

THE BLUE BANNER

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What Standard? A Review of *English Bible Translations: What Standard?* by William O. Einwechter

English Bible Translations: What Standard?, by William O. Einwechter (Preston/Speed publications, 1996) Reviewed by Mark Arvid Johnson.

Recently, a considerable amount of controversy was generated by the possibility of the introduction of an “inclusive language” edition of the popular NIV (See *Inclusive Language Translations*). Evangelicals such as J.I.Packer and James Dobson inveighed against “rewriting” of scripture. Those advocating inclusive language responded that it was faithful to the intended meaning of scripture, if not the very words. Controversies such as this underscore the need for objective standards by which to judge the worth of a translation of sacred scripture. *English Bible Translations: What Standard*, by William O. Einwechter, is a good introduction to the debate about what makes a good translation of the Bible.

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INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE TRANSLATIONS

An “inclusive language” translation avoids masculine language when it is clear to the translators that both men and women were intended in the original, even where the original itself uses masculine language. As an example, here are two sample from the British NIV, Inclusive Language Edition:

Psalm 8:4. What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?
34:20. He protects all their bones, not one of them will be broken.
Compare these with the renderings from the standard NIV:
8:4. What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?
34:20. He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.

The book is not a treatise on textual criticism and its application nor a detailed treatment of linguistics and translation theory, though both textual criticism and translation theory are addressed in the book. Neither is this book a defense of a particular translation as inspired above the Hebrew and Greek sources. Rather, the book aims to set forth briefly the Biblical doctrines directly relevant to Bible translation, and from those doctrines to develop objective standards for judging Bible versions.

Einwechter presents the doctrines of verbal plenary inspiration, and its necessary analog, providential preservation. Scripture claims the very words of the inspired authors came from God. In some cases an entire argument in scripture is based on a single word or letter. Since the word is the basic unit of inspiration, Einwechter concludes that translators should also focus on the word as the basic unit of translation. Providential preservation is the doctrine that God, in a special

dispensation of divine providence, assured that trustworthy copies have always circulated within the church. Though sorely neglected today, Einwechter documents this doctrine from scripture, the reformed creeds, and the Protestant dogmaticians.

Next the author applies these doctrines to the evaluation of Bible translation. Fundamentally, there are two basic questions in Bible translation: what to translate and how to translate it. Though there is general agreement on the proper text of the Old Testament, this is not the case with the New Testament. To simplify considerably, there are two textual traditions of the Greek NT, the Alexandrian and the Byzantine. The Byzantine text is the text that God was pleased to preserve publicly in the use of the universal church for nearly two millennia. The Alexandrian text, though represented by older manuscripts, was all but unknown during this period until a few celebrated manuscripts containing it were rediscovered in the nineteenth century. If God has preserved the true text in the life of the church, then the Byzantine text has a much greater claim and should be used as the basis for translating the New Testament. Translations based on the Byzantine text include the KJV and NKJV. Translations based mainly on the Alexandrian text include the NEB, NASB and NIV.

Einwechter then addresses translation theories. There are basically two theories of Bible translation. Literal or formal equivalence seeks as much as possible within the constraints of good English to keep to the grammatical forms and words of the original language document. Though any translation involves some interpretation, formal equivalence attempts to minimize this element. Alternatively, paraphrase or dynamic equivalence seeks to recast the style, grammar, and vocabulary of the original as if it were written in modern English. To do this, the translator must decide the intended meaning of the text and then paraphrase that meaning in English. Hence the reader is dependent upon the translator's understanding of the meaning of scripture, rather than scripture itself. Because translators should focus on the word as the basic unit of translation, formal equivalence translation is to be preferred. Formal equivalence translations include the KJV, NASB, and NKJV. Dynamic equivalence translations include the NEB and NIV.

Overall, the book is well written and implemented. The author and subject indices are useful, as is the suggested reading list. More knowledgeable readers will perhaps be disappointed because some issues were not explored, or not treated in depth, such as the theory behind dynamic equivalence translation, or the relationship between the Byzantine Text and the Textus Receptus, but they should remember the limited scope and compass of the book. Readers desiring more advanced treatments of the issues raised by this book would do well to follow the footnoted sources throughout and the suggested reading list at the end. In summary, this book is an excellent choice for those looking for a general introduction or concise summary of the issues surrounding Bible versions.

Available from Preston/Speed Publication, RR#4 Box 705, Mill Hall, PA 17751. (717) 726-7844. \$7.50 plus \$3.00 s&h. Multiple copies: 5 - 9 @ \$6.00 each. 10 or more @ \$5.00 each.

The Doctrine of Providential Preservation

The text of Sacred Scripture has endured many hazards over its history. Prior to the Protestant Reformation and the widespread use of the printing press in Europe, the text of the Bible was copied by hand. Heretics twisted holy writ for their own ends. Tyrants attempted to eradicate all copies of it. This raises the question of whether the church has had accurate copies of God's word. If we take scripture seriously as the inspired word of God, we must answer that God has kept his word in the universal church. Repeatedly God promises his word will remain forever with his people:

The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations (Psalm 33:11). For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one title shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18). See also Isaiah 59:21, Psalm 100:5, 111:7-8, 117, 119:151-152,160, Matthew 24:35, Luke 16:17, John 10:35, 1 Pet 1:23-25.

This is the doctrine of Providential Preservation of sacred scripture, as summarized by the Westminster Confession of Faith (I:8):

"The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical"

Antichrist in Scripture

by Francis Nigel Lee

Short Summary of the findings, extracted from a message delivered at the 1997 Blue Banner Conference. See page 5 for ordering information.

Let us now shortly summarise the above teachings of Holy Scripture, Martin Luther and Calvinistic Protestantism.

1 About 540 B.C., Daniel predicted the cessation of all new prophesying around the time of Christ's death. This, Daniel associated with the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem temple within that very same generation! Daniel 2:34-45; 7:7-19; 8:9-12, 20-25; 9:24-27; 11:30-45; 12:1-4.

2 Daniel also predicted that, beginning in AD 70, first the Pagan Roman Empire and then papal Rome as its successor would pollute God's true temple (the Christian Church). That would last for 1260 day-years, or till AD 1330. However, then the great plague called the 'Black Death' would sweep across the civilized world, killing most of its ungodly inhabitants. Daniel 7:24ff & 12:7 cf. Revelation 9:20ff; 11:2-9ff; 12:6-14; 13:1-7.

3 Daniel further predicted that the pollution of the Christian Church, starting in AD 70, would begin to cease after 1290 day-years. The latter would occur thirty years after the 1260 years and hence in AD 1360ff. Daniel 12:11 cf. 7:25 & 12:7. That was when God raised up John Wycliffe in the middle of the 'Black Death' with which He punished a deformed Church. See Revelation 9:20ff & 11:2-9ff. Cf. 'AIDS' today! Revelation 15:1-18:4.

4 Daniel last predicted that a further time of great blessing would start to occur at the end of 1335 day-years after AD 70. Daniel 12:4-12. This would occur when John Huss started preaching Wycliffe's Proto-Protestant views in Bohemia, in AD 1405. CF. Revelation 14:6ff. Only yet thereafter, God told Daniel, would he himself be resurrected "at the end of the days." Daniel 12:13.

5 The appearance of Christ at His incarnation, elicited opposition from several minor antichrists.

Matthew 23:2-36 & John 17:12. The apostle John predicted that these 'antichrists' had already emerged, even before the Holy Scriptures were finally completed. I John 2:18ff & 4:1-3, and II John 7. Yet that same John also insisted that the pagan Roman empire would later be replaced by another 'religious' Roman beast. That latter would look like a lamb, but speak like a dragon. Revelation 13:1-11ff cf. Daniel 7:7-25. Indeed, Paul too predicted a great apostasy and the emergence of 'the man of sin' who would rule in the temple, the very Church of God! II Thessalonians 2:3-8.

6 Probably from even before, and certainly from not long after AD 70, Britain in particular and much of Europe in general started becoming Christian. Especially around the fifth century, the roman Empire broke up into ten "horns" or kingdoms followed by another diverse and blasphemous "horn." Daniel 2:41ff; 7:7, 20, 25; Revelation 13:1-18; 17:3-16. From around AD 600 onward, only the bishop at Rome was called 'pope' ('holy father'). The first papal missionary to Britain, (in AD 600ff) Austin of Rome, was then stoutly resisted by the Culdee or British Celtic Christians. Only after the 664 Synod of Whitby, from about AD 666 onward, did most of Europe and some of England but not Ireland, Scotland and Wales become increasingly Romanized. Thus, the Romish papal power or "horn" became strong or "stout" and long sat and ruled in the Temple of God, while claiming to be His spokesman. However, that spokesman was in fact 'the man of sin' *antichrist!* Daniel 7:25; 8:20-25; 11:36ff; 12:8-11; II Thessalonians 3:3-8, 12; II Peter 2:1-5ff; Revelation 13:11-18; 17:1-17.

7 In fulfilment of the prophecies, the Lord in AD 1330 sent the great plague called the 'Black Death.' Daniel 12:11 cf. Revelation 9:20ff; 11:2-9ff; 12:6-14. One major purpose of this, was to punish the deformed church which had departed from God's Word; exalted the pope; and worshipped the communion bread. Daniel 7:24ff & 12:11 cf. Revelation 13:1-13ff; 15:1-8; 16:1-11.

8 Thirty years later, in AD 1360, God raised up John Wycliffe. He asserted the sole sufficiency of the

long-completed Holy Scriptures. Accordingly, he ridiculed transubstantiation and assailed the pope as antichrist. Daniel 12:11ff cf. Revelation 14:6ff.

9 Forty-five years later, at the end of 1335 years after AD 70, God further raised up John Huss in Bohemia. He promoted Wycliffe's Proto-Protestant views, and inaugurated a time of great blessing in the very heart of Europe. Daniel 12:12 cf. Revelation 14:8ff.

10 In AD 1415, Rome burned Huss (the "goose") for his Biblical views. This was just after he had announced that though the "unclean birds" of the papacy were then roasting a 'goose' after a hundred years a 'swan' would arise to vindicate him. Cf. Revelation 14:8ff & 18:1-2.

11 A century after Huss, God raised up the "swan" Martin Luther! He powerfully propagated the views of Wycliffe and Huss, that the pope was antichrist. He also predicted the destruction of that papal antichrist through the powerful preaching of the Gospel. These Reformation doctrines were well reflected in the *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Church of England, which declare: that "transubstantiation . . . is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture . . . and hath given occasion to many superstitions"; that "the sacrifices of Masses . . . were fables and dangerous deceits"; and that "the bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England" (Articles 28, 31 & 37).

12 Said Luther against the papal antichrist: "We must slay him with words; the mouth of Christ must do it . . . See what effect this . . . preaching and writing this truth has had; how the papists' cover has shrunk . . . Let us be wise, thank God for His Holy Word, and be bold with our mouths . . . Let us keep boldly on: earnestly inculcate the Word; and drive out the laws of men . . . This is the way Christ is, through us, slaying the papacy." "Christ is with His saints, and wins the victory!"

13 John Calvin took over and systematized Luther's Biblical views. Calvin called Luther "my much respected father" who had denounced "the darkness of the papacy." Calvin himself then further repeatedly exposed the Roman pontiff as antichrist.

14 Calvin indicated that though the AD 600 Gregory the Great was the first bishop at Rome to be called sole pope, Gregory himself had regarded that new title as a mark of antichrist! Yet Calvin saw especially the AD 1415 papal burning of Huss as a clear evidence of

the antichristian nature of the papacy. On Daniel 12:4ff, Calvin commented in 1561: "At the present time, in the papacy . . . impiety prevails."

15 Calvin especially insisted that both II Thessalonians 2:3ff and I John 2:18 & 4:4ff clearly brand the pope as antichrist. Romanists, said Calvin, were wrong to regard antichrist as a yet-future tyrant who would harass the church for but three and a half years. Even a ten-year-old, stated Calvin, can see that the centuries-long papacy is itself indeed antichrist! Yet the papal "antichrist will be annihilated by the Word of the Lord . . . Paul does not think the Christ will accomplish this in a moment . . . Christ will scatter the darkness . . . before His coming" by "the preaching of this doctrine." For "we fight by Christ's power, and are armed with God's weapons . . . We are victorious . . . We can no more be conquered, than can God Himself . . . Victory is certain!"

16 Calvin's views were expounded in Britain especially by his student John Knox together with the rest of the "six John's" in the 1560 *First Scots Confession*. There, the Protestants' "True Kirk is distinguished from the filthy synagogues" of Romanism. Especially against the latter, the Confession sounds the trumpet blast: "Arise, O Lord, and let Thy enemies be confounded . . . Give Thy servants strength to speak Thy Word in boldness, and let all nations cleave to Thy true knowledge!"

17 The Calvinistic *Second Scots Confession* of AD 1580 also known as the Scottish *National Covenant* denounces "all kinds of papistry in general. We detest and refuse the usurped authority of that Roman antichrist. Many are stirred up by Satan and that Roman antichrist to subvert secretly God's true religion . . . We therefore . . . protest!" Indeed, this Protestant 'protest' was effective. For the Preamble to the 1618ff international Calvinistic *Decrees of Dordt* declared that also in Holland "the Church was delivered by the mighty hand of God from the tyranny of the Romish antichrist and the terrible idolatry of the papacy." Christians were leaving Romanism, Revelation 18:2-4!

18 The 1646 Calvinistic *Westminster Confession of Faith* denounces "popish monastical vows." It denies "the pope any power or jurisdiction" over magistrates, citing here not only II Thessalonians 2:4 but also the '666' passage of Revelation 13:15-17. It calls "papists . . . idolaters." It describes "the popish sacrifice of the

'mass' . . . [as] most abominably injurious to Christ's one sacrifice." Indeed, it terms "transubstantiation . . . repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason" and indeed "the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries."

19 More specifically, the *Westminster Confession* further insists about deformed churches, that "some have so degenerated as to become synagogues of Satan. Revelation 18:2; Romans 11:18-22 . . . The pope of Rome . . . is that antichrist . . . that exalteth himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God. Matthew 23:8-10; II Thessalonians 2:3-4, 8-9; Revelation 13:6."

20 Finally, the Calvinistic *Westminster Larger Catechism* insists that, in the Lord's Prayer, the petition 'Thy Kingdom come!' is a plea for the destruction also of the ecclesiastical antichrist and indeed precisely through the good works of the Spirit-empowered Church as Christ's own spirit-ual weapon! "We pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, [and] the Church

furnished with all gospel-officers and . . . purged from corruption." Further, "we pray that God would so overrule the world and all in it that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected [and] Satan trodden under our feet. Romans 16:20!"

So Scripture, Luther, Calvin and Calvinism all teach that antichrist's days are numbered! The papacy will be brought down by the powerful Protestant preaching of the Word of God! II Thessalonians 2:8f cf. Revelation 14:6-8. When that is done:

Who shall not fear Thee,
O Lord, and glorify
Thy Name? For
Thou only art
holy.

For all nations shall come, and worship before
Thee! Revelation 15:4Ω

Announcing the Westminster Forum

FPCR has begun an Internet discussion forum called *The Westminster Forum*. The purpose is to post extracts from Reformed literature and doctrinal standards for the purpose of analysis and study. We will shortly begin a discussion of Chapter One of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Presently we are in the later portion of George Gillespie's controversial tract, ***Wholesome Severity Reconciled with Christian Liberty***. This is a welcome addition to the several Reformed discussion forums on the net, and one of the more tightly controlled as far as insisting everyone conduct themselves properly. It is also not meant to be a fast and furious forum, but a "study" forum of reformed material and topics. To join the forum you of course need internet access and an email account. To join do either of the following.

Go to the FPCR web site and follow the links to the Westminster Forum where you can subscribe there and search the archives of the forum. The FPCR/ Blue Banner web site URL is <http://www.fpcr.org>

Or send an email in the following manner

Address the email to listed@fpcr.org. In the subject field type LISTED COMMANDS, in all caps. In the body of the letter type "subscribe westminster your@email, in lower case. Type you email address in place of your@email. Be sure not to include any other text in the body of the letter and turn off any auto signature feature for that post. Send the email and you should get back shortly a welcome message with the rules of conduct for the forum, where to send posts, etc.

The poster of text and keeper of the list of the Westminster Forum is Richard Bacon. Chris Coldwell keeps track of the technical aspects of the list.

JOSIAH, ERASTIANISM, AND NATIONAL COVENANTING

Part One

By Al Hembd

[Editor's Note: This paper is part of a series that originally were email posts to FPCR's Internet discussion group, *The Westminster Forum*. See page 5 for details. Mr. Hembd wrote his articles as part of a discussion of George Gilliespie's 17th century tract, *Wholesome Severity Reconciled with Christian Liberty*.]

[The following question was asked by the moderator of the Westminster Forum.] “In the example of Josiah is there a practical difference between national covenanting and Erastianism? What is the difference in a practical sense? How could the Christian magistrate today cause all his citizens to stand to a covenant between Christ and His elect?”

I offer my meager remarks. May the LORD add His blessing to my feeble endeavors.

I hope to organize this paper in the following manner, namely:

Was what Josiah did, in making his countrymen stand to the covenant, Erastian?

May the Christian magistrate today make his countrymen to stand to the covenant of God? Does he have warrant in the Word of God to do such a thing?

CAN a Christian magistrate do such a thing? That is, is there any ability or power promised to him to effect such a thing?

I. WAS WHAT JOSIAH DID ERASTIAN?

In II Kings 23:1-3 and in II Chronicles 34:29-33, in making his countrymen to stand to the covenant, was King Josiah practicing Erastianism?

2 Kings 23:1-3

And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all

the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

2 Chronicles 34:29-33

Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *to it*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that *pertained* to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, *even* to serve the LORD their God. *And* all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

Was Josiah Erastian? According to today's modern "evangelical Christianity," Reformed and Presbyterian churches included, the answer would probably be "Yes."

According to today's modern "evangelical Christianity," Reformed and Presbyterian churches included, the answer would probably be "Yes." According to today's churches any magisterial

intervention in matters of religion or the Church is regarded as Erastian. This author remembers the PCA version of the Westminster Standards that he once owned. In the preface to that version, the editor, speaking on behalf of the General Assembly, explained why the PCA had altered or deleted Article III of Chapter 23 and Article II of Chapter 31 from the Confession. According to him, these articles “smacked of the Erastian influence that predominated in that [the Westminster] Assembly.” Many Presbyterian denominations worldwide have similarly deleted these articles or taken exceptions to them. The RPCNA and the OPC are examples.

Similarly, the modern Dutch reformed denominations — The Netherlands Reformed Congregations, the Protestant Reformed Churches, and the Free Reformed Church — have all followed the lead of the Christian Reformed Church in seriously revising Chapter XXXVI of the Belgic Confession. This practice has had the effect of curtailing seriously the duties of the civil magistrate toward the First Table of the Law in defending and promoting the true religion.

But, the question arises: what really is Erastianism? Few today actually define the term, particularly by referring to the primary documents of the Erastians themselves. This is why it is most profitable to read the writings of the Westminster divine, George Gillespie.

But, the question arises: what really is Erastianism? Few today actually define the term, particularly by referring to the primary documents of the Erastians themselves. This is why it is most profitable to read the writings of the Westminster divine, George Gillespie. Through him, one learns how Erastianism was understood and overcome in the Westminster Assembly itself.

I now refer to Gillespie’s most excellent work, *Aaron’s Rod Blossoming*, in defense of Presbyterian church government. In order to understand Erastianism, one should read Gillespie’s book. The entire book is a defense of Presbyterianism over against the Erastian doctrine advocated by certain men in the days of the Westminster Assembly: notably, a certain Mr. Coleman and a Mr. Prynne (though Gillespie cites the writings of several other Erastians as well, including Thomas Erastus himself.)

In Book 2, Chapter 1 (pp. 75 and 76 in the edition printed by Sprinkle Publications in 1985) Gillespie claims:

“ … I shall, after their example, make known briefly what I find concerning the rise and growth, the planting and watering, of the Erastian error. The father of it is the old serpent … [H]e hath cunningly gone about to draw men, first into a jealousy, and then into a dislike of the ecclesiastical discipline by God’s mercy restored in the reformed churches. The mother of it is the enmity of nature against the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which He as Mediator, doth exercise in the government of the church; which enmity is naturally in all men’s hearts, but is unmortified and strongly prevalent in some, who have said in their hearts, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us,’ Luke xix … The midwife which brought this unhappy brood into the light of the world, was Thomas Erastus, doctor of medicine at Heidelberg, of whom I shall say no more than what is apparent by his own preface to the reader, namely, that as he was once of the opinion that excommunication is commanded in God’s Word, so he came off to the contrary opinion …

“ … The Erastian error being born, the breast which gave it suck were profaneness and self-interest. The sons of Belial were very much for it, expecting that the eye of the civil magistrate shall not be so vigilant over them, nor his hand so much against them for a scandalous and dissolute conversation, as church discipline would be … And is it as little to be marvelled at if those, whether magistrates, lawyers, or others, who conceived themselves to be so far losers, as ecclesiastical courts were interested in government, and to be greater gainers by the abolition of ecclesiastical interest in government, were biased that way …

“ … The tutor which bred up the Erastian error was Arminianism; for the Arminians, finding their plants plucked up, and their poison antidoted by classes and synods, thereupon they began to cry down synodical authority, and to appeal to the magistrate’s authority in things ecclesiastical, hoping for more favour and less opposition that way. They will have synods only to examine, dispute, discuss, and to impose nothing under pain of ecclesiastical censure, but to leave all men free to do as they list. See their *Exam. Cens.* cap. 25, and *Vindic.* lib. 2, cap. 6, pp. 131-133. And for the magistrate, they have endeavored to make him head of the church, as the Pope was; yea, so far, that they are not ashamed to

ascribe unto the magistrate that jurisdiction over the churches, synods, and ecclesiastical proceedings, which the Pope did formerly usurp. For which see Apollonius in his *Jus Majestis Circa Sacra*."

Now I would have my reader note the following things:

1) Erastianism opposed church authority to excommunicate scandalous offenders. As Gillespie notes in other sections of *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, some Erastians would allow the church the right to suspend scandalous offenders temporarily from the sacraments. However, they would never allow for the church to have the authority to excommunicate the continuously impenitent.

2) Heretics of that day, notably the Arminians, favored Erastianism. By it, they believed they could maintain their errors within the churches; nay, they could even, with their man-pleasing doctrines, prevail with most earthly monarchs and so secure control of the Church.

3) The Erastians, particularly the Arminians, were prepared to grant the monarch all authority which the Pope had formerly claimed: that is, the power of all judgment, the power of all ultimate authority, in matters of doctrine, worship, and practice in the Church. They wanted to make the magistrate the head of the Church on earth.

The pinnacle of what constitutes the doctrine of Erastianism was that the civil magistrate, as head of the church, had power as a lawgiver to the church. In that capacity, he could rule in all matters ecclesiastical, even to the imposition of man-made rites of worship, and to the exclusion of all church discipline other than mere classical and synodical "recommendations."

The pinnacle of what constitutes the doctrine of Erastianism was that the civil magistrate, as head of the church, had power as a lawgiver to the church. In that capacity, he could rule in all matters ecclesiastical, even to the imposition of man-made rites of worship, and to the exclusion of all church discipline other than mere classical and synodical "recommendations."

Now, having seen Erastianism in all its dark colors, can we say that Josiah was Erastian? Did the godly Josiah in any way usurp the authority granted to the priests

alone? Did Josiah impose any human rites upon the worship of God? Did Josiah eradicate all church authority? Did Josiah impose himself upon the nation and the Church, as a new head of the Church, and consequently, as a lawgiver, with power to impose man-made laws of his own choosing?

The answer to all these questions, of course, is "no." In no wise did Josiah usurp Christ's exclusive claims as the Head and sole Lawgiver of the Church. "... [T]here is one Lawgiver, Who is able to save and to destroy," James 4:12. Josiah was in no wise supplanting Christ's place as Sole Head and Lawgiver to the Church. To the contrary, Josiah was submitting himself to that one true Head and Lawgiver of the Church, in obeying God's specific laws with regards to the King, in making the people to stand to the covenant.

The King of Israel was not an absolute monarch. He was to submit himself to the real King in Zion, Jehovah God. See Psalm 20:9; Psalm 24:8-10; Psalm 47:2; 6-7, and Psalm 84:6. Note that King David called Jehovah his king in Psalm 20:9 and Psalm 24:8-10. The kings of Israel, as true sons of David, were all required to bow down to the King of Zion in heaven, the LORD of hosts, and as such were to serve Him by ruling by His Laws alone. And paramount in the Law was the king's duty to use his magisterial power to keep Israel faithful in her covenant to her God: Exodus 24:7-8; Deut. 4:13, 23; Deut. 5:2-3, and Deut. 17:18-20.

Deuteronomy 17:18-20 reads as follows:

And it shall be, when he [the king] sitteth upon the throne of the kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of the Law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this Law and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

The kings of Israel, the sons of David, were to keep all the words of the Law. They were to enforce them, as the supreme magistrates, under God, in their land. They were to see to it that Israel did not "forget the covenant of the LORD their God, which He had made with them," cf. Deut. 4:23, especially His "Ten

Commandments, written upon two tables of stone,” cf. Deut. 4:13.

The king was to do this, not by usurping the unique duties and authorities granted to others in their stations by God’s Law. Rather he was to see to it that others faithfully discharged their God-given duties and authority in their offices committed to them.

Hence, Josiah did not usurp the duties or authority committed to the house of Aaron or to the Levitical priesthood. Certain duties, including authority in Church matters, devolved upon the Levites alone. To the Aaronic priests and the Levites alone belonged these peculiar duties: teaching the Law on a regular basis, administering the temple ordinances, and judging between the clean and the unclean (that is, church discipline). Josiah in no way infringed upon this sphere of uniquely ecclesiastical duties.

It was the Levite who was to teach, on a regular basis, the Law of God to the people. The Levites were also to judge between the clean and unclean, and were to exclude the unclean from church rights and participation in the ordinances. The Law of God in no way gave Josiah or any of the kings any right to interfere in these specific duties delegated to the priesthood alone.

Leviticus 10:9-11 speaks of these commandments to the sons of Aaron in particular. They were not to drink wine when they went into the tabernacle of the congregation, so that they would be clear of mind, when judging between the holy and unholiness, the clean and the unclean; and so that they would with a clear head be able to teach the people. “..that ye may put difference between holy and unholiness, and between clean and unclean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses,” are the Scripture’s own words, in verses 10 and 11. And, the Levites being ordained to help the sons of Aaron, it was lawfully permitted them to assist in these duties, under the oversight of the Aaronic priesthood. See II Chron. 35:3 and II Chron. 30:7-8.

Hence it was that the sons of Aaron were to be “teaching priests,” II Chron. 15:3. The absence of teaching priests in the nation was considered a judgment from God. It was equated with being “without Law,” there being no lively exposition of it.

Specifically regarding the mandated duty of the priests and Levites to separate the clean from the

unclean, we must note that the high priest Jehoiada set the porters at the gates. Those porters had the task of examining prospective worshippers to determine whether their names were written in the books of the genealogies (called “the book of life”). They had a further task of determining whether the prospective worshippers were ceremonially clean and whether they were free from scandal. These porters, a type of the ecclesiastical elders who today are to keep watch over the Lord’s Table, had the task of separating between the holy and the unclean to see to it that the unclean and the unclean were excluded from the Temple ordinances.

Moreover, there were certain matters in which a soul could be “cut off,” or excommunicated, from the congregation (the Church), over a church matter, independent of any matter that would merit punishment under the Civil Law. This power of excommunication likewise pertained alone to the priests. An example of one of these matters was circumcision. The man-child who was not circumcised was to be “cut off” from his people. Yet this excommunication did not mean that he was to be put to death or banished with no possibility of reconciliation. If that were the case then the entire generation of the children of Moses, ages twenty and under at the time of the Exodus would have been executed or banished with no chance of being admitted into the commonwealth of Israel. This was obviously not the case, since they entered the land with Joshua even before being circumcised at Gilgal.

What did it mean, then, to be “cut off?” It meant, to be cut off from the covenant, and from the people of the covenant, and to lose membership status in the “congregation of Israel.” It was ecclesiastical excommunication, as George Gillespie proved

What did it mean, then, to be “cut off?” It meant, to be cut off from the covenant, and from the people of the covenant, and to lose membership status in the “congregation of Israel.” It was ecclesiastical excommunication, as George Gillespie proved in chapters four through six, of the first book, of *Aaron’s Rod Blossoming*. Presumably, in order to be reinstated into the covenant, the concerned person and/or his parents (if the subject were still under age) would have to confess their sins before the priests, and offer a trespass offering. Then, they could be readmitted to the congregation, and to God’s ecclesiastical ordinances.

This would also have been the case with those who ate leaven during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or who knowingly offered sacrifices in any of the temple ordinances, when unclean. That soul, upon being found out, would be “cut off,” until due repentance and trespass offering, under the watchful eye of the priests, allowed for his re-admittance to church privileges. See Genesis 17:14, Numbers 19:13, and Exodus 12:15 for instances that demonstrate these truths.

As Gillespie proves from the writings of the Jews and from the Scriptures, in chapter 9 of the first book of *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, scandalous offenders were considered unclean, and excluded from the ordinances of the church, by the priests. The cutting off of those scandalous offenders by Church authority did not exempt them from civil punishments. However, it is to be noted that there was a dual censure observed in these instances: that of ecclesiastical censure, and that of civil punishment. All this proves that there were distinct spheres of authority between ecclesiastical and civil government. The kings of Israel were not allowed to interfere in the role of ecclesiastical authority, and vice versa.

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With regards to judgment of doctrinal matters: there was no proscription in the Civil Law for priests who taught error, save when the ordinances were corrupted, when open idolatry was advocated, or false prophecy practiced. Presumably, when one of the “teaching priests” taught a doctrinal error, it was to be brought to the attention of the other priests, and they judged the matter. The king, however, certainly had no direct jurisdiction in such matters, other than a general responsibility to exhort the priests to discharge their duty. Thus, there was some synodical authority on the part of the priesthood, to insure doctrinal purity.

An example of the godly kings refraining from disciplining the priests in matters not directly pertaining to the Civil Law can be found in King Joash. The king mandated the priests to collect monies for the restoration of the Temple. The priests, for legitimate or illegitimate reasons (we do not know), did not comply. Did the king punish them for their disobedience? No. Instead, after conferring with them (and reproving them for their lack of diligence), he then devised a different plan: the providing of a chest to collect free-will offerings, outside the gate of the house of the Lord. See II Chron. 24:5-11. The king did not take it upon himself to punish any of the priests, though he did take liberty to exhort them to certain duties.

In fact, there are several instances in which kings exhorted Levites to perform their charges faithfully: in cleansing the house of the LORD, in separating the clean from the unclean, and in instructing the people in the book of the Law of the LORD. Josiah is a prime example of such a king, along with Joash and Hezekiah. Yet we never read of an instance in which a king punished an unfaithful Levite for not performing his ecclesiastical duties. It is quite safe to presume that thesis because the responsibility for disciplining erring priests and Levites lay *with the priests themselves*. The magistrate was free, even duty bound out of loyalty to the Cause of Christ, to exhort the priests and Levites to their duties; but he never was warranted to punish offenses that were solely ecclesiastical. That authority pertained to the Church alone.

In conclusion, then, we see several things about Josiah’s decisive move toward reformation of the land in his reign. He made the people “stand to the covenant.” But he in no way assumed headship of the Church, to prescribe new laws, new rites of worship, or to exercise uniquely ecclesiastical privileges, in teaching the people on a regular basis out of the Law, or in exercising Church discipline. In no way, then, was Josiah an Erastian.

How did Josiah make the people stand to the covenant? By making them swear to obey the Law in their peculiar stations and offices. He did not usurp the authority of the priest in his office, but rather exhorted him to faithfulness in it, even causing the priests to swear to God in the matter. So also did Josiah with the lesser judges and princes under him. Josiah seemed careful not

to usurp their authority. He did not become involved in any cases of Law except those that were referred to him.

And, of course, Josiah himself swore to the keeping of the covenant. He set a right example before the people, in vowing himself before the LORD to keep the covenant, to serve the Cause of Christ. He swore to uphold God's Law in all that sphere that God had delegated to him, viz. in the civil sphere.

In summary, then, Josiah, in his sphere of authority, exhorted the people to "stand to the covenant," by exhorting them to faithfulness in their spheres of authority and in their duties, as commanded by the Law. Josiah covenanted to uphold the Civil Law. Josiah likewise exhorted the priests to discharge faithfully their offices, without him intruding upon their specific spheres of divinely mandated duty. Josiah also, as head of the civil government of Israel, commanded the children of Jerusalem to vow to keep the covenant. This vow was really a **reaffirmation** of the covenant they as a nation and Church were already under by the sovereign declaration of God: see Exodus 24:7-8, Deut. 4:13, 23; and Deut. 5:2-3.

Now there is much here in the example of Josiah that pertains directly to modern magistrates, particularly of those who profess the Name of Christ. Since the resurrection of Christ, the kingdoms of this world are indeed become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ, Rev. 11:15, whether those nations acknowledge it or not. There is, however, a difference between Josiah's position and that of the modern-day Christian magistrate. Josiah had no power to enact ANY laws of his own choosing. He was bound to enforce the Civil Law which the covenant-keeping Jehovah, the Almighty God, had given to that nation. He was to enforce that Law alone. He could enact no statutes in addition to the Civil Laws delivered to Israel; nor could he delete any. This arrangement certainly was part of the unique national covenant that the LORD had made with that nation, for the protection of the Church in the state of its infancy and tutelage under the Ceremonial rites.

Many of those judicial laws related directly or indirectly to the Ceremonial Law, which has expired; and hence, the Civil Law, as a body of binding laws, has certainly also "expired with the state of that people," (*West. Conf.* XIX.4). Moreover, certain of the Civil Laws, though direct applications of the Moral Law, were adapted to the cultural practices of that people, as with

the practice of putting a battlement around their flat roofs. And some of the Laws were also adapted to the relative hardness of their hearts: because of their having lesser effusions of the Holy Ghost, Christ having not yet come. A chief example would be the laws allowing and even regulating polygamy.

Hence, we cannot consider the Civil Law as a body of laws to be binding or permanent, though due reference must be made to them by the magistrate. The Christian magistrate today is the minister of God, ordained of God "for the praise of them that do well." His calling is to be "a terror to them that do evil" He must indeed frame just and equitable laws, with reference always to the Moral Law of the Ten Commandments, as an eternal standard of what is right and wrong.

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Else, if the Moral Law be set aside, in any of its commandments, what then is the standard of right (well doing) or wrong (evil-doing)? If one is, in the fear of God, to serve God as his minister, then he must rule in accordance with God's moral law. The magistrate must protect both tables of God's law, else the definition of morality itself is changed. For that Law is "just, holy, and good," and is the standard of all righteousness. The civil magistrate, as the minister of God, is duty bound to enforce God's righteousness with regards to *outward behavior* alone: to "doing," whether good or evil. And thus it is that the civil magistrate is to frame just and equitable laws that uphold the righteousness of all of the Ten Commandments.

I refer the reader now to the second installment of this discussion, where I will continue looking at the duty of the civil magistrate in every nation to both tables of the moral law.

To Be Continued in further issues

What's New at FPCR's Web Site

The FPCR/*The Blue Banner* web site has been redesigned with a cleaner interface and new items have been added to the large amount of material already there. For those of you with Internet access to the World Wide Web, go to <http://www.fpcr.org>. You will find "links" there to the most recent additions to the site, an archive of most of the past articles which have appeared in *The Blue Banner*, a page of links to other reformed sites and sites of interest, a catalog of tapes, videos, books and tracts, and a link to the archives of our discussion forum, **The Westminster Forum**. Also, from our web site you can download free copies of hypertext and help file software containing various reformed confessions, psalm tunes, psalm tunes with words, Calvin's *Institutes*, etc.

Chronicling the Errors of the Steelites

Also at our web site you will find a new section dealing with the errors of the Steelites and the problems this caused the Reformation Presbyterian Church. The section contains correspondence between the elders of the RPC and the elders of the Puritan Reformed Church of Edmonton AB (who embraced these errors, and dissociated themselves from the RPC), as well as letters from others attempting to answer the Steelite errors.

List of Blue Banner Articles Online

- B. B. Warfield: The Significance Of The Westminster Standards As A Creed
- Nature of True Conversion, Richard Bacon
- Trembling at the Word of God, Richard Bacon
- Revival in the Face of God's Enemies, Richard Bacon
- Scriptural Worship, by Carl W. Bogue. An introduction to the Regulative Principle of Worship.
- Instrumental Music in Religious Worship. By Rev. John M'Donald. A brief tract summarizing the position against having musical instruments in public worship services.
- A Westminster Bibliography. An adaptation of Pastor Richard Bacon's historical thesis for Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.
- A Day in Zion. A Worship Service at FPCR.
- Review of Psalmody Pastor Richard Bacon and Dr. W. Gary Crampton debate the subject of the exclusive singing of psalms in public worship.
- Worship Song Regulated By Scripture An extended review by Pastor Richard Bacon of *Studies in Church Music*, which was a defense of Choirs, Musical Instruments, and singing of hymns in public worship.
- How Dr. Hills became a KJV Believer.

- Christmas Examined. Several articles critical of various aspects of Christmas.
- Indifferent Imaginations? The Case Against Images at Meetings of N. Texas Presbytery (PCA), and articles on the unlawfulness of pictures of Christ.
- The Sovereignty of God in the salvation of my father's slayer. By Rev. Prof. Dr. F. N. Lee.
- Organ Grinding Circa 1849 A debate over the use of the organ in the public worship of God, which took place in 1849, wherein Robert L. Dabney, the famous Southern Presbyterian theologian, took a prominent part.
- Beyond Canterbury. Reviews of Several Books on Worship by James B. Jordan.
- Review of Liturgical Nestorianism
- Review of Theses on Worship
- Review of The Liturgy Trap
- Tyranny in Tyler A response to James B. Jordan's charge that First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas is a synagogue of Satan, and a demonstration of the tyranny of the church discipline of the now defunct Association of Reformation Churches.
- Review of William O. Einwechter's English Bible Translations: By What Standard
- Review of Ken Gentry's "He Shall Have Dominion"
- Review of Andrew Clarkson's Plain Reasons
- Review of Lord God of Truth
- Review of Psalms for Congregational Singing by Hanko
- Review of Reckless Faith by MacArthur
- Review of A Presbyterian Political Manifesto: Presbyterianism and Civil Government

Books by Richard Bacon

Also the text of Richard Bacon's *The Visible Church and The Outer Darkness*, and *What Mean Ye? By This Service* (answering the Paedocommunion error) are posted at the web site under *The Blue Banner* link.

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