequence to Xty," Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence, Letter 79 (Wodrow to Kenrick, 15 April 1784). See parallel discussions by Thomas and Goring in Bolam et al., 168-74 and 178ff.
[59] In Bolam et al., 181.
[60] *Romans…Key*, 57-8.
[61] In Bolam et al., 174.

his death in the place of sinners, which the new divines had come to regard as at best "inferior Points" and at worst nonsense, were regarded by Calvinists simply as "the gospel," and failure to emphasize them was a failure to "preach Christ."[62] Small wonder that some regarded the situation as untenable. As old-fashioned and avant-garde Dissenters in Nottingham found themselves unable to agree over a new pastor, they wrote the esteemed elder statesman Philip Doddridge to ask "whether the congregation at Nottingham be not too far divided already ever to be comfortably united under one minister, and whether they had not better split…rather than unite, like Jeremy's two figs, one very good and one very bad, which may be squeezed together, but will never incorporate."[63] Among the English and Irish Dissenters something like this took place, with the Irish non-subscribers forming their own "Presbytery of Antrim," and a large number of Calvinist Presbyterians in England migrating to the Independent churches, which remained Calvinist in their theology, and some later to the Methodist revival, while the English Presbyterians moved by the last quarter of the century to explicit unitarianism.[64]

Scotland shared in the same intellectual milieu as the English and Irish Dissenters but faced a more complicated situation; for alone among the British Reformed churches, the Church of Scotland was an established state church. A solemn affirmation of the Westminster Confession at ordination, moreover, was longstanding and universal in Scotland, where subscription in Ireland could be plausibly depicted as a recent innovation and among English Presbyterians seems to have been subject to considerable local variety.[65] While some Church of Scotland clerics read the works of the new divines with

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[62] See, inter alia, Taylor's response to this perennial allegation in his *Key to the Apostolic Writings*: "What is it to *PREACH Christ*, or the *Gospel*. 'Tis not telling People that they are all *naturally corrupt*, under God's Wrath and Curse from the Womb, and in a state of Damnation, till they come under the Influences of a supposed efficacious, irresistible Grace….These are no Principles of Christianity; but stand in direct Contradiction to them, and have drawn a dark Veil over the Grace of the Gospel, sunk the Christian World into an abject State of Fear and a false superstitious Humility; and thrown Ministers into endless Absurdities," 102.

[63] qtd. in Bolam et al., 202. The reference is to Jeremiah 24:1-10.

[64] On the evolution of the English Presbyterians, see H.L. Short, "Presbyterians under a new name," 219-86 in Bolam et al., and Watts, volume 1, 464-71. On eighteenth-century evangelicalism and Old Dissent, see Geoffrey Nuttall, "Methodism and the Older Dissent: some perspectives," *United Reform Church Historical Society Journal* 2 (1981): 259-74.

[65] In Ulster, subscription to the Westminster Confession was introduced only in 1698: McBride, 43.

interest and sympathy, they would find the creation of a parallel movement in Scotland to be fraught with unique difficulties.

"NEU-LIGHTS AND PREACHERS-LEGALL": THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW DIVINITY IN SCOTLAND

There is general agreement among scholars that Scottish theology and church life in the second half of the eighteenth century experienced a liberalizing tendency broadly similar to those which characterized the Reformed world elsewhere. In particular, the group of clergymen called at the time the "Moderate party," which formed around the erudite William Robertson of Edinburgh after 1752, has been singled out as an example of the clerical Enlightenment identified elsewhere by John Pocock.[66] Historians remain divided, however, about the antecedents and origins of the Robertsonian "Moderates"; Henry Sefton has described an earlier generation of clerics, complained of in the 1720s as "Neu-lights and Preachers-legall," as "early Moderates," while others like Ian Clark have denied them the title, noting that Robertson's party was defined ultimately by support for patronage in the Kirk, an issue which did not unite the liberalizing clergymen Sefton describes.[67] Regardless of label, it is clear that voices were emerging within the Church of Scotland by the 1720s to articulate a Scottish strain of the new divinity elsewhere in the Reformed world. A reading of Robert Wodrow's private notebooks shows that a well-informed and anxious Calvinist like Wodrow, who kept a watchful eye on what he regarded as the deviations of the Irish and English brethren,[68] saw parallel trends emerging in the Kirk. The chilling atmosphere created by the repeated heresy trials of John Simson, the most outspoken of Scotland's first generation of enlightened clergymen, did not put an end to the Kirk's clerical Enlightenment but caused it to take a strikingly different form, only to re-emerge decades later.

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[66] E.g., 1985's "Clergy and commerce," in Venturi (ed.), *L'Età dei Lumi*.
[67] Sefton, "Early development of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland," Glasgow Ph.D. dissertation (1962); Sefton, "'Neu-lights and preachers legall': some observations on the beginnings of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland," pp. 186-94 in MacDougall (ed.), *Church, Politics, and Society* (1983); Ian Clark, "Moderatism and the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland, 1752-1805," Cambridge Ph.D. dissertation (1963), esp. p. 49.
[68] On affairs among the English Dissenters, see e.g. *Analecta* 3:201, *Correspondence*, 2:392; on affairs amongst the Irish Dissenters, *Correspondence*, 2:387-90, Ibid., 3:455-7, *Analecta*, 3:467-8.

The sorrows of Professor Simson. Glasgow's unfortunate divinity professor John Simson has been seen by some as a forerunner of a clerical Enlightenment, though Sefton has stoutly denied him a place as ancestor of the Moderates, on whom he had no clear or direct influence.[69] Within the context of the larger Reformed intellectual world of the early eighteenth century, however, Simson can be seen as a pivotal figure in Scottish Christianity's eighteenth century, his career a first and abortive foray into the territory of "the new scheme of divinity." Simson's influence on subsequent revisionists was indirect and negative, as an example of how *not* to go about reforming the Scottish Reformation. His deviations from Calvinist orthodoxy, which Anne Skoczylas suggests were actually rather modest,[70] made Professor Simson the target of recurring heresy charges, spectacular trials in the church courts, and ultimate suspension from teaching in 1729. Other Church of Scotland theologians interested in the new divinity learned from Simson's unhappy fate to exercise the greatest discretion. Though a growing number of Scottish clerics read, corresponded with, and privately shared the views of the "Rational Dissent" emerging in England and Ireland, after Simson's downfall they would hesitate to declare their views openly until 1786.

John Simson, professor of divinity at Glasgow University from 1708, hailed from good Covenanting stock in Renfrewshire,[71] but was attuned to the new intellectual developments in the Reformed world, having studied divinity at Leiden in the 1690s.[72] By 1714 rumors that Simson was teaching the west's future ministers erroneous views had reached the ears of watchdogs of orthodoxy like James Webster of Edinburgh, though Webster seemed perplexed how precisely to label the Professor's heresy, suggesting Arminianism, Socinianism, Jesuitism, and the errors of French Reformed

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[69] Sefton, "'Neu-lights,'"187.
[70] Her 2001 monograph, *Mr. Simson's Knotty Case: divinity, politics, and due process in early eighteenth-century Scotland*, is the first thorough and scholarly modern treatment of Simson's theology and career. Skoczylas consistently minimizes Simson's heterodoxy; although her case is not always persuasive, it is a salutary corrective to older interpretations which automatically describe Simson as an "Arian" on his accusers' word without actually consulting the relevant sources or his own defense, e.g., in S. Mechie, "The theological climate in early eighteenth-century Scotland," in D. Shaw (ed.), *Reformation and Revolution: essays presented to the Very Rev. Principal Emeritus Hugh Watt* (Edinburgh, 1967), pp. 271-2.
[71] Skoczylas, 30-1.
[72] Ibid., 34.

theologian Josué de la Place.[73] What seems to have characterized Simson's theology was a greater confidence in reason and the light of nature, and most of the charges against him seem derivative from this. Simson reportedly taught that "there are two Principles of Divinity, the Scriptures, and our Reason."[74] In contrast to orthodox Calvinism, which regarded the fall as catastrophic and human reason and conscience as severely impaired by it, Simson was teaching a much more optimistic view, in which "God has so structured his revelation that no man could be without some means of discovering it," and God and His laws were known, not by the biblical revelation alone, but by innate, natural knowledge in all of humankind.[75] Though some form of natural theology had had a place in Reformed thought,[76] Professor Simson allegedly taught that natural knowledge of God could be sufficient for salvation—that "the gospel is promulgated to all and to the entire human race everywhere, whether implicitly or explicitly, that they may obtain eternal life."[77] Two outraged merchants in Glasgow further accused the divinity professor of soteriological error, claiming that he had told them that "we all have a Natural Power and Ability in our selves, to seek saving Grace, which Power if we use, God has promised to give us that Grace."[78] This smacked to them of Arminianism or Pelagianism.

Simson consistently and energetically denied the charge of Arminianism;[79] other charges relating to his generally more rationalistic and optimistic approach he conceded, but argued that they were compatible with the Bible and with Reformed theology. Though he was careful not to attack the Westminster Confession, which he had solemnly affirmed on ordination in 1705 and on appointment to the divinity chair in 1708, Simson in his defense included a critique of "man-made creeds" strikingly similar to those of his non-subscribing contemporaries in England and Ulster, warning his accusers against the "*Popish Error*" of "*Making the Authority of Men…the Rule of Interpreting Scripture*."[80]

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[73] Ibid., 68.
[74] *The Case of Mr. John Simson*, 10.
[75] Skoczylas, 76.
[76] See, e.g., Michael Czapkay Sudduth, "The prospects for 'mediate' natural theology in John Calvin," *Religious Studies* 31:1 (1995): 53-68; W.J. Torrance Kirby, "Richard Hooker's theory of natural law in the context of Reformation theology," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 30:3 (1999): 681-703.
[77] *Case of Mr. John Simson*, 13.
[78] Ibid., 10.
[79] *Case of Mr. John Simson*, 86-7, 98-9. In fact, Simson claimed, "I Yearly Refute [Arminianism and Pelagianism], and Teach the Contrary Truths," 120.
[80] Ibid., 107-8.

Simson's 1715 defense held out to the Church of Scotland a vision of progressive reformation similar to Abernethy's and (later) Taylor's:

> That some things New and Useful may be found out, and Lawfully propos'd by Me, or any other *Professor*, *Minister*, or *Christian*, I hope, will be thought Reasonable by all, who consider that several things New, whereby the knowledge of the Truth was Promoted, have been advanc'd since our first Reformation from *Popery*, and the framing of the Reformed *Confessions*, which their Compilers designed as a mean to Encrease, but not to Restrain Peoples Growth in Grace and in the Knowledge of God, and of the Truths of the *Gospel*: And this will still be allowed by these, who are persuaded, that our Knowledge in Divinity is not yet arrived at Perfection….If we follow not this way, we Recede from our *Protestant* Principles.[81]

The first heresy trial of Professor John Simson ended with a rebuke. Simson explicitly contradicted some witnesses and insisted that he had been misunderstood by others; the fact that several accusations were based on his Latin lectures, drawn up by auditors who were less than proficient classicists, also helped, as did his loud disavowal of the most important charges. The Kirk's 1717 General Assembly criticized the Professor for using "some expressions…used by adversaries in a bad and unsound sense, though he doth disown that unsound sense," and further rebuked Simson for arguments that "tend to attribute too much to natural reason and the power of corrupt nature."[82] A second set of charges a decade later, however, would prove Simson's undoing. Having begun a study of Samuel Clarke's *Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity*, originally (he claimed) for the purpose of refuting it, the divinity professor found his belief in the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity shaken, as he imprudently shared with a number of students and colleagues. Though Simson never admitted being an Arian, the charge for which he was suspended from teaching, he no longer adhered to the classical Trinitarian orthodoxy either: "After all these Hypotheses, ancient and modern, that I have had Occasion to read and consider," the Professor told his tribunal, "I find none of them is sufficient to explain satisfyingly this incomprehensible Mystery." Simson now recommended "laying aside all these Hypotheses in the said Creeds and Confessions of Faith," since "they were not so clearly revealed in Scripture, as to be accounted necessary Articles of Christian Belief…it being manifest that tho' the Doctrine of the *Trinity* it self

[81] Ibid., 63.
[82] qtd. in Skoczylas, 172.

be clearly taught in Scripture, yet the Manner of it is keept altogether a Secret."[83] John Simson was suspended from teaching Glasgow's divinity students by the 1727 General Assembly, a suspension finalized two years later. No further action was taken against the Professor, who continued to collect his salary and live peaceably in Glasgow until his death in 1740.

The unfortunate Professor Simson, whose troubles were contemporary with the Salters' Hall debate in London and the dawn of the "New Light" in Ireland, was engaged a similar project of reforming the Reformation, and on similar principles. His fate showed the relatively much greater strength of Calvinist orthodoxy in Scotland, surely complicated by the fact that he was not simply minister to a congregation but divinity teacher to the national Church of Scotland. Calvinist Presbyterians in England might abandon their "New Scheme" preacher and join the Independents; no analogous option presented itself to Scots displeased with the instruction their future ministers were receiving at Glasgow. For their part, other Scottish divines sympathetic to Simson's views, who shared with their Calvinist countrymen the experience and assumption of a comprehensive state church for all of society, seem never to have considered forming a separate ecclesiastical body like John Abernethy's "Presbytery of Antrim," though after the 1712 Toleration Act this would have been legally possible. The only conceivable future for divinity students in 1720s Scotland was in a parish of the Church of Scotland, after subscribing the Westminster Confession—a requirement clearly not up for repeal, in view of Simson's melancholy fate. (One Scottish sympathizer of the non-subscribers, Charles Telfer, "made some brustle about the Confession of Faith" as a probationer, but, according to the cynical Robert Wodrow, "when a presentation was gote, and a stipend offered, there was no more difficultys."[84]) The Scottish situation seemed to require a different approach, one identified by Simson's Edinburgh counterpart, divinity professor William Hamilton, and his students. As Sefton has pointed out in contesting Simson's influence on later clerical liberalism, the "Moderate" clergy of later decades were not his students but Hamilton's. One of them, William Leechman, would later tell his own students that "he was under great obligations to Professor Hamilton; that he learned much

[83] *The Case of Mr. John Simson…The second edition*, 36-7.
[84] *Analecta*, 3:239.

from him, in many points, about which the Professor spoke his mind openly; and that…he learned something also in those points, about which the Professor said nothing."[85]

The theology of omission. Embedded in an intellectual climate dominated by Newton, Locke, and the Anglican latitudinarians, linked in a Reformed republic of letters to post-Calvinist colleagues in England and Ireland, but faced with the rigid hostility to theological revision demonstrated in Simson's trials, Professor William Hamilton and his divinity students decided to change the subject. Their theological program was characterized not by denial of any tenet of Calvinist orthodoxy, but by a profound difference in emphasis. Lengthy, vivid descriptions of the gravity of sin and auditors' danger of damnation apart from Christ were out; serene discourses on the benevolence of God the Creator were in. Impassioned descriptions of Christ's suffering on the cross in the place of the hearer were replaced by exhortations to virtuous behavior. Even in 1726, before Simson's final disgrace, traditionalists like Robert Wodrow were flustered and chagrined by the new trend coming out of Edinburgh's divinity school: "Neu-lights and preachers-legall, shall I call them, or Arminian?" Wodrow confided to his notebooks that "Christ and faith scarce ever enter their discourses, or even their prayers. They generally preach upon the improvement of reason, or moral virtues, or general vague heads."[86] An impressive consensus of modern scholars has asserted that, despite these differences in style and emphasis, there was little substantive discontinuity between the theology of the new school and earlier Scottish Calvinism.[87] After all, they all subscribed the Westminster Confession and affirmed particular points of Calvinist orthodoxy if pressed. Contemporary critics, however, from the origins of the Scottish proto-Moderates in the 1720s, discerned something more profound and threatening under the new style. Robert Wodrow, who knew and respected William Hamilton, refused to believe a rumor that the Edinburgh divinity professor was "not sound and firm as to the doctrine of the Trinity,"[88]

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[85] Wodrow, "Life," in Leechman, *Sermons*, 1:4.
[86] Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3:360.
[87] E.g., Ian Clark, "Moderatism and the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland," Cambridge Ph.D. dissertation (1963); Friedrich Voges, "Moderate and evangelical thinking in the later eighteenth century," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 22:144 (1985); Roger Emerson, "The religious, the secular, and the worldly: Scotland 1680-1800," pp. 68-89 in Crimmins (ed.), *Religion, Secularization, and Political Thought* (1989).
[88] *Analecta*, 3:513.

but heard Hamilton's students like Robert Wallace with great foreboding. In 1724 Wodrow complained of Wallace's preaching in his private notebooks:

> he spoeke nothing of naturall corruption, of the fall, but a sentence or two, that man was a weak, limited creature, lyable to mistakes…When he came to trusting in the Lord, he gave its import to be a conviction of the mind that God was infinitely perfect, wise, powerfull, and sufficient for the soul's happiness, and made trust to be a mere assent or conviction of the mind, without any thing of the will and affections, far less of a relation to the Mediator, in whom only a holy God is accessible, and had not one word of faith, or of Christ, in all his short sermon.[89]

The sermons of William Wishart, who brought the new divinity to Glasgow in 1724, "wer thought to be copyed from Tillotson and other writters," according to Wodrow, while malicious gossip accused another avant-garde preacher, Charles Telfer, of cribbing his sermons "out of Shaftsburry, the Tatlers and Spectators."[90]

What most struck contemporary critics of what Wodrow called the "modish" preachers was not what was asserted but what was omitted. An extended presentation of the Christian message by Hamilton's later student William Leechman, in "Jesus Christ full of truth," is especially illustrative:

> It is by the revelation of Jesus Christ that the world is made acquainted with God, and obtains more satisfying and enlarged views of the Divine nature and perfections than it had before. The Gospel has taught mankind that God is one,—that he is light, and in him is no darkness at all,—that he is love and dwells in love,—that he is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.—By the Gospel we are fully instructed in whatever relates to our duty. In the Gospel a whole system of morality is delineated: a system so pure, so perfect and complete, that human imagination can conceive nothing more excellent or elevated.[91]

What is conspicuously absent here is any reference to the cross or the atoning death of Christ, which had been the almost monomaniacal emphasis of earlier preaching in Scottish Christianity. Leechman seems never to have preached on these subjects, and this omission is typical of the new Scottish avant-garde. Not that Hamilton and his students denied the atonement; several of their printed sermons are careful to affirm it.[92] But Christ's death is mentioned in passing, a footnote in long discourses on the importance of

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[89] Ibid., 3:169.
[90] Ibid., 3:360, 240.
[91] Leechman, *Sermons*, 2:92.
[92] Hamilton, 21; W. Wishart, *Charity*, 19-20; Leechman, *Sermons*, 1:288, 2:92.

virtue, the congruency of true religion with morality and both with happiness, and detailed arguments to prove the usefulness of organized religion in upholding social order.[93] Though traditional language describing Christ as "Redeemer" and "Saviour" is retained, the modish preachers emphasize God the Father as Creator and the goodness of the natural and moral order He has made, and correspondingly downplay both the severity of the fall[94] and the (logically consequent) desperate need for salvation by a crucified Redeemer. (Indeed, "to magnify common infirmities into the blackest crimes" through an excessive emphasis on sin is a discredit to God as Creator.[95]) The concept of the self-sacrifice of Christ has been moved from the center of Christianity to the margin, and the references to atonement seem ornamental rather than structurally necessary. To be sure, the avant-garde extolled the founder of their religion as "the Enlightener of the world" and "the Conductor of men to virtue, to glory and immortality."[96] But where folk Calvinism had focused on his redemptive suffering and death almost to the exclusion of his life and teachings, Christ's function here is instead chiefly "to instruct us in the will of God" and "to set us a perfect example of all virtue."[97] Christ deserves veneration because he revealed to us the benevolence of God and His willingness to forgive the sincerely repentant,[98] because (unlike natural religion) he clearly teaches about an afterlife with rewards and punishments,[99] and because he was the author of "a perfect

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[93] See esp. Leechman's bizarre late sermon "On the obligation and reasonableness of public worship," in *Sermons* 1:413-50. "The establishment of assemblies for the Public Worship of God, and for instruction in all the duties of the Christian life, must be acknowledged, by every unprejudiced person, to be one of the best methods that can be thought of for polishing and civilizing mankind….The frequent returns of said times, in which multitudes of people are assembled together in the most friendly manner, to hear their duty explained, and to join in the adoration and praises of the Supreme Being, are the most proper means that could be conceived to spread knowledge, religion, and humanity among all ranks of men. That such religious establishments have a manifest tendency to produce the happiest effects cannot be denied," 428.
[94] The differences are sometimes subtle. Robert Wallace insists that some degree of guilt is universal in *Regard due to divine revelation*, 52-4, and Leechman could refer to human beings as "sinful and guilty creatures," *Sermons* 2:276. But in general human sin seems less catastrophic, and the required solution sincere repentance and amendment of life rather than the atoning death of a divine-human substitute. For the strongest example of polite optimism about human nature, see William Wishart's 1731 sermon *Charity the end of the commandmen*t, which quite explicitly asserts that human nature is benevolent and unselfish.
[95] Leechman, *Sermons*, 2:75.
[96] Ibid., 1:329-30.
[97] Ibid., 1:293.
[98] W. Wishart, *Charity*, 14-5; Wallace, *Regard due to divine revelation*, xxix, 39; Leechman, *Temper, character, and duty*, 32; Leechman, *Sermons* 1:298, 2:93.
[99] Hamilton, 18; Wallace, *Reply to a letter*, 37; Leechman, *Sermons* 2:95-7.

system of morality" superior to those of the classical philosophers.[100] By contrast, in folk Calvinism Christ is venerated because he died in my place to rescue me from eternal death. Many critics of the new preachers regarded this shift as not insignificant or rhetorical but as going to the heart of Christian piety. Hamilton's students insisted on their orthodoxy, affirming their belief in Christ's incarnation, miracles, atonement, and resurrection,[101] and all solemnly (in Leechman's case, ostentatiously) swore their adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith. But by their sedate emphasis on moral duties and the benevolence of the Creator, instead of passionate proclamation of Christ's vicarious sufferings, the preachers of the Scottish avant-garde acquired a suspicion of secret heterodoxy they could not shake despite their protests.

Was this suspicion justified? Did the new divines privately share the views of John Simson (or even more progressive notions) but prudently refrain from the Glasgow professor's candor? Or were they simply "liberal Calvinists," who chose a different emphasis to restore "balance" to Scottish theology without disbelieving the old truths of confessional Calvinism, as many historians have asserted?[102] "I oun it's hard to drau conclusions from single sermons and omissions," the suspicious Robert Wodrow confided to his notebook, "but it's strange that the principall thing in holynes, and the principall subject of the Gospel, Christ, and our dutys to him and his Father, and the Spirit's work, should alwise be omitted, even when occasion is fairly offered from the text and subject."[103] There is little evidence from the first generation about whether these preachers were already privately moving down the path of their contemporary John Taylor, but it seems clear that Simson's disgrace and the inflexible necessity of subscription to the Westminster standards for a career in the Church of Scotland prevented many of the clerical avant-garde from making a full and public declaration of their revised theological views. In 1730, noting Professor William Hamilton's close friendship with English non-subscribers and his support for Simson in the recent trials, Robert Wodrow wrote,

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[100] Hamilton, 15;
[101] Incarnation: Leechman, *Sermons* 2:85-6. Miracles: Hamilton, 8; Leechman, *Sermons* 1:300ff., 2:87. Resurrection: Hamilton, 8; Leechman, *Sermons*, 2:267
[102] Inter alia, S. Mechie, "The theological climate in early eighteenth-century Scotland," in D. Shaw (ed.), *Reformation and Revolution* (1967), p. 268; Clark, "Moderatism and the Moderate party," ix,
[103] *Analecta*, 3:239.

> Whither he be altered in his principles, I cannot say; but by severalls who know him well, it's thought he is departed from the Calvinisticall doctrine, and the ordinary doctrine taught in this Church, though he hath the wisdom to keep himself in the clouds….[Hamilton] seems to have fallen in with every thing that tends to depart from the usages and principles of this Church. The set of young Ministers and Preachers come from his hand for many years, if they have learned their way and principles from him, is not a good *vidimus* of their master.[104]

Nonetheless William Hamilton was never charged with heresy like his less discreet Glasgow counterpart. Neither his lectures nor his single published sermon[105] contained a smoking gun.

"The milky philosophy we sucked in from the amiable Hutcheson."[106] By this time the new ideas of the eighteenth century were being brought to the Strathclyde's future ministers from another source as well, with the arrival of Francis Hutcheson from Ireland in 1729. The west of Scotland, and Glasgow as its intellectual and cultural capital, had long enjoyed a close bond with Irish Presbyterians, one so strong E.W. McFarland has referred to it as an "ideological community."[107] The majority of Ulster's Presbyterians had originally been immigrants from the Strathclyde, and continued well into the eighteenth century to send their sons to Glasgow to be trained as ministers. Hutcheson's career illustrates these links. Born in county Down of Scottish heritage, Hutcheson studied at Glasgow University after 1710, where he attended John Simson's divinity lectures.[108] The "father of the Scottish Enlightenment" was also a cleric, licensed to preach by the Church of Scotland in 1716, though diverted to academia in Dublin where he worked closely with "New Light" Presbyterians and was also friendly with Lord Molesworth.[109] Arriving at Glasgow with a background in divinity just as Professor Simson was suspended from teaching, Hutcheson took over much of the

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[104] *Analecta*, 4:139-40.
[105] *The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion* (Edinburgh: R. Fleming and Gavin Hamilton, 1732). The sermon, intended to defend Christianity from "the Infidelity that appears in our Day," is primarily concerned with showing how the Christian faith "improves and refines" natural religion (7, 14). The faith is identified primarily as "the most Consummate perfect System of Morality," and Christ as one "sent by God to shew his Will to Men" (15, 7-8), though his resurrection and miracles are strongly affirmed and quite orthodox language about the atonement also appears (8, 21).
[106] Samuel Kenrick to James Wodrow, Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence, Letter 48, 21 May 1771
[107] See esp. McFarland, 1-57. cf. also M.A. Stewart's essay "Rational Dissent in eighteenth-century Ireland," pp. 42-63 in Haakonssen (ed.), *Enlightenment and Religion* (1996).
[108] Leechman, "Life," in Hutcheson, *System of Moral Philosophy*, iii.
[109] Ibid., vii-viii.

instruction of divinity students, which he would continue until Simson's death in 1740. Every Sunday evening, according to his biographer Leechman, Professor Hutcheson delivered a lecture on

> the truth and excellency of Christianity, in which he produced and illustrated, with clearness and strength, all the evidences of its truth and importance, taking his views of its doctrines and divine scheme from the original records of the New Testament, and not from the party-tenets or scholastic systems of modern ages: this was the most crowded of all his lectures.[110]

In his regular lectures on moral philosophy, Hutcheson also had much to say of theological import. Although he too had subscribed the Westminster Confession, when he was licensed to preach in 1716, the theology of Hutcheson's *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* differs notably from that of the Westminster divines. Like the developing "New Scheme" of the English Dissenters, Hutcheson's approach to understanding God and human nature is *inductive*—beginning with humanity and the world as we know it and drawing conclusions about God from them—rather than *deductive*—beginning with the *datum* of biblical revelation and building conclusions on what has been revealed.[111] We must, Hutcheson insists, proceed from "subjects more easily known, to those that are more obscure…and therefore don't deduce our notions of duty from the divine Will; but from the construction of our nature."[112] Study of human nature in its present state is the correct embarking point for reasoning about ethics, a principle Hutcheson grounds on his assumption of the goodness of the Creator and His creation

> All such as believe that this universe, and human nature in particular, was formed by the wisdom and counsel of a Deity, must expect to find in our structure and frame some clear evidences, shewing the proper business of mankind, for what course of life, what offices we are furnished by the providence and wisdom of our Creator, and what are the proper means of happiness. We must therefore search accurately into the construction of our nature, to see what sort of creatures we are; for what purposes nature has formed us; what character God our Creator requires us to maintain.[113]

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[110] Leechman, "Life," in Hutcheson, *System of Moral Philosophy*, xxxvi.
[111] For this distinction of inductive and deductive approaches in religion, see Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative* (1967).
[112] Hutcheson, *Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy*, 2.
[113] Ibid.

Hutcheson's ethics would go on to exercise immense influence in the eighteenth century, and their grounding as expressed here represents a dramatic break with Calvinist presuppositions. Human nature in the older view is no place to find an accurate prescription of our duties, for in its present state it is radically deformed by the fall. In fact, according to the doctrine of original sin, what God our Creator requires of us is precisely what we cannot maintain, and the only hope a turning for rescue to the crucified Christ. Though Hutcheson nowhere critiques the notion of original sin directly, his entire understanding of human nature is based on the belief that it is good and benevolent.[114] His philosophy also includes an informal soteriology. God "must approve and love good men," Hutcheson writes, and therefore those who make "sincere efforts" to do the right can presume God's favor both in life and after death. Despite universal "errors and misapprehensions," even "crimes," those who "desire, as far as human weakness can go, to serve Him with duty and gratitude…have some probable ground to expect, that God will be found propitious and placable to such as repent of their sins and are exerting their utmost endeavours in the pursuits of virtue."[115] This doctrine of justification by sincere effort is as distinct from Reformation soteriology as it is similar to the contemporary ideas of Abernethy, Peirce, and Taylor.[116]

Professor Hutcheson shared with John Simson and the avant-garde students of William Hamilton not a comprehensive philosophy but a method—inductive rather than deductive, anthropocentric rather than theocentric. It is largely unnecessary to sort out who among them may have influenced whom, since all were participating in a widespread cultural shift equally accessible to the literate in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin. Simson presumed too much, according to his critics, on the fundamental reliability of human nature and natural reason, and found the old guard more suspicious of such innovations in a professor of divinity than they would be in a professor of moral philosophy. The "legal preachers" coming out of Edinburgh's divinity school identified religion primarily with morality, and, in Robert Wodrow's eyes, morality of a rather

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[114] Ibid., 21.
[115] Ibid., 74-5.
[116] cf., e.g., Taylor in the *Key to the Apostolic Writings*: "So far as we *honestly* and *sincerely* endeavour to follow them [God's laws], we are infallibly sure of God's Acceptance," iv.

secular kind, mere "rightiousnes betwixt man and man."[117] John Dwyer, in a fine essay on the later Moderate divines, agrees with Wodrow's partisan assessment: "In virtually every case, they regarded religious doctrine as a sanction for and reinforcement of the 'moral sense' of individuals who made up human communities. In practical terms, what this position signified was that, if one wanted to discover how to live, one looked to men and not to Scripture."[118] As literate Scots participated in the wider cultural changes of the early eighteenth century, a religious Enlightenment began to take shape, not as a unified party or coherent ideology but a family of views. Parallel impulses from different sources led men like Simson, Hamilton, and Hutcheson to craft a divinity more humanistic, more confident in reason and "the light of nature," more comfortable with human nature and the world as we find it, more concerned with morals than dogma or piety.[119] Simson's humiliation gave the subsequent religious Enlightenment in Scotland its distinctive characteristic: a discretion that bordered on disingenuity, an Arminianism that dared not speak its name. In its origin and intent the new divinity may well have been apologetic; all these men were keenly aware of and disturbed by the threat of deism and infidelity,[120] and needed arguments that infidels would accept, not based on biblical authority. The result, however, changed the character of Scottish Christianity profoundly. As much as the Dissenters in Nottingham, many Scots were beginning to feel by mid-century that their church contained within itself two understandings of Christianity so different that, like Jeremy's two figs, they might be squeezed together but could never incorporate.

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[117] *Analecta*, 3:239.
[118] Dwyer, "The heavenly city of the eighteenth-century Moderate divines," in Dwyer, Mason, and Murdoch (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (1982), 308.
[119] Similar movements were widespread in eighteenth-century Christianity. The volume edited by Knud Haakonssen, *Religion and Enlightenment* (1996), is a good introduction to "Rational Dissent" in Britain. See also Isabel Rivers's fine two-volume work *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment* (1991 and 2000). A dated but still useful narrative of a similar process in New England is Joseph Haroutunian, *Piety versus Moralism: the passing of the New England theology* (New York: H. Holt, 1932).
[120] See Hamilton's only published sermon, *The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion* (1732), 7, 14, as well as Leechman, *Sermons*, 2:430, 1:301, and William Wishart's 1731 *Charity the end of the commandment*, 4. Robert Wallace's 1729 *The Regard due to divine revelation* was preached in direct response to Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*.

CHAPTER 5. "LIKE JEREMY'S TWO FIGS"

The Church of Scotland at the beginning of the eighteenth century was both a structure which exercised profound influence on daily life in the localities and the bearer of a religious culture. In the former capacity, the Kirk's parishes provided subsidized education to village "scholars," relieved the needs of the community's poor, and monitored and punished a variety of petty crimes; the parish pastor, especially in rural areas, was the unofficial leader of the community. In the latter role, the Kirk and its ministers kept the cross and the atonement before the eyes of parishioners, exciting the intense religious affect which was so crucial to the region's traditional culture, exhorting hearers to despair at their sins and consequently to turn to mystical union with Christ for salvation. The troubles that the Church of Scotland faced in the second half of the eighteenth century stemmed from the fact that the traditional religious culture was no longer universally shared in the Strathclyde, but the parish's public functions continued to be a matter of concern for all. An increasing number of Scottish gentry and professionals found provincial Calvinism, with its emotionalism, its intense scrutiny into their personal lives, its dogmatic certainty, to be unnecessary and gauche. They longed for a church which could share in the modern culture of politeness and focus its attention on common notions of religion shared by all polite Europeans. These Scots, however, after withdrawing from the traditional religious culture of Strathclyde, did not cease to take an interest in parish affairs. All those who owned property in the parish were legally responsible to pay for the upkeep of church and school buildings, the salaries of the schoolmaster and parish pastor, and, if voluntary contributions should prove insufficient, to fund the parish's charitable activities. Thus even landowners who were never resident in the parishes and who had no attachment to the traditional piety had what they might legitimately see as an interest in the operation of the parish, and in the man who managed it. The division opening in the century's middle decades between cosmopolitan and provincial mentalities in the Strathclyde could admit of no easy parting of the ways

because of the institutional place of the Church of Scotland in Scottish society. Scots oriented to Edinburgh, London, and the European republic of letters, who looked with cosmopolitan boredom or distaste on parish Calvinism, could not casually relinquish to local enthusiasts a parish structure which they were still obliged to fund. Local inhabitants, however, who still identified overwhelmingly and in many cases ardently with traditional piety, would give a very cold welcome to the kind of clergyman favored by post-Calvinist patrons. Two quite different religious cultures were thus taking shape in what remained a single parochial structure, funded by all and dispensing services relevant to all, a state of affairs that would prove by the 1760s to be unsustainable.

DISCERNING HEARERS

In the religious culture of eighteenth-century Strathclyde, layfolk were not passive recipients of clerical indoctrination. If clerical catechesis of the laity was one crucial aspect of lived religion in the region, the laity's hearing of many different preachers at communion festivals, and explicit comparison and evaluation of them in the process of filling a vacancy, was another. Both the informal practice of the Scottish communion and the official procedures for pastoral appointments trained Scottish layfolk to be discerning hearers, and to put into practice to an unusual degree the old Protestant notion of the "priesthood of all believers." The case of Thomas Harvie, a merchant in Glasgow called before the Presbytery in 1723, provides an apt illustration. Harvie stoutly defended himself to the Presbytery against the charge of "scandalous Expressions against ministers," having sharply criticized several sermons at a recent communion festival. Among the preachers whom Harvie singled out as inadequate was the visiting Robert Wodrow of Eastwood, whom he complained "had spoken abundance of Nonsense that day."[1] Harvie emerges in his debate with the Presbytery, however, not as an irreligious rationalist or proponent of "subterranean heterodoxy," but as a zealous Calvinist disappointed by bad preaching. (Wodrow was a good man and preached "extream good things" in some sermons, but "he had not studied that sermon," Harvie explained to the

[1] CH2/171/9/1, p. 183.

Presbytery.)[2] Harvie's remarks also show how the godly reading habits of eighteenth-century Scots also honed their skills at spiritual discernment, for Harvie found local preachers did not measure up to classic devotional writers like Thomas Vincent: he was reported as complaining that he was "sometimes edified by reading Vincent's Catechism, but never by hearing Mr Gray [a Glasgow minister associated with the "moral preachers"] preach." Elsewhere Harvie cites "the worthy M^r^ [James] Durham," a popular godly writer, by way of contrast with the preachers he had criticized.[3] Mr. Harvie was well-catechized and an eager reader of godly books, but he was not therefore meekly obedient to clerical authority. Instead, he lectured the irritated clerics of Glasgow on "what subjects of sermons or preachings they should chiefly and mostly insist upon." The most appropriate topics, Harvie informed the Presbytery, were "the authority of the Scriptures, the trinity of persons, the Divinity, Satisfaction, and Resurrection of our Saviour, the Judgement to come; and other such Important articles of Christianity,"[4] and he insisted that he would continue to criticize preachers who did not emphasize them. For, he told the clerics of Glasgow Presbytery,

> He judges it a duty incumbent on all Christians [to oppose] heresy and Nonsense, and to expose barbarity if it creep into the pulpit…as a proper Mean of exciting Ministers to diligence in composing their pulpit discourses, as a proper method of putting people in the way of hearing with Judgement and being edified by Sermons, who have been accustomed to hear Sermons inadvertently, and swallow down every thing in a sermon as truth and good sense, without Examination.

Indeed, Harvie reminded the ministers, "Luke commends the Noble Bereans, Acts 17.11 for searching the Scriptures daily, and trying the Doctrines of the great Apostle Paul," and if even inspired apostles like Paul are not to be heard uncritically, how much less ordinary preachers.[5] Harvie's case shows that a well-catechized laity, though long a goal of the clergy, was not necessarily an obedient one. The middle decades of the eighteenth century provided increasing opportunity for the Scottish laity, even in quite humble social strata, to judge for themselves in religious controversy.

The Secession of the 1730s and the rise of a religious market. Even in the first decades of the eighteenth century, when the Church of Scotland effectively held a

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[2] Ibid., 207.
[3] Ibid., 185, 190.
[4] Ibid., 197.
[5] Ibid., 192.

monopoly on organized religious life in the Strathclyde, ultra-presbyterian print and itinerants like John Macmillan had held popular appeal. The formation in the 1730s of Scotland's first dissenting presbyterian church would provide provincial Calvinists for the first time with an alternative to the parish community. A number of Church of Scotland ministers led by the brothers Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine left the Kirk over a bundle of complaints that included church patronage and theological drift. The condemnation of the devotional classic *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* as "antinomian" by the 1720 and 1722 General Assemblies outraged the Erskines and others passionate for "free grace."[6] Reading the unjust censure of the *Marrow* as indicative of a slide toward Baxterian or Arminian sympathies at the highest levels, the Seceders further resented the lenient treatment of Professor John Simson, who, though forbidden to teach, was formally retained on the University faculty and continued to collect his stipend. The founding documents of Glasgow's Secession church in 1740 clearly have Simson in mind, as well as the "legal preachers" among Hamilton's students, when they complain that "Natural reason in corrupt and fallen Man has been exalted to the disparagement of divine revelation" among Church of Scotland ministers, that "the Covenant headship of the first Adam has been denyed, it hath also been taught, that there is ane implicite offer of Grace, made by the marks of Creation and providence…mens natural powers are Cryed up, to the prejudice of the Soveraign and free Grace of God."[7] The secession of several ordained ministers at once meant that it was possible, as it had not been for lone rangers like Macmillan, for the dissenters to organize themselves as a presbytery and to ordain new ministers. Their group, which called itself the "Associate Presbytery" and was labeled by the Kirk as "the Secession," was strongest in Fife and the Stirling area where the Erskines had earlier pastored for the establishment. The Secession's entrée into the Strathclyde was provided by disputed settlements: the first Secession churches in

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[6] The definitive work is David Lachman, *The Marrow Controversy* (1988). Lachman concludes that "The *Marrow* is not demonstrably in conflict with the Westminster Standards and, while some exception can be taken to its doctrines, and that from an equally 'orthodox' point of view, has as good a claim, if not better, to be representative of seventeenth century Reformed Orthodoxy than the General Assembly, which is more in accord with the legalizing tendencies of late seventeenth century Reformed thought than with Reformed thought as a whole," 491.

[7] CH3/469/1, p. 5. The same document also names toleration of Episcopalians and Quakers as a grievance, perhaps ironically given that the same 1712 Toleration Act allowed the Shuttle Street church to exist and to criticize the Kirk.

the region were founded around 1740 in Kilmaurs and Mearns, where many parishioners were still disgruntled about the recent "intrusion" of presentees Coats and McVey.[8] In June 1740 the group expanded its presence by organizing a large congregation in Glasgow under James Fisher. The permanent presence of a presbyterian alternative in the Strathclyde was a major event in the religious culture of the region. The Seceders' claim, moreover, was that theirs was the only Church of Christ, the authentic heir of Scotland's glorious seventeenth century and of popular icons like Guthrie, Dickson, and Rutherford, and that the establishment was now so compromised as to be no true Reformed church. Such claims were of great significance and interest to folk Calvinists in the region, and Fisher's ministry at Shuttle Street in Glasgow drew hearers from far outside the city. Given the frequency with which parishioners in this region traveled to other towns for summer communion festivals, it should be no surprise that allegations that their parish church was apostate and themselves in grave spiritual danger might induce a lengthy journey to the city to examine the claim. By 1743 the Glasgow Shuttle Street congregation had several members from Cadder and Eastwood, and enough members from the Rutherglen and Cambuslang area to have their own elder.[9]

One effect of the Seceder presence was a segment of presbyterian opinion cut off entirely from the parish system, now able to receive the lively preaching and godly discipline they required from another source. Minsiters' almost uniformly favorable reports of their parishioners at visitations by the presbyteries begin to be qualified at this time, often with explicit reference to the Secession alternative. In its visitation of Kilwinning in April 1742, having asked the Rev. Mr. Fergusson about his flock's "regularity and attendance upon Gospel Ordinances," the Presbytery of Irvine was informed that "excepting those who had joined the Seceding Ministers, they did diligently attend publick Ordinances, and were orderly in their Walk."[10] The servant Jean Robe, in recounting her spiritual autobiography in 1743, recounts that "I used to keep the Kirk for ordinary on Sabbath, till the Seceding Ministers came about; and then I went and

[8] CH3/193/1; CH3/227/1. See CH3/193/9, "History of the United Associate Church of Kilmaurs," for an explicit connection between the church's founding and the "intrusion" of Coats in 1739.
[9] CH3/469/1, p. 46.
[10] CH2/197/4, p. 513.

heard them."[11] Another zealous farm servant who had broken with his parish in this period remarked on his fears that "If I continued in communion with this Corrupt Church, I would be a partaker in its sins, and might be a partaker in its plagues."[12] But another, probably larger, group of folk Calvinists in the Strathclyde hesitated between the two churches in the years around 1740, periodically hearing the Secession ministers while continuing to attend "ordinances" at their local parish. Elizabeth Jackson spent the early 1740s alternating between the Seceders and the Rev. Mr. McCulloch's sermons in Cambuslang, where her father was elder.[13] A middle-aged artisan converted in the 1742 revival remembered that in the years immediately preceding, "Sometimes I went and heard a Minister of the Church. . .and sometimes I went & heard a Seceding Minister, that I might know the difference between them," noting that he had "a very favourable opinion" of both.[14] Isobel Provan, a tenant's daughter from Cadder, likewise recalled that "I was in a great Strait betwixt the two, whether I should continue to hear my Parish Minister or if I should break off altogether & join the Seceders. I went as often on Weekdays as I could have access to hear the Seceding Ministers, even to the injuring my bodily health & weakning my strength in going to far distant places to hear them."[15] Many of the converts in McCulloch's manuscripts describe a similar process of discernment and hesitation between the two religious alternatives.[16] The enigmatic references of some to hearing the "North Country Ministers" or a "Mountain Minister" suggest there may even have been a third possibility for Strathclyde folk Calvinists, a successor to the "wild" itinerants like Macmillan and Adamson (whose hearers disdained the johnny-come-lately Secession group and eventually would organize as the Reformed Presbytery).[17] Religious debate and discernment took place even amongst the very humble. A young servant remembered that during this time "All my Friends. . .set greatly upon me, to forsake the Ordinances dispensed by the ministers of the established Church; and spake very bitterly wickedly & maliciously against them all, for the

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[11] Cambuslang MSS., 1:176.
[12] Ibid., 1:484-5.
[13] Ibid., 1:102.
[14] Ibid., 1:398-9.
[15] Ibid., 2:36.
[16] Ibid., 1:95, 102, 126-7; 2:12,
[17] See Cambuslang MSS., 1:21, 475.

defections of the times, strongly urging me to Join myself to the North Country Ministers whom they commended."[18]

It was onto this newly open religious market that the eighteenth century's great "peddler in divinity," George Whitefield, exploded in 1741. The greatest public speaker of his day and a genius at self-publicity, Whitefield was a major figure in the public sphere of the mid-century British Atlantic, though most contemporary scholars have screened out Whitefield's spectacular preaching tours and prominence in eighteenth-century print culture as outside the "critical rational inquiry" with which we are to identify the concept of public sphere.[19] "Such was the scope of his fame and popularity," Harry Stout remarks, "that he can rightly be labeled Anglo-America's first modern celebrity,"[20] and in his use of the latest commercial techniques and the new print media to promote a stripped-down, trans-denominational but ardently conversionist species of Christianity, Whitefield integrated religion into what Breen and others have seen as a consumer revolution.[21] It was the Erskine brothers of the Secession church, pleased by his emphasis on the atonement and salvation by faith in Christ, who first invited Whitefield to Scotland, believing they could quickly bring him to renounce his Anglican background and become a Covenanter. To their horror, however, the Seceders found Whitefield sublimely indifferent to questions of church government and visible church structures, and uninterested in their seventeenth-century shibboleths.[22] Insisting on the irrelevance of "outward things" and the centrality of "JESUS's blood, and the power of his Redemption," the transatlantic evangelist instead descended on Scotland declaring his intention "to preach the simple gospel to all that are willing to hear me, of whatever

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[18] Ibid., 1:481.
[19] See Stout, *The Divine Dramatist* (1991); Frank Lambert, *"Pedlar in Divinity"* (1994). On the concept of a "religious public sphere" see T.H. Breen, "Retrieving common sense: rights, liberties, and the religious public sphere in late eighteenth-century America," 55-64 in *To Secure the Blessings of Liberty* (1993), ed. Pacheco.
[20] Stout, xiii.
[21] Thus Stout xvii-iii and Lambert 6-9.
[22] In January 1740 Whitefield wrote to Ralph Erskine, "As for myself, (though I profess myself a minister of the church of *England*) I am of a *catholic spirit*; and if I see a man who loves the LORD JESUS in sincerity, I am not very solicitous to what outward communion he belongs. The kingdom of GOD, I think, does not consist in any such thing," *Works* 1:140. Describing the Scottish scene to Thomas Noble of Boston in 1741, Whitefield confessed, "I had never made the solemn league and covenant the object of my study, being too busy with matters, as I judged, of greater importance," Ibid., 1:307.

denomination."[23] Whitefield preached at Ralph Erskine's church in Dunfermline, but his refusal to appear only under the auspices of the Seceders soon led them to denounce his indifference to church government as "latitudinarianism," and Whitefield to rebuke the Seceders for their "bigotry."

George Whitefield's visit to western Scotland in September 1741 was preceded by a remarkable publicity campaign. Whitefield's journals, letters, and sermons originally preached elsewhere were republished in Glasgow, many by printer Robert Smith, who seems to have Whitefield's Glasgow publicist.[24] Among some Strathclyde folk Calvinists, Whitefield caused religious excitement even before his arrival. Margaret Richee, the daughter of a Gorbals tenant, recalled, "When I read Mr Whitefields Journals before he came to Scotland, I was glad that God had raised up so remarkable an Instrument of good to many: & that many elsewhere were getting good by him as a mean: & I thought that if I might hear him, I might get good also."[25] The great evangelist's sermons in Glasgow in September 1741, preached in the churchyard of Glasgow Cathedral to massive crowds, created an extraordinary stir in the religious culture of the Strathclyde. Whitefield's constant themes—the gravity of sin, the amazing love of Christ in dying to save humanity, the need of each hearer to trust in him for redemption—were the favorite subjects of folk Calvinism's discerning hearers, preached in an incomparably vivid and dramatic style by a man who had once considered a theatrical career. Whitefield's sermon on the parable of the prodigal son, preached in the Cathedral yard on 11 September 1741, ends with an intensely personalized application to his hearers, who like the son are sinners nonetheless loved by a forgiving Father

> Which of you, or how many of you can say, *I will arise and go unto my Father* . . .Behold how God's bowels yern over you, God sees you when you are yet a great Way off, he saw you from Eternity, he had Compassion on you, he sent the Lord Jesus Christ to work a Righteousness for you Be what you will, be who you will, as many of you that fear you are damned, as many as are willing to accept of Salvation by a crucified Jesus, God is unspeakably more willing to receive you

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[23] Ibid., 1:262.

[24] Inter alia, *Sermons* (Glasgow: n.p., 1740); *Short account of God's dealings with the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield* (Glasgow: n.p., 1741); *Three letters wrote from Boston* (Glasgow: Robert Smith, 1741); *The Wise and Foolish Virgins: a sermon preached at Moorfields* (Glasgow: Robert Smith, 1741). Smith would later publish the sermons Whitefield preached in Glasgow with remarkable speed, separately and then together as *Eight sermons* (Glasgow: Robert Smith, 1741), and would also publish the great sermons of Whitefield's 1742 return to Scotland.

[25] Cambuslang MSS., 2:334-5.

> than you are to receive him. For Jesus Christ's sake do not stay, come in your Filth, damned as you are, God will give you kisses of Love, God will embrace you in the Arms of his Mercy.[26]

Christianity is here not a cosmic reflection of the British social order, nor a way to maintain good order in rural parishes, nor a system of morality ("if so, *Seneca*, *Cicero*, or any of the heathen Philosophers, would be as good a Saviour as *Jesus of Nazareth*"[27]). It is a matter entirely inward and vertical, in which ecclesiastical structures are a matter of indifference (to the scandal of the Seceders) and all that matters is the individual hearer's relationship with the divine.

The excitement created by Whitefield's 1741 visit to Glasgow, with the deluge of printed publicity that accompanied it, can scarcely be imagined. Some idea of its effect can be gleaned from the testimony of Mary Shaw, a ship carpenter's daughter from Greenock. As Whitefield preached on the worthlessness of church membership or mental assent to Christianity without true faith and love, Shaw recounts,

> I thought he was just speaking to me, and was going to name me out for a hypocrite: upon which I was put to great confusion, and was like to cry out. When he further said, If one should ask many of you here, How long since you lov'd Christ, you would answer, Ever since I was born, or ever since I can remember. And some of you would say, I thought I lov'd Christ once, but I do not love him now. I thought he was just describing me, & the thoughts of my heart.[28]

Another woman who heard Whitefield that autumn recalled, "I attended his sermons very closely, and was much affected with them, weeping very much both in the time I was hearing them and when at secret prayer."[29] Those who had heard Whitefield in Glasgow, like Shaw of Greenock and Elizabeth Jackson of Cambuslang, returned to their villages to act, as Michael Crawford has written, "as leaven within the private religious societies" of the parishes, "raising the level of religious emotion."[30] The narrative of Elizabeth Jackson's sister Janet illustrates this process: seeing Elizabeth return from Glasgow "greatly altered in her way, spending much of her time in prayer, and making much use

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[26] Whitefield, *The Prodigal Son*, 25-6.
[27] Whitefield, *What think ye of Christ?*, 9.
[28] Cambuslang MSS., 2:28-9.
[29] Ibid., 1:317.
[30] Crawford, 161.

of her bible by what she used to do, and reading that Ministers [i.e. Whitefield's] sermons often," Janet was driven to seek deeper spiritual experience herself.[31]

The religious ferment which would inflame the region in 1742, known by contemporaries simply as "the work," was set off not only by Whitefield's electrifying visit in September 1741, but also by canny use of the new print media to integrate pious but provincial Scots into what was presented as a mighty outpouring of God's Spirit throughout the British Atlantic.[32] Three Strathclyde pastors, William McCulloch of Cambuslang, John McLaurin of Glasgow, and James Robe of Kilsyth, functioned as links to the world of transatlantic revivalism. McCulloch began in December 1741 to publish the *Glasgow Weekly History, relating to the late progress of the gospel at home and abroad*, reporting spectacular conversions and revivals in England and the New World. Jonathan Edwards's *Faithful narrative of the surprizing work of God* had already been reprinted in an Edinburgh edition in 1737, and apparently circulated widely in the Strathclyde. Pious readers in small parishes throughout the Strathclyde were now recruited as "virtual witnesses"[33] to the crowds in Boston, Moorfields, and Wales "breaking out into Rhapsodies of Joy in Christ."[34] This publicity campaign made agitated folk Calvinists like the Jackson sisters feel part of a wider world, in which their own religious excitement was part of a larger "work of God," and provided a template for revival in Scotland. Elizabeth Jackson recalled, "Hearing [McCulloch]. . .read some papers relating to the success of the gospel abroad; I was greatly affected at the thought that so many were getting good, and I was getting Nought."[35] Margaret Richee, recounted, "When I heard Mr Edwards Narrative of the Surprizing Work of God at Northampton read, I was very glad to hear that there was such a work of conversion in these far distant places: & I thought that if I went there, I might perhaps get a case of

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[31] Cambuslang MSS., 1:20.
[32] Susan Durden, "A study of the first evangelical magazines," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27:3 (1976); Durden, "Transatlantic communications and influence during the Great Awakening," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hull (1978); Susan Durden O'Brien, "A transatlantic community of saints," *American Historical Review* 91:4 (1986); Marilyn Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity* (1988); Michael Crawford, *Seasons of Grace* (1991). On Whitefield's role in revitalizing a pre-existing transatlantic "Calvinist connection," see Stout, 88.
[33] cf. Robe's interesting discussion of testimony in *Christian Monthly History* No. 3 (June 1745).
[34] *Three letters wrote from Boston in New England to a correspondent in the Gorbels of Glasgow* (1741), 7.
[35] Cambuslang MSS., 1:103.

Grace among others."[36] But Richee's attempts to find a way to get to Massachusetts ended when a similar "work of God" began in McCulloch's parish in February 1742.

The unsurprising work of God in Cambuslang. Unlike the work of God in Jonathan Edwards's parish at Northampton some years earlier, the Cambuslang work was not surprising but expected. Clerical leaders like William McCulloch and James Robe eagerly spread news of revivals elsewhere and clearly hoped a similar movement might take place in Scotland, and there is a sense in which the expected revival was produced or managed—even perhaps "invented"[37]—by them. This does not mean conscious cynicism: it was obviously deeply meaningful for McCulloch, who continued over twenty-five years to record the anniversary in the kirk session minutes and to observe a day of thanksgiving for "the never to be forgotten Mercy, of the remarkable Awakning, which publickly broke out in this Place."[38] For McCulloch, a powerful move of God in his parish validated his ministry not only against his own fears of inadequacy and even reprobation,[39] but also against competition from the Secession alternative. The Cambuslang pastor was a "Popular" minister from first to last, called at the congregation's insistence in 1731 despite the extreme reluctance of the Duke of Hamilton, and a lifelong foe of the "grievance" of patronage. Yet parishioners with no objection to him personally came to see his ministry as contaminated by the impurities of the larger Church of Scotland. The extraordinary confrontation of his session with the presbytery in 1740 had left McCulloch with only one elder, as the godly in Cambuslang disputed bitterly over loyalty to the covenants, the defections of distant church courts, and wrongdoings in neighboring parishes. As Whitefield's media empire expanded to Glasgow in 1740-1, it pointed the way out. Whitefield's intensely personal, radically internalist Christianity enabled McCulloch and his colleagues to emphasize Christ's self-sacrifice and the call for personal intimacy with God, so beloved by provincial hearers, while marginalizing the issues of external church structure which had proven so divisive. This had the convenient effect of undermining the appeal of Secession and shoring up the position of revivalist parish pastors as spiritual leaders of the entire community.

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[36] Cambuslang MSS., 2:333.
[37] cf. Jon Butler, "Enthusiasm described and decired: the Great Awakening as interpretive fiction," *Journal of American History* 69:2 (1982); Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (1999).
[38] CH2/415/2, p. 97. cf. CH2/415/1, pp. 328, 420,
[39] See Robert Wodrow's account of counseling the troubled young McCulloch in 1731, *Analecta* 4:280-1.

If one root of the revival was political, another was more strictly pastoral. Both the autobiographies of lay participants in the revival and sermons from the region's most popular preachers like Robe, McCulloch, and McLaurin show that many devout Strathclyde parishioners labored under a burden of profound anxiety about whether they had a true faith—whether they were among the elect whom Christ died to save. Robe's sermons, collected in 1749 as *Counsels and comforts to troubled Christians*, indicate little concern over apathy or indifference in his flock but much for their "inward and spiritual perplexities." His Kilsyth parishioners looked within for the signs of grace, the "thirst after Christ" and "desire after him above all things" which Guthrie and Gray had told them would be found in the elect heart. Robe and other Strathclyde pastors hoped in the fever-pitch of religious excitement in 1741-2 to bring "dark and doubting Christians" to a firm assurance of salvation:

> Thou hast been trying, O Christian, whether thou hast grace or not, and canst find no Scripture mark of it in thee. Lay aside this work for a while, and make a mark in believing. Lay aside this Query for a time, whether you have believed or no; but put all out of doubt by a present Faith. That is, under a penitent sense of what you have done amiss, trust in Christ, and God in him, for help. 'Tis sometimes easier to build a new house, than repair an old one. Make evidences by believing in God in Christ, as if you had never done it before.[40]

Robe's parish of Kilsyth would become a second center of the revival after the pastor returned from a visit to Cambuslang in May.[41]

The flood tides of religious fervor that swept the region between February and October have often been compared to the American "Great Awakening" and the Methodist revival in England, with which they shared key personnel.[42] But "the work" centered in Cambuslang cannot simply be treated as a local manifestation of transatlantic revivalism; they grew out of a specifically Scottish and even regional context,[43] as several

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[40] Robe, *Counsels and Comforts*, 119-20.
[41] Robe, *A Faithful narrative of the extraordinary work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth* (1742).
[42] See esp. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace* (1991) and Susan Durden O'Brien, "A transatlantic community of saints," *American Historical Review* 91:4 (1986).
[43] Stewarton and Shotts, two parishes in the region, had been the sites of seventeenth-century mass religious excitement preserved in oral tradition and recorded by Robert Fleming in *The Fulfilling of the Scriptures* (1667). A number of the preaching and communion meetings of Strathclyde's Covenanting pastors described by Wodrow in his *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* also sound like proto-revivals.

recent scholars have observed.[44] The work of 1742 was a time of great excitement in the Strathclyde—what Crawford has called a "season of grace"—but not a revolution. It differed from the annual excitement of the communion festivals in degree rather than in kind—and in being presented in extraordinary detail to the British public sphere in a barrage of publicity printed by its impresarios McCulloch and Robe and other clerical apologists.

The events of 1742 were an explosion of religious zeal in an already intensely Christian culture, not a mass conversion of an essentially non-Christian population, as may have happened in the contemporary awakenings in Ross-shire and on a large scale among Gaelic-speaking Scots at the turn of the nineteenth century.[45] Many layfolk in the region experienced "the work" as a profound and deeply moving spiritual season, but can be called converts only in a qualified sense. Of the over one hundred men and women who dictated their spiritual experiences to McCulloch in 1743, very few had been converted from irreligion or apathy.[46] Their spiritual autobiographies reveal them to have been in most cases very well-catechized Reformed Christians before the events of 1742; the revival wrought little change in their intellectual beliefs and did not move most "converts" from conscious rejection of Reformed Christianity to acceptance. Indeed, the Cambuslang autobiographers almost universally inhabit a world already suffused with Christian ideas, language, and imagery, easily call to mind verses of scripture, and can quote the metrical psalms at length. They have been converted not from unbelief to belief but from "dead" or "cold" belief to a lively faith in and love for Christ.[47] These men and women, despite being eager readers of the Bible and small godly books and frequent attenders of sermons, had in most cases been troubled by anxieties like that of

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[44] See especially Marilyn Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish piety and the Great Awakening* (1988), and Schmidt, *Holy Fairs* (1989).

[45] John MacInnes, *The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688 to 1800* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1951); Donald Meek, "Protestant missions and the evangelization of the Scottish Highlands, 1700-1850," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21 (1997): 67-72.

[46] Some exceptions include R. Shearer, who had been "much given to cursing & swearing and prophaning the Lords Day" (1:288), the middle-aged collier David Logan, who describes his pre-conversion vices as "cursing & swearing and breaking the Sabbath, gaming &c." (2:483), and Janet Park, who was tempted to "Downright Atheism, to think that there was no God" (2:306).

[47] "All was still but a dead form," says Janet Tennant, a weaver's daughter from Old Monkland, about her pre-Cambuslang church attendance, devotional reading, and prayer life: Cambuslang MSS., 2:9. cf. Margaret Richee's remarks about her pre-revival state, intellectually believing in her sinfulness and need for salvation but unable to "melt or mourn for Sin as I saw I had reason," 2:335-6.

Isobel Matthie, who doubted whether she had "an interest in Christ," that is, whether she was among the elect for whom Christ had died, fearing, like Helen Creelman, "lest I might deceive myself, & lay clame to that which did not belong to me."[48] The religious excitement of 1742 enabled these anxious folk Calvinists to feel the love and joy William Guthrie had taught them would be present in the heart of the elect, and to emulate the affective piety of Elizabeth West. The fiery preaching of Whitefield, the news of a mighty move of God abroad, and then the example of their friends of neighbors[49] stirred up the religious emotions they had long desired.

During the Cambuslang pastor's weekday sermon on 18 February the religious excitement of the previous half year began to boil over, with layfolk "clapping their Hands, beating their Breasts, terrible Shakings, frequent Faintings and Convulsions."[50] Hostile accounts in the polite press and in pamphlets like the 1742 *Short account of the remarkable conversions* and the 1743 *Letter from a gentlemen in Scotland* depicted such behavior as senseless hysteria, but the narratives dictated to McCulloch in 1743 allow those undergoing such distress to interpret their own conduct.[51] Anne Wylie, one such "mourner," saw her sorrow as an appropriate reaction to a deeper understanding of the sufferings of the innocent Christ on her behalf. She describes herself as "weighed down under the sense of my sins, & I got a sight of Christ as suffering on the cross for them: and I was made to beleive that my sins had pierced him."[52] The shoemaker Alexander Bilsland likewise recounts how "I found my heart Melted Down into godly Sorrow, at looking to Christ whom I had pierced by my sins," and Jannet Tennant, a weaver's daughter from Carmunnock, describes how she was overpowered by the sudden conviction that "I had murdered Christ, kill'd the Prince of life and crucified the Lord of

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[48] Ibid., 1:258-9, 414, 526; 2:411-2.
[49] See e.g. 1:20 (Janet Jackson),
[50] *Short account*, 4-5.
[51] For methodological discussions of the McCulloch manuscripts, see Landsman's "Evangelists and their hearers," 122-3; Schmidt, 117-8; Smout, "Born again at Cambuslang," 120-1. McCulloch appears to have collected most of the testimonies in 1743, though some are evidently from later in the 1740s; he then circulated them to several other pro-revival clergymen for editing in hopes of publishing a volume, though the result was never published. The manuscripts were bequeathed by McCulloch's nineteenth-century descendents to the Free Church Library at New College in Edinburgh, where they can now be seen. The narratives are in McCulloch's handwriting, but subsequent clerical editing and marginal remarks indicate that they are faithful transcriptions of lay experiences.
[52] Cambuslang MSS., 1:68.

glory."[53] But counseled by McCulloch and by lay leaders like Ingram More and Jean Galbraith, many such mourners soon moved to a transcendent experience of salvation and intimacy with Christ. "I felt so much of Love to Christ, and of heavenly joy," Mary Lap describes her experience, "that I could not tell whether I was in the Body or out of the Body: and could not forbeare crying out."[54] Elizabeth Dykes testifies, "I got a sight of Christ as a complete and all-sufficient Saviour; and was enabled to trust him with my all, & to take him for my all, and I found much love to him in my heart."[55] The sudden recall of a comforting scripture text, taken as a divine message, provided the crucial moment for many. Margaret Shaw, a tenant's daughter from Rutherglen, remembered, "in hearing a Minister (M^{r} McCulloch) preach one day, that word (tho not spoken by him) darted into my heart, I love thee with loving kindness: on which I was made to admire the love of Christ, that had sent such a word to me who had been so great a sinner."[56]

The fervor of Cambuslang spread quickly to other parishes. The one hundred and ten converts whose experiences McCulloch recorded came from throughout the Strathclyde, from Cathcart, Carmunnock, Bothwell, Old Monkland, Shotts, Cadder, Campsie, and Kilmarnock.[57] Several neighboring pastors supported "the work" and encouraged their flock to take part. George Whitefield's return to western Scotland during the summer of 1742 proved the high tide of the revival. This time the great evangelist preached at small towns throughout the Strathclyde as well as at Glasgow, visiting Cumbernauld, Irvine, Paisley, and Falkirk and telling a London correspondent that "In every place there was the greatest commotion among the people as was ever known. . . .I never was enabled to preach so powerfully as whilst I have been in the *West* [of Scotland]."[58] A hostile gentleman described the scene differently in an anonymous pamphlet: "The *Screamings* and *hysterical Affections* which had been frequent there before, were now considerably increas'd by Mr *Whitefield*'s Manner of Preaching to them. His Sermons were now more passionate and incoherent than ever: But the more

[53] Ibid., 1:122, 2:10.
[54] Ibid., 1:11.
[55] Ibid., 1:213-4.
[56] Ibid., 2:147.
[57] See the table at the end of volume 2 for names, occupations, and place of residence of the converts.
[58] Whitefield, *Letters*, 1:401-3.

wild and *raving* they were, they had the greater Effect upon the illiterate crowd."[59] In July and again in August Whitefield was the star preacher at communion festivals at Cambuslang, with a crowd of 30,000—more than the contemporary population of Glasgow—descending upon the rural parish to hear him. Whitefield's sermon on Isaiah 54:5 ("Thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel"), preached on 11 July and soon published as *The Best Match*, brought still more Strathclyde folk Calvinists to an ecstatic sense of intimacy with Christ. Mary Lap remembered the summer of revival this way:

> I found myself just sick of love to Christ: and was made to beleive that my Maker was my Husband; and instead of all Relations; even all in all to me. . . .I carefully attended all the sermons at Cambuslang, thro' the Summer of Harvest, and was filled with joy every day, at that time: & all the World, & all things in it, sank into nothing in My esteem.[60]

George Jassie recalled Whitefield's impassioned preaching on the same text, with his exhortations to be divorced from the Law and from efforts to achieve righteousness by his own works,[61] and concludes, "I had great satisfaction to find, that I had been divorced from both, and brought to betake myself to Christ for righteousness & for strength."[62] Mystical experiences amongst the Cambuslang converts were not limited to the familiar "word coming with power." James Jack describes his experience in praying with other layfolk at Cambuslang that summer: "I thought Christ Jesus took the throne of my heart, and swayed a Scepter of grace there, and beat down every Corruption there, & destroyed them as to their reigning power. Which I was as sensible of, as if I had seen it with my bodily eyes."[63] The teenage convert K. Stuart told McCulloch that, having asked God for a token that she was elected to salvation, "Immediately there came a sudden glance of fire, that struck me down: And I was made to cry out with Joy, My Lord & My God."[64]

Religious debate and religious choice among plebeian Calvinists. The majority of pamphlets published on the events in the Strathclyde between 1742 and 1745

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[59] *Letter from a gentleman in Scotland*, 9.
[60] Cambuslang MSS., 1:13-4.
[61] "You must be divorced from the Law…you must be made to see that your own rotten, ragged, filthy Righteousness is good for nothing in the Sight of God….Your old Husband the Law must be buried before you can take a new Husband, even Jesus Christ your Redeemer," Whitefield, *The Best Match*, 5.
[62] Cambuslang MSS., 1:151.
[63] Ibid., 1:509.
[64] Ibid., 1:221.

presented Scottish readers with a debate, not between religion and enlightenment, and only secondarily between enlightened Christianity and evangelicalism, but between two views within the region's traditional Calvinism. For, unlike the parallel revivals in England and New England, the work in the Strathclyde was from beginning to end a revival within the established Church, and the parish pastors of the region its leaders (with Whitefield as "guest star"); its effect was not to create new sectarian splits but to reduce the appeal of a pre-existing alternative, the Secession. The very features of the movement which disgusted or discomfited polite elites in Edinburgh and Glasgow—the impassioned preaching, the emphasis on the cross and the atonement, plebeians in large numbers testifying to their ecstatic experiences with the divine—attracted folk Calvinists in the region who had been drawn to the new Secession church in preceding years. The Seceders and the parish pastors of the Strathclyde—McCulloch of Cambuslang, Robe of Kilsyth, McKnight of Irvine, Adam of Cathcart, Warden of Campsie, Oughterson of Cumbernauld, all leaders of "the work"—were competing for the same audience, as the pamphlet war of 1742-5 and a number of the Cambuslang testimonies make clear.

Secession leaders like Ralph Erskine and James Fisher savagely attacked the events at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in pamphlets like *The True Christ no New Christ*. In their chilly logic, if the Holy Spirit continued to work through the Kirk, the Secession "testimony" was unnecessary and their church not the only true one; but their testimony was necessary; therefore the revival must be a delusion, inspired by Satan (through the "prelatical" and "latitudinarian" Whitefield) to discredit the Secession.[65] According to the 1742 *Warning and reproof with advice from the Word*, the Secession ministers at their own 1742 communion "debarred from the Table of the Lord all such persons as were drawn away with the Delusion of *Cambuslang*, which made several of the well meaning People leave you."[66] A series of short but impassioned pamphlets in the early 1740s asked Strathclyde's folk Calvinists to choose between the Secession and "the work of God" in the Church of Scotland.[67] This was a public sphere of a different kind, one in

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[65] See esp. the 1742 *Act of the associate presbytery anent a publick fast*.
[66] *A Warning and reproof with advice from the Word, to those who have spoken, and do speak calumniously, and with bitterness against the Work of the Spirit of God, at Cambuslang…* (Glasgow: 1742), 4.
[67] *A conference betwixt a Conformist…and a Nonconformist, or one in Accession to the Associate Presbytery, anent hearing Mr George Whitefield* (Edinburgh: W. Cheyne, 1741); Gib, *Warning against*

which issues were debated and writers sought to persuade, though not in a form Jürgen Habermas would recognize. The pamphleteers of 1742-5 asked devout readers to employ their reason in a critical, though not secular, way.

The appeal of the Seceders' pamphlets is to Strathclyde's own religious tradition of covenants and ferocious anti-episcopacy—the ideals of the region's folk heroes like Alexander Peden. For if the true gospel could be preached by the "prelatical" Whitefield, ordained by a bishop and refusing to swear the Solemn League and Covenant, did Peden die and their own grandparents suffer for nothing? The Seceders' anti-revival pamphlets asked folk-Calvinist readers to reason about contemporary events based on prior commitment to an inviolable seventeenth-century legacy. Since the Church of Scotland is backslidden and apostate, could a true work of God take place there before it repented and returned to the "Reformation-Principles" upheld by the Seceders? Since presbyterian polity is ordained by God for the Church, and part of obedience to Christ in his kingly office, how could God bless the activities of Whitefield, who endeavored to pull down the hedges of Christ's government? Any apparent conversions in the backslidden Kirk or under Whitefield must therefore be a fraud.[68] Against Secession appeals for loyalty to the region's religious inheritance, apologists ask readers to distinguish between more and less fundamental aspects of traditional Scottish Calvinism.[69] The areas of agreement

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Countenancing the Ministrations of Mr. George Whitefield (Edinburgh: 1742); *Remarks on the fast appointed by the Associate Presbytery* (Glasgow: James Duncan, 1742); *Friendly caution to Seceders and others* (Edinburgh: 1742); *Observations in defence of the work at Cambuslang* (Edinburgh: 1742); *A warning to all the lovers of God in Scotland to be on their guard against the spreading contagion broken out from Mr. Adam Gib…* (Edinburgh: 1742); Currie, *A new testimony unto, and further vindication of the extraordinary work of GOD at Cambuslang, Kilsyth and other places…* (Glasgow: Robert Smith and Alexander Hutchinson, 1743); R. Erskine, *Fraud and falsehood discover'd* (Edinburgh: 1743); *Letter from Mr John Willison…to Mr James Fisher* (Edinburgh: Thomas Lumisden and John Robertson, 1743); *Letter from Mr Alexander Webster to the Rev Mr Ralph Erskine* (Edinburgh: Thomas Lumisden and John Robertsno, 1743);

[68] Inter alia, see the *Act of the associate presbytery anent a publick fast* (1742) and Ralph Erskine's *True Christ no new Christ* (1742).

[69] See esp. John Willison's *Letter…to Mr. James Fisher* (Edinburgh: 1743): "Surely all Truths are not of equal Importance, nor alike clearly revealed in the Bible. This Distinction is plainly founded upon Christ's own Words, Matth. xxiii.23. where he calls some things the weighter Matters of the Law, in Comparison of which others are but light…Our Zeal for Truth should be wisely proportioned according to the Weight of the Truths we contend for: for long Experience teaches, that a high flaming ill-governed Zeal for lesser Matters in Religion doth much Mischief to the Interest of real Piety," 26-7. cf. the anonymous 1742 *Observations in defence of the work at Cambuslang*, which likewise contrasts the secondary "Covenants *National* and *Solemn*" with the more important "*Baptismal* and *Sacramental* Covenants," 4-5.

between the Anglican Whitefield and Scottish presbyterianism are the true essentials of Christianity, according to one anonymous 1742 pamphlet:

> Does not Mr Whitefield preach Jesus a Saviour? Does he not without respect of Persons, tell every one their Sin? That Christ *was raised from the dead*; that *he ascended up to Heaven, and sat down on the right Hand of the Majesty on High*; that, there shall be a *Resurrection of the dead both just and unjust*. . . ?

These, and not the covenants or presbyterian polity, are the true kernel of Scottish Christianity, the writer insists.[70] One of Scotland's most popular living devotional writers, John Willison of Dundee, took up the pen to defend the Cambuslang work in 1743, likewise arguing that public reformation is a means to individual salvation and not vice versa. When the work at Cambuslang is bringing about the salvation of individuals, he implies, the means of an earlier generation (like the seventeenth-century covenants) may no longer be necessary.[71] The final appeal of defenders of the work is to its fruit. For how could satanic delusion lead to men and women closing with Christ or turning from sin?

> Did ever a delusive Spirit make a People forsake Sin, and mourn and repent for the Wrongs they have done unto God in breaking of the Divine Law?...Did ever the Devil of Delusion, as you call it, at *Cambuslang*, turn Drunkards, Swearers, Whoremongers, Liers, Sabbath-breakers, Thieves, Backbiters, Defamers &c.: to become new Creatures?[72]

Short works like these provoked intense debate among plebeian Calvinists in the years around 1742, as can be seen from the Cambuslang narratives. Archibald Smith, a 40-year-old mason from East Kilbride, describes how "In Febry 1742, hearing of some people at Cambuslang that were crying out, some saying that God was there, others that the Devil was there; I put my Bible in my pocket on a week day, saying I should see what was among them ere I come home." Based on what he saw, Smith concluded that "the Lord was among them."[73] John McDonald, a journeyman weaver, had contacts with both the early stages of the Cambuslang work and the Secession, and used his personal experience as well as tracts from the 1742 pamphlet war to make up his mind. "A Seceder having lent my Master a little pamphlet. . .which that Seceder said would prove

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[70] *Remarks on the fast appointed by the Associate Presbytery* (Glasgow: 1742).
[71] Willison, *Letter…to Mr. James Fisher*, 18.
[72] *Warning and reproof with advice from the Word…*, 4.
[73] Cambuslang MSS., 2:442.

this work at Cambuslang to be a Delusion," McDonald says he "got & read a little of it," but it failed to convince him.[74] The competing claims among the godly helped a number of other plebeian Calvinists to hone their skills in discernment. One regular hearer of the Seceders was moved to reconsider his views when he saw an acquaintance, who had heretofore seemed spiritually unserious, undergo what seemed to him a true conversion in the Kirk's revival. Questioning the interpretation of his chosen pastors, the man remarks, "I therefore resolved, that I would go for myself, and hear, & see & judge for my self," and at Cambuslang his own experience became the final evidence: "I found my heart transported with the love & loveliness of Christ."[75] Others evaluated the behavior of the Seceders and the Cambuslang crowds to make up their mind. Archibald Smith was impressed at how the hearers at Cambuslang were "expressing so much brotherly love to one another, & instructing & encouraging one another," while Isobel Provan was repulsed by what she regarded as the excessively narrow and sectarian conduct of the Seceders: "I did not find the Seceders way of Praying agreeable, because they seemed to me to be very narrow in their Prayers, and not to extend them to the whole Israel of God, but to confine them in a great measure to themselves."[76] Other provincial Calvinists, in choosing between revival and Secession, sought and received divine guidance. Janet Tennant was torn between her positive experience at Cambuslang and the denunciations of Secession ministers she respected. Asking God to "shew me from his Word if it was right, within two minutes later I had begun to pray thus, those words came into my heart,

> 'For God of Zion hath made choice,
> There he desires to dwell,
> This is my Rest here till I'll stay,
> For I do like it well.'[77]

This sudden recollection of the Kirk's metrical translation of Psalm 132 was taken by Tennant as a supernatural sign that the revival was God's work. She abandoned the Secession and returned to the Kirk as a regular hearer.

The harvest. The revival in the Strathclyde in 1742, despite its dramatic nature and the unprecedented crowds that assembled for Whitefield's return in July and August,

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[74] Ibid., 1:80.
[75] Ibid., 1:403.
[76] Ibid., 2:442, 202.
[77] Ibid., 2:12.

was substantially in continuity with the region's earlier religious history. In the short term its impact was in fact a conservative one. The evidence of a move of God's Spirit in the established Church, which plebeian Calvinists found both in their own hearts and in the lives of their neighbors, undermined the appeal of the Secession alternative and enabled the establishment to maintain a virtual religious monopoly in the rural Strathclyde for another generation. In the longer term, the impact of "the work" was twofold. It trained humble but devout Scots to evaluate and choose between religious alternatives, to "hear, & see & judge for my self," as one convert had put it, even if they finally decided for the established Church. Having already learned, through the process of filling a pastoral vacancy and through the multiple preachers at communions, to compare one minister with another, the layfolk now had to decide for themselves in a much more radical disagreement between clerics. Some of those who chose for the Kirk in 1742 would choose against it a generation later under different circumstances.

The second long-term consequence of "the work" was to exacerbate the alienation of Scottish elites from the culture of provincial Calvinism. The resident gentry of the Strathclyde are noticeable in their absence both from official printed narratives of the revival and from McCulloch's manuscript autobiographies. Zealous and sympathetic lairds and aristocrats, like those who dot the pages of Wodrow's *History* and had once exchanged letters with Samuel Rutherford, nowhere appear. Instead a number of the Cambuslang narratives indicate the profound indifference or hostility of the local gentry to the religious excitement in the villages. John Napier punctuates the story of his spiritual experience with the remark that

> The Gentleman in whose ground I lived sent his Officer for me and Another Lad. He discharged [forbade] us to Go to Camb:[uslang] threatning that if we did, he would arreist our crop & turn us out of his Land: for that he was informed that when we came home, we could not work any next day: and particularly abused a certain Minister [Whitefield] with his tongue, calling him a Mountebank & Damn'd Rascal, who was putting all the People Mad. . . .He added that if we would read our Catechism we needed no more Religion: And that if we would stay more at home at our work and less to Camb: to hear that Damn'd Rascal, and get our brains crack'd we might pay our rent better, and work better.[78]

[78] Cambuslang MSS., 1:310-1.

The climactic Cambuslang communions of July and August 1742, at which thousands of zealous plebeians convened in the small rural parish to hear Whitefield preach, were a source of profound irritation to the resident gentry, as the Laird of Westburn, Cambuslang's major resident land-owner, would later attest. The revival meetings, he wrote ten years later, were the scene of "great Irregularities" such as "pulling down Gentlemens parkdykes, treading down whole fields of Corn, And the whole Conducted with such Tumult and violence, that it was thought Necessary to bespeak Constables to keep the peace."[79] Westburn was no infidel; indeed, he regarded the revival as "Highly prejudicial to the Interest of Religion."[80] Proper religion, however, should be orderly and restrained, promoting moral behavior in "Leiges" through exhortation and eternal reinforcement; it need not involve exuberant crowds and days off of work for preaching festivals. Gentry like Westburn wanted a parish clergy that behaved like good Anglican parsons, without whipping the lower orders into a frenzy or inviting the carnivalesque antics of the "Mountebank" Whitefield.[81] Nor was the laird mollified by the roots of this event in the outdoor preaching of traditional Scottish communion festivals, which he already regarded as unnecessary and tiresome: "He & severals of his family had proved by experience the Inconveniency of being obliged to attend these feild meetings when the Sacrament was to be Administrated."[82] It in no way reconciled Westburn to the parish community when, at the height of the excitement, shoemaker Ingram More, the most outspoken lay booster of "the work," was ordained an elder in Cambuslang.[83]

If 1742's summer of revival was only a communion festival on a massive scale, it was also much more visible to urban professionals and non-resident landlords because of the detailed coverage it received both from adherents and opponents. McCulloch and Robe's publicity machine and polite periodicals like the *Scots Magazine* provided an uncomfortably close view of the fervor in the Strathclyde to the anglicized elites of Edinburgh and Glasgow. *A Short Account of the Remarkable Conversions at*

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[79] "Answers for Gabriel Hamilton of Westburn," 17 November 1752, NAS, CS236/H/3/1, p. 4
[80] Ibid., p. 14.
[81] See the vicious and hilarious comparisons of Whitefield to Moorfields's quack doctors and menagerie animals in a letter to the editor published in the *Scots Magazine* in 1739, *SM*, volume 4, 200-1.
[82] Ibid., 3-4.
[83] CH2/415/2, p. 95. For a maximalist account of More's role in the revival, see the *Short Account of the remarkable conversions at Cambuslang* (1742) and Ned Landsman's article "Evangelists and their hearers," *Journal of British Studies* 28:2 (1989).

Cambuslang, published in Glasgow in March 1742 by an anonymous "Gentleman of the West-Country," notified its polite readership that the Cambuslang work involved "a great Want of Order and a decent Carriage."[84] This pamphlet is at pains to stress the role in the revival of coarse plebeian lay leaders like the shoemaker Ingram More and the weaver Robert Bowman. "Illiterate Men" are allowed "to pray publickly in the Church, and exhort even in Presence of those whose proper Business it is"; by all the unnecessary religious fervor, country people were distracted from their obligations to their landlords, and servants were "neglecting their Masters Business."[85] This identification of the revival with social disorder dominates the pamphlet, as it would figure prominently in others which would likewise blame the climate of religious excitement in the Strathclyde on "the furious and blind Zeal of the credulous Vulgar."[86]

The effect of the revival of 1742, therefore, was to temporarily win back to the Kirk and its parishes godly plebeians tempted to "wild" ultra-presbyterianism (now institutionalized in the Secession), but at the cost of further alienating the elite. In 1741, the same year Whitefield first visited Scotland, David Hume had published in Edinburgh his essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm."[87] The events of the next year would prove him mistaken in his assumption that the age of enthusiasm was over,[88] and what Hume and other polite Scots perceived as the mass religious hysteria of 1742 deeply disturbed them.[89] In 1748 the impresario of the revival, William McCulloch, together with its most outspoken lay leader, Ingram More, and the other elders ordained at the height of the movement, would find themselves subject to a lawsuit by the Laird of Westburn, in

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[84] *Short Account*, 7.
[85] Ibid., 8-10.
[86] *Letter from a gentleman in Scotland to his friend in New England* (Boston: 1743).
[87] pp. 141-51 in *Essays, moral and political* (Edinburgh: R. Fleming and A. Alison, 1741). Mystical experiences of intimacy with the divine, such as those experienced by the hearers at Cambuslang, are re-described by Hume this way: "A full Range is given to the Fancy in the invisible Regions or World of Spirits, where the Soul is at Liberty to indulge itself in every Imagination, that may best suit its present Taste and Disposition. Hence arise Raptures, Transports, and surprising Flights of Fancy; and Confidence and Presumption still increasing, these Raptures, being altogether unaccountable, and seeming quite beyond the Reach of our ordinary Faculties, are attributed to the immediate Inspiration of that Divine Being," 143.
[88] Ibid., 148-9.
[89] See esp. Chapter 2, "Religion and the 'Peace of Society'" in Donald Siebert's *Moral Animus of David Hume* (1990). Siebert contrasts the 1741 essay "Of Superstition and Enthusiasm," which views enthusiasm as inherently self-secularizing and therefore to be preferred to priest-empowering superstition, with Hume's 1750s histories, in which "extreme Protestants have replaced Catholics as the principal mischief-makers," 90. Siebert makes no reference to the 1741-3 revivals as contributing to Hume's re-evaluation of the continuing dangers of enthusiasm, however.

which the laird's declared intention was to prevent the "Irregularities" of the revival from ever disturbing the region again.

"DIFFUSING RATIONAL AND LIBERAL SENTIMENTS OF RELIGION IN THAT CORNER OF THE COUNTRY"

The revival in the parishes, which seems to have accelerated and hardened alienation from provincial Calvinism among the gentry, also served to catalyze the split within the Church of Scotland's clergy which had been developing over the previous twenty years. To the parish pastors of the rural Strathclyde, the revival was "the work of God," confirming the validity of their church and their ministrations against the claims of the Seceders, and restoring harmony to many parishes (including Cambuslang itself) after the divisive 1730s. To a more urban and academic subset within the clergy, however, it was a disaster, which brought disgrace on the Church of Scotland and threatened to undo the labor of decades, in which avant-garde preachers like Wallace and the Wisharts had sought to woo back cosmopolitan Scots by showing that the Kirk had left behind the fanaticism and enthusiasm of the seventeenth century. Clergymen embarrassed or discomfited by the emotional religious carnival at Cambuslang and Kilsyth, however, nonetheless refrained from the frontal assault on Whitefield and revivalism which clerical counterparts mounted in England and America. The Scottish revival did, after all, take place under the auspices of the established Church and without the itinerancy and church splits which characterized revivalism elsewhere, and many hesitated to criticize their clerical brethren like Robe and McCulloch too publicly. The very virulence of the Seceders' attack on Whitefield, according to the later chronicler Moncrieff Wellwood, helped discourage open attacks on "the work" by the clerical avant-garde, reluctant to make common cause with these fanatical dissenters about anything. Other clerical naysayers muted their criticism due to the "extreme attachment" to Whitefield and his revival by "the great body of the people": such was his popular acclaim, Moncrieff Wellwood claims, that "a direct attack on those who supported him could scarcely have

been made, without incurring a very considerable degree of public odium."[90] Instead, criticism of what many regarded as the enthusiasm and hysteria of "the work" was published anonymously[91] or in reprints of English and American critics of parallel outbreaks of transatlantic revivalism,[92] several printed by the the Foulis brothers, who functioned as the official publishing house of Glasgow University.[93] A letter from New England's premier critic of the Great Awakening, the liberal Congregationalist Charles Chauncy, to George Wishart, a leader of Scotland's clerical avant-garde, appeared in Edinburgh warning Scots against Whitefield's influence.[94] It was also probably no coincidence when the University of Edinburgh awarded Chauncy the Doctor of Divinity degree in 1742, just as his warnings against transatlantic revivalism were appearing in the Scottish public sphere.[95] In polite circles, away from the adulation of the crowds, some clerics criticized Whitefield's style of emotional, conversionist preaching more openly. One debate at Edinburgh University was something of a portent. William Robertson, who would become the dean of the "Moderate" clergy and the manager of the General Assembly, and John Erskine, who would become a prominent leader of the evangelical or "Popular" party within the Kirk, were both probationers training for the ministry in 1742. Erskine participated in and penned a pamphlet in defense of "the work,"[96] which provoked a heated exchange with Robertson in their literary society: "Unfortunately," Erskine's biographer Moncrieff Wellwood recounts, "the question relating to Mr Whitefield's character and usefulness was introduced into their debates; and, creating very contrary opinions, was agitated with so much zeal and asperity, that it caused the dissolution of their society, and is said to have, for some time, interrupted even their

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[90] Ibid., 128-9.
[91] *Remarks on Mr Whitefield* (Edinburgh: 1741); Gentleman in the West Country, *A Short Account of the remarkable conversions at Cambuslang* (Glasgow: Robert Smith, 1742); A.M., *The State of Religion in New-England, since the Rev Mr George Whitefield's arrival there* (Glasgow: R. Foulis, 1742)
[92] Edmund Gibson, *The Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter . . . by way of caution against lukewarmness on the one hand, and enthusiasm on the other* (Edinburgh: W. Cheyne, 1741); Charles Chauncy, *The New Creature Described and Considered* (Edinburgh: Samuel Clark, 1742); John Caldwell, *An Impartial Trial of the Spirit* (Glasgow: Robert Foulis, 1742); *The Wonderful Narrative: or, a faithful account of the French prophets . . . To which are added, several other remarkable instances of persons of the like spirit, in various parts of the world, particularly in New-England* (Glasgow: Robert Foulis, [1742]).
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[94] *A Letter from a Gentleman in Boston, to Mr George Wishart, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, concerning the state of religion in New-England* (Edinburgh: [s.n.], 1742).
[95] Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 171.
[96] Erskine, *The Signs of the Times Consider'd* (Edinburgh: T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1742).

intercourse in private life."[97] The death of Professor Potter in Glasgow in 1743, and the need to appoint his successor as teacher of the west's divinity students, would present the Church of Scotland with a crucial decision of whether to continue to identify with provincial zealotry or to reform itself in accord with the perceived spirit of the age.

The Leechman affair. Some of the pastors ordained in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr came from outside its bounds, but most of the new parish clergy studied in the divinity program at Glasgow. The selection of a new professor was therefore a moment of great consequence for the Church of Scotland. For the academics of Glasgow University and the urban leadership of the Kirk, so soon after the embarrassing display of enthusiasm in the surrounding countryside, this presented a crucial opportunity to take a new approach to the problems of the century.[98] What was needed was a man who would eschew the "popularity" that was bringing the Kirk into contempt with landed elites and polite urbanites, win back a more sophisticated audience, and engage the intellectual challenges of irreligion and deism. Professor of moral philosophy Francis Hutcheson took an active role in the process, regarding the appointment as a golden opportunity to "put a new face on theology in Scotland."[99] Hutcheson campaigned energetically for his friend and sometime student William Leechman, parish pastor of Beith, whose career he had already helped to advance and whom he evidently saw as something of a protégé.[100] Even before the ailing divinity professor Michael Potter was dead, Hutcheson was soliciting support for Leechman, writing to one well-placed friend, "You never knew a better sweeter man, of excellent literature….You could not get a greater blessing among you of that kind. . . .He was the man I wished in the first place [i.e., at John Simson's death in 1740] to be our Professor of Theology."[101] Other faculty members, however, preferred John McLaurin, one of the city's most popular preachers, who had been an active participant in "the work" the year before. Among the more thoughtful of the revivalists, McLaurin was a graduate of advanced studies at Leiden and a regular

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[97] Moncrieff Wellwood, 100.
[98] For a good treatment of the culture of the Scottish univerisities at mid-century, see Peter Jones, "The Scottish professoriate and the polite academy, 1720-46," 89-117 in *Wealth and Virtue*, ed. Hont and Ignatieff (1983).
[99] W.R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, 89.
[100] See Drummond and Bulloch, 47; Wodrow's "Life," in Leechman, *Sermons*, 1:8-9, 20; Carlyle, *Autobiography*, 58, 71.
[101] qtd. in Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 109.

correspondent of Jonathan Edwards, and his *Sermons and Essays* show him to have been conversant with the new ideas of his period while remaining grounded in the region's traditional piety.[102] The choice between Leechman and McLaurin, so significant for the next generation of Strathclyde ministers, became a public controversy. "The people of the city and neighbourhood interested themselves warmly in the fate of the election," Leechman's biographer recounts, remarking that Leechman's partisans were typically those "who considered themselves as the people of taste and education," while McLaurin had "the good wishes of a much larger body, even all the rest of the town."[103] The decision belonged, however, to the University faculty ("managed" from Edinburgh and London[104]), and on 3 January 1744 Francis Hutcheson appeared before the Presbytery of Irvine in person to present the University's appointment of Leechman as professor of divinity.[105]

The preferred candidate of the faculty and the British cabinet's political managers, however, met with theological objections from the elders who represented Strathclyde's laity in the church courts. Before Leechman could be installed, at the February 1744 meeting of the Presbytery of Glasgow, elder James Tennant reported, "at the Desire of sundry Elders and private Christians," that a sermon Leechman had recently published had given "great offence" and asked the Presbytery to "appoint a Committee to peruse the said Sermon, In order to see If there be ground for such outcry against it."[106] Leechman would fix the blame for what he viewed as a Protestant inquisition on the clergymen who oversaw the inquiry in the church courts, especially James Robe of Kilsyth; this interpretation, conveyed by his biographer James Wodrow,[107] remains the standard account among modern commentators who note the incident. Presbytery records clearly show the initial objections were raised by elders, who were only later joined by clerical allies like Robe and William McCulloch. Leechman, however, was sure that initiative

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[102] John McLaurin, *Sermons and Essays* (Glasgow: James Knox, 1755).
[103] Wodrow, "Life," in Leechman, *Sermons*, 1:19.
[104] See e.g. John Simpson, "Who steered the gravy train?" in Phillipson and Mitchison (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement* (1970); Alexander Murdoch, *The People Above* (1980); John Stuart Shaw, *The Management of Scottish Society* (1983); Roger Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 109-13.
[105] CH2/197/5, p. 50.
[106] CH2/171/11/1, p. 164.
[107] Wodrow's "Life" blames the inquiry on "a zealous country clergyman," identified in a footnote as Robe, and opines that this "unexpected attack" by conservative clerical opponents was "visibly calculated to raise a spirit of bigotry in the common people against him," Leechman, *Sermons* 1:25.

could not have come from an ignorant "country elder" like James Tennant, let alone the "sundry Elders and private Christians" for whom he claimed to be spokesman. Rather, behind such alleged lay initiative Leechman and his sympathizers saw the hidden hand of reactionary clerics like Robe, whipping up a "spirit of bigotry" in what would otherwise have been a passive laity. Robe, conversely, depicts himself as responding to lay pressure: his role in the theological inquiry, he claimed, came at the request of "great Numbers of Elders and People, both from the City of Glasgow, and from the Country."[108]

The sermon in question, "The nature, reasonableness and advantages of prayer," had been preached by Leechman three times, once in Beith, a month later in Edinburgh, and finally in Glasgow, and had been published in Glasgow in 1743. Even Leechman's manner of preaching put off some hearers: according to Robe, "Many good Judges were offended, by his preaching in such a philosophical and abstract Way."[109] Like so much of Leechman's divinity, this sermon was explicitly apologetic in nature, designed to defend prayer from irreligious critics and to purify true religion from the "mixture of low superstition" which has led the polite to disregard it.[110] But Leechman's critics took the view that what he had removed as "low superstition" was no dross, and that what remained for him to commend as true religion was not much. True prayer, according to Leechman's sermon, is simply the acknowledgment of our dependence on God; it is "reasonable and natural" to acknowledge that we are dependent creatures and that our Creator alone can supply our needs.[111] Prayer changes not God but us; praying for strength to fulfill our duties increases our love of virtue and hatred of vice, while repentant prayers "produce that temper of mind in us, which leads to an alteration in our conduct."[112] The calm attitude of reverence for the Creator encouraged here certainly does not include the intense affect and familiarity that were typical of prayer in the region's traditional religious culture. Most alarming to hearers steeped in the rigorously christocentric piety of the Strathclyde, Jesus Christ barely appears in the sermon, and the kind of prayer Leechman commends is, by his own admission, not specifically Christian:

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[108] Robe, *Remarks of the committee*, 4.
[109] Ibid., 2.
[110] Leechman, *Nature, reasonableness, and advantages of prayer*, 4.
[111] Ibid., 13.
[112] Ibid., 50, 37.

> There is good grounds to hope it always has been, is at present, and will for ever be, the great, the standing, the invariable law of the divine government, to bestow wisdom, virtue, and happiness, upon all those who ask them with unfeigned sincerity of heart; even tho' they never heard of these comfortable promises on which our souls rest securely.[113]

Both to traditionalist clerics like Robe and McCulloch and to well-catechized layfolk like James Tennant, this sounded suspicious.

The committee appointed by the Presbytery of Glasgow on Tennant's insistence included four elders and six ministers, among them several of the most prominent leaders of the 1742 revival, such as chairman James Robe. The savvy Professor-elect, however, showed the March meeting of presbytery that he was not to be trifled with, vehemently asserting his orthodoxy, demanding to be allowed to swear the Confession of Faith, and intimidating his brethren with teams of lawyers who pronounced their client "injured" by the committee's inquiry.[114] The surprisingly aggressive Leechman met the first sign of continued obstruction with an immediate appeal to the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr (where clerics could outvote the backward elders who had been the source of his trouble). The Synod accepted Leechman's "Answers" to the committee's questions and dismissed the inquiry with a speed Robe judged scandalous.[115] It was William McCulloch who filed the appeal to the Kirk's national Assembly,[116] and his erstwhile partner in revival, James Robe, who articulated the objections to Leechman's sermon and the new shift in emphasis which it exemplified. "It was observed by severals," according to Robe's *Remarks of the committee*, "that tho' the Mysteries of Religion, and the Peculiarities of Christianity, were mentioned, yet, both in Prayer and Sermon, it was done in such a sparing manner, *comparatively* with other Subjects, as if they were but the less principal Objects of Christian Knowledge and Faith."[117] The problem with Leechman's sermon as Christian apologetics was that it wasn't Christian enough. "The Author presents God to Christians. . .merely and absolutely as our Creator, without relation to Jesus Christ," and in discussion of prayer, "there is no Mention made of the Merit and Intercession of our

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[113] Ibid., 9-10.
[114] CH2/171/11/1, p. 167.
[115] Robe, *Remarks of the committee*, 31.
[116] CH1/2/84 f.18.
[117] Robe, *Remarks*, 2.

blessed Saviour and Redeemer."[118] It is only because of Christ's atoning death that Christians can have forgiveness, but Leechman teaches that God automatically forgives the sincerely penitent in every time and place, "thereby superseding the Necessity of the Satisfaction of Christ."[119] The true essence of Christianity, critics maintained, is the redemption of lost sinners by the substitutionary death of Christ, and polite platitudes about the Creator's benevolence without this message is not significantly different from the deism Leechman claimed to refute.

The annual Assembly in Edinburgh, however, dismissed McCulloch's appeal and sustained Leechman's appointment. At the December meeting of the Presbytery of Glasgow, Leechman was formally welcomed to the Presbytery, of which, as divinity professor, he was one of very few members not serving in parish ministry. The controversy, which had appeared acrimonious in the spring, now seemed to be resolved with admirable Christian charity on both sides, with a touching reconciliation between the new professor and the principal clerical spokesman for his critics, James Robe of Kilsyth.[120] But lay adversaries were less easily mollified, and remained unconvinced of Leechman's orthodoxy even after he solemnly and publicly re-affirmed his belief in the Westminster Confession, as he had demanded since February he be permitted to do. An anonymous 1746 pamphlet sharply criticized Robe for going soft on Leechman, and accused him of misrepresenting the Assembly's ultimate ruling to devout laity in order to make it appear a qualified critique of the contested sermon. In their willingness to reconcile with the dubious professor, this pamphlet suggests, popular preachers like Robe showed themselves clerics first and Christians second, putting professional fraternalism and the interests of the established Church before orthodoxy.[121]

"A new school in the western provinces of Scotland." William Leechman was the only teacher of divinity students at Glasgow until 1761. Elevated to Principal of the University in that year, he would maintain great influence and interest in the divinity program until his death in 1785; during these decades his impact on the young men being trained for ministry was considerable, as several of his students attest. Alexander

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[118] Ibid., 41-2.
[119] Ibid., 44.
[120] CH2/171/11/2, p. 185.
[121] *Short essay to prevent the dangerous consequences of the moral harangues…* (Glasgow: 1746).

"Jupiter" Carlyle, who studied under Leechman in the 1740s, would go on to national influence in the Kirk and some notoriety as the theatre-going, brandy-snifting stereotype of the polite cleric. Of his old divinity professor Carlyle writes, "It was, no doubt, owing to him, and to his friend and colleague Mr. Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy, that a better taste and greater liberality of sentiment were introduced among the clergy in the western provinces of Scotland."[122] Modern scholars like Roger Emerson, in his important study of academic patronage in eighteenth-century Scotland, agree that Leechman was a transformative figure. His appointment, Emerson argues, was intended by political managers like the 3rd Duke of Argyll to bring about a change in Scottish church life, and largely accomplished this objective:

> This election turned on the religious opinions of the candidates and those who voted for them. It installed a divine with good connections to the moderate men in the church, to literati, such as Hume and his friends, and to politicians who were not going to have an 'overly Orthodox' divine breeding up more like himself to preach to them of their sins. Leechman was a smooth man not bent on the saving of souls. He preferred to make men moral, a much lower, if more useful, calling. Glasgow University was changed by his appointment.[123]

In a fascinating generation gap, the sons of Robert Wodrow followed their father into ordained ministry, but would become champions of the avant-garde divinity of which he had been so critical. Leechman became a spiritual father to Wodrow's youngest son James, who was four when his father died in 1734. James Wodrow remained in regular correspondence with his beloved divinity professor until his death, after which he edited for publication Leechman's sermons and wrote a near-hagiographical preface on the life of the author,[124] as well as the Principal's official obituary.[125] In his "Life" of Leechman, published in 1789, James Wodrow would credit his mentor with "diffusing rational and

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[122] Carlyle, *Autobiography*, 58.
[123] Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 112-3.
[124] Leechman, *Sermons* (London: 1789). For Wodrow's deathbed visit to Principal Leechman, see Letter 106 in the Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence. On the project of editing and revising Leechman's manuscripts (given to Wodrow by Leechman's widow, Letter 108), see Letters 132 and 144.
[125] Included in Letter 108 in the Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence (27 December 1785): "His taste was elegant, and had been early formed by a diligent attention to the writings of the best Poets, Historians, and Philosophers of antiquity. Animated with the spirit of true and rational religion, and familiarly acquainted with its principles, he explained and enforced its doctrines and precepts, both in the theological chair, and in the pulpit, with a nervous and commanding eloquence….The numerous scholars trained up under his care, many of whom are at present an ornament to literature and religion, are the most honourable testimony to the utility of his labours."

liberal sentiments of Religion in that corner of the country."[126] Likewise Carlyle would write of Leechman in his *Autobiography* that

> It was thanks to Hutcheson and him that a new school was formed in the western provinces of Scotland, where the clergy till that period were narrow and bigoted, and had never ventured to range in their mind beyond the bound of strict orthodoxy. For though neither of these professors taught any heresy, yet they opened and enlarged the minds of the students, which soon gave them a turn for free inquiry; the result of which was, candour and liberality of sentiment.[127]

The memoirs and correspondence of men who studied divinity in Glasgow during the 1740s and 50s suggest a profound shift religious culture. In both "Jupiter" Carlyle's *Autobiography* and the Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence, the atmosphere of the divinity school seems closer to the coffeehouses of Edinburgh or London than the prayer societies of the rural Strathclyde. Seminarians, at least in Carlyle's circle, seem to have spent more time in literary clubs and at dances than in Bible-reading and "secret prayer"; "Our conversation was almost entirely literary," Carlyle recalls.[128] Kenrick and Wodrow's letters discuss Latin literature, Samuel Clarke, Voltaire, the controversial Mr. Hume, and their teacher Adam Smith,[129] but almost never the Bible, Reformed heavyweights of the past, or popular religious bestsellers. The devotional classics of Scottish folk Calvinism are totally absent: nowhere amidst their voracious readings do the friends mention William Guthrie, Samuel Rutherford, Elizabeth West, or Thomas Vincent, writers who, though deeply beloved by future parishioners, were regarded as impossibly gauche and "enthusiastic" among the fashionable. In one memorable scene in Carlyle's *Autobiography*, ministers sit around a Port-Glasgow inn discussing how to counter the threat of deism while the women in the kitchen are reading Alexander Peden's apocalyptic *Prophecies*.[130] Leechman's protégés, trained to refute Voltaire and Mr. Hume, would struggle to pastor women like these. But with their calm and polished style, their comfort moving in the wider cultural and intellectual world of Georgian Britain, their emphasis on the goodness of creation and of the world as we find it, their

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[126] Wodrow's "Life," in Leechman, *Sermons*, 1:70.
[127] Carlyle, *Autobiography*, 71.
[128] Carlyle, *Autobiography*, 61, 65.
[129] Wodrow criticized Hume's "licentious tendency" but praised Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which he calls "most ingenious. . .wonderful. . .most satisfying": Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence, Letter 33 (Wodrow to Kenrick, 10 July 1759).
[130] Carlyle, *Autobiography*, 77.

emphasis on practical morality and hostility to "enthusiasm," they would appeal to lairds and aristocrats who had found the piety on display at Cambuslang hysterical and repulsive.

"THE GREATEST IRREGULARITIES"

A more frontal assault on Strathclyde's traditional religious culture, meanwhile, was being launched in Scotland's civil courts. In October 1748 Cambuslang's major resident landowner, Gabriel Hamilton of Westburn, began a lawsuit against the parish pastor and elders that would drag on in the courts for four years and occupy an increasing amount of the session's time and energy. Westburn was the community's wealthiest and most important figure after the lofty and London-based Duke of Hamilton. He had helped McCulloch navigate the troubled years after the split in the session and the presbytery's deposition of all the elders but one in June 1740; it was Westburn who had recommended John Hamilton as a trustworthy man to mind the parish finances after the sudden departure of the treasurer with the other protesting elders.[131] Despite the impressive loft Westburn installed for himself in the parish church,[132] it is unclear to what extent he was active in the worshipping life of the community; according to some sources, Westburn was, like many of the land-owning elite, an Episcopalian.[133] He was also apparently a man of broad cultural interests, sympathetic to a move away from the dark Calvinism of Scotland's past to a sunnier view of human nature and its innate benevolence; Gabriel Hamilton of Westburn appears on a list of the original subscribers

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[131] See CH2/415/2, p. 89; NAS, CS236/H/3/1, "Condescendance of facts given in for Mr Hamilton of Westburn," 6 December 1750; cf. "Answers for Gabriel Hamilton of Westburn," 17 November 1752, pp. 2-3. John Hamilton was apparently acting session clerk and treasurer (though not schoolmaster and precentor) between the spring of 1740 and the spring of 1742. It is not clear that he was ever formally ordained an elder, nor is it clear how he left the session; he seems to disappear in the first half of 1742, and McCulloch denies he was ever legally treasurer in "Answers for M^{r} McCulloch to Hamilton's Condescendance," 1750.

[132] HR410/1, p. 6.

[133] Mitchsion, *The Old Poor Law*, 62. cf. the oblique remark in the July 1752 "Petition" of the kirk session (CS236/H/3/1), which implies that Westburn has not "in any other respect acted as a Member of that Congregation."

to Francis Hutcheson's *System of Moral Philosophy* in 1755.[134] The business-like if not warm relationship between the laird and the religious leadership of Cambuslang had soured in 1742. That spring—the height of "the work" at Cambuslang—saw a new cohort of elders take office in the parish, men who were both relatively young[135] and of humble social status.[136] Westburn would later label them "A new set of Elders. . .no other wayes Recommended but by their fervour and zeal for these feild conventicles."[137] The two communion festivals of summer 1742, to which tens of thousands came seeking God or entertainment, assembled on Westburn's land, damaging some of his fences. As early as June 1744, Westburn was complaining about McCulloch to the Presbytery of Hamilton, seeking to compel the minister to preach inside the church instead of outside, and asking the Presbytery to supervise the pastor more closely, that "manifold Disorders" in Cambuslang might be "rectified."[138]

Although the Westburn process ultimately came to focus on issues of parish finance, the laird's original complaint to the courts in October 1748 focuses explicitly on the disorder of the revivals, asking a court order to prevent unruly outdoor preaching in the future. "Whereas the s^{d}. Mr William McCulloch minister of the s^{d} Parish takes upon him a power and Liberty when he thinks proper to preach in the fields though there is a Sufficient Church lately built belonging to the s^{d}. parish And much more than Sufficient For holding and Accommodating the whole peritioners," Westburn's original suit complains, "Therefore he ought & should be Decerned and Ordained by Decreet fores^{d}. of our s^{ds}. Lords to preach and perform all divine service in time coming in the Said Church only and not in the Fields."[139] Concerns about financial affairs figured only secondarily in this first round of the lawsuit. Westburn's October 1748 libel refers disdainfully to "the Pretended Elders & Deacons of the s^{d}. Parish," whom he patently views as not to be trusted with the parish finances. According to the ancient practice of

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[134] Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy* (Glasgow: R. and A. Foulis, 1755), v.
[135] Most of them continue to serve on the session until the early 1770s, as can be seen from the kirk session register.
[136] The papers of the Westburn process describes Ingram More as a shoemaker, Claud and Bartholomew Somers and Archibald Fife as weavers, and Matthew Strang as a "landlabourer," CS236/H/3/1, 21 January 1749.
[137] "Answers for Gabriel Hamilton of Westburn," 17 November 1752, CS236/H/3/1.
[138] CH2/393/3, p. 413.
[139] CS235/H/3/1, 18 October 1748.

the Church of Scotland, money was raised chiefly by voluntary contribution. From this fund the needs of the community's poor were to be met, and all the parish's collections were considered "the poor's money," though by custom the fund was also used for minor parish expenses such as communion cups, the clerk's salary, and traveling expenses for preachers who visited when there was no settled minister.[140] The heritors (parish land-owners), however, might be assessed (taxed) if the regular collections did not suffice to meet the poor's needs, and Westburn insisted that he faced real financial risk from the likely incompetence of the weavers and landlaborers now administering Cambuslang's funds. He demanded all the parish accounts in the fall of 1748 and asked the courts that if mismanagement was found that the session "be declared by Decreet of our saids Lords incapable of Manadging or hereafter being Concerned in the manadgement of the said poors money"; instead, "fitt & proper persons resideing within ye sd. parish" should be appointed "for overseeing & manadging the publick or poors money"—persons, implicitly, of the laird's choosing.[141]

Cambuslang's elders and minister William McCulloch interpreted Westburn's lawsuit as a frontal assault upon the autonomy of the parish and at once began a ferocious and uncompromising resistance, a resistance which they would sustain for years at considerable personal cost. The kirk session minutes during the late 1740s and early 1750s are dominated by what the parish leadership style "Westburn's process," and include formal legal statements prepared by the minister and elders and copies of letters to the Edinburgh lawyers they hired to fight the laird in the courts. Like Westburn himself, the parish lawyer Robert Craigie initially focused on the demand that McCulloch be ordered to preach only in the church and not in the fields. "The Defe^{r} knows no law that pins down the Minister to preach or perform the divine service in the Church only and where the Church is not able to Contain such as attend Divine Service Necessity makes it not only lawfull but laudable to perform Divine Service in the fields in the Neighborhood of the Church," Craigie told the court.[142] Lord Elchies, the judge of the Court of Session who heard the case in the "Outer House" in January 1749, agreed: he

[140] See Mitchison, *The Old Poor Law in Scotland* (2000), esp. 25; and Cage, *The Scottish Poor Law* (1981).
[141] CS236/H/3/1, 18 October 1748.
[142] Ibid., 21 January 1749.

found this aspect of Westburn's case "not Competent to be Insisted on in this Court."[143] More sympathetic to the laird's demand to review the parish accounts, Elchies was told by Cambuslang's lawyer that the session were prepared to account for its management to him or to others, but not to surrender its account-books to Westburn. "The Defenders were very willing he [Lord Elchies] should see their books if he is pleased," Craigie stated for the record, insisting that his clients were "at this hour ready and willing to show them and give what Inspection and Satisfaction they can."[144]

With one of Westburn's demands—that the civil courts restrain disorderly outdoor preaching—dismissed, the parish accounts became the focus of the battle in Cambuslang. The kirk session minutes leave no doubt that McCulloch and the elders saw the accounts as symbolic of their autonomy—a test case of whether the parish would be controlled by socially humble but spiritually fervent elders, or by a wealthy landlord inactive in parish worship and of suspected Anglican sympathies. Both minister and elders over several years demonstrated an intense personal investment in the case. At a meeting of the kirk session on 18 November 1748, the elders agreed that "each member of the session should pay his proportionate part of the expences of our defence, at Law"; the minister and the elders each contributed 12*s*.6*d*. out of his own pocket to pay their lawyers Craigie and Mackintosh in Edinburgh.[145] Over two years later their commitment to continuing the legal fight, even at their own expense, persisted. In 1750 a letter from McCulloch instructed Mackintosh in Edinburgh to "spare no charges in our Affair that Justice and Honour may require."[146]

By the summer of 1750, evidently finding no gross mismanagement in the account books, Westburn was prepared to drop the process if allowed once annually to review the accounts. McCulloch, remarkably, refused to accept this proposal, unless the laird agreed to pay all the legal expenses the session had incurred since 1748, and to "repair the Injury he has done us, in our good name & Reputation, by an Advertisement in the Edin^r Gazette."[147] This audacious demand provoked predictable fury on Westburn's part, and the dispute became increasingly bitter as it expanded into new

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[143] Ibid., "Minutes – Gabriel Hamilton agt Minister & other Members of Cambuslang," 27 January 1749.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Cambuslang kirk session minutes, CH2/415/1, p. 217.
[146] Ibid., p. 239.
[147] Ibid., p. 238.

accusations. Westburn now complained also of irregularities in the office of treasurer in the spring and summer of 1742. Here again "the work"—and the enormous collections taken at it—lurks in the background. The laird wanted a strict accounting of the donations the parish had collected from the thousands of visitors to the parish, but his man John Hamilton had not been permitted to act as treasurer during the whole season of revival. "There were great Collections made during that time every day of the week as well as Sundays," according to Westburn, but "much of the collection when made was not Counted nor allowed to be Counted by the Gatherers but thrown into a bag…whereby the Heretors are kept entirly in the dark."[148] McCulloch insisted that the provisional treasurer Hamilton had not been removed in a shoemakers' coup, as Westburn implies, but that the sums collected during spring and summer 1742 were so large they could not safely be kept by the treasurer—because of "the Weakness and Openness of his House, & of his having little Conveniency for keeping Money, especially considering the great Confluence of a Mixt multitude about the Place at that time."[149]

The ongoing row over the account books—in which Westburn accused the elders of tearing pages out of the accounts, and the session insisted that some records had been kept on loose leaves now missing—led to another hearing before Lord Elchies in Edinburgh during June 1751. Here the Rev. Mr McCulloch appeared in person before the judge, and finally "produced ane Inventory of Books and Schedules consisting of twenty-four articles. . .And Depones that after much Search, to the best of the Deponents knowledge the Books and Schedules mentioned in said Inventory are all the Session books and Schedules which the Deponent has containing ane Accompt of the poors money."[150] Having reviewed the accounts, Lord Elchies found "that the poors money had been applyed to purposes which they ought not such as for Communion Elements and others as Extraordinary."[151] The expenses which the court judged illegitimate were almost all special expenditures from 1742 related to "the work": the purchase of a tent for field preaching, tables and tablecloths for the unprecendeted number of communicants, rental of land use from area landowners. The final stage of the process, the appeal to the

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[148] CS236/H/3/1, "Condescendance of facts given in for Mr Hamilton of Westburn," 6 December 1750.
[149] Ibid., "Answers for M^{r}. McCulloch to Hamilton's Condescendance," 1750.
[150] Ibid., "Deposition of Mr William McCulloch," 18 June 1751.
[151] Ibid., "Act and Commission – Kirk session of Cambuslang v. Hamilton of Westburn," 19 July 1751.

Inner House of the Court of Session, was apparently undertaken on the personal initiative of McCulloch, who refused to accept Elchies's judgment. He demanded that the case be reviewed by the full bench of the Lords of Session, rather than by the one judge currently sitting on rotation as "Lord Ordinary," insisting with such vehemence that Westburn's lawyer Mr. Lockhart complained of the minister's "Contempt of the Authority of the Court."[152]

The Inner House's interloquitor (provisional judgment) of 25 July 1752, however, affirmed Lord Elchies's ruling. In spite of the long-standing custom of using "the poor's money" (as the total parish funds were styled) for expenses like communion cups, the court ruled that the Cambuslang session was "not to have allowance" for a number of expenses from the year 1742: £2.2*s*. for a preaching field, £2.16*s*. for a new tent, 17*s*.2*p*. to pay for "damage to Chappells dyke" by the revival crowds, £1.1*s*.6*p*. for "communion forms"—nor for similar expenses related to festal communions in later years, like 12*s*. in 1743 for a tent cloth, 2*s*.6*p*. in 1745 to pay constables for the great event, nor 13*s*.4*p*. to rent "Chappels brae for preaching" in 1746.[153]

Under Scots law the Cambuslang elders were allowed one last appeal from this preliminary "interloquitor" to a final and binding judgment of the full Court of Session, and the statements for this appeal by both the session and Hamilton of Westburn reveal in a striking way how both parties saw the dispute about parish funds as fundamentally connected to larger issues—to what the laird saw as disorderly folk religion and what the session understood as the autonomy of the local church as an "Ecclesiastical Society" distinct from the social hierarchy. The lengthy and fascinating "Petition of Mr William M'Culloch, Ingram Moir, Claud and Bartholomew Sommers, Archd. Fife, John Miller and Matthew Strang," dated 30 July 1752, hotly defends the honor of the rural artisans who make up the eldership, protesting "this defamatory Action most groundlessly raised & most litigiously insisted in," and demanding public vindication of their reputations from Westburn's allegations, "tending to blacken and defame the Petitioners."[154] It also stoutly defends the session's right to use parish funds for the expenses criticized by Westburn and Lord Elchies. A kirk session, the Petition lectures Scotland's highest

[152] Ibid., 'Minutes Hamilton of Westburn agt. Kirk session of Cambuslang,' 6 June 1751.
[153] Ibid., "Inner House Interloq^{r} – Hamilton ag^{t} McCulloch," 29 July 1752.
[154] Ibid., "Petition of Mr William M'Culloch et al.," 30 July 1752, pp. 5-6.

court, is "not only a legal Court," but "an Ecclesiastical Society," where "the Christians of such Congregation do give their oblations & alms as a part of their Christian worship." The voluntary collections at church doors or at preaching festivals, therefore, are "not to be considered as money of a Parish taken as a legal Society," and therefore solely to be used for social welfare,

> but [are] the free will offering of the Christians who gave it & which the overseers to whom they commit it have the disposal of so as shall appear most fit for the Glory of God and the good of the Church. Upon this footing it does not occur to the Petitioners that a kirk session is guilty of a misapplication or mismanagement of the money arising from these ordinary and Christian oblations by not strictly giving every farthing of them to the poor, providing they so apply it as in their judgement seems most Conducive to the Ends of that Religion from whence it floweth.

Indeed, the session remarks, "it will seem excessively hard" if, after the elders have "done what they could to provide for the poor," they are harassed for minor and customary expenses at the impetus of "one Single Person. . .tho perhaps he has not Contributed one mite towards the funds of the Poor, or in any other respected acted as a Member of their Congregation."[155] The Petition goes on to defend in detail the expenses disallowed by the Court. Regarding the rental of the field for preaching in 1742, the session observes that "There was for some time. . .a great Concourse of People which resorted there to attend the ordinances of Religion so that these could not be gone about either in the Church had it been fit for inhabiting or in the Church yard by reason of the Multitude," and as for the expenses for a tent and communion tables, these "are nearly connected w^{t} the former." To pay for the tent that had been used at "the work" with collections taken at that same event seemed to the elders reasonable as well as traditional. "'Tis the custom over all Scotland that there is a Tent made use of for preaching without upon occasion of the Sacrament, and there is no fund for this Expence unless it is taken out of the extraordinary Collections upon these Occasions from those on Acco^{t} of whom this Expence is incurred." Far from being prejudicial to the parish's duties to the poor, the revival meetings allowed the collection of vast sums of money to help the parish poor which otherwise could never have been raised. "The Petitioners cannot well comprehend how it can be called a misapplication of the money belonging to the Poor of this Parish

[155] Ibid, 8-10.

that they received a very large Sum of money by the Collection of Strangers who joined this Congregation in attending upon Religious Instructions."[156]

Hamilton of Westburn's "Answers," written on 17 November 1752 for the final appeal, makes explicit that, just as when he began the suit four years earlier, Westburn's primary motivation in his suit was to prevent the pious disorder of 1742 from ever recurring. The revival had competed directly with the Seceders and functioned as a mechanism for retaining Calvinist piety within the Church of Scotland, but in Westburn's anxious post-puritan imagination, Seceders, revivalists, Covenanters, and Levellers are indistinguishable, a hydra of out-of-control plebeian religious zeal. "This parish of Cambuslang, so famed in Story, was amongst the first where the Spirit of Secession, industriously propagated by the Conventicles of feild-meetings that were held therein, broke out into a flame."[157] The revival of 1742, obviously the root of the laird's concerns, is painted in the darkest colors. "Popularity became a great prize that was to be Contended for, And as that most liekly to be gaind by Conventicles and feild preachings, it was well known that Divices were fallen upon to Convocate the Lieges from all Quarters upon these occasions."[158] The Cambuslang sacraments of July and August 1742 interfered needless with the productivity of tenants and servants, and were a theatre of intolerable disorder and riot on the part of the lower orders. It was this, Westburn attests, that had driven him to legal action:

> As these proceedings became Extremely grievous to the more Sober part of the paroch; And as the application of the poor's money for these uses became the Subject of Complaint, the Respondent thought it a duty Incumbent upon him…to satisfy himself, and those who applyed to him for that purpose, whether the Session books under the present manadgers, were duly kept; and how the funds were applyed.[159]

Westburn reminds the Court of Session that in ruling on the Cambuslang case they will set a precedent for other kirk sessions in Scotland, urging them to consider the social and even political subversiveness of folk Calvinism, with its disorderly throngs of peasant enthusiasts. "These popular Convocations. . .are attended with so much riot and Disturbance. . .[that] no man living can Hesitate to say, that whether these Convocations

[156] Ibid., 14-5.
[157] Ibid., "Answers," 1.
[158] Ibid., 3-4.
[159] Ibid., 4-5.

are assembled under Religious or Secular pretences, they are Highly prejudicial to the Interest of Religion; as well as to the peace both of the Church and State."[160]

The final verdict of the Court of Session, on 23 November 1752, ruled against the Cambuslang session and ordered them to repay to the poor box the money spent on revival-related expenditures. "It is unreasonable," the Lords of Session ruled, "to charge the poor's money with an expense which might have been saved, if too much encouragement had not been given to the assembling of mobs of people, to the dishonour of religion, and the real hurt of the country."[161] This particular case, so intimately connected with the spectacular religious meetings in the parish some years earlier, was also part of a pattern of similar legal cases at mid-century, as Rosalind Mitchison has noted. In several Scottish parishes in the 1750s, a prominent landowner, often minimally involved in parish life, successfully challenged socially middling or humble elders for control of parish funds.[162] "Behind the specific complaint," Mitchison concludes, "lay a common opinion of propertied society, that those with small personal resources should not have control of large funds."[163] In Cambuslang, as in a number of other parishes, the session had become a place where men of relatively lowly status could exercise real influence in their communities. Hamilton of Westburn and other lairds through legal process were able to constrict this influence. But these cases were not only about class but about religious culture. The pejorative term "popularity," which recurs throughout Westburn's legal complaints, also appears in many contemporary pamphlets on church politics. This undesirable trait manifested itself in opposition to church patronage and in support for control of parish life by plebeian elders, but also in an impolite, "warm" preaching style.[164] Clergymen guilty of an "affectation of popularity" would increasingly find themselves out of favor with the gentry and aristocracy.

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[160] Ibid., 14.
[161] Morison, *Dictionary of Decisions of the Court of Session*, vol. 25-6, pp. 10570-1.
[162] Mitchison, *The Old Poor Law*, esp pp. 60-5. Mitchison emphasizes two sample cases, Cambuslang and the similar lawsuit in Humbie parish in which the principal landowner Mr. Hepburn sued the kirk session for control of the poor's money.
[163] Ibid., 61.
[164] "The warm party," "the wild party," and "the popular party" are used interchangeably by Milton and Argyll and their circle for ministers who insisted on the congregation's right to call a minister. NLS MSS. 16692, 16696.

Although the Cambuslang revival is often labeled as "evangelical," it must be distinguished from the evangelicalism of the Regency and Victorian periods, patronized and supervised by patricians like Hannah More and William Wilberforce and seen by elites as a positive influence on the lower orders. By contrast, the 1742 revival in Scotland, like the early Methodist movement in England at the same time, was viewed by the upper classes not as socially desirable but as threatening and dangerous, as Christopher Smout has noted.[165] This reaction no doubt owed more to post-puritan nightmares than to any reality; the religious excitement in mid-century Strathclyde posed neither an overt nor an implicit challenge to the British social hierarchy, and its major effect was to keep the lower orders within the established Church. Lairds are not necessarily more rational than peasants, however. The crowds of "Leiges from all Quarters," the intense emotion, the public praying and exhorting of "mechanics" like Ingram More, and the sense of a mass movement not under their control provoked visceral revulsion in men like Westburn. Moreover, the parish was not only an ecclesiastical society, the identity which the Cambuslang elders saw as primary: it was also, as they had to concede, a legal court. Scots law obliged Westburn to pay McCulloch's stipend and that of his schoolmaster, as well as maintenance of the church and school, in proportion to the land he owned in the parish; should he not be able to restrain a cleric whose salary he paid? Westburn would be legally responsible for paying a "proportionate burden" of parish charity if funds were mishandled by googly-eyed revivalists; the elders, who were very modest heritors, if they owned land in the parish at all, would in this circumstance be taxed much less or not at all. It seemed only fair to Westburn and the other landlords of the Strathclyde, whose religion was increasingly one of calm moralism and benevolence rather than ecstatic Calvinism, that those who paid the clerical piper should call the parish tune.

POPULAR PREACHERS AND POLITE PREACHERS

If Hamilton of Westburn and like-minded lairds were looking for a clergyman very different from William McCulloch, they did not have to look far. James Wodrow,

[165] Smout, "Born again at Cambuslang," *Past and Present* 97 (1982): 118.

who had just left his post as Library Keeper at Glasgow University to become pastoral assistant to the aging Alexander Fergusson in Kilwinning, was a cleric who shared Westburn's esteem for Hutcheson and other modern thinkers, who would never countenance the riotous enthusiasm of 1742 or invite a mountebank like George Whitefield into his pulpit. The correspondence of the English Dissenting banker Samuel Kenrick and the Church of Scotland minister James Wodrow, preserved in Dr. Williams' Library in London, is a remarkable document of church life in Strathclyde in the second half of the century, and the contrast between Wodrow and an earlier generation of parish pastors, including his own father Robert, is stark indeed. Where William McCulloch had worried about his own elect status,[166] Wodrow and Kenrick seem never to have questioned that they would be accepted by a benevolent God. Where McCulloch championed heroic feats of piety like Jonathan Edwards's "Concert of Prayer,"[167] the old seminary friends in fifty years of correspondence almost never refer to praying for each other or to a prayer life of any kind.[168] Wodrow's letters make clear, however, that he spent a great deal of time staying current with the world of ideas and the wider British public sphere, reading literary magazines and recently published books in history and philosophy with a diligence that seems to have exceeded his attention to sermon preparation. By his own admission, the Rev. Mr. Wodrow periodically preached published sermons from his library when he could not find time to compose his own.[169] James Wodrow was a citizen of the republic of letters stranded in the dreary backwater of Strathclyde. His letters to Kenrick recall the "Golden Scenes of Life" of their student days in (relatively) sophisticated Glasgow as a "melancholy pleasure. . .mixed with Regret" now that he must spend his time "preaching all day."[170] Writing and delivering sermons, though dull, was tolerable, but pastoral care in his rural parishes Wodrow found particularly onerous. The "visitation" to each parishioner's home which clergy in the

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[166] See Robert Wodrow, *Analecta*, 4:280-1.
[167] See Susan O'Brien, "A transatlantic community of saints: the Great Awakening and the first evangelical network, 1735-1755," *American Historical Review* 91:4 (1986).
[168] E.g., Wodrow writes "May God support and recover you" to the seriously ill Kenrick before signing his name to Letter 24 (27 April 1755). Even this is exceptional.
[169] In Letter 38 Wodrow expresses his gladness to have "a Large Stack of Sermons & Lectures lying by me to be used when I happen to be out of Time for Composition, or disposed to spend a week in reading or visiting my friends." (Wodrow to Kenrick, December 1759)
[170] Ibid.

region were expected to make once annually, to offer prayer and spiritual counseling, was the subject of his repeated complaints to Kenrick. "I am at present visiting the town of Kilwinning," Wodrow lamented in 1755, "which is the most tedious troublesome toilsome disagreeable peice of the ministerial business. . . .This will be over thank God with this week."[171] Several years later, finally ordained to his own parish in Dunlop, Wodrow retained this low opinion of pastoral visitation. "I have been visiting my Parish as it is called," he wrote Kenrick in 1759, "that is to say going thru every single house & giving them an exhortation & prayer. . . .It is in truth a most tedious, tiresome useless work & can serve no purpose that I know of but to make a Minister acquainted with his parish & therefore I think it should be dropt after the third time."[172] Robert Wodrow's letters had been full of anecdotes about particular parishioners of very humble status, whose spiritual anxieties, joys, and supernatural visions were of keen interest to the parish pastor. James Wodrow's letters never mention individual parishioners by name; his flock is an anonymous mass, which appears chiefly as a distraction from literary pursuits. The reader can hardly imagine the man we meet in Wodrow's correspondence shepherding the flock which testified in the Cambuslang manuscripts. But Wodrow cultivated relationships with other polite divines, like John Warner of Kilbarchan, and seems to have been friendly with the noble family of Eglinton and some other area gentry.[173]

"Popular preachers" and "polite preachers." From the 1740s and 50s, more and more of the Church of Scotland's ministers shared James Wodrow's style of divinity, as the clerical avant-garde of the 1730s became mainstream. The older approach persisted, however, not only in clerics of an older generation like James Robe (d. 1753), John McLaurin (d. 1754), and William McCulloch (d.1771), but also among a minority of young preachers, many of whom had been energized by participation in the Cambuslang work.[174] Printed pamphlets and sermons from the 1740s reflect a growing sense that the Church of Scotland's clergy was now divided into two parties. In terms of

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[171] W-K, Letter 24 (Wodrow to Kenrick, 27 April 1755).
[172] Ibid., Letter 33 (Wodrow to Kenrick, 10 July 1759).
[173] See e.g. Letter 101 (Wodrow to Kenrick, 27 September 1785).
[174] e.g., John Gillies, pastor of Blackfriars church in Glasgow from 1742-96; John Erskine, pastor of Kirkintilloch 1744-52 and of Culross 17 ; and John Witherspoon, pastor of Beith 1744-56 and of Paisley 1756-68. Gillies and Erskine had both been involved in the revival at Cambuslang as young probationers.

doctrine, ministers of the new school were attacked as "legal preachers" or "moral preachers," and accused of not "preaching Christ." This allegation, and the new divines' dismissal of it, revolved around disagreement among Scottish Christians about the relative weight to be given to different aspects of Christian belief and practice. "Preaching Christ" for traditionalists meant a clear proclamation of the hearers' need to be saved and of Christ's death as a substitute to atone for their sins, with an invitation to a personal, inner trust in his death for salvation. A Christianity in which this was not the central emphasis was, in their view, a defective Christianity. By contrast, moral preachers stoutly denied that by not emphasizing the atonement and personal religious experience with God they did not "preach Christ." As early as 1731 William Wishart was concerned to refute such accusations. In Wishart's transvaluation of priorities, ethics and a general attitude of benevolence to others became the center of Christianity and both dogma and inner spirituality were explicitly moved to the periphery.[175] "Is the *end* of Christianity Love?" Wishart asks rhetorically. "Then, preaching our Saviour's Great Law of Love, is preaching Christ, and preaching the Gospel."[176] Decades later, Leechman and his protégé James Wodrow likewise denied that the doctrines of salvation they minimized could fairly be considered "the gospel." Wodrow's eulogistic "Life of Leechman" concedes that his mentor had been accused of not "preaching Christ" only to dismiss the allegation out of hand: "to preach any part of the religion of Jesus Christ is to preach Christ," Wodrow insists.[177]

What was increasingly perceived as a two-party system within the Church of Scotland clergy was sometimes described in terms of doctrine: those who emphasized virtue and avoided the cross and the atonement, labeled by opponents as "moral preachers," and those who preached justification by faith alone, whom adversaries accused of being "antinomian." But contemporaries also regularly identified each of these positions with a particular social base. Moral preachers themselves continually identify their opponents within the clergy as "the popular party."[178] One anonymous

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[175] W. Wishart, *Charity*, 29.
[176] Ibid., 30.
[177] Wodrow, "Life," in Leechman, *Sermons*, 1:51.
[178] See *Observations on the overture concerning patronage* (Edinburgh: 1769), in which preachers of the "popular party" are identified by "a loud voice, a rententive memory, an affectation of enthusiastic and mystical expressions, and low manners," 14. cf. Letter 57 of the Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence (15

pamphlet from the 1760s complains of the (vaguely defined) "Antinomian tenets" that prevail among "the common people," and remarks that some preachers, "by preaching always in the Antinomian strain, or one nearly approaching it, are called popular preachers."[179] Ministers who eschewed the new style for the old emphasis on Christ's death for sin were accused of "affecting popularity," and of trying to curry favor with the vulgar: "What can induce any young man, upon his entering into the ministry, to throw off his natural good sense, and take up with the popular jargon, I cannot see, except…the desire of standing high in their estimation."[180] One Strathclyde pastor of the 1750s and 60s, John Witherspoon, drew fervent crowds and a wide readership by preaching the cross and the atonement in the older style. Denounced by new-style colleagues for this affectation of popularity, Witherspoon remarked,

> It is, doubtless, a mean and despicable principle, to act only with a view at gaining the applause of the vulgar and ignorant. I have often wondered, how some should so blindly and uncharitably lay this to the charge of their brethren, without considering how easy it is, and with at least equal justice, to presume that they are under the influence, and acting with a view to please the great. I am sure, there is a much stronger temptation to this than the former.[181]

Witherspoon combined his straightforward defense of traditional piety in the pulpit with withering satire of the new divinity in print.[182] His *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, which lambasted the clerical avant-garde (already coming to be known in the General Assembly as "the Moderate party") went through at least five Scottish editions in the decade after its publication in 1753. The four "special marks and signs" by which the pamphlet claimed a "Moderate" preacher could be identified mixed theological with social criteria:

> 1. His subjects must be confined to social duties. 2. He must recommend them only from rational considerations, viz. the beauty and comely proportions of virtue, and its advantages in the present life, without regard for a future state of more extended self-interest. 3. His authors must be drawn from heathen writers,

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June 1776), in which Wodrow distinguishes himself and his friend John Warner from "the popular Men" among Strathclyde preachers.

[179] *Letter to the author of a pamphlet on patronage and presentation*, 6-7.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Witherspoon, *The charge of sedition and faction against good men*, 44.

[182] See Witherspoon's interesting defense of satire in the cause of orthodoxy in his *Serious apology for the Ecclesiastical Characteristics* (1763), pp. 15-20. Opining that there is no necessary opposition between prayer and satire, the Rev. Mr. Witherspoon also observes that "there are many instances of irony in the sacred writings," and that it is suitable for "the reigning taste of the age," as "a certain levity of mind prevails." "Besides," he concludes, "I must acknowledge, that the conduct of the prevailing party did often appear to me in a very ridiculous light."

> NONE, or as few as possible, from Scripture. 4. He must be very unacceptable to the common people.[183]

In an anonymous pamphlet from the 1760s, theological critique of the new divinity, as excessively optimistic about human nature and as vaguely theistic rather than robustly Christian, is woven seamlessly together with assumptions about its elite social base: "The manners and the tables of their patrons they [the new ministers] will imitate with the most obsequious admiration. They will speak to the people when they cannot avoid it; but genteel company is the center toward which that learned and holy body shall gravitate."[184] Alexander Fergusson's 1767 essay in the *Scots Magazine* likewise shows how progressive theology and domination of the Kirk by social elites had come to be identified, here by a senior statesman of the new divinity. Fergusson's anonymous tract moves effortlessly from praising John Taylor of Norwich and advocating the supremacy of reason in divinity to insisting on the incapacity of ordinary parishioners to choose their minister.[185]

What Witherspoon and the host of anonymous pamphlets are identifying in the third quarter of the century is the convergence of two impulses—the modernizing, liberalizing impulse in the Church of Scotland, oriented to "Rational Dissent" in England and "the New Light" in Ulster, though more discreet, and the determination of Scotland's secular elites to subject parish life to their direct control and conform Scottish divinity to their more cosmopolitan tastes. These two forces, originally and conceptually distinct, shared a desire to bring Scotland's backward religious culture up to date, to escape the narrow Calvinism of provincial piety; they also shared a reaction of disgust and even fear (visible in Westburn's 1752 "Answers") to the extraordinary revival in the region in 1742, an embarrassing paroxysm of popular hysteria abetted by fanatical pastors like McCulloch and Robe. Leechman's divinity program at Glasgow was providing a source for pastors on an alternative model, polite literati like James Wodrow, at just the moment when Strathclyde patrons perceived a pressing need to move away from the old divinity. In the new era of patronage, "Popular" preachers like John Witherspoon and John Freebairn were best able to thrive in urban parishes (like Paisley and Dumbarton), where

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[183] Witherspoon, *Eccclesiastical Characteristics*, 4.
[184] *A Plain answer to Thoughts of a Layman*, 15-7.
[185] *Scots Magazine* volume 29 (1767), 174ff.

the right of patronage was vested in the town council—no democracy, but closer to and more in tune with parish opinion than non-resident aristocrats. By contrast, rural parishes in the Strathclyde were increasingly under the thumb of the gentry by the 1750s. Church records suggest James Wodrow's career was advanced by his connections with the landed. Wodrow had been presented to Dunlop by the Earl of Eglinton in 1756, and was evidently regarded by the parish as unimpressive though not extremely offensive. As the Earl pressed for Wodrow's settlement, a meeting of Dunlop elders and heritors asked the Presbytery of Irvine to delay in moderating a call and asked to hear other preachers.[186] Times were changing, however; patrons were more active and harder to thwart, and Wodrow's shortcomings were not enough to provoke active resistance from the parish. The session received their new pastor with a studied indifference: given the opportunity to sign a statement in favor of Wodrow in February 1757, "None of the Elders signed it, yet they declared th^{t} they had nothing to Object ag^{t} it."[187] At the moderation of a call in March, the Laird of Dunlop, several non-residing heritors, and one elder voted for Wodrow, but another landlord refused to sign the call "in regard that he understands Mr Wodrow is not acceptable to the People"; a paper of concurrence was offered to the parish heads of families, the presbytery clerk remarks, "but none offered to sign it."[188] Wodrow's transportation to Stevenston in 1759 was quieter still. Property owners rather than elders now appear as spokesmen for the community. A paper by "heretors & others" in Stevenston praised Wodrow for his "amiable Dispositions of Mind &. . .a real goodness of heart"; hearers below the level of the heritors agitate neither for nor against Wodrow's settlement, but appear admirably passive in the process, as patrons and their lawyers had long insisted they should be.[189] At least in Stevenston, the era of active popular participation in pastoral elections, of petitions and politicking, seems to have passed.

It is difficult to know the degree of popular acceptance of or dissatisfaction with the new clerical cohort of the 1750s, however, because of the disappearance at this time of the "pastoral visitations" which presbyteries had earlier made to parishes in their

[186] CH2/197/5, p. 543.
[187] Ibid., p. 550.
[188] Ibid., p. 553.
[189] Ibid., pp. 623, 627.

bounds. In the first half of the century, representatives of the presbytery regularly visited each parish, inspecting the church and school buildings but also inquiring at length into the relationship between pastor and parishioners. In a traditional visitation, common in all the presbyteries of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr before mid-century, the pastor and elders were interviewed about the state of the parish in the absence of the other, and the "heads of families" were called in the absence of both pastor and elders and asked to assess clerical and lay leadership. Presbyterial visitations in the second half of the century, however, deal exclusively with parish property and buildings; neither the elders nor the heads of families are called to opine on the pastor's diligence, nor are pastors asked about the attendance or devotion of their flock. This pastoral aspect of the visitation grows increasingly rare in presbytery minutes from the early 1740s and has vanished entirely by 1760. Another subtle but significant change in parish life during the same period is the apparent disappearance of the congregation's ritual welcoming of the new minister after his ordination. In ordination ceremonies in the first half of the century, presbytery clerks always record that the congregation "took [the new pastor] by th^{e} hand in Token of th^{r} receiving him to be th^{r} Minister."[190] During the 1740s and 50s, this almost formulaic conclusion to the description of ordination services becomes less common in presbytery minutes, then disappears entirely.[191] It is unclear whether this change reflects popular disaffection (as the heads of families reluctantly accepted but refused to welcome the landlords' candidate), or whether they instead indicate presbytery clerks' indifference to a custom that persisted but was now seen by clergy as insignificant.

"THE UNSOUNDNESS OF HIS FAITH & THE INSINCERITY OF HIS PRACTICE"

Though the disappearance of pastoral oversight in presbyterial visitations makes it difficult to know the degree of popular discontent, anecdotal evidence indicates that

[190] A late example, from the ordination of William Bell at Campsie in 1747: CH2/171/11/2, p. 247.
[191] For examples of later ordinations at which the congregational embrace is conspicuously absent, see the installation of Alexander Dobie at Glasford in December 1762, CH2/393/4, pp. 67-8, of James Hodgson at Cumbernauld in November 1775, CH2/171/14, p. 126, and of William Stewart at Carmunnock in January 1778, Ibid., pp. 183-4.

many Strathclyde parishioners received Leechman's students with the same discomfort and suspicion which which clerical and lay traditionalists had greeted Leechman himself in 1744. When their patron presented David McClellan to be pastor of Beith in 1758, the congregation was troubled not so much by what he asserted by what he omitted. The statement these village Calvinists submitted to Irvine Presbytery contains curious echoes of earlier traditionalists' remarks about Leechman's controversial sermon on prayer and on the 1720s "Neu-lights and preachers-legall." Beith petitioners opined,

> It is. . .possible that a Man may Lean to the Armenian [*sic*] side in his Doctrine & Depart in a Good Measure from the Doctrine of free Grace which he hath subscribed in the Confession of faith, & yet keep in such generall terms rather hideing the truth then affirming falsehood that it shall be impossible to prove it on him. All this serious hearers can Discover & it Gives them a dreadfull opinion both of the unsoundness of his faith & the Insincerity of his practice. And yet they would be very unwise if they should Turn their secret suspicions into open & public Accusations.[192]

Did the omission of classic themes like the atonement by preachers like McClellan signify actual disagreement? The widespread view of modern scholars that the Scottish "Moderates" did not follow their English and Irish equivalents into Socinianism and unitarianism seems to be based on their published writings, together with their professions of orthodoxy and willingness to subscribe the Westminster standards. The Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence, however, together with other unpublished correspondence, suggest a rather different picture:[193] that at least several Moderates in the west of Scotland, including Professor William Leechman, came to practice an esoteric divinity in which their true views, expressed in private to other progressive clerics, diverged very widely from the Calvinist doctrine they publicly affirmed. Leechman was a correspondent of many of the most advanced of England's "Rational Dissenters." As early as 1744, just after his appointment to the divinity chair, Leechman described his difficult situation to George Benson, an English Dissenter long avowedly Arminian and now moving toward Socinianism:[194]

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[192] CH2/197/5, 591.
[193] The letters of Wodrow and Kenrick are preserved in Dr. Williams' Library in London, and the letter of Leechman to George Benson quoted below are archived at John Rylands Library in Manchester, perhaps explaining why they have not been utilized adequately by scholars of eighteenth-century Scotland.
[194] See Bolam et al., 82ff.

> I don't believe it is possible for one in your Situation to imagine to what hight bigottry & Nonsense in Religion prevails in this Country, especially in this part of it. . . .From this view of my present Situation you may easily perceive how difficult a task it must be to teach pure & genuine Christianity & at the same [time] not to expose myself to the fury of Bigotts.[195]

At what point Leechman himself took leave of the Nicene dogma of the Trinity is unclear, but he had certainly done so by 1784, when Wodrow reports to Kenrick their mentor's views on Samuel Horseley, an English divine who had recently defended the traditional doctrine: "He is amused at a man of Horseley's abilities appearing at this day as a defender of the Athanasian doctrines & others of the same kind and is not sure but the best way of answering him, would be in the way of ridicule."[196] Leechman's relationship with John Taylor of Norwich suggests that the divinity professor may have already shared Taylor's rejection of original sin and the atonement by the 1750s. He was the prime mover behind Glasgow University's decision to award the controversial Taylor the Doctorate of Divinity in 1756.[197] Leechman and John Taylor finally met during the divinity professor's visit to England in 1759: "He spent a Sunday at Warrington with the late Dr. Taylor," according to Wodrow's biography, "but they were no strangers to one another, as they corresponded by letters."[198]

The private correspondence of James Wodrow indicates that Leechman's position was not unique. Though less bombastic than Kenrick (an outspoken unitarian who railed against "the nonesensical absurdities of St Athanasius"[199]), Wodrow shared his old seminary friend's disdain for Reformed orthodoxy and doubted the orthodox teachings on the Trinity and the atonement. Several times in the correspondence Wodrow expresses his leanings toward a Socinian Christology. In January 1769 he told Kenrick that "it is my apprehension that most of the men of learning & freedom of thought among the Clergy both in Scotland & in most Protestant countries in Europe will soon become Socinians," not from reading Socinus but "owing from enquiry into the sacred

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[195] qtd. in Skoczylas, 338.
[196] W-K, Letter 84, 22, 28, and 29 October 1784
[197] See the entry for Taylor in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 40:439-40; for Leechman's role and his further (unsuccessful) efforts to award the D.D. to the open Socinian George Benson, see Jeremy Goring, "Break-up of the Old Dissent," in Bolam et al., 197. Wodrow's "Life" prefixed to Leechman's *Sermons* also notes Leechman's role, 1:75.
[198] Wodrow, "Life," in Leechman, *Sermons*, 1:74-5.
[199] W-K, Letter 31, Kenrick to Wodrow, 14 June 1759.

writings."[200] The next year he praised Nathaniel Lardner's *Letter. . .Concerning. . .the Logos* as "wrote upon a very rational plan. . .quite upon Socinian or Sabellian principles."[201] In 1784, asked directly by Kenrick for his views on Christ's divinity, the Rev. Mr. Wodrow wrote,

> It is one of the few theological points about which I have formed no decided opinion. Like many other disputed points, It is of little consequence to Xty. The credit of our Sav[rs] religion and its Influence on Mankind stands on his Fathers authority. In his Name He ever spoke & acted & never in his own. . . .The S-c-nian appear to me to have a considerable advantage over all other sects in urging the Example of X upon his followers as a motive to virtue & also in stating his Resurrection or future life as a direct proof of ours.[202]

As for Christ's death on the cross being a satisfaction for sin, Wodrow opines that the connection between his death and our forgiveness is probably "in the minds of the inspired writers. The Death of their Master led them by this chain to the Publication of pardon & grace."[203] Wodrow also had contact through Kenrick with English Dissent's most aggressive unitarian, Joseph Priestley, whom Wodrow admired, though he also criticized him for "a certain want of Judgement or Prudence."[204]

Like the Rev. Dr. Leechman, Wodrow had sworn his agreement with the Westminster Confession,[205] in his case certainly after he had come to his mature views. These men, however, apparently did not feel that they were guilty of dishonesty in publicly affirming dogmas which they privately doubted or denied. Their mutual friend Alexander Fergusson, pastor of Kilwinning, offers a clue to their behavior in his April 1767 article in the *Scots Magazine*. Here Fergusson (anonymously) writes that to require ministers to subscribe to the Confession is to "deprive us of our natural right of private judgement, and the invaluable privilege of inquiring after truth. . . .This is to impose upon us the doctrine of implicit faith, one of the greatest errors, and grand supports, of

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[200] Ibid., Letter 45, Wodrow to Kenrick, 25 January 1769.
[201] Ibid., Letter 46, Wodrow to Kenrick, 1 May 1770.
[202] Ibid., Letter 79, Wodrow to Kenrick, 15 April 1789.
[203] Ibid., Letter 91, Wodrow to Kenrick, 6 February 1785.
[204] See Ibid., Letters 79 (15 April 1784), 87 (3 January 1785), 89 (14 January 1785), 91 (6 February 1785).
[205] Thus, e.g., they had solemnly affirmed their agreement with VIII.ii.: "The Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary," and XI.iii., "Christ by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf," 58, 73.

Popery."[206] No government or ecclesiastical institution should require a subscription to "a composition of fallible men," which would contradict our natural rights of "private judgement, freedom of inquiry after truth, and improvement in the knowledge of it"; moreover, "No man can divest himself of these rights, if he has any taste of them: for they are inseparable from his nature, as a creature made among other noble purposes, to inquire after and discern truth and to judge for himself."[207] So tyrannical, so monstrous is the requirement of such a subscription, Fergusson writes, that a man may morally affirm it with the mental proviso that he does so only insofar as he believes it agreeable to Scripture, "though he do not at signing express that qualification."[208] For the alternative was unthinkable, as letters in defense of Fergusson published in later issues insist: "Ought they, as some have proposed, to cast themselves out of the way of their present usefulness, to separate, of their own accord, from the parishes that love them? From the church that they agree with, in all fundamental points?" one anonymous letter asks. "God forbid."[209] Rather, another anonymous defender asserted, a young man "who has been endeavouring to qualify himself for that office, by improvement in good learning, and by the diligent of faithful study of the Scriptures, at no small expence of time and money" was quite justified in affirming the Confession with such a mental reservation, if by doing so he might be "put in a capacity to be useful in the way of life he has chosen."[210]

The pastor as heretic. Fergusson's essay led to a firestorm of debate in the pages of the *Scots Magazine* among Scotland's elites. But examination of the church records of Fergusson's parish and neighborhood show his evolving theology provoked comment in humbler strata as well. In the well-established Scottish tradition, ministers engaged in a great deal of pulpit-sharing at the summer communions. It was there that James McConnell of the next-door parish, Beith, heard the Rev. Mr. Fergusson preach a message he found dubious, and in November 1767 McConnell appeared before the Presbytery of Irvine to file a formal complaint against Fergusson, charging the minister with heresy. In the accuser's version of the incident, Fergusson had on multiple occasions interpreted Romans 3 as teaching that justification was not by faith in Christ

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[206] *Scots Magazine* volume 29 (1767), 172.
[207] Ibid., 175.
[208] Ibid.
[209] "Philanthropos," Ibid., 534-5.
[210] "S.D.," Ibid., 526.

alone, but that "good works, or as some have it, our sincere obedience," were a necessary condition of salvation: "a direct overturning, as well as contradicting. . .the orthodox sense of the apostle's words."[211] McConnell insists that is he is no isolated eccentric but a spokesman for widespread concerns about Fergusson. At the communion festival, McConnell claims, "As the preacher was delivering his sentiments. . .some of the common and ordinary people around the tent, spoke audibly, so as to be heard by one another, Is that man or minister preaching truth or error?"[212] So disturbed was the layman that he first wrote to Fergusson, and then sought to "wait on him" in person in order to discuss the perceived errors, but the Kilwinning pastor ignored his requests to meet, leading McConnell to take his concerns to the presbytery.[213]

Where a generation earlier presbyteries had carefully investigated any accusation against ministers, the Presbytery of Irvine received McConnell's charge with surprising nonchalance; his paper was, the presbytery clerk records, returned to McConnell unread.[214] A rather naked social snobbery was one reason. The petitioner, a former soldier now serving as town drummer of Beith, was belittled both to his face and in print as "obscure and illiterate." The ex-soldier's humble background and limited formal education were reason enough to ignore his allegation entirely: "I as a libeler was objected unto very warmly, by a member of the Presbytery, because I was a poor man," according to McConnell's own account.[215] In the pamphlets and articles printed by Fergusson's allies in the ensuing controversy, the retired soldier is always demeaningly described as "the drummer" rather than named, and repeatedly labeled as "illiterate,"[216] although he would write and publish a quite articulate, 46-page defense of his action.[217] (Presumably, his ignorance of Latin and Greek or his lack of a university education is intended.) McConnell reappears before Irvine Presbytery in February and in July of 1768, asking the clerics to take action on "so Clamant a Cause," but met with continued

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[211] McConnell, 3.
[212] Ibid., 1.
[213] CH2/197/4, p. 170.
[214] CH2/197/6, p. 170.
[215] McConnell, 19.
[216] Thus the minutes of Irvine Presbytery, CH2/197/6, p. 178, and also John Graham's anonymous *Religious establishment in Scotland examined*, 10.
[217] James McConnell, *Some reasons humbly offered to the public, why a prosecution was commenced and carried on against Mr. Alexander Fergusson* (Glasgow: printed and sold by the author, and by William Whyte, bookseller in Beith, 1769).

refusal by Fergusson's fellow clergymen to examine the allegations at all. The primary reason given is that McConnell is "an improper Person to insist on a Lybel of this kind"; identifying theological error, the clergymen explain, "requires in a Special Manner Prudence and Learning, as much as Zeal."[218] McConnell declined, however, to accept clerical admonition to leave theology to the experts. At his appeal to the Synod, McConnell's appeal to "principles" was met by further social elitism, as one clergyman informed the ex-soldier that a man like himself could have "nothing to do with principles." McConnell remarks, "I might have justly observed to him, that such an assertion as his was more becoming the Romish clergy, who take away the key of knowledge from the people. . .than that of one of the church of Scotland."[219]

The letters of James Wodrow, one of the clerics on Irvine Presbytery who rebuffed the layman's complaint, provide a different view of the events. Wodrow had begun his career as Alexander Fergusson's pastoral assistant in Kilwinning; he orchestrated the elderly Fergusson's defense in the ensuing controversy, boasting to Kenrick of how "The Presbytery played him off for eight or nine months without taking any step of consequence."[220] The "Popular party" of clerical traditionalists was stronger at the Synod, which agreed in October to examine McConnell's charges—a decision the Presbytery of Irvine appealed and against which Principal Leechman of Glasgow University registered a formal protest.[221] The matter was resolved to the clergy's satisfaction when, in July 1769, Wodrow and two other clerical brethren met in private with Fergusson to receive his brief and rather bland written statement that "it was never his intention to impugn or Deny the Satisfaction of Christ," and they declared the case dismissed.[222]

The Fergusson controversy thus provides us a glimpse of a crucial moment in the cultural history of Scotland, in which an increasing number of the Kirk's clergy had become cosmopolitan, post-Calvinist literati but the provincial laity remained stubbornly loyal to the faith in which they had been catechized. In his pamphlet *Some reasons humbly offered* the "illiterate" James McConnell includes an eloquent paraphrase of the

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[218] CH2/197/6, pp. 173, 178.
[219] McConnell, 6.
[220] W-K, Letter 45 (Wodrow to Kenrick, 25 January 1769).
[221] CH2/464/4, pp. 64-5.
[222] CH2/197/6, p. 214.

doctrine of the atonement, which he regards as the core of Christianity: "[Christ's] dying and shedding his blood on the cross, was not for himself, but on the account of others. . .accepted in the room and stead of guilty helpless sinners; and by an act of divine grace reckoned to all who are enabled by faith to lay hold on Christ, for the whole of salvation and justification unto eternal life."[223] But this teaching was, if not actively disbelieved by the polite clergy, at least regarded by them as unimportant. (Even the question of Christ's divinity, in James Wodrow's view, was "of little consequence to Christianity.") In an increasing number of Strathclyde parishes, the man in the pulpit no longer shared in the inner world of the Calvinist laity, as ministers like Robert Wodrow had once done. This intellectual and cultural withdrawal from the world of the parish by its official leaders proved even more destructive to the Christian community than the withdrawal of lay elites decades earlier, which in many ways had facilitated the rise of the clerical avant-garde. As a generation of Calvinist ministers died in the rural parishes of the Strathclyde,[224] patrons were determined to settle preachers of the new school, with whom they shared both cultural tastes and social connections. Not all parishes, however, would show themselves as supine as James Wodrow's congregations in Dunlop and Stevenston. The settlement disputes which proliferate in the region in the 1760s and 70s represent a unique movement of popular resistance to "the people above" in eighteenth-century Scotland, as provincial Calvinism went to war with Scotland's clerical Enlightenment and the alliance of polite preachers and cosmopolitan gentry which formed its social base.

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[223] McConnell, 7.

[224] William McKnight of Irvine d. 1750; James Robe of Kilsyth d. 1753; George Adam of Cathcart d. 1759; James Hamilton of Bothwell d. 1760; Richard Henderson of Blantyre d. 1769; William McCulloch of Cambuslang d. 1771; James Stoddart of Kirkintilloch d. 1773; John Oughterson of Cumbernauld d. 1777; James Halket of Fenwick d. 1779.

CHAPTER 6. "THE GIDDY MULTITUDE": THE FORCED SETTLEMENTS IN THE STRATHCLYDE

The second half of the eighteenth century was an exceptional period in Scotland's intellectual history, as a remarkable flowering of polite cultural life took place under the patronage of church and university. It was an equally exceptional era in Scottish social history, when ferocious conflicts between aristocratic patrons and local communities over pastoral appointments resulted in scores of what were styled "forced settlements" or "violent settlements." Richard Sher and Alexander Murdoch, in the essential summary of the disputes on a national scale, count nearly one hundred settlement disputes that reached the highest level, the Church of Scotland's General Assembly, between 1750 and 1800.[1] Many similar cases likely remained at the regional level of the presbyteries or synods. While the "Scottish Enlightenment" has commanded considerable attention from intellectual historians and philosophers, the scores of forced settlements—which reshaped Scottish social life and created a flood of pamphlet literature and public debate—have been largely ignored.[2] This is so despite the fact that the settlement cases provoked an otherwise unparalleled level of popular involvement in public life in late Georgian Scotland. Petitions and protests, sometimes collecting hundreds of signatures, were circulated both in major towns like Kilmarnock and remote hamlets like Shotts, and from Nigg in the far north to Jedburgh in the Borders. Several cases culminated in full-scale

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[1] Sher and Murdoch, "Patronage and party in the Church of Scotland, 1750-1800," in MacDougall (ed.), *Church, Politics, and Society: Scotland 1408-1929*, pp. 197-220.

[2] Chapter 7 of Kenneth Logue's book *Popular Disturbances in Scotland, 1780-1815* (1979) is one of the very few treatments of these protests, but is flawed by failure to use church records from either the local or regional level. Logue's reliance on the justiciary and circuit court papers, with a few references to Scott's *Fasti*, causes him to overlook protests which did not result in criminal trials, some of which were nonetheless disturbances of the first order, e.g. Shotts, in which a company of dragoons was required to settle the new minister. Also, Logue's study begins in 1780, by which time the Moderate triumph was complete and the most dramatic settlement protests in the past. Sher and Murdoch's "Patronage and party in the Church of Scotland" is a fine introduction but does not examine particular cases in detail. The only two detailed studies of which I am aware are Sher, "Moderates, managers, and popular politics in mid-eighteenth-century Edinburgh," pp. 179-209 in Dwyer, Mason, and Murdoch (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (1982), on the 1760s settlement dispute in Edinburgh, and Ned Landsman, "Liberty, piety, and patronage," pp. 213-24 in Hook and Sher (eds.), *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (1995), on the contemporary settlement at the Wynd church in Glasgow.

rioting against the "intruded" ministers, in defiance of the local gentry, the King's government, and the Church of Scotland's hierarchy. These dramatic popular protests have been surprisingly neglected by scholars. Some have evidently followed the patrons and "Moderate" divines of the day as seeing them as irrational, motivated only by "groundless prejudice" and unworthy of serious examination. Others have apparently overlooked them as "religious" squabbles, of interest only to religious specialists. On the contrary, local opposition to "forced settlements" was strikingly organized and articulate. Several anti-patronage petitions are preserved with the General Assembly papers, while others are transcribed into presbytery minutes. The authors of these petitions are quite humble—"blacksmiths, weavers, and distillers of whisky," the noble patron of Kilmaronock called the dissenters there, while the signers of the final protest against the presentee in Cambuslang were a weaver, a coalhewer, and several farmers.[3] These protests therefore provide an almost unique opportunity for eighteenth-century Scots below the level of the gentry and urban professionals to speak. Nor are the settlement cases narrowly "religious" disputes. Especially in the countryside, the parish was the primary unit of local life and governance, far more a part of the everyday lives of most Scots than the King's government in Edinburgh; the ability to participate in calling a new minister was a jealously-guarded local privilege, one of the few venues for ordinary Scots to influence the decisions that shaped their community. The defiance of the powers of church and state by the humble in these cases is remarkable and fascinating. At the climax of the forced settlement in Eaglesham, parishioners showered the Principal of Glasgow University with garbage.[4] In Kilmarnock, a mob pelted the Earl of Glencairn and several ministers of the presbytery with stones, driving them from the parish church.[5] In Shotts, Lawrence Wells could only be installed as pastor with a company of dragoons to protect him from his congregation.[6] This is popular protest comparable to the events studied by Thompson and Rudé, and should be of interest to all social historians of early modern Europe, not consigned to "church history."

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[3] *Case of the parish of Kilmaronock*, p. 2; CH2/393/4, p. 195.
[4] CH2/171/13/1, p. 77.
[5] NAS, JC26/171.
[6] CH2/393/4, p. 131.

If the forced settlements and popular resistance to them ought to be rehabilitated as a major phenomenon of late eighteenth-century Scotland, a natural curiosity may arise about their relationship to that other and better-known feature of the time, the "Scottish Enlightenment." Did the widespread and articulate popular resistance to the political and ecclesiastical establishment in these cases indicate a popular Enlightenment below the level of the urban universities and reading clubs and the clerical literati studied by Richard Sher? If this movement can be read as a version of enlightenment, it is one not only distinct from but opposed by the leaders of the Scottish Enlightenment as commonly understood. William Robertson, polite man of letters, best-selling historian, and the doyen of Sher's "Moderate literati," was also an inflexible proponent of aristocratic patronage in the Kirk.[7] The Rev. Dr. Robertson used his dominance in the General Assembly from the 1750s to systematically support aristocratic power in church appointments, to rule out any role for congregational dissent, and punitively to defrock ministers who sided with local dissenters.[8] Almost without exception, the party around Robertson, hailed by Sher as scions of a clerical Enlightenment, likewise were active in promoting the patron's right, voting to impose presentees on objecting parishes and penning pamphlets against any popular role in calling pastors.

The reason why "enlightened" clergymen like Robertson, William Leechman, James Wodrow, and their ilk should so vigorously oppose popular participation in calling ministers is not readily apparent. Their customary claim was that, disagreeable though it might be, patronage was the law of the land and must be enforced for the sake of social order.[9] Modern scholars like Sher and Murdoch join contemporary adversaries in doubting that the energetic enforcement of presentations by Robertson's faction in the Assembly can be explained by reluctant civil obedience,[10] but it is not before the 1760s that the polite divines hint at another reason. The first to do was Alexander "Jupiter"

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[7] For the best short introduction to Robertson's career, see Stewart Brown, "William Robertson (1721-1793) and the Scottish enlightenment," 7-35 in *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire*, ed. Brown (1997).

[8] The 1752 case of Thomas Gillespie, future founder of the Relief church, is best-known, but compare also the Assembly's treatment of John Finlay and other members of Stirling Presbytery, who in 1773 fulfilled the Assembly's order to settle presentee David Thomson at St. Ninians while strongly criticizing the same, CH1/2/116, ff. 67-130.

[9] See esp. Robertson's "Reasons of Dissent" in the 1752 Inverkeithing case, in Morren's *Annals of the General Assembly*, i: 231-7.

[10] See their brief but important analysis, 213-4 of their essay "Patronage and Party," in MacDougall (ed.).

Carlyle, in an anonymous pamphlet produced by the forced settlement in Edinburgh, the so-called "Drysdale bustle." In this case the genteel city council denied a role in calling a new pastor to the elders and trade guilds, who had previously shared in the selection of ministers. "Was it not their duty," Carlyle asks, "to take that choice out of the hands of men, on all occasions undiscerning…who had frequently shown their inclination to exclude the most learned, able, and truly pious ministers from the city?"[11] Polite divines like John Drysdale, or like himself, Carlyle implies, could not expect to meet with popular consent. As numerous settlement disputes festered around Scotland, a debate at the 1766 General Assembly prompted a new defense of aristocratic patronage as desirable in itself. According to the *Annals of the General Assembly*, at that year's meeting of the Kirk's highest body,

> There were some who scrupled not to give it as their opinion, That patronage was the best way of settling churches: That the nobility and gentry, in whom the right of patronage was usually vested, must be presumed the best judges of the qualifications of ministers, and were naturally entitled to that distinction by the eminence of their station: That if the election were in the common people, they would be easily carried away by men of superficial rather than solid talents.

The annalist identifies the speaker as the Rev. Dr. Robertson himself.[12] Anonymous pamphleteers from the Moderate party followed the lead of their chief. One 1769 tract asks rhetorically, "Have men of rank and education no advantages over the vulgar, in forming a judgment of the real qualifications of mankind?"[13] This important pamphlet reveals the hidden connection between pro-patronage church politics and post-Calvinist theology. For its argument in favor of aristocratic patronage clearly presupposes that this is the only way that polite and enlightened clergymen can win advancement in the Kirk:

> Upon the supposition that no ministers could be admitted without the concurrence of the people, candidates for the sacred office would naturally consider those qualities that are agreeable to the people, as the only objects worthy their attention. Literature, candour, and sincerity, would be looked upon as bars in the way of preferments. The knowledge of theology would become the sole literary pursuit: a loud voice, a retentive memory, an affectation of enthusiastic and mystical expressions, and low manners.[14]

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[11] *Faction detected*, 15.
[12] Morren, *Annals of the General Assembly*, ii: 333.
[13] *Observations on the overture concerning patronage* (Edinburgh: 1769), 11.
[14] Ibid., 14.

The nobility and gentry, not "the lower ranks, where ignorance chiefly prevails," are best-suited to judge of the qualifications of a minister. That the polite divines almost universally came to hold this view surely reflects their awareness that the new divinity appealed to Scotland's elites, not to ordinary parishioners. Over time polite clerics became willing to make this argument more openly. In 1782 Thomas Hardy explained in his *Principles of Moderation* that ministers must not be chosen by the congregation because congregations would choose the wrong ministers. If popular consent were to determine pastoral appointments, Hardy contends,

> There would remain no chance of success to genius, to sound doctrine, to sober religion, to modest and unassuming virtue; qualities like these, proscribed from society, and stamped with popular reprobation, would give place to vulgar cant, to dark Puritanical intolerance, and to the worst debasement of character to which the slaves of the people were ever reduced.[15]

What was often portrayed at the time as the subservience of the polite clergy to lay elites can equally be seen, as Sher and Murdoch point out, as a case of "government and the landed elite being used by the Moderates to achieve their ends rather than vice versa." The supreme goal of Dr. Robertson and his circle was "leading the nation out of the abyss of seventeenth-century fanaticism,"[16] and it was the post-Calvinist upper classes, not the enthusiasts of local parishes, who were most likely to facilitate this.

The vigorous enforcement of aristocratic patronage in pastoral appointments, and the systematic squelching of popular dissent, were therefore part and parcel of the program of Enlightenment pursued by William Robertson and his allies. Surprising as it may seem at first, this was a logical consequence of the situation in Scotland at mid-century. As I have shown, many people in the parishes, especially the elders and the most active parishioners, were devoutly attached to a provincial Calvinism which the cosmopolitan clergy found repulsive, fanatical, and an obstacle to "freedom of inquiry and improvement of knowledge." At the same time, Enlightenment values such as "love of learning and virtue; a faith in reason and science; . . . a style of civilized urbanity and polite cosmopolitanism" found a home in Scotland's higher academic and ecclesiastical

[15] Hardy, 16.
[16] Sher and Murdoch, 213-4.

institutions.[17] In Richard Sher's felicitous phrase, Enlightenment here took place within the establishment, not against it, while humble people in Scotland's parishes remained, from the point of view of the Rev. Dr. Robertson and his brethren, mired in backwardness and fanaticism. The proper role of the clergy, as Sher summarizes the Moderate view, was thus "not so much to placate popular taste as to enlighten it, not so much to serve the people as to lead them."[18] Far from including anything like democracy or popular participation, this vision of Enlightenment precluded it, at least while the many retained their attachment to "prejudice" and "enthusiasm." In this understanding, Enlightenment could not co-exist with popular consent, but required a re-education to which ordinary Scots might not willingly submit but which would be in their true interests. An anonymous pro-patronage tract of 1769 remarks,

> It is not harsh or indecent to suppose, that the bulk of men ought to be treated as diseased patients. Would it be safe to trust a man in a dangerous illness with the choice of his physician? No! his friends, who are cool, are certainly the proper persons to choose for him; probably he would decide in favour of the Quack or Mountebank Doctor."[19]

The clerical Enlightenment was here a kind of therapy, prescribed for fanatical parishioners by their spiritually "cool" friends in the gentry and higher clergy.

While there have been several studies of the settlement disputes at the level of ecclesiastical politics, these have focused on clergymen and on debates at the highest level. The Moderate party around Robertson and its clerical rivals in the "Popular party" have both been the subject of close study,[20] but opposition to imposed settlements by local lay people has not, despite abundant records at the local level.[21] It was elders and

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[17] Sher, *Church and University*, 8.
[18] Ibid., 159.
[19] *Letter to the author of a pamphlet on patronage and presentation*, 4-5.
[20] See Ian Clark, "Moderatism and the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland, 1752-1803," Cambridge University Ph.D., 1963; Clark, "From protest to reaction: the Moderate regime in the Church of Scotland," pp. 200-23 in Phillipson and Mitchison (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement* (1970); Andrew Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Scottish Church 1688-1843: the age of the Moderates* (1973); Peter Jones, "The polite academy and the presbyterians," pp. 156-76, and Dwyer, "The heavenly city of the eighteenth-century Moderate divines," pp. 291-315, in Dwyer, Mason, and Murdoch (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (1982); Friedrich Voges, "Moderate and evangelical thinking in the later eighteenth century: differences and shared attitudes," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 22:144 (1985), pp. 141-57; John McIntosh, "The Popular party in the Church of Scotland, 1740-1800," University of Glasgow Ph.D. dissertation (1989)
[21] Two exceptions are Sher's study of the 1763 settlement in Edinburgh, "Moderates, managers, and popular politics in mid-eighteenth-century Edinburgh," in Dwyer, Mason, and Murdoch (eds.), and Ned

hearers at the parish level, however, not the waffling and self-seeking church politicians of the "Popular party," who were the primary adversaries of Robertson and his ecclesiastical program. Examination of parish and presbytery records show clearly that ordinary parishioners were not, as Moderate controversialists sometimes asserted, docile until stirred up by unscrupulous Popular ministers. The agency of the laity is consistently denied in the pro-patronage pamphlets which proliferate in the 1760s and 70s as many violent settlements drew national attention. Congregations are depicted as almost bovine in their passivity, easily inflamed by clerical demagogues but without the ability to take initiative or challenge gentry leadership on their own. "Without your sticking for it [popular consent], the Christian people would not make half the noise about it," one anonymous pamphlet tells the Popular clergy. Lamenting that traditionalist clerics have spread the foolish belief that patronage is unscriptural, the pamphleteer opines, "If the people were told from the same hand that the case was otherwise, their former belief would soon vanish."[22] On the contrary, local records show that opposition to presentations in the Strathclyde arose from the laity of the congregations themselves, preceded the tepid support of Popular clerical allies, and endured after Popular clergymen had submitted to pressure from the Assembly. Although the elders and (in Kilmarnock) town magistrates sometimes took the lead in organizing opposition, anti-patronage protests showed broad-based hostility to patrons' candidates for the ministry, and opposition by the very humble might, as in Cambuslang, continue after the elders too had acquiesced in the patron's inevitable victory.

The fiercest settlement disputes took place in those parishes in which the polarization described in Chapter 3 above was most advanced. In early settlement disputes, such as that at Mearns in 1732, both the local landowners and the "hearers" of the community were divided. The settlement disputes of the 1760s-80s tended to starkly juxtapose a united (mostly absentee) gentry, concurring with the patron, with a united community rejecting the presentee. In the Shotts settlement of 1764-8, the patron and his allies boasted that they owned four-fifths of the parish, but hardly any humbler residents

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Landsman's study of the 1762 controversy over the settlement of the Wynd parish in Glasgow, "Liberty, piety, and patronage: the social context of contested clerical calls in eighteenth-century Glasgow," in Hook and Sher (eds.).

[22] *Letter to the author of a pamphlet on patronage and presentation*, 11.

could be found to concur with their candidate.[23] In Fenwick and Kilmaurs, only the patron's factor and absentee gentry signed the call.[24] Patrons in dozens of similar cases blamed "groundless prejudice" for resistance to their presentees and railed against "the giddy multitude (whom its simply impossible to please)."[25] But the records of the Church of Scotland, together with some original petitions which survive in the papers of the General Assembly, show that local dissenters had well-considered reasons for opposition, ranging from defense of local custom to theological disagreement, and that their strategies of resistance were likewise not spasmodic but rational, escalating from legal petitioning to carnivalesque protests which demonstrated the community's disapproval even when the "intrusion" could not be prevented.

CAUSES OF OFFENSE

The rhetoric of patrons and their clerical allies in settlement controversies consistently treats local resistance to presentations as irrational, "groundless." Though dozens of parishes turned in petitions or written statements to the church courts articulating their reasons for opposing their patron's candidate, patrons typically dismissed the opposition, in language so common as to be formulaic, as arising from "mere Whims & Caprice" or "causeless prejudice."[26] What is intended by this, apparently, is that the opposition is fundamentally an insolent hostility to the right of presentation itself, and that dislike of the pastoral candidate derives not from any shortcomings in the man himself but merely to his having been presented by the patron. In many settlements, parishioners' petitions and statements indicate that this was in fact the case, though dissenters would see their rejection of presentation per se not as prejudiced but as principled. In other cases, however, hostility to a presentee arose from other sources, sometimes from locals' concern that the candidate would be physically incapable of the pastoral work required, in other cases from a clear opposition to the presentee's preaching style or theology.

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[23] CH1/2/106, f. 126.
[24] CH2/197/6, pp. 393, 531-2.
[25] CH1/2/106, f. 127.
[26] Papers on the Jedburgh settlement of 1757, CH1/2/99, f. 119.

Lack of consultation. Parishioners had long shown a willingness to negotiate and compromise with noble patrons over pastoral appointments. The right of elders and property-owners to vote in a pastoral election, however, and even of "ordinary hearers" to argue and opine about the merits of various preachers, were well-established in the Strathclyde. By 1760, these customs were increasingly ignored by the absentee aristocrats who held the power of presentation; patrons sought to unilaterally impose a particular client, without any consultation with local men of importance and even without allowing the community a "hearing" of the candidate to preserve the appearance of consensus. This was perceived by elders and small heritors, and evidently even by humbler members of the parish without a legal vote, as a grave insult to the honor of the community. In November 1762, without any prior consultation with the elders or the town council, the Earl of Glencairn notified the urban parish of Kilmarnock that he had decided on a new pastor. According to the session minutes for 24 November, "The Mod^{r} acquainted the Session that the Earl of Glencairn has given a Presentation to Mr William Lindsay Minister of the Gospel on Cambray to fill the vacant charge of second Min^{r}. In this place, & that Mr Lindsay has accepted of the same."[27] The Rev. Mr. Lindsay was a man unknown to the parishioners of Kilmarnock, and had apparently never preached there. The Earl seemingly hoped to avoid tiresome negotiation with locals by presenting them with a *fait accompli*. His behavior, however, went beyond aggressive promotion of a particular candidate; by denying the elders and hearers of Kilmarnock even token participation in the choice of their new minister, the Earl proceeded in what Kilmarnock perceived as an intolerably high-handed and insulting manner. On 23 December 1762, the session clerk recorded in the minutes,

> This day the Session taking under their serious consideration the Presentation given by the Right Honble the Earl of Glencairn to Mr Willm. Lindsay Min^{r}. at Cambray to fill the vacant collegiate charge of second Minister in this place, & Mr Lindsay's acceptance of the same in a way quite unprecedented in this place, unanimously Declared their Disapprobation both of the manner of the Presentation & Acceptance, & that they could not concurr with said Presentation at present, & appointed a Committee of their Number to meet & draw up reasons in form to be laid before the session at next meeting why they cannot concurr with said Presentation.[28]

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[27] CH2/197/5, p. 249.
[28] CH2/1252/4, 249.

Glencairn's agent Mr. Dalrymple, who also appeared at the January 1763 meeting of Irvine Presbytery to oppose the session's delegates, labeled the opposition of the parish "both unreasonable & unnaturall," lauding the Rev. Mr. Lindsay's "Character & uncommon Qualifications"; opposition to the presentee, Mr. Dalrymple insisted, was based on "whimsical Conceits & prejudices."[29] But the Kilmarnock parishioners regarded hostility to patronage as such, irrespective of the merits of the man presented, not as "prejudice" but as eminently reasonable. "How far such Treatment may Tend to Sour the Minds & embitter the Spirit of a free people," Kilmarnock remarks of Glencairn's conduct, "the Presbytery will easily perceive. . . .Reasonable men will always be led by Reason, but will not be driven by force."[30] Much of their petition is given to an impassioned and articulate condemnation of church patronage per se. Presentations had been unknown in this locality since the episcopal church of the Restoration, and the petitioners several times associate patronage with the darkness of episcopacy and popery.[31] The artisans and merchants of Kilmarnock cite Scots law, Reformed confessional statements, and the Bible against the innovation of aristocratic patronage: "By the Act 1649, Patronage, is declared to be a Custom altogether popish, brought into the Church in times of Ignorance. . .without any warrant from the word of God & Contrary to the Second Book of Discipline."[32]

A similar lack of consultation in pastoral appointments caused outrage in other parishes. The thinly-populated parish of Shotts in Hamilton Presbytery held a sacred place in the folk memory of Scottish Calvinists, as the site of an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit at a communion festival in 1630. In April 1761 lawyer William Bogle appeared before the Presbytery of Hamilton on behalf of the young Duke of Hamilton and his tutors, with a presentation moving Shotts's pastor James Baillie to the larger parish (and more lucrative benefice) of Bothwell; with the presentation Mr. Bogle turned in the Rev. Mr. Baillie's acceptance of the transfer.[33] There is no evidence in the kirk session minutes that the pastor had conferred with or even informed his elders of the

[29] CH2/197/5, 70-1
[30] Ibid., 69.
[31] Ibid., 68-9.
[32] Ibid., 69.
[33] CH2/393/4, p. 39.

arrangement before this,[34] and the community seems to have resented being treated as a stepping-stone in this manner. The "Reasons of Transportation," moreover, explicitly cited Bothwell's higher stipend and its greater density of socially prominent laity as reasons for the move, which humbler hearers in both parishes saw as scandalous. Shotts insisted on turning in a paper of "Answers" to the patron's "Reasons of Transportation," trying to prevent their pastor's removal.[35] But even while the lay leadership of his old parish fought to retain Baillie—at least partly to defend the honor of their community, which the Duke's tutors and other grandees publicly belittled as "a remote Moorland…having but one Gentlemans family resideing within it"[36]—the minister's behavior in the case, blithely abandoning his parishioners for a larger stipend and unblinkingly accepting the patron's presentation, alienated the congregation of Bothwell. Having at first seemed open to Baillie's settlement, the elders of the new parish quickly soured on him. To the great vexation of the patron, his attempted transfer met with dovetailing objections both from the old parish, which complained about Baillie's removal, and from the new, which protested his presentation to them, both evidently concerned more about the nature of the process than any personal merits or shortcomings in the Rev. Mr. Baillie.

The Fenwick case in 1780 shows the same aristocratic disdain for accommodation with locals. When the Earl of Glasgow presented William Boyd to Fenwick, the elders expressed willingness to hear and consider him, but insisted on retaining the parish's old right to hear and choose between multiple candidates, a prized symbol of local autonomy. Elders William Cuthbertson and John Lyle, upon hearing of the presentation to Boyd, told Irvine Presbytery in October 1780 that they "desired a hearing of him to Preach at Fenwick. . . .They had no objections to the young man as he was a stranger to them, but that they wanted a number of Preachers to make a Choice of, and that this was the Mind of the Parish."[37] But no candidates other than the patron's would be sent to Fenwick.

"Filthy lucre." A second cause of offense to parishioners overlapped with the first but was distinct from it. The petitions and complaints of congregations faced with

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[34] CH2/460/2, though the minutes are highly fragmentary.
[35] CH2/393/4, p. 57.
[36] Petition to the 1762 General Assembly, CH1/2/103, f. 50.
[37] CH2/197/6, p. 422.

an imposed settlement show intense hostility directed at clergymen who accepted a presentation without prior consultation with the parish, especially if the would-be pastor persevered in legal efforts to obtain the living after the congregation had made clear its lack of support. Such a man, parishioners insisted, was no true shepherd of souls but a "hireling" motivated only by greed. Petitions from congregations across the Strathclyde in these cases hold up a high ideal of a pastor interested above all in the spiritual good of the flock. The "intruded ministers," by contrast, are depicted as indifferent to the spiritual health of the community and willfully destructive of it in their vulgar and worldly quest for the stipend.

In dozens of disputed settlements, parishioners' petitions utilize strikingly similar language opposing true shepherds to worldly hirelings. In protesting presentee David McClellan, and his "Endeavouring to Obtrude himself upon a Congrega^{n} contrary to the Inclina^{n} of almost the whole Body," the parish of Beith in 1758 asked the Presbytery of Irvine "what any parish can think of a man that tells them by word or deed I will be your Min^{r} in spite of your teeth and if I can but get the stipend glebe and manse I'm indifferent whether you hear me or not?"[38] Similar invective was directed by Kilmarnock parishioners against William Lindsay. When the Earl of Glencairn sought to move Lindsay from the small island parish of Cumbrae to Kilmarnock, Lindsay accepted the presentation immediately; his paper of acceptance was turned in together with the original presentation. The parish of Kilmarnock, in its January 1763 petition, seems to find Lindsay's behavior the most offensive part of the entire affair, complaining bitterly of his "rash & absolute Acceptance of it [the presentation], before he could have any opportunity of knowing the Sentiments of the Congrega^{n} w^{t}. Regard to him." The petition darkly notes that Kilmarnock's stipend is much larger than that of Cumbrae, and insinuates that the Rev. Mr. Lindsay is more interested in this than in the good of souls: "this in our view, looks as if he contented himself with a Right to the Stipend, w^{t}out the smallest regard to the Consent & Approbation of the parish, Yet w^{t}.out this how can his Ministra^{ns} be profitable to them?"[39] As the initial protest was ignored and patron and presbytery prepared to move forward to settle Lindsay, a second petition was submitted

[38] CH2/197/5, p. 606.
[39] CH2/197/6, 70.

in March 1763, signed by over 500 "hearers" in Kilmarnock. Here even more starkly than in the January protest, it is the Rev. Mr. Lindsay rather than the noble patron who receives the brunt of the parish's anger:

> They never can be perswaded that any man can have a real goodness of heart & uprightness of intentions, as to General usefulness & edifica^{n} who can deliberately thrust himself in upon a people contrary to their Declared mind & will as if he could Instruct & Edify them whither they will or no, or altho they should never Come to hear him or submitt to his Min^{ry} how will this ever screen him from the Contempt of a provoked people or the Calumny of haveing done it for filthy Lucre.[40]

Disputes over the pastoral care of Shotts parish in the 1760s illustrate similar concerns. The patron and his allies approached pastoral positions as any other network of patronage; in the papers submitted by the Duke of Hamilton's agents to justify moving Shotts pastor James Baillie to Bothwell, they unashamedly pointed to Bothwell's larger stipend, seen as a reward for the loyal clerical client Baillie. One hundred forty-seven inhabitants of Shotts signed a petition blasting the transfer as "altogether politicall," based on worldly interests instead of on the "greater and more noble ends and motives" of pastoral care and the spiritual welfare of the two parishes,[41] and the unrecorded reservations of the Bothwell session, which the Duke's lawyers called "frivolous pretences as well as Groundless,"[42] seem to have been similar. The parish of Kilmaronock, after almost two years of opposition to presentee James Addie, addressed the unwanted cleric personally in a final protest submitted in July 1771: "Your acceptance of a mock Call to the parish of Kilmaronock where in its present Circumstances your Intrusion must be attended with many bad Consequences, plainly show that it is worldly Ends and not the good of Souls you have in view."[43] Seven elders, eleven small heritors, and 59 heads of families in the small parish signed the statement condemning the "hireling" and his pursuit of "filthy lucre."

Physical incapacity and inaccessible style. Some parishes based their opposition to a patron's presentee not on a defense of local honor or a resentment of clerical worldliness but on very practical considerations. While the patron, usually

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[40] Ibid., 79.
[41] Petition to the 1762 General Assembly, CH1/2/103, f. 46.
[42] Ibid., f. 50.
[43] CH2/546/12, 166.

resident in Edinburgh or London, would rarely hear his presentee and was concerned primarily to build up a network of clerical clients, regular hearers in the parishes themselves were sometimes faced with ministers they viewed as physically unable to fulfill their pastoral duties, or as preaching in a style so inaccessible to ordinary parishioners as to be incomprehensible. Two months after his presentation to Kilmarnock, William Lindsay still had not preached there—"as yet he is altogether unknown to us"[44]—and the elders were forced to base their objections on what had been reported to them about his preaching. Members of the parish who had visited Lindsay's parish on the Isle of Cumbrae described the presentee as physically frail and barely able to project to his congregation there, which Kilmarnock parishioners saw as an alarming impediment to his ministry in a large urban parish like their own.

> As the petitioners are informed, M^{r}. Lindsay, however well qualified by his Education for the ministry, is a Gen^{t}. so weak, in his State of bodily health & voice, that he is no more able to reach Instruction to his whole auditors in the kirk of Kilm^{k}. than he is to the Inhabitants of the Uttermost ends of the Earth, so that Should the people punctually attend his Ministry with unprejudiced Minds, they cannot enjoy all the Benefits of it.[45]

Parishioners of Blantyre offered similar complaints when John Finnie was presented to their parish in 1770. Blantyre repeatedly complained that Finnie was incapable of the charge due to his "bodily weakness and infirmities." The frail Finnie could not deliver the stirring sermons hearers desired and to which they had been accustomed: "When he preached at Blantyre, he was more oppressed with the delivery of his sermons, and discovered more Symptoms of Infirmity, than our late worthy Pastor did, at the time he was seized with the trouble of which he died in the eightieth year of his age."[46] These physical limitations, in the parish's view, constituted an "inability to discharge the duties of the ministerial office."[47] Parishioners' concerns about Finnie's health proved justified; the presentee died in 1772 before he could be settled.[48]

Opposition to William Boyd in Fenwick seemed to rest on a combination of resentment at presentation per se, criticism of Boyd as physically unable to preach to

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[44] CH2/197/6, 69.
[45] Ibid., 68.
[46] CH2/393/4, p. 157.
[47] Ibid., p. 175.
[48] Ibid., p. 177.

their satisfaction, and what seems an inchoate discomfort with the presentee's preaching style. "We cannot see of what Advantage his Ministry can be to us," a petition of elders, heritors and heads of families told Irvine Presbytery, "when what he speaks cannot be heard by us in the Kirk of Fenwick by reason of his weak voice or slow way of speaking." The petition later likens Boyd's preaching to "speaking in an unknown tongue," suggesting that his style or choice of language alienated parishioners, and further objects that he "Reads and not Preaches the Gospel," that is, that Boyd preached from prepared notes, not impromptu, "trusting more to their paper or notes there than to the assistance and enlargement of the Spirit."[49]

Differences over style of preaching also figured in the protracted settlement controversy at Cambuslang in the early 1770s. Parishioners' initial complaints that the presentee's "gifts are not suitable to our capacities" drew the rejoinder from the 1773 General Assembly that the Rev. Mr. Meek was a "plain and distinct preacher." The elders responded in a further petition by distinguishing between a preacher's ability to make himself heard and understood and his ability to edify the congregation. The lifelong practice of hearing different preachers, the Cambuslang elders explicitly point out, had prepared them to evaluate ministers and to find some wanting:

> The Venerable Assembly very well knows, that every one who is in use to read the scriptures, and has long been an attentive and serious hearer of discourses from the pulpit, must form to himself a certain idea of edifying preaching, by which he judges of the fitness of every discourse that he heares to promote his spiritual edification. . .they must continue to measure the usefulness of every sermon, by comparing it with them.[50]

This interesting remark illustrates how rural Calvinists had learned to distinguish between edifying and unedifying preachers. In the view of the Cambuslang elders, a cleric whose preaching could not edify the congregation was incapable of performing the office of pastor.

Theology. In some parishes, resistance to a presentee came to center explicitly on doctrine. In a curious reversal of fortune, in every settlement case I have examined in which doctrine is an issue, the parish's complaint is that the presentee's theology is *not orthodox enough*—most commonly, that the candidate's preaching holds forth an

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[49] CH2/197/6, p. 449.
[50] *Answers to the Reasons of Appeal*, 3.

excessive optimism about human nature and avoids discussion of those favorite tropes of provincial Calvinists, the gravity of sin and the atoning death of Christ. Concern about doctrine was expressed even in remarkably humble parishes, like overwhelmingly rural parish of Kilmaronock in the Presbytery of Dumbarton. Kilmaronock lacked even a proper village, consisting of several tiny hamlets scattered at some distance from the parish church. The tenants and rural artisans of the congregation, however, based their hostility to presentee James Addie primarily on questions of theology, which became increasingly clear as the controversy dragged out between the end of 1769 and July 1771. The parish's discomfort with Mr. Addie was apparent from the time he first preached there in December 1769, though at first locals had difficulty articulating to the ministers of the presbytery the precise nature of their objections. In May 1770 elder John McKindlay told delegates from Dumbarton Presbytery that "he could not be edified by [Addie's] way of teaching to which all the elders present gave their Assent, several Heritors also adhered, and said, they thought this Objection might serve for all; to which many heads of families present adhered."[51] A later petition from the parish likewise warned that "it will be attended with the worst Consequences to the religious Interests of the parish to settle a Minister by whose preaching they cannot be edified,"[52] while the final protest of the inhabitants referred to "his Inability and unsuitableness of his Gifts to our Capacities."[53] Some elders were able to be a bit more specific, complaining that Addie's preaching had a tendency "to gratify human Pride,"[54] and as the patron continued to press for his settlement, the session insisted that the Presbytery review the content of Addie's preaching to try his doctrinal soundness. This brought them at least one articulate clerical ally, John Freebairn, the "Popular" preacher of the town of Dumbarton, who after hearing Addie's sermons on James 1:27 in May complained that "several very important things were ommitted in them." To Freebairn, and to the elders present at the May meeting of presbytery—both those from Kilmaronock and those from other parishes—Addie seemed to be preaching a kind of Christian deism: his preaching "mentons God as Creator, Benefactor, Lawgiver & Judge," but "he had not one word of

[51] CH2/546/12, p. 138.
[52] Ibid., p. 147.
[53] Ibid., p. 163.
[54] CH1/2/113, f. 27.

him, as Redeemer & Sanctifier"[55]; Addie the preacher seldom referred to Jesus Christ, and when he did do so, the dissenters complain, "he does it only in such general Terms as leaves great Room to doubt what his own Sentiments in respect to the peculiar Doctrines of the Christian Dispensation are."[56] Mr. Addie, according to his critics, not only avoided mention of the atonement and Christ's satisfaction for sin but preached justification by works: for his sermon "seems to rest our final acceptance with God upon that charitable frame of spirit and life of holiness which he had been recommending."[57]

Despite the presence of Freebairn as clerical spokesman, hostility to Mr. Addie in the presbytery was predominantly one of the lay eldership, as a number of observers remark. Only three other ministers voted with Freebairn not to sustain Addie's call to Kilmaronock, while eight elders did so, narrowly overruling eight ministers who voted to settle him.[58] Both the patron and the outvoted clerics complained loudly of the role of "Country Elders" in the process. "Considering that the purpose of this meeting was to judge of Mr Addie's [theological] trial," huffs the patron's pamphlet *Case of the parish of Kilmaronock*, "it seemed a little extraordinary that it should be attended by so great a number of lay members, all of them country people in the lower stations of life, and absolutely unqualified to form a judgement in a matter of that kind."[59] The clerical "Answers" to the ruling, submitted to the General Assembly, insisted that elders stay in their place and leave theological judgments to trained experts. "A majority of the Judges in the opposition to Mr Adie, were unlearned Country Elders," the statement remarks, "who, if they had thought at all, could not possibly give an Opinion to be depended upon, concerning an Exercise that required such considerable knowledge both of the Greek Language, & of the Jewish Antiquities."[60]

In 1771 the parish's resistance to Addie came to focus more and more on what it called "his Errors in Doctrine," preaching salvation by good intentions or moral living, "without any Regard. . .to the merits of a Redeemer." In July 1771, after the General Assembly had mandated his settlement, the parish turned in a written libel in response to

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[55] Ibid., f. 28.
[56] CH2/546/12, p. 145-6.
[57] Ibid., 146.
[58] Ibid.
[59] *Case of the parish of Kilmaronock*, p. 5.
[60] CH1/2/113, f. 27.

the call (now an empty formality) for objections to the new minister's life and doctrine. This fascinating statement combines increasingly articulate complaints about Addie, whom the authors view as a pretentious Pelagian, with a dark vision of the declension of the Kirk's clergy more broadly. The signs of the times were

> Probationers of this Church omitting in their Sermon the peculiar and capital Doctrines of Christianity. . .the advancing of Doctrines subversive thereof and tending to weaken or destroy the same, misquoting Scripture, contradicting the Confession of faith and public Standard of this Church, and upon other occasions attempting to alter the very being and wise Constitution of the Church of Scotland, in direct opposition to their profession and Subscriptions.[61]

If the parishioners of Kilmaronock gradually moved from inchoate discomfort with their presentee to explicit accusations of unorthodoxy, the always singular parish of Cambuslang seems to have regarded their patron's choice for successor to William McCulloch as a heretic from the very beginning. Parishioners' esteem for McCulloch, who had died in December 1771, is palpable in the papers they submitted in the settlement controversy:

> Our late worthy minister taught us the great truths of the gospel; and faithfully instructed us in the fear of the LORD, and our duty to men; not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the HOLY GHOST teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. He came to us not with excellency of speech, nor of wisdom, declaring to us the testimony of GOD; but to us he appeared to be acquainted with CHRIST, and him crucified; and we make no doubt, that his services in our parish were blessed of God.[62]

By contrast, Duke Hamilton's presentee James Meek seemed to parishioners unspiritual, preaching pompously in an elevated style but not expressing the intimacy with the Holy Spirit that had so impressed them in his predecessor. Meek appears to have been a special protégé of William Leechman, Glasgow's controversial divinity professor; the Synod minutes note that he was the preacher of the College Chapel in the mid-1760s.[63] On hearing that the Rev. Mr. Meek, pastor of nearby Lesmahagow, had been named by the Duke as successor to their beloved McCulloch in 1772, Cambuslang sent delegates to hear him preach there. A late pamphlet printed in Glasgow for "the objectors" in Cambuslang described how

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[61] CH2/546/12, p. 164.
[62] *The Parish of Cambuslang. . .The Case of the Respondents*, 6.
[63] CH2/171/12/1, p. 49.

> The parish of Cambuslang. . .had heard different and various reports, both of the life and doctrine of Mr Meek, [and] thought it absolutely necessary, for the hearers of the gospel in that parish, to make a scrutiny into the principles and doctrine of Mr Meek. . . .Accordingly an impartial and candid enquiry was made, by several intelligent and unprejudiced persons, who thought that Mr Meek was heretical in his opinions and doctrines which he held, and had taught upon several occasions, in several sermons, which they had heard him preach, both in his own church in Lesmagahow, and in other places where he had occasion to preach, in the year 1772.[64]

The Rev. Mr. Meek, according to the offended hearers at Cambuslang, not only failed to preach the atonement, he repeatedly preached sincerity and good intentions as the grounds of acceptance with God, "A doctrine big with and conform to Pelagian heresy," according to distressed parishioners.[65] Unfortunately no sermons or theological writings by Meek survive; his views must be reconstructed from parishioners' accusations, his close associations with avant-garde divines like Leechman, and his account of Cambuslang in the 1790s *Statistical Account of Scotland* (which contains a curt dismissal of the enthusiasm of the revival in his parish fifty years earlier). According to the Cambuslang petitioners' petition of 1774, Meek preached that "resolving to do better" was a sufficient condition to receive communion, and had also taught that "our sincere endeavours cooperate with the righteousness of Christ," which seemed to them further evidence of Pelagianism and a contradiction of the Westminster Catechism.[66] James Meek seems to have been engaged in his own project of Christian Enlightenment, trying to distinguish "faith" from "credulity." True faith was in accord with reason, while belief "above or beyond reason" he rejected as credulity, according to his critics. But if this was the case, the heresy-hunting parishioners claimed, then "the doctrines of religion are unfixed, and not to be believed, when above our reason."[67] The graying weavers and shoemakers of the Cambuslang session—the same men who had been installed in 1742, at the height of the revival—adhered fiercely to the Calvinism they had learned from the late Pastor McCulloch, and rejected the revisions of a younger generation of clergy.

Few settlement disputes were as dramatic as that of Cambuslang, where surprisingly articulate Calvinist artisans battled the clerical Enlightenment of James Meek

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[64] *Narrative of the case of the parish of Cambuslang*, pp. 6-7.
[65] Ibid., 8-9.
[66] Ibid., 10.
[67] Ibid., 12.

and other alumni of the new divinity. But theological concerns about presentees surfaced elsewhere as well. In Cardross in 1774, parishioners long complained of the "unsoundness in Doctrine" of their presentee Mr. McAulay.[68] Though they never mustered the specific accusations of Cambuslang parishioners, their concern seems to have been not that McAulay actively preached error but that he omitted to preach important truths.[69] At least as offensive to Cardross parishioners was McAulay's high-handed manner when challenged. The parish accused McAulay directly in a statement submitted to the Presbytery of Dumbarton, claiming that

> [you] obstinately refused to Conferr with the people anent the Objections they had against you. . .in the most impudent Manner before the Committee and the whole Congregation in a rage of anger said that you would rather cut your throat or allow it to be cut before you answer to our Objections and with great Difficulty would be kept from running out at the Kirk Door.[70]

Having trained at university and been presented by the King's government, McAulay was not about to defend his theology to weavers, smiths, and farmers.

STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE

Efforts by locals to negotiate with noble patrons, once commonplace, were rebuffed in the Strathclyde after 1760. When Earl Glencairn's presentee to Kilmarnock, William Lindsay, met with strong disapproval from elders and humbler hearers, the session in May 1763 made several attempts to negotiate with the Earl for a "harmonious settlement," actively seeking out compromise candidates whom he might agree to present instead of the hated Lindsay, "to show how ready they are to agree to any reasonable scheme of accommodation."[71] Pastors William Auld of Mauchline, Thomas Walker of Dundee, George Muir of Cumnock, and Andrew McVey of Dreghorn were all approached for this end. "If my Lord Glencairn will be pleased to grant a Presentation" to any of these men, the elders claimed, "they will undertake for the parish cheerfully

[68] CH2/546/12, p. 226.
[69] See Ibid., p. 254.
[70] Ibid., p. 257.
[71] CH2/1252/4, p. 255.

concurring with it, as they know [them all] very agreeable to the people of this place."[72] After some half-hearted negotiations with Auld failed, the Earl appears to have ignored the session's plea entirely, pressing on with his suit in the church courts to impose his original candidate. The rejection of compromise by the patrons of the Strathclyde left parishioners opposed to a presentation with several other methods of resistance. One was appeal to the ecclesiastical courts of the Church of Scotland, in a series of petitions expressing the parish's dissent from the patron's choice for minister. This was the first approach of almost every parish faced with a forced settlement, and, in the 1760s, could find some success when parishioners could win clerical allies in the church courts. These, however, proved to be temporary: the Kirk's highest court, the General Assembly, consistently backed patrons in the second half of the century, leading dissenting parishioners to resort to disorderly and carnivalesque protests and even, in several cases, full-scale riots.

Legal appeals to the church hierarchy. In the first half of the century, clergymen in the higher ecclesiastical courts had often sought to broker a compromise between noble patrons and local opinion, and had repeatedly insisted that no presentee could be settled without the consent of the local congregation, protesting, in the formulaic language of presbytery minutes, that patronage was "a grievance to this church." After mid-century, presbyteries were less and less willing to take on a mediating role or to obstruct patrons' favored candidates to bring about the "harmonious settlement" so desired by an earlier generation. When the Earl of Glencairn presented William Lindsay to Kilmarnock in 1763, Irvine Presbytery, in a striking deviation from earlier practice, showed no concern to bring about consensus in the parish. Instead the Presbytery dismissed petitioners claiming to express the community's dissent at their January meeting and ordered that the moderation of a call to Lindsay take place within the month.[73] Nevertheless dozens of parishes made use of the legal machinery of Scotland's church courts to express their rejection of their patron's choice for minister. In parishes facing a "violent settlement," petitions circulated widely, both among heritors and ordinary hearers. Some of these petitions, preserved with the papers of the General

[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., 71.

Assembly in Edinburgh, show a striking breadth of opposition in the local community, from elders and other local men of importance who sign their names to semi-literate parishioners who signify agreement by making their "mark," typically their initials.[74] In February 1763, after Irvine Presbytery's disastrous effort to moderate a call to the unpopular William Lindsay, 11 papers were submitted by Kilmarnock to the Presbytery signed by 570 parishioners protesting against the presentation.[75] At the next meeting of Presbytery, in March, the parish submitted another petition signed by over 500 hearers.[76] A number of parishioners from Shotts appeared before the Presbytery of Hamilton in 1763 to oppose the patron's nominee Lawrence Wells; the petition they submitted has not survived and the number of signatories is not noted in the presbytery minutes, but the clergymen reluctantly recognized thereafter "an universal opposition to the presentee by all ranks and orders of men in the parish."[77] In 1766, faced with the determined efforts of the Earl of Eglinton to impose his client Thomas Clark on the parish, Eaglesham's elders, deacons, heritors, and heads of families met in the parish church to draw up a legal protest, informing the higher church courts that "we cannot consent to have Mr Thomas Clark as our Minister."[78] Similar petition drives showed widespread hostility to the presentees in Kilmaronock,[79] Cambuslang,[80] and Cardross, [81] led by the elders but apparently including large numbers from humbler social strata—the patron in the Kilmaronock case rails against the petitioners as people "of the lowest ranks, chiefly blacksmiths, weavers, horsecoupers, and distillers of whisky."[82] The elders for their part denied that they had stirred up an otherwise passive laity—Cambuslang's session insisted to the contrary that "the elders were solicited by the people, to go through the parish, and get such a paper signed."[83]

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[74] See e.g. the petition of the parish of St. Ninians (1769), CH1/2/122, f. 161, and the several petitions in the settlement of Bo'ness (1747), CH1/2/87, ff. 1-69; cf. also the 1786 protest of Kilbarchan transcribed into the minutes of Paisley Presbytery, CH2/294/11, pp. 292-5.
[75] CH2/197/6, pp. 76-7.
[76] Ibid., 79.
[77] CH2/393/4, pp. 78, 88.
[78] CH1/2/107, f. 294.
[79] CH1/2/112, ff. 71-2.
[80] CH2/393/4, pp. 177, 189.
[81] CH2/464/4, p. 104.
[82] *Case of the Parish of Kilmaronock*, p. 2.
[83] *Answers to the Reasons of Appeal from a Sentence of the General Assembly* (1773), p. 2.

Even when local protests and petitions gained a hearing at the level of the presbyteries and synods, however, the patron's appeal to the Kirk's highest court, the General Assembly, guaranteed him victory over any local objections. The annual Assembly was controlled from the 1750s by William Robertson and the "Moderate" party, and after 1760 I am not aware of a single case in which a patron's presentation was not sustained by the Assembly. Any and all objections against a presentee were unfailingly overruled by the Assembly, often "without a vote." The Robertson circle of polite clergy, as argued above, regarded aristocratic patronage as necessary to advance their own cultural and theological program.[84] Another key to explaining the politics of the General Assemblies is the disproportionate number of lay elders at that body from the gentry and professional classes. In the Strathclyde, elders often came from very humble strata; but the rural artisans and tenants of the western sessions could hardly afford to leave their work for ten days each May to attend the Assembly in Edinburgh. Only the most wealthy lay elders could afford to be representatives to the Assembly, and these were typically allies of the aristocratic patrons, sometimes installed as elders only for the purpose of church politics at the highest level, as a number of contemporary pamphlets complain. Archibald Bruce's 1771 satire *The Patron's ABC* complained of these political elders, uninterested in quotidian duties in the parish but faithfully voting for patronage at the annual Assembly:

> He [the patron] takes care to have a proper number of lay-elders, of his own recommendation, admitted from time to time, by such sessions, where he knows the ministers are his devoted slaves. . . .What though few of these are ever found visiting the sick, or praying over them? Perhaps they seldom pray at all!—What though they never serve at the Lord's table? Perhaps they seldom sit there!—What though they have no family-worship? Perhaps they have no family.[85]

Ministers of the lower courts who refused to cooperate with the Assembly's rulings, like the obstinate Thomas Gillespie in the Inverkeithing case or several ministers of the Presbytery of Stirling in the St. Ninians settlement, were disciplined or removed. Over time the church courts became less willing to receive petitions from disgruntled parishioners at all. By 1785, representatives of the parish of Glasford were told by

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[84] The logistics of the Robertson Moderates' domination of the General Assembly are analyzed in Sher, *Church and University*, 120-35.
[85] Bruce, *The Patron's ABC*, 13-4.

Hamilton Presbytery that the petition they had drawn up against their patron's presentee Mr. Mitchell would not be received, "as it contained hearsay against the Character of Mr Mitchell." The Presbytery found no necessity either to record the details of the allegations against Mitchell or to investigate them, and threw out the parish's protest as "incompetent and inadmissible."[86]

Non-compliance. The rules of the Church of Scotland continued to require "the moderation of a call" in the parish church, with the drawing up of a "leet" (ballot) of candidates on which property-owners were to vote, and separate paper of "concurrence" for the heads of families, whose acclamation was customary though not legally required. By 1760 this process had become an empty shell of the intensely participatory parish politics of the first half of the century. Only the candidate presented by the patron would be permitted to appear on the leet, though heritors were still invited to vote for him and heads of families to concur. Many parishioners demonstrated their hostility to presentations by refusing to participate in the mock election. In 1766 the Presbytery of Glasgow agreed to moderate a call to the Earl of Eglinton's presentee to Eaglesham, Thomas Clark, in spite of the parish's expressed opposition. A large crowd of parishioners turned out to witness the election, in which only the Earl's candidate was allowed to appear on the ballot, but refused to play their assigned role as rubber stamp. "A Call was read which was signed by the Commissioner for the Earl of Eglinton," the presbytery minutes note, but by no other member of the assembled community, except for one head of a family.[87] In Neilston in 1772, where parishioners' opinions had likewise been ignored, the minutes of Paisley Presbytery note that the moderation of a call to the presentee was disrupted "Because of the Riotous & disorderly behaviour of several Idle people present by whom the Patron and such as offered to sign the call were insulted."[88] In the settlement dispute at Fenwick in 1780-2, parishioners took a more comprehensive approach to non-compliance. Many refused to hear the presentee at all when he was assigned by the Presbytery of Irvine to preach there, as the patron's statement to the General Assembly describes: "So indifferent were they in this affair so interesting to them, or such were their Resolutions to oppose his Settlement, that few if

[86] CH2/393/6, p. 24.
[87] CH2/171/13/1, p. 69; the call itself, with the two signatures, is preserved CH1/2/107, f. 297.
[88] CH2/294/10, p. 425.

any did attend [worship services when Mr. Boyd preached in the parish]."[89] At the moderation, where once parishioners had clamored for rival candidates, three ministers from the Presbytery met stony silence from the large crowd when they invited Fenwick hearers to concur with Earl Glasgow's presentee: "After waiting a Reasonable time to allow People to subscribe—the Meeting closed with prayer," the presbytery clerk tersely notes. The call was signed only by Mr. Robieson, the patron's factor, with two letters of concurrence by non-resident landowners, "but neither call nor concurrence was signed by any of the Parish."[90]

Clerical allies in the ecclesiastical courts. Some clergymen in the second half of the century, however, did demonstrate sensitivity to local sentiment, and such clerical allies could provide crucial assistance to local dissenters in obstructing a patron's candidate. These clerical allies were motivated in part by concern that popular dissatisfaction might lead parishioners to defect from the Church of Scotland altogether. The Secession church, though its appeal had been reduced in Strathclyde by the success of the 1742 revival within the Kirk, continued to exist as an alternative, and the Seceders strongly upheld the right of a congregation to call the minister of its choice. A second denomination of dissenting presbyterians, the Relief church, was founded in 1762 explicitly to oppose patronage. The possibility that disgruntled Christians might leave the established Church for another denomination was imagined not only by the clergy[91] but by the protesting parishioners themselves: several of their petitions make veiled threats that the growth of secession may be an inevitable result of an imposed settlement. The opposers in Cambuslang asked Hamilton Presbytery in 1772 to "do every thing to preserve the connexion betwixt this parish and the Church of Scotland, which we are sorry to leave; and hope this presbytery will not compell us."[92] Dissenters in Fenwick made themselves equally clear in a 1781 written protest to Irvine Presbytery: "your Petitioners flatter themselves that you would not Love to see the Parish of Fenwick divided and separated from the present Establishment by a violent Settlement."[93]

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[89] CH1/2/123, f.
[90] CH2/197/6, p. 393.
[91] See esp. the Presbytery of Glasgow's "Answers" in the 1747 settlement dispute in Govan, CH1/2/87, ff. 209-12.
[92] *Case of the Parish of Cambuslang*, 3-4.
[93] CH2/197/6, p. 427.

Whether from genuine sympathy for parishioners "oppressed" by imposed settlements or from political calculation, many clergymen at the presbytery level continued to try to prevent presentations which aroused strong local opposition. Having at first complied with Earl Glencairn's presentation at Kilmarnock with admirable docility, seeking to persuade and cajole parishioners into accepting the presentee Lindsay, the Presbytery of Irvine drew back in March 1763. The moderation of a call to Glencairn's man turned into a debacle, as the town magistrates and session used it as an opportunity to demonstrate the community's unanimous opposition instead of approval. Both the Presbytery and the Synod of Glasgow, to which Glencairn's lawyers appealed, declined to sustain the call.[94] In spite of the 1763 General Assembly's supposedly final ruling mandating Lindsay's settlement, the resistance to the unwanted pastor continued to inflame Kilmarnock for the next year. The parish's clerical allies at the Presbytery provided legal cover, quibbling over the "Reasons of Transportation" for moving Lindsay from his current parish of Cumbrae, while the Earl's lawyers railed against opponents who "Delight in Broills wherein they can hop for no Success," and denounced "an Affected popularity humoring the Distractions of the Congregation."[95] The kirk session minutes of Kilmarnock show that the elders carefully followed debates relating to the settlement in the presbytery and synod, sending members to observe all relevant proceedings and receiving detailed reports.[96]

The settlement of Lawrence Wells in Shotts likewise saw local opposition gradually win some tentative support in the higher ecclesiastical courts. The presentation, by the tutors of the young Duke of Hamilton, met with no initial resistance from the Presbytery of Hamilton, who ordered a call be moderated to Wells even before he had apparently preached in the parish.[97] Opposition arose from Shotts itself, which sent representatives to the June 1763 meeting of presbytery to object both to Wells's character and to the validity of votes cast for him at the hasty moderation of his call.[98] Hostility to Wells was further inflamed in the parish when it became known that he had

[94] Ibid., p. 80; CH2/464/4, p. 20.
[95] Ibid., pp. 88-9.
[96] CH2/1252/4, pp. 257ff.
[97] CH2/393/4, p. 73.
[98] Ibid., p, 75. Two local landowners, Wallace of Cairnhill and Inglis of Murdistone, had voted for Wells without attending the election personally, lesser parishioners complained, and the "proxies" they had sent were unattested.

been guilty of fornication in his youth. The probationer's extract of his absolution by the church courts satisfied the presbytery but not the parish;[99] Wells confessed matter-of-factly to his clerical colleagues, not tearfully to his would-be parishioners, and the congregation was less forgiving than Cathcart had been of their beloved George Adam in a parallel case. By the beginning of 1764 the Presbytery of Hamilton was quite flustered by what it described as a "universal opposition. . .against Mr Wells in the parish of Shotts," formally petitioning the Duke's tutors to "be pleased to drop this presentee and to present another."[100] The tutors' curt refusal left the Presbytery at a loss to know what to do in what it called "a very difficult and perplexing affair," since "on the one hand there is a presentation by the tutors of his Grace the Duke of Hamilton undoubted patron of the parish of Shotts. . .and on the other hand there is a universal opposition to the presentee by all ranks and orders of men in the parish with the single exception of one heritor."[101] Pressured by the Duke's lawyers to take Mr. Wells "on trials," listening to him preach in order to confirm his fitness to be a pastor, the clerics of Hamilton Presbytery found to their horror that the Duke's candidate was "wholly deficient in point of knowledge… particularly of Divinity," and also faulted his preaching ability, finding him "greatly wanting in the talents necessary for communicating knowledge."[102] The Presbytery of Hamilton refused to proceed in settling the patron's nominee, on the basis of what it viewed as his inadequacy for the pastoral charge.

In these and similar cases, however, clerical allies of local opposition were overruled by their superiors at the General Assembly.[103] In spite of Kilmarnock's virulent hostility to the presentee William Lindsay, the 1763 General Assembly overturned "without a vote" the decisions of presbytery and synod refusing to settle him.[104] When further foot-dragging at the presbytery level was able to hold up Lindsay's settlement another year, the 1764 Assembly ordered the ministers of Irvine Presbytery to report by 17 July that they had installed Lindsay at Kilmarnock or face deposition from

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[99] Ibid., p. 81.
[100] Ibid., p. 82.
[101] Ibid., p. 88.
[102] Ibid., 99-100.
[103] On the influence in the General Assembly by the government's political managers, see Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 246.
[104] CH2/197/6, p. 86.

their own benefices.[105] An even more stubborn resistance from the clergy of the lower courts showed itself in the Shotts case. The 1766 Assembly's decision, ordering Hamilton Presbytery to proceed in Lawrence Wells's settlement in spite of their judgment that he was unqualified, aroused great resentment among the clerics of the lesser court and provoked them to an impressive display of obstructionism over several years.[106] The impasse between the Duke's agents and the stubborn clerics of the Presbytery continued until May 1768, when the exasperated Assembly named a particular clergyman to serve Wells's edict the very next day,[107] and ensured that a meticulous record of ministers in attendance was kept.[108] Now sufficiently browbeaten, the Presbytery complied.

The consistent support of the General Assembly for the patron's right gradually wore down clerics of the lower courts, even when, as in the Shotts settlement, these put up an obstinate resistance. The national leadership at the Assembly had made examples of individual clergymen who refused to comply with its orders, deposing Thomas Gillespie in 1752, and even those clerics at the presbytery level most sympathetic to popular opposition were unwilling to risk their own livings in opposition to patronage. In settlement cases of the 1770s and 80s, fewer clergy show themselves as stubborn as the clerical protectors of Kilmarnock and Shotts. A late case from Fenwick in the Presbytery of Irvine shows the extent of official indifference to local opinion by 1780. The parish's patron, the Earl of Glasgow, declined even to deal with the presbytery, calling privately on one of the ministers whom he knew personally and delivering to him the presentation and the presentee's acceptance.[109] In February 1781 a petition of the heads of families of Fenwick asked the ministers of Irvine Presbytery to mediate between the parish and the patron, and ask the Earl to "condescend so far as to have an agreeable settlement of a Pastor in this Parish," by giving them their choice among several acceptable to him. Though presbyteries in the first half of the century had often taken this mediating role, the Presbytery of Irvine in 1781 declined to do so.[110] The insistence of the patron on settling his presentee, backed up by the General Assemblies of 1780 and 1781, made the

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[105] Ibid., p. 115.
[106] For highlights, see CH1/2/107, f. 236; CH2/393/4, pp. 118-21.
[107] CH1/2/110, f. 6.
[108] Ibid., f. 7.
[109] CH2/197/6, p. 391.
[110] Ibid., 427.

settlement of Mr. Boyd seem inevitable to the clergymen. Their efforts in the Fenwick case in 1781 were directed not to a compromise but to the effort to "deal w^{t} the People towards their concurrence with Mr Boyd."[111]

Physical obstruction of presentees. Whether lay opponents of a presentation found useful clerical allies—as in Kilmarnock, Shotts, and Kilmaronock—or found the lower church courts solidly against them—as in Cambuslang and Fenwick—church records make it clear that opposition to the "imposed settlements" of the late 1700s arose from local lay sentiment, and endured after the exhaustion of friendly clerics. Throughout the Strathclyde, parishioners' first response to an unpopular presentation was to work within the ecclesiastical structures, by petitioning or appeals to the church courts. The failure of such legal methods, however, often led parishioners to resort to more creative methods of protest. By May 1768, the parish of Shotts found their erstwhile clerical allies at the Presbytery of Hamilton had wilted under pressure from the General Assembly, agreeing to ordain the controversial Lawrence Wells as commanded. Parishioners, however, continued their opposition. Archibald Hamilton, agent for the tutors of the underage Duke of Hamilton, submitted this testimony to the General Assembly describing his efforts to get access to the parish church for the ordination:

> I in name of the said Tutors went to the Dwelling House of the Bell man or Keeper of the Keys of the Kirk of Shotts, and enquired for him for to get of the Keys thereof but was told by his wife, she neither knew where Andrew Hamilton her Husband the Bell Man was, or where he had the Keys of the Church, and I attest that William Hamilton Church officer at Hamilton called out with a loud voice naming the said Andrew Hamiltons name three times but no answer was given by him so could not get access to the Church by so much opposition being made.[112]

The parish of Fenwick, faced in the early 1780s with the imposition of unpopular presentee William Boyd, waged a tireless campaign of physical obstruction, non-compliance, and abuse against the unwanted cleric. Boyd had at first been heard cordially by parishioners, but after it became clear that their request to hear multiple candidates would be refused, locals employed a variety of tactics to render impossible his

[111] Ibid., 437.
[112] CH1/2/110, f. 9.

visits as guest preacher. The Presbytery of Irvine, which had assigned Boyd to preach there on the second Sunday of February 1782, received this report from the presentee:

> He had written by post to the schoolmaster of Fenwick eight days before the 2d Sabbath. . .that he was to Preach at Fenwick upon that Sabbath, and that he desired him to warn them of the same—That he accordingly came to Fenwick the Saturday before that Sabbath with an intention to Preach next Day—when Sabbath came he was informed that the Kirk Doors were put into such a Condition, that by them he could have no access to the Church.

According to Mr. Boyd's colleague, Mr. Roger, who had accompanied him to Fenwick, "the Locks on the Kirk Doors were filled wt small stones, so as they could not be opened." The parish's disorderly protests against the presentation included not only anonymous vandals but the church officers, who openly defied clerical authority. Roger further informed the Presbytery that "the Beadle was desired on the Saturday Evening to Ring the Kirk Bell, as a Signal that the Parish was to hear Sermon the Morrow, that he refused to Do, that also on the Sabbath he refused to Ring the Bell, and that no Bell was then Rung." At length, Boyd reports, "as no Persons conveined to hear Sermon, he then went to Stewartown to attend upon Publick Worship."[113] The woebegone Mr. Boyd met with a further indignity on his way out of town: he was "followed," according to presbytery minutes, "for about a quarter of a Mile by a Number of Boys, and some Girls, crying out, Thief and Robber,[114] and some of them throwing Stones and Dirt."[115] In view of this incident, Mr. Boyd declined to obey further instructions from Irvine Presbytery to preach at Fenwick. In March, asked if he had preached in the parish, he told his clerical colleagues "that he had not, as no Application had been made to him by any in the Parish to do it."[116] This did not stop him from pursuing the benefice of Fenwick, however, and he was ordained in June.

Similar abuse was inflicted on Allan McAulay, who was presented to Greenock by John Shaw Stewart Esq. in 1786. The presentee, who seemed sure to be settled in spite of the parish's hostility, found a cold welcome when he visited as guest preacher:

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[113] CH2/197/6, p. 442.
[114] The reference is to John 10:1-3 contrasting true and false shepherds: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."
[115] CH2/197/6, p. 442.
[116] Ibid., 449.

"Early on the morning of that day," according to the patron's complaint to Paisley Presbytery, "some malicious persons cut away the Bell rope, broke into the Church, barricaded all the doors, and fastened the Pulpit door with Screwnails the heads of which were cut off."[117] Despite investigation by the patrons' agents, those responsible proved difficult to identify because of the support of the rest of the parish. "Hitherto nothing positive has come out," Mr. Stewart lamented, "& I am afraid never will—because most of those who have been examined declared without hesitation that they approved of what had been done, & one in particular said, *that those who had shut up the kirk were well warranted to do so from the word of God*."[118]

Final protests at the serving of the edict. In the customary process for installation of a new minister in the Church of Scotland, a climactic moment was the "serving of the edict." An official decree of the presbytery notifying the parish of the upcoming ordination, the edict included a formal statement asking for any final objections to the ordinand's "Life and Doctrine." This, the last step before the ordination itself, was the scene of formal or informal protests in a number of parishes. The serving of William Boyd's edict at Fenwick in 1782 was the scene of impassioned last-minute dissent and arguments by the parishioners. The Presbytery of Irvine notes that upon being asked for objections against the presentee's life and doctrine, "many of the People from the Parish of Fenwick were heard at great length, remonstrating against ordaining Mr Boyd the Presentee to be their Minister," but none of their objections were found relevant by the Presbytery, and none were recorded by the presbytery clerk.[119]

The serving of James Meek's edict in Cambulang in August 1774 saw the opposers of the presentation submit a formal, written statement articulating their objections to the new pastor's theology. With the help of a Glasgow lawyer, John Robb, a number of distressed parishioners turned in a paper formally accusing Meek of heresy.[120] The paper compiled the various theological complaints of Cambuslang's suspicious hearers, labeling the new minister a Pelagian who overthrew justification by

[117] CH2/294/11, p. 277.
[118] Ibid.
[119] CH2/197/6, pp. 450-1.
[120] CH2/393/4, p. 190.

faith for salvation by good intentions and elevated reason above faith.[121] The petitioners asked the Presbytery to "find that the said Mr Meek is unworthy of the Character of a Minister of the Gospel; and depose or lay him aside from preaching; or at least to find, that he cannot be settled in Cambuslang."[122] The ministers of the Presbytery, however, did not allow the accusations to disrupt the proceedings; after briefly examining the paper, they found some objections "frivolous and unworthy of notice,—others of them absurd and unintelligible, and all of them irrelevant." Robb's attempt to appeal was found by the ministers to be "incompetent and inadmissible," and Meek was duly installed as pastor of Cambuslang.[123] Not only did the ministers of Hamilton Presbytery express no interest in the parishioners' theological accusations, they sought to prosecute the signers of the paper for slander against Meek.[124] Interestingly, the elders of Cambuslang, who had been prominent in leading parish opposition to Meek over the last three years, were not among the signers of the accusation of heresy. Instead the accusers apparently come from a humbler social stratum: they are identified in the presbytery minutes as John Lindsay, James Bowman, John Gourley, Thomas Gemmil, Andrew Cochrane, John Dick, and Robert Sommers, farmers; John Arbuckle, coalhewer; and James Frame, weaver.[125]

A similar paper was served on John McAulay, presented to Cardross by the Crown, at the serving of his edict in March 1774. Walter Glen, an elder of the parish, turned in a petition signed a number of heads of families, many of whom are identified as weavers, smiths, and farmers. "To neglect to preach and apply the capital Doctrines of our holy Religion. . .is a fault very culpable," according to the petition: "more especially in a Minister of our Church who is about to take the Charge of Souls in that Congregation where he is to be their pastor and will give no Satisfaction to the people nor converse with them concerning the Doctrines he has taught that they may have trial of his Gifts for Edification."[126] The Cardross complaint articulates parishioners' suspicion that Mr. McAulay was theologically unsound, identifying the presentee with "corruption" of "the

[121] Ibid., 190-2.
[122] Ibid., p. 192.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., p. 200.
[125] Ibid., 195.
[126] CH2/546/12, p. 254.

purity of Doctrine," but does not include the detailed accusations of heresy that Cambuslang served on the Rev. Mr. Meek. Cardross parish seems to take as much offense at the cleric's haughty manner as his theology, citing his repeated refusal to defend his doctrine to parishioners. In any case, the Presbytery of Dumbarton found the petition irrelevant and proceeded to the presentee's ordination.[127]

Ordination riots. In several cases, carnivalesque parish protests escalated into full-scale rioting against the presentee and his allies. In the parish of Eaglesham, Earl Eglinton's presentee Thomas Clark had received exactly two votes in the moderation of a call, one of which was by Eglinton's agent;[128] the parish's repeated complaints and objections to Clark had been dismissed or ignored by the church courts. When in April 1767 the Presbytery of Glasgow's representative—in this case, divinity professor William Leechman himself—served the presentee's edict and read the traditional formula inviting objections to his life and doctrine, "the said person was upon doing thereof treated by the [crowd] assembled at the door with the most abusive language most horrid oaths and most terrible threatenings and even with death." The shouts and curses of angry parishioners were accompanied with "the throwing of stones and garbage in his [Leechman's] face." Retiring to a safer location, the Rev. Dr. Leechman convinced the other ministers that "in equity Mr Clark ought not to suffer upon account of his ordination being thereby prevented but that he ought to be considered from hence forth as having a title to the stipend and other emoluments of the benefice."[129] Though they could not prevent his legal installation as their pastor, the congregation of Eaglesham had symbolically enacted the community's rejection of the Earl's candidate—a dramatic inversion of the traditional ordination service at which the heads of families took the new pastor by the hand to symbolize their welcome.

In Kilmarnock, years of opposition by locals and by their clerical allies in the Presbytery of Irvine came to an end when the General Assembly of 1764 set 17 July as a date certain for the installation of William Lindsay the presentee. The dissenters in Kilmarnock, having exhausted the ordinary channels for protest against Lindsay, took a final opportunity to express their oft-declared unwillingness to "Submitt to his Ministry."

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[127] Ibid., p. 257.
[128] CH1/2/107, f. 297.
[129] CH2/171/13/1, p. 77.

The minutes of Irvine Presbytery record the scene this way: "Mr Brown ascended the pulpit & began publick worship. . .But before he had prayed a few sentences, the Congrega^{n} was attacked by a furious Mob throwing stones upon them from the doors & windows of the Church severals of which they broke in pieces."[130] The papers from the trial of the rioters, which took place in the following autumn, contain this description of the event:

> After the Divine service had been begun by Singing of Psalms and while Prayers to Almighty God were actually offering up from the Pulpit by one of the said Ministers a great number of riotous and disorderly persons…having Convocated and Assembled themselves in a lawless manner, did. . .forcibly attack and brake open the doors of the said Church, and did Assault the Ministers and Congregation assembled, as said is, by throwing many and large Stones at them.[131]

Finding stones harder to wave aside than petitions, the Rev. Mr. Lindsay and his supporters beat a hasty retreat, according to the presbytery minutes:

> as their lives were in danger & nothing could be heard from the Noise of the Mob the Presbytery were Oblidged to remove & Goe from the Church into a publick house, when Mr Lindsay haveing adhered to the questions Appointed to be putt to Min^{rs} att their Ordina^{n} was by prayer (performed by Mr Brown) admitted Min^{r} of the second Charge of Kilm^{k}.

It was, from the point of view of the dissenters, a fitting conclusion. The Earl of Glencairn and a handful of absentees had imposed their private choice for minister on the community, without any pretense of consultation. Though the installation of Lindsay could not be prevented, it would not take place in the community's public space, with the customary pomp and acclamation of the harmonious parish. Instead the riotous dissenters compelled the patron, the "intruder," and their clerical allies to make an undignified exit from the parish church and conduct their business in a bar, where the presbytery clerk notes that Lindsay "was received" as minister, not by the heads of families as in a traditional ordination service, but "by the Right Honble the Earl of Glencairn several heretors and two elders"[132]—not the shepherd of the community but the private choice of private men.

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[130] CH2/197/6, p. 117.
[131] NAS, JC26/171.
[132] CH2/197/6, p. 117.

At the insistence of the Lord Advocate in Edinburgh, ten parishioners were arraigned as ringleaders of the ordination riot in Kilmarnock that autumn. The accused were younger artisans, many of them sons of Kilmarnock's prominent master craftsmen or of the parish's lay leadership: "Alexander Thomson Journeyman Shoemaker in Kilmarnock, William Wylie Journeyman Glover in Kilmarnock Son to John Wylie Glover there, James Crawfurd Son to James Crawfurd Church Officer there," together with other glovers, bonnetmakers, and shoemakers.[133] This leaves unclear to what degree the young ringleaders may have been acting as proxies for their parents, who had more to lose, and expressing the disapproval of the entire community. In the event, the Lord Advocate had to accept half a loaf as better than none. The three most prominent leaders of the action were convicted, whipped, and banished from town, but a jury consisting mostly of minor landowners from the region and five merchants from Ayr refused to convict the other seven defendants, largely because they could not be positively identified as among the rioters. Respectable witnesses from the town, including merchants, excise officers, and a medical doctor, contradicted the clerical victims' identification of their assailants.[134] Some of the accused claimed that they had been locked out of the church and had not been present at all, others that they were peaceably within and themselves were injured in the confusion.[135] The trial documents leave the impression that the ordination riot was truly a community affair, making it difficult to assign responsibility to particular individuals.[136]

The parish of Shotts was also the scene of a full-fledged settlement riot. On 26 May 1768, seven ministers of the Presbytery of Hamilton met at Shotts and attempted to ordain Lawrence Wells as parish pastor, "but," according to the statement they submitted to the Assembly's representatives,

> were hindered from carrying the sentence of the Assembly into execution by a tumultuous concourse of people who armed with clubs and staves, told them in a threatening manner, that if they proceeded to the ordination the most fatal consequences would follow, or words to that purpose.

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[133] NAS, JC26/171.
[134] Ibid., "Execution, Witnesses in Thomson and others."
[135] Ibid., "Copy of Defence for Alexander Thomson."
[136] See George Rudé's discussion, in his *The Crowd in History*, of the prominence of youth in our pre-industrial crowd actions and the degree to which they can be said to be acting for the passive majority, 208-12.

The ministers further found they could not, like Irvine Presbytery in Kilmarnock, relocate the ordination service to another local establishment such as a tavern: they were refused access not only to the church, according to the presbytery minutes, but also to "every House about the place, the doors being locked and the keys removed."[137] The higher-ups at the Assembly "intimated to them that they should have the aid of the civil power to protect them" in their next attempt. The full power of the Hanoverian state was now called in to support the patron's right. On 8 June the presbytery minutes record the presence of Mr. Cross, sheriff depute of Hamilton, who "had lately seen the King's Advocate at Edinburgh, who had recommended to him in the strongest manner, to support the settlement of Mr Wells, and to protect the Ministers who were to be Concerned." A special order had been sent from "the General commanding the Kings troops in Scotland, to the forces lying at Glasgow and Hamilton to attend the Sheriff on that occasion and to be under his Direction." With "a body of foot & Dragoons" to protect him from his flock, Lawrence Wells was finally ordained pastor of Shotts.[138] It was a rather unedifying beginning to his ministry, and certainly made clear to all concerned whence the new minister's authority derived.

THE MORAL COMMUNITY

In his classic essay "The moral economy of the English crowd," E.P. Thompson rejected a view of eighteenth-century price riots as irrational or what he called "spasmodic," denying that crowd actions against hoarders and price-gaugers were "compulsive, rather than self-conscious or self-activating."[139] Instead, Thompson claims that "some legitimizing notion" activated eighteenth-century food riots, that is, that "the men and women in the crowd were informed by the belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs; and, in general, that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community."[140] Man does not live by bread alone, however, and the "moral economy" discussed by Thompson has an analogue in the Scottish context with

[137] CH1/2/110, f. 10.
[138] Ibid., 131.
[139] Thompson, *Customs in Common*, 185-6.
[140] Ibid., 188.

the ideal of a harmonious settlement of a new pastor. Like the protests Thompson studies, settlement opponents were activated by a sense of violation of local custom. The parishioners of Rutherglen, faced with a forced settlement, remarked indignantly that "the Constant practice of filling Ministers since that time [the revolution of 1688] has been by the Heretors and Kirk Session without Exception."[141] The well-informed elders of the Strathclyde, moreover, understood that the Kirk's confessional documents, such as the Second Book of Discipline, supported them and not the rulings of the ecclesiastical courts. Glasgow Presbytery, commenting on the persistence of local agitation in defiance of the church hierarchy's decrees, told its superiors, "the plain reason of it seems to be this, that when the people apprehend that we disregard our own Church Rules; they thereby defend their disregard to our Church Decisions."[142]

Motives for resistance to presentations were various, but tended to be rooted in this ideal of the moral community. Custom going back to 1688 and, for the more literate, the Kirk's own official documents reinforced the conviction that local people had the right to participate in choosing their own pastor. For some Scots, pastoral appointments may have served as a unique opportunity to express resentment of the absentee gentry more generally, a symbolic issue which could stand as surrogate for the larger changes taking place in Scotland's socioeconomic life.[143] For others, the dignity and honor of the local community were central: a presentation without consultation or negotiation was an insult to a "free people," as the Kilmarnock magistrates told Irvine Presbytery: "Reasonable men will always be led by Reason, but will not be driven by force."[144] For many Strathclyde elders—but also for the pious at a humbler social level, like the "coalhewer" John Arbuckle in Cambuslang—spiritual considerations were paramount. Prospective ministers who were physically unable to fulfill their duties, who appeared to be careerists more concerned with the fleece than the flock, or whose theology seemed incompatible with folk Calvinism, provoked the opposition of the very devout. Cambuslang elder James Millar explained his hostility to presentee James Meek to a minister at the Synod of Glasgow this way: "I have a family, Sir, and I am deeply

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[141] CH1/2/79, f. 375.
[142] CH1/2/87, f. 210.
[143] For these see, inter alia, Malcolm Gray, "The social impact of agrarian change in the rural Lowlands," 53-68 in Devine and Mitchison (eds.); chapter 5 of Whatley.
[144] CH2/197/5, 69.

concerned about them; I am afraid, that instead of being fed with the wholesome truths of the gospel, they will be *starved*, nay, that they will be *poisoned*."[145] These discrete motives converged to present Scotland's church and state authorities with the protest of a united community, as the outrage to the moral consensus of the parish legitimated crowd actions otherwise almost unheard of in late eighteenth-century Scotland. For many Strathclyde parishes the parish community would never be so united again. After the triumph of the patrons, parishioners who had joined the opposition for diverse reasons would respond to the new parish regime in different ways.

[145] *Narrative of the case of the parish of Cambuslang*, 16n.

CHAPTER 7. AFTER THE SETTLEMENTS

The forced settlements of the late eighteenth century had a profound and lasting effect on parish life in the west of Scotland. Despite what appears in many parishes to have been a united opposition of local residents, culminating in dramatic protests, heresy accusations, and riots, the patron's candidate was invariably settled, even when, as in Shotts, he could be "intruded" only under the protection of dragoons. In many parishes opposition to the landlords' candidate proved to be the last act of the unified parish community. Many parishioners, conformable but perhaps not so devout, had resented the imposition of the presentee but quickly made their peace with the new parish realities. Even some traditionally pious layfolk, like Cambuslang's elders, evidently attempted to reconcile themselves to the inevitable, hoping to uphold their Calvinism within the parish structure. Others, often the most active and zealous parishioners and sometimes the unanimous eldership, refused to "submit" to the ministry of the "intruder," and left the parish to establish a new church, writing to the Secession or to the new Relief denomination to obtain a pastor more to their liking. The resulting division in the community eroded the discipline and the all but universal catechesis of the culture of village Calvinism. The Church of Scotland parish, meanwhile, remained a legal court even as many withdrew from it as an ecclesiastical society. Kirk session registers at the end of the century indicate a striking change in the practice of discipline, from a maximalist and spiritual approach focused on the sinner's sincere repentance and eternal salvation, to a more worldly and utilitarian approach, fining those whose behavior might impose financial burdens on the legal court of the parish. Both the formation of new voluntary churches and the parish authorities' new approach to maintaining order in the localities reflect the separation of communal institutions from the spiritual lives of individuals, an event as significant as the great settlement riots, though less spectacular.

THE PARISHES AND THE DISSENTERS

The new parish regime. Despite a few important recent articles,[1] the settlement controversies and their social consequences at the local level remain relatively unknown. John Galt's novel of 1821, *The Annals of the Parish*, continues to be a point of reference, and even to be cited in historical scholarship as a source of information about the settlements.[2] *The Annals* begin with a fictional account of a settlement dispute, with the "intruder" as the sympathetic protagonist: mild-mannered Mr. Balwhidder is forced by the hostility of the congregation of Dalmailing to crawl in the window of the kirk for his ordination, a parish mob having barricaded the door. The fictional Balwhidder is neither a snooty elitist like McAulay of Cardross, nor an incompetent like Wells of Shotts, nor yet a crypto-Pelagian like Meek of Cambuslang, but a basically traditional cleric opposed only from "causeless prejudice," and it takes him less than a year to win over the pious zealots of Galt's imaginary parish.[3] Extant church records suggest that the situation in real parishes in the Strathclyde was rather different. In many parishes, the settlement of the disputed minister is marked by gaps of months or years in the kirk session minutes and by a shuffling or complete replacement of the session's personnel. In Eaglesham, where Thomas Clark was settled in 1767 in the face of almost unanimous hostility, the new minister evidently could not convince any residents to sit with him on the session, even years later. In May 1775, when further complaints from the parish drew Glasgow Presbytery's attention, the Rev. Mr. Clark faced a delegation from his parish in the presbytery meeting and, according to the minutes, "entreated the people to attend on his ministry and give him their best of their own advice in forming a Session that discipline might be regularly exercised in the parish."[4] A similar situation seems to have faced Lawrence Wells, who was installed as pastor of Shotts under the protection of "a body of foot & Dragoons" in August 1767. Two years later, the Rev. Mr. Wells admitted to his colleagues at Hamilton Presbytery that there were still no elders in his parish.[5] No parish records for Shotts survive to shed further light on local affairs; the session minutes are marred by a gap between August 1767, the month of Wells's ordination, and 1795. In St.

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[1] Callum Brown, "Protest in the pews," 83-101 in Devine (ed.), *Conflict and Stability*; Sher, "Moderates, managers, and popular politics," 179-209 in Dwyer, Mason and Murdoch (eds.); Landsman, "Liberty, piety, and patronage," in Hook and Sher (eds.).
[2] Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe* (1981), 37; Bulloch and Drummond, 64.
[3] Galt, 5-7.
[4] CH2/171/14, p. 92.
[5] CH2/393/4, p. 137.

Ninians, where Alexander Thomson was "intruded" in 1773, all the elders and the schoolmaster abandoned their posts in protest.[6] In Fenwick, where William Boyd was settled in June 1782, the existing parish leadership seems to have been divided in how to respond to their defeat. Some seem to have resigned; on its visitation of the parish the next April, Irvine Presbytery noted that "the Parish schoolmaster had left the Parish and had accepted an office elsewhere,"[7] and elder William Cuthbertson, spokesman for the resistance to Boyd, also disappears from the session minutes at this time. Other elders of the old parish regime, however, such as Alexander Dunlop, John Bain, and Robert Kirkland, still sat on the session in 1787.[8]

The elders of Kilmaronock, who had failed to prevent James Addie's settlement in July 1771, united in a boycott similar to those at Kilmaurs and Mearns earlier in the century. In December 1771 the Rev. Mr. Addie informed Dumbarton Presbytery that the elders refused to sit in session with him.[9] In 1772 the Presbytery attempted a novel solution, sending John Freebairn and another "Popular" minister who had supported the parish in the controversy to chair the session of Kilmaronock,[10] but Addie's settlement would not be reversed, and this was no permanent answer. In December 1773 the Rev. Mr. Addie again complained to the Presbytery that his parish was "at present altogether without Elders, whereby the Business of the parish must soon go into great disorder." The old elders, who met with the Presbytery several times in 1774, insisted that they would neither sit with Addie in session nor resign their office, but agreed to "give all the Aid in their power in the distribution of the poor's money and such like."[11] Addie insisted on forming a new session, one made up of members of the local elite instead of the rural artisans who dominated the old session. James Buchanan Esq. of Cotter, William McGovan Esq. of Mains, James McAlpine of Blairlusk, William Haldane of Badshalloch were among those whom he named as suitable for the eldership.[12]

In Cambuslang, the last meeting of the old session took place on 14 August 1774. James Meek's settlement later that month coincides with the beginning of an almost five-

[6] CH2/337/9, pp. 5, 6, 8.
[7] CH2/196/6, p. 468.
[8] CH2/982/5, p. 330.
[9] CH2/546/12, p. 180.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., p. 264.
[12] Ibid., pp. 241-2.

year gap in the minutes. The absence of parish records makes it difficult to reconstruct a clear picture of Cambuslang parish in the late 1770s, but it appears that some at least of William McCulloch's elders continued in their office for several years, perhaps opposing Meek's theology within the parish structure.[13] The aging weavers of the 1742 revival, like the brothers Claud and Bartholomew Somers, had led the opposition to the presentation in 1772-4 but then, despite submitting their final "Reasons of Protest" in July 1774,[14] had declined to sign the formal accusation of heresy just before Meek's ordination. The Somers brothers and another elder of the old regime, John Peacock, continue to appear in the synod and presbytery minutes as lay representatives from Cambuslang in the years after Meek's settlement.[15] In April 1779 the old elders asked the Synod of Glasgow to mediate a dispute between them and the Rev. Mr. Meek, "in order to Compromise matters";[16] thereafter the old guard never reappears in the Church of Scotland's records. When the session minutes of Cambuslang resume in July 1779, not one of the earlier elders remains, nor does McCulloch's schoolmaster-precentor-clerk William Fisher. Instead the Rev. Mr. Meek apparently sat in a skeleton session with only his new schoolmaster-clerk William Kirkland and a single elder. The new elder, moreover, was none other than the parish's wealthiest resident, John Hamilton of Westburn—a crucial ally of Duke Hamilton in procuring Meek's settlement in 1774, and son of the old session's nemesis, the late Gabriel Hamilton of Westburn.[17] The "enthusiastic" weavers and shoemakers whose control of parish finance the elder Westburn had contested were now removed from positions of influence in Cambuslang.

In Campsie parish, the settlement of James Lapslie in November 1783 led to the unanimous resignation of the parish officers. The elders and clerk evidently destroyed or took with them the session minutes; no records from Campsie parish survive between 1716 and the Rev. Mr. Lapslie's settlement. Almost a year later, on 6 October 1784,

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[13] See p. 17 of John Snodgrass's 1770 pamphlet *An Effectual method for recovering our religious liberties*, which tries to persuade traditionalist elders not to resign after failure to block a presentation: "Hereby they think they will vex and punish their minister, by leaving him to himself. . . .Hereby the church loses, from time to time, a number of her best and true friends; and if they are succeeded at all in their office, it is either by those who will go along with their minister, by betraying her interests, or, at best, be lukewarm and indifferent about them."
[14] CH2/393/4, p. 189.
[15] CH2/393/4, pp. 213, 221; CH2/464/4, pp. 118, 122, 135.
[16] CH2/464/4, p. 150.
[17] CH2/416/1, p. 518.

Lapslie notified Glasgow Presbytery that he still had no elders who would sit with him in session.[18] The new minute book for Campsie parish opens with this note:

> The Session of Campsie having demitted their office, in Novr. 1783 The Prysbytry of Glasgow having considered the situation of the Parish of Campsie empower'd the following Ministers, viz. Mr Dun of Kirkintilloch, Mr Stewart of Cumbernauld & Mr Telfer of Kilsyth, to act along with Mr Lapslie for the purpose of managing session affairs and of erecting a new session.

The new elders selected to reconstitute a session for the parish, recorded in the minute book, all bear "lairdly" stylings: "James Muir of Aulton, James Hunter of Hayston, John Gray of Birdston, John Calder of Baldoran & James Calder of Strouthead."[19]

In parishes like Campsie and Kilmaronock the new regime constituted a social counter-revolution, with lairds displacing the devout artisans and tenants of a previous generation on the session. This was not always the case: in Ayr, under the impeccably polite pastors Dalrymple and McGill, new elders installed in the late 1780s included a grocer, a baker, a shoemaker, and weavers.[20] Session minutes from the end of the eighteenth century do, however, suggest a clericalization of authority in the parish during this period. Pastors increasingly made important decisions on their own and informed the elders *post facto*, where earlier in the century minutes show extensive sharing of authority, both in pastoral care (with two or three elders named a "committee" to speak privately to an accused sinner) and in finance (where one elder as treasurer, not the minister, had taken the lead). Strathclyde sessions before the settlements had agreed together after long discussion what charitable donations were to be made by the parish; in Cambuslang in 1781, James Meek gave parish funds to parishioners he deemed deserving and informed the session later.[21] The Rev. Mr. Meek likewise removed names from the poor's list unilaterally.[22] The pastor's behavior is perhaps explained by what seems to be the extreme infrequency of meetings of the session; where sessions earlier in the century had met weekly or even more often, in Cambuslang under Meek the session apparently

[18] CH2/171/14, p. 335.
[19] CH2/51/2, p. 1.
[20] CH2/751/14, pp. 283-4.
[21] CH2/415/1, p. 527.
[22] Ibid., p. 554.

met about once every six months.[23] The schedule of Meek's only elder, a busy landowner periodically resident in Edinburgh, may have prevented more frequent meetings. In Stevenston too, elders seem to have taken a less active role in the face of clerical authority later in the century. Minutes of a variety of parishes in the first half of the century suggest that sitting elders took a prominent role in nominating members of the congregation to join the session. But in 1785 pastor James Wodrow seems to have presented the session with a list of candidates for eldership without consultation; both the elders and congregation here appear passive, acquiescing in the minister's selection.[24] Though the traditional language inviting the congregation's objections to elder nominees was retained, this seems by the 1780s to have become a mere formality. Earlier in the century, sessions had allowed several days for parishioners to bring in objections; Cambuslang's minutes note that in 1732 the elders waited five hours at the time and place announced to receive any complaint.[25] In 1785, the Rev. Mr. Wodrow's nominees for eldership were announced to the congregation in Stevenston and ordained on the same day.[26] Likewise, in the admission of a new cohort of elders in Ayr in 1784-5, the ministers appear in the minutes as taking in the initiative both in selecting the candidates and in "sounding" them as to their willingness to serve; the elders appear passive, agreeing to the clerics' decisions rather than taking an active role. Ayr kirk session register notes that the new elders were announced eight days before "the day of their Admission," but there is no reference to opportunity for the congregation to give in objections to the candidates.[27]

Where Robert Wodrow at the beginning of the century had lived closely with and largely shared the worldview of his parishioners, his successors shared a strong cultural affinity with the anglicized gentry and were often estranged from ordinary hearers. To traditionalists like Archibald Bruce, author of the 1791 satire *The Catechism Modernized*, this was both a commonplace and a matter for bitter joking: "*Q*. How does he [the patron] create a man? *A*. . . .After his own image, as nearly resembling him in learning, taste,

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[23] The minutes after they resume in 1779 record meetings in July 1779, December 1779, February 1780, June 1780, July 1780, December 1780, April,1781, and November 1781: Ibid.
[24] CH2/336/2, p. 339.
[25] CH2/415/2, p. 63.
[26] CH2/336/2, p. 339.
[27] CH2/751/14, pp. 101-5.

opinions and morals as possible."[28] The patron's ten commandments to the polite clergy in the same work include "keeping a good table. . .shunning the open, smokey, dirty, miserable huts of the common people. . .lying a due time in bed, and an excursion now and then to a spaw or watering place."[29] Sins forbidden the new divines in Bruce's satire include "tedious prayers, long or vehement preaching, preaching in an unpaved or unceilinged kirk, all barn and field-preachings, work-day sermons, catechisings, or annual parochial visitations, entering chambers or houses of the sick, especially in fevers, dysenteries, and consumptions."[30] Private letters from the ministers settled in the last half of the century tend to confirm Bruce's hyperbolic depiction of their social and cultural affinities. Patrick Wodrow, pastor of Tarbolton, was James Wodrow's older brother and, like him, a fierce defender of patronage, hostile to "popularity" in the Kirk.[31] Several of his surviving letters show his cozy relationship with the region's nobility, like Colonel Montgomery of Coilsfield, a regular correspondent, to whom Wodrow complained of the "Petulance, & personal Abuse" he received from more ordinary parishioners—"Turbulent Spirits in the Parish, who. . .have already raised a considerable degree of Ferment."[32] James Lapslie, whose settlement at Campsie had led to the mass resignation of the elders in 1783, enjoyed great familiarity with the parish's richest landowners, the Lennoxes of Woodhead. The Rev. Mr. Lapslie, according to his enemies, owed his benefice to his previous position as tutor to the children of the Lennox family, and surviving letters show that the minister retained both business and personal ties to the family, taking out loans in the 1790s and selling his landholdings to them in 1800.[33]

The persistence of parish Calvinism and the domestication of "popularity." Many zealous Calvinists in the Strathclyde refused to be reconciled to the intruded ministers and founded dissenting churches at this time, but many others remained within the Church of Scotland, seeking by a variety of tactics to mitigate the unsatisfactory preaching of the new divines and the "tyranny" of patronage. Some congregations, like

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[28] Bruce, *Catechism Modernized*, 11.
[29] Ibid., 29.
[30] Ibid., 30.
[31] See CH2/464/4, p. 190,
[32] NAS, GD3/5/1169.
[33] Mitchell Library, Glasgow, TLX9/4.

St. Ninians, tried to raise money to purchase the right of presentation from the patron.[34] Many others, especially in urban areas, promoted new "chapels of ease" within the parish system. Unlike earlier chapels of ease, which had existed in remote corners of large parishes and had been served occasionally by the parish pastor, these were to be an alternative source of preaching for those dissatisfied with a recent presentation. Chapel preachers and, in many cases, their buildings would be funded by public subscription, and subscribers would therefore have the right to call the preacher of their choice, as long as he was in communion with the Church of Scotland. The town council and parishioners of Kilmarnock began a project to convert an older-style chapel of ease into an independent chapel with its own minister in 1763, in the midst of the struggle to prevent William Lindsay's settlement.[35] In December 1763 those who had contributed £3 or more called James Oliphant, a popular preacher and devotional writer who upheld the old divinity.[36] In the 1760s, with the "intruder" William Lindsay at the parish church and Oliphant at the chapel, the church was "poorly attended," but Oliphant's chapel was "filled with a devout and attentive audience," according to one nineteenth-century source.[37] Parishioners of Shotts, where Lawrence Wells had been intruded at bayonet-point in 1767, proposed in 1771 to raise the salary of a preacher "of the established Church chosen by the people," who would preach in Wells's place in the parish church on Sundays, and also "catechize and visit the Parish."[38] In effect, the scheme proposed would leave Wells the stipend and title of pastor but transfer the actual duties of pastoral ministry to a subordinate paid and chosen by the community. The Rev. Mr. Wells rejected this proposal as "inconsistent with his Duty."[39] Parishioners then proposed a second scheme to build a chapel of ease and raise the salary of a "preacher of the established Church" there; Wells objected that this was unnecessary, since the parish church was large enough to hold the congregation and was centrally located, but he finally agreed.[40] St. Ninians parish saw, instead of a separate chapel of ease, the creation of the position of "assistant" to the pastor who would

[34] CH2/337/9, p. 260.
[35] CH2/197/6, pp. 92-4.
[36] Ibid., 111.
[37] Railton, 23.
[38] CH2/393/4, pp. 164-5.
[39] Ibid., p. 166.
[40] Ibid.

function in the same capacity. The assistant's salary was raised by the congregation and in 1782 the Rev. Mr. Thomson agreed to allow his flock to choose his assistant.[41]

The popularity of the new chapels of ease and their independent preachers shows how committed were many Strathclyde Calvinists to the idea of a single church for the entire community. They served to keep many layfolk within the established Church. The chapel preachers, though ordained, could not vote in the presbyteries and synods as did parish pastors, and therefore could not bring their "Popular" views to bear in the church courts. The chapels of ease thus could be seen as a device to control and, it was hoped, to domesticate "popularity" within the Church of Scotland, as a 1779 debate at the General Assembly makes explicit. The church politicians of the Assembly, though finding the popularity of the chapels distasteful, hoped that they would undermine the appeal of the dissenters. The chapel preachers, moreover, "having neither seats in the church-judicatories, nor livings so comfortable as in the establishment, will naturally wish to obtain such advantages; and will therefore take care, while they cultivate popularity, to preserve the dignity of character that may recommend them with men of sense to preferment." Perhaps over time the chapels of ease would become redundant and be dropped, "as the people lose sight of their fondness for popular elections, and acquire that cultivated state of manners which prepares the ear to relish the simple words of truth and soberness."[42] It is by no means clear, however, that the chapels had the effect the Assembly intended. The small town of Newton-upon-Ayr, within the parish of Monkton, responded to the settlement of unpopular presentee Andrew Mitchell by first raising funds for a chapel of ease in 1777, then proceeded to another fund drive to have Newton disjoined and made its own parish, with the right to present vested in the town council. The minister they chose, William Peebles, was a traditionalist, "Popular" preacher.[43]

The proliferation of fervently Calvinist dissenting churches at this time did not mean the extinction of traditional piety in the Church of Scotland laity. Many layfolk unwilling to leave the parishes retained a preference for the older style of divinity. When John Warner of Kilbarchan, one of the most distinguished of the new divines, became too ill to preach in 1776, his elders proposed bringing in as substitute preacher not one of his

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[41] CH2/337/9, pp. 179-80.
[42] *Scots Magazine* volume 41 (1779), 282.
[43] *Fasti*, 3:132.

polite friends but one of the Calvinistic "popular Men in the neighbourhood," a suggestion Warner rejected indignantly.[44] Calvinism survived, moreover, not only in the laity but in the clergy of the established Church, despite the ascendancy of the new school. The "Popular party" of the Kirk's clergy, espousing the old Calvinism with a fiery style and sympathy for the congregation's right, included not only old-timers like John Gillies of Glasgow and William Auld of Mauchline, but young men who had been educated by Leechman and his polite successors, yet rejected the new divinity. One such was Robert McCulloch, the only son of Cambuslang's William McCulloch, whom the congregation evidently had hoped might succeed his father.[45] These Church of Scotland clerics found employment in chapels of ease and in many urban parishes like Dumbarton and Paisley, where town councils often held the patronage and shared popular tastes. By moderating their opposition to patronage and perhaps their pulpit style, and by cultivating the kind of patron-client networks long used by the polite preachers, some theological conservatives also obtained presentations from noble patrons. Young Robert McCulloch was presented to Dairsie in Fife by Earl Eglinton's tutors in 1771; James Mackinlay, who was a strong Calvinist but also apparently a serviceable tutor to the Glencairn family, was presented to Kilmarnock by the Earl of Glencairn in 1787.[46] Traditionalist ministers of this generation were culturally closer to the urban elites and gentry and sought to distinguish themselves from the excesses of folk Calvinism. Even as they retained their emphasis on the atonement and free grace, the younger Calvinist clergy eschewed "enthusiastic" folk-Calvinist practices like charismatic biblicism, in which the sudden recollection of a biblical text was taken to be a direct message from God. This practice, accepted by Robert Wodrow at the beginning of the century and by William McCulloch in the revival, was looked at with suspicion by the younger generation of conservative

[44] W-K, Letter 57 (Wodrow to Kenrick, 15 June 1776).
[45] See *The Parish of Cambuslang. . .The case of the respondents*, 2. For Robert McCulloch's traditional divinity and piety, see his preface to the 1793 collection of his father's *Sermons on Several Subjects*.
[46] Fasti,

ministers.[47] The hybrid Calvinism of Scottish folk culture, with its wonders and personal revelations, would wane among clerical traditionalists as well as the avant-garde.[48]

Folk Calvinists in exile. In John Galt's fictional account of a Strathclyde parish in this period, the forced settlement, the introduction of the new rational divinity, and the rise of dissenting churches are three discrete events, taking place years apart with no connection to each other.[49] The records both of the Church of Scotland and of the dissenting churches themselves suggest that, on the contrary, it was often the "intruders" themselves who were the first representatives of the new divinity in the parish, and splinter churches formed promptly in protest. The forced settlements realized the long-standing danger—implicit in kirk session registers from the beginning of the century, looming ominously in the elders' "boycotts" in Mearns, Kilmaurs, and Cambuslang in the 1730s—of abandonment of the Kirk by its most devout laity. These hearers had internalized a version of Scottish Calvinism so uncompromising that they were prepared to reject the institutional Church of Scotland if it did not live up to its principles and traditions. Such ultra-Reformed or "wild" parishioners remained a tiny minority while there was no alternative ecclesiastical structure to offer them the fiery and emotional preaching they needed to feel the evidence of their election; even after the Secession of the Erskine brothers established a presence in Strathclyde, around 1740, dissent was contained for a generation by the revival within the Kirk. The dozens of "converts" who testify in McCulloch's manuscripts show how plebeian Calvinists in the Strathclyde chose between revival and Secession, with the majority finding the evidence of God's

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[47] See e.g. the 1771 *Essay on the continuance of immediate revelations*, by Thomas Gillespie with preface by John Erskine, two of the most notable of the younger generation of traditionalist clergy. Both had been involved with the Cambuslang revival of 1742 in their youth but now sought to distance themselves from the "enthusiasm" typical of lay converts' narratives.

[48] See Sher, *Church and University*, 160-1 on Popular clerics' "accommodation to the cultural and intellectual values of Moderatism" during this period. More work remains to be done on this process and the degree to which traditionalist layfolk followed the clerical lead. I have found few sources like the Cambuslang narratives or the outstanding Methodist diaries and letters studied by Phyllis Mack to hazard a statement about continuing Calvinist wonders among layfolk.

[49] Not the Rev. Mr. Balwhidder himself (ordained in 1760) but the visiting preacher William Malcolm in 1789 is the bearer of the new divinity in the novel: "the elderly people thought his language rather too Englified, which I thought likewise," the narrator Balwhidder writes, and there are rumors of heterodoxy, but these turn out to be unfounded: Mr. Malcolm's Moderatism is a matter purely of style, not of substance (132). Only in 1806 does Balwhidder's parish see the emergence of "various sectarians among the weavers, some of whom were not satisfied with the gospel as I preached it. . .[who] began to speak of building a kirk for themselves, and of getting a minister that would give them the gospel more to their ignorant fancies," Galt, 193.

work in the established Church reason to remain within it. Twenty years later the outrage of the settlements and the perceived theological "defection" of Church of Scotland ministers prompted a reconsideration. By 1784 James Wodrow, pastor of Stevenston, wrote to his old schoolmate Kenrick that "The Clergy of Scotland are not so much respected at least by their own people as when you were in the Country [in the 1740s]." Within his own presbytery, that of Irvine, Wodrow writes, with seventeen parishes, there were "about ten dissenting Houses most of them built since you was here. One of them just built within my parish a much neater & finer church than my own."[50] In some localities dissenters from the parish church made up a majority: in Kilmaurs, for example, the Presbytery of Irvine conceded in 1787 that "there are Comparatively but a small number of the Parish who adhere to the Church."[51] In Cathcart parish, local landowners observed in 1784 that "Of between eighty and ninety heads of families that compose the parish, not one half are in use to attend the parish-kirk."[52] In Shotts parish, the *Statistical Account of Scotland* noted in the 1790s, dissenters outnumbered adherents of the establishment three to one.[53]

Provincial rejection of the intruded ministers was institutionalized in the creation of dissenting presbyterian churches, which grew explosively in the Strathclyde in the age of forced settlements.[54] What is perhaps remarkable is that most Strathclyde dissenters did not feel free to organize a new church from scratch, ordaining one of their own as pastor. Very few folk Calvinists were willing to attempt a possible solution hinted at in Beith in 1757. When Mr. Ross, who had been assigned by Irvine Presbytery to preach in the vacant parish, did not appear on Sunday morning, the "disappointed" congregation found a layman, John Blyth, to preach to them. Upon hearing of the incident, Irvine Presbytery summoned Blyth to inquire whether he was properly licensed: "to which he replied no, But he had studied Divinity almost three years." Asked "how he came to be guilty of so Irregular & Disorderly a thing," Blyth told the horrified clergymen

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[50] W-K, Letter 79, Wodrow to Kenrick, 15 April 1784.
[51] CH2/197/6, p. 540.
[52] *Colin Rae of Little Govan*, 1.
[53] *OSA*, 15:58.
[54] See esp. Callum Brown, "Religion and social change," 143-60 in Devine and Mitchison (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland*, vol. 1 (1988).

> That the people of the parish Being assembled for sermon & no Min^{r} comeing up to preach unto them & the tim being elapsed for their going to other Kirks, he out of pity & charity to the people being there present w^{t} Bogstoune [a resident landowner] & Dr Montgomery proposed that he would preach unto them And it being not opposed by these Gentlemen the Bell was rung & he preached accordingly publick worship both forenoon & afternoon being performed by him.

The lay preacher admitted to the Presbytery that this was "a rash step" but "insisted his Discipline was orthodox." Appalled at "a cause so singular," the clergymen ordered Blyth rebuked before the congregation of Beith and the congregation itself reminded of the Kirk's disapproval of "Irregular & disorderly practices of this sort."[55] It is a curious fact that the lay preacher Mr. Blyth, who seems to have submitted to the rebuke, had few parallels in eighteenth-century Strathclyde, even after many determined to leave the Church of Scotland. These men and women, though very willing to disregard clerical authority they deemed not consonant with Scripture, were sufficiently committed to Reformed ecclesiology to insist on acquiring an academically-trained minister, ordained by other ministers in proper presbyterian fashion. They therefore sought out the "oversight" of dissenting clergymen, retaining a high view of ordained ministry even while they tempered it with insistence on the people's call of their pastor. Scotland's dissenting churches established their own divinity-halls in the second half of the century, where their ministers could be trained without fear of contamination by Leechman and his successors at Glasgow University.

The Secession church, which had established a foothold in the region around 1740 but then stagnated, saw explosive growth in the Strathclyde in the 1760s and 70s;[56] so too did the Relief church, founded in 1762 by former Church of Scotland ministers defrocked for their refusal to settle unpopular presentees.[57] Though the rapid spread of these churches in the generation after the forced settlements was a striking feature of the age, provoking remark from many contemporaries and a lengthy and fascinating debate in the 1766 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland,[58] there is a dearth of detailed personal testimonies from Scots who left the Kirk for the dissenting churches articulating their reasons for doing so. Extant sermons from Secession and Relief preachers in these

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[55] CH3/197/5, pp. 60-1.
[56] Small, 1:211-33, 2:22-167.
[57] See Struthers, *History of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of the Relief Church* (1843).
[58] Reported in the *Scots Magazine*, volume 28, 338-40.

decades, however, make it possible to reconstruct the message of the dissenting groups, which apparently held strong appeal to many Strathclyde layfolk.

The discourse of liberty and that of orthodoxy converge in the sermons of the presbyterian dissenters. Both the Secession and the Relief strongly upheld the right of the Christian people to choose their pastor, and they denounced the injustice of forced settlements. Relief pastor Patrick Hutchison, explaining the principles of his group in 1779, asks, "If one, having a suit at law, is at *liberty* to chuse his counsel; if one, affected with a distemper, is at *liberty* to chuse his physician, is it not highly reasonable in itself, that men have the liberty of chusing those who are to watch for their souls?"[59] Frequent asides in both Relief and Secession sermons denounce the tyranny of patronage, and the Relief preachers in particular emphasize "the duty of every Christian to *judge for himself*, in matters of religion, and not to receive implicitly the doctrines, which men teach, except they be agreeable to the holy scriptures."[60] These remain asides, however; the main themes of extant sermons from the two dissenting churches are the classic tropes of folk Calvinism: the lostness of the hearers, the love of Christ who died in their place, the need for personal dedication and union with him. Both Secession and Relief describe the old faith as imperiled in the establishment. The 1766 publication *Memoirs of modern church-reformation*, by James Baine, who resigned from a benefice in the Church of Scotland to join the Presbytery of Relief, defined his new church against what he described as theological drift in the Kirk:

> They must go to other pulpits, than those of that presbytery [i.e. the Relief], who would be entertained and edified by Arian or Pelagian tenets; who would hear the bold unscriptural assertions and criticisms of Dr Taylor maintained, the doctrine of original sin treated as original jargon, the present purity and powers of human nature extolled to the skies, and the wonders it can work to its own salvation, whilst the Redeemer and his most holy Spirit are allowed a very small share of the honour.[61]

James Ramsay, who gathered a large congregation of Seceders in Kilmarnock after the Rev. Mr. Lindsay's settlement, extolled "the preaching of Christ" as the task of the true pastor and blasted false shepherds who preached vague moralism instead:

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[59] Hutchison, *A Compendious View of the religious system maintained by the Synod of Relief*, 5.
[60] Ibid., 16.
[61] Baine, 26.

> We may expect nothing this way, by retailing dry shreds of Heathen philosophy; by empty, though well finished, declamations on the beauty of virtue and deficiency of vice; by fine-spun, abstruse, metaphysical speculations; or even by continual, abstract harping on the laws of God.[62]

The implied critique of the "polite preachers" in the establishment is not too thinly veiled here, but Ramsay goes on to be even more explicit:

> Many public teachers are a disgrace to their office….Light, frothy men, void of every requisite for discharging a ministry, who never had it for their concern to be furnished for their work—thrust into the church, by dint of ecclesiastical, perhaps even civil violence—at the point of the bayonet, in down-right perjury, declaring that to be the confession of their faith, three parts of which, if not more, they treat with scorn and buffoonery. . . .Do they preach Christ? Plato they know; Socrates and Seneca they know; Bolinbrokes, Shaftsburys, Humes, and Voltaires they know. . . .But as for the God-man, Christ Jesus, in his righteousness, only justifying, in his Mediatory offices, in the freeness of his love; efficacy of his grace, HIM they would be ashamed to know!...Preach Christ! Such cant; nonsense; enthusiasm![63]

This sort of preaching apparently appealed greatly to Strathclyde layfolk in the generation after the forced settlements. Cultural alienation may also have played a role; a 1791 satire on the Church of Scotland clergy by a Secession minister notes the danger of theological drift but dwells equally on "The graceful Anglican pronunciation…the placid persuasive address. . . .The preaching, but especially the reading of sermons, transcribed from books, or copied from manuscripts. . .ornamented with a sufficient quantity of flowers culled from the gardens of the poets."[64] Many layfolk in the Strathclyde found preachers of the dissenting churches more faithful both to the style and the substance of their traditional piety.

The presbytery minutes of the two dissenting churches show clearly that their expansion in Strathclyde at this time was not the result of active proselytizing on their part but of demands by "forming congregations" of lay dissenters to be supplied with a minister. The case of Lanark, where Robert Dick had been settled against the will of the congregation in 1749, is an early example. On 11 September 1750, the Glasgow presbytery of the Secession church was presented with

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[62] Ramsay, 13.
[63] Ibid., 45-7.
[64] Bruce, *The Catechism Modernized*, 90.

> a Representation & Petition from the Magistrates Council & Eldership of Lanark representing the Melancholly Situation they are at present reduced to, by the Tyrannical Procedure of the present Judicatories in their furiously carrying in a Violent Intrusion among them. . .and craving that they Pby may be pleased to take their Case in to Consideration & send one of their Number as soon as possible to preach the Everlasting Gospel among them.[65]

The 1760s and 70s saw the Secession (or, as they styled themselves, the "Associate") Presbytery of Glasgow besieged by requests for "supply of preaching" from across the west of Scotland. In October 1764, their minutes record, "There was given in verbal Petitions from Ayr Dumbarton & Straven for frequent Supply."[66] Dissenters from Kilwinning, the Isle of Bute, Old Monkland, Campbeltown, West Kilbride, and Kirkintilloch are also among the groups requesting preaching or oversight from the Secession in the mid-1760s.[67] The minutes of the Relief Presbytery of Glasgow, which begin in early 1767, likewise indicate a parade of requests from local groups of dissenting laity to "take the said body of people under their care and inspection."[68]

Many of the parishes where the fiercest settlement disputes had taken place evince a direct connection to the growth of evangelical dissent in the region. The Secession presence in Kilmarnock dates from 1764, the year of William Lindsay's settlement, and by the 1770s the Seceders had built a church seating 725.[69] Shotts already had a number of Seceders in 1765, and their number expanded after the intrusion of Lawrence Wells.[70] The "altogether politicall" transfer of James Baillie to Bothwell in 1763 offended so many in the parish that a Relief church seating between 600 and 700 was established there within a few years.[71] Robert Small, the historian of presbyterian dissent, writes that after James Addie's intrusion in 1771, "The people of Kilmaronock almost in a body placed themselves under the inspection of the Relief Presbytery of Glasgow," erecting a church with 450 sittings the next year;[72] John Galbraith, almost certainly the elder who

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[65] CH3/146/2, p. 86.
[66] CH3/146/5, p. 2.
[67] Ibid., pp. 5, 28, 53-4, 77, 89, 91; CH3/146/6, p. 45; CH3/146/7, p. 10.
[68] CH3/272/1, p. 22.
[69] Small, *History* 284-8.
[70] CH3/1445/1, p. 22; CH3/146/7, p. 1.
[71] Small, 222ff.
[72] Ibid., 218.

had led opposition to Addie,[73] appears in the Relief Presbytery minutes as "preses of the relief society in Kilmaronock" in 1779.[74] Eaglesham likewise saw the "intrusion" of Thomas Clark followed by the growth of dissent; in 1782 the Seceders built a church in the parish with 480 sittings.[75] In June 1782, the same month that the unpopular William Boyd was settled in Fenwick, the Secession's presbytery records that they "read also and received one [petition] from the Parish of Finwick, for supply of sermon."[76] The late settlement dispute in Campsie parish, in the mid-1780s, saw the elders immediately proceed to set up an alternative church. The Campsie kirk session register notes the resignation *en masse* of the elders in November 1783, the same month as the new pastor James Lapslie was ordained.[77] In 1784 the minutes of the Relief Presbytery in Glasgow record petitions from the "forming congregation of Campsie" requesting preachers.[78] The minute book of Campsie Relief church opens in May 1786 with the selection of elders for the new dissenting congregation. The usual process in Relief churches was for the congregation to choose elders in a special election, but the newly-ordained James Colquhoun asked his superiors in the Relief Presbytery for dispensation to simply name the former elders of the parish church as the session of the Relief church:

> In consequence of a Petition presented by the Rev Mr James Colquhoun to the Relief Presbytery of Glasgow met at Edinburgh May 23^{d} requesting that he might be authorized to constitute Messrs James Buchanan Archibald Brown John Blair & George Brown Elders in the Relief Body and Congregation in Campsie, seeing they had previously officiated in, and formed the Old Session of Campsie.[79]

The lay leadership of the new dissenting church here did not simply overlap with the old regime in the parish church, it was identical with it.

Although a forced settlement in the parish was often the catalyst for the rise of a dissenting church there, some folk Calvinists left their parish at this time because of the broader situation in the established Church rather than in their own locality. Kilsyth parish, which under James Robe had been a second center of the 1742 revival, was the scene of a bitter split in the late 1760s. The Rev. Mr. John Telfer had received a popular

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[73] See, e.g., CH2/546/12, pp. 138-9.
[74] CH3/425/1, p. 93; CH3/272/1, p. 43; Ibid., pp. 60-1.
[75] Small, 140ff.
[76] CH3/146/10, p. 105.
[77] CH2/51/2, p. 1.
[78] CH3/146/27, p. 52.
[79] CH3/1041/1, p. 1.

call after Robe's death in 1753 and worked congenially with Robe's elders for over a decade, but his participation in the ordination of "intruder" Thomas Clark in nearby Eaglesham outraged many in his flock. In March 1768 the Relief Presbytery records that "a Petition from the people of Kilsyth and its Neighbourhood was this day presented by Jo: Rankin & James Miller"—two of Kilsyth parish's longstanding elders. In their petition the Kilsyth dissenters describe themselves as "groaning under heavy oppression through want of gospel priviledges," and the Relief ministers, after examining the situation, agreed "to take the said body of people under their care and inspection and to grant them such relief as we shall find for edification."[80] No mention of the schism is made in the minutes of Kilsyth's kirk session, where the Rev. Mr. Telfer was evidently serving as his own clerk; elders Rankin and Miller disappear in 1768 without remark. The official register of Scotland's parish ministers, the *Fasti ecclesiae scoticanae*, however, confirms that Telfer's involvement in the Eaglesham intrusion "so offended his elders and others in the parish as to lead to the rise of a congregation of Relief."[81] In Kirkintilloch, another parish closely linked with the 1742 revival, the national situation rather than local troubles led to the rise of dissent. Sixty-nine people from the parish, in requesting a preacher from the Relief group, signed a petition which "expressed deep concern on account of the defections of the National Church and the oppressive measures of her judicatories. They also complained of the prevalence of legal doctrines in her pulpits through the thrusting in of a corrupt and erroneous ministry."[82]

One crucial question which faced lay dissenters was whether to seek the "care and inspection" of the Secession or of the Relief. Though both dissenting presbyterian groups identified themselves in this period primarily with rejection of patronage and loyalty to traditional piety, there were meaningful differences. The Secession was a self-consciously backward-looking body, idealizing Scotland's seventeenth-century past and the Covenants. The Seceders regarded themselves not as another denomination but as the true Church of Christ, and they denied that true Christians could exist in other church bodies. Both presbytery and local records of the Secession habitually identify their group with "the Lord's Cause"; leaving the fellowship of the Secession church is described as

[80] CH3/272/1, pp. 19-22.
[81] *Fasti*, 2:73.
[82] Small, 150.

"apostasy." The Relief group, by contrast, appears as pioneers in a kind of evangelical ecumenism—as Kenneth Roxburgh has argued, the true heirs of Whitefield in their indifference to visible church institutions.[83] Unlike the Seceders, the Relief group did not anathematize other churches, nor did it attempt to forbid its members to hear ministers from other groups. Its pastors remained friendly with "Popular" clerics in the established Church, who upheld Calvinist theology and the right of the congregation, even co-officiating at an Edinburgh communion with John Erskine, a leading evangelical in the Kirk, in 1766.[84] When in 1763 Alexander Simson, a probationer of the established Church, accepted a call from the Relief congregation at Bothwell ("that Parish not being able to reconcile their minds to the minister lately settled among them by a presentation"[85]), the ministers of the Presbytery of Paisley were horrified, accusing him of "Divisive Schismaticall and Disorderly courses." But Mr. Simson denied that he or the Relief body were schismatical: according to the minutes of Paisley Presbytery, he "alledged that neither he nor the Presbytery of releif taught any separating principles but that he was only affording a Temporary releif to a part of the Parish of Bothwell."[86] The hope of Simson and those like him was that patronage might be defeated in the future and the temporary Relief churches reunited with the Kirk. The ecumenical spirit of the Relief, and their treatment of church government as a matter indifferent, provoked the wrath of the more precisian Seceders, who denounced the "Latitudinarian tenets" among "those who profess to adhere to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel."[87]

Evidence for how lay dissenters chose between the Secession and Relief bodies is difficult to find. The minutes of the dissenting churches start after the arrival of a

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[83] *Thomas Gillespie and the Origins of the Relief Church in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (1999). The same point was made as long ago as 1843, by Gavin Struthers, the original historian of the Relief church: "It was among the Relief that the catholic and evangelical principles of Whitefield, mainly in this quarter of the island, found a resting place," iv.
[84] Struthers, 202.
[85] CH2/294/10, p. 225.
[86] Ibid., pp. 228-9.
[87] CH3/144/1, p. 92. Though the Relief group is not specifically named, the ongoing jeremiads of the Antiburgher Secession's Synod against "the woful prevalence of Latitudinarian and Independent delusions" clearly have them in mind. (The first generation of Seceders had likewise damned Whitefield as "latitudinarian" after his refusal to regard presbyterian v. episcopal church government as important.) See the remarks on the fast of August 1771: "The discipline of the Lord's house has been unhinged and perverted, and the government He has instituted therein counted a matter of indifferency, not worth the contending about," p. 88; on the fast of April 1772: "Any particular form of church government is denied to be of divine institution," p. 92; and on the fast of September 1773: "many of the generation are worshipping an idol of their own framing under the name of catholic love," p. 119.

minister from one or the other of the denominations, and inevitably they reflect his influence; only a handful contain a history of the congregation before the calling of their new pastor. The minutes of both Secession and Relief presbyteries indicate a severe shortage of preachers in proportion to the extraordinary demand for "supply" from "forming congregations," and some groups may simply have taken the first minister available and affiliated with his denomination. Other lay believers, however, no doubt were drawn to the differing visions of the two evangelical bodies, to the Secession's uncompromising adherence to the seventeenth-century legacy, or to the more catholic spirit of the Relief, who proclaimed themselves no enemies to true believers in any church body. Those who had warm relations with "Popular" clergymen in the Church of Scotland, and those who had been most involved in the Kirk's revival in 1742, may have been drawn to the Relief, reluctant to damn the established Church wholesale. One of the few dissenting churches that explicitly remarks on the choice between the dissenting bodies is that of Campbeltown Relief church, which was formed in 1767. Written after its affiliation with the Relief, the narrative of the church claims that the Seceders "being ready to Compasse sea and land to make Prosylites, sent over some of their Party, to Preach with a view to gain the People to their Party."[88] The records of the Secession group, however, explicitly contradict this account, recording in January 1766 that their visit was requested by "a Petition subscribed by Ten persons inhabitants in and about Campbeltown in Kintyre," who "earnestly Craved that the Rev^{d}. Presbitry would appoint one or two of their Members to Come over & Observe a day of solemn fasting and to preach some Sabaths."[89] Regardless, the Seceders record no more interest in their oversight after their initial visit to Campbeltown, while the Campbeltown dissenters recalled that the Secession ministers "got no Countenance, as neither their Principles nor termes of Communion were agreeable to the people of Campbelton." Instead, "After mature deliberation," the narrative recounts, "they agreed to Joine the Presbytery of Reliefe, and accordingly wrote to them for their Counsel and direction."[90]

The new dissenting churches sought in many ways to retain the atmosphere of the old folk-Calvinist community. Both the Secession and the Relief owed their expansion to

[88] CH3/1421/28.
[89] CH3/146/4, p. 53-4.
[90] CH3/1421/1, p. 28.

their stout adherence to the congregation's right to call its pastor, and the records of local churches show a participatory and egalitarian process that not only matched but surpassed the "golden age" of popular participation in the early eighteenth-century parishes. Unlike the 1690 law, which gave elders and property-owners the right to elect the pastor, with the concurrence of the heads of families, the dissenting churches explicitly vested the power of election in "the congregation." The special role of the "heads of families," so prominent in the old parish system, is absent from the dissenting church minutes, no doubt because membership was voluntary, and servants and apprentices as well as married women might belong to the church independently of the "head of their family."[91] The ordination process in Secession and Relief churches appears hyper-participatory, as revulsion from the rigged parish calls led to votes being taken on multiple occasions, and a second vote by lifting of hands after the subscribing of the written call. Moderators of elections in these churches also solicited additional nominations at the call to ensure no candidates were being excluded: at Balfron in 1752, "the mod^{r} demanded if any in the congregation desired any other to be added [to the ballot] but none being added he proceeded to th^{e} election."[92] At a Secession ordination at Bridgend in 1747, the ordinand insisted on double-checking the written call he had already received at the service itself: "The People that Signed the Call, having, at the Rev^{d}. Mr Black's desire, a-new testified their willingness to have him to be their Minr, by the Lifting up of their Hands."[93] The congregation's ritual welcoming of the new minister, which had died out in the parish churches at mid-century, was retained and received even greater emphasis in the dissenting churches. At the conclusion of an ordination service for a Secession minister in County Antrim, Ireland, "The Modr desired as many of the Associate Congregation as were near to take him by the Hand presently & such as could not do it conveniently then to do it after publick worship was over."[94] As in the parish churches of the first half of

[91] E.g., between 1766 and 1774 thirty-four women joined Strathaven Associate church on their own, not with their husband, CH3/289/1.
[92] CH3/425/1, p. 57.
[93] CH3/146/1, pp. 64-5.
[94] Ibid., 34.

the century, a congregation's inability to reach consensus on a new minister led to indefinite postponement of a call.[95]

Elders for the dissenting presbyterian churches were also chosen directly by the congregation, not by the existing session as was traditional in the Church of Scotland. Several local churches are quite explicit in locating the selection of elders in "the Power of the Congregation."[96] Despite the dissenters' traditionalist rhetoric, the popular election of elders in these churches represented a significant innovation, one creating a more egalitarian church structure. The elders chosen seem to have been representative of the churches' artisanal and middle-class constituency. Irvine Relief, one of the few dissenting churches to record the occupations of elders, identifies them in 1777 as a tailor, a merchant, a lawyer, and several stockingmakers; two years later a wright and a laborer joined the session, and in the 1780s a mason, a shoemaker, and another weaver were ordained elders.[97] The session of Paisley Relief church in the 1780s seems to have been made up almost entirely of weavers.[98] Campbeltown Relief church is the only dissenting church I have examined whose minutes give a clear sense of the social composition of the congregation. At its foundation in 1767, subscribers (i.e., those contributing money) included 55 tenants, 30 merchants, 24 shipmasters, 18 coopers, 15 maltsters, 14 weavers, eleven sailors, seven wrights, five shoemakers, five carters, four smiths, one changekeeper, the town officer of Campbeltown, and a handful of artisans in other trades.[99]

Most significant of all breaks from traditional Scottish Christianity, of course, was the fact that the dissenting churches were voluntary societies. Both churches occasionally expressed anxiety over whom to admit, fearing that members might join for other than spiritual reasons (seeking to escape discipline in the parish, for example) or

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[95] See e.g. the Secession's treatment of the Stirling congregation in the late 1740s, where it refused to allow the majority to call the pastor of its choice while a substantial minority remained unreconciled, warning of the "Overbearing of one part of the Christian Societie upon the other," CH3/46/2, p. 48.
[96] Beith Antiburgher church, CH3/1055/1, p. 39; cf. Paisley Associate's remark that new elders in 1769 were "Chosen for different corners or Quarters of the Congregation, by the people, to whom the Right of Election belongs," CH3/465/1, p. 8; and cf. Saltcoats Relief, CH3/591/1, p. 2.
[97] CH3/409/1, p. 1.
[98] CH3/254/1, pp. 41-2.
[99] CH3/1421/1, pp. 30-7.

bring disrepute on the church. The Glasgow Shuttle Street congregation of the Secession resolved in 1744,

> In regard of the danger of Receiving members into this Congregation whose profession and Moral Character may not be Sufficiently known and th^{r}by a reproach be brought upon the Lords Cause by their after bad and untender behaviour. It is agreed by this Session that none shall for the future be received members of this Congregation, till they first apply to the Elder of their bounds and bring two or three members of the Congregation to attest them to the s^{d}. Elder and afterwards the Elder shall make all Enquiry into the Moral Character and good report of the said person.[100]

On receiving members, both the Secession and the Relief asked the new member to discuss his or her reasons for wanting to join. Though prospective members were evidently not asked, as in the English and American Congregationalist tradition, to present a detailed testimony of personal conversion, they were questioned by the elders and were expected to show themselves "sound in the faith." The session of Saltcoats Relief church in 1785 found it "highly expedient, that those who apply to them from the Establishment. . .should be examined. . .and if they are found sound in the faith, & can give a proper reason of the hope that it is in them, they will be cheerfully received." Those wishing to receive communion with the Relief church, the Saltcoalts elders agreed, should be able to "distinguish betwixt truth & error (in some measure) when they hear it" and be "groaning on account of the sins & backslidings of the day."[101] A number of Secession churches asked new members to profess their agreement with the Judicial Act and Testimony, the official statement of the Secession's founders for leaving the Church of Scotland in 1736. The minute book of the Mearns Secession church records that

> The Session, taking under their Consideration what Method should be falln upon, for the orderly receiving into Ministerial Inspection, of such Persons within the Bounds of this Associate Congregation who hath not as yet formally Acceded to the Lord's Cause, and yet are looking for the good old way, agree'd that all such as are ripe, or clear to make an accession upon the footing of the Judicial Act and Testimony, should compear before the Session and testify their adherence to the same.[102]

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[100] CH3/469/1, p. 56.
[101] CH3/598/1, p. 6.
[102] CH3/227/1, p. 5.

Admission of members is recorded in a number of Secession churches, allowing us to glimpse how the process worked. In Greenock in August 1754, a meeting of the elders includes this note:

> Compeared Bettie Steel & Jannet Wattson to give in their Accession to the Judicial act & testimony. . .being interrogate if they had read and Considered the Testimony to which they answered that they had & having signified their approbation of the same according to their measure of Light & Knowledge and their Resolution through grace to adhere thereunto & being duely attested whereupon the Session did admit them as Members of this associate Congregation.[103]

Likewise, when Janet Brounin appeared before Strathaven's Secession elders in 1767 asking to be received a member, "after several questions were proposed & answered, & her moral character attested, the session agreed to receive her with suitable Exhortations."[104] Some prospective members, whose reasons for wanting to join the elders judged inadequate, were turned away. Cambusnethan's Secession church records in May 1754 that James Okrew asked to be received, but "the Session having heard him Exhorted him to be at pains to inform himself better about the grounds of the Secession and to bring a line of his moral Character from the place where he was brought up as he was a stranger in this place."[105]

Unlike Church of Scotland parishes in which ministers were paid by a legally required "stent" on the parish property-owners, the dissenting churches, as voluntary societies, had to raise the salaries of their ministers. Many dissenting congregations struggled to raise sufficient funds, and pastors' salaries were a source of ongoing friction within the dissenting churches. In some cases, the congregation pressured individual members to contribute their fair share. In Beith in 1766, Robert Fulton was called before the session of his Secession church for "making little or no Conscience to contribute for the support of a Gospel Ministry in the Place"; Fulton professed sorrow and promised to contribute more in the future.[106] More commonly, though, disputes over the payment of dissenting pastors saw a local congregation as a whole ranged against the Secession or Relief presbytery in Glasgow. Both groups refused to send a minister to "forming

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[103] CH3/812/1, p. 3.
[104] CH3/289/1, p. 7.
[105] CH3/1445/2, p. 145.
[106] CH3/1055/1, p. 73.

congregations" of dissenters until assured that locals could pay a pastor what they regarded as an adequate wage. In 1776 the Secession Presbytery met with disgruntled Christians from Cumnock who desired a pastor:

> The Pby conversed with Commissioners from Cumnock about the Harmony of the Congregation for a Moderation, & the Stipend they proposed to give their Minister; the Pby was satisfied as to the first but not as to the second: & told the Commissioners what they thought they should give & desired them to report this to their constituents.[107]

Similarly two years later dissenters in Tarbolton were keen to acquire a minister from the Secession, but their proposal regarding "the Ministers temporal Maintenance did not altogether satisfie the Pby," which informed the locals that "they should give their Minr 60 £ per annum with a free house."[108] Dissenters in Fenwick engaged in extensive haggling with the Secession leaders to obtain a minister in 1785: their original offer of £55 per annum was regarded as insufficient, but locals eventually agreed to a counter-offer of £60 p.a.[109] Dissenting congregations sometimes found themselves unable to pay their ministers what they had agreed upon. James Graham, pastor of the Relief church in Kilsyth, demitted his charge in May 1775 apparently because of his congregation's inability to pay him, and John King's 1779 demission of his ministry in Kilmaronock also appears to be a matter of the congregation's inability to support him.[110] By the late 1780s the problem of dissenting congregations unable to pay what they had originally agreed was such that the Relief leadership ruled that ministers should insist on a legal bond before accepting a call.[111] Their commitment to a professional, trained ministry contributed to the relatively rapid *embourgeoisement* of these churches. Despite the formally egalitarian structure of the churches, "subscribers" (those who contributed money to the construction of a house of worship) inevitably had more influence than devout hearers who could not contribute, and already by 1800 the dissenting churches were associated with a predominantly middle-class and lower-middle-class constituency. The zealous but truly lowly had participated in the community resistance to the forced

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[107] CH3/146/7, p. 35.
[108] Ibid., p. 80.
[109] CH3/146/10. pp. 217, 253.
[110] CH3/272/1, pp. 41, 60-1.
[111] Ibid., 89.

settlements and may have been drawn initially to the dissenters' message, but in the long run the new churches would be controlled by those able to pay their preachers.

For groups of local dissenters who had spent years without a resident pastor, the arrival of a "settled ministry" was perceived as a great blessing. The Secession church in Paisley observed a special day of thanksgiving in November 1769 after finally obtaining a pastor, remarking in their minute-book on "the Lord's goodness to ourselves in particular as a congregation in Raising us as it were out of the dust, nourishing us up for a while by means of occasional waterings from time to time, and then remarkably giving us the Gospel in a fixed way."[112] Nonetheless dissenters remained discerning hearers, and if they perceived their new pastor to be guilty of unorthodox teaching they might call for his removal. A particularly dramatic example is that of the Relief minister in Irvine, Hugh White. White had received "an harmonious & almost universall call" from Irvine's Relief church in 1782, according to the group's minute-book,[113] but many in his flock became concerned after the arrival in April 1783 of a Glasgow woman named Elspeth Buchan, who became the Rev. Mr. White's lodger.[114] Ten days later "M^{r}. White was Decerned to Alter his Doctrine," the minutes note ominously, and at the end of the month the session sent one of its number "to Advise M^{r}. White to send this woman Buchan away."[115] As White became a proponent of Mrs. Buchan's new perfectionist and allegedly antinomian ideas, the Irvine dissenters refused to follow their new pastor uncritically, just as they had refused to accept the authority of the establishment. In June the minutes note,

> M^{r}. White continuing both from the pulpit & private[ly] to propose Erronious Doctrines to the great grief of 9/10 of the Cong^{n}, the Clamour being so very great that the meeting 5 of June Agreed Unnanimously to have an Intimation from the Desk Sabath the 8 June for a meeting of Managers & Elders to be held the 11 June in M^{r}. Th^{s} Francis house & Intreated all might attend being abt. matters of great Importance.[116]

At this meeting the Relief congregation of Irvine decided, as they informed the Rev. Mr. White, that "they would not Continue to hear you in your present mode of doctrine,"

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[112] CH3/465/1, p. 6.
[113] CH3/409/1, p. 7.
[114] Ibid., p. 11.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., p. 12.

drawing up charges of theological error against their pastor which they submitted to the Relief Presbytery.[117] White's errors, according to his flock, had mostly to do with perfectionism, denying that sin remained in the Christian believer;[118] the congregation rather than the ministers of the presbytery appear as the driving force behind White's deposition for what Irvine dissenters called his "Errors & Unparaleled herisies."[119] In November 1784 they called a new minister, Peter Robinson, whose doctrine they found more orthodox.[120]

The Irvine dissenters' aggressive campaign against their own pastor and the minority of "Buchanite" perfectionists among them shows that the explosive growth of dissent at this time was not simply a social protest but was also driven by theological concerns, and both establishment and dissenting clerics might be rejected by the flock if they were perceived to be unorthodox. James Wodrow's letters, taking into account both the offense caused by patronage and the theological fashion among establishment ministers in the rise of dissent in Strathclyde, regarded the latter as the more significant. In 1784 he informed Kenrick that

> Our people are turned wild in their Sentiments about Patronage & the uniform decisions of the Gen[l] Assembly in favour of the Law irritate them more & more. Yet I believe the cheif cause [of the growth of dissenting churches] is a difference in their theological sentiments with their Clergy they get sermons more to their Tast i.e. more calvinistick in their turn, or suited to the books they are accustomed to read.[121]

Increasingly unable to receive the fiery and atonement-centered preaching they desired from their parish clergy, Strathclyde's folk Calvinists established alternative churches to provide them with the divinity they preferred.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

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[117] Ibid., pp. 13-7.
[118] Sensationalist accounts of White and Buchan's ideas were widespread at the time. The young and excitable Robert Burns, who was eager to use the episode as an object lesson in the dangers of "leaving the guidance of sound reason, & common sense in matters of Religion," repeated many of the wilder rumors in a letter of 3 August 1784 and even personally vouched for them: Ferguson (ed.), 1:22. James Wodrow, who shared Burns's antipathy to evangelical enthusiasm, told Kenrick that "their opinions are not as wild as they have been represented," Letter 88, 7 January 1785.
[119] CH3/409/1, p. 23.
[120] Ibid., p. 25.
[121] W-K, Letter 79. Wodrow to Kenrick, 15 April 1784.

The new dissenting churches, like the parishes of time past, sought to bring their members under godly discipline, although their status as voluntary societies changed fundamentally the nature of discipline. At the same time, the presence of widespread, organized alternative churches in the Strathclyde altered discipline in the parish churches in a profound way. The dramatic growth of presbyterian dissent in the region in the second half of the century meant that in many Strathclyde parishes there was no longer one Christian community but several. This development caused problems both for the establishment and the dissenters, and created social space for Scots who declined to accept the discipline of any church.

Discipline in the new parish regime. Minutes at a number of local churches show the nettlesome situations that resulted when not all members of the community were under their pastoral oversight. Both members of the establishment and the self-consciously devout of the dissenting churches fell into sins of the flesh, and when they crossed denominational lines to do so, confusion could follow. In February 1768, the minutes of Irvine Presbytery record, "Thomas Boyd a Married man in Killmarnock (being a Seceder) of his own accord compeared before this Presbytery, and acknowledged that he had been Guilty of Adultery wt Janet Arthur a single woman in Killmarnock." Though Arthur was a member of the parish church, no rumors or reports had suggested her guilt to the parish session before her dissenting partner turned her in. In this case, the establishment found one of its own reluctant to submit to its discipline, while Boyd, though not a member of the Church of Scotland, actively sought to be disciplined by it.[122] More often, however, dissenters refused to be disciplined by the corrupt establishment they had abandoned. In March 1777 Stevenston parish referred such a problem to the presbytery: "Janet Ritchie haveing accused one Henry Finnie as guilty of fornication with her, and th^e^ Father of her Child; That this man being a Seceder had been Contumacious to Two Citations given him to appear before the Sesn." The Church of Scotland had no coercive power since the 1712 Toleration Act, and the Presbytery of Irvine advised Stevenston to summon the fornicating dissenter once more,

[122] CH2/196/6, p. 172.

"and upon his not obeying it, that then they censure th^{e} Woman according to her acknowledgements."[123]

Interestingly, both the establishment and the dissenters accepted the testimony of non-members against their own members. When in December 1772 a member of the parish church of Paisley, Jean Cameron, appeared before Paisley's Secession elders to accuse a member of their congregation as the father of her child, the elders were quick to believe her and to seek to extract a confession from the accused. When William Stewart confessed fornication with her but continued to deny that he was the father of her child, the Seceding elders further "dealt with his conscience," clearly assuming his guilt.[124] The leadership of the establishment in Paisley, though seemingly less eager to investigate alleged sins of the flesh among their flock, could also be convinced by dissenting accusers. In November 1783, rebuffed by the parish church, dissenter Mary Leitch appeared before Paisley Presbytery to accuse John Martin, an adherent of the establishment, of adultery with her, while Martin appeared to deny her charges. Confronted with two male witnesses whom Leitch had named, the Presbytery of Paisley found her accusation proven in March 1784 and "appoint[ed] the man to converse with the ministers of Paisley," though it is unclear what discipline he received.[125] Sometimes dissenting and establishment churches might cooperate, or at least communicate, in matters of discipline. In April 1781, after their parishioner Barbara Kerr was accused of fornication with Joseph Clerk, a member of the Relief church, the session of Kilwinning resolved "to write to M^{r}. Jack the Minister of that Congregation Informing him of what had happened and to require him to take such steps with the said Joseph Clerk as should be most for Edification."[126] In March 1784 the same session delayed taking action in a case of inter-denominational fornication "till it be known what steps are taken by the [dissenting] session."[127] In July 1788 the Relief church of St. Ninians sent a note to the parish church, notifying the session that their member Isobel Forsyth had confessed

[123] Ibid., p. 359.
[124] CH3/465/1, p. 37.
[125] CH2/294/11, pp. 208-13.
[126] CH2/591/6, pp. 14-5.
[127] Ibid., pp. 43-4.

fornication with George Brown of the parish church, and inviting them to "conduct themselves in this Matter as they shall see proper."[128]

The existence of multiple churches and multiple disciplinary regimes, however, also made it easier for accused sinners to slip through the cracks. Some parishioners consciously used the new problems of denominationalism to evade discipline. In June 1785 Jean Cunningham of Irvine was reported to be with child, but "declined to appear," according to the session of the parish church, "on acc^{t}. of her belonging to the Relief congregation, and that she was resolved to apply to them [for discipline]." Two months later, however, Cunningham wanted very much to have her newborn baptized, and, finding that the Relief church (of which she had not, in fact, been a member previously) would not receive her, returned to the parish. Only after her rebuke for both fornication and "having uttered a falsehood, in having alledged that she was a member of the Relief congregation," was Cunningham's child baptized.[129] Cunningham's case further shows the rise of widespread absence from public worship in the west of Scotland: for though not a member of the dissenting church as she had claimed, she was also not recognized as a regular attender of the parish church. A similar case was that of John Connachie, a weaver in Kilwinning parish, whose request for baptism for his infant in 1780 met with the session's indignant objection that he had not attended worship in the parish church for over four years. Connachie claimed that he had worshipped sometimes at the Relief church in Irvine, but could not prove to the parish leadership's satisfaction that he had been a regular attender there.[130] Though by all accounts many in the Strathclyde left the parish churches at this time, it is by no means clear that all these became members of the new dissenting churches. Where in the first half of the century absence from public worship had been rare and sternly disciplined, cases like those of Cunningham and Connachie suggest that it had now become common.

The fracturing of the parish community meant that, although it occupied the parish church buildings and paid its ministers through a tax on all parish property-owners, the Church of Scotland no less than the dissenters had become a *de facto* voluntary community. As early as 1712, the Act of Toleration had eliminated civil penalties for not

[128] CH2/337/9, p. 240.
[129] CH2/1505/5, pp. 31-7.
[130] CH2/591/6, p. 7.

attending the parish church and left the Kirk with no coercive power over local "sinners." Layfolk in the Strathclyde continued, however, to submit themselves to the discipline prescribed by the Kirk with impressive regularity. Even those long recalcitrant typically had appeared before the elders seeking to "satisfy" the session's sentence when they became parents, in order to be eligible to have their child baptized in the parish church. The forced settlements and the spread of dissent, however, brought with them an extraordinary spike in "contumacy" and refusal to submit to the establishment's discipline, clearly visible in extant kirk session registers. In part this truculence may be the result of lasting bitterness from the forced settlements. Even layfolk who ultimately acquiesced in the settlements, had their children baptized in the parish church, and who were regular "hearers" of the parish pastor may have harbored a resentment or lack of respect towards the new parish regime that re-asserted itself when they were asked to submit to discipline. In such parishes as Kilmaronock, Cambuslang, and Campsie, where lairds replaced rural artisans and tenants on the session, social alienation may have reinforced lingering hostility toward the "intruded" minister. Moreover, the social stigma of excommunication from the Christian community was severely diluted by the new ecclesiastical pluralism of the Strathclyde. None of the Strathclyde's churches was coterminous with good neighborhood or respectability as the old parish church had been. Where in the first half of the century only the occasional laird had dared refuse a summons to appear before the elders, after the settlements humble people increasingly ignored a citation to the session altogether. In Greenock parish in 1766, hammerman Niel Turner was summoned to the session for "habitual drunkenness & indecent carriage," but did not appear; further summons failed to bring him to heel.[131] Parishioners like David Kennedy might fail to appear for their rebuke before the congregation with impunity,[132] an impudence that would have been nearly unthinkable in the first half of the century. As "contumacity" to the parish leadership became more common, presbyteries found that their authority was also increasingly flouted. Archibald Zuill of Port-Glasgow, after ignoring three separate summons to appear before the

[131] CH2/872/1, p. 267.
[132] Ibid., p. 287.

Presbytery of Paisley, was put under the lesser excommunication in March 1773.[133] In the same month—five months after being summoned and threatened with the lesser excommunication for fornication and contumacity to his session—John Hamilton of Paisley appeared to express his contempt for the Presbytery's authority: "he declared to the Presbytery that he was asking no priviledges of them. The presbytery therefore upon his obstinacy and Contumacy appearing agree to lay as they hereby do lay the said John Hamilton under the Lesser Excommunication which he has in effect taken on himself by declaring that he hath no regard to Church Priviledges."[134] Paisley Presbytery spent almost two years trying to convince William Pollock and Margaret Kyle to cease living together outside of wedlock in Eastwood. Their threats and cajoling having been consistently ignored, the Presbytery finally sentenced the pair to the greater excommunication in March 1775, but this also seems to have had no effect.[135]

Scottish culture continued to stigmatize women who bore children outside of marriage, and women's reputation was much more susceptible to damage by rumors of sexual wrongdoing. This no doubt accounts for the striking gender disparity in cases of sexual sin in the 1760s and 70s. Women remained much more likely to appear before the session in such cases and to submit to discipline in order to be "absolved of the scandal." Scots like Barbara McMillan in Beith in 1773 might still actively seek out "a course of discipline" to "purge" themselves from guilt and have their reputation in the community at least partially restored.[136] McMillan's insistence that the man guilty with her also be publicly rebuked was in keeping with Scottish tradition, and most sessions at this time continued to assume the truth of women's accusations and summon the men named. Men accused of fornication and paternity, however, increasingly ignored the session's summons; their honor was not impugned by sexual scandal in the same way, and like James Gibson, whom McMillan accused, many now preferred to remain permanently "under scandal" rather than be publicly rebuked. The new parish regime, for its part, showed less diligence in "dealing with the consciences" of accused male fornicators than with their predecessors, rarely calling on such men at home as elders in the first half of

[133] CH2/294/10, p. 448.
[134] Ibid., p. 451.
[135] CH2/294/11, p. 5.
[136] CH2/196/6, p. 306.

the century had done. After their erstwhile partners had ignored repeated citations to the session and the presbytery, scores of Scottish women suffered the melancholy fate of Barbara McMillan, sentenced in August 1775 to be censured before her congregation alone, "according to her acknowledgements."[137] Small wonder, then, that by the 1780s the gender gap in appearances for charges of sexual sin begins to fade, with many women as well as men refusing to appear before the session at all. In December 1781, the Presbytery of Paisley surveyed the status of cases in which the accused had ignored previous citations to appear. The minute is a remarkable document of the impotence of the Kirk's disciplinary regime in the waning decades of the century:

> No Execution against Andrew Whiteill & Margaret Miller, the Appointment continued & the clerk to write. No report as to Mary Miller & the appointment continued. No Execution against Lauchlan McLauchlan & Elizabeth Gray…Summon them to next meeting pro 2do. No report as to Robert Gemmell & Elizabeth Keir. No report as to Isobell Thomson & the appointment continued. No report as to Marg^{t}. Paterson & the appointment continued. No Execution produced against Thomas Mitchell & Mary Allason. The Appointment [continued] & the Clerk to write Mr. Simpson. No report as to Jean Mcallister & Daniel McLean And the Appointment continued.[138]

Not that kirk sessions in the new parish regime had no disciplinary business. Even as many fornicators began to refuse to deal with the Kirk at all, others continued to appear before their parish elders to accuse themselves. From the 1770s these cases multiply rapidly, with kirk session registers noting that the parishioner appeared "*sua sponte*" (of her own will), without being cited or summoned by the session. The growing number of self-accusations indicate both the internalization of Reformed sexual teachings by the laity, and what seems to be a lack of oversight by the parish leadership. It was Isobel Brown herself, and neither an accuser nor neighborhood gossip, who brought her pregnancy to the attention of Kilmarnock session when she appeared *sua sponte* in May 1772.[139] Brown may have feared eventual discovery, but even more striking are the self-accusations of women like Margaret Binnie, who compeared before St. Ninians parish session in December 1775 to point out that she had borne a child "in Fornication" five weeks earlier. Binnie appears nowhere in the minutes before this; the elders seem to have

[137] Ibid., p. 345.
[138] CH2/294/11, p. 150.
[139] CH2/1252/5, p. 96.

been unaware of her out-of-wedlock pregnancy and birth until her voluntary confession.[140] In 1786 John Shard and Janet Dunlop lived together outside of marriage in Irvine for three months without being noticed by the elders; only when she hauled him before the session to claim they were already united in a clandestine marriage did the couple's behavior come to its attention.[141] Such cases contrast vividly with those at the beginning of the century, with elders almost morbidly vigilant for any hint of scandal in the congregation. Not only women, but also men, who might have found it easier to hide or deny evidence of their sexual activities, appeared periodically before the sessions of the parishes "*sua sponte*" to accuse themselves of sexual sin.[142] Many of these cases involved what the Kirk had long termed "antenuptial fornication," usually cases in which a child was born after its parents' marriage but had been conceived before the wedding. Up until mid-century sessions showed an extraordinary attention to cases in which a couple's first child had been born suspiciously early, consulting with midwives for their assessment of the "ripeness" of the child and "dealing with the consciences of" newlywed parents. Extant minutes from the parishes of the Strathclyde show that most parishes in the last quarter of the century ceased to pursue cases of this kind, but some parishioners found their consciences so disturbed by premarital sexual relations that they volunteered themselves for discipline.[143] The Irvine elders in 1784 were beset by cases of adultery and fornication resulting in children outside of wedlock, children who would become dependent on the parish poor funds; they were less concerned with fornicators who had already married their partners. Even as multiple fornicators defied the session, newlywed husband John Gillies appeared *sua sponte* and "acknowledged himself to have been guilty of antinuptial [*sic*] fornication" with his wife Christian Inglis.[144] Strathclyde elders accommodated parishioners like Gillies, who requested discipline for his premarital lapse, though they no longer actively sought out perpetrators of this "crime." The

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[140] CH2/337/9, p. 57; cf. the similar cases of Janet Culbertson in Kilmarnock in 1773, CH2/1252/6, p. 11, and of Katherine Porter in Irvine in 1786, CH2/1505/5, p. 51.
[141] CH2/1505/5, pp. 53-4.
[142] E.g., John Stiel in Shotts, in 1765, CH2/460/2, p. 137; Nicholas Murry in Stevenston in 1768, CH2/336/2, p. 130; Robert Love in Beith in 1779, CH2/31/4, p. 34; Andrew White in Ayr in 1788, CH2/751/14, p. 259.
[143] Almost all of the Strathclyde parishes in this era contain examples of newlywed couples accusing themselves of antenuptial fornication. John Cleland and Mary Wardrop did so in Shotts in 1767 (CH2/460/2, p. 138), William Muir and Mary Roxburgh in Kilmarnock in 1771 (CH2/1252/5, p. 90)
[144] CH2/1505/5, pp. 2-3.

parishes of the late-eighteenth-century Strathclyde included both the scrupulous and the contumacious.[145] The alarming rise in the number of poor people dependent on the parish in the last decades of the century, however, meant that increasingly ministers and elders were concerned not with consciences but with funds.

Discipline and resistance among the dissenters. Traditional discipline waned in the establishment's parishes in the last quarter of the century, with fines increasingly substituted for the full penitential ritual and rebukes more often administered privately before the session than on the "stool of repentance" before the congregation. At the same time the dissenting churches maintained the stringent discipline and public rebukes of traditional Scottish Calvinism, now chosen voluntarily by a self-selecting godly minority. In this context dissenters like Elizabeth Rodger of Kilmacolm might resent not discipline, which she actively sought out in her chosen congregation, but the leniency with which her partner in crime was treated by the establishment. Already before her child was born in August 1783, according to the minutes of Paisley Presbytery, "application was made by her to the Seceding session at the Branch hill in Kilbarchan in order to have the Process discuss[d]." But almost two years after the birth of their child, the scandalized Rodger complained to the Presbytery, no action against the father Matthew Crawford had been taken by the Church of Scotland, to which he belonged. The parish minister of Kilmacolm, the Rev. Mr. Fleming, implicitly concedes her claim that he knew of the charges against Crawford and ignored them, writing in a letter to Paisley Presbytery that, since Rodger had not appeared personally before the Church of Scotland session to accuse her partner, the case was not his concern.[146] The disinterest of Fleming and the establishment is no doubt related to the fact that Rodger's child was not a dependent on parish funds; the dissenting churches supported their own poor.[147] Had she and her child been on the dole of the Church of Scotland, kirk session registers suggest, the Rev. Mr. Fleming might have been more keen to identify (and collect from) the father.

While most parish churches adopted a new leniency in church discipline, some dissenting churches, especially the Secession and its offshoots, created a disciplinary

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[145] On the scrupulosity of the Scottish laity in this period, see Mitchison and Leneman, 76-8. Church discipline they claim, had been "abandoned from the top while still acceptable to the bulk of the people."
[146] CH2/294/11, pp. 255-61.
[147] See, e.g., CH3/465/1, pp. 21, 23, 26; CH3/193/1, pp. 15-6;

regime even more constricting than that of the early eighteenth-century parishes. The culture of folk Calvinism in the Strathclyde had been characterized by the coexistence of popular merriment and godly zeal, as moderate drinking had been allowed at fairs and even between church services, and dancing and reveling at "penny weddings," though criticized in the formal statements of the Kirk, were tolerated by the sessions in practice. The dissenting churches, especially those which derived from the Secession, now formed a more sectarian culture clearly demarcated from the profane festivities of the ungodly. "Promiscuous dancing," card-playing, and "gaming," which almost never appear as subjects of discipline in the early eighteenth-century parishes, frequently draw the ire of the Secession elders. The discipline of such pastimes represents a discontinuity in the religious life of the region, and provoked more resistance than discipline for sexual sins, which members of dissenting churches expected and even sought out. John Lenox, who was called before Strathaven's Secession elders in 1769 for promiscuous dancing, "acknowledged his offense,"[148] but other dissenters were reluctant to accept the elders' rising standard of holy behavior. In January 1771 William Easton became the latest of several Strathaven Seceders admonished by the elders to abstain from promiscuous dancing:

> being interrogated if promiscuous Dancing was to the glory of God, he answered it was not and being further interrogated if thro Grace he would promise to abstain therefrom; Answered he would not promise to forbear the same, being again interrogated why he would not promise to abstain from it…Answered it was not sinfull. . . .The Session finding him prevaricating and having no Appearance of Candor and Ingenuity, aggreed that [the] Mod^{r} should exhort him to lay the s^{d} Sin and Scandal of Dancing promiscuously to Heart.[149]

Surviving minutes of the dissenting churches show that layfolk frequently argued back with their pastors and elders over dancing and reveling at weddings, as they almost never did when accused of sexual sin. This indicates that the restrictive ban on popular recreations, unlike Reformed sexual ethics, had not been internalized by many devout hearers among the Strathclyde laity. In Mearns, where the early "intrusion" of George McVey had provoked a precocious dissenting community, the Secession elders lamented in 1757 that "a great many young people in the congn are Chargeable with dancing &

[148] CH3/289/1, p. 10.
[149] Ibid., p. 17.

night reveling," and resolved that before admission to communion "each person Suspected in the Cong^{n} of being concerned in such reveling & dancing be required to Acknowledge before the Session their Sin & promise thro' grace to Leave off such an offencive practice."[150] There is little in the minutes to suggest subsequent success in convincing these young hearers of the elders' view that dancing was imcompatible with the gospel. Both the "Burgher" and "Antiburgher" wings of the fissiparous Secession indicate similar tensions. In Greenock's Burgher church, a parishioner argued with the elders that he had not been drunk at the summer fair, "only a little merry with Liquor," which he did not regard as a sin.[151] In Cambusnethan, the Secession elders were scandalized when two of their congregation, Gavin Petticrue and Jean Baillie, "had Music and promiscuous Dancing at their Marriage feast." When both were summoned to the session, only the husband appeared; he "Refused to ans^{r} any Question thereanent," and eventually "went off in a fume telling the session he might not stay any longer."[152] Even leaders of the dissenting churches might refuse to follow the new, more restrictive rules about popular pastimes. In July 1777, at the Antiburgher Secession church in Beith, deacon John Muir came into conflict with the rest of the session over his behavior at a wedding. The deacon, according to the rest of the church leadership, "had been engaged in that sinful & foolish Diversion of riding the Breuse," and had also invited his cousins to the wedding "while he well knew that his Cousins were exceeding adicted to the sinful Practice of promiscuous Dancing." Deacon Muir denied he could be blamed for his cousins' dancing, and admitted singing and participating in raucous popular recreations at the wedding "but thought there was no moral evil, nor any thing justly offensive in it." The rest of the session "dealt long with him," according to the minutes, "but without the desired effect."[153] Such incidents contrast vividly with cases of dissenters admonished by their churches for fornication and adultery, in which layfolk are notably submissive and contrite. They show that the religious culture of the Secession was not simply a continuation of the old folk Calvinism but a new religious culture, aggressively separatist, unwilling to compromise with popular culture as the older culture had been.

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[150] CH3/227/1, p. 65.
[151] CH3/1378/1, p. 17.
[152] CH3/1445/1, pp. 30-1.
[153] CH3/1055/2, pp. 8-9.

While many dissenters accepted the discipline of their chosen church willingly, especially when they fell into sexual sin and usually also in cases of quarreling and drunkenness, the voluntary nature of these churches altered the dynamic profoundly. Alexander Love, admonished by the elders of Paisley's Secession church for his drunkenness, was unusually blunt in his threats to leave the church if pushed too far: according to the minutes, Love "said he did not see great evil in geting intoxicate now and then, and that if the session was going to be so strict with him as to call him to account for it, he would have no more to do with us."[154] In the same church some years earlier, John Findlay had resisted discipline for his "Drunkness, Swearing, and abusing his Wife by beating and otherwise threatnning her." Rather than submit to the Seceders' discipline, Findlay signaled his defection by having his child baptized elsewhere. "Upon the Receiving the above [report], the Session agreed to sist all further enquiry," the minutes record, "and further agreed, to declare him no longer a member of this Congregation…and ordered his Name to be struck out of the Congregational Roll."[155] Like John Liddel in St. Ninians, some Scots may have been initially drawn to the dissenters until they faced discipline. In October 1780 Liddel appeared before the elders of the parish church, where he "declared his Sorrow for his having left the Church to which he now proposed to return, acknowledged he had been denied Church privileges by the Relief Cong^{n}." Liddel produced "a well attested Character from Respectable Neighbours" and was re-admitted by the parish, which seems not too curious about the cause of his friction with the Relief.[156] Tailor John Gourlie, who admitted he was "addicted to a habit of Drunkenness," regarded the discipline of Cambusnethan's Seceders as too harsh; he was received by the parish church of Cambusnethan upon affirming his "resolution of amendment for the future."[157]

"Wanderers among the sectaries." Even when the Church of Scotland had retained its ecclesiastical monopoly in the region, Strathclyde's layfolk had been able to hear and assess different preachers, at the preaching festivals that preceded communion and in the rotation of guest preachers during a vacancy. The introduction of multiple

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[154] CH3/465/1, p. 90.
[155] Ibid., pp. 8-10.
[156] CH2/337/9, p. 135.
[157] CH2/48/2, pp. 45-6.

churches reinforced the laity's tendency toward "sermon-tasting," and the initial choice of a church was sometimes revised. The Secession and its offshoots were the most aggressive in their efforts to combat what they called "promiscuous hearing," and the minutes of their churches show that many who regularly worshipped with the Seceders could not be dissuaded from occasionally hearing establishment or Relief preachers, despite the Secession's claims to be the exclusive Church of Christ. Janet Stevenson, a member of the Secession church in Mearns, was admonished by her elders for having attended a service of the "intruded" minister of Mearns parish, George McVey, but she argued back that she "saw no ill in it refused to Answer the Session to give any Satisfaction, which was the result of all his dealings with her." When Stevenson refused to attend subsequent meetings to which she was summoned, an elder visited her in her home, later reporting to his brethren that "she acknowledged that she had offended Man but could not see what offence she had given the Lord. She was dealt with to attend the Session but refused that."[158] By the 1770s "promiscuous hearing" contended with drunkenness and sexual sin as a leading subject of discipline in many Secession churches;[159] though some recognized the sin of "hearing in another Socitie,"[160] many members, like John Fleeming in Beith, steadfastly refused to acknowledge it as a fault. "The Session after several arguments used, & much time spent, in endeavouring to bring him to a sense of the sinfulness & inconstancy of his Conduct therein," wrote the exasperated Antiburgher Secession elders of Fleeming, "finding him strenuous in defending his Conduct, and in a very passionate manner advancing that it was lawfull to hear (what he called) a Gospel sermon anywhere. . .suspended [him] from sealing ordinances."[161]

The Relief church, which became the most numerous dissenting church, was much more indulgent of the "promiscuous hearing" to which the Strathclyde layfolk seemed so addicted; far from making the Seceders' exclusive claims, the Relief body formally resolved in 1773 to "Hold communion with those of the episcopal or Independent perswasion," welcoming non-members to attend worship and receive

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[158] CH3/227/1, pp. 29-34.
[159] E.g., CH3/289/1, p. 27, 35; CH3/1445/2, pp. 150-1; CH3/425/1, pp. 66, 73, 85, 86; CH3/193/1, p. 155; CH3/193/3, p. 3; CH3/1055/1, p. 72.
[160] Elisabeth Smith in Kilmaurs Burgher church, December 1786: CH3/193/4, p. 18.
[161] CH3/1055/1, pp. 79-80.

communion, "upon supposition always that they are by profession visible Saints."[162] True Christianity was for the Relief evangelicals not tied to denominational affiliation but to inward spiritual experience and a minimal doctrinal orthodoxy (members of other churches should be "sound in the essentials of Christian faith" to participate in communion), and the minutes of local Relief churches do not show the obsessive concern with members' "promiscuous hearing" which characterized the Seceders. The hostility of the more broad-minded Relief dissenters to the exclusiveness of the Secession may have been manipulated by some layfolk. In November 1789 Mary Craig, who had been a member of the Secession church in Beith, asked to be received as a member of the Relief church; "she gave no other reason," according to the Relief church's minutes, "but that Mr Mitchell [the Secession pastor] had dealt harshly with her in bringing her to a sense of her guilt in consulting a woman who lived in Kilmarnock respected [*sc*. respecting] some money that she had lost." Craig acknowledged that consulting this soothsayer had been wrong, but preferred to "satisfy" for it in the Relief church, not the harsher Secession. The Relief elders declined Craig's request for admission, finding her reasons dubious. But two months later she again asked to be received, adding that "as she had heard the Gospel Elsewhere, this was a bar in her way [to reconciliation with her old Secession church] for which they would require satisfaction, and that she could not in conscience acknowledge it as a fault." This changed the Relief elders' minds: they now voted "by a considerable Majority" to "Rebuke and Receive Mary Craig into Christian communion with their Congregation."[163]

By the 1780s the religious practices of layfolk in the Strathclyde were characterized by a dizzying diversity, from the many villagers who refused to appear before the Kirk's courts and lived under permanent excommunication, to devout newlyweds who insisted on being disciplined for "antenuptial fornication." Some godly women and men sought to re-create the Christian commonwealth of old in the voluntary communities of the dissenting churches, but a number of them, not necessarily less devout, argued back when their chosen churches tried to discipline them for activities like dancing which they regarded as harmless fun. It is impossible to know how many Scots,

[162] CH3/272/1, p. 26.
[163] CH3/1054/1, pp. 3-4.

like Robert Wishart in Paisley, left the parish churches in disgust but maintained a less than regular attendance at the dissenting churches. In November 1773 Wishart, though a member of Paisley's Secession church, was cited together with his wife Mary Howe for "not attending public ordinances, but staying at home in his house with his family on Lords days." In January 1774 the Seceding elders recorded that Wishart still did not have "any suitable view or sense of the sinfulness of his conduct," and in May the couple was declared to be "no longer members of this Congregation."[164] In the new era of religious pluralism a number of Scots became, like John Bowie in St. Ninians, "Wanderers among the Sectaries." In October 1780, Bowie appeared before the elders of the parish church to request a course of discipline to remove the scandal of fornication with Janet Hay. After the St. Ninians session observed that "it does not appear that John is properly a Member of the Church of Scotland," Bowie "expressed his Sorrow for wandering from Place to Place among the Sectaries and declared his Intention to adhere to this Church." He was absolved after paying a fine of five shillings.[165] Less than a year later, the parish minutes record that Bowie, who "had been admitted to Church privileges on a Solemn promise of close Adherence to the Church," was not "observed to be regular," and was warned to attend worship in the parish church. "John Bowie declined giving any Satisfactory Account of his Conduct," St. Ninians kirk session register remarks at the end of 1781,[166] and the "wanderer" does not reappear in the minutes.

THE BUSINESS OF THE PARISH AT THE END OF THE CENTURY

Seen from the heights of the presbytery minutes, or of Scotland's even more distant secular authorities—the King's Advocate in Edinburgh, the Duke of Argyll and his eventual successor Henry Dundas in London—the forced settlements of the 1760s-80s were the occasion of dramatic but momentary explosions of popular disorder. The region's kirk session registers, however, make clear that these events had a lasting effect, bringing about a fundamental shift in the balance of the two aspects of the parish, as legal

[164] CH3/465/1, pp. 40-53. Interestingly, three years later Robert Wishart re-appears in the minutes of the same church requesting re-admission, though his wife Mary Howe nowhere does so, Ibid., p. 85.
[165] CH2/337/9, pp. 136-42.
[166] Ibid., p. 154.

court and as ecclesiastical society. Although a number of devout locals continued in their adherence to the parish as an ecclesiastical society, many Scots now made their spiritual home in one of the dissenting churches, while others may have made regular (or not so regular) visits to each of the competing churches. Even in localities such as Kilmaurs or Cathcart, where the Church of Scotland as an ecclesiastical society had the allegiance of less than half of the inhabitants, it remained a legal court with obligations to all. Any needy person in the parish bounds might claim the support of the parish (though dissenting churches sought to provide for their own). All those who owned land in the parish—whether adherents of the Kirk, the Secession, the Relief, or none of these—were legally bound to pay the stipend of the parish schoolmaster and fund needed repairs to the school and church buildings. This situation could result in thorny new dilemmas, as when the heritors of Shotts chose as their schoolmaster in 1770 one Adam Selkirk, whom the Rev. Mr. Wells wanted disqualified as a Seceder.[167] Could the parish schoolmaster be a dissenter? Trouble in Shotts was averted when Mr. Selkirk, despite having attended lectures in the divinity hall of the Secession, agreed to attend the services of the Church of Scotland and "follow no divisive courses."[168] But the problem of the Kirk's legal jurisdiction over Scots who refused to acknowledge its spiritual oversight affected other areas as well.

Changing practices in church discipline went together from the 1760s with a profound and growing concern about the rise of poverty, vagrancy, and dependence, visible in kirk session registers from across Strathclyde. The socioeconomic dislocation this reflects is apparently the dark side of the era's economic "improvement," as less productive tenants were removed from the land by improving landlords, or squeezed out by upwardly-mobile fellow tenants.[169] The parish had a longstanding obligation to care for the local poor, but this duty increasingly overwhelmed all other parish business in the last decades of the century. The financial obligations of the parish become the primary or even the exclusive matter of many Strathclyde kirk session registers by the 1780s; as pastoral counseling disappears from the minutes, discipline and church-seating are

[167] CH2/393/4, p. 141.
[168] Ibid., p. 142.
[169] See esp. Malcolm Gray, "The social impact of agrarian change in the rural Lowlands," 52-68 in Devine and Mitchison (eds.).

commuted into fund-raising mechanisms. Spiritual aspirations were crowded out by the most pressing need of the parish at century's end, that of funding and administering a minimal system of welfare in a time of social crisis. In the difficult circumstances of the late eighteenth century, the importance of the parish as a legal court waxed even while its role as an ecclesiastical society waned.

The crisis in parish finance. Extant kirk session registers from parishes throughout the Strathclyde indicate by the 1760s a growing concern about a new underclass of vagrant poor. Urban parishes seem to have seen a sharp rise in population as those left behind by improvement made their way to towns like Irvine, Kilmarnock, Ayr, and even some smaller localities. As early as 1757 the session in Kilmarnock remarked that "the Number of poor in this parish is very much increased by the coming in & settling of great numbers of vagrants & indigent strangers in the place. . .who soon become a very great burden upon the poors funds."[170] The elders of Ayr parish began in 1763 to "mark such poor people as are lately come into town and are likely to be a burthen on th^e place"; such was the concern about the growth of impoverished newcomers that the session decided some years later to support only those who had been resident for over three years.[171] A similar anxiety about an influx of dependent poor is noticeable in the minutes of Irvine parish in the mid-1760s. In May 1765 the minutes record, "The Sess: recommends it to their Several Members to go through their Quarters and enquire what new entrants are come in to the Town this Term, if they have certificates and are able to maintain themselves & Families & to make report the next meeting." Similar searches for new residents unable to support themselves were made in 1766 and 1768.[172] A new concern over vagrancy and incomers appears in Bothwell parish records in the 1760s as well.[173] Such was the anxiety about "vagrant People coming into the Parish" in Kilsyth that in March 1763 the session ordered the minister and clerk to "prepare a Petition to be presented to the Sheriff or Sheriff Depute of Stirling Shire" to appeal for their help in preventing vagrancy. The parish's obligation, both in custom and in Scots law, to support the local poor was increasingly perceived as an

[170] CH2/1252/4, p. 198.
[171] CH2/751/13, pp. 118, 166.
[172] CH2/1505/3, pp. 30, 42, 65.
[173] CH2/556/2, pp. 30-1.

insupportable burden, and Kilsyth as early as 1763 began to explore new ways to rid itself of dependents. Owners of houses were by order of the session to be warned that "by selling Houses or Tacks of Houses that they will be liable for their [tenants' or buyers'] maintenance in case of Illness or incapacity to maintain themselves." Kilsyth session at the same time appointed its treasurer to make a trip to Stirling "to enquire. . .whether or not the Magistrates of the Correction House in Stirling will receive People that are vagrants & scandalous livers upon the Declaration of the Kirk Session of the Parish wherein such live."[174]

While the new economic policies of the improving landlords contributed to a dramatic increase in the number of dependent poor, the hostility of many locals to the new parish regime seems to have led to a decrease in the funds available for parish charity. Many parishes in the first half of the century funded this and other activities by voluntary contributions from the congregation, not ordinarily making use of their legal power to "stent" (tax) parish property-owners. Though not all parishes of the Church of Scotland maintained detailed financial records, surviving accounts suggest great generosity by the people of the parish in the first half of the century, especially during the annual or biannual communions, when the parish typically raised much of its annual income. The kirk session register of Carmunnock records £63 collected at the 1730 communion, £65 in 1737, £67 in 1752, and £81 in 1767.[175] A large urban parish like Kilmarnock might collect even more, receiving nearly £128 in voluntary contributions at the 1724 communion festival. Bothwell raised £124 of voluntary contributions during the first five months of 1750, £72 at the May communion alone.[176] The extant records of many parishes show a collapse of voluntary giving in the third quarter of the century; in some localities this appears to be directly connected with the forced settlement of a new, unpopular minister. Part of the problem was the departure of a substantial number of dedicated "hearers" to one or other of the dissenting churches, but even those who remained in the establishment's congregations seem to have expressed lingering hostility by withholding voluntary contributions. At the last communion festival in Fenwick during the lifetime of the Rev. Mr. Halket, the parish raised £33; at the first communion

[174] CH2/216, pp. 47-8.
[175] CH2/58/3, pp. 147, 274-5, CH2/58/4, pp. 256, 295.
[176] CH2/556/2, p. 120.

under William Boyd, the "intruder" whom the parish had unsuccessfully resisted in 1780-2, the collection amounted to scarcely more than £2, a stunning drop in voluntary giving that surely reflects the bitterness of the community toward the presentation.[177] The parish of Carmunnock did not see a dramatic settlement controversy like that of Fenwick, but it appears to have endured a similarly precipitous decline in the generosity of parishioners after the ordination of Joseph Hodgson in 1776. Whereas communion festivals in the early 1770s had typically collected between £80 and 100, collections under the Rev. Mr. Hodgson ranged from a high of just more than £11 in 1778 to a mere £6 in 1780.[178] A drop in voluntary giving so dramatic and so sudden, which can also be seen in a number of other Strathclyde parish accounts, cannot result solely from economic hard times, but must have been an expression of discontent with the new regime, one of the few means of expressing dissatisfaction left to ordinary parishioners who, for whatever reason, did not wish to join the dissenting churches. By 1780, parishes across the Strathclyde, from villages like Cambusnethan and Kirkintilloch to large towns like Irvine and Kilmarnock, described their financial state as one of "Emergency."[179]

The pastor as bureaucrat. The convergence of a sharp rise in the number of dependent poor with the collapse of voluntary contributions meant that parish pastors in the last decades of the eighteenth century were increasingly burdened by financial concerns and needed to find new ways of funding the parish's charity obligations. Many parishes found a new source of funds in the second half of the century by selling "lairs," or particular plots in the parish graveyard. Traditionally all members of the parish had the right to be buried in the kirkyard, but "ordinary hearers" did not own a specific plot; they were buried near those who died around the same time rather than near family members. The sale of "lairs" in the kirkyard was eagerly welcomed by many parishioners, who preferred burial next to deceased kin, and it provided a new source of income for the parish. Dumbarton, a large urban parish, was a trailblazer in this regard, with the sale of lairs becoming common in the late 1740s.[180] Parish records suggest this

[177] CH2/982/8, pp. 362, 426.
[178] CH2/58/4, pp. 321, 333.
[179] CH2/48/2, p. 32; CH2/1027/1, p. 388; CH2/1505/5, p. 45;
[180] CH2/97/5, pp. 2, 37, 53, 124.

practice became widespread in the late 1750s at St. Ninians[181] and the 1760s in Eastwood.[182] In December 1766 Kilsyth kirk session register records, "The Session appoint the Treas^{r}. to demand pay^{t}. from the Persons who have put grave and headstones in the kirkyard agreeable to a List produced at this meeting."[183] The crisis in parish finance also seems to have prompted the final act in the long process of pewing Strathclyde churches. The division of the church nave by the parish landowners "conform to their several Valuations" took place in many churches in this area in the 1720s or 30s, but the earlier arrangement often left a common area for the portable stools or chairs of the humble. From mid-century sessions began on their own authority to "seat" the area that remained and rent out the session's pews to raise parish funds,[184] often with the explicit observation that by doing so "more gain would accrue to the poor."[185] In March 1775 the kirk session of Dumbarton abolished the "common area" in the parish church with this decree:

> The Session agreed that these who belonged to this Parish, who were not otherwise accommodated in the Kirk, and who were at present in possession of these chairs should be continued in their position upon paying for the year ensuing (the poor excepted) six pence sterling each; At the same time declaring and enacting, that upon the death of the present possessors or any of them leaving the parish, their respective chairs should fall under the disposal of the Kirk Session, and that the whole should be from year to year under the Session's regulation.[186]

At the time seventy-two persons in Dumbarton, fifty-four of whom were women, continued to bring their portable seats to the "common area." "The Possessors of the Chairs" were summoned by the kirk session, "and the above Minutes being read distinctly to them, they were formally interrogated by the Moderator if they chose to submit to the regulations now proposed by the Session?" Three women, according to the kirk session register, objected to the abolition of the common space, though their specific objections are not recorded; "the same was withdrawn," the minute concludes, "upon all

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[181] CH2/337/8, pp. 14ff.
[182] CH2/119/1, pp. 321ff.
[183] CH2/216/4, p. 164.
[184] In Kilmarnock, a trend-setting urban parish, this practice began at the end of 1735. Each December the session appointed a committee "for setting the seats in the Kirk for the ensuing year": CH2/1252/3, p. 348, CH2/1252/4, pp. 10, 25, 36.
[185] Dumbarton kirk session register, CH2/97/5, p. 310.
[186] CH2/97/6, p. 4.

the rest harmoniously agreeing to it."[187] Parishioners who had formerly heard the Word in the parish church free of charge would not be required to pay the session for their seats.

Although some Scottish parishes had already been in the practice of charging fees or "kirk dues" for services like baptism,[188] this seems not to have been common in Strathclyde parishes in the first half of the century, and its introduction in some localities provoked remark. In January 1767 Kilmarnock's magistrates complained that the session clerk was charging people for "Baptisms, Marriage, Absolutions from Scandal, Burial, and School wages," suggesting that this practice was an innovation in the town.[189] Over time, the practice of charging fees for parochial services became accepted, however, and in 1780 the Kilmarnock session included in its minutes a schedule of payments: 8*p*. for a baptism, 2*s*.3*p*. for proclamation of marriage banns, 4*p*. for a testimonial of good character when a parishioner moved to another location, 6*p*. for a registration of death, and 1*s*. to look up records in the baptismal register.[190] Similarly, in 1785 Fenwick parish began charging parishioners 1*s*.6*p*. to toll the bell at a funeral.[191] Many parishes also expanded their lending at this time as a source of income. The practice of lending some of the parish funds at interest was longstanding in Scotland, and several kirk session registers show that loans were given out by Strathclyde sessions in the first half of the century. In the last decades of the century, however, the parish's loans, bonds and debtors become much more prominent in kirk session registers,[192] and many sessions, in the atmosphere of financial crisis, took on an aggressive posture in their lending alien to earlier practice. The session of Kilsyth, for example, after consulting lawyers on a particular outstanding debt, found that "the Kirk Sessions way was now Clear to proceed to every legal step needfull to obtain actual payment," and proceeded to sue their debtor in civil court,[193] a legal aggression without precedent in the first half of the century. Around the same time Kilsyth also prepared to bring suit before the Sheriff of

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[187] Ibid.
[188] E.g., in Kirkintilloch kirk dues were collected for both baptisms and irregular marriages in the 1740s, CH2/1027/1, pp. 235, 236, 251.
[189] CH2/1252/5, pp. 11-2.
[190] CH2/1252/6, p. 120.
[191] CH2/982/8, p. 418.
[192] See esp. the kirk session register of Kilsyth, CH2/216/4, p. 170, and CH2/216/5, pp. 7ff.
[193] CH2/216/5, p. 18.

Stirlingshire against those in arrears for baptism fees and other kirk dues.[194] Kirk session registers from the 1760s show a remarkable transformation, as references to loans, interest, and debts increase as remarks on pastoral counseling and the cure of souls fade from the minutes.

In no area is this transition as dramatic as in church discipline. Though some parishes had long combined counseling and public rebuke with fines in the discipline of serious sins, in a number of Strathclyde kirk session registers there is no evidence that fines were part of the process of discipline in the first half of the century. In the last decades of the century, public penance was increasingly commuted to fines, as parish records show a diminishing attention to the souls of fornicators and adulterers and an increasing concern with the financial support of their offspring. The transition was uneven and inconsistent in most parishes. Wealthier fornicators led the way in offering the sessions money for absolution without public penance—interpreted by sinners and elders alike not as a bribe but as a donation to the poor. In December 1757 the father of fornicator James Noble appeared before Dumbarton's kirk session to explain that his son was "willing to submit himself to the Discipline of the Church," but described him as "indisposed" and suggested that, if the session would "dispense with the public Appearances," the Nobles would "give such a Compliment to the Poor as the Session thinks reasonable to name." The Dumbarton elders agreed that, if he seemed penitent, young Noble could be absolved with a "sessional rebuke" (i.e., before the elders alone rather than before the entire congregation) if the family donated £5 "for the Benefit of the Poor," which in their view "will do more good in this straitened Season."[195] In Ayr when Benjamin Graham was sentenced to public rebuke for antenuptial fornication in 1761, he immediately offered the session the substantial sum of £12 Scots to "dispense with his publick appearances." The session, as their clerk records, "unanimously agreed to the same."[196] The substitution of "gifts to the poor" for public rebuke increased in Ayr later in the 1760s,[197] though sinners without such gifts to offer were still rebuked before the

[194] Ibid., pp. 15-6.
[195] CH2/97/5, p. 311.
[196] CH2/751/13, p. 93.
[197] Ibid., p. 129, 156, 178.

congregation,[198] sometimes in combination with smaller fines.[199] By 1771 a fornicating lawyer in Ayr, James Crawford, could manage by donating three guineas to the poor to be absolved without appearing before the elders at all, admitting by letter his paternity of Jean Rob's child. Mr. Crawford's further request "that my name will not be publickly mentioned as to this affair" was apparently granted by the session after some discussion. Equally remarkable in view of practice earlier in the century is the Ayr session's seeming indifference to Crawford's penitence. Where earlier pastors and elders had spent hours counseling and "dealing with the consciences of" fornicators to "bring them to a sense of their sin," Ayr's leadership in 1771 absolved Crawford without ever meeting with him in person, evidently finding sufficient his written statement that "I sincerely regret the Occasion of this application."[200] The kirk session register of Kilmarnock shows a similar shift in disciplinary practice around the same time. Noting cases of discipline for fornication in the autumn of 1768, the parish minutes describe several sinners rebuked before the congregation, but others, after "declaring their nuptial intention" and paying one guinea, were absolved after a "sessional rebuke."[201] By the 1770s, while some fornicators were still rebuked before the congregation in Kilmarnock (now accompanied by a fine of 5*s*.),[202] many were absolved without public appearances after making large contributions "for the use of the poor."[203] In Stevenston parish, where James Wodrow was pastor, John Cameron appeared in 1784 to confess himself the father of Agnes Auld's child, further informing the session that "he was willing to pay to the poor as was usual in this parish and be absolved from the said Scandal." The Rev. Mr. Wodrow rebuked and absolved Cameron on the spot, again without closely inquiring as to his "sense of his sin" as an earlier generation of pastors had done.[204] When inconsistencies in the treatment of fornicators provoked protest—like that of William Gregory in Kilmarnock in 1785, who complained that he "would as others were in my situation have been absolved by sessional rebuke"[205]—most parishes moved to consistently adopt a

[198] Ibid., pp. 107, 119, 131, 241.
[199] e.g., Ibid., pp. 143,
[200] Ibid., p. 203.
[201] CH2/1252/5, pp. 50-1.
[202] e.g., Isaac Brackis and Anne Finnie, CH2/1252/6, p. 36.
[203] e.g., William Baillie, Ibid., p. 34.
[204] CH2/336/2, p. 31.
[205] CH2/1252/7, p. 124.

more lenient system of discipline based on fines, not public shaming. In a few parishes, like New Monkland, public rebukes and old-fashioned discipline survived far longer.[206] (Perhaps not coincidentally, New Monkland was unusual among Strathclyde parishes in that it had no patron, the congregation having legally purchased the patronage earlier in the century.) But by the 1780s most Strathclyde parishes took part in the monetarization of the disciplinary regime.

Particularly striking in the changing treatment of fornication cases in Church of Scotland is the handling of men accused of paternity. In the first half of the century, men who denied a pregnant woman's accusation, like William Fleming in Cumbernauld or James Thompson in Beith, were called to repeated interviews, both with the full session and with the minister or individual elders, and urged to an "ingenuous confession."[207] Though the parish authorities seem usually to have presumed the guilt of the man named by the expectant mother, his confession was essential; sessions were willing to spend months pressuring, cajoling, and "dealing with" him to obtain it, while the course of discipline for his partner was postponed. Early eighteenth-century sessions had a strong preference for male and female partners in sexual sin to be disciplined together, which they found more appropriate to the crime, and the rite of rebuke could not be adequately performed without admission and penitence. More than this, however, ministers and elders early in the century approached paternity cases as a matter of soulcraft. Male fornicators and adulterers were endangering their immortal souls, first by their sexual sins, then by their lack of "ingenuity." Intrusive as it must appear to modern readers, the relentless "dealing with the consciences of" men accused of paternity by parish authorities was an expression of concern for their perceived spiritual good. The case of William Boyd in Irvine shows how far the situation had changed by November 1785. Anne Boyle had repeatedly named Boyd as father of her child, continuing to do so on her deathbed. Because of her accusations and "other circumstances," the session clerk writes, the Irvine parish leadership formally ruled that "they have reason to believe him

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[206] CH2/685/3. e.g., in August 1780 antenuptial fornication in New Monkland was still punished by rebuke before the congregation, when most other parishes in the region had moved to private rebuke and absolution, p. 197. In August 1782 elders of the same parish met privately with adulterer James Morton and reported on "their Satisfaction. . .as to the Evidence of Repentance," a practice which had largely died out elsewhere, p. 220.

[207] CH2/79/1, p. 3; CH2/31/2, pp. 158-9.

guilty," though he had never confessed and there is no evidence in the Irvine minutes that the elders had "dealt with" or interviewed Boyd. The purpose of the session's inquiry, moreover, was not exactly pastoral, having more to do with "the burden they lie under" of financially supporting the orphan; having resolved to its satisfaction the question of the child's paternity, the session sued William Boyd in civil court to force him to pay for its maintenance: "The Session therefore authorise and appoint Mr Robert Fullarton Kirk Treasurer to commence, & insist in a process. . .for the sum advanced out of the poors funds by the s^{d}. Treasurer."[208] Two years later the same session also sued William Johnston for child support, "whom this Session have reason to believe is guilty" of fathering Agnes Hunter's child, though he had not confessed.[209] Here again the session shows itself keenly interested in the parish's financial state, less concerned with the spiritual state of the accused fathers.

As parishes across the Strathclyde reached a state of financial crisis in the 1780s, such unpastoral behavior became common. In such circumstances, the new parish regime's lack of interest in the cure of souls was not replaced by an Enlightenment humanitarianism: if the immortal souls of fornicators were of little interest to the harried administrators of the late-century parish, the bodies of the poor were a burden to be re-routed elsewhere if possible. Dundonald and Irvine parishes engaged in a sustained squabble in 1784 about which was obliged to support Agnes Sillars and her illegitimate child. Sillars was resident in Irvine when she gave birth, but Irvine's elders claimed that their counterparts in Dundonald should pay for her support, since she had conceived the child there.[210] The next year Port-Glasgow and Irvine engaged in a similarly unedifying struggle to avoid responsibility for Mary Kerr, with the Irvine session threatening to forcibly deport the "object of charity" to her parish of origin.[211] The case of Mary Cameron and Alexander Fergus in Kilsyth illustrates the urgent imperative of the late-century parish, to avoid incurring additional "burdensome" parishioners at all costs. Fergus had never admitted fathering Cameron's child, but the Kilsyth elders showed no interest in his "sense of his sin" as long as he and his mother paid for its upkeep. When

[208] CH2/1505/5, pp. 40-1.
[209] Ibid., p. 74.
[210] Ibid., p. 38.
[211] Ibid., p. 41.

Fergus's mother took the rather extraordinary step of leaving her (alleged) grandchild on the doorstep of elder John Anderson, the elder physically chased Mrs. Fergus down and returned the infant to her. Lest Mrs. Fergus be more successful in a second attempt, Kilsyth session resolved in 1784 that "A process should be Immediatly commenced before the Sheriff of the county of Stirling Against the said Alex^{r}. Fergus to oblige him to Maintain that Child. . .and that the Session and the Public funds of the parish shall not be effected with the Maintenance of said Child." Neither the spiritual state of the accused fornicator Fergus nor the physical welfare of the burdensome infant seems to be of concern to the exhausted bureaucrats of Kilsyth session.[212] Likewise in 1785 the session of Irvine intervened in a child-custody lawsuit between their parishioner Elizabeth Gibson and Hugh Reid of Kilmarnock. As soon as they received word that Gibson had won her case and acquired custody of her child, the elders hired a lawyer to seek a reversal in the courts, since "she & the child will, in all probability, soon become a burden upon Irvine Session. . .unless the s^{d}. Elizabeth Gibson will find caution to maintain her child, without any burden on the parish of Irvine."[213] Nowhere in the minutes do the elders show any sensitivity to the maternal feelings of their parishioner Gibson, or even speak with her about the case.

Extant kirk session registers for Strathclyde parishes from the 1780s contrast vividly with the same parishes in the 1720s and 30s. The registers from early in the century in parish after parish show both extraordinary attention to the behavior of the flock, and a remarkable diligence in pastoral care and counseling. Though the parishes in the 1780s and 90s continued to monitor sexual sins, the other sins which appear commonly as subjects of discipline in the early eighteenth century—slander, quarreling, cursing—disappear from the parish minutes. Likewise drunkenness, which seems to have been a serious problem in the dissenting churches at this time,[214] almost never appears as a subject of discipline in the late-century parishes. This is probably not because quarreling and cursing diminished in these decades, nor because dissenters were more prone to heavy drinking than members of the established Church, but because parish discipline ceased to be concerned with these. Even some sexual sins, like

[212] CH2/216/5, pp. 26-9.
[213] CH2/1505/5, pp. 21-2.
[214] E.g., CH3.465/1, pp. 89, 98, 103, 129, 137; CH3/1378/1, pp. 30, 36, 41, 43; CH3/1055/1, pp. 95, 99.

"antenuptial fornication," ceased to be of interest to the parish authorities, though some parishioners continued to feel guilt over premarital sexual activity and pursue discipline "*sua sponte*."

Church discipline in the Church of Scotland thus changed from an intensely intrusive system, focused on the sinner's internal attitudes and aiming at his eternal salvation, to one chiefly concerned with the raising of child-support payments from those most likely to engender dependent children, *viz*. fornicators and adulterers. The reasons for this shift must remain somewhat opaque, for, though almost universally recognizable in kirk session registers in the last quarter of the century, the new approach to discipline is almost never articulated or explicitly defended. It appears, however, that it was more than a matter of financial emergency. Alexander Fergusson's essay of April 1767 in the *Scots Magazine* criticized the traditional disciplinary practice as well as the traditional theology of the Church of Scotland. The old style of discipline, with its elders ever vigilant for hints of scandal in the congregation, its relentless "dealing with" men who denied a woman's accusation, its scrutiny into the true inner sincerity of those professing repentance, and its public shaming of the wayward, was not only without scriptural justification, but even amounted to "persecution."[215] In fact, to truly verify the inner attitude of a penitent is not only difficult but impossible, according to Fergusson, opining that the old practice of discipline "made many hypocrites."[216] Fergusson's theology was extremely individualistic, rejecting any restrictions by the Christian community or tradition on the individual thinker's "freedom of inquiry after truth," and a parallel individualism may have tended to remove any role for fraternal oversight or correction in the spiritual experience. If Fergusson and the clerical avant-garde shared a heightened sense of privacy and private life that undercut older traditions of discipline, however, they continued to regard extramarital sexuality as a matter of public interest. In a time and place in which reliable methods of birth control were not available, these activities seemed, to enlightened clerics, publicly relevant through their tendency to bring about children who would require support from the parish. Not the fornicator's inner penitence

[215] *Scots Magazine* volume 29 (1767), 174.
[216] Ibid.

(still less public shaming on the "stool of repentance," which Fergusson regarded with disgust) but his willingness to pay resolved the matter.

In matters of discipline, always the primary concern of the kirk session registers, church records from the last decades of the century show evidence of a remarkable shift, one which can be described as the secularization of church discipline, as odd as this may sound. This striking change in Scottish cultural and social life seems to have preceded by many decades the process of "differentiation" of ecclesiastical institutions from secular functions, which secularization theorists often depict as the first measure of secularization.[217] The Church of Scotland continued to be responsible for education and charity, as it would well into the nineteenth century. It also continued to monitor what moderns would regard as the personal lives of Scots within the parish bounds. But church discipline itself was increasingly concerned not with matters of ultimate concern—sin, penitence, the eternal destiny of the sinner—but with social disorder as such and with the needs of Scottish society. Sins which resulted in or were likely to facilitate a tangible cost to the parish as a legal court—especially sex between the unmarried, which sessions viewed as likely to burden the parish with dependent offspring—were of keen interest to the administrators of the parish. Such interest, however, no longer extended to the sincerity of the penitent, even when public rebukes were retained. Financial payment was more important than inner sorrow or desire of amendment of life. It is also quite interesting that very little difference appears in late-century kirk session registers between parishes headed by Moderate clergymen and those headed by the self-styled orthodox.[218] Clerics of the Kirk's Popular party, though Calvinists in the pulpit, appear to have (perhaps gradually) adopted the changes in disciplinary practice pioneered by Moderates like Fergusson. The parish's function as a legal court now took precedence over its second identity as an ecclesiastical society. At the end of the century, piety flourished in voluntary groups like the Seceders and Relief, and also among devout individuals in the Kirk, alongside a curious self-secularization of the social structures which were common to all. This process, much more than the

[217] E.g., see Olivier Tschannen, "The secularization paradigm: a systematization," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 30:4 (1991): 395-415.
[218] E.g., Kilmarnock, where despite the presence of James Russell and (after 1787) James Mackinlay, the monetarization of discipline continued unabated:

Reformation itself, represents the passing of the communal religion John Bossy has described as typical of late medieval Europe.[219]

[219] Bossy, *Christianiy in the West, 1400-1700* (1985).

CHAPTER 8. LIGHT AGAINST DARKNESS

The last decades of the eighteenth century saw the collapse of the "sacred canopy" of Calvinist hegemony in Strathclyde;[1] as pastors were accused of heresy and many of the most devout laity left the parish for the dissenting churches, discipline was eroded and the unity of the Christian community fractured beyond repair. This did not at all mean the collapse of Calvinist belief, which remained quite vibrant in the region; but it did mean an end to the identification of society with the Calvinist religious culture, and of a single ecclesiastical institution with both. In the new world of the late eighteenth century, Calvinism could be (and was) chosen by many, even at the cost of opposition to the parish structure and the religious preferences of the gentry; but it could also be chosen against. In the fractured parish of late eighteenth-century Strathclyde, Scots like John Goldie and Robert Burns forged a plebeian Enlightenment, sometimes under the direct influence of the new pastors. Scotland's clerical Enlightenment, meanwhile, inspired by the liberalizing of Reformed divinity in Geneva, England, and Ireland, would reach an apex in 1786 with Ayr pastor William McGill's *Practical Essay on the Death of Christ*. In this bold if not original work, McGill moved away from the old strategy of omission to argue publicly the views that he and his mentor William Leechman had shared with English "Rational Dissent" for decades; in 1788, in another move to bring the backwards Kirk up to speed with Irish and English brethren, McGill also publicly rejected subscription to the Westminster Confession, as no Scottish minister had done since John Simson's humiliation in 1727—a belated Scottish equivalent to the non-subscription controversies elsewhere. Subsequent efforts to prosecute McGill for heresy recall earlier charges against enlightened clerics like Meek, Addie, and Alexander Fergusson. McGill, unlike these predecessors, found a plebeian constituency. The extraordinary popular outcry against his views, however, with an orthodox "mob" attending the hearings in Glasgow and a public subscription taken up for his prosecution, also shows the continuing strength of the old divinity a generation after the forced settlements.

[1] For this concept, see Peter Berger's older but still valuable book *The Sacred Canopy* (1967).

THE PLEBEIAN ENLIGHTENMENT IN THE STRATHCLYDE

The settlement controversies were followed by ferocious church splits and the rapid spread of dissenting churches in the Strathclyde, creating a space, for the first time, for plebeian anti-Calvinists in the west of Scotland to find their voice. This represented a great change from the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when a clerical Enlightenment had clashed with what appears the unified hostility of the parishes, the somewhat surprising result of Scotland's successful "long reformation" on the one hand and of the attention of clerical elites to a new intellectual climate on the other. Enlightened clergymen like Alexander Carlyle and Thomas Hardy assumed that men of their views would be rejected by a popular vote in the parishes: "superstition" and "dark Puritanical intolerance" were associated with "the giddy multitude," while progress and enlightenment were sure to be advanced only by "men of rank and education."[2] The manuscript records of settlement controversies in the Strathclyde support these assumptions. In every Strathclyde settlement case I have examined in which the prospective minister's theology is criticized, objections are to what parishioners describe as "Arminianism," "Pelagianism," or emphasis on morality to the neglect of the atonement and our need for salvation. The opposite criticisms of traditionalist clergy as "antinomian" or "enthusiastic," which circulated among Scotland's cosmopolitan elites, never appear in parishioners' objections. The smaller number of similar incidents involving incumbent ministers, like Fergusson of Kilwinning in 1767, seem likewise to juxtapose the revisionist, post-Calvinist divinity of the polite clergy and their gentry allies with the starchy traditionalism of the village, or at least of its most articulate representatives. But by the 1780s, two decades after the contentious introduction of the new divinity in the region's parishes, the close association of avant-garde religious views with the social and intellectual elites was breaking down. In the last decades of the century, the provincial Calvinism of original sin and atonement by Christ the sacrificial

[2] These tropes are constants in Moderate pamphlets from the settlement controversies, see e.g. Carlyle's *Faction detected*, 11; Hardy, 16; and Robertson's speech in the 1766 debate over the schism overture, in Morren, *Annals of the General Assembly*, ii:333.

Lamb might equally be rejected by the humble, as men like John Goldie and Robert Burns developed a plebeian Enlightenment which shared and extended the polite divines' critique of Reformed orthodoxy.

A harbinger of things to come was the citation of Andrew Whyte to the Presbytery of Paisley in January 1776. The elders of Paisley parish informed their superiors at the presbytery of "a Report which had reached their Ears," that Whyte, a merchant in the town, "had used most unjustifiable and unwarrantable expressions respecting one of the most capital Doctrines of our Holy Religion vizt. the Holy Trinity in a publick and promiscuous Company."[3] The doctrine of the Trinity had already become an object of ridicule to divinity graduates like Samuel Kenrick and, apparently, of tacit disbelief or indifference among many of the region's clergy, like James Wodrow and divinity professor William Leechman. But I am aware of no case in the Strathclyde before Whyte's in which an ordinary parishioner is cited for dissent from Trinitarian dogma, or from other foundational beliefs of Reformed orthodoxy such as Christ's divinity, his atonement for sin, or the authority of the Bible, all of which it was rumored Whyte had denied. Whyte declined to appear before Paisley Presbytery on his first citation, instead sending a letter that acknowledged he had "used unguarded Expressions" and had a tendency to "speak & argue about the Capital doctrines of the Gospel but never has absolutely denied them but only threw out things for Information." He had publicly advanced arguments against Christ's divinity and against the Trinity, according to his letter, only "for Information," not out of settled disbelief, and conceded that he "might have denied" the doctrine of original sin.[4] The provincial skeptic's long and detailed letter to the Presbytery insisted that "ever since I could read my Bible I solemnly declare I never knew nor ever had any other rule of Faith and Manners but the word of God contained therein." Reading a variety of Enlightenment authors—including John Taylor of Norwich, the proto-unitarian English Dissenter who had earlier influenced the polite clerics—caused him to question, however, whether Reformed orthodoxy was truly scriptural. "I have read several Authors who wrote against the established Religion of this Church," Whyte relates, "particularly Dr Taylor of Norwich which made me doubt &

[3] CH2/294/11, p. 21.
[4] Ibid.

dispute against some of these doctrines." Whyte's letter further claims that he "never did wholely believe" these arguments against orthodoxy, despite his public arguing about them.[5] Paisley Presbytery declined to inflict censure on the questioning merchant but kept the case open, meeting with Whyte in person in March. There Whyte and the clergy of the Presbytery seem to have reached an understanding, with Whyte agreeing to refrain from "disputing and throwing out doubts and objections about Religious questions."[6] The doubting merchant does not reappear in the presbytery minutes.

Goldie the lay theologian and "the unthinking crowd." Only a few years later, however, the Strathclyde saw the emergence of another provincial skeptic far bolder than Whyte, who would voice publicly the views which polite clerics like Leechman and James Wodrow had long held in private. This man, John Goldie of Kilmarnock, was plebeian Strathclyde's first homegrown anti-Calvinist (or at least, the first whose voice we can hear). The son of a miller in Galston parish, Goldie was a polymath, self-educated and self-made; he established himself in the larger town of Kilmarnock as a cabinet-maker, also gaining a reputation as an inventor, mathematician, and astronomer, and finally becoming a successful wine merchant.[7] Goldie in younger life was evidently a strong adherent of the region's traditional Calvinism.[8] It was only after the forced settlement of William Lindsay in Kilmarnock that Goldie apparently began to question and then to attack the folk Calvinism in which he had been raised. According to Archibald McKay, the nineteenth-century historian of Kilmarnock, "About the year 1764, when the Rev. Mr. Lindsay. . .was settled in the Low Church, the religious opinions of Goldie underwent a material change, occasioned, perhaps, by the acrimonious disputes which then prevailed in the district regarding the Calvinist and Arminian creeds."[9] In 1779 the polymathic wine merchant published his *Essays on various subjects, moral and divine*, which scandalized his devout neighbors by its frontal assault on two of the most

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[5] Ibid., pp. 23-4.
[6] Ibid., p. 29.
[7] *Dictionary of National Biography*, 22:74-5.
[8] Though certainly not, as McKay would have it, raised an Antibugher Seceder. Goldie was born in 1717 and thus would have been nineteen years old when the original Secession occurred, thirty when the Seceders split into "Burgher" and "Antibugher" factions in the late 1740s. He may have attended the Secession church in Kilmaurs, founded in 1740, which later joined the Antibugher faction. McKay claims that Goldie traveled from his father's house to hear Mr. Smeaton in Kilmaurs, 154; David Smeaton was ordained pastor of the Kilmaurs Seceders in November 1740, CH3/193/1.
[9] McKay, 154-5.

basic convictions of Strathclyde Calvinism, the plenary inspiration of the Bible and the doctrine of original sin.

Goldie's 1779 *Essays*, like Alexander Fergusson's *Scots Magazine* essay twelve years earlier and John Abernethy's sermons at the beginning of the century, utilize the rhetoric of Protestantism to advance an understanding of reformation quite different from traditional Reformed theology. "Real and unadulterated Christianity" is distinguished from "the doctrines, traditions, and commandments of fallible men," but the final authority here is not the written Word but human reason, "the candle of the Lord,"[10] and the human sense of what is appropriate to "the nature and perfections of the true God."[11] By bringing the Scriptures, the ultimate authority in provincial Calvinism, before the bar of his own judgment, Goldie issued the most radical challenge to Strathclyde's religious culture since the Reformation. Goldie's theology rested on a fundamentally optimistic assessment of human nature and human reason. The basic reliability of reason for Goldie is axiomatic: "Man's reason remains as entire, as it did in the first moment he received it of God," he asserts, without argument.[12] To claim that any supernatural revelation or inspiration is necessary to correct reason is to Goldie self-evidently absurd, like saying a clock "completely finished. . .and properly adjusted" can't keep time "without an additional weight added."[13] This view is the ground of Goldie's arguments rather than the conclusion,[14] as little subject to question in his system as the opposite assumption of the corruption of human nature in that of his Calvinist opponents. From it proceeds Goldie's rule of scriptural interpretation, obviously indebted to Taylor's *Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin* and other English "Rational Dissenters," though Goldie does not cite them. In determining how a particular text of Scripture is to be read, Goldie declares, "we must always bring the text or texts to this infallible test, *viz*. the nature and perfections of the true God."[15] In light of this rule, "We may well doubt whether every part of scripture, separately considered, was given by inspiration of God." Since God's

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[10] Goldie, *Essays*, 37.
[11] Ibid., 5 inter alia.
[12] Ibid., 226. cf. Goldie's position in his 1784 work *The Gospel recovered*, in which he identifies reason as incorrupt and incorruptible: since reason (*ratio*) means right and corrupt means wrong, "corrupt reason" is a contradiction in terms: 32-3.
[13] Goldie, *Essays*, 36-7.
[14] Indeed, Goldie suggests, it is pointless to reason with those who regard reason as defective: 39.
[15] Ibid., 16.

nature and attributes are known *a priori*, parts of the Bible which seem incompatible with these are to be rejected: "whatever [in the Bible] comes short of this quality, in complying and agreeing with the nature and perfections of the Deity, has no authority or right to receive the character, and bear the impression of that divine image."[16] The innate human sense of what would be proper to the honor and perfections of God here sit above all alleged revelations. The inductive theology of Goldie (like that of his polite predecessors Hutcheson and Taylor) reasons from a pre-existing sense of justice and propriety to declare what God must be like, in sharp contrast with the deductive theology of Calvinism, in which God cannot be known apart from His revelation, from which notions of justice and righteousness must be derived.[17] It is, Goldie concludes, a mistake to describe the Bible as the Word of God; rather, "we ought to take everything that is good for revelation," without attributing sacred authority to "unworthy" scriptures.[18] Goldie's confidence in his ability to distinguish the good from the unworthy is total and apparently unself-conscious.

Having dispatched what he styles an "ignorant and superstitious" elevation of the Bible over reason and the human sense of justice, Goldie proceeds to a 200-page refutation of the doctrine of original sin, which he styles a "heresy" and "arch-heresy," "sophistry," a "superstitious tenet," and "a most blasphemous doctrine."[19] The notion that humans are unable not to sin undermines morality, providing wrongdoers with an excuse for their wickedness,[20] and the idea that God might still punish those born unable not to sin is absurd and incompatible with the perfections of the divine nature. It is certain, in Goldie's view, that "God never requires more of any of his creatures than what they are able to fulfil."[21] The dispute over original sin may seem to be an arcane *querelle des clercs* of little practical application, but this doctrine was, as Goldie realizes, the foundation of the whole Calvinist system of salvation: for the sinner's despair over her own ability to achieve righteousness was the necessary precondition to turning to the sinless Christ, dying to take away the sins of others. The "dangerous and absurd" notion

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[16] Ibid., 66-8.
[17] cf. Berger, *The Heretical Imperative* (1967).
[18] Goldie, *Essays*, 76, 86.
[19] Ibid., 123, 144, 115, 197.
[20] Ibid., 142.
[21] Ibid., 195.

that "a person is altogether incapable, and can do nothing toward its own reformation or salvation"—which Goldie calls "much in vogue now-a-days. . .held in very great esteem in the Christian world"[22]—grounded the religious system to which his neighbors were so attached, an attachment the wine-merchant-*cum*-theologian compared to blindness, bewitchment, and insanity.[23] In Goldie's *Essays* the transformation of Christianity from a religion of redemption to a religion of instruction, tacit in the hands of the clerical avant-garde, is finally completed and made explicit. Though Christ is referred to as "our Saviour," his function in Goldie's theology is not to save but "to teach and instruct us," and the man who has done wrong is saved not by Christ's sacrificial death in his place—it would be totally unjust, Goldie insists, for God to "punish the innocent upon the account of the guilty"[24]—but instead by his own repentance and changed behavior.[25]

John Goldie's *Essays* of 1779 were followed five years later by a second volume, *The Gospel recovered from its captive state*, which expanded on the plebeian theologian's earlier work to argue directly against justification by faith and substitutionary atonement. Goldie contends explicitly that it is only "by living conformable to the duties required of us" that men and woman are "accepted of by Almighty God."[26] Here we encounter, as we never do in the settlement disputes of the preceding generation, a Strathclyde layman of humble origins who clearly prefers the new emphasis on morality to what he always labels the "popular" emphasis on "the doctrine of believing."[27] Though Goldie rails throughout at "priestcraft," he exempts from this sin "Such clergymen. . .who openly declare for morals, against mysteries and idle speculative opinions, and useless ceremonies."[28] The exhortations to faith of the "popular priests" he regards as bizarre and absurd, as if a military officer were "beating up in his own regiment, to enlist recruits. . .instead of instructing [his soldiers] in the exercise of their duty."[29] Few passages in Goldie's work better show his entire

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[22] Ibid., 195.
[23] Ibid., 33, 43, 82, 220.
[24] Ibid., 219.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Goldie, *The Gospel recovered*, 23. Goldie's explicitly Pelagian position is restated throughout the work: see e.g. 53, 59-60, 68-9, 70-2, 88-9, 100-1, 161, 170
[27] Ibid., 128 inter alia.
[28] Ibid., 35.
[29] Ibid., 99.

estrangement from the religious culture of provincial Calvinism. He here takes faith to mean intellectual assent to the teachings of Christianity, and is understandably puzzled why professing Christians should be exhorted to belief: but the faith of the preachers' exhortation is not *fides* but *fiducia*, a profound personal trust in Christ and his work on the cross. As for justification by faith, Goldie rejects it in no uncertain terms as a doctrine "devised for the smuggling of ROGUES and VILLAINS into heaven."[30] It is merely an appeal to the morally lazy, "for 'tis a prevailing principle, with the general part of mankind, that they may become rich, whether in spirituals or temporals, at little or no expence if possible"; the preachers of justification by faith, for their part, are like quack doctors, offering heaven on the cheap to those who will but assent to their unintelligible jargon.[31] In fact, Goldie makes clear, eternal life is for those who earn it: the unjust doctrine of salvation by grace through faith "is only to invade and people heaven with those who are worst and least deserving of it. But if these gentlemen [popular preachers] had heaven at their disposal, it would be such a place in which an honest man would scarce either dare or wish to show his face."[32]

Goldie's *Gospel recovered* further takes aim at the other most beloved theme of his pious neighbors, the substitutionary death of Christ in the place of sinners. The pugnacious Pelagian rails against the classic theory of the atonement, shared by traditional Catholics and Lutherans as well as Calvinists, as "refusing God the liberty to pardon or forgive the repenting sinner, that turns to him from his iniquity (which is all that justice requires) under less than full restitution, or more than complete satisfaction."[33] The man or woman who sins can only be reconciled to God by his own "repentance and amendment,"[34] not by the death of a third party. Goldie's rejection of Christ as Passover Lamb is of a piece with his extreme anti-Judaism. In one essay, "The Gospel, no connection with Judaism," he condemns the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures as a farrago of "blood and carnage," which Jesus came not to fulfill but to destroy. Indeed, there is no meaningful difference between Judaism and Paganism, Goldie asserts, since both have the same "mode of worship. . .*viz*. that of sacrifices"; in calling a

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[30] Ibid., 29-30.
[31] Ibid., 73, 130. cf. *Essays*, 40-1.
[32] Ibid., 31.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 170.

sacrificial system "more suitable to be paid to cannibals and rapacious animals, than to reasonable beings," Goldie plainly means his critique to extend to Christian theories of the atonement as well.[35] In identifying the barbaric sacrificial religions of Paganism, Judaism, and Anselmian Christianity, Goldie opposes all three to what he calls "the system of a rational Christian," which is affirming of human nature, fully compatible with reason, and consists almost exclusively of moral teachings and the belief in judgment after death based on conduct.[36] In fact, though Goldie wants to distinguish his "rational Christianity" from deism (which he identifies with an undiscriminating rejection of the Christian Scriptures),[37] his theology emerges as a kind of Christian deism, with Jesus as the first deist, whose role was "to republish the law of nature," and whose teachings "originally contained nothing but rational incitements to moral virtue, free from rites, ceremonies, and unintelligible mysteries."[38] The correspondence of Samuel Kenrick and James Wodrow suggests that many Church of Scotland ministers privately shared or at least sympathized with Goldie's "rational Christianity." But they were too discreet to make public their dissent from the Westminster Confession, which they had solemnly affirmed in order to secure their benefices. It was the humbly born and self-taught wine merchant of Kilmarnock who first made explicit what the Rev. Dr. Leechman and his disciples had long implied, through what Wodrow bemusedly called "the heresy of omission."[39]

John Goldie's theological writings of 1779 and 1784 represent a sea change in the religious history of the Strathclyde, scarcely a generation after what had seemed to be a united village Calvinism opposed the settlement of avant-garde clerics like Lindsay, Addie, and Meek. His represents the voice of a plebeian dissent from the region's provincial Calvinism that heretofore either did not exist or was silenced. Goldie's work gained him great notoriety in the region. "What an alarm has Goldie's Epistle [*sc*. his 1779 *Essays*] made, among those who are the superstitious and unthinking part of mankind!" he exclaimed in the successor volume: "Some, even of their very teachers, most vehemently cry out against and condemn it, who themselves never so much as

[35] Ibid., 294, 304-5.
[36] Ibid., esp. 170ff.
[37] See Ibid., 163ff.
[38] Ibid., 169; cf. 174, 176.
[39] W-K, Letter 84, 22, 28, and 29 October 1784.

either saw the book, heard, or read one page or word of what is contained therein."[40] It seems likely that Goldie was condemned by name from the pulpit, both by area dissenters and more traditional preachers in the established Church in Kilmarnock like John Russell. But, perhaps remarkably, I have found no evidence that Goldie was summoned before either Kilmarnock's session or the Presbytery of Irvine. Several remarks in his work indicate that he was not a regular attender of any church,[41] and the Kilmarnock kirk session register suggests that by the 1780s the body was perhaps too swamped with charity obligations, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and contumacious fornicators to bother citing a local scoffer certain to flout their authority. Despite his self-portrayal in the 1784 work as a near-martyr suffering persecution for the sake of truth,[42] Goldie apparently continued to live in Kilmarnock and to publish his theological opinions through the early nineteenth century.[43] Nor does it seem Goldie's views caused the ruin of his wine business. In 1786 he was financially secure enough to serve as guarantor for the first edition of Robert Burns's poems, published in Kilmarnock.[44] In the late 1780s, according to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Goldie "engaged heavily in coal speculations, by which he lost heavily,"[45] which implies that he continued to have money to invest. The preface attached to Goldie's second work, *The Gospel recovered*, suggests that, despite his quite humble origins, the Pelagian wine merchant had friends in high places, who may have protected him from harassment by church and state. Henry Home, Lord Kames, a major figure in both intellectual life and the King's government in Edinburgh, wrote the letter of dedication, thanking Goldie for sending him a personal copy of the earlier 1779 *Essays* and endorsing the provincial sage's attacks on the "strange and absurd doctrines, that have been ingrafted on the Christian Religion," among which Lord

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[40] *The Gospel recovered*, 107.
[41] As part of his argument against original sin, Goldie argues at some length against infant baptism in *Essays*, 160-9, which all major churches in eighteenth-century Strathclyde practiced. In *The Gospel recovered*, Goldie refers to a conversation he had "being in company with a certain number of what they call presbyterians" (57), distinguishing himself from all three of the region's major churches, which were presbyterian in government. If, as McKay suggests, Goldie worshipped with the Seceders at Kilmaurs in the 1740s-60s, he may not have been part of the parish of Kilmarnock for some forty years by the time he achieved notoriety in 1780.
[42] e.g., *The Gospel recovered*, 78-9, 90, 94.
[43] The *Dictionary of National Biography* states that he published a final work of theology, *Treatise upon the Evidences of a Deity*, in 1809, although apparently no copies are extant. Goldie died the same year at the age of ninety-two.
[44] Ferguson (ed.), *Letters of Robert Burns*, 2:455.
[45] *DNB*, 22:74-5.

Kames singles out "the doctrine of faith, as perverted by many of our Zealots."[46] McKay's nineteenth-century *History of Kilmarnock* confirms the impression left by Kames's letter. Despite the controversy created by his writings, McKay writes, Goldie "lived on terms of intimacy with the most respectable inhabitants of the town. He was also honoured with the correspondence of several literary men of celebrity."[47]

The popular reception of Goldie's first theological work of 1779 may be inferred from one of the most pervasive tropes in the sequel of five years later, *The Gospel recovered from its captive state*, that of the seemingly invincible superstition and bigotry of the many. The 1784 work repeatedly contrasts "the ignorant and unthinking crowd" with "the sensible and thinking few."[48] What Goldie calls "the populace" is portrayed throughout his second work as hopelessly prejudiced against rational notions of the Deity, while the seekers of truth are depicted as a tiny and embattled minority, a righteous remnant. "Truth hath but few friends, when error and falsehood are generally attended by the support of many votaries," Goldie laments.[49] Indeed, he concludes, mankind has an aversion to "being reformed or brought to knowledge of the truth," and in all ages "the voice of the populace" and false religion have been "inseparable companions of one another."[50] Despite his quite modest artisanal background, Goldie's relationship with men like Lord Kames and his constant disparagement of "the populace" suggest that he saw himself as part of an intellectual elite. So axiomatic is the folly and superstition of the many to Goldie by 1784 that the popularity of an idea is presumptive evidence of its falsehood:

> For the voice of the populace being so far from a just character of true or sound knowledge, or of peoples' being in the right, that it will rather. . .bring it into doubt with men of sense, and such as are persons of judgment, than add to its validity: popularity being so disagreeable in its nature to men of understanding, that if a wise man were to meet with it, he would immediately not only doubt, but question with himself of his being in the right.[51]

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[46] Goldie, *The Gospel recovered*, 7-8.
[47] McKay, 156.
[48] Goldie, *The Gospel recovered*, 26.
[49] Ibid., 20-1.
[50] Ibid., 44, 130.
[51] Ibid., 19.

Goldie, an acquaintance and early financial supporter of Robert Burns, is known to scholars chiefly from Burns's laudatory "Epistle to John Goldie," which has led some commentators to overestimate his contemporary influence. Burns describes Goldie as victorious over "Sour Bigotry on her last legs," and "Auld Orthodoxy," which now "fights for breath." Indeed, in Burns's poem, Goldie seems to have vanquished all the enlightenment shibboleths of false religion:

> Poor gapin, glowrin Superstition!
> Wae's me, she's in a sad condition. . . .
> Enthusiasm's past redemption,
> Gane in a gallopin consumption. . . .[52]

These statements, however, are prescriptive, not descriptive. The publishing history of the time suggests that the devotional classics of folk Calvinism continued to be extremely popular. The English Short-Title Catalog shows that Guthrie's *The Christian's Great Interest*, so favored by the Cambuslang converts of 1742, was republished eleven times in Scotland in the last four decades of the century, while Vincent's Catechism went through six Scottish editions and Elizabeth West's *Memoirs* five. James Durham's mystical treatise on *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* also saw five Scottish editions between 1760 and 1800, while the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* was republished nine times in the same period, and the most popular of all, Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, went through twenty-three editions in Scotland. The ESTC suggests no such popularity for Goldie's works, which were never republished. The lay theologian himself concedes in his 1784 work that "only the smallest number adhere to Goldie's sentiments."[53] In view of what Goldie portrays as the irredeemable ignorance and prejudice of "the unthinking crowd," the truth seems predestined to be embraced only by a courageous minority of freethinkers, a kind of anti-Calvinist elect.

Burns the fornicator and "the rigidly righteous." But if "only the smallest number" in the Strathclyde came to share Goldie's full-throated critique of the region's folk Calvinism, the last decades of the century also saw the development of a subculture of men and women who rejected both the Kirk's continuing efforts to bring their sex lives under discipline, and what they perceived as the spiritual pride of their self-consciously

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[52] The Canongate Burns, 566-7.
[53] Goldie, *The Gospel recovered*, 109.

godly neighbors. These men and women multiply in kirk session registers in the last quarter of the century; it is difficult to know how many of their predecessors languished in silent resentment in the first three quarters of the century. The alienation of many Strathclyde families from the parish clergy after the settlements, the presence of competing churches (none coterminous with the community), and the decrease in pastoral care and extended counseling evident in kirk session registers all may have contributed to a rise in hostility to discipline, but it is also possible that the situation simply allowed the expression of an antipathy felt much earlier. Cultural polarization seems characteristic of the time, and may also have contributed to the development of an articulate critique of "the rigidly righteous." Devout Scots in the last quarter of the century were moving to separate themselves from popular culture in ways that they had not previously, a process most conspicuous in the minutes of the Secession and its offshoots. Where earlier the godly had tolerated moderate drinking even on the Lord's day and tacitly indulged dancing and other rowdy popular pastimes, now "promiscuous dancing," card-playing, and the like were looked down upon by the zealous as "not glorifying to God"; those most given to such pastimes may have grown cooler towards the especially pious and their faith in response.

Such men and women found a supremely articulate spokesman in Robert Burns. A tenant farmer in rural Ayrshire, Burns published poetry in Kilmarnock in 1786 and in Edinburgh in 1787 that pilloried the region's Kirk evangelicals who sought to uphold the old system of discipline and expressed a powerful resentment of the self-consciously devout laity. Burns was himself a rather distinguished fornicator, fathering seven illegitimate children by four different women (though his four children by Jean Armour were subsequently legitimized when the couple married in 1788), and he seems to have tangled with kirk sessions in several Strathclyde parishes.[54] The claim of the Church of Scotland's clergy and elders, that their interest was motivated by concern for his own spiritual good as well as the women affected and offspring begotten, was rejected by Burns. Rather, he asserts, the Kirk's efforts to discipline loose-living Scots like himself was motivated by malice, hidden under a pretense of religiosity:

[54] For the best short discussion of Burns's interactions with church discipline in the Church of Scotland, see McGinty, 47-9.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, an' malice fause [false]
He'll still disdain. . . .
They take Religion in their mouth;
They talk o' Mercy, Grace, an' Truth,
For what?—To gie their malice skouth [i.e., give it play or let it out].[55]

It is a curious fact that the presbyterian dissenters, whose numbers were growing explosively in the area during Burns's lifetime, are all but invisible both in his poems and in his private letters. Their message of universal sin and redemption by Christ's death, popular among many in the Strathclyde, held no appeal for Burns; and though they upheld stringent standards of discipline amongst themselves, the Seceders and Relief concerned themselves only with their "regular hearers," and so could easily be ignored by him. Those ministers within the Church of Scotland who aimed to maintain the old practices of discipline, however, continued to regard all residents in the parish as under their oversight unless affiliated with one of the splinter churches. It was men like these, with their vain efforts to uphold the old ideal of the Christian community, who rankled the fornicator Burns and his Sabbath-breaking gentry sponsor Gavin Hamilton, provoking the poet to vilify them in verse. Disciplinarians of the old school among the region's parish pastors were ruthlessly caricatured in poems like "The Twa 'Herds" and "The Holy Fair," while Mauchline's elder William Fisher, for his efforts to hold Burns's landlord and benefactor Hamilton to the old standards of Sabbath observance, was immortalized as a monster of religious pride and hypocrisy.[56]

Burns's hostility extended beyond the guardians of old-style discipline, however, to the religious culture of provincial Calvinism more generally. The very pious among the Strathclyde laity, with their "grace-proud" faces and affected religiosity, were also a target of the poet's ridicule:

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighan, cantan, grace-prood faces,
Their three-mile prayers, an' hauf-mile graces.[57]

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[55] "To the Rev. John M'Math," ll. 49-52, 55-7, in The Canongate Burns, 572.
[56] "Holy Willie's Prayer," in the Canongate Burns, 557-60.
[57] "To the Rev. John M'Math," ll. 19-21, the Canongate Burns, 571.

Burns uses parallel language in "The Holy Fair" to attack the devout hearers of the region's "popular" preachers as "a Chosen swatch,/ Wi' screw'd up, grace-proud faces," and identifies them with Superstition and Hypocrisy.[58] In the 1786 "Dedication to Gavin Hamilton," the poet's wrath is directed chiefly against the Mauchline session's harassment of his patron, but overflows to the more ostentatiously devout among the laity:

> Learn three-mile pray'rs, an' half-mile graces,
> Wi' weel-spread looves [i.e. palms], an' lang, wry faces;
> Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
> And damn a[ll]' Parties but your own;
> I'll warrant then, ye're no Deceiver,
> A steady, sturdy, staunch *Believer*.[59]

And in the 1787 Edinburgh edition of his poems Burns directly addresses those he calls, in his broad Strathclyde vernacular, "the unco guid," which he renders for the uninitiated as "the rigidly righteous":

> O ye wha are sae guid yourself,
> Sae pious and sae holy,
> Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
> Your Neebours' fau[l]ts and folly!

These Scots regard their own lives as "a well-gaun mill," looking down on those like Burns prone to sins of the flesh, though "that purity ye pride in" is due as much to "scant occasion" as self-control, and perhaps equally to "your better art o' hidin."[60] Burns reluctantly submitted to discipline for his indiscretions—in one case, in an agreement with Mauchline's pastor William Auld to obtain a certificate of bachelorhood, lest his partner later claim he had promised marriage[61]—but his poetry provides a voice to the growing number of "contumacious" sinners before the church courts in the last quarter of the century, who in church records can be seen but not heard. His verse shows us a subculture in late-century Strathclyde of Scots alienated from both parish discipline and the religious culture that undergirded it. From his era we can trace the split between "the people of the religious meeting" and "the people of the tavern," a social division in the

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[58] The Canongate Burns, 30, 29.
[59] The Canongate Burns, 127.
[60] "Address to the Unco Guid," the Canongate Burns, 192-3.
[61] Letters 33 (to John Richmond, 9 July 1786) and 34 (to David Brice, 17 July 1786), in Ferguson (ed.), 1:41-2.

British plebs which would become a commonplace of the nineteenth century,[62] but is nowhere in evidence in the kirk session registers of the early 1700s.

From "polite preachers" to "New Lights": the changing constituency of the new divinity. If Burns was in one respect the spokesman for the contumacious fornicators proliferating in kirk session registers in the last quarter of the century, he also represents something equally significant in the religious history of the eighteenth-century Strathclyde. Born in 1759 and baptized by one of the region's leading polite divines, William Dalrymple of Ayr, Burns was part of the first generation raised entirely under the pastoral care of the clerical avant-garde. Both of the ministers of the parish in which he grew up, Dalrymple and William McGill, who joined him in the charge in 1761, were clerics of the new school, staunch defenders of patronage[63] and gently Arminian, even Socinian, in their theology. Burns's poems and private letters reveal, a generation after the great settlement disputes, the development of a plebeian constituency for the new divinity in the Strathclyde. By 1790 tenants like Burns as well as lawyers and literati might reject the "Nonsense" of traditional Reformed theology.

If the forced settlements, orchestrated from the General Assembly by the Rev. Dr. William Robertson and the clerical literati around him, may be read as a program for the re-education and gradual enlightenment of the Scottish people, Robert Burns would seem a sign of its success. He was brought up from infancy under the preaching of William Dalrymple and William McGill in Ayr parish, and his religious views as an adult were substantially the same as those of his childhood pastors, whom he energetically defended from their critics in the 1790s.[64] From Dalrymple and McGill's published writings,[65]

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[62] McLeod, 42.

[63] See esp. McGill's remarks in his 1789 sermon *Benefits of the Revolution*: a great danger to Britain's laudable constitution, according to the Rev. Dr. McGill, is "mobs and tumults," which he observes "frequently rise in opposition to the settlement of ministers, who come in by presentations, as if the law of patronage were the most intolerable grievance. . . .A riotous, mobbish disposition in any people. . .shews that the people in whom it prevails are unworthy of liberty," 17-8.

[64] Most famously in the poem "The Kirk's Alarm," published anonymously in 1789 as a broadside: the Canongate Burns, 437-40. cf. Letters 152, 352, 354, 356, in Ferguson (ed.), volume 1.

[65] Dalrymple: *Christian Unity Illustrated and Recommended* (Glasgow: R. and A. Foulis, 1766); *A history of Christ for the use of the unlearned* (Edinburgh: E. Balfour, 1787); *A Sequel to the Life of Christ, lately published* (Ayr: John Wilson, 1791). McGill: *The Prayer for our Saviour for the union of his followers considered* (Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1768); *A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: Mundel and Wilson, 1786); *The Benefits of the Revolution* (Kilmarnock: John Wilson, 1789).

their close relationships with James Wodrow and William Leechman,[66] and the long-circulating rumors of their unitarian sympathies,[67] it seems certain that young Burns was formed in a Christianity that avoided talk of original sin and the atonement to stress the benevolence of the Creator and the priority of morals over dogma and ceremony. School and home seem to have reinforced the divinity Burns heard in the parish church. John Murdoch, the schoolmaster under whom Burns learned to read, write, and cipher, has also been identified by several commentators as a partisan of the new divinity.[68] The poet's father, William Burnes, who hailed originally from peasant stock in the north of Scotland, pursued a career first in Edinburgh and then in the Strathclyde as gardener and groundskeeper on the estates of the landed gentry. The *Manual of Religious Belief* which Burnes composed for his young son, evidently in the 1760s, combined aspects of the traditional theology in which he had probably been raised with the teachings of Dalrymple and McGill, whom, as several scholars remark, he regarded with warm esteem.[69] The *Manual* upholds a high view of the Bible, uses the language of atonement, and emphasizes Christ's miracles,[70] but also includes a decidedly non-Calvinist passage on justification, basing our acceptance with God on sincere repentance and our best efforts rather than Christ's atoning death:

> It is the glory of the Christian religion, that if we be upright in our endeavours to follow it and sincere in our repentance, upon or failing or shortcoming, we shall be accepted according to what we have, and shall increase in our strength, by the assistance of the Spirit of God co-operating with our honest endeavours.[71]

A tenant farmer, Robert Burns was representative of a social class that a generation earlier had seemed unanimously to reject the new divinity as unedifying, "cold and lifeless," tending to "gratify human pride" and "departing from the doctrine of free

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[66] W-K, esp. Letters 79 (15 April 1784) and 84 (22, 28 and 29 October 1784).
[67] The charges against McGill, stemming from his controversial 1786 *Practical Essay*, were later extended to his senior colleague and staunch ally Dr. Dalrymple: see, e.g., James Ramsay's screed *A clear, scriptural detection of Satan transformed into an angel of light; or, The Socinian creed, as held by Drs. M'Gill and Dalrymple* (Glasgow: R. Chapman and A. Duncan, 1790). The Wodrow-Kenrick correspondence lends credence to these hostile rumors: the friends put McGill in touch with Kenrick's acquaintance, the English unitarian Joseph Priestley; though McGill and Priestley apparently quarreled, neither Wodrow nor Kenrick could perceive how their Christology differed: Letters 89 (Kenrick to Wodrow, 14 January 1785) and 91 (Wodrow to Kenrick, 6 February 1785).
[68] McGinty, 3; McIlvanney, 42-6; Mackay, 35-6.
[69] McIlvanney, 136-7; Mackay, 35.
[70] Burnes, xliii; xlii; xlii, xlvi.
[71] Ibid., xliv-xlv.

grace." Burns, however, befriended young preachers of the new style like John McMath, Patrick Wodrow's assistant at Tarbolton, and praised his childhood pastors, widely suspected of Socinianism, as heroes of true religion:

> O Ayr! my dear, my native ground,
> Within thy presbytereal bound
> A candid lib'ral band is found
> Of public teachers,
> As men, as Christians too renown'd
> An' manly preachers.[72]

Burns was five years old when Kilmarnock rioted against William Lindsay and fifteen when Cambuslang parishioners accused James Meek of heresy; by the time of his maturity, the period of the great settlement disputes was over, and the patronage issue seems to be of no interest to the poet. In Ayr itself, Burns's home parish, the introduction of the new divinity in the persons of Dalrymple (presented by the Crown 1746) and McGill (presented by the town council 1761) apparently occasioned little controversy; the few references to patronage in his poems suggest that he regarded it as an arcane hang-up of an older generation. The most vocal opponents of patronage in 1780s Scotland were the presbyterian dissenters, whom Burns consistently ignores; within the Church of Scotland, it was those most loyal to undiluted Calvinism and rigorous discipline who maintained the objections to patronage, though this was increasingly a matter of rhetoric. The Kirk evangelicals continued to insist that a presentation ought to be ratified by popular consent, but by the 1780s they might themselves curry favor with aristocratic patrons and did not scruple to accept a presentation; Burns mocks one such traditionalist presentee, James Mackinlay of Kilmarnock, in his 1787 poem "The Ordination."[73] The association of anti-patronage rhetoric with the old-fashioned Calvinists he detested made Burns unsympathetic to what by this time seemed a lost cause anyway.[74] Burns eschews the older division of the Church of Scotland's clergy

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[72] "To the Rev. John M'Math," the Canongate Burns, 570-3.

[73] The Canongate Burns, 185-8, esp. ll. 64-72, and ll. 39-40. As Burns points out, Kirk evangelicals like Mackinlay made much of their spiritual motives, but did not hesitate to accept the stipend if they themselves were presented: an interesting re-appearance of the trope of "filthy lucre" from the settlement disputes.

[74] In "The Twa 'Herds," for example, Burns puts these verses in the mouths of the poem's Calvinist villains: "Join your counsel and your skills/ To cowe the Lairds,/ And get the Brutes the power themsels/

into "Popular" and "Moderate" parties, defined chiefly in reference to the patronage issue, as an unhelpful and even obsolete way of framing differences within the Kirk, preferring instead to distinguish between "New Lights" and "Auld Lights." The "New Lights" are identified by Burns as those who aim to "join FAITH and SENSE," who share in his childhood pastor McGill's project of "squaring Religion by the rules of Common Sense, and attempting to give a decent character to Almighty God and a rational account of his proceedings with the Sons of Men,"[75] and he leaves no doubt that his sympathies are with them and not their Calvinist critics. Literacy gave Burns access to avant-garde thinkers outside Scotland as well. According to Burns's biographer Robert Crawford, the young Burns was reading John Taylor of Norwich and expounding him to his Strathclyde neighbors as early as 1780.[76]

Those who had been described by friends and foes alike as "popular preachers," even as recently as Goldie's 1784 *The Gospel recovered*, are here re-described as "Auld Lights." Raised from his earliest childhood in the new Christianity of benevolence and virtue, Burns heard the old-fashioned preachers of other parishes with distaste and incomprehension. The preaching of one traditionalist Church of Scotland cleric in the Strathclyde, Alexander Moodie of Riccartoun, is ridiculed by Burns in "The Holy Fair":

> Hear how he clears the points o' Faith
> Wi' rattlin and thumpin!
> Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
> He's stampan, and he's jumpan!
> His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd up snout,
> His eldritch squeel an' gestures,
> O how they fire the heart devout,
> Like cantharidian plaisters [blister-producing plasters].[77]

In the old folk Calvinism, the preaching of universal sin was the logically necessary prelude to the "good news" of Christ's death for the salvation of the hearers. These preachers understood their message as one of grace for lost sinners: their vivid portrayal of the sinner's fate apart from Christ's atonement was correlative with an emphasis on his

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To chuse their [shep]Herds," the Canongate Burns, 554. cf. ll. 33-4 of "A New Psalm for the Chapel of Kilmarnock," in Ibid., 436, and ll. 122-6 of "The Ordination,"in Ibid., 188.

[75] "The Kirk's Alarm," in Ibid., 437; Letter 373, to Robert Graham of Fintry, 9 December 1789, in Ferguson (ed.), 1:454.

[76] Crawford, 93.

[77] The Canongate Burns, 31.

love and mercy, for the more desperate the condition of the lost, the more amazing was Christ's compassion in dying to save them. To a hearer like Burns, however, who did not perceive himself as lost, this message sounded like one of condemnation instead of love. In a letter of 1787 he referred to "hell-mouthing John Russell" of Kilmarnock, and in a 1786 poem mocked another traditionalist preacher of the region as mounting the pulpit "Wi' tidings o' damnation."[78] Nor did Burns hold in higher esteem the small devotional books of folk Calvinism like Boston's *Human Nature in its Fourfold State* and the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. Though these books continued to be bestsellers in late eighteenth-century Scotland, with Boston's classic going through seven Scottish editions in the 1780s alone, Burns grouped them with the "damned trash" inexplicably popular among his provincial acquaintances in a letter of 17 January 1791, and elsewhere describes a superlative example of folly as "as stupid as Boston's Four-fold State."[79] In a letter of February 1790, Burns explicitly rests his hopes for acceptance with God on moral conduct rather than the bizarre notion of a substitutionary atonement so central to these works:

> If there be any truth in the Orthodox faith of these Churches, I am damned past redemption, and what is worse, damned to all eternity.—I am deeply read in Boston's fourfold State, Marshal on Sanctification, Guthrie's trial of a Saving Interest, &c., &c. but "There is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there," for me; so I shall e'en turn Ariminian [*sic*], & trust to "Sincere though imperfect obedience."[80]

Justification by faith was to Burns an absurd and unjust doctrine, which he mocked in a 1787 letter to Gavin Hamilton[81] and publicly attacked in a 1786 poem. Morality, not doctrine or ostentatious piety, is what counts, and here Scottish Calvinists have no advantage over non-Christians:

> Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
> 'Mang black *Gentoos*, and Pagan *Turks*,
> Or Hunters wild on *Ponotaxi*,

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[78] Letter 84, to James Dalrymple of Orangefield, Ferguson (ed.), 1:94; The Canongate Burns, 31.
[79] Ferguson (ed.), 2:66, 36.
[80] Letter 392, to Alexander Cunningham, 13 February 1790, in Ferguson (ed.), 2:16.
[81] Burns tells Hamilton ironically that the Mauchline session may accuse him of "trusting to, or even practising the carnal moral works of Charity, Humanity, Generosity & Forgiveness. . .neglecting or perhaps prophanely despising the wholsome doctrine of, 'Faith without Works, the only anchor of salvation,'" Letter 157, December 1787, Ferguson (ed.), 1:180.

Wha never heard of Orthodoxy.[82]

Against the Kirk's "Auld Lights," whom he depicts as trying to frighten fundamentally decent men like himself with the bad news of universal sin and hellfire, Burns opposes "Common-Sense." By this the poet seems to mean the opposite of the traditional divinity: the basic decency of human nature, the reliability of unaided reason, God's acceptance of human beings on the basis of moral actions, are understood by Burns to be simply good sense, and "what is not Sense must be Nonsense." This way of describing things seems to be the poet's, not the Auld Light preachers'; I am not aware of any contemporary sermons or writings which attack common sense or reason as such,[83] and Burns's repeated image of the Kirk evangelicals as crusading against "Common-Sense"[84] seems to be a caricature. In his 1787 poem "The Ordination," the religious views Burns shares with the polite clergy are personified as "Common-Sense," who is then subjected to sadistic abuse by Kilmarnock's popular preachers Russell and Mackinlay: their criticisms of the new divinity are likened to whipping, flogging, beating, and torturing "her."[85] The same poem contains one of the few hints in Burns of the importance of the forced settlements in the spread of "New Light" religious opinions. For "Common-sense," the starchy Calvinist villains of the piece lament, entered the Strathclyde with the intrusion of William Lindsay in Kilmarnock, the first of the dramatic settlements in the region.[86]

Though less theologically substantive than the somewhat earlier critique of John Goldie, Robert Burns's attack on provincial Calvinism is significant because it illustrates that the new divinity by the 1780s had broadened its appeal from its original gentry sponsors. The position of Goldie, who was apparently not a regular attender of any church, was that of the consummate outsider, by his own admission a maverick with few converts. Burns, by contrast, remained throughout his life an active participant in the

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[82] "A Dedication to Gavin Hamilton, Esq.," the Canongate Burns, 127.
[83] McIntosh argues that, on the contrary, Popular theologians asserted the congruency of reason and religion: 44-5, 181-2.
[84] E.g., in "The Holy Fair," ll. 142-5; "The Ordination," ll. 10-18 and 97-9; "The Kirk's Alarm," ll. 4-5, and "The Twa 'Herds," ll. 93-6, in the Canongate Burns,
[85] Ibid., 185-8.
[86] ll. 10-11: "Curst Common-sense, that imp o' hell,/ Cam in wi' *Maggie Lauder*." "Maggie Lauder" was a mocking popular ballad from the 1764 settlement of Lindsay in Kilmarnock, named for his wife Margaret, former governess to Earl Glencairn's children who, according to some, had wrangled her husband's presentation: see Noble and Hogg's explanatory note, the Canongate Burns, 189.

Church of Scotland, in spite of his wrangling with various kirk sessions over his philandering.[87] His is an insider's critique, which identifies explicitly with what he calls "the New Light," the post-Calvinist divinity within the Church of Scotland. A generation earlier, presentees like James Meek and James Addie, who aimed to "square Religion by the rules of Common Sense," had aroused the all but unanimous opposition of parishioners who suspected them of Arminianism or Pelagianism. By the late 1780s the earlier identification of what Burns styled "New Light" theology with elite social status, and of "Auld Light" Calvinism with "popular" preachers, no longer seemed so clear. The emergence of men like Burns and Goldie thus constituted the last stage in the fragmentation of Strathclyde's folk Calvinism. The development of alternative worldviews was at first confined to strata of the lay and clerical elites, which became divided into parties oriented to the local and the region's traditional culture (parish pastors; some resident gentry) or to the cosmopolitan (especially among urban and academic clergy and landowners who made their primary home in Edinburgh or London). As late as the 1760s this still appears to be a division within the elite (with the gentry increasingly absentee and increasingly cosmopolitan in its tastes), though it is possible that the forced settlements, with their dramatic threat to local autonomy, actually temporarily strengthened loyalty to provincial culture as against imperious outsiders. In the generation after the settlements the correlation of religious tastes and cultures with socioeconomic status begins to fade, leaving a division that was not horizontal (between classes) but vertical (within them).

To the Kirk's closeted unitarians like Principal William Leechman of Glasgow, the possibility of a cosmopolitan tenantry, symbolized by Robert Burns, might have seemed a vindication. William McGill had studied in Glasgow's divinity program under Leechman in the 1750s, and served as pastoral assistant to Alexander Fergusson (of the controversial *Scots Magazine* essay of 1767 and the heresy charge of later that year) in Kilwinning before becoming the second minister of Ayr in 1761, when his parishioner Robert Burns was two years old. Through the influence of McGill and his like-minded colleague William Dalrymple, Burns was freed from the popular superstition and "dark Puritanical intolerance" polite preachers had once loathed in "the giddy multitude." The

[87] McIlvanney, 126.

emergence of men like Burns among the Strathclyde laity, no longer spellbound by the "bewitching" power of folk Calvinism, indicated to Leechman that he had achieved his goal, which his protégé James Wodrow would describe as "diffusing rational and liberal sentiments of Religion in that corner of the country."[88] But if McGill's Ayr represents the best-case scenario for the clerical avant-garde, in which parish pastors functioned as agents of enlightenment in the backwater of the Strathclyde, kirk session registers show that most pastors of New Light leanings found the parish's charity obligations too overwhelming in the last decades of the century to focus on diffusing liberal and rational sentiments of religion to their parishioners. And when McGill finally published, at Leechman's urging, his *Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ*, advancing a re-interpretation of Christ's death without reference to atonement or sacrifice, the New Lights found that their success was not as general as they had hoped.

CODA: THE McGILL AFFAIR

The controversy that erupted over Ayr pastor William McGill's book *A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ* in 1789 may serve as a coda for the history of religious cultures in eighteenth-century Strathclyde. For if in some ways the case seems all too familiar, with echoes of the charges against clerical predecessors like Fergusson in 1767 and Leechman in 1743, the McGill case illustrates both the dramatic changes in the last quarter of the century and their limits.

Leechman himself, doyen of the new divinity, whom James Wodrow called "our valuable master,"[89] played an important role in convincing McGill to publish the book. As the only professor of divinity at Glasgow from 1744 to 1761, and as Principal of the University with an active interest in its divinity program thereafter, Leechman had been a seminal influence on most of the controversial presentees of the great settlement disputes. The Reverend Doctor was himself no stranger to controversy, his original appointment in 1744 having been challenged by charges of heterodoxy. Leechman's lifelong practice of esoteric theology makes it difficult to reconstruct his true views. Two volumes of his

[88] Wodrow, "Life," in Leechman, *Sermons*, 1:70.
[89] W-K, Letter 126 (9 January 1787), Letter 80 (2 June 1784).

sermons, edited by Wodrow after his death, stress morality and warn against enthusiasm, avoiding themes like the atonement and Christ's divinity while being careful not to deny them. Leechman twice subscribed the Westminster Confession of Faith, but, according to his friend and protégé Wodrow, privately disdained what he called "the Athanasian doctrines,"[90] and had apparently done so since at least the 1740s. The stridently unitarian Kenrick remarked to Wodrow that he had never heard or read any satisfactory discussion of the death of Christ, except "the hints our worthy Principal gave us long ago in his lectures."[91] By 1784, the elderly Principal had come to hope that Scotland might finally be ripe for an open revision of doctrine. He urged his former student McGill, pastor of Ayr, to publish a treatise already circulating in manuscript among the polite clergy, which advanced a re-interpretation of Christ's death without the language of atonement or sacrifice. The Rev. Dr. Leechman, 78 years old and in declining health, "is earnest to have My friends book published," Wodrow wrote Kenrick in October 1784: "says he has but a short time now to live and woud wish to see a book upon that plan published from this Country before he die."[92]

The book itself, *A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ*, Wodrow called "excellent & much supperior to anything I have ever seen on the subject" in the same letter. Published in 1786, after some cold feet on the part of the printer, with William McGill's name on the title page, the book presented Christ's death as a human death and his righteousness as an example for imitation, not a propitiatory sacrifice. Traditional Christian language about salvation by Christ's blood, McGill explains, is figurative. A military hero is said to "saved his country at the price of his blood," though it was not his death *per se* but his dying military exploits which save his countrymen. In the same way, we are saved by the righteous living which Christ's holy conduct inspires, not by his death "simply and separately considered."[93] Christ's death in folk Calvinism had been the goal of his mission, for by it he voluntarily paid the debt owed by sinners, commuting to believers his righteousness in a "happy exchange" as he endured the sufferings they had earned. McGill's god, however, desires repentance, not the sacrifice of the innocent

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[90] Ibid., Letter 84 (22, 28, 29 October 1784).
[91] Ibid., Letter 85 (2-3 December 1784).
[92] Ibid., Letter 84 (22, 28, 29 October 1784).
[93] McGill, *Practical Essay*, 324-7. cf. the parallel argument of John Taylor's *Paraphrase with Notes on the Epistle to the Romans*, Chapter VIII.

substitute, and his Christ might have accomplished his ministry equally well without dying at all. "To suffer many indignities in the world, and to die on a cross, were not the chief and ultimate ends of our SAVIOUR's mission," McGill writes, "nor any direct end of it at all, but only incidental calamities. . . .The direct and immediate end of his mission, was to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, or reveal the Will of GOD," that is, moral living, and repentance and amendment of life for those who have erred.[94] Insofar as Christ's death can be said to accomplish salvation, it does so subjectively, by changing the attitudes of believers, rather than objectively, by satisfying the justice of God: "Does it not forcibly persuade us to forsake all sin, and to present ourselves as living sacrifices unto GOD? Does it not kindle in us some zeal for the duties of a humble piety and benevolence, and all good works?"[95] Though McGill avoided the issue of Christ's divinity, and refrained from the more polemical attacks on the atonement which the combative layman Goldie had made a few years earlier, his work is like Goldie's an effort to excise from Christianity what he regarded as the superstitious and barbaric notion of substitutionary atonement.

What is most striking about the McGill case is that charges were not brought against the Ayr pastor until April 1789, over two years after the publication of the *Practical Essay*. The Rev. Dr. McGill was well-established in the town of Ayr, where he was widely respected—his original settlement in 1761, by presentation from the town council, seems to have provoked no local controversy[96]—and he enjoyed the cordial support of the magistrates, his senior colleague William Dalrymple, and his elders.[97] Many of the clergymen in the region in fact agreed with McGill's *Essay*: "the moderate clergy," Wodrow told Kenrick in January 1787, "are much pleased with it." Not so the minority of "Auld Lights" in the Church of Scotland clergy, as Wodrow described in the same letter: "They have been thundering anathemas against it, in the pulpit of Kilmarnock particularly a very young & very popular Brother lately ordained there a M^{r}. Mackinley. . .who called it from the Pulpit a refuge of Lies."[98] Rumors that a heresy accusation might be brought against McGill in the church courts reached Wodrow as

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[94] Ibid., 245.
[95] Ibid., 331-2.
[96] CH2/751/13, p. 90.
[97] CH2/751/14, pp. 290-2.
[98] W-K, Letter 126 (9 January 1787).

early as January 1787, and were still circulating in November, when McGill's erstwhile parishioner Robert Burns referred in a letter to "the prosecution which I hear the Erebean Fanatics are projecting against my learned and truly worthy frined, D^{r} M'Gill."[99] But neither Mackinlay nor any other of what Wodrow called "the orthodox Clergy" filed charges in the ecclesiastical courts that year. The Kirk's Auld Lights were in part responding to rumblings from the dissenting quarter—"all the Abuse that was cast upon [McGill] in the pamphlets of the Seceding & Relief Brethren"[100]—condemning both his re-interpretation of Christ's death and the Church of Scotland, which countenanced his views if it allowed him to remain a minister. Kirk evangelicals like Mackinlay were, like their revivalist predecessors McCulloch and Robe fifty years earlier, competing directly with the dissenting preachers for the same audience, the fervently Calvinist layfolk of Strathclyde; they could ill afford to be seen as soft as Socinianism. The establishment's own laity was also active in complaining about McGill's book. Wodrow wrote Kenrick in June 1787,

> The Mod^{r}. of the Genl. Ass^{ly}. was pestered with anonimous Letters almost every day relative to this obnoxious book, some of them in the stile of Irony & poor wit, others of them serious, all attempting to roup the zeal of the Lukewarm leaders of that court, but the time seems now to be past for this sort of Persecution.[101]

As 1787 and then 1788 passed without the rumored heresy charges being filed, it began to appear that the Rev. Dr. Leechman, who had died in December 1785, had been right—that the time had finally come for the New Lights to advocate their views openly, not privately as Leechman had done for so long, nor in anonymous essays like Alexander Fergusson. It was only in 1789, after a further exchange with his Auld Light neighbor William Peebles of Newton-upon-Ayr, that the spectre of heresy trials made their final appearance in eighteenth-century Scotland. McGill, in indignantly defending himself from the rather oblique criticism of Peebles,[102] all but admitted that he did not believe in the Westminster Confession of Faith, equated the Church of Scotland's requirement that

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[99] Ferguson (ed.), 1:175.
[100] W-K, Letter 146 (8 March 1789).
[101] Ibid., Letter 130 (15 June 1787).
[102] Peebles nowhere criticizes McGill or the *Practical Essay* by name. A footnote on p. 36 refers to "a late publication" from which orthodox doctrines must be defended. The passage that apparently so offended McGill is on pp. 34-5: "Not a few in this country hold the Confession of faith in the highest contempt, and pour out the greatest abuse on all who adhere to it…Alas! my brethren, they are not open separatists from this Church—they dwell in her bosom."

its ministers affirm the Confession with the inquisition, and argued that, given the tyrannical circumstances, it was justified for Church of Scotland ministers to affirm the Confession without believing it—or, as he put it, believing it "in a reasonable, qualified sense."[103] This proved to be too much. McGill was now "the object of Popular Odium in the West of Scotland," Wodrow informed Kenrick, and the Kirk evangelicals could not afford the further defection of Calvinist layfolk they feared would follow if they did not disassociate themselves from the Ayr pastor.

The Synod of Glasgow's Committee on Overtures informed the body in April 1789 that "there is a *Fama Clamosa* that certain Books which have been published by the Rev^{d}. D^{r}. William McGill. . .contain Doctrines contrary to the Word of God, the Confession of faith, & his ordination Vows."[104] The initial complaint did not seek any specific outcome, but asked the Synod to "take this Matter into their serious Consideration & make such Inquiry into the grounds thereof as to them shall seem proper."[105] More cosmopolitan Scots agreed in viewing the investigation of McGill for heresy as shockingly backward and embarrassing in an enlightened age, but disagreed about where to fix the blame. The excitable Burns, who was attached to the rhetoric of priestcraft and had his own reasons for hating the Kirk's clerical disciplinarians, blamed the inquiry on the Auld Light clergy—"a few bigotted Priests," he wrote in August 1789;[106] McGill himself blamed his woes on a conspiracy of dissenters,[107] apparently unable to believe that the charges could arise from within the Church of Scotland unless by the interference of "outside agitators." James Wodrow, however, portrays the investigation as driven by Church of Scotland layfolk. The meeting of the Synod at which the complaint was filed, in April 1789, was attended by an unusual—and, to Wodrow, suspicious—number of elders. Though by law each parish could send one elder to meetings of the presbytery and synod, elders did not normally attend, allowing clerics to determine the decisions of the church courts. At the meeting at which the process against McGill was raised, Wodrow fumes to Kenrick, "Between 30 & 40 Country Elders were carried away from their ploughing & harrowing their grounds to the

[103] McGill, *Benefits*, 32, 40, 42-3, 45.
[104] CH2/464/4, p. 242.
[105] Ibid., 242-3.
[106] Ferguson (ed.), 433-4.
[107] NAS, GD51/9/22, McGill to Henry Dundas, 15 January 1791.

Synod at Glasgow."[108] It was their votes that defeated the motion made by the Rev. Mr. James Meek of Cambuslang to throw out the complaint entirely as "inexpedient and incompetent" (as his parishioners' charges against him had been in 1774).[109] Like John Warner's session at Kilbarchan, the elders of the Strathclyde had retained the old faith within the Church of Scotland; though willing to tolerate the omission of their favorite themes of atonement and redemption, they would not brook McGill's open disavowal of them. Throughout his descriptions of the process to Kenrick, Wodrow portrays hostility to McGill as driven by the elders, "the rotten part of our constitution," with friendly ministers trying to rescue the Reverend Doctor from "the fanaticism in the City & neighbourhood of Glasgow supported by Country Elders."[110] The autumn meeting of the Synod in Glasgow was described by Wodrow as taking place in the midst of a "Mob…raised to a pitch of Enthusiasm" against McGill.[111]

Wodrow twenty years before had managed the defense of Alexander Fergusson of Kilwinning, bamboozling his plebeian accuser with technicalities and procedural rules.[112] He now seems to have performed a similar service for McGill,[113] though made more difficult by a much hotter public outcry and the determination of the Auld Light clergy to inflict some censure. The investigation, which Burns described as a "persecution," appeared to Calvinists like James Robertson as a "FAMOUS FARCE."[114] For a year, church courts at different levels took it in turn to refer the charges to one another and evade final judgment, and a variety of committees were appointed to further study the matter, while McGill labeled his adversaries "Inquisitors" and threatened to sue them in civil court for defamation of character.[115] At the General Assembly, McGill's defenders warned that if any inquiry was to be ordered, "all end would be put to the progress of literature in the eighteenth century," and that an official examination of the pastor's orthodoxy would "greatly disturb the peace and quiet of the country, already too much

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[108] W-K, Letter 148 (20 May 1789).
[109] CH2/464/4, 243.
[110] W-K, Letter 149 (5 August 1789).
[111] Ibid., Letter 151 (9 November 1789).
[112] Ibid., Letter 45 (25 January 1769).
[113] W-K, Letter 151 (9 November 1789), tells Kenrick that he has been "very busy. . .partly with D^{r}. Macgill's cause."
[114] Robertson, 26.
[115] CH2/532/8, pp. 453, 458.

inflamed, and very incompetent to judge of religious controversies."[116] The final outcome was something of a compromise. McGill in April 1790 submitted what was billed as an apology and retraction, though, as Wodrow privately insisted to Kenrick, it was not much of one.[117] "I am extremely sorry that what was honestly intended by me to serve the interests of piety, charity & peace, should have given grounds of offence to my Christian brethren," McGill wrote: "I may in some instances have omitted things which I hold to be true." His use of some expressions, he conceded, may have been "ambiguous and unguarded."[118] The Synod accepted this as satisfactory and pronounced the process ended.[119]

The resolution of the McGill process seems to have pleased very few, except perhaps its apparent architect James Wodrow. The Kirk's Auld Light clergy like Mackinlay and Peebles were able to effectively silence McGill, at least in print; it would be generations before a Church of Scotland minister again published such an open attack on Reformed orthodoxy. However, McGill remained safely in his benefice and continued to preach the new views which he had never really retracted, to the great consternation of traditionalist layfolk. The attempt of the Auld Lights to claim this as a victory earned them the ridicule and hostility of Strathclyde laity who had wanted McGill defrocked. A public subscription for a second prosecution of McGill was taken up by Church of Scotland layfolk, and raised "a handsome sum."[120] This time, however, lay accusers would find no clerical support;[121] when a farmer, a shoemaker, a weaver, and a linen-printer appeared at Ayr Presbytery in January 1791 to renew the heresy charges, the Presbytery found their complaint "incompetent and unnecessary."[122] A second wave of pamphlets on the McGill case, in 1790-2, directed their anger not at the Ayr Socinian but at the *soi-disant* orthodox clergy in the Kirk, who were blasted as traitors and self-serving

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[116] *Short Statement of the Debate in the General Assembly*, 4.
[117] W-K, Letter 156 (10 January 1791): "The D^{r} did not," contrary to reports in England, "*retract* a single sentiment sentence or iota of his publications nor was required to do so," according to Wodrow.
[118] *Proceedings of the Very Rev. Synod of Glasgow and Ayr. . .relating to some late publications of the Rev Dr William M'Gill*, 6-7, 11-2.
[119] CH2/464/4, p. 258.
[120] *Procedure of our Church Courts in the Case of Dr William M'Gill*, 51-2.
[121] Asked "whether they had taken the advice of any Ministers or Elders of this Presbytery," the accusers reported that "some of them had conversed wth some Ministers and Elders of this Presbytery, but none of them advised them to proceed further in their Complaint," CH2/532/8, pp. 489, 497.
[122] CH2/532/8, p. 499.

politicians. "As you began this process by *amusing* the people, so you have concluded it by *betraying* the truth," wrote James Moir, and the Secession preacher Robertson called the compromise the "*infamous burial of the truth of the gospel*, in which some popular orthodox clergymen had the *honour of being the principal pall-bearers*."[123] The bonds of clerical fraternity, according to these critics, was stronger than faithfulness to the old gospel: the Popular preachers, according to one 1791 satire, "confined to the pulpit only" their orthodoxy, thus leaving the church courts in "an amiable tranquility."[124] The proclamation of the Auld Light clergy that they had vindicated the purity of the Church of Scotland, and that secession was not necessary to protect the old faith, was greeted by derision: "The people themselves have a right to judge for themselves what these errors are," retorted one pamphlet, "and when they are so taught and propagated, as will justify them in separating in church fellowship."[125]

The McGill affair illuminates a changed religious landscape in the Strathclyde, one characterized neither by the stark polarization of elite Enlightenment and popular fanaticism of the settlement disputes, nor by the stadial progress away from the dark Calvinist past for which William Leechman and his protégés had hoped, but by irreducible complexity. McGill's ability to publish a work as audacious as the *Practical Essay* and remain in his benefice, after his non-apology and non-retraction and what amounted to a slap on the wrist, is a remarkable testament to the decline of orthodoxy in the Church of Scotland's clergy and to the impotence of its surviving clerical champions. At the same time the case shows the broadening of the New Light's constituency. Burns, who lambasted the Doctor's "persecutors" in his anonymous 1789 poem "The Kirk's Alarm,"[126] was not alone as a humble defender of McGill. Both the elite and the humble in his own congregation at Ayr seem to have supported him. The Ayr kirk session's letter supporting McGill, published in Glasgow and Edinburgh newspapers, was evidently written by the Rev. Dr. Dalrymple, but the elders seem in the minutes to have been undivided in their support for the embattled minister.[127] Ayr's elders, moreover, were not elite landowners like their counterparts in Cambuslang and Kilmaronock, but

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[123] Moir, iv-v; Robertson, 26.
[124] *Address to the Libellers of Dr. M'Gill in name of the Orthodox Ministers*, 12-3.
[125] Moir, 52.
[126] The Canongate Burns, 437-40.
[127] CH2/751/14, p. 291.

good artisans: a shoemaker, a grocer, a baker, and weavers sat on the session at the time.[128] In some parts of the west at least, a popular following for the new divinity had developed by the 1790s; William Thomson, in his description of Ochiltree for Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, wrote that "the *New Light Doctrines*, contrary to our Confession of faith" were prevalent in many parts of Ayrshire.[129] The New Light did not displace Calvinism as a hegemonic force in the Strathclyde, however. Even a generation after the forced settlements, Calvinism survived and even thrived, and not only among the presbyterian dissenters but among the Church of Scotland laity. Those who were dissatisfied with their parish pastor but for whatever reason declined to join a dissenting church often balanced the message delivered from the pulpit with an avid reading of the devotional classics of folk Calvinism, which remained steady sellers throughout the closing years of the century. What appears in kirk session minutes as parish pastors' consuming investment in poor relief perhaps distracted them from adequately forming or re-forming the religious views of their parishioners. Indeed, though some ministers coming out of Glasgow's divinity school may have converted their parishioners to the New Light, others seem to have been converted themselves. The entries for Cambuslang and Kilsyth in Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, drawn up by parish ministers in the 1790s, provide an interesting example. The account of Cambuslang by James Meek, whose settlement had been opposed by the revival generation, contained a thoroughly reductionistic treatment of "the work" in his parish fifty years earlier, attributing it to "sympathy and example. . .imaginations and passions" with a muted but palpable disdain.[130] But Robert Rennie, who in 1789 had become minister of Kilsyth, the second center of the mid-century revival, praises the movement's lasting and positive effects on his parishioners:

> By their fruits they may still be known, and the effect of conversion on men's practice is the only true test and criterion by which we ought to judge. Whatever were the means, whether hope, or fear, or sympathy, for example, they experienced at that period a great and important change, which has formed and decided their characters through life.[131]

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[128] Ibid., 283-4.
[129] *Statistical Account*, 5:450.
[130] Ibid., 5:272-3.
[131] Ibid., 18:251.

So strong did the religious culture of provincial Calvinism remain that, forty years after the commencement of Leechman's program to diffuse rational and liberal sentiments of religion in the west, William McGill was forced to retreat from the open declaration of sentiments the Principal had hoped might finally be possible, returning to the esoteric divinity of omissions and hints. The 1790s would be marked not by the triumph of liberal and rational religion, which Kenrick and Wodrow had assumed was natural and inevitable, but by a resurgence of evangelicalism among the Church of Scotland's clergy, which would dominate the Kirk for the next half-century.[132] According to Callum Brown's study of religion in Glasgow after 1780, it was Scotland's burgeoning cities, and the new middle class of businessmen and artisans, which provided the backbone of evangelicalism within the established Church.[133] In the new century, resources and power within the Kirk were redistributed to urban areas in accord with the growth of urban population, enabling the Kirk evangelicals of the cities to outgun the Moderate ministers of rural areas and tipping the balance in the church courts to the successors of the Popular party by 1834.[134]

In some ways this story is one of the rise of a new religious culture. The new worldview of the Enlightenment—an optimistic assessment of human nature, a trust in unaided reason, an emphasis on morality over faith, and a rejection of the need to be redeemed by the vicarious sufferings of a sinless substitute—was all but unthinkable in the Strathclyde of 1700, and at mid-century was the reserve of gentry, urban professionals, and avant-garde clerics, but by century's end had become a viable option for humble Scots like Burns and the weavers who supported McGill on Ayr session. Seen from another perspective, however, the story is about the persistence of the old religious culture, which refused, to the utter amazement of men like Wodrow and Kenrick, to die out, even after the diffusion of the new divinity and its installation in positions of cultural power. Far from dissipating before the New Light like the "enthusiastic gloom of Egyptian darkness" these men believed it to be, Strathclyde

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[132] See David Alan Currie, "The growth of evangelicalism in the Church of Scotland, 1793-1843," Ph.D. diss., St. Andrews University, 1990.
[133] Brown, "Religion and the development of an urban society," 284-5, 312, 328
[134] Ibid., 47.

Calvinism proved tenacious enough to lead its frustrated foe John Goldie into a quite remarkable analogy: "for as light is destroyed by darkness," Goldie wrote in 1784, "so is knowledge by that formidable enemy, *viz*. prejudice, and likewise superstition."[135] The Calvinist hegemony of a century earlier was broken, but the universal Enlightenment for which men like Leechman had hoped did not replace it. Strathclyde in 1800 was neither secular nor post-Calvinist, but inescapably pluralistic.

[135] Goldie, *The Gospel recovered*, 21.

CONCLUSION.
"IN AN AGE SO ENLIGHTENED, ENTHUSIASM SO EXTRAVAGANT": THE MAKING OF MODERNITY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STRATHCLYDE

This study has traced the history of one religious culture in the age of Enlightenment. The core of this culture, which I have called folk Calvinism, was a narrative of redemption by Christ that was logically predicated on a despairing attitude toward human nature and potential apart from Christ's work on man's behalf, and which found its emotional center on the death of Christ the Savior in the place of the redeemed. Rejected by the intellectual vanguard of the century as "gloomy," unreasonable, and "enthusiastic" in its notions of personal intimacy with the divinity, this religious culture came under consistent attack in the age of Enlightenment, first more subtly through theologians and preachers who sought to change the subject, later more directly by thinkers like John Taylor of Norwich, whose books circulated widely in the west of Scotland, and by homegrown equivalents like Kilmarnock's John Goldie. But though high politics and polite culture were now emancipated from Christian dogmas like those that undergirded folk Calvinism, eighteenth-century Europe still contained many people for whom the doctrine of original sin (for example) had not at all, as G.T. Eddy claims, "ceased to be credible."[1] Many men and women of the century, including many Christian clergymen, did find the "gloomy" assessment of the human condition which Calvinists shared with traditional Lutherans and Augustinian Catholics to be false, though more on the basis of intuition or of *a priori* assumptions than of empiricism.[2] Others, however, continued to find in this idea a persuasive account of their own experience, and to thirst for the imputation of another's righteousness which Dr. Taylor assured them was both impossible and unnecessary.[3] Despite the confidence of Taylor and those like him that

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[1] Eddy, 121.

[2] Taylor's argument is fundamentally that a human inability not to sin (*non posse non peccare*) *must not* be the case, since we can only be morally responsible for things under our control: *Original Sin*, 13-4, 58n., 126-7, 152.

[3] See one of the most interesting passages in Taylor's work on original sin, in which he concedes and responds to the contrary intuitions of his opponents: "It may be further urged—*Do we not experience, that*

they represented the spirit of the age and the way of the future, a very considerable number of eighteenth-century men and women continued to find the narrative of fall and redemption meaningful, and they could be found in the metropolis as well as in provincial Scotland. Samuel Kenrick, who typically moved in avant-garde English Dissenting circles, paid a visit to a church of "Hernhutters or Moravians" in 1760 and was appalled by what he saw and heard there. The emphasis on the atonement and the blood of Christ, the swooning emotionalism, the pretensions to personal intimacy with God—all this filled Kenrick with disgust, but equally with surprise that such a thing could be happening at all in a major city in the modern world. "What language is this wch. enthusiasm assumes!" the amazed unitarian banker wrote to James Wodrow: "That in an age so enlightened, enthusiasm so extravagant should take place!"[4]

Kenrick's surprise has, to a large extent, been shared by scholars of the age of Enlightenment who have noted its coexistence with the age of revival. Peter Gay expresses something of the same attitude when he writes that the crowds who gathered to hear Wesley and Whitefield preach "would have been at home in twelfth-century Chartres."[5] Such women and men lived in the modern world with a fundamentally medieval way of thinking, and, being but the new century's representatives of the same old dogmatism and supernaturalism, may safely be ignored in histories of what is distinctive about the eighteenth century, especially intellectual histories. In this understanding, the reason for the invisibility of piety in accounts of the eighteenth century is that it is not properly of the eighteenth century at all but an atavism, a hangover from the preceding age of faith from which it takes some people longer to recover. What I want to suggest, however, is that those to whom ideas like the atonement and the Trinity did not "cease to be credible" were not medievals trapped in a time warp but legitimate citizens of their age. In particular, the Scottish Calvinists who have been the subject of this study, in their refusal to accept clerical authority they judged inconsistent with the

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we have corrupt and wicked Hearts? And that the Apostle's Description (Rom. vii.) *but too well suits what we find in ourselves?* I answer, Every Man can best judge what he finds in himself; but if any Man really finds his Heart is corrupt and wicked, it is the Duty of a Minister of the Gospel to exhort him earnestly to use those Means which the Grace of God hath provided for purifying ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit," i.e., self-redemption by repentance and amendment of life, 237-8.

[4] W-K, Letter 41, Kenrick to Wodrow, 6 August 1760.

[5] *The Enlightenment: an interpretation*, volume 1: *The rise of modern paganism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 254.

true faith and to submit to the religious preferences of the gentry, and in the language of liberty and conscience they adopted, were participants in the eighteenth-century cultural world, even in trends and discourses we ordinarily think of as belonging to the Enlightenment.

The clerical Enlightenment and the uses of establishment. Adherents of the old Calvinism, when they have appeared in scholarship on eighteenth-century Scotland at all, have usually served as stock villains, described in the very words of their "Moderate" adversaries: "enthusiasts," "fanatics," "intolerant," "zealots,"[6] representatives of both an earlier age and a darker one. By contrast, most historians have found it easier to sympathize and identify with the "Moderate" or "New Light" clergy, and have equated them with progress and with the virtues of the modern world.[7] Studies of the Moderates have typically focused more on their contributions to the wider world of letters and culture than their more pedestrian participation in the ecclesiastical politics of the Church of Scotland, but attention to this aspect of their movement makes it difficult to sustain an unqualified identification of the eighteenth-century Moderates with "intellectual and religious toleration."[8] With their emphasis on the benevolence of human nature, their avoidance of dogma and preference for moralism, their openness to high culture and the liberal arts, the Moderates have often been equated with a religious Enlightenment. But their Enlightenment did not include, and explicitly rejected, some aspects assumed or asserted to belong to the modern package, such as commitment to human equality and popular participation. Instead, the Enlightenment of the Moderate divines was consistently and firmly elitist. The crucial policy with which Scotland's clerical Enlightenment was identified in practical church politics was the vesting of the right to appoint parish pastors in aristocratic patrons, and Moderate clerics became increasingly open in their disdain for the opinions of ordinary parishioners. Not only do "the people" have no right to choose their ministers, Alexander Fergusson of Kilwinning asserted in the *Scots Magazine*, "it would be as absurd to give them such a right, as to give school

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[6] Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 116, 118; Ian Simpson Ross, "The Natural Theology of Lord Kames," in *The Scottish Enlightenment* (2000), ed. Wood, 344; Skoczylas, *Mr. Simson's Knotty Case*, 341, 343; Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, n92 on 106, 109.

[7] Sher, *Church and University*, 324-8; Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 113ff.; Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, 63-8; T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation: a history 1700-2000* (New York: Viking, 1999), 64ff.

boys a right to chuse their teachers."[9] The dean of the Moderates, William Robertson, was famous internationally (and among historians of the Enlightenment) for his elegant histories and participation in the republic of letters, but in Scotland better known for his iron-fisted suppression of congregational dissent in pastoral appointments through his dextrous management of the General Assembly. "As for the opposition of the people" to a patron's presentation, the Rev. Dr. Robertson told the 1766 Assembly, "arising from mere whim and caprice, or from groundless prejudice, no regard ought to be paid to it at all; or rather it is your duty to discourage and suppress it."[10]

Like other eighteenth-century Britons, the Moderate divines were much given to the language of liberty, but their use of this rhetoric needs to be parsed carefully. They greatly valued what Fergusson called the "freedom of inquiry after truth," and what McGill of Ayr styled "the right of private judgment, and the great principles of protestant liberty."[11] Their concern for liberty and tolerance, however, had chiefly in view the liberty of intellectually avant-garde ministers, that is to say, of themselves. They were not concerned with what congregational petitions and dissenting and Popular pamphlets called the liberty of "private Christians" to support a preacher they found "edifying" and no other. Dr. Robertson generously conceded the right of dissenting churches to exist, and of dissatisfied members of the Church of Scotland to join them.[12] But they would have to continue to pay the salaries of Church of Scotland clergy whose theology they found objectionable. Thus the Moderate conception of liberty of conscience in matters of religion did not include the "equal title to the free exercise of religion" prized by other thinkers identified with Enlightenment, such as Witherspoon's American student James Madison. Any publicly-funded church, Madison wrote in his 1785 *Memorial and Remonstrance*, violated equality "by subjecting some to peculiar burdens" and "by granting to others peculiar exemptions."[13] Madison's concept of religious liberty takes the standpoint of the individual (lay) citizen, whose freedom of worship and belief is fundamental. Any religious teacher or guru, in Madison's scheme, may compete for the

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[8] Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, 67.
[9] *Scots Magazine*, volume 29 (April 1767), 174.
[10] Reported in *SM*, volume 28 (July 1766), 340.
[11] *SM*, volume 29 (April 1767), 175.
[12] *SM*, volume 28 (July 1766), 339.

financial support of these equal citizens; none is entitled to have his religious teaching subsidized. The Moderate conception of religious liberty, by contrast, is clerical not only in its origins but in its perspective. It has in view the inconvenience faced by a highly-trained religious professional who cannot find enough voluntary financial support to make his living by expounding the results of his free inquiry after truth. The clerical intellectual's liberty of conscience, as defended by the Moderates, includes not only immunity from actual persecution but also an entitlement to public support.

Most scholars, especially casual observers of eighteenth-century Scotland, have been too charmed by the substantive liberalism of Moderate divinity to remark on its procedural authoritarianism. In fact, the two poles of Moderatism—tolerance for clerical free-thinking, intolerance of congregations' disapproval of such clerics; liberty for avant-garde theologians, coupled with compulsory public subsidy of the same—are neither in contradiction nor accidental, but intimately connected. The self-interest of clerical literati with unpopular views is only part of the explanation, however. That most controversial of Robertson and Leechman's literary friends, David Hume,[14] can help us understand the logic of their position. Hume's well-known religious skepticism did not prevent him from taking the view that "there must be an ecclesiastical order, and a public establishment of religion in every civilized community," as he explains in his *History of England*. In general, Hume writes, government should take an attitude of laissez-faire towards the arts and professions. Unlike professions like law and medicine, however, divinity must be subsidized and regulated by the state to prevent abuse. In free competition between doctors or lawyers, the best practitioner is likely to be the most successful, but a free market in religion sees success go to the worst, inspiring "superstition, folly, and delusion," encouraging "disorderly affections" rather than "truth, morals, or decency." The political interests of society, Hume concludes, will not be served by separation of church and state:

> In the end, the civil magistrate will find, that he has dearly paid for his pretended frugality, in saving a fixed establishment for the priests; and that in reality the

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[13] *Memorial and Remonstrance, presented to the General Assembly of the state of Virginia…* (Worcester, MA: n.p., 1786), 6.

[14] Robertson and Hume were regular correspondents: see Greig (ed.), *Letters of David Hume*, 1:272-4, 282, 287-95, 297-305, 314-6, 415-7, 2:193-5, 196-7. Leechman and Hume were cordial though not close: see Hume's remarks in Ibid., 1:53, 176, 213.

> most decent and advantageous composition, which he can make with the spiritual guides, is to bribe their indolence, by assigning stated salaries to their profession, and rendering it superfluous for them to be further active, than merely to prevent their flock from straying in quest of new pastures.[15]

Hume's initially surprising argument for an establishment of religion as a prophylactic against religious enthusiasm, though located in his discussion of the seventeenth-century English puritans, is probably conditioned by his upbringing in a Lowland Scottish milieu where folk Calvinism, unlike puritanism in England, retained widespread and fervent popular allegiance when he wrote in 1759. Many partisans of Enlightenment elsewhere in Europe assumed that truth would be victorious in a free and open debate, a theme which ran from Milton's *Areopagitica* to J.S. Mill and became a classic trope of liberal thought. Hume, however, together with other enlighteners who shared his Scottish background, was not so sure: the addiction of "the giddy multitude" to enthusiasm and prejudice seemed too strong to be overcome by reasoned argument. What emerges as the unusually authoritarian form taken by Enlightenment in Scotland is correlative with its unusually successful Calvinist Reformation in the preceding century. The situation called not for equal liberty for all but for special protection for the enlightened few from the enthusiastic multitude.

An authoritarian Enlightenment? A popular Counter-Enlightenment? Few intellectuals south of the Tweed can have felt surrounded by "enthusiasm" in the 1750s as might a Glasgow professor or an Edinburgh philosopher, but the authoritarian version of Enlightenment which Hume shared with his friends in the clerical literati had British as well as specifically Scottish dimensions. The cozy harmony of Enlightenment and establishment in eighteenth-century Britain has been observed by historians like Porter and Sher,[16] but the significance of this is still only beginning to be appreciated, despite the ongoing and eloquent efforts of John Pocock to bring it to scholars' attention.[17] For decades Pocock has made it his task to point out the extent to which Enlightenment in

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[15] Hume, *History of England*, 3:134-6

[16] Sher, *Church and University*; Porter, *Creation of the Modern World* (2000).

[17] See "Post-puritan England and the problem of the Enlightenment," 91-111 in Perez Zagorin (ed.), *Culture and Politics from Puritanism to the Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); "Clergy and commerce: the conservative Enlightenment in England," in *L'età dei Lumi: studi storici sul settecento Europeo in honore di Franco Ventui* (Naples: Casa Editrice Jovene, 1984), volume 1, 525-

Britain was aimed not at an overweening alliance of throne and altar, but at the anarchy of the seventeenth-century interregnum (blamed on enthusiastic sects). Hobbes's Leviathan, Pocock notes, holds both sword and crozier:[18] it was the claims of unruly subjects to spiritual truth and authority independent of the monarch that had led to the disaster of the civil wars, and the main stream of the British Enlightenment, heir in this respect to Hobbes though usually not wishing to acknowledge its debt to him, was not libertarian or separationist in matters of religion but deeply Erastian. Religion was a dangerous force that needed to be controlled by the state, and the language of enthusiasm was a weapon of Britain's "conservative Enlightenment" against "those who might refuse submission to the civil order in the name of conscience [or] spiritual liberty."[19] This explains the otherwise odd use by Anglo-Scottish elites of the term "high-flyers" (which originally identified high-church, sacerdotalist Anglicans) to describe forces in the Church of Scotland who opposed patronage and government control of the Kirk. English "high-flyers" were Tories, proponents of the divine right of kings, given to liturgy and ritual, while Scottish "high-flyers" were Whigs ardently adhering to the Hanoverian succession, opponents of ritualism, etc. Both, however, believed in the independence of their church from the Georgian state, which made them, to secular-minded managers of church patronage like the 3rd Duke of Argyll, the same in the only meaningful respect—a usage perpetuated in modern scholarship by sympathizers like Roger Emerson.[20] Again, the contrast with a spokesman of the American Enlightenment like James Madison is stark. For Madison, the individual's free religious worship is both an inalienable right and (because) a duty towards God, preceding civil society and "wholly exempt from its cognizance."[21] For post-puritan Britons, whether philosophers like Hume or politicians like Argyll, the security of the social order had to come first; the religious liberty of the subject might be accommodated after this, in so far as they were compatible.

Appreciating these Scottish and British contexts helps us understand to what degree programs of Enlightenment are contingent, not a seamless package of

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62; "Conservative Enlightenment and democratic revolutions," *Government and Opposition* 24:1 (1989): 81-105; *Barbarism and Religion* volume 1 (1999).

[18] Pocock, "Conservative Enlightenment," 83.

[19] Ibid., 85.

[20] *Academic Patronage*, 48-9, 74, 115-6. The index of Emerson's 549-page monograph contains no entries for "Calvinists," "Popular party," or "evangelicals," who are instead indexed under "High-flyers."

philosophical modernity, as Jonathan Israel would have it.[22] Israel's insistence that his Enlightenment values (toleration, freedom of expression, democracy, equality racial and sexual) necessarily come in one package is both logically and historically flawed. Even Professor Israel might not be so keen on democracy if he lived in eighteenth-century Scotland; perhaps he would see the need, like the East German government in Brecht's joke, to "dissolve the people and elect another one."[23] At the very least, it appears that there must be some hierarchy of Israel's Enlightenment virtues. If the fundamental thing about Enlightenment is secular rationality (or its closest approximation)—downplaying of the supernatural, rejection of mysteries and dogmas "above" or "beyond" human reason, such as the Trinity and the imputation of another's sin and righteousness—or if the crux of Enlightenment is an insistence on human dignity and innocence against Augustinian Christianity—with its dark vision of universal sin and the inadequacy of all human works—Scotland's clerical literati and their secular allies can claim to be a true manifestation of Enlightenment, forced by the unfortunate condition of the time to use coercive means. To be sure, they would not win certification by Professor Israel as purebreds. Theists and political conservatives, men like William Leechman, William Robertson and James Wodrow would doubtless be classed by him among the trimmers of the "moderate Enlightenment," watering down the materialist and politically radical genuine article.[24] But surely they are closer to the virtues of philosophical modernity than their opponents: the hysterical converts of Cambuslang, the unreconstructed Calvinists of the Secession, the intolerant mobs of the settlement riots.

If Israel's "radical Enlightenment" is scarcely to be found in eighteenth-century Scotland (even Hume is too moderate, being a supporter of the political status quo[25]), and the avant-garde clergy around Robertson and Leechman represent the "moderate Enlightenment," that leaves these various clingers to Scotland's Calvinist past to assume

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[21] *Memorial and Remonstrance*, 3-4.
[22] "Enlightenment! Which Enlightenment?", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67:3 (2006), 529; *Enlightenment Contested: philosophy, modernity, and the emancipation of man 1670-1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11, 866.
[23] Brecht, "The Solution," in *Poems 1913-1956*, ed. John Willett and Ralph Manheim (London: Minerva, 1994),440.
[24] *Enlightenment Contested*, 10-2, 57, 865-6.
[25] Ibid., 52.

the third position in Israel's tripartite scheme, as a "Counter-Enlightenment."[26] It is indeed in these terms that the "Popular party" and its constituency has normally been seen by historians of Scotland's eighteenth century, though usually without much close analysis. Despite their dissent from Bishop Bossuet (whom Israel takes to be the template and fount of Counter-Enlightenment) on issues like the divine right of kings and the liberties of the subject, and despite the widespread popular support their views enjoyed at the time, traditional Calvinist critics of the Moderates would thus perhaps be the Scottish analogue to the French clerics Darrin McMahon styles "enemies of the Enlightenment."[27] We are not accustomed to think of the Counter-Enlightenment as a popular movement, but perhaps such a thing is not too far-fetched. After all, the plebiscite and other trappings of popular acclaim were used by Bonapartists and by twentieth-century fascists to enshrine a tyranny of the majority. To twenty-first-century American progressives, recent survivors of the Bush administration, the idea of a popular Counter-Enlightenment may seem all too plausible.[28]

…or a Calvinist Enlightenment? Most scholars of the Scottish Enlightenment and of the Moderate clerics seem not to have bothered to actually read the published critiques of their "Popular" adversaries or (more understandably) of the manuscript petitions and protests of congregational opposition archived in Edinburgh. Instead, the Moderates' own descriptions of their critics as intolerant, reactionary clerics supported by a "giddy," irrational mob have been taken at face value by most historians. Actual examination of anti-Moderate pamphlets and petitions, however, makes it rather more difficult to support a narrative of popular Counter-Enlightenment. For here we see that while the Moderate literati, whom we have been encouraged to identify with the Enlightenment, insist on deference to the law, ecclesiastical authority, and the need of the vulgar multitude to submit to men of superior station, Scotland's leading candidates for a Counter-Enlightenment appeal to liberty and the right of the people to choose their religious leadership. In Glasgow, where the town council tried to settle George

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[26] For this concept, see Israel, "Enlightenment! Which Enlightenment?", 542-3; *Enlightenment Contested*, 38-40. cf. Darrin McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment* (2001); Jeffrey Burson, "The crystallization of Counter-Enlightenment and *philosophe* identities: theological controversy and Catholic Enlightenment in pre-revolutionary France," *Church History* 77:4 (2008): 955-1002.

[27] McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment: the French Counter-Enlightenment and the making of modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Bannatyne in the Wynd parish in 1764 without consulting congregation or elders, petitioners wrote that they were forced to oppose him "on vindication of liberty."[29] Kilmarnock's dissenters base their lengthy and eloquent protest against William Lindsay not on unorthodoxy (though Lindsay was rumored to be an Arminian) but on the rights of "a free people," who will be led by reason but not force, and refuse blindly to submit to "the will & Choice of Another, without the Liberty of Judging for ourselves." In the appointment of their "Spiritual Guide," the petitioners insist, "[we] must be perswaded in our minds, Wee cannot see with the Eyes of another."[30] Indeed, many of the petitions of anti-patronage parishioners sound oddly like "New Lights" such as Ulster's John Abernethy or Kilwinning's Alexander Fergusson, with their rhetoric of "the Right of Private Judgement."[31] Here, however, this means the right of a Calvinist congregation to have a Calvinist minister, rather than the right of clerical intellectuals to doubt the doctrinal statements of the church which employs them.

It's not immediately clear that the ubiquitous use of the rhetoric of liberty among religious traditionalists is enough to clear them of the standard charges of intolerance and reaction. Long before the eighteenth-century vogue for freedom, the godly had a notion of *libertas ecclesiae* which entailed freedom for themselves to obey God's law but not freedom for the ungodly to flout it.[32] After all, the Restoration forebears of Strathclyde's dissenters demanded freedom from episcopal "curates," but were quite unwilling to extend Scottish Episcopalians the same freedom. "Popular" and dissenting opposition to the Moderate regime in the Kirk may have begun as something similar, but in the extended debate over patronage it developed into something else—into a doctrine of religious liberty for all, not just for the elect or the true faith. The growing opposition to any civil establishment of religion is the great untold story of Enlightenment Scotland, and has escaped notice because it was located *not* among the official bearers of religious

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[28] Garry Wills, "The day the Enlightenment went out," *The New York Times*, 4 November 2004.
[29] CH2/171/12/1, p. 23.
[30] CH2/197/6, p. 69.
[31] Ibid.
[32] For example, see XX.ii. of the Westminster Confession, "Of Christian liberty, and liberty of conscience." Having insisted on their own freedom from "any thing contrary to [God's] word, or beside it in matters of faith and worship," the Westminster divines go on to remark, "As for the publishing of such opinions, or maintaining or such practices, as are contrary to…the known principles of Christianity…they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church and by the power of the civil magistrate," 108, 110-1.

Enlightenment but precisely among their opponents, the warmly devout and theologically traditional, whose conversion to church-state separation may constitute an unofficial and unrecognized Enlightenment of the godly.

From the beginning of the patronage disputes, local protestors and Popular leaders drew on various languages of liberty to articulate what they experienced as the injustice of forced settlements. They appealed to their privileges as British subjects and as members of "a free people," as well as "that Liberty of the Gospel whereby Jesus Christ hath made us free."[33] Patronage was popish and un-Protestant, but it also violated what were described by traditionalists as their natural and inalienable rights. John Witherspoon, the great champion of the Popular party and the *bête noir* of enlightened clerics like Alexander Fergusson, wrote in 1763: "Every man hath a natural right…to judge for himself in every thing that regards religion, and to adhere to any minister he pleases, in the establishment, or in opposition to it."[34] The theologian of the Relief church, Patrick Hutchinson, repeats in 1779 an analogy that had become a commonplace of anti-patronage rhetoric: "If one, having a suit at law, is at *liberty* to chuse his counsel; if one, affected with a distemper, is at *liberty* to chuse his physician, is it not highly reasonable in itself, that men have the liberty of chusing those who are to watch for their souls?"[35] A 1768 pamphlet entitled *An Attempt to prove, that every species of patronage is foreign to the nature of the Church* shows how hostility to patronage could lead to a deeper rethinking of church-state relations. The anonymous author first blasts the moralizing Moderate divines who neglect to preach "the sublime doctrines of the CROSS," whom he accuses of Pelagianism and crypto-Socinianism, and whose ascendancy he credits to lay patronage in the Kirk.[36] But the root problem is not merely a lay patron's right to present to a living, but "the civil establishment of religion, or…the GREAT PATRONAGE. . .as it has been the mother of every other kind of patronage."[37] The very high and traditional Christology and soteriology of this pamphlet accompany a doctrine of the church that is explicitly egalitarian and democratic: "Are not the Christian

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[33] Ibid.
[34] *Serious apology for the Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, 38.
[35] *A compendious view of the religious system maintained by the Synod of Relief* (Falkirk: Daniel Reid, 1779), II:5.
[36] (Edinburgh: J. Gray and G. Alston, 1768), 9, 35.
[37] Ibid., 20.

people, high and low, noble and ignoble, indiscriminately members of it [the Church]? And is it not essentially necessary unto the being of every free society, that the several members be allowed to vote in what concerns the whole and every part?"[38] Nor is this spiritual democracy for the elect alone, for the author also repeatedly describes the Church as a voluntary society and repudiates any coercion in religion.

> The kingdom, or church of Christ, is a VOLUNTARY society. She is made up of persons who voluntarily coalesce into associations for the joint worship of God, and in order unto the due and ordinary performance of joint obedience unto all the laws and ordinances of Christ's spiritual and independent kingdom. . . .Assent and consent seem to be so essentially necessary unto membership, that it is impossible to conceive of a church-society, where these are a-wanting. . . .[Christ's kingdom] is not the kingdom of force and violence; but the empire of truth. The understandings and consciences of men are the proper seat and subject of this empire; not their bodies and estates in the world.[39]

In the heat of the patronage debates, many of Scotland's pious traditionalists came to share this new understanding of the church as a spiritual and voluntary association of individual Christians. It was the evangelicals of the Relief church, and especially their chief ideologist Patrick Hutchinson, who were the most thorough in revising the received doctrines on church and state in accordance with their new voluntarist ecclesiology. "Compulsive measures in religion," Hutchinson wrote in 1779, in terms reminiscent of Locke, "may make men *hypocrites*, but can never make them Christians. The truths of the gospel must be embraced from personal conviction and choice."[40] Unlike his fellow dissenters in the Secession, who continued to idolize the seventeenth-century Covenanters and their ill-starred effort to impose a Calvinist state-church on all Britons, Hutchinson explicitly criticized the Covenanters as mistaken in this regard: "imposition of profession of the true religion, by civil punishments, upon any, contrary to their inward conviction, was wrong"[41]—"the unhappy error of our pious ancestors," he elsewhere calls seventeenth-century Scotland's theocratic ambitions.[42] Hutchinson's late *magnum opus*, his 1810 *Dissertation on the Nature and Genius of the Kingdom of Christ*, explicitly and repeatedly holds up "the apostolic weapons of argument and persuasion" as

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[38] Ibid., 58.
[39] Ibid., 79, 70.
[40] Hutchinson, *Compendious view*, 17.
[41] Ibid., 13.
[42] Hutchinson, *Dissertation on. . .the Kingdom of Christ*, 26.

the only appropriate means of bringing infidels and heretics to true belief and insists that anyone who would reject Christianity must be left to "the mournful consequences of their own folly and unbelief";[43] it also notes, in passing, that the only legitimate government is by consent of the governed and that the divine right of kings is so absurd as to be beneath serious refutation.[44] This same Hutchinson was a stout defender of original sin and of Christ's divinity and atonement, who lamented that modern infidels reject revelation to depend on fallen reason.[45]

Patrick Hutchinson's combination of traditional, salvationist Christianity with libertarian views on church and state was not unique. Among his own group, the Relief, it was the consensus view.[46] Clerics of the Church of Scotland's Popular party, who like their Moderate rivals preached at the public's expense, were more reluctant to repudiate the support of the Christian magistrate. Nevertheless development in their thought on church and state is discernible. An episode of the 1750s, the debate in the General Assembly over whether heresy charges should be raised against David Hume, is sometimes cited as an example of their intolerance,[47] but in fact illustrates something quite different. For the (ultimately unsuccessful) proposal of the intolerant traditionalists was *not* to imprison or physically abuse Hume, like Voltaire's *causes célèbres* Jean Calas and the Chevalier de la Barre, nor to censor his writings, nor to prosecute him under Britain's still extant but never enforced blasphemy laws. Rather, their goal was to have the Assembly *formally declare Hume not to be a member of the Church of Scotland*.[48] Not exactly friendly, but also not much in the way of persecution, in an age when a Frenchman could still be executed for vandalizing a crucifix. Despite what appears to be the irresistible compulsion of avant-garde ministers to compare any criticism from the theological "right" to the inquisition, the same spirit can be observed elsewhere. The guardians of orthodoxy in Cambuslang in 1774, after accusing James Meek of sundry heresies, ask not that he be restrained from setting forth his errors by the civil magistrate,

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[43] Ibid., 29, 229.
[44] Ibid., 241.
[45] E.g., Ibid., 63.
[46] See e.g. Alexander Murdoch's *Principles of Christianity Inculcated: a sermon preached at the opening of the Relief Synod in Edinburgh, May 19th 1797* (n.d., n.p.).
[47] E.g., Allan, *Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, 67; Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 117-8.
[48] *SM* volume 18 (May 1756), 223-7.

but that he be suspended from the clergy of the Church of Scotland.[49] Even more revealing is the case of William McGill of Ayr. Far from being the "persecution" and "inquisition" portrayed by friends like James Wodrow and Robert Burns, the suit of McGill's four lay accusers in the second charge of 1791 *explicitly defends his right to hold and teach unitarian views and found a unitarian church*, even while asking that he be removed from the Church of Scotland in accordance with its declared Trinitarian principles. These inquisitors begin from what they regard as the self-evident premise that "A man may adopt what opinions in religion he chuses." They continue:

> [People] will be naturally led to associate with those whom they think of the same principles with themselves, that their religious fellowship may be the more profitable and comfortable. . . .But if a member of such a society, should afterwards call in question, deny, or act in opposition to the principles, upon which the society is founded and cemented together; or violate the rules by which it is governed, he forfeits his right to enjoy the privileges thereof. . . .The Unitarian system might ultimately have been right, but a *preacher* of that system, had no *title* to fill the *pulpits* or *enjoy the benefices of a church*, founded upon principles entirely opposite. They presumed, that the members of a society of Unitarians, would, *in the event* of one *of their preachers* attacking the leading principles, of their association, and preaching and writing, *in defense of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ*, have been disposed, to follow the same line of conduct, which they resolved to pursue.[50]

Here, and not in McGill's entirely derivative *Practical Essay on the Death of Christ*, is a moment of some significance in intellectual history. These four humble men—farmer William Morton, shoemaker John Adam, weaver-merchant Robert Robertson, and linen-printer James Gardner—while concerned enough about religious truth to raise, at their own expense, a prosecution against a sitting minister with no clerical support, are also explicitly recognizing the liberty of *erroneous* conscience, the right of the heretic to hold and propagate error. Theirs is a call, not for a theocracy or for the extirpation of false worship by the Christian magistrate, but for freedom of association, a freedom which is meaningless without the right to exclude from the private religious association those in disagreement with its core beliefs.

Dr. McGill understood himself to be boldly pressing forward the original impulse of the Reformation, discerning between the essentials and *adiaphora*, discarding the

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[49] CH2/393/4, p. 192.
[50] *Procedure of our church courts, in the case of Dr. William M'Gill* (1792), 52, 140.

dross (like justification by faith alone) and popish remnants (like the incomprehensible jargon of one God in three Persons). His critics he understood to be basically unthinking —"bigots"—adhering without reflection to the "system" of the seventeenth century. He seems not to have considered that eighteenth-century men and women might think for themselves and arrive at conclusions which differed from his own. The foursome which filed the second charge against McGill in 1791, like Mr. Hutchinson and his brethren in the Relief church, in fact rejected parts of the Covenanting legacy—the role of the Christian magistrate and the catholic but coercive doctrine of the Church on which it rests—even while they stubbornly defended others—the Trinity, the atonement—which McGill regarded as indefensible. Their position signals the emergence of an alternative route out of Calvinist theocracy to modernity, one which had wide appeal in the Relief church and among pious Church of Scotland layfolk, and even among the laity of the Secession church, where clerical leadership were most insistent on the infallibility of the Westminster Confession and Scotland's golden seventeenth century. When the Antiburgher Seceders insisted in 1779 on having members re-affirm the Covenants, including the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant, with its theocratic if implausible vow to impose the true faith on England and Ireland, they found some members objected to the idea of coercive reformation. Three members of Paisley's Secession church were grilled in November 1779 over what the elders called their "sectarian tenets," specifically hostility to the Solemn League and Covenant and to seventeenth-century Scotland's involvement in Britain's civil wars.[51] These lay dissenters defended their post-theocratic Calvinism to the Secession leadership. Asked if they had impugned the Westminster Confession, the clerk records, Thomas Biggar and Robert Gilman "answered that they had not, but were in the dark or in doubt about the power given to the civil Magistrate about Religious matters in the 23rd Chapter of said Confession." Regarding the Covenants, "they answered that they never did contemn nor ridicule them, but were in darkness and not clear about their binding Obligation on account as they apprehend of Civil and Religious things being blended together in them, especially in the Solemn League."[52] These men, it should be recalled, were first-generation Seceders who had left

[51] CH3/465/1, pp. 117-8. cf. a similar case in Beith's Antiburgher church in 1779, CH3/1055/2, p. 37.
[52] Ibid., p. 120.

the parish churches to escape clerical unorthodoxy, and had chosen to support at their own expense more traditional preaching. By 1791 Secession clerics as well as laity were questioning the theocratic ideal.[53] After a decade of debate over the proper relation between church and state, Scotland's premier bastion of ultra-orthodox Calvinism issued a notable qualification to its adherence to the Westminster Confession. The relevant passage is worth quoting at length:

> The power of the church is wholly spiritual, and is exercised by her office-bearers, in its whole extent, solely with respect to the spiritual interests of men. . . .But the power competent to worldly kingdoms is wholly temporal, respecting only the temporal interests of society. Their rulers can have no spiritual power, because this cannot reside in a civil body, and therefore cannot be communicated to them by those who have entrusted them with power. . . .[The church] hath no power over earthly kingdoms, in their collective and civil capacity; nor have they any power over her as a church. Christ her Head, while on earth, disclaimed all exercise of civil authority; and there is not the least evidence from the New Testament, that he intrusted his servants with any. . . .Christian magistrates have no power to. . .prescribe a confession of faith, or form of worship, to the church, or their subjects in general. . . .In matters purely religious, civil rulers have no right to judge for any but themselves.[54]

At this point, we may ask whether we are looking at an alternative to Enlightenment or an alternative Enlightenment. The voluntarist doctrine of the church which emerged from anti-patronage arguments—a free association of individual believers, with the natural right to choose their own religious teachers—was closer to Locke than to Calvin.[55] Indeed, David Sorkin identifies this voluntarist doctrine of the church as a marker of his "religious Enlightenment."[56] However, Scotland's presbyterian dissenters steadfastly refused to abandon their ideas about original sin and salvation by the crucified Christ, which thinkers like James Wodrow regarded as at least as outdated

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[53] See the debate in the General Associate (Antiburgher) Synod over the proposition that the magistrate "ought not to punish any as Hereticks," and the need to clarify the relevant passages in the Westminster Confession, CH3/145/1, pp. 48-51

[54] qtd. McKerrow, 444-5.

[55] In the *Letter Concerning Toleration*, Locke identifies a church as "a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to Him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls. . . .Since the joining together of several members into this church-society. . .is absolutely free and spontaneous, it necessarily follows, that the right of making its laws can belong to none but itself, or at least, which is the same thing, to those whom the society by common consent has authorized thereunto," *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 220-1.

[56] "Religious enlighteners first defined the church or synagogue as a separate society (or collegium) of equal individuals, and then used that same criterion to define state and society," 15.

as their notions of church-state relations. The godly of Enlightenment Scotland are best seen not as frozen in the seventeenth century, as their critics so often asserted, nor as drifting along (at some distance behind) the avant-garde, eventually to be fully assimilated, but as constructing their own distinct response to the challenges of the age. We might view this as a partial and selective appropriation of some ideals of the Enlightenment by Scots who nonetheless firmly rejected other aspects of its official orthodoxy. This suggestion has echoes of earlier parts of my argument, where I suggested a popular appropriation in western Scotland of the Calvinist Reformation. The earlier appropriation, however, seems to have been more thorough, and different in kind; for the sectarian or Lockean doctrine of the church, which pious Scots accepted during the Enlightenment, and the moralistic, rationalistic reinterpretation of Christianity, which they mostly rejected, were not presented to them by the same people. The Moderate or New Light clergy did *not* teach this kind of voluntarist ecclesiology; instead, they identified the church with all of society, under the direction of the state, which would nonetheless permit free thought by its members—a quite different understanding. Their opponents seem to have groped their way to a Lockean ecclesiology on their own (perhaps by reading Locke himself, whose writings certainly circulated in eighteenth-century Scotland), at first as a convenient weapon against "the tyranny of patronage," but in time with sufficient conviction to revise the views of their pious ancestors on church and state.

If the religious movement I have described cannot fairly be considered a "Counter-Enlightenment," are we forced to recognize it as itself a species of Enlightenment, locked in fraternal rivalry with the more recognized clerical Enlightenment of Dr. Robertson and his brethren? A number of scholars, especially of American history and also of English Methodism, have claimed that those two great movements of the eighteenth century, evangelicalism and Enlightenment, were not mutually exclusive, as they may at first appear—that even the very devout and theologically traditional, even that notorious enthusiast John Wesley, might themselves be men of Enlightenment.[57] In spite of the suggestive case of John Witherspoon (anti-

[57] Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment* (2008); Frederick Dreyer, *The Genesis of Methodism* (1999), esp. chapter 4; Catherine Brekus, "Sarah Osborn's enlightenment: reimagining eighteenth-century

Moderate satirist and orthodox preacher in Scotland, tutor of James Madison and signer of the Declaration of Independence in America), most historians of Enlightenment Scotland have not considered this possibility. Ned Landsman has been almost alone in suggesting an "evangelical Enlightenment" in eighteenth-century Scotland.[58] But though very willing to see Enlightenment as a family of movements rather than a single, unitary ideology,[59] I confess that, for me, to speak of a Calvinist Enlightenment is to push this a wee bit too far. If Enlightenment is everything, it isn't anything. (Didn't St. Thomas allow a robust role for reason? Didn't Anabaptists disavow the aid of the secular arm? Must we therefore suffer a Thomistic Enlightenment or an Anabaptist Enlightenment?) In spite of what I regard as their real adaptations to the eighteenth century, Scotland's godly retained as the core of their worldview an Augustinian vision of radical and innate human sinfulness, the need for humanity to be saved by super-human forces, the death of Christ in the place of the helpless sinner—a schema they referred to simply as "the gospel." If there can be such a thing as an Augustinian Enlightenment, it seems to me the term has become too broad to be useful.

Perhaps the need to graph all possible intellectual positions in relation to (various shades of) Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment is itself the problem. This, after all, automatically makes Enlightenment (however defined) the star of the modern show, with everyone else defined in response to it. Instead, I suggest that the collision of Scotland's traditional piety with the Enlightenment, which included both rejection and borrowing, resulted in neither a Counter-Enlightenment nor a rival form of Enlightenment, but an alternative modernity.[60] To propose this is to dispense with what we might call a stadial theory of modernity, which we may identify with Samuel Kenrick, and, more recently, with various scholarly proponents of the classic "secularization

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intellectual history," 108-32 in *The Religious History of American Women* (2007); Nina Reid-Maroney, *Philadelphia's Enlightenment: Kingdom of Christ, empire of reason* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001); Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast* (1989); David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (1989), 1-50.

[58] "Presbyterians and provincial society: the evangelical Enlightenment in the west of Scotland 1740-1775," in *Sociability and Society*, ed. Dwyer and Sher (1993).

[59] See esp. Porter and Teich (eds.), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (1981).

[60] See Charles Taylor, "Two theories of modernity," *Hastings Center Report* 25:2 (1995); cf. Robert Hefner, "Multiple modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a globalizing age," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27 (1998): 83-104.

thesis."[61] In this view, certain ideas and values (self-evidently true once the fog of superstition is lifted) inevitably drive out other, outdated ones (Calvinism, Moravian revivalism). It is also to reject a distinct theory of modernity which we may call the agonistic and identify with Jonathan Israel (perhaps also, in another form, with John Goldie, who lived in closer proximity than did Kenrick to the full strength of eighteenth-century enthusiasm). Here modernity is not so much a natural development as a prize which the sons of light must wrest with great struggle from the sons of darkness, who cannot be expected to go quietly into the dustbin of history. Because all the modern virtues cohere and logically entail one another, all thinkers must ultimately line up with Spinoza or Bishop Bossuet, who hold the only consistent positions; this is so despite the pusillanimous half-measures of compromisers, who make up the majority in the eighteenth century and may even receive the credit due properly to radical innovators. I submit, however, that Scots who founded Secession churches, at great cost and inconvenience to themselves, to escape clerical "Socinianism" and "heathen moralizing," but then dissented from the coercive theory of Christian magistracy in Chapter 23 of the Westminster Confession, were neither confused Spinozists nor inconsistent theocrats. Including them in the story of the eighteenth century allows us to understand modernity as characterized not fundamentally by the disappearance of faith but by the proliferation of alternatives. To accept the condition of plurality (not necessarily to approve or celebrate particular alternatives) is to be modern. This means that, unlike the Covenanters and the early Secession leaders, who were pre-modern in their ambition to superintend all of society, Relief evangelicals like Patrick Hutchinson, McGill's accusers in 1791, and even the Secession after 1804, were thoroughly modern enthusiasts, as legitimately modern as any deist or skeptic.

From religious culture to religious faith. As for the question of whether eighteenth-century Strathclyde experienced secularization, my considered view is yes and no, but then again, yes. Which is to say, it depends on what you mean. Calvinist Christianity held a position of cultural hegemony at the beginning of the period. Though in the seventeenth century this hegemony had been upheld by state violence where

[61]A good account of both "the orthodox model" of secularization and its recent critics is give in Steve Bruce (ed.), *Religion and Modernization: sociologists and historians debate the secularization thesis* (New

necessary, church records suggest that, at least in the Strathclyde, it was so strong that the end of state-sanctioned monopoly for the Church of Scotland in 1712 scarcely made any difference. Only a person of exceptionally strong character and will, like the self-converted Quaker Margaret Robinson in 1720, could reject this culture, and it is probably no accident that Robinson lived in Glasgow, the largest of the region's towns.[62] Strathclyde in 1800 still contained very few who did not consider themselves Christians, at least as far as we can tell from church records (extremely fragmentary after the forced settlements); but the "New Light" divinity may be interpreted as a kind of self-secularization of the theological mind. God remains but becomes less important emotionally, and His interventions in the world less significant, if they are not yet denied. The new Christianity focuses on the felt needs of human beings as they are (happiness; morality in a rather mundane sense) rather than their transformation and redemption. At the same time, the commanding heights of cultural and intellectual life in Scotland were clearly undergoing a form of secularization. This was not a sharp break but a gradual diminution of God's role and function among Scotland's most prestigious and influential thinkers. Already by the second quarter of the century Francis Hutcheson's philosophy, though still theistic, is no longer specifically Christian and, in its assumption of human benevolence, implicitly anti-Calvinist. By 1780 the most treasured beliefs of the old piety (e.g., the death of Christ for sinners) could be publicly attacked, apparently without serious adverse consequences other than the hostility of devout neighbors, as John Goldie's case suggests. By this time a subculture of men and women flouting the moral strictures of Reformed Christianity can be clearly discerned in parish records, as it cannot in the first half of the century. This all adds up to a social and cultural shift of significance, which might well be construed as de-Christianization.

However, if secularization is understood to mean the virtual fading away of strong religious belief, or its marginalization from public life, Scotland in 1800 was not secularized. Traditional piety remained vibrant in the 1790s. In the last decade of the

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York: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[62] Cited to Glasgow Presbytery for her "Apostacy to Quakerism," Robinson refused to attend the services of the Church of Scotland and, pronouncing herself "not satisfied about Predestination" in particular, steadfastly resisted the efforts of the Kirk's leaders to "reclaim" her. Despite several conferences with elders and ministers over two years, Robinson continued to insist "That she was satisfied, that the way [of

century alone, Scottish presses printed seventeen works by Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, the founders of the Secession (who had died in 1752 and 1754, respectively), five by George Whitefield (who had died in 1770), nine by the American Calvinist theologian Jonathan Edwards, and fourteen by the English puritan John Bunyan.[63] Defense of the Trinity or of Christ's atonement for sin could still excite enough public passion to engender what Wodrow called a "mob" in Glasgow in 1789. Tenants, artisans, and the rising middle classes paid for the scores of dissenting evangelical churches which were built in Scotland in the last decades of the century, in spite of still being obliged to pay the stipends of the parish pastors whom they found heterodox. This was not a society from which Christianity was about to disappear, nor one in which it was dissolving into theistic moralism. Rather, it illustrates the possibility that Philip Gorski raised in an important article of 2000, that "secularization and religious vitality need not be opposed to each other," that in fact, the social structures of a society can become secularized even as the population within that society remains largely religious.[64] The assumption that Augustinian Christianity must fade to insignificance once displaced from hegemonic cultural dominance, as Kenrick and Goldie supposed in the eighteenth century and as some modern scholars seem also to believe,[65] appears to be based on the view that it is an inherently incredible ideology, which can only be widely believed with the support of state violence or overwhelming cultural pressure. I see no reason to believe this to be the case.

What did change in the eighteenth century was the position of Calvinist Christianity in Scottish society as a whole. In 1712 this was almost universally shared. Those who were less fervent or less disciplined than their neighbors nonetheless paid a detailed and persuasive homage to this worldview when summoned before the session. Calvinism was the default, a matter of consensus; by 1791 it was a matter of controversy,

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the Quakers] was right, and that she was resolved to adhere thereunto." She disappears from church minutes after 1722, determined to "byde by" the Quaker faith: CH2/171/9/1, pp. 136, 156, 164, 170.

[63] English Short Title Catalog.

[64] Gorski, "Historicizing the secularization debate," *American Sociological Review* 65:1; cf. John Sommerville's argument about a secular society containing a religious population in "Secular society/religious population: our tacit rules for using the term secularization," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37:2 (1998).

[65] Brown, *Religion and Society*, 125; Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World*, esp. 44-5 and 141-2. Bruce seems to imagine that any religion can only be believable in the absence of religious diversity.

the intense loyalty of a significant number of Scots notwithstanding. Whether we call this secularization or pluralization, it is a very significant change. The fact that orthodoxy is a choice in the modern world makes the world in which the same beliefs are held a quite different one—a world, as Peter Berger wrote long ago, in which even the orthodox are heretics in the original sense (from *haeresis*, choice), and in which no one can escape the "heretical imperative."[66] John Sommerville describes this move as one "from religious culture to religious faith," from a communally-shared, largely implicit belief to one more individual, personal, self-conscious.[67] Though I have here described Strathclyde's Calvinism throughout the century as a religious culture, my narrative is one of the process by which this became an elective *sub*culture. The fact that this subculture continued to be chosen by many rather than by only a few is perhaps less significant than the structural change.

Few artifacts from the period under study better illustrate this shift than what session clerks referred to as "the oath of purgation," used in cases without witnesses or in which it was one person's word against another's. The oath most commonly made its appearance when a man denied a woman's charge of fornication or adultery: elders presumed him guilty unless he was prepared to deny it after taking the oath, in which case he was presumed innocent. Perhaps surprisingly, very few men accused of sexual wrongdoing chose to "purge themselves by oath" when invited to do so, even though they might have ended the case by doing so. Instead, they typically decline to swear the oath but continue their denials of the woman's accusation, which the session then refuses to take seriously. After days, weeks, or months of browbeating by the elders, the accused men later confess. The "oath of purgation" is often referred to but almost never transcribed in early eighteenth-century kirk session registers; it was only by a happy accident that I stumbled across the full text of the oath, very late in my research, in the parish records of Kilsyth. The oath these men declined to clear themselves by swearing was this:

> I am sensible that if I do not tell the Truth in the matter I make my self liable to the wrath & vengeance of Almighty God both in time & thro' Eternity & altho' I

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[66] *The Heretical Imperative: contemporary possibilities of religious affirmation* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1979).
[67] *The Secularization of Early Modern England: from religious culture to religious faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

> should escape Punishment from Men in time yet the Lord my God will not suffer me to escape his righteous Judgment & if I should tell a Lie I hereby forfeit all that is Good to my Soul.[68]

The oath made its most dramatic appearance in eighteenth-century Strathclyde in Beith in 1755, when the schoolmaster George Hay was accused of inappropriately touching three female students—probably pre-teens, as most village "scholars" were. The fathers of the three girls "alledged to be indecently used" appeared before church authorities to accuse Mr. Hay; but as children were not regarded in eighteenth-century Scotland as competent witnesses, the Presbytery of Irvine treated it as a case with no witnesses, asking the fathers whether they would drop the charges if Hay "purged himself by oath." To my shock and horror, the fathers immediately and unanimously agreed to this proposal. But I read on to find, to my even greater surprise, that Mr. Hay, after denying the accusations to his neighbors, pastor, elders, and to the very faces of his victims and their parents, *declined to do so*.[69] Hay still did not admit molesting the students, claiming that his refusal had rather to do with "a Scruple in his own mind with relation to all oaths in the Generall," but he was now regarded as guilty by the community and was removed from his position.

In the modern West, Calvinists and believers in a vibrantly supernatural universe may still be found, as may unitarians, deists, and Humean skeptics, but a man like George Hay seems truly an ambassador of another age. Hay not only broke the commandments of his neighbors' god, he also lied about it repeatedly and brazenly. He would not, however, persevere in his lie after invoking damnation on himself if he were not truthful, although by doing so he might have evaded punishment. The "oath of purgation" which ended this predator's career is an interesting symbol of a society in which fear of God's judgment was (for practical purposes) universal, and the oath's decline is symptomatic of the secularization of Scottish society *as a whole*, though not of large numbers of individuals within it. The oath, a regular feature of he said/she said cases in the first half of the century, all but disappears from kirk session registers in the 1760s and 70s. Elders no longer offer accused men the opportunity to "purge themselves by oath" by the fourth quarter of the century, instead preferring to sue them in civil court for child-support

[68] CH2/216/4, p. 27.

payments. Fear of damnation, which many Scots continued to feel keenly, could no longer be assumed to be common to all. It is hard to imagine something like the oath being regarded as an adequate proof of innocence today, even by the very devout. Even in areas where traditional Christianity remains strongest (say, rural Tennessee, or the Isle of Lewis), Christians can imagine a sinner indifferent to his own damnation, as the parents of Beith in 1755 evidently could not.

The Reformed Christendom of eighteenth-century Scotland, though no longer, after 1712, backed by the threat of state violence, was often stifling and meddlesome. Non-Christians, liberal Christians, and modern Augustinians alike may welcome its passing. But Mr. Hay's case reminds us that a society in which everyone is afraid of damnation does have some advantages. After the passing of the unifying religious culture which the pedophile Hay shared with his puritanical neighbors, what remains is a world where belief (of various sorts) and unbelief are a matter of individual choice, and the tie that binds is not Christian community but whatever overlapping consensus the diverse inhabitants of our society can find.

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[69] CH2/197/5, pp. 513-7.

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