

# The Blue Banner

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## WESTMINSTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Part Two

#### **POLITICAL BACKGROUND of the WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY**

Parliament convened the Westminster Assembly in 1643 for two chief purposes. First, the Assembly undertook to examine the doctrine of the Church of England and keep that church in harmony with Scripture and the other Protestant churches of Europe. From July to September, 1643, the Assembly busied itself with this first task. The approach the Assembly took, naturally enough, was a revision of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. However, the Assembly never got past Article Sixteen.<sup>1</sup> In October 1643 the Westminister Divines went to work on church polity and worship. When the Assembly later took up the doctrinal portion of its task, it did not attempt to further revise the Thirty-nine Articles. Instead, the divines produced a confession and catechisms *de novo*.

Second, Parliament requested the Assembly to advise them on such changes in the polity and government of the Church of England as would bring that church into closer uniformity with the Church of Scotland and the Reformed churches on the European continent.<sup>2</sup> The Church of England was never as reformed as were the other national

churches of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. This lesser degree of reformation was what gave rise to the “puritan” movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> The three documents with which most Presbyterians are familiar are the documents that the Assembly composed in its purpose of vindicating Reformed doctrine, yet the documents that are less familiar to us — the ones designed to establish Reformed polity and worship in the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland — are actually the documents that occupied most of the Assembly’s time from 1643 to 1647.<sup>4</sup>

The religious and political history of the period as a whole divides into three easily distinguishable periods. The King and his bishops stood and fell together; the rule of Parliament saw the ascendancy also of Presbyterianism; and the triumph of Cromwell over Parliament was also the triumph of the Independents over the Presbyterians.<sup>5</sup>

Earlier, the Second Reformation in Scotland (1637-1638) so provoked King Charles I that he went to war against Scotland to suppress it.<sup>6</sup> Once the Glasgow General Assembly of 1638 declared the acts of the bishops of the Church of Scotland for the previous twenty years null and void, it could be expected that the king and his bishops would react strongly and swiftly. There was no Parliament to finance Charles’ adventure, however, so the task of

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot described the event as follows: “On Thursday the 12 of October, 1643, we being at that instant very busy upon the sixteenth article of the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and upon that clause of it which mentioneth departing from grace, there came an order to us from both houses of Parliament, enjoining our speedy taking in hand the discipline and liturgy of the Church. . .” Bishop John Lightfoot, *Works*, XIII, 18. Hereafter *Lightfoot*.

<sup>2</sup> “An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons in Parliament, etc.” cited in W. M. Hetherington, *History of the Westminister Assembly of Divines* (Edmonton, AB: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991 reprint of 1856 edition), 97-99. Hereafter *Hetherington*.

<sup>3</sup> See chapter one in *Blue Banner* vol. iv, number 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, Alex and Struthers, John, eds. *Minutes of the Westminister Assembly (1644-49)*. (Edmonton, AB, Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991 reprint of 1874 edition), xxvii. Hereafter *Minutes*.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Lewes Cutts, *Turning Points of English Church History*. (London: SPCK, 1889), 257. Cutts makes no effort to mask his disdain for the Puritans and his admiration for Charles I.

<sup>6</sup> Hetherington, 78-79.

underwriting the campaign fell to the bishops themselves.<sup>7</sup>

The wars against the Scots thus became known as “the Bishops’ Wars.” The English army under Charles’ command crossed the Tweed River into Scotland on June 3, 1639. The Scots returned the advance and the English (who were outnumbered 9,000 to 3,000) withdrew back across the Tweed. On June 11 peace negotiations began and the war ended a week after that on June 18, 1639. Not a shot was fired; not a blow struck; not a battle fought. The key concern for the Scots and for the purpose of this paper is found in one detail of the terms of the treaty between Charles and his Scottish subjects: “. . . all matters Ecclesiastical shall be determined by the Assembly of the Kirk, and matters Civil by the Parliament.”<sup>8</sup> Andrew Melville’s idea of “the two kingdoms” (one civil and one ecclesiastical) had at last become a reality in Scotland — at least for the time being.

The abortive attempt by King Charles I and his bishops to impose themselves upon Scotland emptied the King’s coffers. Charles reluctantly called a Parliament<sup>9</sup> in hope of receiving money from it. Charles had previously refused to call a Parliament for almost twelve years — regarding the institution as a threat to his “divine right” as a king. When Charles asked for his subsidies the House of Commons refused to consider granting him supplies until after he redressed nearly twelve years worth of grievances. Charles was enraged: he dissolved Parliament and imprisoned its leading members.

The Convocation of Bishops continued meeting even after Parliament was dissolved.<sup>10</sup> The king had the right to augment the revenues of the clergy by means of grants and they could in turn give a portion of their grant revenues to the king. All this could be done without any legislative authority, so the danger of tyranny was quite real. The Convocation also published seventeen canons, one of which required all clergymen in the Church of England to take an oath in support of the government of that church. The oath said in part, “Nor will I ever give my consent to alter the government of this Church, by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, *et cetera*, as it stands now established.”<sup>11</sup> The emphasized term above gave rise to the name, “the *et cetera* oath,” and drove many of the clergy into the Puritan camp because they could not consent to swear adherence to an implicit faith, i.e., a faith that required them to believe something unknown at

present because the church may declare it to be true at some time in the future.<sup>12</sup>

Having received the necessary funds from the bishops, Charles broke the treaty he made with Scotland and again marched north. The Scots were prepared to raise an army at a moment’s notice. They raised their army and proceeded into England. Once again the king sued for peace with Scotland, this time transferring the discussions first to Ripon and finally to London.<sup>13</sup> In London the nature of the matters in dispute plus the fact that the royal treasury was once more depleted compelled King Charles again to summon Parliament.<sup>14</sup>

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The long struggle between Parliament and King came to a head with the convening of the Long Parliament on November 3, 1640.<sup>15</sup> It had been so long since Parliament met that demands for reform came from all over the kingdom. One of the calls for reform was on the so-called “religious question.” The Parliament’s Grand Committee for Religion reported to the House of Commons on December 12, 1640. The report advised that Parliament should inquire into the cause(s) of three concerns: (1) the decay of preaching in many parishes; (2) the increase of popery in the kingdom; and (3) scandalous ministers. A committee was appointed to inquire into these questions.<sup>16</sup>

It did not take long for petitions concerning themselves with reform to become calls for abolition of the entire prelatical system. A party within the Long Parliament began calling for the complete overthrow of episcopalian government together with its abuses. Robert Baillie, who was in London for the peace negotiations between Scotland and King Charles, wrote to his wife on November 18, 1640,

“The town of London, and a world of men, minds to present a petition, which I have seen, for the abolition of

<sup>7</sup> Thomas M’Crie, *The Story of the Scottish Church from the Reformation to the Disruption* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, nd.), 170.

<sup>8</sup> F. N. McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation* (Berkeley, CA: U. of CA Press, 1974), 62-63. It would not be unfair to date the modern idea of the separation of church and state from June 18, 1639 because of the terms of this treaty.

<sup>9</sup> What came to be known as “The Short Parliament.”

<sup>10</sup> Such continuation of the Convocation without Parliament in session was without historical precedent and probably illegal.

<sup>11</sup> Hetherington, 79-80.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>15</sup> John R. DeWitt, *Jus Divinum: The Westminster Assembly and the Divine Right of Church Government* (Kampen: Kok, 1969), 9. Hereafter DeWitt.

<sup>16</sup> W. A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church During the Civil Wars and Under the Commonwealth 1640-1660* (New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green And Company, 1900), I, 15-16. Hereafter Shaw.

Bishops, Deanes, and all their aperteanances [sic]. It is thought good to delay it till the Parliament have pulled down Canterburie and some prime Bishops, which they minde to doe so soon as the King hes a little digested the bitterness of his Lieutenant's censure. Hudge things are here in working: The mighty hand of God be about this great work! We hope this shall be the joyfull harvest of the teares that this manie yeares hes been sawin in thir kingdomes. All here are wearie of Bishops."<sup>17</sup>

Baillie undoubtedly wrote of the famous "Root and Branch Petition" presented to the House of Commons on December 11, 1640, and bearing some fifteen thousand signatures. The petitioners requested that prelatical government, "with all its Dependencies, Roots and Branches, may be abolished, and all Laws in their behalf made void, and the Government according to God's Word may be rightly placed amongst us."<sup>18</sup> After several false starts, the Root and Branch Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on Thursday, May 27, 1641: "An Act for the utter abolishing and taking away of all archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, prebendaries, chanters, and canons, and all other their under officers."<sup>19</sup>

*In the course of the debates over the Root and Branch Bill, the suggestion was repeatedly made to call an assembly of divines to lend their advice to Parliament on the religious question.*

At about the same time both King and Parliament were dangerously short of funds. Due to the nature of the ongoing peace negotiations with the Scots, King Charles was obliged to support the Scottish army in England as well as his own. He was understandably eager to have the Scottish army out of England.<sup>20</sup> The House of Commons had also borrowed considerably to finance its own operations. London's creditors were hardly eager to loan

<sup>17</sup> Robert Baillie, *Letters and Journals* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1841-42). II, 273-74. Hereafter, *Baillie*.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in *DeWitt*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in *Shaw*, I., 78. A **chancellor** is the titular head of a university; a **commissary** is a representative of a bishop who has jurisdiction in remote parts of a diocese or performs the bishop's duties in his absence; a **dean** is a high church official often in charge of a cathedral church; **deans and chapters** are the electors of the bishop. The chapter can be either a general meeting of the members of a religious order or a meeting of the canons of a collegiate or cathedral church and presided over by a dean; an **archdeacon** is an assistant to the bishop. He superintends other members of the clergy; a **prebendary** is a clergyman who receives his income from the tax or produce of property owned by a cathedral or collegiate church; a **chanter** is a person who sings in the choir of a cathedral church; a **canon** is a member of a group of clergymen belonging to a cathedral chapter.

<sup>20</sup> Of course, the Scottish presence in England was also a source of encouragement to King Charles' enemies in Parliament, while forming a hindrance to his own military plans.

more money to the government, especially in light of Charles' history of dissolving the Short Parliament. The general lack of confidence in government was exacerbated when a plot was discovered in the Army to march into London and take over both the Parliament and the city. The Parliament therefore enacted a bill, "That this present Parliament shall not be adjourned, prorogued,<sup>21</sup> or dissolved, without their own consent." The bill passed both houses handily and even received the royal assent.<sup>22</sup>

In the course of the debates over the Root and Branch Bill, the suggestion was repeatedly made to call an assembly of divines to lend their advice to Parliament on the religious question. Benjamin B. Warfield said,

"The most notable early attempt to secure such advice was probably that taken by the Lords March 1, 1641,<sup>23</sup> in the appointment of what has come to be known as Bishop Williams' Committee. . . . Similarly, in its discussion of the 'Ministers' petition and remonstrance' in February, 1641,<sup>24</sup> the Commons sought the advice of divines in its committee. The desirability of a standing Assembly of Divines for giving stated advice to Parliament was adverted to by more than one speaker in the course of the discussion of the Root and Branch Bill which was introduced on May 27, 1641: on the government to be set up after the abolishing of the prelates the debaters felt the need of advice from such a body."<sup>25</sup>

The idea of calling an assembly of divines was also forwarded in the Grand Remonstrance of November 8, 1641, which marked the break between King and Parliament. The Parliament claimed to desire a further reformation of religion in England and to advance that reformation they maintained,

" . . . we desire that there may be a General Synod of the most Grave, Pious, Learned and Judicious Divines of this Island; assisted with some Foreign Parts professing the same Religion with us, who may consider of all things necessary for the Peace and good Government of the Church, and represent the Results of their Consultations to Parliament, to be there allowed of and confirmed, and receive the stamp of Authority, thereby to find Passage and Obedience throughout the Kingdom."<sup>26</sup>

Fully nineteen months prior to the actual passage of the call of the Assembly, such a motion was already being discussed in Parliament. Significantly for the importance of the three neglected documents, the *purpose* for which

<sup>21</sup> "Prorogue" means to discontinue the regular meetings of a lawmaking body for a period of time.

<sup>22</sup> Hetherington, 84-86.

<sup>23</sup> Warfield was using the modern dating in which the year begins January 1.

<sup>24</sup> See previous footnote.

<sup>25</sup> B. B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and its Work* (Edmonton, AB: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991 reprint of 1959 edition), p. 10, note 17. Hereafter *Warfield*.

<sup>26</sup> Cited in *DeWitt*, 15.

such an assembly was contemplated was to “consider of all things necessary for the Peace *and good Government* of the Church” (emphasis added).<sup>27</sup>

As Parliament wanted either a revision or a complete rewriting of the Thirty-nine Articles, it also desired a substitute for *The Book of Common Prayer*. The Scots also had reasons for wanting to proceed with the project,<sup>28</sup> and used the zeal of the Independents much to their advantage. Both the Scots and the Independents were convinced *The Book of Common Prayer* should be supplanted. Robert Baillie observed, “In the meantime, we would assay to agree upon the *Directorie of Worship*, wherein we expect no small help from these men [Independents] to abolish the great Idol of England, the Service-Book, and to erect in all parts of worship a full conformitie to Scotland in all things worthie to be spoken of.”<sup>29</sup> The plan was for *The Directory for the Public Worship of God* to replace the Prayer Book (*Book of Common Prayer*).

***The Assembly’s decision not to limit the idea of divine appointment to the topic of church government gives us reason to believe that the Assembly was setting forth the same principle with respect to worship as well. The principle of jus divinum or sola Scriptura, as it applies to worship, we now call “the regulative principle of worship.”***

*The Directory for the Public Worship of God* was not adopted by the American church in 1729 when it adopted the *Confession* and *Catechisms*. As Julius Melton points out in his *Presbyterian Worship in America*,

“When it came to worship, the colonial synod [of 1729] only ‘recommended’ the *Directory* to its members, ‘to be by them observed as near as circumstance will allow, and Christian prudence direct.’ The synod of 1729 therefore gave only a qualified endorsement to the *Directory*. . . .”<sup>30</sup>

As a result, the document is not well known to many Presbyterians in this country. Even in Scotland, the Act of Parliament recognizing the *Directory* was annulled at the Restoration in 1660. The *Directory* was never again

<sup>27</sup> Per part one of this series, the three neglected documents are the *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, *Directory for Family Worship*, and *Form of Presbyterian Church Government*.

<sup>28</sup> The Scottish Church only barely escaped the imposition of Laud’s Service Book in July 1637. One can understand a desire to rid the island of the book altogether.

<sup>29</sup> Baillie, II, 117.

<sup>30</sup> Julius Melton, *Presbyterian Worship in America*. (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967), 17.

acknowledged by the civil authorities in Scotland.<sup>31</sup>

The Westminster Assembly regarded worship and church government both to be strictly by the appointment of God, as evidenced by the minutes for Session 633 of May 4, 1646:

“The Assembly entered upon the debate of the *jus divinum* [divine right]. Upon a debate it was *Ordered* — To inquire how many ways the will and appointment of Jesus Christ is set out in Scripture. *Resolved* upon the Q., These words, ‘in reference to church government,’ shall not be added.”<sup>32</sup>

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The Assembly’s work on *The Directory of Worship* appears to have taken about a year. Very soon after the arrival of the Scottish Commissioners, a committee was appointed to begin work on the *Directory*. The Committee met, perhaps for the first time, on December 15, 1643. Baillie claimed the Committee on that date appointed a sub-committee “of five, without exclusion of anie of the committee to meet with us of Scotland for preparing a *Directorie of Worship*.”<sup>34</sup> By the end of the following year (December 27th, 1644) Parliament received the last part of *The Directory*.<sup>35</sup> *The Directory* was approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on February 3, 1644/45.<sup>36</sup>

The Westminster Assembly’s greatest controversy was in coming to a consensus view of church government. The fact that a majority did come to an agreement has evidence from another of the three neglected documents: *The Form of Presbyterian Church Government*.<sup>37</sup> There were three distinguishable and irreconcilable views represented at

<sup>31</sup> W. Beveridge, *A Short History of the Westminster Assembly*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1904), 91. Hereafter *Beveridge*.

<sup>32</sup> *Minutes*, 227.

<sup>33</sup> The fact that the Assembly very clearly held to the idea that God does not desire or permit worship in accordance with human traditions is discussed later in chapters 3 and 6.

<sup>34</sup> Baillie, II, 118.

<sup>35</sup> On December 27th, the Assembly sent to Parliament the *Directory* for fasting and the *Directory* for singing of Psalms. There is no record in the Minutes that any further sections were later adopted and/or sent to Parliament. Minutes, 23-24. Lightfoot, in his journal entry for November 11, 1644, stated, “And, first, in the title [of *The Directory for the Publick Worship of God*], there was singing of Psalms left out; which I moved again and again to be put in, and so it was accordingly.” *Lightfoot*, 325.

<sup>36</sup> Hetherington, 343.

<sup>37</sup> Another document which came from the Westminster Assembly came to be known as *The Grand Debate*. It will be the subject of a subsequent paper. It consisted of a debate between the Independents and the Presbyterians on the question of the subordination of congregations to presbyteries.

Westminster.<sup>38</sup> First was the Erastian view that held the civil government to be a sort of “chief pastor” of the church. The Erastian view was reflected in the earlier church settlements in England in which the monarch was head of the church.

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The second view was that of Independency. The Independents were only seven to eleven in number, depending upon how one counts. The best known of them were Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Jeremiah Burroughs, William Bridge and Sidrach Simpson. Depending upon the issues before the Assembly they could also generally count on Joseph Caryl and William Greenhill. But the chief strength of the Independents lay not in the Assembly, but in the Parliament and later in the army.

The Independents were the successors of a sect that originated in Elizabeth’s reign under Robert Browne. The “Brownists,” as they came to be known, regarded the English church as a mere creature of the state. They believed that each particular congregation was and should be independent of every other congregation. Each assembly would then have full authority to settle its own doctrine, discipline and ritual. Many of the Independents had been persecuted under both Stuart and Tudor monarchies exiled to Holland and New England.

With the opening of the Long Parliament in November, 1640, many of these exiles returned from the Netherlands and the Independents rapidly increased all over the kingdom. Yet they had modified their original ideas (or rather they had modified the ideas of the original Brownists) such that they acknowledged many of the parochial churches to be true churches. They professed to agree with the doctrines expressed in the Thirty-nine

<sup>38</sup> The Grand Committee on Church Government met from September 20, 1644, through October 25, 1644. The committee was for the purpose of reaching an accommodation between the Independents and the Presbyterians. However, the committee was so divided on the accommodation (10-9 against) that they no longer met after October 25th. George Gillespie, “Notes of Debates and Proceedings of The Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster,” p. 107 in *The Works of George Gillespie*. Gillespie’s works were published in the mid-nineteenth century as part of a subscription called *A Presbyterian’s Armoury*. Each subscriber bound the volumes as he saw fit. Therefore, there is not a standard pagination that runs through all of the volumes. The “Notes” are paginated i to xv and 1 to 120. We will follow that pagination throughout this paper, with the work referenced simply as *Gillespie*.

Articles and they moderated their Independency to such an extent that they ultimately allowed that an “offending church” could be examined for doctrine and discipline by neighboring churches and, if found wanting, could be excommunicated by them.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, the majority of the divines held to some view of Presbytery, though there was not a complete unanimity as to everything that the position entailed. All three of these views will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper.<sup>40</sup>

In 1643 the parliamentary party fell upon hard times in its prosecution of the Civil War against the king. By the autumn of 1643 the western part of England, with only a few exceptions, had declared for the king. The north was also in the royalist camp with the exception of Lancashire. Though the parliamentary army had gained some strength in the eastern counties, it held the midlands by the barest of margins.

The English Parliament then decided to call upon Scotland for aid because of Scotland’s recent wars with King Charles and his bishops. Parliament may have thought that the recent Scottish victories over the king in the Bishops’ Wars would intimidate the royalist forces. The Scottish Parliament agreed to send 21,000 men to the English Parliament’s assistance, but only on the understanding that the *Solemn League and Covenant* would be accepted in England as it was in Scotland. The *Solemn League* pledged the two nations to unite for the reformation of religion “according to the Word of God and the example of the best Reformed Churches.” There can be no doubt that the Scots understood that to involve a “Presbyterian Reformation.” As historian John Brown said, “As we follow the course of events, it becomes clear that it was not Presbyterianism that brought on the war, but the war that brought in Presbyterianism.”<sup>41</sup>

The Westminster Divines, at the direction of Parliament, resolved on October 17, 1643, “that this Assembly shall first confer and treat concerning Discipline and Government.”<sup>42</sup> Clearly, the Westminster Assembly’s

<sup>39</sup> This very strange view of excommunicating an entire gathered church they called “disfellowshipping.” See Charles Sidney Carter, *The English Church in the Seventeenth Century*. (London: Longmans, Green, 1909), 40.

<sup>40</sup> Seven members of the Assembly brought a dissent against the propositions concerning church government. Those “dissenting brethren” (or Independents) apparently wanted to work both sides of the table. A committee was appointed to draw up answers to their dissent and the Assembly decided that it would act as a committee of the whole in perfecting its answers to the dissent. Amazingly, the dissenters wanted a hand in framing the answers to their own dissent! When that was denied, Lightfoot explained, “This the Independents, Mr. Burroughs and Mr. Goodwin, were so shameless as to except against; and to challenge to be present at the drawing up of our answers: but Mr. Bridges was more reasonable.” *Lightfoot*, 338. The resulting papers, known to history as *The Grand Debate*, will be discussed in a subsequent dissertation.

<sup>41</sup> John Brown, *The English Puritans*, (New York: Putnam, 1910), 133.

<sup>42</sup> Gillespie, 1.

reason for dropping its work on the *Thirty-Nine Articles* and beginning its work on discipline and government was the recent arrival of the commissioners from Scotland and the terms of the *Solemn League and Covenant*. The Assembly presented *The Directory for Ordination of Ministers* to Parliament on April 20, 1644. The leading propositions of church government (discussed later in this paper) were presented to Parliament November 8, 1644. The Assembly finally incorporated its resolutions on church censures and presented them to Parliament July 7th, 1645.<sup>43</sup> These three items taken together comprise *The Form of Presbyterial Church Government*.

The preliminary work on *The Directory for Worship* was started quite some time before the issues of church government were settled. Though a year may seem to be a long time, it is relatively short considering that the debates on church government began in October, 1643 and continued into and through 1646.<sup>44</sup> George Gillespie presented his famous landmark book against Erastianism, *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, to the Assembly on July 30, 1646<sup>45</sup> as part of the debates over church government.

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<sup>43</sup> Beveridge, 89.

<sup>44</sup> DeWitt, 62.

<sup>45</sup> *Minutes*, 261. See chapter 8 for a discussion of the details.

doubtful that the *Form of Government* issuing from the Westminster Assembly would have been the same, though the *Directory for Worship* would likely have not undergone many changes from the final document as we know it today.

Parliament resolved in November, 1648, that King Charles should be brought to trial and when justice had been served the people should be free *to choose another king*.<sup>46</sup> Parliament therefore moved the King from the Isle of Wight to Hurst Castle on the opposite shore of England. On December 5, 1648, the House of Commons declared that the King's answers to various interrogatories "were calculated to serve as a basis for peace."

The vote on the resolution was 140 to 104. At 7:00 the following morning, two army regiments occupied all the avenues leading to the House.<sup>47</sup> When the Members of Parliament arrived, forty-one leading Presbyterians were arrested and many others were refused entrance.<sup>48</sup> The resistance of the House was still not overcome, however. The Parliament resolved not to proceed to any business until its members were restored. The next day (December 7th), forty additional members were taken prisoner — which left the fanatics in charge of the Parliament. At that point the House voted 50 to 28 to take into consideration the proposals of the army. Cromwell was finally present for the vote on the 7th and declared simply, "God is my witness that I know nothing of all that has passed in this house; however, since it has been done, I am content."<sup>49</sup> Samuel R. Gardiner suggested that Pride's action irritated to the point of alienation even many of the Independents in Parliament.<sup>50</sup> There is probably some merit to his thesis due to the fact that 104 had voted against entering into peace discussions with King Charles, but two days later only 50 could be found to support the purge.<sup>51</sup> The Army ordered the Parliament to dissolve itself and "to confer with the General [Cromwell] for the discharge [unjailing] of the members."<sup>52</sup> When the Members were finally released and asked their jailors by what power they had been detained they received the short answer, "by the power of the sword."<sup>53</sup> Gardiner further maintained,

<sup>46</sup> F. C. Dahlmann, *The History of the English Revolution*. Trans. by H. Evans Lloyd. (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1844), 199.

<sup>47</sup> A regiment generally consisted of about 3,000 men during wartime and it was typically commanded by a Colonel. Modern armies do not use regiments in the same way they were used in the 1640's.

<sup>48</sup> This measure was executed under Colonel Pride, but the presence of two regiments strongly suggests that the operation was commanded at brigade or army echelon.

<sup>49</sup> Cited in Dahlmann, *op. cit.*, 200.

<sup>50</sup> S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War*, (London: Longmans, Green, 1893), IV, 270.

<sup>51</sup> Either that or Pride was so stupid he was arresting the wrong people.

<sup>52</sup> "Journal of the House of Commons," VI, 94, cited in Gardiner, *op. cit.*, IV, 271.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

“There can hardly be a doubt that Cromwell had been consulted as to the proposed interference of the army; but the special form it took had been rapidly determined, almost certainly only on the preceding day, so that there had been no time to obtain his opinion on the adoption of a purge in place of a dissolution.”<sup>54</sup>

One can only think with a certain sadness of that day five years earlier when Oliver Cromwell stood with 228 members of the House of Commons, his hand raised toward heaven, and promised to be faithful to the *Solemn League and Covenant*. Perhaps Cromwell was not disinclined at that point to make common cause with Presbyterians or perhaps he simply did not yet want his true colors to be known. He swore to God at the taking of the Covenant in 1643. He swore to God again in December, 1648. And God alone will be his judge.<sup>55</sup>

***Shortly after Pride’s Purge, Thomas Watson preached a sermon to the “Rump” Parliament that was left. In his sermon, titled “God’s Anatomy Upon Man’s Heart,” Watson said the hypocrite is “zealous in lesser things and remiss in greater. . . zealous against a ceremony, a relic, or painted glass. . . but in the meantime lives in known sin, lying, defaming, extortion, etc. . . . Many make religion a cloak for their ambition. Come see my zeal, saith Jehu, for the Lord. No Jehu, thy zeal was for the kingdom. Jehu made religion hold the stirrup till he got in the saddle and possessed the crown. This is a most exasperating sin.”<sup>56</sup> Predictably, the Rump did not thank Watson or invite him to print his sermon.***

With Colonel Pride’s march on London and purge of the Presbyterians in Parliament in 1648, it mattered little what advice the Westminster Assembly gave Parliament. Parliament by that time had turned its ear away from the Assembly and to the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell. The Independents thus accomplished with horse and sword that which they had been unable to accomplish by reason or politics.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> See Mitchell, *Westminster Assembly*, 183.

<sup>56</sup> Cited in H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Religion, The Reformation, and Social Change*, (London: Macmillan, 1967), 335.

Watson said the hypocrite is “zealous in lesser things and remiss in greater. . . zealous against a ceremony, a relic, or painted glass. . . but in the meantime lives in known sin, lying, defaming, extortion, etc. . . . Many make religion a cloak for their ambition. Come see my zeal, saith Jehu, for the Lord. No Jehu, thy zeal was for the kingdom. Jehu made religion hold the stirrup till he got in the saddle and possessed the crown. This is a most exasperating sin.”<sup>57</sup> Predictably, the Rump did not thank Watson or invite him to print his sermon.



### **The Desire of All Nations. (Haggai 2:7)**

by R. Andrew Meyers

Tongues shall be redeemed  
And Calvin’s land sing  
Psalms again esteemed  
Unto Christ our King

Jesu, who from the throne  
Doth in heaven reign  
Loves to hear his own  
glorify his name

But Zion’s walls breached  
The world now dark lies  
Revolution preached  
Wicked men arise

Evil is called good  
Not thy law defined  
Yet shall kings who should  
Kiss the Son divine

God, thine own cause plead  
Hear those prayers of old  
Do thy people lead  
Glory to unfold

Thy plan consummate  
Return to acclaim  
The praise shall be great  
On earth to thy name◆

<sup>57</sup> Cited in H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Religion, The Reformation, and Social Change*, (London: Macmillan, 1967), 335.

## REVIEW: The Psalms for Congregational Singing

by Kenneth W. Hanko

[self-published; 17 Miami Road; Norristown, PA 19403] \$15.00 postpd. plastic comb bound.

Quoting from Pastor Hanko's Preface, "The Psalms are the songs God gave to his church, the hymns he appointed for his praise, and the spiritual songs he designed for the edification of his people. We should sing them, and as much as possible as he gave them." This reviewer could not agree more with this proposal from Mr. Hanko.

Hanko follows the modern custom of using "you/your" even when addressing deity. In this writer's opinion the loss of "thee/thou/thy/thine" is a lamentable one, but not one that mars this psalter beyond use. Pastor Hanko's reason for abandoning the convention of distinguishing between second person singular and plural pronouns is a commendable one, to be sure, ". . .the Bible must be in, and the church must speak, the language of the people. . . ." Certainly - and "thou/thee/thy/thine" is English.

Addressing God in second person singular is preferable, in this reviewer's opinion, for at least two reasons. First, it is a practice that runs through the Bible without exception. God is nowhere in Scripture, so far as I have been able to tell, addressed in the plural. Second, it has become in most English speaking churches, a part of what might be called "the posture of prayer." Truly posture is a thing in itself indifferent, yet our posture does generally arise from our attitude. Thus a teacher may admonish a student, "sit up and pay attention."

Generally, we stand or kneel to pray. Generally we bow our heads to pray. Generally we close our eyes to pray. Many also pray with uplifted palms. These all comprise the posture of address to God and arise from reverence in the one who addresses him. The liturgical use of "thou/thee/thy/thine" has taken on a similar role in our praying and singing. Yes, we can sing without the use of these pronouns, just as we could pray in a slouched sitting position with our hands in our pockets. The question is simply one of a proper decorum in our worship of God.

Though some considerable space has been spent disagreeing with a single translation choice, the *Psalms for Congregational Singing* is to be commended on the whole. Hanko has selected well established Psalm tunes throughout and in each setting the music fits the mood of the Psalm quite well. There are some Psalm tunes that Mr. Hanko apparently knows under different names. For

example, he calls the Common Meter tune "St. Stephen" by the name "Abridge."<sup>1</sup> It seems that wherever possible Hanko has used tunes from the 16th century Genevan Psalter (not to be confused with the Sternehold and Hopkins Psalter printed at the back of later editions of the Geneva Bible).

All in all, Mr. Hanko's contribution to the restoration of Psalmody in churches and homes is a positive one. However, as Pastor Hanko admits in his Preface, "The *Scottish Psalter*, first published in the 1650s and still in use in many Presbyterian churches . . . gives us the most accurate metrical versification of the Psalms in English available even today . . . ." We agree with Hanko and would prefer to see the 1650 *Scottish Psalter* revised to eliminate some of its awkwardness for modern readers and singers. In the opinion of this reviewer, such a project would be worthwhile. REB

## REVIEW: A Presbyterian Political Manifesto: Presbyterianism and Civil Government

by Michael G. Wagner

[Still Waters Revival Books, 21+ XIV pp.] \$12.95 Canadian

Michael Wagner is a doctoral student at the University of Alberta. In the pages of this pamphlet Wagner espouses what has come to be the most fiercely-fought enemy of American Evangelical Christianity: the principle that there should be an established church within a nation and that church which most closely resembles the church that should be established is the Presbyterian Church.

It is probably fair to say that the attitude most Americans (and even most Evangelical Americans) take toward religion is similar to the attitude of the final edition of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* toward Earth: "mostly harmless." However, Wagner maintains that such a view of religion is deficient. For Wagner religion is the underlying belief system that everyone has about the meaning of life. Thus from his point of view the question is not properly *whether* a society will establish a religion, but *which religion* a society will establish.

At this point the author takes a step in his thinking that he never clearly justifies - and in this reviewer's opinion *cannot* be justified from a strictly "natural law" point of view. We cannot properly say that the state is the whole of society. Society does indeed establish a religion in the

<sup>1</sup> And what Mr. Hanko refers to as "St. Stephen" is a tune by William Jones which *The Psalms in Metre* identifies as "Newington," etc.

broad sense in which Wagner claims. There is a necessity that a godly society will establish the true religion. There is not such a necessity that arises from natural law that the civil magistrate can or ought to establish a particular religion apart from that religion being the generally homogeneous religion of the entire society.

This lack of homogeneity has been a considerable difficulty in this country from the beginning. There has never been a national consensus that any *particular* understanding of Christianity is the true one. This reviewer disagrees with the implication of chapter two that establishment of religion can or ought to be found in natural law. Even Wagner himself admits in a subsequent chapter of his pamphlet, “philosophical considerations alone should not be considered sufficient to prove that an establishment of religion is a moral obligation.”

Eventually, however, Wagner examines the proper source material. After attempting (and in this reviewer’s opinion failing) to derive the establishment principle from natural law, Wagner turns to Scripture and the Scottish understanding of the relationship of church and state. Thus the Free Church of Scotland scholar Dr. William Cunningham, writing against what he called “Voluntaryism,” stated, “. . . nations, as such, and civil rulers in their official capacity, are entitled and bound to aim at the promotion of the interests of true religion, and the welfare of the church of Christ; that there are things which they can lawfully do, which are fitted to promote these objects; and that thus a connection may be legitimately formed between Church and State. . . . I still believe it to be a portion of divine truth, fully sanctioned by the word of God, and, therefore, never to be abandoned or denied. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

Wagner deals effectively with the subject of liberty of conscience. As Wagner points out, “Liberty of conscience does not override the obligation to obey authorities acting according to God’s Word.” Another way of saying this is to recognize that personal conscience is *not* the final authority for our beliefs and actions. The Scriptures are the final authority for a godly society, and the state (civil magistrate) has a duty to enforce the dictates of Scripture regardless of various personal consciences. It must be remembered that liberty of conscience exists; but it must also be remembered that liberty of conscience is bounded by God’s Word.

The *prima facie* case for the establishment of the Presbyterian Church does not come from either natural law or liberty of conscience. Rather it arises from the fact that

Presbyterianism is biblical Christianity. A civil government that establishes the Presbyterian Church will therefore be nothing more or less than a civil government that rules a nation in accordance with Scripture.

Wagner concludes properly: “The Scriptures also give us a pattern of church-state cooperation that is not only still valid, but represents the only pattern for civil government that has ever been endorsed by God Himself. However, fears that this would involve the creation of a totalitarian state are unfounded. The state is obligated to enforce the Law of God and cannot go beyond that Law since it is limited by the very Law that spells out its responsibilities.”

Wagner admits that establishment is not a part of the modern political discourse. It may be many years before it ever is in this country (or in Wagner’s country, Canada). Wagner concludes his thesis with a call for political activism and one hopes and supposes he is calling for an informed Christian political activism. How politically active can a Christian be in a system that is constitutionally opposed to Christianity? Well, Wagner did not deal with that issue. It is an important question, but not the one that immediately concerns Wagner’s thesis. However, given the cover art -- the swearing and subscribing the National Covenant in Greyfriars’ Churchyard 1638 -- it might have been an appropriate subject. Such a discussion would be a welcome addition to this or a future volume from Mr. Wagner’s pen. REB

### **REVIEW: Reckless Faith: When the Church Loses Its Will To Discern**

by John MacArthur [Crossway Books, 256 pp.] \$17.99

Early in 1994 a document entitled “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium” was published. The document was drafted by a group led by Richard John Neuhaus and Charles Colson. Neuhaus converted to Romanism in 1990 and has since been ordained to the Roman Catholic Church priesthood.

Given the fact that there is a fundamental difference of opinion between Romanists and Protestants over the content of the gospel, one must wonder if it is the Evangelicals who have departed from Protestantism or if it is Romanists who have departed from Rome. John MacArthur leaves no doubt that it is Evangelicals who generally have departed from the tenets of the Protestant faith.

Though there are some, such as Neuhaus and Scott Hahn,

<sup>2</sup> William Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (Still Waters Revival Books reprint), vol. I, p. 391.

## REVIEW: The Necessity of Reforming the Church.

by John Calvin with an introduction by W. Robert Godfrey. Old Paths Publications, 117 + xi pp.

who have made an informed decision to apostatize to Romanism, for most Evangelicals this has not been the case. MacArthur points out that the drift in Evangelical thinking has come about as a result of downplaying the importance of truth (the content of faith) and focusing on the faith itself. In fact, on pages 28-29 of his book Pastor MacArthur is so bold as to say, "The face of evangelicalism has changed so dramatically in the past twenty years that what is called evangelicalism today is beginning to resemble what used to be called neo-orthodoxy. If anything, some segments of contemporary evangelicalism are even more subjective in their approach to truth than neo-orthodoxy ever was."

The nineteenth century in America saw the rise of such evangelists as Charles Finney, Dwight Moody, and Billy Sunday. Finney was openly hostile to the reformed doctrine of total depravity and Moody seemed to be of the opinion that it makes no practical difference. What was sown in the nineteenth century is being reaped today.

As the church moves away from the reformed faith it must move toward either unbelief (i.e. liberalism and neo-orthodoxy) or Romanism (i.e. traditionalism and ritualism). Only Protestantism, with its insistence upon the foundational doctrine of *sola Scriptura*, will be able to stem the bleeding in evangelicalism today. Only as the church returns again to the belief that Scripture *alone* is the basis for doctrine, government, and worship will she be able to reassert with power the other Protestant doctrine of *sola fide* (justification by faith alone).

Pastor MacArthur does not agree with the views of *Blue Banner* on every particular. However, he does champion the key doctrine from which all else must be derived. He stands firmly for the fact that Christianity is a faith founded on the inspired Word of God, which is found today *only* in the 66 books of the Bible.

The Toronto Movement, or "laughing revival," is simply the latest manifestation of how far from Protestantism modern Evangelicalism has come. The preoccupation with individualistic religion rather than covenantal Christianity simply digresses farther from the truth that is in Christ and declines farther into the morass of mysticism.

The issue of the gospel is not this or that experience - it is the truth that Jesus Christ died according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures ( 1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The proclamation of the gospel is not "ask Jesus to be your personal savior," but "repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." The church must reclaim her heritage by preaching the Christ who sits at the right hand of God the Father and not some mythical and mystical Christ of her own vain imagination. REB

In these days of Roman Catholic/Protestant "dialogue" and common cause over such social concerns as the holocaust which is abortion, Protestants sometimes forget what the Reformation did. In fact it has justly been charged by some that modern day Evangelicals do not "think" like Protestants at all, but like Romanists. The Reformed community should therefore welcome this publication of Calvin's justification of the Reformation.

One of the first things readers should notice is the emphasis Calvin placed on reforming worship first of all. He says on page 4, "If it be enquired, then, by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence amongst us and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity, viz., a knowledge, *first*, of the mode in which God is duly worshipped; and *secondly* of the source from which salvation is to be obtained. When these are kept out of view, though we may glory in the name of Christians, our profession is empty and vain."

Calvin seems to be speaking not only to the Roman church of the sixteenth century, but even to many Protestant churches of our own day when he states, "A new Judaism, as a substitute for that which God had distinctly abrogated, has again been reared up by means of numerous puerile extravagances, collected from different quarters; and with these have been mixed up certain impious rites, partly borrowed from the heathen, and more adapted to some theatrical show than to the dignity of our religion." (p.10)

This edition has been completely retypeset and is perfect bound with an illustrated cover, bright paper and good print. It is an above average publication of an important book. Previously one had to buy Calvin's seven volume *Selected Works* in order to obtain this gem.

This book will help its readers understand much of what is wrong with Protestant churches today and why a return to the Reformation is in order. REB