

For Kirk and Kingdom: The Public Career of Alexander Henderson (1637-1646)

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Thesis Abstract

For Kirk and Kingdom: the Public Career of Alexander Henderson (1637-1646) by L. Charles Jackson

This thesis reasserts Alexander Henderson's prominent place as the leading clerical spokesman for the Scottish Covenanters during the British Revolutions (1637-1646). Older biographies were hagiographical, portraying Henderson as a hero in the cause of liberty. Recent scholarly works on the Covenanter movement have often failed to do justice to its clerical leaders and their religious ideas. This thesis aims to correct both. Focusing on covenanting, preaching, ecclesiology and pamphleteering it reassesses Henderson's public leadership especially in regard to the central role of religion.

This thesis outlines Henderson's various means of public communication, his self-fashioning as a leader, and how he was effective as a public figure in early modern Scotland. It begins with Alexander Henderson's preparation for public service and his role as co-author of the National Covenant (1638), in which he popularized covenant theology as a political instrument focused on the issue of idolatry. It assesses Henderson's preaching, in which he personalized the national struggles, and fused Scotland's frustration over rule of Charles I with the popular hope for a blessed providential destiny. Henderson used a subtle but developing eschatology, providing Scotland with a greater sense of national identity.

This is the first study to emphasise and to explore Henderson's critical contribution to the Covenanter pamphleteering, as the most important author and/or editor of covenanter propaganda. Henderson led the movement in using pamphlets to argue for the duty of self-defence, and the obligations of ordinary men and women in early modern Scotland. Henderson developed an eschatological ecclesiology, raising presbyterian polity to a place of fundamental importance in the struggles with Charles I. This helped to provide the covenanters and Scotland with a greater sense of divine destiny, while also making it more difficult to forge a compromise at the Westminster Assembly.

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Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Conventions and Abbreviations	2
Introduction	5
1. Alexander Henderson: the Preparation	30
2. Alexander Henderson: the Covenanter	66
3. Alexander Henderson: the Preacher	121
4. Alexander Henderson: the Presbyterian	178
5. Alexander Henderson: the Pamphleteer	228
6. Alexander Henderson: the Collapse of the Cause	277
Conclusion	329
Bibliography	336

Conventions and Abbreviations

Henderson Works:

Preached, I

A sermon preached by the Reverend Mr Alexander Henderson, before the sitting down of the General Assembly, begun the 12 of August 1639 (London, 1682).

Preached, II

*A sermon preached to the Honourable House
of Commons, at their late solempne fast,
Wednesday, December 27, 1643 (Edinburgh,
1644).*

Preached, III

A sermon preached before the Right Honorable the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament at margarets Church in Westminister, upon Thursday the 18 day of July, 1644: it being the day of public thanksgiving for the greate mercie of God in the happie successe of the forces of borth kingdoms neer York, against the enemies of King and Parliament, by Alexander Henderson (London, 1644).

Preached, IV

A sermon preached before the Right Honourable House of Lords, in the Abbey-Church at Westminster, Wednesday the 28. of May 1645. Being the day appointed for solemne and publick humiliation. By Alexander Henderson, minister at Edinburgh (London, 1645).

Sermons

Sermons, Prayers and Pulpit Addresses
(Edinburgh, 1867).

Two Speeches

Two speeches delivered before the subscribing of the Covenant, the 25. of September, at St. margarets in Westminster the one by Mr. Philip Nye, the other by Mr. Alexander Henderson (Edinburgh, 1643).

Other sources:

Acts

The Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, From the Year 1638 to the Year 1649 (Edinburgh, 1682).

APG	<i>Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland</i> , 3 vols, ed. T. Thomason, (Edinburgh, 1839-45).
APS	<i>Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland</i> , 12 vols, ed. T. Thomson (Edinburgh, 1814-1875).
Baillie, <i>Letters</i>	<i>Letters and Journals of Mr. Robert Baillie</i> , 3 vols, ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1842).
Balfour, <i>Works</i>	Sir James Balfour, <i>The Historical Works</i> , 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1824-25).
BUK	<i>The Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland: Wherein The Headis and Conclusionsis Devysit Be the Ministers and Commissionaris of the Particular Kirks Thereof, Are Specially Expressed and Contained</i> , ed. Alexander Peterkin (Edinburgh, 1839).
Calderwood, <i>History</i>	<i>History of the Church of Scotland by Mr. David Calderwood</i> , 8 vols, ed. T. Thomson (Edinburgh, 1842-49).
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic</i> , 2 nd series, 1625-1702, 77 vols, ed. W.D. Hamilton, et al. (London, 1897-1937).
Gordon, <i>Scots Affairs</i>	J. Gordon, <i>History of Scots Affairs, from 1637-1641</i> , 3 vols, eds, J. Robertson & G. Grub (Edinburgh, 1841).
Guthry, <i>Memoirs</i>	<i>The Memoirs of Henry Guthry, Late Bishop of Dunkeld: Containing an Impartial Relation of the Affairs of Scotland, Civil and Ecclesiastical, from the Year 1637, to the Death of King Charles I</i> (Glasgow, 1747).
Melville, <i>Diary</i>	<i>The Autobiography and Diary of Mr. James Melville Minister of Kilrenny in Fife and professor of Theology in the University of St Andrews</i> (Edinburgh, 1842).
RKS, I	<i>Records of the Kirk of Scotland containing the acts and proceedings of the General Assemblies from the year 1638 downwards as authenticated by the clerks of the assembly with notes and historical illustrations</i> , I (Edinburgh, 1838).

Roths, <i>Relation</i>	John Leslie, earl of Roths, <i>A Relation of Proceedings Concerning the Affairs of the Kirk of Scotland, from August 1637 to July 1638</i> , ed. J Nairne (Edinburgh, 1830).
Row, <i>History</i>	J. Row, <i>History of the Kirk of Scotland from the Year 1558 to August 1637</i> , ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1842).
Scot, <i>Apologetical Narration</i>	William Scot, <i>An Apologetical Narration of the State and Government of the Kirk of Scotland since the Reformation</i> , ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1846).
Spalding, <i>Troubles</i>	J. Spalding, <i>The History of the Troubles and Memorable Transactions in Scotland and England, 1624-1645</i> , 2 vols, ed. J. Skene (Edinburgh, 1828-29).
Spottiswood, <i>History</i>	John Spottiswood, <i>The History of the Church of Scotland</i> , 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1850).
Wariston, <i>Diary</i>	<i>Diary of Sir Archibald Johnstson of Wariston 1632-39</i> , ed. G.M. Paul (Edinburgh, 1911).

References to the transcribed Westminster Assembly Minutes, which will shortly be superseded by the publication of the multivolume work, containing the minutes, all extant papers, and the correspondence of the Assembly and its members, are referred to in this thesis by the following:

WAM	Chad B. Van Dixhoorn, 'Reforming the Reformation: Theological Debate at the Westminster Assembly 1643-1652', 7 vols, Ph.D. thesis (Cambridge University, 2004).
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Introduction

In his public career (1637-1646) Alexander Henderson was one of the leading Scottish ministers as a covenanter, preacher, presbyterian, and pamphleteer. In each of these areas Alexander Henderson contributed significantly to Covenanter theology which he believed was at the heart of Scotland's mission as a covenanted nation. This mission included Henderson's commitment to an aggressive presbyterianism with an underlying connection to what I describe as eschatological ecclesiology. This eschatological ecclesiology not only provided Henderson with a sense of providential mission in his public work, but he also used it to furnish Scotland with a similar sense of divine destiny as a holy nation. Alexander Henderson's public career provides one of the richest and most important sources to augment the growing scholarly interest in the role of religion in early modern Scottish history, especially during the British Revolutions.¹

Traditional Approaches: Hagiography and Anti-Clericalism

Paying close attention to Henderson's theology, especially as it related to the vital areas of covenanting, preaching, ecclesiology, and pamphleteering, this thesis situates religion at the centre of Henderson's public career. This thesis is unique because it does not argue for the common portrait of Henderson as a hero in the cause of liberty, as one of the villains in a cadre of repressive Calvinist ministers, or as merely some kind of a political moderate. Rather, I hope this thesis will provide a much-needed and updated study on Alexander Henderson's public career that can supplement the ongoing scholarly conversations about the centrality and complexity of religion in early modern

¹ This thesis answers the call of David George Mullan who states that recent work which has illuminated our appreciation of the political aspects of the covenanting movement needs to be supplemented by a 'detailed and nuanced portrait of Scottish divinity; without this our picture of events is bound to be skewed'. See Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638* (Oxford, 2000), 7. This thesis hopes to facilitate precisely this kind of 'nuanced' portrait of the public career of Alexander Henderson, who has not had such a study since 1836.

Scottish history. This is especially important since a scholarly analysis of Alexander Henderson's public career has not been attempted for more than a hundred years.

Compared to the lavish praise that Henderson received from his contemporaries, he has been given very little scholarly attention.² For instance, Alexander Henderson's peers praised him as 'the fairest ornament, after John Knox of incomparable memory that ever the Church of Scotland did enjoy'.³ Henderson's friend and fellow minister, Robert Baillie lauded him declaring that 'Mr. Henderson was incomparablie the ablest man of us all, for all things'.⁴ Henderson's first major biographer, John Aiton, stated, 'Of all the great men of our church, with the single exception of Knox, the deepest debt of gratitude is due to Henderson'.⁵

Even after Aiton's biography in 1836, Masson in his work, *Life of Milton*, outlined the need for more study of Henderson:

He was, all in all, one of the ablest and best men of his age in Britain, and the greatest, the wisest and most liberal, of the Scottish Presbyterians. They had all to consult him; in every strait and conflict he had to be appealed to, and came in at the last as the man of supereminent composure and comprehensiveness, and breadth of brow... yet you may look in Encyclopedias and such-like works of reference published of late years in Scotland and not find Henderson's name. The less wonder that he has never received justice in general British History! I undertake, however, that any free minded English historian, investigating the course of even specially English History from 1638-1646 will dig up the Scottish Henderson for himself and see reason to admire him.⁶

² The most recent summary of Henderson's life is found in John Coffey, 'Alexander Henderson (c.1583–1646), Church of Scotland minister and politician', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004-06). Intended only as a summary, Coffey's article outlines Henderson's activity and points to a handful of undeveloped items such as Henderson's interest in idolatry and eschatology. His article is an excellent outline of Henderson's life and highlights the need for further study of Henderson saying, 'Henderson was a key figure at the heart of the Scottish revolution, and easily the most important Covenanting minister'. See Coffey, *Ibid*.

³ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 122.

⁴ *Ibid*, I, 122.

⁵ John Aiton, *The Life and Times of Alexander Henderson, Giving the History of the Second Reformation of the Church of Scotland, and of the Covenanters, During the Reign of Charles I* (Edinburgh, 1836), vi.

⁶ David Masson, *The Life of John Milton and a History of His Time*, III (London, 1896), 16.

Scholars have overlooked him for the past century, so Henderson's former fame lingers in Scotland primarily in the form of monuments, plaques, and pictures. These monuments testify to Henderson's once great place in Scottish history. The capital city, Edinburgh, has Henderson's portrait hanging in the National Gallery of Scotland. Henderson's name is on a plaque at the base of a column in the northwestern section of St Giles Cathedral, which reads: 'Statesmen, Scholar, Divine, Minister of St Giles 1639-1646'. At the entry of Greyfriars kirkyard where Henderson is buried, his name is inscribed third in a list of famous Scots who are also buried there. At Scotland's National Museum Henderson's clerical robe stands alongside a display of his famous sermon, 'The Bishops' Doom', from the notable 1638 Glasgow General Assembly at which he directly challenged the authority of Charles I.

Henderson is openly positioned among the most famous men and women of Scottish history. Even the smaller Edinburgh City Museum exhibits a copy of the National Covenant along with a picture of the signing of the National Covenant with Henderson as one of its authors. Henderson's portrait is etched in stained glass beside John Knox's picture in presbytery hall at the College of the Free Church of Scotland.⁷ Yet despite all of these indications of Henderson's great place in Scottish history there is no modern scholarly monograph regarding him or his work.

John Aiton wrote the most thorough and scholarly biography of Henderson entitled, *The Life and Times of Alexander Henderson*, in 1836. When writing his biography, Aiton lamented that even though Henderson rose to the position of unrivalled leadership in

⁷ This stained glass portrait among other past heroes of the faith is ironic given the iconoclastic Calvinist tradition that rejected stained glass images and saints!

Scotland, it was remarkable that nobody had compiled a detailed or separate life of Alexander Henderson, who Aiton believed was the prime Scottish mover during the reign of Charles I.⁸ Robert Orr followed Aiton's challenge with a biography entitled *Alexander Henderson: Churchman and Statesman* that was published in 1919, which is now approaching one hundred years old.⁹

To date the biographies of Henderson are not only extremely old, but they tend to have a hagiographic quality. That is to say, they tend to be written by sympathetic Scottish Presbyterians who focused most pointedly on Henderson's heroic character and how that character advanced the cause of the Scottish Covenanter movement in particular, and also how Henderson advanced the greater cause of liberty in general.¹⁰ Studies of Henderson over the centuries have reflected the ebb and flow of historical trends in Scottish historiography generally.

For instance, the later eighteenth century historians often wrote with reference to the Scottish Enlightenment, which many believed provided a new perspective on the history of the period.¹¹ These histories have tended to place key sources such as Spottiswoode (pro-episcopal) and Calderwood (pro-presbyterian) on two sides of a clearly demarcated and progressive struggle towards liberty and modern times. The Reformation and the

⁸ Aiton, *The Life and Times*, v.

⁹ Orr's work is thorough, but does not advance our understanding of Henderson beyond Aiton. Orr also tends towards the same kind of Scottish Whiggish view that portrays Henderson as a divine instrument in the overall cause of liberty. Furthermore, Orr does not provide the same level of detailed source notes that Aiton used in his 1836 work.

¹⁰ This sense of liberty has been variously translated into what Colin Kidd describes as moving from a more Scottish dominated tradition to an Anglo-British mode. See Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish whig historians and the creation of an Anglo-British identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993), 7. Nevertheless, with the exception of Buckle and Trevor Roper, Henderson's role as a hero in this otherwise morphing tradition has remained mostly steady.

¹¹ It appears that Thomas M'Crie for example used history as a theological counterattack against what he believed were the ill-effects of the Enlightenment. See Neil Forsyth, 'Presbyterian historians and the Scottish invention of British liberty,' *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 34 (2004), 94-110.

Scottish Second Reformation were placed in the context of the progress of liberty against tyranny and Henderson was portrayed as one of the heroes in this narrative. John Howie's 1775 publication, *The Scots Worthies*, dedicated a chapter to Henderson and a later 1850 edition articulated what could be described as a kind of Christian, Scottish Whiggish version of history.¹² The following aptly summarizes this approach to Henderson and other 'worthy' Scots, saying, 'They paved the way for that grand renewal of human society, that brightening of the world's destinies... they constitute a chain of progress tending to a better state of things'.¹³

It is into this context that most studies of Henderson were written. Howie's work in the eighteenth century was matched as the nineteenth-century witnessed a flurry of activity regarding Covenanter history, though not entirely scholarly in nature.¹⁴ Thomas McCrie wrote a biographical sketch of Henderson originally published in the *Christian Instructor*, vol. x, but edited and reprinted by T. Thomson in 1846.¹⁵ It appears that McCrie's brief account is the basis for an article on Henderson in Robert Chambers'

¹² Neil Forsyth outlines elements of this approach arguing that it involved efforts to re-define the contest with the Stuarts in the Post-Reformation period as a struggle for liberty, and casting Melvillian Presbyterian ecclesiology as striking a blow against the absolutism of James VI; thus, making the Covenanters 'heroes of constitutional liberty'. See Forsyth, 'Presbyterian historians and the Scottish invention of British liberty', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 34 (2004), 94-110. For book length studies on similar themes see Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past*; Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History* (London, 2008).

¹³ J.A. Wylie, ed., *The Scots Worthies: Their Lives and Testimonies. Including Many Additional Notes, and Lives of Eminent Worthies Not Contained in the Original Collection* (London, 1850), i.

¹⁴ This does not mean that the eighteenth century was devoid of publications that included Henderson as an example of an emblematic hero of their cause. Some examples might include the formations of the Associate Presbytery in 1733, the Reformed Presbytery in 1743, and the Relief Presbytery in 1761. In the early and mid eighteenth century the seceding Scottish Presbyterians believed that their own doctrinal struggles were similar to Henderson's and they commonly used him as a virtual symbol of their contemporary aspirations. For an example of this see John Currie, *An essay on separation: or, a vindication of the Church of Scotland. In which the chief things in the testimonies of these Reverend brethren who lately made a secession from her are considered, and shown to be no ground of separation or secession. By John Currie, A. M. Minister of the Gospel at Kinglassie* (Edinburgh, 1738), 31, 47, & 148. The same thing happened in the nineteenth century perhaps with even more intensity with the disruption of 1843.

¹⁵ Thomas M'Crie, *The Life of Alexander Henderson: Minister of Edinburgh, and One of the Commissioners from the Church of Scotland, to the Assembly of Divines at Westminster* (New York, 1840).

Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen, in 1832.¹⁶ McCrie also wrote two other hagiographic though scholarly histories, the *Life of John Knox* and *Life of Andrew Melville*. These histories were written in connection and in response to the disruption of 1843 and the formation of the Free Church of Scotland which reinvigorated arguments involving church/state relationships.

J. Hill Burton's eight volume *The History of Scotland* published in 1873 and P. Hume Brown's three volume *History of Scotland to the Present Time* represent the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century histories that continue along a kind of simple struggle in the ongoing progress of liberty. According to Alan R. MacDonald, few attempts have been made to look behind and beyond the polemical frames of reference which required a two-dimensional contrast between those whom MacDonald calls the 'good guys' and the 'bad guys'.¹⁷ Since the primary and secondary sources are apparently so tinged with partisan dedication, the historian must take the time to sift through all the extant sources comparing and considering their merits. MacDonald rightly noted the two dimensional quality of the previous histories and has called for more thorough study. This is precisely why a study of Henderson's public career can help to provide a greater sensitivity to the nuances and complexities of early modern Scottish life that could help to move historians beyond this 'two-dimensional' narrative.

¹⁶ See David Stevenson, 'Scottish Church History, 1600-1660: A Select Critical Bibliography', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 21 (1983), 209-10. The surge in nineteenth century historical work corresponded not only to ecclesiastical debates, but also with the enormous growth in Scottish historical clubs such as the Bannatyne club formally constituted in Edinburgh in 1823 with Sir Walter Scott as its first president. Other clubs such as the Abbotsford, Grampian, Maitland and Spalding Clubs together with numerous individuals began publishing vast numbers of documents from Scottish history, especially from church history. See Alasdair Ross, 'The Bannatyne Club and the Publication of the Scottish Ecclesiastical Cartularies', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 85 (October 2006), 202-233.

¹⁷ Alan R. MacDonald, *The Jacobean Kirk, 1567-1625: Sovereignty, Polity and Liturgy* (Aldershot, 1998), 4.

Publication of historical work on Henderson slowed in the twentieth century, but there were a few. There was a 1942 publication entitled *Henderson's Benefaction: A tercentenary acknowledgment of the university's debt to Alexander Henderson*, edited by J.B. Salmond and G.H. Bushnell. Here as in so many other biographies one finds a rather brief outline of Henderson's major accomplishments but nothing of a serious, scholarly analysis is offered regarding his theological or political role in the British Revolutions.¹⁸ The most recent of these kinds of sketches was Marcus L. Loane's 1961 book, *Makers of Religious Freedom in the Seventeenth Century*. Loane's title bears evidence of a marked interest in the development of liberty rather than a scholarly monograph on Henderson as an historical figure in the context of early modern Britain. Consequently, there has not been a professional historical study or a scholarly monograph of Alexander Henderson more thorough than John Aiton since 1836.

Not only are the older studies of Henderson dated and hagiographic but other studies that deal with him albeit indirectly tend to be extremely critical and tend as much towards vituperation as the nineteenth-century had tended towards praise. For instance, in 1967 Hugh Trevor-Roper's *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* argued that Scotland was under the backwards tyranny of an intolerant theocratic Kirk. He associated Calvinism in Scotland with repressive, primitive forces that militated against the rise of Enlightenment progress. According to Trevor-Roper, seventeenth-century Scottish ministers were, 'A gallery of intolerant bigots, narrow-minded martinets, timid, conservative defenders of repellent dogmas, instant assailants of every new or liberal idea, inquisitors and witch-burners'.¹⁹

¹⁸ The same is true of James Pringle Thomson, *Alexander Henderson, the Covenanter* (Edinburgh, 1912).

¹⁹ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century; Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (New York, 1966), 222.

Trevor-Roper was following the lead of the nineteenth-century historian Henry Buckle's work, *On Scotland and the Scotch Intellect*, which was extremely critical of the Covenanter ministers. H.T. Buckle sermonized against the seventeenth-century Scottish preachers saying that they had placed the people of Scotland under the shadow of a long and terrible night in which 'the clergy once possessed of power showed themselves harsh and unfeeling masters.'²⁰ Buckle asserted that these Calvinistic ministers essentially enslaved seventeenth-century Scotland in a worse than Egyptian bondage.²¹

Recent Approaches: Political, Intellectual, and Religious

This overly critical approach has been challenged with a revival of historical studies in early modern Scottish historiography. Most notably in the last thirty years the origins of the Scottish Revolutions have been analysed by such historians as Maurice Lee in his 1982 book, *The Road to Revolution: Scotland under Charles I*, Peter Donald in his 1991 work, *An Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish Troubles, 1637-41*, and also Allan MacInnes's detailed study, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement*, likewise published in 1991. Each of these works has enabled historians to investigate the central role that Scotland and the Scottish Covenanters played in the 'troubles'. Peter Donald's study, *An Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish troubles, 1637-1641*, was a self-conscious attempt to approach the growing troubles between the King and the Scots from the King's perspective which complements the great narrative outline of David Stevenson's work, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-1644*, published in 1973, who was also attempting to chronicle a detailed narrative with attention to the complex political context.

²⁰ Henry Thomas Buckle, *On Scotland and the Scotch Intellect* (Chicago, 1970), 194.

Lee, Donald, and Stevenson advanced early modern Scottish studies and their work is excellent in many ways. However, because they concentrated almost exclusively on the political complexities of the Covenanter period, most of their works were not sensitive to the role of religion. In fact, some were consciously attempting to diverge from what they perceived as an over-emphasis on religion. For instance, David Stevenson argued that his work was aiming to move beyond past studies that he believed had placed an exaggerated emphasis on religion by concentrating on what he referred to as ‘pulpits’ and ‘ecclesiastical assemblies’.²² According to Stevenson, most previous studies have been little more than ‘church history’, and he was intent to emphasize ‘secular motives’ and ‘civil institutions’ in order to provide a decidedly ‘political’ history of the period.²³ Since none of these studies included a sustained analysis of Covenanter theology, Henderson’s theology warrants a supplementary study to their work, which this thesis attempts to provide.

Along the same lines, this thesis partially answers the recent call for historians to a renewed evaluation of the role of religion in early modern studies as opposed to some historians who are still inclined to explain religious beliefs as a mask for more ‘fundamental’ social, economic, or political interests.²⁴ According to John Coffey, the methodology of the Cambridge school has ‘fostered a serious exploration of the religious elements in early modern political argument’.²⁵ Maintaining this kind of sensitivity to Henderson’s overtly religious approach to his public career helps in many ways. For instance, though common to the histories of this period, it is infelicitous to

²¹ Ibid, 194.

²² Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-1644: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (London, 1973), 14.

²³ Ibid, 13-14.

²⁴ See John Coffey, ‘Introduction’, in Chapman, Coffey and Gregory, eds., *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame, In, 2009), 11-12.

²⁵ Ibid, 7.

speak of Henderson in the context of an inevitable metanarrative, either negatively or positively. This older approach tends to reduce the legitimate complexities in Henderson's life and activity as a seventeenth-century minister, and it tends to 'fit' him into a category that meets the plot line of a larger story often created in the minds of historians rather than one that derives from the actual events, at least as Henderson understood them.

Discussions in this area continued to broaden and Walter Roland Foster's 1975 work, *The Church before the Covenant: The Church of Scotland, 1596-1638*, contributed to a sharper understanding as he worked extensively in the Kirk records of the period. However, Foster's work analysed the socio-economic backgrounds of Covenanter ministers, and his study did not include theology, per se. David George Mullan's 1986 study, *Episcopacy in Scotland: The History of an Idea, 1560-1638*, provided more insight as to the ecclesiastical context of this period. Mullan did pay attention to religion, but his study stopped well short of Henderson's public activity. Thus, my study of Henderson builds on and moves forward where Mullan stopped.

John Morrill's 1990 study, *The Scottish National Covenant in its British Context, 1638-51*, added insight to the growing appreciation of the intellectual, religious, and political Scottish contributions to the early modern period. This study reveals that Scottish clerical leaders in general and Henderson in particular contributed to the events of early modern Britain in multiple ways. Morrill's study provides a tantalizing introduction to the place of religion but none of the essays speak directly to Alexander Henderson's role as one of Scotland's leading public figures even though there are multiple hints of Henderson's importance.

With all of the developments in early modern Scottish studies, according to David Allan, ‘prejudices against Scottish clergy as backwards and repressive remained alive and well’.²⁶ Allan’s 1993 work, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment, Ideas of Scholarship in Early Modern History*, challenged long-held ideas about Scottish Calvinism, arguing that it was an intellectual movement deeply affected by Renaissance humanism as well as medieval theology, thus displacing the notion that Scottish ministers of the early modern period were ‘backwards bigots’. Roger Mason’s 1994 work, *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603*, offered ongoing scholarly insight to discussions among professional historians, but he does not cover Henderson in detail.

Perhaps the most decisive contribution to this field as it relates to a fuller analysis of Scottish Covenanter ministers with sensitivity to the centrality of religion is John Coffey’s 1997 book, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford*. Coffey’s study was the first modern intellectual biography of the Covenanter’s most important theologian, Samuel Rutherford, and his work has opened the field for similar studies of Covenanter ministers.²⁷

David George Mullan’s work, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638*, continued to develop this area of historical study, and Mullan highlighted the need for more studies, especially in regard to the role of religion. This thesis is partly in response the way in which Coffey’s study of Rutherford has reminded historians of both the centrality and

²⁶ David Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment, Ideas of Scholarship in Early Modern History* (Edinburgh, 1993), 3.

²⁷ See Margo Todd’s, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (London, 2002). Todd’s exploration of the social and cultural impact of the Reformation on early modern Scots and an interdisciplinary approach produced a work which is sure to become a standard in Scottish Reformation studies and which provides excellent context for a study of Henderson.

complexity of religion in early modern Scotland. This thesis is also a response to the following challenge from Mullan:

Recent work which has illuminated our appreciation of the political aspects of the covenanting movement needs to be supplemented by a detailed and nuanced portrait of Scottish divinity; without this our picture of events is bound to be skewed.²⁸

In this thesis, I am attempting to do precisely what Mullan has requested: to supplement ongoing historical studies with a detailed and nuanced portrait of one of seventeenth-century Scotland's most important, yet recently overlooked divines, Alexander Henderson. Given the ongoing discussions among professional historians of this period the time is ripe for a detailed, scholarly study of Alexander Henderson, which I attempt to address in this thesis. I attempt to study Henderson's public career in a way that adds Henderson's voice to the newly developing scholarly discussions of early modern Scottish history such as those of Coffey and Mullan.

In this thesis, I address a scarcity of academic literature on Scottish Presbyterianism of the early modern period and on Scottish Covenanter leaders. This shortfall is especially pronounced when compared to the enormous attention that scholars have directed to Puritanism of the same era in old and New England. In his work on Rutherford, Coffey notes, 'the contrast is all the more striking, moreover, when one realises that devout Scottish Presbyterians were as "Puritan" in their religious culture as the English and New English for whom the term is usually reserved'.²⁹ Scottish Presbyterianism of early modern Scotland in general and Scottish Presbyterian ministers such as Henderson simply have not received the sustained attention of professional historians of the early modern period.

²⁸ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 7.

²⁹ John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), 17.

As one of the recognized leaders of the Scottish Covenanters of the British Revolutions, Henderson matches the criteria for needed study in the development of historiography of early modern British studies. The historiography of early modern Scotland in which Henderson lived and worked is still developing. For instance, historians of this period have tended to speak of the 'Puritan' movement. Yet Scottish Presbyterianism has been largely ignored by historians of Puritanism.³⁰ This has been the case even though Henderson and his fellow radical ministers seem to fit the general criteria for defining Puritanism. Still the developing historiography is not fixed. In her essay entitled 'The Problem of Scotland's Puritans', Margo Todd remarks on the ambivalence of applying the term Puritan to the Scottish context saying, 'the term is distinctively English in its origins. Is it then possible to apply it, with this definition to Scotland? The short answer is yes and no – but then again, yes'.³¹

The rise of interest in Puritan studies among American scholars stemmed primarily from an interest in the Puritans as 'intellectuals'. The Harvard scholar Perry Miller best represents this method.³² In this thesis I do not treat Henderson as a mere intellectual figure. To the contrary, I attempt to grapple with the complex nuances of religious and political currents that were running together in Henderson's day with which Henderson was actively attempting to engage, especially as a public spokesperson. Henderson cannot be treated as a mere intellectual, especially when one considers that he was an ordained minister and a self-avowed reformed pastor.

³⁰ Ibid, 18.

³¹ See Margo Todd's, 'The Problem of Scotland's Puritans,' in John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge, 2008), 175.

³² See Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1939).

Henderson Sources

One challenge in studying Henderson lies in the sources. Not only did Henderson live in a polarized and complicated context, but there are periods of Henderson's life that lack for resources. Specifically there are very few extant sources for Henderson's early life from around 1618 through his rise to prominence in 1637. This shortage of primary evidence makes it difficult to chart Henderson's rise to prominence at the outbreak of the prayer book riots in 1637. For Henderson, there is nothing remotely close to Rutherford's *Letters*, or Baillie's *Journal*, or the memoirs of Blair and Livingstone.

In spite of the lack of large archive collections such as those of Baillie or Argyll, this thesis attempts to put together bits and pieces of Henderson's life from references in multiple primary sources. For example, I used the letters and writings of William Scot, a fellow minister at Cupar in a town nearby Leuchars, where Henderson was the pastor from 1612-1639. I used the extracts of the records of the city of Edinburgh, as well as the actual records of the City of Edinburgh from the Edinburgh City Archives. I have also culled information from the Scottish Privy Council records and Calendar of State Papers Domestic for Henderson's period, all of which furnish brief but helpful facts. I have engaged with manuscripts from the National Library of Scotland, the National Archives of Scotland, and the University of St Andrews rare books room in order to piece together scant references from small but helpful manuscript sources that frame my study in the historical context in which Henderson lived and worked as a pastor, who was very conscious of what he believed was a struggle to maintain and to promote the Reformation as the work of God in history.

Henderson was writing and receiving letters from all over the nation as well as from exiled ministers in England, Ireland, and Holland. However, only a few of his letters survive, and historians are dependent on references and comments from the other sources. Using the Royal Collection and manuscripts from the National Library of Scotland, I have mined Henderson's private and official correspondence. In his book, *The Jacobean Kirk, 1567-1625; Sovereignty, Polity, and Liturgy*, Alan R. MacDonald outlines the traditions tracing back to the period of study when James Melville, Spotiswoode, David Calderwood, William Scott, John Row, and others tried to provide a 'true' account of the history of the period of struggles. I make extensive use of all of these sources, especially since Henderson worked with all of them personally.

Calderwood and Scot, for instance, offer indispensable, albeit polemical, histories of the context for Henderson's life. There is a most notable collection of such works in Robert Wodrow's huge compilation of material on the history of the Kirk, much of which was later published in the nineteenth-century, and most of which is at the National Library of Scotland. Not only are these sources quite polemical, but there are other challenges in the sources.

For instance, even Henderson's well-known public career was only scarcely covered in Wodrow's account of these times, and Calderwood's famous history did not include many of the specific historical details that one might desire. For example, Calderwood chronicled the history of the times up to the death of James VI, which helps to set the stage, while Wodrow picks up the story at the restoration of Charles II. William Scot's *Apologetical Narration* is a primary source history which covers the early part of Henderson's activity but concludes in June of 1633. Thus, there is a gap in the

contemporary histories of the period regarding Henderson. One can fill in the gaps with sparse but insightful information gathered from the histories of Guthry, Spalding, Stevenson and Row and especially with the *Letters and Journals* of Robert Baillie.

An important collection of Henderson's sermons has been available in print since 1867. This thesis makes use of this compilation of sermons primarily from 1638 and offers an updated analysis of Henderson's preaching that has not been attempted since 1888. Likewise, using the primary sources from Henderson's closest associates, it argues for Henderson's central role in the editing and redacting of Covenanter pamphlets; something that none of Henderson's previous biographers have attempted to do.

Because the bulk of primary source material from and about Henderson is related to his public career, I focus almost entirely on his public leadership. This means that I make extensive use of such sources as Peterkin's *Records of the Kirk of Scotland* and the Acts of Parliament. Henderson appears to have been instrumental in most of the major Scottish ecclesiastical and political developments during the British Revolutions till his death in 1646. His writings are not as extensive or as rigorously theological as his contemporary, Samuel Rutherford, but he has written works that contribute to the religious/political debates that were raging in his day, and ones that compared to Rutherford's writings have been relatively ignored. I make careful use of some of the following heretofore neglected sources: '*Instructions for Defensive Arms*', *A Remonstrance Concerning the Present Troubles, The Unlawfulness and Danger of Limited Prelacy, or Perpetual Presidency in the Church, The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland, Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland* (which Henderson co-authored), as well as numerous tracts, sermons and addresses.

Another strikingly important source that I employ is the Covenanter pamphlets during the Bishops' Wars. These pamphlets have only recently undergone scholarly scrutiny, especially in the work of David Como and S. Warechuen. However, I combine heretofore unconnected references in Baillie, Johnston, Rothes, and other primary sources, and I argue for the first time that Henderson is the primary editor and/or redactor of covenant pamphlets during the Bishops' Wars.

Regarding Henderson's last public activity at the Westminster Assembly, this thesis has a distinct advantage of a source that has heretofore been unavailable to all previous biographers of Henderson. This is Chad Van Dixhoorn's work at Cambridge on the updated minutes of the Westminster Assembly.³³ This resource is decisive for assessing Henderson's contributions at Westminster, which has never been done to date. For instance, Henderson has been reckoned the most prominent and influential Scottish delegate to the famous Westminster Assembly and was considered indispensable to its work. I supplement the updated minutes from the Westminster Assembly using the newsbooks, pamphlets, and parliamentary sources from this period as well as making extensive use of the *Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*. Since resources are now available that were simply unavailable when most Henderson biographies were written in the last two centuries, using the updated minutes, I attempt to offer an updated and clearer picture of Henderson's role at the Westminster Assembly.

Though I use neglected and in some cases new sources, the originality of this thesis does not reside in the new sources alone; at least part of the originality of this thesis

³³ Chad Van Dixhoorn, 'Reforming the Reformation: Theological Debate at the Westminster Assembly 1643-1652', Ph.D. thesis (University of Cambridge, 2004).

involves the questions that I ask of the sources both new and old, and in the connections that these questions have as they relate to the developing studies in early modern British history. This is particularly true of the development of scholarship noted previously regarding the reassessment of the central role of religion in early modern Scotland.

Method and Argument

This thesis attempts to move through the public career of Alexander Henderson highlighting the historical context of his activity as a leading Covenanter minister in the British Revolutions. Using relevant primary sources, this thesis attempts to offer a portrait of Henderson not as a mythical forerunner to liberty nor as the master of a blinkered theological tyranny. Attempting to avoid both extremes, I consider the subtleties and complexities of the context in early modern Scotland, and Henderson's activities as a Covenanter minister in this setting.

In this thesis I attempt to present Henderson and his life as he saw himself, first and foremost as a minister of the gospel who was struggling to live faithfully as he understood it.³⁴ Throughout many of Henderson's own writings, sermons, and addresses one can find the phrase, 'for Kirk and Kingdom', as something of a caption of how Henderson saw himself and his work.³⁵

³⁴ For the basics of this approach see the 'Introduction', and 'Quentin Skinner and the Religious Dimension of Early Modern Political Thought', from Alister Chapman, John Coffey, and Brad S. Gregory, eds., *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (South Bend, IN, 2009), 1-23 & 46-74.

³⁵ *RKS*, I, 120, 353, 355; *A Short Relation of the State of the Kirk of Scotland Since the Reformation of Religion to the Present Time for Information and Advertisement to our Brethren in the Kirk of England, By an Hearty Well-wisher to both Kingdome* (London, 1638), np.

Even if Henderson was not always consistent, he believed he was defending what God was doing in Scotland. He genuinely believed that the Kirk of Scotland ‘after the reformation of Religion did by degrees attained to as great perfection both in doctrine and discipline as any other reformed kirk in Europe.’³⁶ Thus, he openly stated that his cause was the cause of defending and promoting the Reformation throughout Scotland and eventually the whole realm of Stuart Britain.³⁷

In this thesis I try to place the ideas and actions of Alexander Henderson firmly in the historical context in which he lived. Thus, I attempt a historically sensitive reading of Henderson’s sermons, letters and pamphlets respecting his intentions and attempt to be sensitive to the linguistic, political, theological, and ecclesiastical context in which Henderson lived. This approach owes a debt to the ideas of Quentin Skinner, John Dunn, and John Pocock, and to what is sometimes referred to as the ‘Cambridge School’.³⁸

Skinner, in particular, has challenged historians to make it one of their principal tasks to ‘situate the texts we study within such intellectual context as to enable us to make sense of what their authors were doing in writing them’.³⁹ Since Alexander Henderson was the most prominent public spokesman for the Scottish Covenanters, Skinner’s challenges in regard to linguistic sensitivity are particularly apropos as he warns

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁷ *Arguments given in by the Commissioners of Scotland unto the Lords of the Treaty perswading Conformitie of Church Government, as one principall meanes of a continued peace between the two Nations* (Edinburgh, 1641), 1.

³⁸ See J. Tully, *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Cambridge, 1988); J. Dunn, ‘The identity of the history of ideas’, in P. Laslett, Q. Skinner and W.G. Runciman, eds., *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Fourth series (Oxford, 1982), 158-73; J. Pocock, ‘The history of political thought: a methodological enquiry’, in P. Laslett, Q. Skinner and W.G. Runciman, eds., *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Second series (Oxford, 1962), 183-202.

³⁹ See Quentin Skinner, ‘Introduction: Seeing Things Their Way’, in *Vision of Politics: Regarding Method*, I (Cambridge, 2002), 3.

historians to be attentive to the rhetorical features of writing and speech, especially as they relate to the power of words to underpin or undermine the construction of our social world.⁴⁰

Also, in this thesis I attempt to supplement the more ‘politically’ oriented studies of early modern Scotland by historians such as David Stevenson who explicitly argue that political history precedes all other concerns.⁴¹ Edward J. Cowan has suggested that Covenanter leaders used religious differences in the Scottish Kirk as an opportunity, one might even suggest as an ‘excuse’, for constitutional reform.⁴² Likewise, Alan Macinnes argues that Protestant religion in early modern Scotland was of paramount importance as a political factor in cementing the political nation and maintaining Scotland’s national identity. This leads Macinnes to avoid making any serious theological inquiry beyond what he deems related to the political use of religion. Macinnes asserts rather boldly that for seventeenth-century Scottish clergy material acquisitiveness was as important if not more so than spiritual zeal, thus effectively eliminating religion as a substantive element of his studies of the period.⁴³ This approach tends to ‘domesticate’ early modern religion by importing ‘up to date’ categories of religious thought, thus making religion fit into a more manageable place for the modern historian.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid, 5.

⁴¹ See David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-44* (London, 1973), 13.

⁴² See Edward J. Cowan’s article, ‘The Making of the National Covenant’, in John Morril, ed., *The Scottish National Covenant in its British Context: 1638-51* (Edinburgh, 1990), 70.

⁴³ See Macinnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement, 1625-1641* (Edinburgh, 1991), 22, 16.

⁴⁴ See John Coffey, ‘Introduction’, in *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion*, 12.

For Henderson, a person's political activity was as much religious as anything else that he or she tried to do. He believed that covenanting the nation under the National Covenant was an act of obedience to God so that 'religion may continue among us in purity and we may have peace and comfort in it, through Jesus Christ'.⁴⁵ These are the concepts found in his covenantal theology, and they were concepts that Henderson understood himself to be using, for instance in his preaching and pamphleteering, to broad effect.

I attempt to study Henderson within the context of early modern Scotland as well as within the nexus of his larger European context, for which I am indebted to the work of Margo Todd.⁴⁶ Henderson's experience corroborates what Margo Todd argues when she asserts that the historian should see the second reformation movement not as a radical movement 'wrenched from their social, political, and ecclesiological mainstream, and from their intellectual moorings as well'.⁴⁷ Todd has insisted that seventeenth-century Protestant thought was part of a geographically larger complex of early modern intellectual developments which developed in the context of a larger European intellectual community.⁴⁸ This proved true for Henderson. David George Mullan echoes this same sentiment saying, 'the religious history of Scotland must be studied and presented in an international context: religious thought in Scotland did not develop in a vacuum, in isolation from English and European influences'.⁴⁹

Henderson and his seventeenth-century fellow Scottish ministers lived and worked in the context of a nexus of historical developments both Scottish in particular and

⁴⁵ Henderson, *Sermons*, 163.

⁴⁶ Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge, 1987).

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 9.

European in general. They were educated in the context of the lingering medieval requirements of a university education also being formed by the continuing influence of Renaissance intellectual emphasis and Reformation theological developments. As Andrew Melville shaped Henderson's St Andrews education it was as European as it was Scottish, and it shared as much from the latest scholarly techniques of the Renaissance as from the central ideas of historic Christianity and the ongoing theological changes afoot from the Protestant Reformation, most significantly Calvinism. This also includes the complex of the growing theological/political tensions that were forming in Stuart Britain in general and Scotland in particular. Scotland formed as it were the more particular topography of Henderson's education and activities. To complicate matters even more, Henderson was convinced that Scotland was involved in a spiritual battle of historical proportions, and he believed that he was calling the nation to their religious duties and to side with God.

Chapter one (Alexander Henderson: The Preparation) outlines the general preparatory period in Henderson's life. Tracing his education at St Andrews under the tutelage of Andrew Melville, chapter one argues that Henderson received a Calvinistic humanist education that was intensely theological, rigorously academic, steeped in the classics of Antiquity, and grounded in the latest Renaissance educational techniques. This chapter highlights the complexity of early modern religion and offsets the criticism of seventeenth-century Scottish clerics as backwards and/or ignorant. It also advances our understanding of David Mullan's 'puritan brotherhood' that informed Henderson's understanding of the conflict with Charles I as essentially a religious one.

⁴⁹ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 4.

Chapter two (Alexander Henderson: The Covenanter) covers one of the most centrally important political theologies in early modern history in Scottish covenanting. As one of the primary authors of the National Covenant in 1638, Alexander Henderson's work is paramount to a full understanding of early modern political thought, especially as it relates to the contributions of Scottish Calvinistic covenant theology to early modern theories of the nature and purpose of civil government. This chapter reassesses Henderson's mission to resist idolatry as linked to his hope of revival and reformation. In addressing the controversy over Charles I's attempt to impose the Service Book on the Scottish Kirk, this chapter is sensitive to Henderson's savvy use of rhetoric that displayed his understanding of the prevailing theological, political, and constitutional ideas of his day. This chapter argues that his covenanting was decisive for Scotland's success as they resisted the rule of Charles I; and in so doing, it also set into motion a series of events that brought the three kingdoms into conflict with the King.

Chapter three (Alexander Henderson: The Preacher) offers an updated analysis of Alexander Henderson's preaching that has not been attempted since 1888. This chapter argues that Alexander Henderson's preaching was both covenantal and especially effective in unleashing a flurry of religious emotions throughout the nation of Scotland that filled the country with a sense of religious destiny. He deliberately added a personal dimension to the national struggles as he linked Scotland's struggle with Charles I to its calling as a holy nation and with its mission as having a special place in providence. Alexander Henderson may have been best known among his peers as a preacher, and this chapter provides a much needed reassessment of his homiletics.

Chapter four (Alexander Henderson: The Presbyterian) examines the connection between Alexander Henderson's ecclesiology and eschatology as an untold dimension in his struggle with Charles I, chiefly at the pivotal Glasgow General Assembly of 1638. This chapter argues that during his struggles with Charles I Henderson pushed ecclesiology to an unrivalled position of theological prominence, as he also connected Scotland's version of presbyterian polity with the dawning of a new age of redemptive history. As prominent as ecclesiology has been to early modern Scottish studies, few historians have emphasized the connections between ecclesiology and eschatology. Chapter four asserts that for Alexander Henderson there was an important connection between ecclesiology and eschatology that helped to animate his struggle with Charles I, particularly as a public leader, but which also laid the groundwork for future difficulties and Henderson's ultimate failure.

Chapter five (Alexander Henderson: The Pamphleteer) provides the first specific study of Alexander Henderson's role as a pamphleteer, especially as it relates to attribution and authorship of the Covenanter pamphlets. This chapter outlines Henderson's rhetorical efforts as they were crafted in a style and substance to great effect and as they differed from previous generations of nonconforming Scottish propagandists. Chapter five studies Henderson's pamphleteering as an extension of his religion and in particular as connected to covenant theology as it related to the emerging notion of a public sphere. This chapter attempts to initiate a conversation about the nature of the 'public sphere' in early modern Scotland primarily as it relates to Henderson's theology of a covenanted nation.

Chapter six (The Westminster Assembly and the Collapse of the Cause) chronicles Henderson's role as one of the leading Scottish commissioners at the Westminster Assembly. Using new sources that account for Henderson's role during the debates at Westminster, this chapter argues that Henderson acted as something of a cheerleader for a quick ecclesiastical resolution, which he believed would end the overall conflict in the three kingdoms. Focusing primarily on ecclesiology, he attempted to manage the assembly as he had done in Scotland, but with ultimate failure. Henderson's earlier work to elevate presbyterian ecclesiology to a fundamental aspect of the Christian faith and his efforts to link it with eschatology had succeeded in Scotland, but backfired badly at the Westminster Assembly.

Henderson's efforts ended in frustration and illness, and he eventually died having failed to accomplish his mission. In so many ways, Alexander Henderson's public career is characteristic of early modern Scottish history. It is riddled with the emerging tensions and ironies so common to early modern history; all of which were heightened with a deep sense of religious zeal that seemed to make compromise in some areas impossible. This thesis does not claim to be an exhaustive study of Alexander Henderson, but it offers an updated study of the major areas of Henderson's public career in order to foster a scholarly conversation in the growing area of religion in early modern Scottish history. I argue that any such conversation would be greatly improved if the presently updated study of the public career of Alexander Henderson were added to the discussion.

Chapter 1

Alexander Henderson: the Preparation

Alexander Henderson's university education, combined with his experience in what David Mullan describes as a 'fraternity of Scottish divinity', were key components in preparing him for his public role as a clerical leader during the British Revolutions.¹ His formal education at the University of St Andrews provided Henderson with what could be described as a Calvinistic humanist education, which prepared him for and encouraged him to public service as a minister. Henderson's instruction under Andrew Melville appears to have been common for Covenanter ministers and stands in sharp contrast to some historians' assertions that Covenanter ministers were 'bigoted and ignorant'. After his studies at St Andrews, Henderson's conversion brought him into intimate associations with ministers and lay leaders who nourished in one another a shared understanding of the developing ecclesiastical conflicts in Scotland. Mullan describes this community as a 'puritan brotherhood' which generated and sustained a passionate vision for what would become the Covenanter cause, and also was decisive in preparing Henderson for his public response to the ecclesiastical policies of Charles I.²

University of St Andrews

Henderson was born in 1583, most likely in the village of Luthrie in the parish of Crieich, Fifeshire.³ A later reference to Henderson from Creich parish records refer to 'The said Mr. Henderson, being born in the toun of Luthrie'.⁴ He never married but

¹ David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638* (Oxford, 2000), 13.

² Ibid, 44.

³ National Archives of Scotland, 'The Will of Mr. Alexander Hendrisoune', registered in 1652, MS, f. 643.

⁴ National Archives of Scotland, 'Creich Kirk Session Records', 5 October, 1702, 24. The General Register Office of Scotland contains no records of anything from Creich parish or Luthrie earlier than

grew up in a large family.⁵ His father was probably David Henderson, a tenant farmer who worked a small estate that he eventually purchased from Seaton of Parboath in 1601.⁶

No records exist for Henderson's earliest years of grammar school education, but he entered the University of St Andrews at the age of 16. Specifically, he matriculated to the College of St Salvator on 19 December 1599.⁷ He earned the degree of Master of Arts at the University of St Andrews in 1603.⁸ The visitation reports from 1588, 1597 and 1599 indicate that Henderson's earliest years at St Andrews required his attendance in classes under the tutelage of the legendary Andrew Melville, who was there until 1605.⁹

Since St Mary's College at St Andrews was uniquely dedicated to divinity studies after 1583, we can be certain that Henderson's initial studies at St Salvator's were not solely directed to ministerial or clerical studies.¹⁰ If he dedicated himself to divinity studies, it most likely occurred sometime between his graduation in 1603 and his appointment as

1695. Likewise, the Scottish National Archives can trace parish records in Creich only as far back as 1693.

⁵ National Archives of Scotland, 'The Will of Mr. Alexander Hendrisoune', MSS, f. 644.

⁶ See Walter Makey, *The Church of the Covenant, 1637-165, Revolution and Social Change in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1979), 102. This is asserted and reasserted in all of the major biographies and biographical sketches of Henderson such as John Aiton, *The Life and Times of Alexander Henderson: Giving a History of the Second Reformation of the Church of Scotland, and of the Covenanters, During the Reign of Charles I* (Edinburgh, 1836), 85-89; Robert Low Orr, *Alexander Henderson: Churchman and Statesman* (London, 1919), 3; J. P. Thomson, *Alexander Henderson, The Covenanter*, 15; John Coffey, 'Alexander Henderson, c.1583-1646, Church of Scotland minister and politician', *Oxford DNB* (Oxford, 2004-06).

⁷ St Andrews University Library, MSS, 'Acta Rectorum & 4', 19 December, 1599, f. 130. See also John Aiton, *The Life and Times*, 88; Orr, *Alexander Henderson*, 3.

⁸ Henderson is listed with 43 other graduates as Alexander Henresonus. See St Andrews University Library, MSS, 'Acta Rectorum & 4', 1603, f. 306. The following are various spellings of his surname: Henderson, Henrisone, Henrisoun, Henrici, Hendreson, Hendrison, henryson, Hendersone, Henrison, Henresonus.

⁹ J. B. Salmond, and G. H. Busnell, eds., *Henderson's Benefaction: A tercentenary acknowledgment of the university's debt to Alexander Henderson* (St Andrews, 1942), 18.

¹⁰ See 'Introduction', in 'Acta Facultatis Artium', LVVI, & Calderwood, *History*, III, 407.

a member of the faculty in 1610.¹¹

In 1610, he was Questor at St Andrews and a member of the faculty of Arts, recorded as 'Mr. Alexandri Henrysone' in the 'Faculty of Arts Bursars Book, 1456-1853'.¹² He was also listed the next year in 1611 as 'Mr. Alexandro henrisone', which did not designate him as questor, but listed him as 'a facultatis disputatio'.¹³ In 1611, he was also named an expectant in the Synod of Fife, being ordained to serve as minister at Leuchars the following year in 1612 when he would have been twenty seven years old.¹⁴

Founded in 1413, St Andrews is the oldest university in Scotland. By the time Henderson attended St Andrews it possessed an academic standing connected to a notable history of well-respected scholars. John Mair brought educational developments from Paris as he came to St Andrews by way of Glasgow. Likewise his well-known work, *Historia Majoris Britanniae*, in 1521 gained him an international reputation, which attracted scholars and students to St Andrews. The famous humanist scholar, George Buchanan, studied at St Andrews under Mair in 1524. Buchanan brought similar academic notoriety to St Andrews with noted publications which included, *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*, published in 1582, the year Buchanan died.¹⁵ From its beginning and throughout its brief history, St Andrews developed a reputation as a place of serious scholarship.¹⁶ By the time Henderson matriculated at St Andrews in 1599, the educational environment was already developing according to the latest

¹¹ After his graduation in 1603, the university records do not list him on the faculty until 1610.

¹² St Andrews University Library, MSS, 'Faculty of Arts Bursars Book, 1456-1853', f, 86.

¹³ Ibid, f, 87.

¹⁴ *Records of the Synod of Fife*, 39.

¹⁵ See John MacQueen, ed., *Humanism in Renaissance Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1990), 26.

¹⁶ See Annie I. Dunlap, ed., 'Introduction', *Acta Facultatis Artium Universitatis Sancti Andree, 1413-1588* (Edinburgh, 1964), li.

Renaissance/Reformation expectations.¹⁷ Along with the obvious training and instruction in Latin, Andrew Melville introduced Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac to Scottish universities in general and to St Andrews in particular.¹⁸

Henderson received what appears to be a fairly common education for those who would become Covenanter leaders in Scotland during the British Revolutions.¹⁹ This runs contrary to a criticism that seventeenth century Covenanter ministers were a dark, repressive force of Calvinistic reactionaries.²⁰ Hugh Trevor-Roper, for instance, argued that Scotland's Calvinistic ministers were bigoted and backwards. He wrote:

Calvinism was intolerant, fundamentalist, scholastic, determinist... The religion of intellectual reactionaries, scholastical bigots, and blinkered Augustinians, Hebraic fundamentalists had to be swept away before the Enlightenment could dawn.²¹

¹⁷ St Andrews University Library, MSS, 'The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland', III, 1567-1592. Regarding the new foundations to University of St Andrews', see St Andrews University Library, MSS, 'Acta Parliamentorum Jacobi VI, A.D. 1579', f. 178, 179.

¹⁸ For the most recent scholarly study of the University of St Andrews when Henderson was a student, see Steven J. Reid, 'Education in Post-Reformation Scotland: Andrew Melville and the University of St Andrews, 1560-1606', PhD thesis (University of St Andrews), 2008.

¹⁹ Baillie was educated at Glasgow, which had experienced similar changes under the direct supervision of Melville, himself. Likewise, Samuel Rutherford, a fellow Scottish delegate to the Westminster Assembly, though educated at Edinburgh also participated in a similar educational context, in which Melvillian reforms had taken place there as well. However, I have not found any strong connections between Henderson and other St Andrews graduates who led in the later Covenanter movement. Therefore, while Melville's academic changes are worth noting, they do not seem to have had a direct influence towards creating militant presbyterians at least in terms of strict methodological or curricular changes that Melville instituted. See John Coffey, 'The Scholar,' in *Politics, Religion, and the British Revolutions, The mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), 62-81.

²⁰ See Donald Macleod, 'Scottish Calvinism: a dark, repressive force?', the *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*, 19, No. 2 (Autumn 2001). For another analysis of these ideas see also, John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning and Education* (Cambridge, 1986).

²¹ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (New York, 1966), 204-5, 207. It is at this point that Trevor-Roper argued incorrectly that the urbane, intellectual and humanist elites never formed the core of the seventeenth century Calvinist church in Scotland. He argued that this created two intellectual elements of the Calvinist Church; the clergy who controlled its force and the humanists who merely attached themselves to it. He argued that these two groups remained separable, which created much tension between them. This is the point at which Henderson's education and later public career argues exactly the opposite to Trevor-Roper's assertions. This also provides another reason why an updated study of Henderson remains an important topic for early modern British studies.

H.T. Buckle virtually sermonized against the Scottish preachers.²² The Calvinistic ministers, argued Buckle, essentially enslaved seventeenth century Scotland in a worse than Egyptian bondage.²³ Trevor-Roper echoes Buckle describing them as ‘A gallery of intolerant bigots, narrow-minded martinets, timid, conservative defenders of repellent dogmas, instant assailants of every new or liberal idea, inquisitors and witch-burners’²⁴ Though somewhat dated, these criticisms of the Scottish Calvinistic clergy according to David Allan, ‘remain alive and well’.²⁵

Henderson’s education at St Andrews does not accord with these kinds of assertions that the clergy of seventeenth century Scotland, ‘prolonged the reign of ignorance and stopped the march of society’.²⁶ To the contrary, Henderson’s experience corroborates Margo Todd’s argument that historians should understand the leaders of the second Reformation in Scotland not as radicals ‘wrenched from their social, political, and ecclesiological mainstream, or from their intellectual moorings as well’.²⁷ Henderson was trained in a context rich with a wide variety of sources including ancient, medieval, and Renaissance. In this sense, Henderson received what may be described as an education that was deeply religious, unapologetically theological, strenuously academic, and one that was shifting along the lines of the latest humanist educational and intellectual developments of that day.

²² Henry Thomas Buckle, *On Scotland and the Scotch Intellect* (London, 1970), 194.

²³ Ibid, 194.

²⁴ Trevor-Roper, *Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change*, 190.

²⁵ David Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment, Ideas of Scholarship in Early Modern History* (Edinburgh, 1993), 3.

²⁶ Buckle, *On Scotland and the Scotch Intellect*, 162.

²⁷ Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge, 1987), 8. While Todd’s assertions here are directed primarily to English puritans, they apply equally well to their seventeenth century Scottish counterparts.

It was to Andrew Melville that St Andrews owed many of the particular changes that were common for Henderson and his classmates. David George Mullan notes, ‘Melville’s influence is not easily overestimated due to his educational labours’.²⁸ Melville’s experience in Paris among Jesuit intellectuals and in his various contacts with European intellectuals confirms Todd’s insistence that seventeenth century Protestant thought was part of the early modern intellectual developments that stands in the context of a larger European intellectual community.²⁹ David Allan argues that Buckle’s account of the anti-intellectual Calvinist clergy fails to consider the consistently ‘humanist’ strain of thought so prevalent in Henderson and his fellow Calvinists ministers.³⁰ This ‘humanist’ aspect of Henderson’s education derived through a complex of sources.

Melville instituted reforms at St Andrews, especially in the areas of logic and rhetoric, which he developed under the influence of Petrus Ramus in France in the mid-sixteenth century. These reforms were evolving as part of a wider unified “method” for teaching the arts and the sciences.³¹ ‘The fundamental ideal at the heart of Ramus’ reforms’, argues Stephen Reid, ‘centered on his belief that practical usage was the ultimate end of all arts and sciences’.³² This included an emphasis on clarity in logic and rhetoric. Ramist logic was expected to produce lucidity and simplicity in place of the supposed obtuseness of the older Aristotelian methods. Melville used these kinds of practical, humanist impulses and blended them with Reformation theology, which seems to have had a significant influence on Henderson’s later public work.

²⁸ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 16.

²⁹ Ibid, 9.

³⁰ Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment*, 1-10, 55-66.

³¹ Reid, ‘Education in Post-Reformation Scotland’, 21.

Melville expected his students to put their studies to use in society, especially as an aspect of what he believed were the important battles against the ‘papists’. At St Andrews, Henderson’s academic training included intense biblical studies that were expected to yield practical results for the nation. Andrew Melville was constantly pushing this task. James Melville stated that he:

Bathe publiclie and privatlie, ceassit nocht to cry and warn ministers and scholars to be diligent upon ther charges and buiks, to studie the controversies, and to tak head they neglected nocht the tyme, for ther wald be a strang unseatt of Papists.³³

Melville instituted the educational innovations and techniques at St Andrews to produce a well-educated clergy, and through them to provide beneficial results for the nation.

Melville emphasized the scriptures as central to education, but they were not the only source of Henderson’s training at St Andrews. Henderson studied antiquity as part of the basic curriculum for his education. He was thoroughly trained in Aristotle, immersed in the works of Plato and Cicero, as well as a whole host of classical authors. This was the common expectation of the students who graduated from St Andrews in Henderson’s day. Allan argues that humanist qualities were alive and well in the seventeenth century Scottish Kirk because such qualities had derived from a ‘deeply learned and humanistic Calvinism which had propelled the Reformation and which... was to greatly affect subsequent development of religious life in Scotland’.³⁴

Henderson’s Master’s thesis from St Andrews was printed by Andrew Hart in Edinburgh in 1611 and provides evidence that his instruction included what one might

³² Ibid, 23.

³³ Melville, *Diary*, 76.

³⁴ Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment*, 45. See also Clare Kellar, *Scotland, England and the Reformation, 1534-15661* (Oxford, 2003), 80.

consider a well-educated understanding of antiquity.³⁵ His thesis was written in Latin with quotes in Greek in so far as they were appropriate to the point. Henderson's thesis indicated that his familiarity with antiquity went beyond language.

His thesis was an outline of what one might call the humanities; covering subjects such as politics, ethics, logic, and others. Henderson seemed to be comfortable moving in and out of classical works, citing Plato's *Republic*, and Aristotle's *Poetics* as he also made ready use of Socrates, Cicero, and lesser known poets such as the Greek Empedocles and the Roman Lucretius along with other thinkers of the classical world.³⁶

This confirms John Coffey's observation that seventeenth-century Scottish ministers received a 'strikingly secular' course of studies as part of their normal ministerial education.³⁷ This secular course of studies for ministers reflected the ancient university system. The university had inherited sources from late medieval Christendom combined with the developments instituted as a result of Renaissance changes and, more specifically for Henderson, from Melville's educational reforms at St Andrews.³⁸ According to Stephen Reid, Andrew Melville's educational developments were profound, yet his ecclesiastical influence had been largely marginalized by 1600 when Henderson was a student.³⁹ The new archbishop of St Andrews, George Gladstone, maintained the academic and curricular changes that Melville had instituted while

³⁵ Alexander Henderson, *Gymnasma philosophicum de rebus logicis, ethicis, physicis, sphaericis, metaphysicis, in publico philosophantium consensu, in Academia Andreana ab ingenuis nonnullis Salvatoriani Gymnasij adolescentibus, rude philosophica jam donandis, D.O. M.A. habendum A.D, Iunii 1611, loco consueto Alexandro Henrisono praeside* (Edinburgh, 1611), I; hereinafter, *Master's Thesis*.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁷ J Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 63.

³⁸ See J.K. Cameron, 'Humanism and Religious Life', in John MacQueen's, *Humanism in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1990). Also, for insight as to the growing tensions between "secular" university education and "clerical" education as it specifically unfolded in Calvin's Genevan Academy and as such developments affected other educational efforts among Reformed thinkers see Karin Maag's, *Seminary or University? The Genevan Academy and Reformed Higher Education, 1560-1620* (Brookfield, VT, 1995).

moving away from Melville's strident ecclesiology and taking the university to what Reid describes as a more 'moderate' ecclesiastical tone.⁴⁰

The Call to Leuchars and the "Call of God"

When Henderson left St Andrews he did so having developed good relations with Archbishop Gladstone.⁴¹ In fact, Gladstone gave Henderson his first ministerial appointment to the church of Leuchars, in the Presbytery of St Andrews.⁴² The setting, however, was quite different from St Andrews.

Henderson's call to Leuchars landed him in what most of his biographers refer to as a 'hotbed of opposition to Prelacy'.⁴³ The exact date of Henderson's ordination at Leuchars is obscured because of the lack of primary source evidence from the parish records, but his call is usually recorded as 1612. In 1611, Henderson was listed as an expectant in the Synod of Fife.⁴⁴ Henderson's call to Leuchars most likely took place in 1612, between 1611 when his name appears as Questor of the Faculty of Arts and 26 January, 1614, when he as one of the members of his presbytery signed a certificate in behalf of Mr. John Strang.⁴⁵

Bishop Guthry indicated that Henderson's appointment to Leuchars was as much about flattery and political manoeuvres as about seeking the call God. Guthry said:

³⁹ Reid, 'Education in post-Reformation Scotland', 165-66.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 165-66.

⁴¹ Sometimes spelled Gladestone or Gledtaness.

⁴² See Henry Guthry, *The Memoirs of Henry Guthry, Late Bishop of Dunkeld: Containing an Impartial Relation of the Affairs of Scotland, Civil and Ecclesiastical, from the Year 1637, to the Death of King Charles I* (Glasgow: 1747), 24. See also Aiton, *The Life and Times*, 89.

⁴³ Aiton, *The Life and Times*, 90.

⁴⁴ An expectant was something of a technical term that in today's ecclesiastical jargon might correspond to a licentiate. This person is someone that a presbytery recognized as possessing the requisite qualifications for the ministry yet who did not possess a call to a church and thus was expected to continue to develop his gifts under the supervision of the presbytery.

Mr. Henderson had been in his youth very Episcopal, in token whereof, being a professor of philosophy in St Andrews, he did at the laureation of his class, chuse archbishop Gladstones for his patron, with a very flattering dedication, for the which he had the kirk of Leuchars given him shortly after.⁴⁶

This corroborates what Henderson said later in his life when speaking at the Glasgow General Assembly of 1638:

Beloved, I put no question but there are divers amongst us that have had no such warrant for our entry to the Ministry as were to be wished. And although the calling itself be not only lawful, but laudable necessary and commanded of God, yet alas! How many of us have rather sought the kirk, than the kirk has sought us? How many have rather gotten the kirk given to them, than they have been given to the kirk for the good thereof?⁴⁷

It appears that he was not looking for ecclesiastical struggles, but for a comfortable setting near the university as he described in the following:

there be Students of Divinity whereof some, if they have opportunity of their Studies, do make their abode within in the bounds of the Presbytery.⁴⁸

In 1612 Henderson moved from the comfortable and agreeable oversight of the archbishop of St Andrews to the tense ecclesiastical environment of Leuchars parish. Geographically Leuchars was only a few miles from St Andrews, and it was in the bounds of the presbytery, but ecclesiastically it was a world away. Henderson was forced to face a feisty network of resisting ministers, and it would not be long before he found himself not only agreeing with them, but moving into a position of leadership among them.

Henderson's support of prelacy changed following an episode which has become the stuff of presbyterian legends.⁴⁹ The story began when he arrived at the church at

⁴⁵ *Synod of Fife*, 39.

⁴⁶ Guthrie, *Memoirs*, 24.

⁴⁷ *RKS*, I, 176. This sermon would become well-known and was published under the title, *The Bishop's Doom*.

⁴⁸ Henderson, *The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1641), 5.

⁴⁹ Stories about Henderson's conversion experience have become a standard part of Henderson lore in

Leuchars only to find the parish had locked the doors to their new pastor. With the help of a friends, Henderson broke a window and climbed into the church in spite of opposition.⁵⁰ Henderson's famed encounter with Robert Bruce put this church scene into Henderson's conversion story.

As the story goes, Henderson had wanted to hear the famed Robert Bruce preaching, yet because he was not associated with the presbyterian cause, he seated himself in obscurity in a dark corner of the church. One account stated, 'Alexander Henderson crossed our vision in the dim light of Forgan Kirk when Robert Bruce won him over to the presbyterian cause'.⁵¹ The earliest known account of Henderson's conversion is found in Robert Flemming's 1669 work entitled, *The Fulfilling of the Scriptures*:

When Mr. Bruce was come to the pulpit he did for a considerable time keep silence as his manner was, which did some way astonish Mr. Henderson but much more when he heard the first words wherewith he begun, which wer these, He that cometh not in by the dorr, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber; which did by the Lord's blessing at the very present take him by the heart, and had so great an impression on him that it was the first means of his conversion.⁵²

Virtually all of Henderson's subsequent biographers have included this story with only minor alterations.

virtually every significant piece of biographical work on Henderson. For example, see Coffey, 'Alexander Henderson', *Oxford DNB*; Aiton, *The Life and Times*, 91; Orr, *Henderson*, 8-9; Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 27 and many more.

⁵⁰ Robert Fleming, *The fulfilling of the Scripture complete; in three parts. ... By the late Reverend and learned Mr. Robert Fleming, Sen. Together with some memoirs of the author's life; in a sermon preached on the occasion of his death. By the late learned Daniel Burgess. Collected in one volume. The fifth edition corrected. To which is added an index, ... and at the begining of the work a table of Scots phrases*, ... (London, 1726), 191.

⁵¹ William M. Campbell, *The Triumph of Presbyterianism* (Edinburgh, 1958), 37.

⁵² Fleming, *The Fulfilling of the Scriptures*, 191. Henderson was very careful or reticent in providing details concerning his personal life. Flemmings' account does not run contrary to any of Henderson's public statements about himself. In fact, since this story does accord with the small number of facts we can find in Henderson's public statements, and since it is published less than thirty years after Henderson's death, it seems like an essentially reliable source of Henderson's conversion experience.

Wodrow's *Life of Bruce* records that Bruce would have been in Henderson's area in the year 1613.⁵³ Henderson experienced some kind of a change of heart after his ordination and call to Leuchars in 1612 and before his activity at the Aberdeen General Assembly in August of 1616.⁵⁴ His notable associations at the Aberdeen Assembly, as well as his public resistance to the Articles of Perth after 1618, means that his 'conversion' occurred sometime between 1613-1615.

The Context of the Conflict

Shortly after Henderson's call to Leuchars in 1612 he apparently began developing a friendship with William Scot, a minister at Cupar only a few miles from Leuchars.⁵⁵ Scot was a committed presbyterian who had been at the forefront of the ecclesiastical struggles in Scotland and an ally of Andrew Melville. The records of the Synod of Fife indicate that Scot had led Cupar Presbytery in offering steady resistance to the policies of the archbishop of St Andrews and the King.⁵⁶ William Scott was one of the Scottish ministers summoned along with the irascible Andrew Melville to meet with James VI at the famous Hampton Court Conference in 1603.⁵⁷ Scot had been such a nuisance to the King's policies that in 1606 James personally warned him saying:

Having neuertheles, so little praesualed with some incredulous, wilull, ingrate, and maliciously disposed persons, as some of them haue not sorborne rashly to contemne and disobey our aucturity... so stubbornly to persiste in their contumacy, as their malicious obstinacy hath forced us to intende greater rigor against them then our inclination allowes, yet far les then their ofences did deserue.⁵⁸

⁵³ Robert Wodrow, *Sermons by the Rev. Robert Bruce, Minister of Edinburgh, with Collections for his life, by the Rev. Robert Wodrow* (Edinburgh, 1853), 127.

⁵⁴ RKS, I, 139.

⁵⁵ Guthry attributed Henderson's change of heart to his 'intimate acquaintance' with William Scot. See Guthry, *Memoirs*, 21.

⁵⁶ *Records of the Synod of Fife*, 88-89.

⁵⁷ Alan R. Macdonald, 'William Scot', Oxford DNB.

⁵⁸ *Original Letters Relating to the Ecclesiastical Affairs in Scotland, Chiefly Written by or Addressed to His Majesty King James VI After His Ascension to the English Throne, MDCIII-MDCXIV*, I, ed. David Laing, (Edinburgh, 1851), 48.

As early as the General Assembly of 1596, Scot had begun to write an account of the conflict because he said they ‘desired us to studie it, for my weake opinioun’.⁵⁹ This was the impetus for Scot’s *Apologetical Narration*, a work that would become something of a skeletal structure for the Covenanter narrative of the struggles. It provided the Covenanters a firsthand account of what they believed was the unfolding of an ecclesiastical struggle that had cosmic or eschatological meaning. In summary Scot noted, ‘The devil, envying the happinesse and laudable proceedings of our Kirk, stirred up both Papists and politicians to disturb her peace and deface her beauty’.⁶⁰

According to William Scot, King James I would eventually call Melville and his fellow Scottish ministers to a meeting only because they were “to be trapped” due to their commitments.⁶¹ Melville’s friends immediately associated him with a long line of ‘martyrs’ who had struggled for the Reformation. Beginning with George Wishart and John Knox, James Melville placed Andrew Melville in a list of martyrs in the battle with the ‘Papistrie’ in a war over the destiny of the kirk.⁶² Henderson’s interaction with Scot helped to frame the growing conflict in providential and eschatological terms.

Conrad Russell refers to this kind of history as ‘Covenanter mythology’.⁶³ During this time of preparation, Henderson was formulating his view of the history of the conflict that would become the basic narrative he used in petitioning, preaching and pamphleteering. Allan states, ‘In a sense, one might say that these ferocious intellectual

⁵⁹ Calderwood, *History*, VI, 786. Scot’s manuscript seems to have been available and may even have been used by Calderwood although it was not published until 1846.

⁶⁰ Scot, *Apologetical Narration*, 67.

⁶¹ Ibid, 170.

⁶² Melville *Diary*, 72.

⁶³ Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford 1987-1988* (Oxford, 1990), 39.

battles of the later seventeenth century between Episcopalians and Presbyterians were fought over the decisive control of fundamentally historical arguments'.⁶⁴

Scot's *Apologetical Narration* outlined the conflict with James VI and his bishops as a spiritual and eschatological war between darkness and light. The struggle began, said Scot, 'when the light of the Gospell was striveing with the darknesse of Poperie, within this realme, at the breaking up of Reformation'.⁶⁵ Like Calderwood's account of the conflict, Scot's record became a definitive factor in how the radical ministers understood their place in history. Later in his public account of the Covenanter cause, Henderson used Scot's work as the basic framework outlining their conflict and presenting it to the public. When working with his friend Archibald Johnston of Wariston on letters, addresses, and pamphlets to defend their cause in 1637 and 1638, Henderson made sure that Wariston had a copy of Scot's work to direct him.⁶⁶ Henderson used Scot's version of the conflict as a guide to his public work which portrayed his opponents in the struggle not merely as those who had arguments over theoretical ecclesiology, but rather as spiritual and eschatological combatants whom Henderson would later call 'haters of Sion'.⁶⁷

William Scot was writing a history of the Kirk of Scotland, attempting to grapple with the changes the Reformation had brought to the nation and casting it as a cosmic conflict. Yet the conflict was full of ambiguities. Replacing the word 'bishop' with 'superintendent' did not mask the complicating ambiguities of the language of diocese

⁶⁴ Allan, *Virtue and Learning*, 48.

⁶⁵ Scot, *Apologetical Narration*, 3.

⁶⁶ Wariston, *Diary*, 399.

⁶⁷ Henderson, *Sermons*, 305.

vs. presbytery. It was not until April of 1581 that a General Assembly in Glasgow agreed to establish presbyteries.⁶⁸

The church had changed the name of bishop to superintendent, but even the semantic changes eventually vanished. As early as January of 1571 a General Assembly in Leith decided that the names and boundaries of the dioceses would need 'to stand and continue in time coming, as they did before the reformation of religioun'.⁶⁹

Calderwood argued that though the titles remained the same, their role and jurisdiction was spiritual and subject to the general assemblies of the kirk authority.⁷⁰ The role of the bishop was uncertain and changing. In one instance, for example, John Winram, superintendent of Fife, warned the new archbishop not to vote in parliament upon pain of excommunication while at the same time the Earl of Morton warned him to vote in parliament upon pain of treason.⁷¹

Kirk general assemblies between 1575-1580 intensely engaged in the ongoing debate over the nature, jurisdiction and definition of bishops.⁷² According to David Calderwood, the Dundee General Assembly of 1580 'damned' the office of bishop quoting the assembly saying that the office of bishop 'aggreit not with the woorde'.⁷³ The Dundee Assembly did condemn the office of bishop in its abuse of authority, but went on to require these same bishops to meet over the next year 'to giue obedience to

⁶⁸ RKS, I, 212.

⁶⁹ Calderwood, *History*, III, 172.

⁷⁰ Ibid, III, 172.

⁷¹ See Alan R. MacDonald, *The Jacobean Kirk, 1567-1625: Sovereignty, Polity and Liturgy* (Burlington, VT, 1998), 9.

⁷² See Foster, *The Church Before the Covenants: The Church of Scotland, 1596-1638* (Edinburgh, 1975), 9.

⁷³ Calderwood, *History*, III, 469.

the said act' so as to clarify the nature of their office as it related to administrative oversight.⁷⁴ This statement indicates that bishops were to remain as a pastoral office maintaining a kind of administrative position without having any more authority in church courts than any other minister. From the very beginning, the conflict was not nearly as crisp and clear as Scot's narrative had framed it.

As the place of bishops became more and more contentious, Melville insisted that even the title should be abolished since the office of 'bishop' in the scriptures indicated nothing more than any other pastor. Melville concentrated on specific words from scripture arguing, 'As to the Bischope, if the nam episkopos be properlie takin, they ar all an with Ministers, as we befor declarit; for it is nocht a name of Superioritie and Lordschipe, bot of office and Watching'.⁷⁵

Using arguments like this, Melville asserted that only one form of ecclesiology was sanctioned in scripture. This 'jus divinum' or argument exclusively from the scriptures would characterize the approach of the dissenting presbyterians and it would leave them little room for compromise in later arguments with English brothers.

Melville's influence appeared to be having its effect. Henderson's first ecclesiastical sponsor, Archbishop Gladstones, as late as 1596 argued that the position of bishop had been reduced to 'notion' and not a 'reality'.⁷⁶ In a letter to King James VI, Gladstones warned the King that Andrew Melville 'hath begun to raise new stormes' against the King's policies.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ BUK, 195.

⁷⁵ Melville *Diary*, 107.

⁷⁶ *Original Letters*, 54.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 54.

Melville's audacity had risen so much that in 1596 he was said to have called King James VI, 'God's sillie vassal'.⁷⁸ He possessed the Knox-like temerity to lecture the King:

Sir...I must tell you, there are two kings and two kingdome in Scotland: there is Christ Jesus, and his kingdome the kirk, whose subject King James the Sixt is, and of whose kingdome not a king, nor a head, nor a lord, but a member; and they whom Christ has called and commanded to watche over his kirk, and governe his spirituall kingdome, have sufficient power of him, and authoritie so to doe, both together and severllie, the which no Christian king nor prince sould control and discharge.⁷⁹

Melville asserted this 'two kingdom' approach to the church/state relationship and was raising 'stormes' against the King's policies. When a riot broke out in Edinburgh in 17 December 1596 relating to a challenge to royal authority, James took decisive action against those who opposed him. This is ironic because it would be a similar riot some forty years later in 1637 that turned decisively against James's son, Charles I. From 1596 to 1617, it appears that James had consolidated the bulk of his ecclesiastical authority but he had one major liturgical item that would draw intense hostility from the Covenanter ministers, the Articles of Perth.

The Perth General Assembly passed what would become known as the Articles of Perth in 1617 and they were ratified by the Privy Council on 21 October and made public at the Market Cross in Edinburgh on 26 October 1618.⁸⁰ These articles became a significant catalyst for the continued resistance in the ongoing ecclesiastical struggles. The Perth Articles affirmed the validity of private baptisms 'when the necessitie sall require', private communion for the sick or infirmed, the observance of certain Holy days, including bishops in the 'ceremony' of blessing, and prayer for the children under

⁷⁸ Calderwood, *History*, V, 440.

their care, and finally but most importantly, the liturgical requirement of kneeling to receive the sacrament of holy communion.⁸¹

Conformity to the Articles of Perth met with stiff resistance in Henderson's synod of Fife. From 1615 to the end of the reign of James VI in 1625, Henderson was developing networks and friendships with other like-minded ministers and elders in numerous ways. For instance, he participated in the conventicles and/or special private meetings such as those at the Aberdeen Assembly in 1616. In 1638, when ordering the affairs of the Glasgow General Assembly Henderson noted with a sense of authority, 'I was present at these Conferences, at ane Assembly in Aberdein in 1616'.⁸² In fact, these meetings had caused Henderson to become the focus of royal attention. In 1618, he was so closely associated with opposition to Perth that he was accused of co-authoring a highly critical pamphlet entitled *Perth Assembly* with two other ministers.

John Row records that Henderson along with William Scot and John Carmichael of the Synod of Fife were summoned before a meeting of the High Commission in St Andrews in August of 1619.⁸³ At this meeting, they were accused of authoring *Perth Assembly*. Henderson and the others denied writing the tract and their accusers were forced to release them.⁸⁴ However, this indicates that as early as August 1619 at age 36 Henderson had gained a reputation as a leading nonconformist minister in Scotland.

⁷⁹ Ibid, V, 440.

⁸⁰ Ibid, VII, 337.

⁸¹ Calderwood, *History*, VII, 337; *BUK*, 617-618.

⁸² *RKS*, I, 139.

⁸³ *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, XL, 1616-1619 (Edinburgh, 1894), 434.

⁸⁴ Row, *History*, 324-325.

There is no record that Henderson agitated publicly for anything other than passive resistance throughout the 1620's.⁸⁵ In fact, he worked amiably with Archbishop Spottiswoode, who was not sympathetic to those who were referred to as the 'puritan faction'.⁸⁶ Spottiswoode said 'papisty was a disease of the mind and Puritanism of the brain and the antitode of both was a grave settled and well-ordered church in obedience to the King'.⁸⁷ Henderson's approach apparently did not fit the archbishop's definition of 'puritan' because Henderson served the Synod of Fife on several committees, including work on a Psalter and a catechism.⁸⁸ During this period, he worked hard to assist the synod even while he was under intense scrutiny for his nonconformity to Perth.

The Synod of Fife minutes of 6 April 1619 record Henderson as one of several ministers not giving the communion according to the prescribed order. He was 'exhorted to strive to obedience and conformitie'.⁸⁹ Under royal pressure from the King's representative, Lord Scone, the Archbishop Spottiswoode convened a meeting in November 1619. While others were summoned to attend, Henderson was the only one who appeared at the meeting.⁹⁰ According to Calderwood, Lord Scone ranted and 'breathed out great threatenings against the absence of the ministers' but Henderson remained unperturbed and humble.⁹¹

⁸⁵ By passive resistance I mean nonconformity as recorded in the Records of the Synod of Fife. Even at this point there is no record that Henderson advocated for nation-wide nonconformity.

⁸⁶ Spottiswood, *History*, III, 262.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, III, 262.

⁸⁸ *Records of the Synod of Fife*, 114, and 94.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 88.

⁹⁰ Calderwood, *History*, VII, 407.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, VII, 407.

Henderson put Spottiswood in a genuinely difficult position. Spottiswoode judged Henderson to be a cooperative churchman who up to this point had not been the source of major turbulence or trouble except once or twice a year refusing to conform at the communion service. Thus, the Archbishop noted, ‘Yie sie the brethren conveyed were quyet, honest, and modest men’.⁹² Spottiswoode had no interest in fanning the flames of dissent, but was rather content to work with the dissenting ministers so long as their dissent was limited specifically to Perth and so long as they (like Henderson) were willing to contribute to the overall well-being of the synod.⁹³ This would change when Charles I pushed them toward towards more complete uniformity in worship.

Charles I and the Push for Uniformity

When King James I died in 1625, there had been a loosening of the Scottish ecclesiastical tensions of a decade prior. Under Charles I, in twelve years this relative peace would be shattered not only with riots in the streets of the capital city, Edinburgh, but with the Bishops Wars and eventually with the entire British Isles enveloped in what has been variously titled ‘the troubles’, ‘the Great Rebellion’, ‘the Civil War’, ‘the Puritan Revolution’, ‘the British Revolutions’, and the list continues to grow.⁹⁴ What happened in those twelve years have been the subject of innumerable books, countless articles and centuries of seemingly endless historiographical debates.

The most recent and thorough account of King Charles’ troubles with Scotland is David Stevenson’s *Scottish Revolution*. Stevenson makes a conscious attempt to avoid what

⁹² Ibid, VII, 407.

⁹³ *Original Letters*, II, 522.

⁹⁴ For the latest review see John Adamson, *The English Civil War: Conflict and Contexts, 1640-49* (London, 2009), 1-35.

he calls ‘church history’.⁹⁵ Maurice Lee’s *The Road to Revolution: Scotland under Charles I, 1625-37* and Peter Donald’s *Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish Troubles, 1637-1641* are both excellent outlines of the events relating to Scotland and the British Revolutions. While both historians acknowledge that religion and the church were particularly important in early modern Scotland, neither of these works is specifically focused on the liturgical or theological issues.⁹⁶

An updated study of Henderson’s theological understanding of the conflict may help historians to direct their efforts to theological and religious concerns, which can supplement the common and overemphasized refrain that the Scots were simply reacting to “Anglicization” of Scotland or that the Scots were merely responding to the political absolutism of Charles I. Allan Macinnes summarizes an all too common narrative of the conflict saying:

His remorseless promotion of conformity to English practice took no account of Scottish fears of provincial relegation inflamed by the union of the Crowns since 1603. His relentless pursuit of administrative, economic and religious uniformity not only provoked constitutional opposition, but fanned the flames of nationalism that was to terminate his personal rule by 1638.⁹⁷

Henderson argued that the ultimate reason for his resistance to the King was not primarily a matter of taxes, tiends, revocations, or nationalism; it was the issue of idolatry. If they were commanded to worship in a way they deemed contrary to the word of God, then it would be idolatry. Thus, ‘in matters of God’s worship’, Henderson said, ‘we are not bound to blind obedience’.⁹⁸ For Henderson the conflict was

⁹⁵ David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-44: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (London, 1973), 14.

⁹⁶ See Maurice Lee, *The Road to Revolution: Scotland under Charles I, 1625-1637* (Illinois, 1985), 192; Peter Donald, *An Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish troubles, 1637-1641* (Cambridge, 1990), 27.

⁹⁷ Macinnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement, 1625-1641* (Edinburgh, 1991), 1.

⁹⁸ Rothes, *Relation*, 38.

fundamentally a theological one, which renders a simple political narrative insufficient as the sole guide to the conflict. Henderson's views offer confirmation of John Morrill's assertion that the civil wars did not constitute the first European revolution but rather the last of the wars of religion.⁹⁹

Within a few months of his father's death, Charles ordered Spottiswoode and other bishops to move to strict conformity to the Articles of Perth.¹⁰⁰ The King followed his April statements in August of 1625 with a public announcement of his intentions of the strictest enforcement of the Articles of Perth. It appeared that new ministers were to accept the Articles subscribing at their admission a 'band of conformity' now to be common to all dioceses.¹⁰¹ If not always graceful, James had usually proceeded cautiously as he advanced his causes; at least he attempted to maintain the appearance of consultation. Charles I conversely simply imposed his desires without advice or consent from any representative body, whether assembly, parliament or council.¹⁰² Mullan notes, 'if James had dealt clumsily in introducing the Five Articles, then Charles I's handling of his own innovations was positively ruinous'.¹⁰³

Test Act 1629

In 1627 Charles authorized the court of high commission to examine Papists and priests on oath.¹⁰⁴ This led to a request from some Edinburgh ministers to allow for nonconformity to Perth. The King was outraged and issued a kind of test act in 1629; for royal officials in Edinburgh, Charles required communion to be celebrated quarterly

⁹⁹ John Morrill, 'The Religious Context of the English Civil War', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 34 (1984), 177-78.

¹⁰⁰ Scot, *Apologetical Narration*, 313; Calderwood, *History*, VII, 634.

¹⁰¹ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 28; Lee, *The Road to Revolution*, 62-64.

¹⁰² Mullan, *Episcopacy in Scotland*, 174.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 174.

in the chapel royal at Holyrood.¹⁰⁵ All of the King's councillors and other officials in the city had to attend at least once a year on pain of dismissal from their jobs.¹⁰⁶

Charles apparently wanted to make an example of Edinburgh, which is why Scot stated, 'The King conceived that all, some few excepted, wold conforme, and, if Edinburgh yielded, the rest of the countrey would follow their example'.¹⁰⁷ The ministers of Edinburgh, according to Row, attempted to avoid a major confrontation by postponing the communion service, which had become such an intense point in the controversy.¹⁰⁸ Still, the ministers of the city came under fierce pressure to conform.

The more the King pushed for uniformity, the more the heretofore somewhat passive nonconforming ministers became convinced that they would need to do more than passively resist. The future Covenanters spoke of those who resisted the King's policies in Scotland with biblical, prophetic imagery. Calderwood described the decades of resistance in Edinburgh referring to the nonconforming people of the city as if they were the brave 'seven thousand who had refused to bow the knee to Baal'.¹⁰⁹

This helps to place the issue of idolatry at the forefront at least from the Covenanters' perspective. Looking back to this kind of persecution, Henderson warned that the 'godly' must remain faithful because they could not tell how near destruction was to their land.¹¹⁰ Such prophetic and apocalyptic language would become common fare for

¹⁰⁴ Lee, *Road to Revolution*, 63.

¹⁰⁵ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 28; *Road to Revolution*, 64; Scot, *Apologetical Narration*, 320; Row, *History*, 345-356.

¹⁰⁶ Lee, *The Road to Revolution*, 64; Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, 14.

¹⁰⁷ Scot, *Apologetical Narration*, 311.

¹⁰⁸ Row, *History*, 346.

¹⁰⁹ Calderwood, *True History*, 728.

¹¹⁰ Henderson, *Sermons*, 113.

Henderson and his fellow Covenanters as they developed a narrative of their 'struggle', and as the struggle became more and more intense. Row described the city of Edinburgh, in particular, as becoming tense and divided into the year 1630.¹¹¹

Convention of Estates – 1630

A convention of estates met in Edinburgh to deal with issues primarily related to taxation and the revocation. However, the commissioners for the shires also submitted grievances for action, part of which was a request for relief from enforcing the Articles of Perth. The commissioners were denied an opportunity to present them because the King's council blocked their actions, and Lord Balmerino seems to have been the leading nobleman.¹¹²

Nobles, who were sympathetic to the nonconforming ministers, wanted less interference with their patronage of such men. They were tired of bishops using the oath required for new entrants to frustrate their choices of ministers. The convention began 28 July, 1630, and lasted a little more than a week.¹¹³ Six months earlier, William Struthers of Edinburgh had written Menteith urging that there be no more innovations. The church he said was 'rent... grievously for ceremonies, the bishops were odious already and now there were rumors of organs, liturgies and such like'.¹¹⁴

Multiple attempts were made to petition and to appeal to the King for some kind of ecclesiastical tolerance for nonconformists. Charles frustrated every attempt at every level with persistent rebuffs. Undeterred, a group of nonconformists pushed for a

¹¹¹ Row, *History*, 349.

¹¹² Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 29.

¹¹³ Lee, *The Road to Revolution*, 99.

¹¹⁴ Balfour *Works*, II, 181-184; *Road to Revolution*, 99-100.

supplication drawn up after parliament met. This was famous because it led to the prosecution of Lord Balmerino. The supplication criticized the King's handling of parliament, suggesting that he had been misled by poor counsel.¹¹⁵

Charles' Coronation in 1633

John Morrill argues that the coronation event was a hallmark moment in the history of Scotland and proved to be one in a series of critical turning points in the personal rule of Charles I, especially as an absentee monarch.¹¹⁶ The King's coronation became one more event that convinced the future Covenanters that they would need to move from passive to active resistance. 'His presence', argues Allan Macinnes, 'provided tangible proof of not just his intransigence and ineptitude as a monarch, but also his crass insensitivity to Scottish sensibilities'.¹¹⁷ It was in regard to Scottish sensibilities to liturgy and idolatry that the King inflamed the Scots the most.

Charles I arrived in Edinburgh on Saturday, 15 June 1633, and the city was filled with pageantry and fanfare.¹¹⁸ According to Dougal Shaw, the coronation visit had been advertised and postponed at least once every year from 1628 until it actually occurred in June of 1633.¹¹⁹ Spalding recorded that the coronation scene at Holyrood Abbey included:

Two chandlers and two wax candles...at the back of the altar there was an rich tapestry where the crucifix was curiously wrought, and as their bishops who were in service past by this crucifix, they were seen to bow their knee, and beck, which with their habit was noted and bred great fear of inbringing popery.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 29-31; Lee, *The Road to Revolution*, 62-65.

¹¹⁶ John Morrill, 'The National Covenant in its British Context', Morrill, ed., *The Scottish National Covenant*, 2.

¹¹⁷ Allan I. Macinnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement*, 128.

¹¹⁸ Spalding, *Troubles*, I, 20-21.

¹¹⁹ Dougal Shaw, 'St Giles' Church and Charles I's Coronation Visit to Scotland', *Historical Research*, 77 (2004), 481.

¹²⁰ Spalding, *Troubles*, 23.

On his first Sabbath day in Edinburgh Charles I refused to take part in Scottish worship and insisted on the use of the English Prayer Book at any service he attended.¹²¹ He remained in Holyrood Palace listening to a sermon there rather than going to a worship service at a church.¹²²

The following Sabbath on 23 June, the King did worship at St Giles Church, which thoroughly alarmed the ‘godly’ who believed it ‘smelled of popery’.¹²³ Spalding records that the bishops’ use of his rochet on this day was not seen in St Giles since the Reformation.¹²⁴ The King added insult to injury in leaving the church service to attend a boisterous party in the New Toolbooth beside the church, which lasted into what would have normally been the time for another sermon.¹²⁵

Laud’s Rise

Charles compounded his offense when he used his coronation visit as an opportunity to showcase William Laud. The nineteenth century historian Hewison described Charles’ arrival in Edinburgh saying, ‘he rode between two evil geniuses, Bishop Laud and James Marquis of Hamilton’.¹²⁶ When William Laud stood behind the King at Holyrood Abbey, it provided what one historian has called a ‘striking visual message, which signalled Charles’ determination to enforce the Five Articles of Perth’.¹²⁷

¹²¹ John Morrill, ‘The National Covenant in its British Context’, in Morrill, ed., *The Scottish National Covenant*, 2; Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642*, 44.

¹²² Row, *History*, 362.

¹²³ Spalding, *Troubles*, I, 26.

¹²⁴ Ibid, I, 26.

¹²⁵ Row, *History*, 363.

¹²⁶ Hewison, *The Covenanters*, 216.

¹²⁷ Dougal Shaw, “Charles I’s Coronation Visit”, 484.

According to Hewison, this stunning series of events pushed the Covenanters to a point of no return if they failed to act.¹²⁸

When the King appointed Laud to be Privy Councilor in Scotland during his coronation visit, and then in 1634 when he made him Archbishop of Canterbury, the ‘godly’ were convinced that Charles I was determined not merely to enforce a new uniformity, but to destroy the cause of the Reformation completely. It is hard to capture the visceral hatred that developed towards Laud, particularly after he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. One author went so far as using the Latin spelling of Laud’s name, attempting to add them up to 666, the number of the Beast.¹²⁹ At the end of 1633 even the King’s move to tear down the wall in St Giles, making it one large cathedral, was interpreted as part of the plan of ‘unpreaching prelates’ who loved to fit churches for pomp and ceremony rather than the sound preaching of the word of God.¹³⁰

For the Covenanters, Laud’s rise to distinction was ominous, to say the least.

‘Certainlie if ye part his religion in four’, said one critic, ‘twa parts was Arminian, a third part Poperie, and scarce a fourth part was Protestant’.¹³¹ For the ‘godly’, Laud’s ascent marked the rise of the spectre of one of history’s worst and most aggravating heresies, Arminianism. Henderson would later publicly equate ‘popish and Arminian’ as closely related heresies.¹³² When Henderson led an attack against the Scottish

¹²⁸ Spalding, *Troubles*, I, 68.

¹²⁹ Row, *History*, 369.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 368.

¹³¹ Ibid, 368.

¹³² *A Short Relation of the State of the Kirk of Scotland Since the Reformation of Religion to the Present Time for Information and Advertisement to our Brethren in the Kirk of England, By an Hearty Well-wisher to both Kingdome* (London, 1638), np.

bishops in the 1638 Glasgow General Assembly, one of the central charges against them was Arminianism.¹³³

Robert Baillie's 1640 work, *Ladensium autokatakpiSis, or the canterburians self-conviction* argued that Laud had deliberately led the King away from truth and towards ungodliness and lawlessness.¹³⁴ For Henderson and his fellow Calvinists, Arminianism undermined the very foundation of Christianity, the Kirk and the nation.¹³⁵ So Coffey notes:

Fear of Arminianism, whether real or imagined, was certainly one of the factors contributing to anti-government agitation in Scotland in 1637-8, and as such it must count as one of the causes of the British troubles, even if not the most important.¹³⁶

Charles' push for uniformity as it materialized in the person of Archbishop Laud had a dangerously polarizing effect on the Kirk and the kingdom. Laud increased the pressure against those he tagged as 'puritans', and instead of quelling opposition, it actually radicalized it.¹³⁷ For the Covenanters, Laud represented an attack against all that God was doing in the ongoing Reformation, which they believed was one of God's greatest works in history.

Laud became the personification of what Henderson and others argued was a conspiracy of corrupt bishops to misinform the King of the liturgy, and in particular the ecclesiology, of the Scottish Kirk. 'Thus', said Henderson, 'they kindled in his Majestie's heart the desire of an absolute power over the Kirk, being specially moved

¹³³ RKS, I, 156-159.

¹³⁴ Robert Baillie, *Ladensium autokatakpiSis, or the Canterburians Self-conviction* (Amsterdam, 1640), 117-123.

¹³⁵ See J. Macleod, *Scottish Theology* (Edinburgh, 1974), 28-29. See also T.F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh, 1996).

¹³⁶ Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 142.

¹³⁷ See John Coffey, 'The Problem of Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638', in Crawford Gribben, ed., *Enforcing the Reformation in Ireland and Scotland 1550-1700* (Burlington, VT, 2006), 83.

by their owne particular ends'.¹³⁸ Henderson believed that the bishops not only continuously gave the King corrupt counsel but they were also deviously attempting to suppress any attempt to challenge them. 'All this time', said Henderson, 'these pretended prelates laboured, that there should be no generall Assembly at all to censure them for transgressing their cautions that they might more boldly contraveene'.¹³⁹

The nonconforming ministers believed that Charles was taking step after step to destroy the Reformation, as evidenced when the King made Edinburgh a new bishopric in 1634.¹⁴⁰ The Archbishop of St Andrews, Spotiswoode, held chancellorship in October of 1634, which represented, according to Henderson, a dangerous 'medling of ministers in civill impolyments'.¹⁴¹ The Court of High Commission was restored and the stage was now set for a major confrontation, which as the nonconforming ministers saw it would come in the form of the Canons of 1636.

A Puritan Brotherhood and National Prominence

When the conflict became public, Henderson emerged as the obvious leader because he had become an important part of a network of nonconforming ministers, who by 1636 had built decades of relationships preparing them for the conflict with Charles I. John Aiton, Henderson's best known biographer, noted that 'till about the year 1630, Henderson did not seem to have taken the lead in Church matters'.¹⁴² This does not comport entirely with the primary sources and this thesis offers a closer look, revealing

¹³⁸ *A Short Relation*, np.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, np.

¹⁴⁰ Laura A. M. Stewart, *Urban Politics and the British Civil Wars: Edinburgh, 1617-53* (London, 2006), 202-203.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 2.

¹⁴² Aiton, *The Life and Times*, 104.

that Henderson was well known across the nation, and that he had been active for decades as part of a growing community of the ‘sincerer sort’.

As already noted, Henderson’s relationship with William Scot and his place at meetings with ‘godly’ ministers situated him in the centre of nonconforming ministers as early as 1616.¹⁴³ As also noted, in 1619 the King thought he was the author of the *Perth Assembly*, which places him central to the conflict. In 1623, the city council of Aberdeen sent their baillie as a commissioner for the burgh to try to convince Henderson to leave Leuchars and come to Aberdeen.¹⁴⁴ This request is fascinating considering that Aberdeen was a centre of support for the king’s ecclesiastical policies as well as a city that would later become one of the last burghs to hold out against the National Covenant.

Spalding stated, ‘there was nothing noted in the years of God 1626 to 1627 worthy of memorial’.¹⁴⁵ While no ‘official’ ecclesiastical councils were convened, Henderson was part of a group of ministers who remained active in what could be called informal assemblies. In July 1627, Henderson was nominated at one such meeting to assist Patrick Bishop of Ross. While he was not elected, his name was set forth as an option, proving that at least to some members, he was worthy of acknowledgement beyond the presbytery of St Andrews or the Synod of Fife.¹⁴⁶ He was nominated the following year in 1628, but failed to gain enough votes. According to William Scot, this was due to foul play. Scot says:

¹⁴³ RKS, I, 139.

¹⁴⁴ See *Extracts from the Council Register of the Burgh of Aberdeen, 1570-1625* (Aberdeen, 1868), II, 384.

¹⁴⁵ Spalding, *Troubles*, I, 7.

¹⁴⁶ See *The Bannatyne Miscellany: Containing Original Papers and Tracts Chiefly Relating to the History and Literature of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1855), III, 224.

The sincerer sort would rather have had Mr. Alexander Henderson, minister of Leuchars, to be their Commissioner; but, by the promiscuous voting, the burden was laid upon the other.¹⁴⁷

This indicates that by 1627, Henderson was recognized as a leading light among the ‘sincerer sort’, whose connections were built on mutually recognized commitments to the cause of continued reformation, especially as it related to resisting conformity to the Articles of Perth.¹⁴⁸ Throughout the 1620’s Henderson became more and more prominent among these ‘sincerer sorts’.¹⁴⁹ It appears that this network of ministers began working together to ordain men who were nonconformists to the disappointment of bishops seeking uniformity.¹⁵⁰ Henderson became active in what Mullan calls a ‘puritan brotherhood’. Mullan says:

The fraternity of Scottish divinity embraced a group of men bound by numerous ties of blood, doctrine, and emotion. They were often related to others of the circle, married women from within it; they studied together; they influenced each other’s thinking and fashioned themselves after shining lights in their midst, they suffered together; they wrote letters to one another, describing their joys and especially their sorrows, and generally tended to each other’s emotional and spiritual needs not least of all on their deathbeds.¹⁵¹

In the summer of 1630, John Livingstone noted that Henderson was part of a group he referred to as the ‘godly’ who had been meeting consistently from 1626-1630.¹⁵²

George Gillespie also mentioned Henderson’s attendance at such conventicles in the same time period.¹⁵³ Livingstone indicated that the ‘godly’ from all over the nation were forming close relationships with each other as they shared in the mutual sufferings and longings for reformation of Scotland. They shared among them, according to

¹⁴⁷ Scot, *Apologetical Narration*, 317.

¹⁴⁸ Calderwood, *History*, VII, 332. See also, David George Mullan, ‘A Puritan Brotherhood’, in Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 12-44.

¹⁴⁹ Livingstone’s memoir may be found in W.K. Tweedie, ed., *Select Biographies*, I (Edinburgh, 1845).

¹⁵⁰ *Select Biographies*, I, 142.

¹⁵¹ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 13.

¹⁵² *Select Biographies*, I, 139.

¹⁵³ Gillespie quoted in Hewison, *Covenanters*, 211.

Livingstone, ‘great meltings of heart’ during those times.¹⁵⁴ Livingstone himself had been exiled from Ireland with a significant number of other ‘godly’ ministers and families who had refused to conform in matters of worship. Macinnes argues that this influx of frightened exiles from Ireland ‘hardened the resolve of the Scottish conventiclers to resist further liturgical innovations’.¹⁵⁵ According to Eric Schmidt, their resolve was strengthened also because of the intensely emotional and personal bonds they developed in what he describes as presbyterian ‘awakenings’.¹⁵⁶

At these meetings among the ‘sincerer sort’ Henderson became well known as a persuasive preacher. The ‘sincerer sort’ travelled to hear Henderson and other preachers at communion services held across the nation. At these meetings Henderson gained a reputation as a heart-warming preacher and as such he made more and more connections among the ‘godly’, who were associated with the ‘preaching kind’. Archibald Johnston, for example, had made it his practice to travel to the various places to hear the sermons by well-known preachers such as Henderson.¹⁵⁷

In July of 1633 at a communion service in Kennoway, Wariston noted that he and many others were moved with Henderson’s handling of the message of peace through Jesus Christ. According to Johnston, Henderson preached a simple but stirring sermon of Jesus Christ who loved his people and washed them from their sins in his own blood.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ *Select Biographies*, I, 135.

¹⁵⁵ Allan I. Macinnes, *The British Confederate: Archibald Campbell, Marquess of Argyll, 1607-1661* (Edinburgh, 2011), 101-02.

¹⁵⁶ Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, 1989), 21.

¹⁵⁷ Wariston, *Diary*, 37.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 37.

These kinds of gatherings of the ‘godly’ all over Scotland provided a strong bond of love and connection with each other as well as a network of the like-minded.¹⁵⁹

This network produced intimate kinships between the godly, so that men like Henderson and Wariston became close friends in their working relationship, principally in the late 1630s. They became such close friends that Wariston chose Henderson to baptize one of his sons.¹⁶⁰ Henderson preached and formed relationships with many people who would become future leaders in the Covenanter cause. For instance, Henderson became close friends with David Dickson, minister of Irvine, with whom he would later work closely during the petitioning campaign of 1637, with whom he preached for subscription to the National Covenant, and with whom he co-authored a series of pamphlets entitled *Answers to the Aberdeen Doctors* in 1638.¹⁶¹

Schmidt argues that these gatherings taking place in the context of resisting ‘episcopacy’ helped to transform them from small, huddled but determined groups into ‘massive evangelical gatherings’ of the godly from all over the nation. Schmidt describes these gatherings as having an amazing influence on the psychological perception of the future Covenanters as those who saw themselves specially blessed as if God were uniquely preparing them for a great spiritual revival.¹⁶² For Henderson and the ‘sincerer sort’, the struggle in which they were engaged was not a mere ‘ecclesiastical’ squabble, it was spiritual warfare.

¹⁵⁹ *Select Biographies*, I, 142-143.

¹⁶⁰ Wariston, *Diary*, 406.

¹⁶¹ See Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 23-34.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 22.

In this context, Henderson developed relationships with noblemen and women across Scotland who were sympathetic to these ideas. Aside from official correspondence, there are only two personal letters that are extant from Henderson. In one letter, Henderson is responding to Lady Mar's request for him to consider being translated to Stirling parish over which her husband, Lord Mar, was the patron. In this letter Henderson mentioned his thanks for their ongoing relationship and the respect and favour he had experienced from them. This means that Henderson was well known throughout the lowlands and well-connected to important noblemen who would later play an important role in the public conflicts of 1637 and 1638.

In another brief exchange, Lady Mar asked Henderson to speak with Lord Rothes on behalf of another ministerial appointment when they met.¹⁶³ This 1631 letter indicates that Henderson was having meetings with sympathetic noblemen as early as 1630, and if one combines this evidence with Livingstone, it indicates that Henderson had relationships that had been developing throughout the late 1620's and up to the outbreak of the prayer book riots in the summer of 1637. His stature had grown steadily so that by the outbreak of the prayer book controversy, Henderson was recognized as one of the obvious leaders of the Covenanter cause.

Though few extant letters are available, references to Henderson in journals, letters, and on the rolls of key meetings make it clear that Henderson was corresponding with Rutherford, Cant, and Dickson, among a handful of Covenanter leaders, not to mention his communications with powerful nobles such as John Leslie, 6th Earl of Rothes and

¹⁶³ See *Fourth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, part I, Report and Appendix* (London, 1874), 527-28. See fourth report above for a reference to Henderson "if he found Lord Rothes and Mr. Alexander Henderson together she wished him to speak a good word for Mr. Robert Key's preferment to the vacant Kirk of Inverkeithing", 524.

John Erskine, the 2nd Earl of Mar. Livingstone indicates that the like-minded Covenanters were reading each other's letters, listening with warm hearts to each other's sermons, and spending time together engaging one another in the pressing issues of the kirk.¹⁶⁴ For Henderson, these connections had been developing as early as 1619, when Calderwood records him working closely with the leading nonconforming ministers William Scot, John Carmichael, and John Weems.¹⁶⁵

Conclusion

Alexander Henderson's education at St Andrews indicates that he was trained as a Calvinistic humanist. His training included the intense theological instruction from Andrew Melville as well as Melville's rigorous emphasis on the latest renaissance techniques and humanist educational developments. While Melville's theological vigour for presbyterian ecclesiology did not take root at first, Henderson eventually made close connections with those who would become the leaders in the Covenanter movement. All of this indicates that by the time Henderson stepped openly onto the public stage in 1637 he had spent decades developing relationships that prepared him for national leadership. His activities in Cupar and St Andrews were fundamental for building secure alliances with the committed radicals who were friends with his close comrade William Scot.

These connections crisscrossed Scotland from east to west and then to the Netherlands, to Ireland, and south to England. So much so that Samuel Rutherford wrote Henderson in March of 1637, saying that Henderson's letters were 'as apples of gold to me'. Only months before the outbreak of the prayer book riots in July of 1637, Rutherford's letter

¹⁶⁴ *Select Biographies*, I, 135-145.

provides evidence of Henderson's national reputation, as Rutherford also said, 'ye are the talk of the north and south; and so looked to, as if ye were all crystal glass'.¹⁶⁵

Thus, immediately prior to the outbreak of open hostilities to the King's liturgy in July of 1637, Henderson was one of the most important clerical leaders of what would become the Covenanter cause. This also reveals that the Service Book riots of 1637 were not the spontaneous uprising of an immediate stirring, but the result of over a decade of activity in which Henderson was working with a dedicated 'puritan brotherhood', who were developing a theological narrative of the conflict and who also believed that they were being pushed to the point of open resistance, especially on the issue of worship.

¹⁶⁵ Calderwood, *History*, VII, 332.

¹⁶⁶ *Rutherford Letters*, 233.

Chapter 2

Alexander Henderson: The Covenanter

Alexander Henderson attempted to use carefully nuanced and thoughtfully crafted rhetoric to navigate his way through theologically and politically treacherous paths in the defiance of a seventeenth century monarch. In this sense, Alexander Henderson's work as a Covenanter offers the historian of early modern history an important contribution to Scottish political theology. In this chapter, I agree with one historian who described Henderson as 'sometimes a patriot, sometimes a Melvillian and always a superb politician'.¹

In resisting Charles I's ecclesiastical policies, Henderson attempted to address a prime concern of early modern political discourse and what one historian calls a basic assumption of 'the indefensible nature of rebellion and revolt'.² This concern could be summarized in a 1639 criticism of the Covenanters saying:

Good God! Can they be Christians who do these things? Or have they any warrant for this out of God's word which commands us to be subject to Superior powers, and that for conscience sake, even then when all Kings were enemies unto the Christian religion?³

When Henderson addressed the question of resistance, he thought carefully about the proper procedures in the initial protests, and as the protests evolved into more organized modes of resistance, he worked hard on legitimating the entire movement using familiar and prestigious terms, which found their way into the National Covenant of 1638.

Henderson and his fellow Covenanter, Archibald Johnston of Wariston, attempted to

¹ Walter Makey, *Church of the Covenant, 1637-1651* (Edinburgh, 1979), 18.

² Conal Condren, *The Language of Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1994), 115.

³ *Full Confutation of the Covenant* (London, 1639), np.

combine constitutional, historical and theological arguments in the National Covenant, which they believed would provide the Scottish nation with legitimate grounds for resisting the King's actions regarding the Kirk. Henderson attempted to define his resistance as defensive and legitimate, especially as he believed he was defending against idolatry. In this sense, Henderson's work as a Covenanter offers an important contribution to resistance theory, which supplements the studies of early modern political resistance, especially Calvinistic theories as expounded in the works of Quentin Skinner.⁴

No historian since 1836 has offered a concentrated evaluation of Henderson's public leadership as a Covenanter, and given the central place that the National Covenant has had in Scottish history, an updated assessment of Henderson's work is vital to a full understanding of this part of Scottish history.⁵ As he developed his ideas on covenanting as a means of legitimate resistance to idolatry, Henderson's work contributes to a fuller understanding of the religious character of early modern theories of resistance.⁶

⁴ Skinner tried to argue that there was nothing distinctively Calvinist about them, and that Lutherans and Catholics had been there earlier. See Quentin Skinner, 'The duty to resist', in Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: volume two the Age of Reformation* (Cambridge, 1978), 189-238. See also Skinner's article, 'The Origins of the Calvinist Theory of Revolution', in ed., Barbara C. Malament, *After the Reformation: essays in honor of J. H. Hexter* (Philadelphia, 1980), 309-330.

⁵ John Aiton's biography was thorough on a number of levels, but he did not spend a significant portion of his study evaluating Henderson's theology of covenanting as it related to the issue of idolatry and as connected to the theology of the Canons. Rather, Aiton commented primarily on the Canons as they related to the progress of Henderson's and Scotland's overall struggle against Charles I and his 'Episcopal' allies. Aiton likewise chronicled the 'behind the scenes' manoeuvring relating primarily to the issue of bishops, but he did not develop Henderson's theology of resistance. See Aiton, *The Life and Times of Alexander Henderson* (Edinburgh, 1836), 226-69.

⁶ As noted in my 'Introduction', this chapter partially answers the recent call for historians to a renewed evaluation of the role of religion in early modern history. See John Coffey, 'Introduction', in Chapman, Coffey & Gregory, eds., *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame, In, 2009), 11-12. As such this chapter attempts to offset the more 'politically' oriented studies of early modern Scotland by historians such as David Stevenson, who explicitly argues that political history precedes all other concerns. See Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-44* (London, 1973), 13. Likewise, Alan Macinnes argues that Protestant religion in early modern Scotland was of paramount importance as a political factor in cementing the political nation and maintaining Scotland's national identity, which leads Macinnes to avoid making any in depth theological inquires beyond the political use

The Canons of 1636

Most histories of the Covenanter struggle with Charles I mark the beginning of the conflict as July of 1637, which was the public response to the introduction of the Scottish Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, known colloquially as the Service Book.⁷ Yet, according to Covenanter sources, the real battle began in 1636 when the Scottish Canons and Constitutions Ecclesiastical, known as the Book of Canons, was published.⁸

Henderson indicated that while the Service Book was the final spark that enflamed the nation, the real battle was over its constituting ordinances outlined in the Book of Canons.⁹ He was convinced that the Canons were an ultimate threat to the Reformation in Scotland, especially as it undermined godly worship.¹⁰ This is rather stunning since most secondary histories of this period spend little if any time dealing with theology of the Canons, especially as they relate to the response of the Covenanters to the Service Book in 1637.¹¹

David Stevenson mentions that the canons would reduce the church to ‘praying only the words prescribed to it by the King’, which points to what Henderson believed was the

of religion and to assert that for seventeenth century Scottish clergy material acquisitiveness was as important if not more so than spiritual zeal. He thus effectively eliminates religion as a substantive element of his studies of the period. See Macinnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement, 1625-1641* (Edinburgh, 1991), 22, 16.

⁷ For consistency, this thesis will follow Allan Macinnes’ use of ‘Canons’, and ‘Service Book’, as colloquial titles. These titles also correspond to Henderson’s language as well. See Macinnes, *The British Confederate: Archibald Campbell, Marquess of Argyll, 1607-1661* (Edinburgh, 2011), 102.

⁸ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, 3.

⁹ See Guthrie, *Memoirs*, 3-5; Rothes, *Relation*, 2-6; Row, *History*, 398-407.

¹⁰ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, 3

¹¹ Even though David George Mullan is one of the most thorough historians of this period, he spends less than a full page on the canons and spends virtually no time analyzing the theology of the canons. See Mullan, *Episcopacy in Scotland, The History of an Idea, 1560-1638* (Edinburgh, 1986), 174.

deeper issue relating to the sovereignty of God in matters of worship.¹² Stevenson argues that the primary offense of the Canons was their attempt at the ‘Anglicization’ of Scottish worship. ‘Many of the new canons’, stated Stevenson, ‘were bound to offend Scots susceptibilities, being based on the English canons of 1604’.¹³ This kind of comment tends to diminish the character of the response that men like Row had to the ‘theology’ of the canons, not to the ‘Englishness’ of them.

Anglicization is probably the most common historical explanation of the Covenanter’s response in secondary histories of this period. This refrain is found in older popular histories such as Burton’s *The History of Scotland* in 1873. Burton argued that the history of Scotland cannot be truly understood if one fails to appreciate that the Scots were reacting to an English attempt to force an English institution upon the people, which for the Scots was a gross national insult.¹⁴ Burton described the Scottish fears of Anglicization but failed to account for the deeply theological character of these concerns, especially as reflected in leaders such as Henderson, Wariston and eventually Baillie.

To date the most thorough study of the theology of the Service Book is Gordon Donaldson’s work, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book*, 1637. Donaldson scrutinizes the Service Book in detail, but not with consideration of the corresponding Canons, which according to the Covenanters set the Service Book in its context. Donaldson argues that the Service Book did not contain anything theologically radical per se and therefore concludes that the Covenanters overreacted, using the Service Book

¹² Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 46.

¹³ Ibid, 45.

¹⁴ John Hill Burton, *The History of Scotland: From Agricola’s Invasion to the Extinction of the Last Jacobite Insurrection*, 8 vols (Edinburgh, 1873), VI, 132.

as a pretext for their resistance to the King.¹⁵ Donaldson dismisses the Covenanter arguments against the Service Book in 1637 as ‘mere hysterical rants’. His work echoes some of Henderson’s earliest critics who said that Henderson was part of a ‘menzie of discontented puritans’.¹⁶ ‘They are not worthy of serious consideration’, says Donaldson, ‘except as illustrating the inflamed state of public opinion generally’.¹⁷

Donaldson dismisses the ideas of one Covenanter, arguing that he was ‘the creature of unreasoning prejudice’.¹⁸ He criticizes Row and Baillie for taking up what he argued was not in the book itself. However, when placed in the context of the Canons which framed the Service Book, the Covenanters’ concerns can be understood with regard to their theological and liturgical character.

A study of the Canons helps the historian to appreciate the theological character as well as the theological complexities of the controversy rather than describing it merely as Scottish overreaction to Charles I’s policies of Anglicization. I have found only one historian, Joong Lak Kim, who has taken the Canons seriously as an important source for understanding the overall conflict.¹⁹ Kim notes that each of the canons contains very important texts through which historians can discern the aims and nature of Charles’ ecclesiastical policies.²⁰ This is precisely what the Covenanters did, and when

¹⁵ Gordon Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637* (Edinburgh, 1954), 71.

¹⁶ Spalding, *Troubles*, I, 56.

¹⁷ Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637*, 71.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 71.

¹⁹ See Joong Lak Kim, ‘The Debate on the Relations Between the Churches of Scotland and England During the British Revolutions (1633-1647)’, Ph.D. thesis (University of Cambridge, 1997). See also, Kim, ‘Firing in unison? The Scottish canons of 1636 and the English canons of 1640’, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 28 (1998), 55-77. While Kim is the only historian to use the canons as a central source in his study, even Kim does not focus on the theological gravity of the canons as they related to the Covenanter’s response. Rather, Kim’s focus is more on investigating the nature of Charles I’s policies of uniformity in England, Scotland, and Ireland as it relates to the common arguments of ‘Anglicization’.

²⁰ Joong Lak Kim, ‘Firing in unison? The Scottish canons of 1636 and the English canons of 1640’, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 28 (1998), 56.

they did so, they became convinced that Charles I was using the Canons, which culminated in the Service Book, as a determined attempt to destroy worship, which they believed was at the heart of the Reformation in Scotland.

It was not the ‘Englishness’ of the Service Book but its theology that caused the Covenanters to believe that it was such a serious a threat.²¹ In his pamphlet, *A Short Relation*, Henderson argued that it was the theological influences of things like ‘Poperie and Arminianisme’ that forced the Covenanters to resist the Service Book.²² He never intimated that it was anything ‘English’ per se; in fact, his intended readers were English. According to Kim, the King himself was not interested in mere conformity with England’s liturgy, but he had specific theological concerns about the decency of Scottish worship. The King believed, says Kim, that ‘Scottish worship had neither decency nor uniformity’.²³ If this is true, then emphasizing Anglicization without a corresponding emphasis on theology oversimplifies and misrepresents not only the Covenanters’ views, but those of Charles as well. It tends to diminish common theological concerns that were widespread among many people on both sides of the controversy.

The first few chapters of the Canons established a kind of episcopal dominance that moved far beyond merely kneeling at communion. The Canons began with chapters on the authority of the Service Book and the authority of the bishops that did more than startle the Covenanters. Chapter 1, Article III, asserted of anyone who disagreed with

²¹ The Covenanters believed that the Service Book lacked proper ecclesiastical authority because the king attempted to impose it without consultation with a properly convened kirk general assembly or parliament. This means that political considerations were not irrelevant, but they were also not the underlying issue for Henderson.

²² *A Short Relation*, np.

²³ Joon-Lak Kim, ‘The Debate on the Relations Between the Churches of Scotland and England During

these Canons, 'Let him be Excommunicated and not restored, but by the Bishop of the Place or Archbishop of the Province after his Repentance, and publick Revocation of such his wicked Errors'.²⁴

The Canons did not allow for any nonconformity to the coming Service Book saying, 'No person shall be hereafter received into Holy Orders without the due examination of the literature by the Archbishop or Bishop of the Diocese or by their Chaplains appointed to that work'.²⁵

Not only did the Canons control the ordination of new ministers, but ministers could no longer transfer their existing credentials without the approval of the bishop.²⁶

One of the most important matters relating to worship was preaching. Alexandra Walsham captures this sentiment saying, 'Calvinists made the sermon the critical climax and focus of liturgical worship, the very hinge upon which the post-Reformation church service hung'.²⁷ According to Henderson, the Canons threatened to replace the centrality of preaching with the reading of a liturgy in its place. Henderson considered this change in the role of preaching as an illegitimate attack on worship. He pressed his case, arguing that the Canons had not been properly authorized through the established channels of ecclesiastical authority such as presbyteries, synods and the general assembly.²⁸ The bishop could 'dispense' with the afternoon teachings if he desired it.²⁹

the British Revolution; 1633-1647', Ph.D. thesis (University of Cambridge, 1997), 106.

²⁴ Canons, 7.

²⁵ Ibid, 8.

²⁶ Ibid, 8.

²⁷ Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), 53.

²⁸ Peter Donald, *Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish troubles, 1637-1641* (Cambridge, 1990), 37.

²⁹ Canons, 12.

According to the Canons, preaching would be under the complete control of the bishop of the diocese and the Service Book was to be required reading before all preaching.³⁰

The Canons forbade local preachers from ‘dissenting or contradicting’ the doctrines delivered by any other preacher in the same church or in any church nearby without getting permission from the bishop to do so.³¹ According to the Covenanters, this made preachers the puppets of the prelates, indirectly serving the King. The Canons ensured that the King could not be challenged in the pulpit. So the Canons read, ‘No Presbyter or Preacher shall presume in Sermons to speak against his Majesty’s laws, statutes, acts, or ordinances; but if he conceive any scruple or doubt, let him go to his Ordinary and receive instruction’.³²

Furthermore, preachers were not allowed to mention names from the pulpit.³³ The canons according to Row:

foster a lizie, ydle, careless ministrie for without any preparation, studie, prayer meditation wrestling, application, he can come straigt from the ail house, from the bordello, read his Book of Common Prayer and homilie, and so he hes acquyte himself sufficientlye for all that the antichristian prelate requires, for unpreaching prelacy myndes thus to shoulder out reaching and so to introduce ignorance and profanitie.

When the canons altered preaching, one can hardly underestimate the resentment that this provoked in a people accustomed to what Margo Todd refers to as a ‘culture of Protestantism’.³⁴ Todd highlights this point saying:

Particularly in the Calvinist version of the faith, the word – read, preached, sung, remembered and recited back at catechetical exercise or family sermon repetition – became a hallmark of communal worship and individual piety. The sermon came to be the central event of feast and fast, of regular Sunday worship and sacramental seasons.³⁵

³⁰ Ibid, 11.

³¹ Ibid, 12.

³² Canons, 13.

³³ Ibid, 13.

³⁴ Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (London, 2002), 25.

³⁵ Ibid, 24.

The Canons in this sense represented an attack on what Todd calls the central event of worship: the preaching of the word of God. This is why the original Covenanter critics did not focus on kneeling per se, but on the multiple other doctrinal issues related to worship, one of the most important of which was the Covenanters' fears that Scotland would return to popish superstitions if the word of God was no longer preached. Row captured this concern when he referred to the Canons as establishing 'unpreaching prelates' who desire to root out the word of God from the center of worship.³⁶ For Henderson the Canons would allow the Service Book to establish an intractably alien theology that if implemented was certain to establish idolatry, which would destroy the Kirk and ruin the people.³⁷ It was precisely this kind of theological understanding of the struggle that moved Henderson and his fellow Covenanters to portray the signing of the National Covenant as much as a religious revival as a political event.³⁸

Henderson insisted that there was to be no 'blind obedience' in regard to the potential offense of idolatry.³⁹ He did not resist using a Service Book as a useful guide to good order in worship. He said, 'for although they be not tyed to set formes and words; yet are they no left at randome, but testifying their consent and keeping unity, they have their directory and prescribed order'.⁴⁰

³⁶ Row, *History*, 405.

³⁷ At this point Henderson's arguments confirm Carlos Eire's case that Calvinist theories of resistance did not differ merely from the arguments themselves but in the 'reasons' for their arguments. Eire asserts that the struggle against idolatry as a social phenomenon related to the whole body politic was a central and distinguishing element of Calvinist theories. See Carlos Eire, *War Against Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986), 308.

³⁸ As the Service Book came to represent the legalization of idolatry, for the Covenanters it came to represent everything subversive and destructive to true religion. This stands in contrast to David George Mullan's uncharacteristically harsh statement that in order to create the National Covenant, the Covenanters 'fabricated a crisis from the religious fanaticism of their own minds', which Mullan argues ultimately led to the 'subversion of Scottish Reformed piety'. See Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 321 & 320.

³⁹ Rothes, *Relation*, 46.

⁴⁰ Henderson, *Government & Order*, 'Address to the Reader', A.

Rothés said that the prayers of the proposed Service Book were ‘not of themselves corrupt, though hoyned with the rest’.⁴¹ However, Rothés along with Henderson and many other nonconforming ministers argued against the ungodly manner in which the Service Book was being forced on the Kirk, especially in the context of the Canons. For Henderson, having a Service Book that offered guidance and good order was fine, but having one that dictated every action and every posture in worship was intolerable and fostered idolatry. All of this for the Covenanters posed a direct assault against the authority of God as King of his church and as the final authority in matters of worship.⁴²

The Service Book riots in July of 1637 were not merely a scrap over whether the King could tell the Scots to kneel at communion. According to Covenanter critics, regardless of the chapter demanding kneeling at communion, the Canons presented enough other offensive theological instruction for the Covenanters to reject them. For instance, chapter IX of the Canons forbade any praying *ex tempore* or any other prayers not prescribed in the Service Book.⁴³ The Covenanters believed the Canons struck at the core doctrine of the Reformation, justification by faith alone, ‘The superstition of former ages is turned unto great profaneness... esteeming that good works are not necessary: therefore shall all presbyters as their text giveth occasion urge the Necessity of Good Works to their hearers’.⁴⁴

This is why historians must pay careful attention to the theology that was so central to both sides of the growing conflict.

⁴¹ Rothés, *Relation*, 5.

⁴² Rothés, *Relation*, 5.

⁴³ Canons, 27.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 14.

Even some of the best historians of this period such as Laura Stewart when describing the outbreak of the riots focus primarily on the symbolic issue of kneeling rather than on the underlying theological issues that had found their way into the actual words of the National Covenant.⁴⁵ Stewart says:

The more complex doctrinal arguments surrounding the Perth Articles controversy probably went over the heads of most Scottish church-goers, but the straight-forward association between kneeling and idolatry was deeply ingrained in Scottish religious culture.⁴⁶

It is no small detail that kneeling was not required when the riots broke out in Edinburgh in July of 1637.⁴⁷ According to Rothes' account, 'the whole people and inhabitants in Edinburgh were now very sensible of the corruptions of that book, which had been pressed on them by the Comittie'.⁴⁸ This indicates that many of the basic doctrinal arguments may well have taken effect in the 'heads' of the church-goers, at least in Edinburgh and other places where such teachings had been offered for years.

For Henderson the most fundamental issue was related to idolatry, but idolatry was also intimately related to the kind of ecclesiastical order which would allow for it.⁴⁹ For instance, Henderson also argued that the Canons subverted the order and form of discipline established in Scotland, thus introducing errors which opened the door to future doctrinal chaos in religion.⁵⁰ According to Henderson, through the Canons the King asserted an arbitrary and ungodly authority over the church which, if left unchecked, would spell the end of godly worship.

⁴⁵ See Laura Stewart, 'A Culture of Dissent: The Five Articles of Debate', in Stewart, *Urban Politics and the British Civil Wars, Edinburgh, 1617-53* (Boston, 2006), 172-222.

⁴⁶ Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 179-80.

⁴⁷ Even though Stewart argues that the more sophisticated theological arguments may have been missed among parishioners, she properly reiterates that the underlying issue of idolatry was 'deeply ingrained in Scottish religious culture'. See Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 179-80.

⁴⁸ Rothes, *Relation*, 13.

⁴⁹ At this point we see Henderson making what would be an increasingly important connection between his version of a sound ecclesiology and its fundamental or foundational relationship to all the other doctrines of the kirk.

⁵⁰ *A Short Relation*, np.

For Henderson, the Canons and their corresponding Service Book would effectively end the word and sacrament ministry that Christ gave to the church. If the King succeeded, then he would formally establish idolatry, which Henderson believed would destroy both Kirk and kingdom. This is why it was common to hear the Covenanters refer to the Canons and the subsequent Service Book with rhetoric such as ‘Popish-English-Scottish-Masse-Service Booke’.⁵¹ The title of George Gillespie’s 1637 work, *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies Obtruded on the Church of Scotland*, captures how the Covenanter viewed the theological character of conflict. Henderson argued the same when he asserted, ‘our service book urged upon us whilk is a mass-book also’.⁵²

The Canons were published in December of 1636 and essentially ordered the Scottish ministers to purchase and to use the coming Scottish Service Book by Easter of 1637.⁵³ The stage was set for a major confrontation, and it came in the form of the Service Book riots on 23 July 1637. The riots in Edinburgh marked the outbreak of open resistance to Charles I’s religious policies, and it also marked a major turning point in the public career of Alexander Henderson.

Public Resistance

Prior to the summer of 1637, the primary evidence of Henderson’s life is extremely limited. After the April of 1637, there are a number of important sources to track his public career as a leader of what would become known as the Covenanter resistance.⁵⁴

Henderson was part of the first group of ministers to resist the King openly when they

⁵¹ Row, *History*, 398.

⁵² Henderson, *Sermons*, 396.

⁵³ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, 4.

⁵⁴ Spalding, *Troubles*; Rothes, *Relations*; Row, *History*; Wariston, *Diary* as well as the actual

brought a series of supplications and petitions against the Canons and Service Book. This launched Henderson into public leadership with the ever-consistent theme of self-defence. Henderson's public supplications and petitions are saturated with the theme of self-defence, which enabled him to set the protest movement in the best possible terms. He and his fellow ministers were anxious to portray the reaction to the Service Book as a spontaneous rising which forced them to act.⁵⁵

This did not originate solely from opportunistic motives, but rather from deep-seated religious commitments. These commitments were reflected in the public statements Henderson used to order and to organize his actions. Since most of Henderson's written work is connected to his public activity, his public statements provide the historian with what Stephen Greenblatt refers to as one of the functions of literature in history. Greenblatt argues that literature manifests the concrete behaviour of its particular author and in so doing helps the historian to appreciate the codes by which the author's behaviour was shaped, as well as something of a reflection on these codes.⁵⁶ Greenblatt's ideas supplement Conal Condren's argument that behaviour is reflected in language, especially terminology that is consciously used to organize how people see their world, which was one of Henderson's most important public roles.⁵⁷

supplications and petitions of Henderson and others who resisted the King's actions.

⁵⁵ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 56.

⁵⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), 4. While Greenblatt's work is more pointedly focused on artistic literature such as poetry and plays, his ideas apply equally well to items such as Henderson's sermons and pamphlets, especially in so far as Henderson was acting consciously as a public figure. Likewise, there is a paradox in so far as Henderson was self-effacing even as he was engaged in self-fashioning. For instance, he rarely spoke autobiographically, and the persona he crafted was as a public spokesman. In this sense, he was quite different from literary figures such as Milton who accented their own individuality. I am grateful to John Coffey in discussing this point.

⁵⁷ Condren, *The Language of Politics*, 132.

Henderson presented himself as a shepherd who was ‘helping’ the bewildered sheep, and thus one of the reasons for his resistance was a means of bringing order to the disorder that the King’s policies had created.⁵⁸ Henderson argued that as a pastor it was his calling to care not only for his own flock but ‘to care for the whole Kirke, especially in time of a ‘common combustion’ such as they faced with the outbreak of the riots.⁵⁹ The riots provided Henderson with the perfect context as a ‘concerned’ shepherd who was merely responding to help his needy sheep. It is not clear, however, that he was ‘merely’ reacting. Prior to the actual outbreak of the riots in July, Henderson and a few other ministers met in April of 1637 to plan their strategy of resistance. According to Guthry:

This tumult was taken to be but a rash emergent, without any predeliberation whereas the truth is, it was the result of a consultation at Edinburgh in April, at which time Mr. Alexander Henderson came forth from his brethren in Fife, and Mr. David Dickson from those in the west country and thoe two having communicated to my lord Balmerino and Sir Thomas Hope the minds of those they came from and gotten their approbations there to did after waryd meet at the house of Nicholas Balfour in the Cowgate, with Nicholas, Eupham, Henderson, Bethia, and Elspa Craig and several other matrons and recommended to them that they and thire adherents might give the first affront to the book.⁶⁰

A contemporary critic, John Spalding, confirmed Guthry’s account and recorded that other secret meetings were happening in Edinburgh throughout June and into early July as Henderson met with the Earl of Rothes, the Earl of Traquair, Lords Lindsay, Balmerino, and Couper, along with the Marquis of Hamilton and other ministers, who Spalding called a ‘menzie of discontented puritans’.⁶¹ Since these meetings were secret, it is impossible to determine how frequent or exactly where they took place, but the precision of Spalding’s record of April 1637 indicated that the meetings were occurring and that they were thought to have had important consequences.

⁵⁸ Rothes, *Relation*, 45.

⁵⁹ Henderson, *The Answers of Some Brethren Concerning the Late Covenant*, 12.

⁶⁰ Guthry, *Memoirs*, 23.

Henderson was active in these meetings, and whether he organized the riots or not, one scholar notes, ‘it is unlikely that any of them were surprised or indeed distressed by it’.⁶² Henderson himself said, ‘The people have bein other wayes taught by us, and be our predicessours in our places, ever since the Reformatione; so it is lyklie they will be found unwilling to change, [when they shall be assayed,] even wher their pastors ar willing’.⁶³

In fact, his appeal to the Council that he wrote on 23 August 1637 argued that the unrest and disorder were partly responsible for his resistance. He stated, ‘It is not unknowne to your Lordships what disputing, division, and trouble hath been in this Kirk about sum few of the many ceremonies contained in this Book’.⁶⁴

This is how almost all of Henderson’s public addresses portrayed his actions; as defensive actions required by his role as minister, and as actions necessary to the promotion of good order.

The Service Book Riots

The King sent a letter to his Privy Council in November of 1636 to employ the Service Book; the Privy Council issued a proclamation that each parish should purchase two copies of the Service Book by Easter of 1637, but gave no specific order for using it.⁶⁵

The King had issued a copy of the Service Book for the Council’s inspection, but this was not the final version, since the final one would not be printed until April of 1637.

The King had unwittingly created legitimate questions, such as when and how this final

⁶¹ Spalding, *Troubles*, I, 56.

⁶² Makey, *The Church of the Covenant*, 17.

⁶³ Rothes, *Relation*, 45.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 45.

copy was to be approved and received by the church. Henderson was keen to exploit the ambiguities and uncertainties in the King's actions.

The Privy Council had ordered the Service Book to be purchased by Easter, but delays in printing and stubborn resistance from nonconforming ministers created a looming crisis. On 31 May 1637, the synod of Edinburgh met at Trinity Kirk, where the bishops urged the ministers to receive and to use the Service Book, but some ministers walked out when the book was read.⁶⁶ By June of 1637, a large enough number of ministers had refused to purchase the Service Book. The Council responded to their refusal by issuing letters of horning⁶⁷ against them on 13 June: Henderson was one of the ministers listed.⁶⁸

The bishop of Edinburgh, David Lindsay, entered St Giles on 16 July to announce that the Service Book would be used the following week. However, Andrew Ramsay of Greyfriars and Patrick Henderson of St Giles refused to read the King's direction's for this in the church. For their refusal they were disciplined, which provoked a strong reaction among the people who were said to have loved them dearly.⁶⁹ The whole city was poised for what would happen at the next worship service, and Lindsay's actions backfired, especially since it appears that he actually wanted to use the week's notice to prepare the city and the visitors, who had come to Edinburgh for business which would end on 31 July. Lindsay's idea was to have these men return to their homes with great news of the acceptance of the Service Book in Edinburgh. It turned out to be a serious

⁶⁵ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, 1635-7*, VII, ed. J.H. Burton, D. Masson, and P.H. Brown (Edinburgh, 1877-1908), 336.

⁶⁶ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 59.

⁶⁷ The term 'letters of horning' was a legal pronouncement used originally for debtors, but it was also used as in Henderson's case as a means of publicly denouncing a person as a rebel.

⁶⁸ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, 1635-7*, VII, 448-9.

tactical error, and the lairds, lawyers, and businessmen returned to their regions with a very different story than the one for which Lindsay had hoped.⁷⁰

On 23 July, the opponents of the Service Book were ready for action. Many members of the Privy Council, the Edinburgh Town Council, two archbishops, and eight or nine other bishops, along with the lords of the session, assembled at the High Kirk at St Giles, with a large congregation of the people of Edinburgh, mostly the women who were sometimes described as the ‘meaner sort’.⁷¹ Row described the reaction when the Service Book was read, ‘The women yelled ‘sorrow, sorrow, for this doolefull day that they are bringed in Poperie among us.’ Others of course cast their stools against the Deans face’.⁷²

Guthry noted:

The women rose in a tumultuous way, and having prefaced a-while with despicable exclamations, threw the stools they sate on at the preachers, and thereafter invaded them more nearly and strove to pull them from their pulpits, whereby they had much ado to escape their hands, and retire to their houses. And for the bishop (against whom their wrath was most bent) the magistrates found difficulty enough to rescue him; and when they had brought him without the church, he was yet in danger to have been murdered in the street, had not (by providence) the earl of Roxburgh... received him into his coach, which drove so quickly, that they could not overtake them.⁷³

Whatever happened at Henderson’s secret meetings from April to July, the results were exactly what he and the others could have hoped for, as they were poised to enter into the chaos with offers of peace and order. Johnston of Wariston stated that the tumult was ‘the faire, plausible and peacible wealcome’ that this ‘vomit of romisch

⁶⁹ Row, *History*, 407.

⁷⁰ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 60.

⁷¹ Row, *History*, 408.

⁷² *Ibid*, 409.

⁷³ Guthry, *Memoirs*, 23.

superstition' deserved.⁷⁴ Wariston wanted to take full advantage of the riots, but it does not appear to have been a mere political opportunism. He seems to have been motivated with a genuine desire to bring down God's blessings on the nation as opposed to his curses. So Wariston continued, 'If we licked up the vomit of Romisch superstition again, the Lord in his wrayth wald vomit us out and was not lyk man, to returne to his vomit againe'.⁷⁵

Supplications and Petitions

After the riots Henderson led the next round of resistance in the form of personal appeals, official petitions and supplications. Guthry noted, 'Upon Mr. Henderson all the ministry of that judgment depended; and no wonder, for in gravity, wisdom, and state-policy, he far exceeded any of them'.⁷⁶

The King made it clear that he would be satisfied with nothing less than a 'full and quyet settling of the practice of the service booke'.⁷⁷ However, as Stevenson noted, the Privy Council's response revealed that they were divided and irresolute.⁷⁸ The Privy Council blamed Traquair and attempted to shift focus on the Edinburgh City Council, demanding that they prevent further disorder, investigate the riots, and then punish those responsible.⁷⁹ Henderson took advantage of the growing ambiguities and uncertainties.

He attempted and was successful at tying the Privy Council, the Town Council, and the King into knots that promoted further delay, and allowed him to grow and to organize

⁷⁴ Wariston, *Diary*, 265 & 267.

⁷⁵ Wariston, *Diary*, 267.

⁷⁶ Guthry, *Memoirs*, 24-5.

⁷⁷ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, 1635-7*, VII, 521.

⁷⁸ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 63.

⁷⁹ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, 1635-7*, VII, 483-4.

national opposition. For instance, in August, along with other ministers, Henderson appealed to the Council to allow him and others to offer assistance to return order to the nation. He also began a series of apparently reasonable requests, such as requesting the opportunity to read a copy of the Service Book in order to see what it contained before he was required to use it in good conscience.⁸⁰ This was connected to the well-known sensitivity that in theological matters, especially worship, they could not be expected to be bound to 'blind obedience'.⁸¹ Henderson's appeal to conscience was effective.

Conal Condren argues that there were three prominent forms of resistance rhetoric in early modern history: 'counsel, self-defence, and dissolution'.⁸² Henderson used the first two prominently in his public activity. When resisting a monarch, one might claim the posture of providing the ruler with 'counsel' that would 'correct' the ruler's actions, or one might suggest that the monarch's present counsellors had been providing incorrect or even corrupt advice which was the source of the monarch's woes.

Henderson consistently used the tactic of counsel in providing the King with 'ministerial guidance', as well as criticizing Laud and others who had misinformed his majesty.⁸³

The rhetoric of self-defence provided Henderson with his most pervasive terminology. According to Condren, self-defence was a core belief of early modern political thinkers that was so widespread that those who faced it could usually do little more than try to

⁸⁰ Rothes, *Relations*, 45.

⁸¹ Rothes, *Relations*, 45.

⁸² See Condren, *The Language of Politics*, 120.

⁸³ Peter Donald highlights this specific idea in his work, an *Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish troubles, 1637-1641* (Cambridge, 1990). Donald argues that in order to avoid casting direct aspersions on the king, the Scots like everyone in the seventeenth century had to direct their criticism and attacks against his counsel. See Ibid, x. Donald outlines the complex 'British' character of these complaints in narrative form as they occurred in the context of the king's troubles, although he does not direct his efforts to Henderson's role in the conflict.

control the rhetoric by narrowing its range to situations of direct individual danger.⁸⁴

Dissolution was another rhetorical form of resistance, but not one that Henderson used because it indicated the dissolving of political relationships, which Condren notes was more common as an appeal after the 1688 Revolution.⁸⁵ In fact, Henderson was very careful never to use language that might indicate that he was undermining the King's position as legitimate ruler.

Henderson engaged in a series of tactical manoeuvres that involved matters of known theological sensitivity and genuine questions about the idolatry as it related to ecclesiastical and civil authority in Scotland. He also asked serious questions as to the nature of the facts involved. In a petition, 'Supplication of the Ministers in St Andrewes Presbitrie, 23 August 1637', Henderson argued that the Service Book had not been warranted by a lawfully called general assembly which represented the Kirk and the kingdom, which assembly, he argued, should always be the final arbiter in matters of worship.⁸⁶ He appealed to the King:

3. The Kirk of Scotland is a free and independant kirk, and her owne pastors sould be most able to discern and direct what doeth best beseem our measour of reformatione, and what may serve most for the good of the people.

4. It is not unknowne to your Lordships what disputing, division, and trouble hath been in this kirk about sum few of the many ceremonies contained in this Book, which being examined... will be found to depairt farr from the forme of worschip and reformatione of this kirk, and in points most materiall to draw near to the Kirk of Rome, which, for her heresies in doctrine, superstitione and idolatrie in worschip, tyrannie in government, and wickednes everie way, is as Anti-christian now as when we came out of her.⁸⁷

These were formidable objections with which the Council had to reckon, and Henderson's work had its intended effect. The Privy Council officially received them on 25 August 1637, and some of the nobles on the Council persuaded the others to

⁸⁴ Condren, *The Language of Politics*, 122.

⁸⁵ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 125.

⁸⁶ Printed in Rothes, *Relations*, 7. Henderson's name is listed with other ministers.

compromise without admitting to doing so saying, ‘a great many of the best of the countrey resented’ the imposition of the Service Book.⁸⁸ While not officially relenting, the Council made significant concessions to Henderson, stating that the letters of horning issued against him and others only pertained to the purchase, and not the use of, the Service Book.⁸⁹ This granted Henderson a significant tactical advantage and gave the Council some breathing room. The Council simultaneously began begging the King to reconsider and to wait to enforce the Service Book, at least until a general assembly could be convened.⁹⁰

Henderson’s initial success as well as his personal influence enabled him to encourage others to join him in what would become an avalanche of petitions and supplications.⁹¹ Henderson’s influence required the Council to be more honest with the King about the widespread opposition to the Service Book.⁹² So the Council said:

Wee fand ourselves far surprysed by our expectioan with the clamor and feares of your majesties subiects from diuersse parts and corners of the kingdom and that even from these who hes hertofoer otherways lived in obedience and conformity to your majesties laws...wee humblie kisse your royall handes from Edinburghe 25 August 1637.⁹³

Begging the King to reconsider, the Council agreed to meet on 20 September to hear his reply.

Since Charles believed that the protestors were rebels who wore religious cloaks to cover their sedition, he commanded that the Service Book be implemented

⁸⁷ Rothes, *Relations*, 7.

⁸⁸ *The Register of the Council of Scotland, 1635-7*, VII, 521; Rothes, *Relations*, 7.

⁸⁹ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, 1635-7*, VII, 521; Rothes, *Relations*, 7; Guthry, *Memoirs*, 16-17.

⁹⁰ Balfour, *Works*, II, 230.

⁹¹ Guthry, *Memoirs*, 24-5.

⁹² Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 65.

⁹³ Balfour, *Works*, II, 230-1.

immediately.⁹⁴ This, says Stevenson, put the Council in an impossible position. They rose from their 20 September meeting without taking specific action against Henderson. Instead of implementing the King's wishes, they sent back word with the King's cousin, the Duke of Lennox. They did this hoping that Lennox would communicate the pervasive opposition, interfere on their behalf, and provide them with guidance and relief; this did not happen.⁹⁵

The King's response created palpable fear for many. For instance, Robert Baillie worried that civil war would come and 'give us over unto madness, that we may every one shoot our swords in our neighbours hearts'.⁹⁶ Baillie noted that Henderson was the primary minister he believed could petition and overture the King in order to 'calme this storme'.⁹⁷

Henderson responded to the King's rejoinder with a call for more widespread national protests as four ministers were commissioned to move into specified areas of the Lowlands to persuade ministers to join the petitioners.⁹⁸ The Edinburgh City Council assisted his work when the burgh leaders joined the resistance on 22 September in refraining from the punishment of the petitioners.⁹⁹ Laura Stewart notes that since Edinburgh's more substantial inhabitants had been involved in the disturbances, it is little wonder that the Town Council proved politely resistant to the King's demands.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ *Large Declaration*, 6; Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 225.

⁹⁵ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 70.

⁹⁶ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 23.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 24.

⁹⁸ Guthrie, *Memoirs*, 27; Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 71.

⁹⁹ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 71.

¹⁰⁰ Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 227.

Less than a month later, hundreds from all over the nation had gathered in the capital, and petitions were flowing into the Council at ,what for them, was an alarming rate.¹⁰¹ Some records indicate that there were at least 45 petitions from across Lothian, Fife and the south-west. The Burghs of Ayr, Cupar, Dumbarton, Irvine, Lanark, and Stirling were represented. Presbyteries also sent petitions such as those from Haddington, Kirkcudbright, Perth and Stirling.¹⁰² Baillie indicated that Kirk sessions were also sending representatives to the Council meeting with petitions from local churches.¹⁰³ The Council was inundated with pressure from the supplicants, and this pressure increased when it was rumoured that the Council was going to meet in Edinburgh sometime in October, before their next scheduled meeting. According to Baillie, the Council was supposed to meet on 1 November, but was planning a secret meeting on 18 October.¹⁰⁴

The King issued orders for the Council to declare itself dissolved so far as the affairs of the Kirk were concerned. The King also issued orders demanding that all the petitioners leave Edinburgh and ordered his Privy Council to withdraw from Edinburgh, first to Linlithgow, and then to Dundee.¹⁰⁵ The city of Edinburgh was packed, and when the Council met on 18 October the riots which occurred were bigger and better organized than the famous 23 July riots, by which Stewart says, the city of Edinburgh rapidly slipped from the King's grasp.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 229.

¹⁰² *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, 1635-7*, VII, 700-16; Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 229.

¹⁰³ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 14.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, I, 33-34.

¹⁰⁵ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 72.

¹⁰⁶ Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 232-3.

Having left Leuchars, Henderson stayed in the capital and worked with Dickson, influential nobles, lairds, and Town Council members.¹⁰⁷ He and Dickson led the way in creating another supplication and complaint that the Council refused to accept because the King had forbidden them to do so.¹⁰⁸ This did not deter the soon to be Covenanters. In fact, the King's arbitrary disregard for their legitimate appeals seems to have inspired more widespread opposition. According to Guthry, many ministers returned to their local churches and 'thundered' from their pulpits, which stirred up even more resistance.¹⁰⁹ Not only did the resistance grow, but the petition drafted in October of 1637 broadened some of the initial complaints and began including criticism of the bishops and their office.¹¹⁰ The Privy Council met outside of Edinburgh and seemed to have abandoned the city to Henderson and the supplicants.

Henderson attempted to use measured, legal actions for each step he took in his resistance. On 15 November, he was part of an action that would prove to be decisive in creating what would eventually become a rival Scottish government for a brief time in the future. The supplicants divided themselves into four groups comprised of the nobility, gentry, burgesses, and ministers, which groups would eventually be called the 'tables'.¹¹¹ Henderson and Dickson were chosen as the ministerial representatives.¹¹² The development of the tables moved Henderson and the future Covenanters into a more organized and formidable body.

¹⁰⁷ Rothes *Relations*, 21.

¹⁰⁸ Baillie *Letters*, I, 38.

¹⁰⁹ Guthry *Memoirs*, 27.

¹¹⁰ *Scotland's Supplication*, 60-2.

¹¹¹ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 76; Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 234; John R. Young, *The Scottish Parliament, 1639-1661: A Political and Constitutional Analysis* (Edinburgh, 1996), 1-15.

¹¹² Rothes, *Relations*, 44.

Henderson was involved in meetings throughout December, which brought him into closer contact of the leading nobles involved in the conflict. Rothes recorded Henderson's pastoral rebuke of Lord Roxburgh for his 'oft swearing'.¹¹³ This means that by December of 1637 Henderson was moving adeptly among Scotland's elite leaders, and even though he was ordained as the minister of Leuchars, he was effectively becoming the leading pastor in Edinburgh, and thus the nation.

No matter how much momentum seemed to be building on behalf of the Covenanters, the King's reply in December was as intractable as his first. Henderson was attempting to create a legal, legitimate means of distinguishing between resistance and rebellion, or what his critics later called an ungodly 'combination against authority'.¹¹⁴ Henderson believed that the King left him, and those who loved the Kirk, with no other option but to accelerate their resistance as an act of self-defence in the form of what would become known as the National Covenant.

Henderson and the young lawyer Archibald Johnston of Wariston worked tirelessly as partners in what they both described as a spiritual battle. A few months later in a sermon Henderson stated, 'whenever the kirk of God in any part has had a sound reformation according to the word of God and has been labouring still to have it more and more sound then Satan seeks both by wiles and by violence how to hinder such a good work'.¹¹⁵ Henderson continued arguing that their present struggle was in line with the whole history of the Kirk from the days of the apostles to the present.¹¹⁶ Wariston recorded that while looking for the proper legal writs he also paused to look up to

¹¹³ Ibid, 44.

¹¹⁴ Henderson, *Answers*, 14.

¹¹⁵ Henderson, *Sermons*, 452.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 452.

heaven in prayer.¹¹⁷ Henderson and the Covenanters were deliberately linking the Covenanter cause with the cause of God in history.

In anchoring their action with the cause of God, they were also pushing the nation to take their side. Henderson argued that the conflict could be summarized as a fight between two sides. Henderson deliberately excited the imaginations of his listeners to think that they were on the horns of a terrible spiritual dilemma: on the one side was God, and on the other were those that Henderson called the ‘haters of Sion’. As the conflict came to a head Henderson stated, ‘And I may say... they hate Sion for there can be no mediocrity here; there is no adiaphorists of this kind; for these who love not Sion, they hate Sion’.¹¹⁸

Crafting the National Covenant

Henderson’s mentor, William Scot, had argued that petitioning the king for redress of grievances was the common practice of the Kirk as well as an orderly, legal process in resisting the royal will.¹¹⁹ At this stage of the resistance, Rothes recommended that Archibald Johnston of Wariston work with Henderson so that they might answer for them ‘in law, being for a just cause in a peaceable manner, with legal proceeding’.¹²⁰ Arthur Williamson argues that this was not easy, since Scottish laws were underdeveloped in comparison to English, thus making it easier for competing sides to claim legality, while in reality the laws and legal traditions were still very much in transition.¹²¹ According to Williamson, complaints about the conflicting and contradictory character of Scottish laws was a longstanding part of the growing conflict

¹¹⁷ Wariston, *Diary*, 285.

¹¹⁸ Henderson, *Sermons*, 305.

¹¹⁹ Scot, *Apologetical Narration*, 327-330.

¹²⁰ Rothes *Relations*, 43.

between the Covenanters and the King. Henderson exploited these conflicts with legitimate protests relating to the character and extent of the King's legal authority, particularly in ecclesiastical matters.

This created genuine problems for Charles I, since Donald notes that in spite of the King's fierce adherence to royal authority, he understood that kings were not supposed to act contrary to the laws.¹²² Donald argues that this caused Charles I to hesitate to impose his will categorically where there was genuine doubt surrounding his rights.¹²³ Henderson and Wariston exploited these doubts, putting Charles in a constant struggle to reckon the extent of his royal prerogatives when imposing his will in Scotland. This hampered Charles significantly in Scotland, especially because his advisors would resort to using what Donald calls 'high-sounding doctrine, which could be an effective silencer of argument, but not without the cost of heightening tensions'.¹²⁴ It would be here that Henderson exploited and aggressively confronted these tensions. Throughout January of 1638, Henderson and Wariston worked to create the National Covenant.

This whole month, Henderson was 'busie in privatt' working to craft the National Covenant in a way that would meet the approval of the various parties, and in particular with nobles and ministers.¹²⁵ While Henderson was meeting privately and officially with the Tables, the King's Privy Council was in disarray.¹²⁶ They met once on 8 January 1638 in Stirling, but they were paralyzed and inactive. The City Council had stopped cooperating. The Tables were well organized and swift to respond with legal

¹²¹ Arthur Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI* (Edinburgh, 1979), 19.

¹²² Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 18.

¹²³ Ibid, 22.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 23.

¹²⁵ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, I,17.

¹²⁶ Guthry, *Memoirs*, 5.

challenges. Henderson was one of the keys to this unity. He worked carefully with the noblemen Rothes, Loudoun, and Balmerino, who had been elected by the Tables as a committee to organize and oversee their opposition to the king.¹²⁷ Wariston recorded one such meeting of two hours, whereby the nobles were stirred to action after Henderson's 'sensible exhortation to piety and unity'.¹²⁸ Some of these exhortations involved convincing the nobles that the National Covenant was theologically and legally legitimate.

Henderson attempted to find a solid basis in Scottish antiquity to justify Covenanter actions. This is reflected in an entire section of the National Covenant which was dedicated to Scottish parliamentary history. Henderson's work reflects Conal Condren's arguments that seventeenth century thinkers feared novelty in religion and politics, so much so that 'innovation' in religion and politics contained an inherent or a priori danger.¹²⁹ Condren argues that seventeenth century political discourse possessed an interest in 'disavowing radical change'.¹³⁰ This was true of Henderson and Wariston, as they carefully structured words and phrases in a way that presented their actions not as radicals, but as those who were the defenders of lawful practice. According to Henderson, it was the King who was pushing innovations on the Kirk.

Henderson used language that connected his cause to that of continuity and tradition. This tactic also infused the National Covenant with a strong sense of divine destiny. For instance, Henderson and Wariston included phrases such as 'divers times before',

¹²⁷ See Macinnes, *The British Confederate*, 108.

¹²⁸ Wariston, *Diary*, 288.

¹²⁹ Conal Condren, *George Lawson's 'Politica' and the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2002), 194.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 194

‘bygone’, etc.¹³¹ Their language and expressions were freighted with a sense of history that pressed the reader to believe that all of the theological matters for which they were struggling had been long settled, and the Covenanters were merely defending and protecting what was potentially being lost. These were the kinds of arguments they felt necessary, says Williamson, ‘not the kind the Presbyterians were seriously capable of making’.¹³²

At the same time, the National Covenant was their attempt to create the ultimate legal/constitutional and theological anchor for the Covenanter’s view of history. In several key histories they had a well-developed narrative of events that had led them to their present struggle. Beginning with the Articles of Perth, the Covenanter historians conceived of virtually all of the James VI’s prior and subsequent ecclesiastical actions as part of a developing conspiracy to unseat Presbyterianism with bishops, who represented his abusive royal power. This notion was common into the nineteenth century. For example, Peterkin argued that Scotland had been cheated of their favoured polity by ‘the insidious manoeuvres of James.’¹³³ For instance, Calderwood argued, ‘So it is as all men know, that the discipline and government of the Kirk, exercised by presbyteries and by bishops are so opposed one to another that when the one is sett up the other must doun of force’.¹³⁴

In this way, Henderson was contributing to the ‘invention of tradition’, while simultaneously codifying it in ‘Covenanter history’. The dissenting or nonconforming ministers developed a historiography of the period that attempted to create a clear

¹³¹ Gordon Donaldson, *Scottish Historical Documents* (Glasgow, 1974), 196-201.

¹³² Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness*, 83.

¹³³ *RKS*, I, 3

¹³⁴ Calderwood, *History*, VII, 513.

conflict between two easily identifiable sides. For example, James Melville's work, *True Narratioune of the Declinyneing Aige of the Kirk of Scotland*, was written in 1610, setting the stage for a series of later works including the massive and well known book by David Calderwood, *The True History of the Church of Scotland, From the Beginning of the Reformation, unto the end of the Reigne of King James VI*. The clarity of the Covenanter conception of history, however, did not always match the complex reality of the Scottish church, even if it was widely persuasive.

A Legal/Constitutional Victory

With this view of history as the context, the National Covenant made the following otherwise astonishing legal assertions:

Likeas many Acts of Parliament, not only in general do abrogate, annul and rescind all laws, statutes, acts constitutions, canons civil or municipal, with all other ordinances and practique penalties whatsoever, made in prejudice of the true religion, and professors thereof; or of the true kirk, discipline, jurisdiction, and freedom thereof; or in favours of idolatry and superstition or the Papistical kirk...¹³⁵

In this astounding and all-encompassing little section, Henderson and Wariston attempted to sweep away almost a hundred years of legal and ecclesiastical actions that stood in the way of their objectives. In one fell swoop, The National Covenant provided a decisive legal, constitutional, and theological claim in support of their cause.

Henderson's foes were keen to point out that his use of parliamentary laws as a basis for his actions was fraught with problems. Henderson chose to use some laws that appeared to have been in conflict with themselves. For instance, the 1581 parliament was used in support of the National Covenant, but this same parliament condemned Buchanan's book, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* because Buchanan made similar

¹³⁵ Donaldson, *Scottish Historical Documents*, 195.

arguments to those found in the National Covenant.¹³⁶ One group of opponents became known as the Aberdeen Doctors.¹³⁷ They noted the incongruous character of Henderson and Wariston's selective use of parliamentary acts, some of which had been rescinded by other parliamentary acts. So the Doctors said, 'How could ye in a legal dispute, for justifying your union, produce rescinded Acts, as if they were standing Laws, and passed by the posterior Acts, which are yet Laws standing in vigour, whereby these other Acts are rescinding'?¹³⁸ Henderson did not dignify such incongruities with a public response; he simply kept moving forward.

The National Covenant as a Document

Henderson and Wariston combined reformed confessional theology with a litany of parliamentary acts held together with theological commentary and concluding with a call to the nation and the king to promote true religion. Henderson was attempting to use the National Covenant as a means of fusing a political alliance together with many people who did not agree with all the details of his theology.

One of Henderson's premiere roles as a public leader was his use of the concept of covenant. This may be one of the most crucial ideas to Henderson's public work and it reflects the need for historians to pay careful attention to Henderson's rhetorical use of concepts without clear definition. For instance, Henderson carefully avoided the kinds of tension-filled theological definitions relating to such crucial questions such as 'who is included in the covenant and why'. For example, he does not address the grounds for

¹³⁶ J. B. Torrance, 'The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics and its Legacy', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 34 (1981), 233.

¹³⁷ This thesis will cover the Aberdeen Doctors and their arguments more thoroughly in the next chapters on preaching and pamphleteering.

¹³⁸ Henderson, *Duplies of the Ministers and Professors of Aberdene, to the second Answers of some reverend Brethren, Concerning the Late Covenant* (Edinburgh, 1638), 22.

which people are included in the covenant at least not directly. Are they included because they are elect? If elect, then why does the signing of the covenant include military troops that accompany the covenanters to intransigent cities such as Aberdeen? It appears Henderson understood that delving into fine-tuned theological definitions was either not necessary or was perhaps even incongruent in serving the more immediate success of their movement.

This contributes to why John Morrill described the National Covenant as ‘at once a very precise and an infuriatingly imprecise document’.¹³⁹ Henderson’s imprecision probably followed what Condren describes as the recognized wisdom of avoiding too much precision in political discourse. Precision, Condren argues, is not always a virtue or a necessity in political rhetoric.¹⁴⁰

Henderson did so to promote unity in what he believed was a godly cause. This reflected a common approach for Henderson and something that up to the Westminster Assembly in 1643 was a key part of his success as public leader in Scotland. Henderson seemed to be willing to compromise at every conceivable point so long as he believed that it did not compromise his basic principles. His willingness to compromise prompted Charles I’s contention that the Covenanters were merely using religion as a pretext for their rebellion, as well as using religion as a device to remake Scottish political order.¹⁴¹

Some historians argue similarly that the National Covenant was not religious per se, except in so far as it had to be dressed up in seventeenth century religious language to

¹³⁹ See Morrill, ‘The Covenant in its British Context’, in Morrill, ed., *Scottish National Covenant*, 11.

¹⁴⁰ See Condren, *The Language of Politics*, 131-32.

¹⁴¹ *Large Declaration*, 6; Stewart, *Urban Politics*; Edward J. Cowan, ‘The making of the National Covenant’, in Morrill, ed., *The Scottish National Covenant*, 70.

comport with the popular notions in seventeenth century Scotland.¹⁴² Michael Lynch argues that the Covenanters wanted security, but in the seventeenth century it had to have a religious dimension to it.¹⁴³ This means that the National Covenant was basically a political document, with incidental theological import. Allan Macinnes is quite clear stating that the Covenanters ‘accorded primacy to the political process, not ecclesiastical issues, a primacy upheld by Alexander Henderson and other leading ideologues among the ministry’.¹⁴⁴

There has been significant historical debate on the nature and origin of the National Covenant. However, this debate has not always led to a close analysis of the following: the text of the document itself, the immediate theological context, nor of Henderson’s theology.¹⁴⁵ For instance, Margaret Steele concludes that the National Covenant was not the result of a well-developed theology, but essentially the result of a sophisticated petitioning campaign that cleverly used popular religious enthusiasm.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, David Mullan has argued that during the reign of James VI there was a gradual retreat from the radicalism of John Knox and Christopher Goodman, and in total there was not much resistance theory developed in the Jacobean Kirk. Therefore, says Mullan, ‘there was no firmly rooted tradition in Scottish divinity which might have led a contemporary observer to expect ministers to lead an uprising against the crown’.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² See Allan Macinnes, *The British Revolution, 1629-1660* (London, 2005), 111-119.

¹⁴³ See Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London, 1991), 273. See also Allan Macinnes, *The British Revolution*, 111-119.

¹⁴⁴ Macinnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenaning Movement, 1625-1641* (Edinburgh, 1991), 183.

¹⁴⁵ See Edward Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant, State Oaths, Protestantism and the Political Nation, 1553-1682* (Woodbridge, UK, 2005), 44-47. Vallance offers evidence of a thorough and growing network of British Calvinists political theorists who were well known in their circles and whose works would have been easily accessible. See below.

¹⁴⁶ See Margaret Steele, ‘Covenanting Political Propaganda, 1638-89’, Ph.D. thesis (University of Glasgow, 1995), 48; Margaret Steele, ‘The Politick Christian’, in ed., Mullan, *Scottish National Covenant*, 32 & 58.

Margo Todd and Johann Sommerville have challenged Mullan's work.¹⁴⁸ Todd argues that in the 1620's in England there was far from a consensus toward passive submission to Stuart rule. To the contrary, there were developments in resistance theory in English theopolitical circles, and this was true of Scotland as well. On the one hand, Mullan is correct in so far as Scottish theologians per se had not developed treatises or compendiums on resistance theory since Buchanan. Yet this was partly because most justifications for resistance were written to justify specific acts of resistance.¹⁴⁹

At the opening of the conflict, Henderson and others had not published theological treatises on resistance theory, and in this sense they were not developing treatises on resistance. This seems to indicate that up to this point, Henderson and the Covenanters were hoping to use the National Covenant to avoid outright war with the king. It is quite revealing that in 1638, the moment war appeared to have been imminent, Henderson wrote his tract, 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', which attempted to justify resistance in what would be known as the Bishop's Wars. When he wrote this little tract, he argued from what he believed were well established scriptural arguments, especially covenantal arguments.

¹⁴⁷ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 257.

¹⁴⁸ See Margo Todd, 'Anti-Calvinists and the Republican Threat in Early Stuart Cambridge', in Laura Langer Knoppers, ed., *Puritanism and its Discontents* (Newark, Delaware, 2003), 85-105.

¹⁴⁹ Mullan's argument agrees in concept with Glen Burgess' similar argument for England regarding Jacobian rule. See Burgess, *British Political Thought, 1500-1660* (London, 2009), 17-83. However, Mullan and Burgess fail to consider the larger developments among reformed political thinkers which produced a body of Calvinist resistance theory widely available and easily accessible. It was easy, for example, for Henderson to read Buchanan, Knox, Beza, *Vindiciae*, Althusius, and many others, which was exactly what Warriston recorded in his *Diary* as happening during the deliberations among Henderson and other Covenanter leaders. Wariston noted, 'I set to work to extract my remarques out of Knoxe and Buchanan for the hypothese, and to turne Althusius reasons and De Jure Majestatis to Inglish'. See Wariston, *Diary*, 408. For other references to reformed resistance theorists see Wariston, *Diary*, 310, 348, 410.

Covenant Theology

Mullan's argument is also insufficient because it gives less attention to the basic theological ideas which were foundational to Covenanter theories of resistance. For instance, the idea of covenanting was a solid Scottish tradition and was very-well established among the Covenanter ministers. After 1590, federal or covenant theology spread all over Reformed Europe.¹⁵⁰ In fact, it spread so widely, according to David Weir, that it is impossible to draw historical connections between the various concepts of covenant after 1590, because after that date, the prelapsarian covenant and the federal theology quickly became commonplaces of Reformed theology.¹⁵¹ Vallance argues that the earliest Scottish reformers, such as John Knox, were working on the continent, especially with their English brothers, in order to develop well-formulated ideas of resistance based on similarly well-formulated covenantal theologies. Vallance notes:

The Marian exiles, John Knox and Christopher Goodman, had offered a resistance theory based on the notion that England was a covenanted nation, and that allegiance was first and foremost owed to God, not the monarch. Their ideas did not go underground in 1559, but resurfaced in debates in Parliament, in the marginalia of bibles and in sermons offered at court.¹⁵²

As early as 1597, the Scottish minister and theologian Robert Rollock wrote his *Tractatus de vocatione efficaci* in which he said, 'all the word of God appertains to some covenant; for God speaks nothing to man without the covenant'.¹⁵³ This means that by the time Henderson wrote the National Covenant in 1638, he was building on commonly accepted theological concepts.¹⁵⁴ Like Rollock, Henderson maintained that God had ordered life under his sovereign rule as a covenant arrangement. According to

¹⁵⁰ Robert Letham argues that the language of Scottish theologian Robert Rollock in his covenant theological statements in 1597 reflected something of a terminological consensus that had emerged after decades of reformed theological considerations in Geneva, Germany, and throughout Europe. See Robert Letham, 'The Foedus Operum: Some Factors Accounting for Its Development', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 14 (1983), 459.

¹⁵¹ David, A. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth Century Reformation Thought* (Oxford, 1990), viii.

¹⁵² Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant*, 16.

Henderson, God used covenants not only for establishing an individual's relationship with God vertically, but covenants were also the means by which all social relationships were organized and ordered around the heart of the covenant, God's law.¹⁵⁵

Nations and their leaders had covenant obligations to God on which social order depended. Henderson said, 'For the people and the magistrate are jointly bound in covenant with God for observing and preserving the commandments of the first and second table, as may be seen in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles'.¹⁵⁶

Burrell adds a Scottish dimension to Weir's earlier statement, noting that, between 1596 and 1637, covenant theopolitical arguments were slowly and almost unconsciously assimilated in the covenant theological scheme with such thoroughness that the product of this fusion became something so apparently Scottish as to cause its foreign origins to be forgotten.¹⁵⁷ Most notably, John Knox had argued that since Scotland responded positively to the Reformation, it had become a 'covenanted nation' in much the same way that the nation of Israel had become in the Old Testament.¹⁵⁸ Henderson would build on this idea to craft not only a theology that Scotland was a covenanted nation, but

¹⁵³ See Robert Rollock, *The Select Works of Robert Rollock*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1849), I, 33.

¹⁵⁴ See Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant*, 16.

¹⁵⁵ Henderson used the concept of covenant as the controlling principle in his political thinking, though he did not publically argue for nuanced kinds of covenant schemes relating to prelapsarian or postlapsarian theological positions, although such distinctions are evident in his sermons. Henderson did not make a distinction between 'covenant' theology and 'federal' theology, as some theologians and historians have done. See Nathan D. Holsteen, 'The Popularization of Federal Theology: Conscience and Covenant In the Theology of David Dickson (1583-1663) and James Durham (1622-1658)', Ph.D. thesis (University of Aberdeen, 1996), 6-10. In his public work, Henderson assumed covenant theological commitments in his readers, which actually may have played an important role in providing a sense of 'settled' theological character to covenant theology in Scotland. This would certainly become the case after the strong national reception of the National Covenant.

¹⁵⁶ Henderson, 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', np.

¹⁵⁷ S.A. Burrell 'The Covenant Idea as a Revolutionary Symbol: Scotland, 1596-1637', *History Today*, 27 (1958), 339.

¹⁵⁸ W. Stanford Reid, 'John Knox's Theology of Political Government', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19 (1988), 529. See also, Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant*, 8.

that such a status called the nation to a powerful sense of divine destiny as God's instrument in history.

When Henderson created the National Covenant in 1638, he was building on a long-standing indigenous tradition, which may account for why he seldom referenced sources other than the Bible as a basis for his thinking. Henderson resembled Knox, who Quentin Skinner notes did not develop, strictly speaking, a 'political theory' as much as a biblical/theological justification for his actions, couched entirely in terms of religious obligations.¹⁵⁹ Henderson's writings are filled with allusions and references to the Bible as the key source for his covenantal thinking. He cited the scriptures as if such assertions were commonly understood without need for explanation or clarification.

This may help to account for why theories that relate to the origin of civil government are not mentioned in the National Covenant, nor in most of Henderson's public statements in general. Unlike Buchanan, for example, Henderson did not speak as much to the origins of civil government, as to their purposes immediately given by God.¹⁶⁰ There is one phrase in '*Instructions for Defensive Arms*' which speaks to the issue of origins. Henderson said:

Princes principallie are for the people and their defence and not the people principally for them, the safetie and good of the people is the supreme law, magistracie is the inferior & subordinate law. The people maketh the magistrate, but the magistrate maketh not the people. The people may be without the magistrate for the world was governed another way till Cain building a citie made the godlie first take this order for their defence¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, II, 211.

¹⁶⁰ Buchanan, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, 4.

¹⁶¹ Henderson, 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', 3.

Here Henderson makes brief reference to origins, which he may have taken almost verbatim from Johannes Althusius's *Politica Methodice Digesta*.¹⁶² Still, this single reference to origins plays a minor role compared to the overall appeal directly to the scriptures as the basic source for the purposes of civil government.

Whereas Buchanan spent significant time arguing from history regarding the origin of civil government, and then from the origin to the purpose, generally speaking, Henderson argued immediately from the scriptures to the purpose of civil government.¹⁶³ This indicates that Henderson, at least at this point, was more in line with Knox than with Buchanan. Furthermore, this allowed Henderson to avoid arguments related to the specific structure of government and enabled him to move directly to the issues related to liturgy and theology. Henderson avoided assertions about the best form of government per se, at least in public statements. This allowed him to press for radical demands on the King's authority and actions as it related to the Kirk, while never publicly hinting of revolutionary or treasonous actions against the King or his government.

Henderson used the National Covenant to summarize the primary purposes of civil government, which he believed was always connected to the protection and promotion of true religion. He stated:

That the quietness and stability of our religion and kirk doth depend upon the safety and good behaviour of the King's Majesty, as upon a comfortable instrument of God's mercy granted to this country, for the maintaining of his kirk, and ministration of justice amongst us.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² See Edward J. Cowan, 'The Making of the National Covenant', in Morrill, ed., *The Scottish National Covenant*, 81.

¹⁶³ Buchanan, *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos*, 5.

¹⁶⁴ *The national covenant, or, The confession of faith, of the Kirk of Scotland subscribed at first by the Kings Majesty and his houshold, in the yeare 1580, thereafter by persons of all rankes in the yeare 1581, by ordinance of the Lords of the secret counsell, and acts of the General Assembly ... and now subscribed*

He appealed to Scottish traditions and biblical ideas, but not to political theories per se, which aligns him most closely with Knox. Henderson's theological proximity to Knox can also be found more clearly in his sermons after the signing of the National Covenant.

Henderson's notion of a covenanted nation had obviously important implications for Charles I. John Coffey summarizes this nicely, saying, 'As the king of a nation in covenant with God, Charles had been obliged to prosecute heresy and idolatry with the same zeal as Old Testament rulers. Yet he had done the opposite, encouraging Arminianism and popery'.¹⁶⁵

Henderson called the king to this duty in the National Covenant, especially emphasizing that his coronation oath bound him to it, saying:

All Kings and Princes at their coronation and reception of their princely authority, shall make their faithful promise by their solemn oath in the presence of the Eternal God, that during the whole time of their lives they shall serve the same Eternal God to the utmost of their power, according as He hath required in His most Holy Word, contained in the Old and New Testaments, and according to the same Word shall maintain the true religion of Christ Jesus, the preaching of His Holy Word, the due and right ministration of the sacraments now received and preached within this realm (according to the confession of faith immediately preceding).¹⁶⁶

In so far as the National Covenant was intended to meet a specific need, Henderson spent virtually no time sorting out the various theological complexities of the covenant of works and/or the covenant of grace per se. Such theological nuances might have distracted from the simple call to action that Henderson desired.¹⁶⁷ Henderson's words

in the year 1638, by us, noblemen, barons, gentlemen, burgesses, ministers, and commons then undersubscribing ... and now ... subscribed again in the year 1639, by ordinance of Council and acts of General Assembly, the tenor whereof here followeth (London, 1700), 5.

¹⁶⁵ Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 168.

¹⁶⁶ *The national covenant, or, The confession of faith, of the Kirk of Scotland*, 9.

¹⁶⁷ This would also have confused the issue by raising questions of personal election and reprobation that

gave the impression of obvious clarity and settled stability. His extant work shows no evidence of a concern with the kind of theological perplexities over Calvinistic and covenantal dilemmas that dominated much of the work of the famous historian Perry Miller. J.B. Torrance argues that Henderson's oversimplification may have helped to craft an excellent political document to meet the immediate needs of the nation, but he argues this approach yielded an overly simplistic, and even reductionistic, theology for later generations.¹⁶⁸

Unlike the later theological treatises of a Samuel Rutherford, most of Henderson's extant works dealing with covenant theology were his public statements, such as sermons, addresses and pamphlets.¹⁶⁹ One of the great virtues of Henderson's work resides in their summary quality. His work was an attempt to simplify, and in a sense, to popularize the Covenanter's concepts for the nation. Henderson's success in simplifying the idea of political covenanting, according to some theologians and historians, may have lent itself to immediate success against Charles I, but it also left the Scottish Kirk with a popular theology 'riddled with tension'.¹⁷⁰

J.B. Torrance argues that the Scottish Covenanter thought wove together their historical arguments from the ancient Scottish precedent of bands and pacts and coronation oaths in defence of liberty and national sovereignty. It was thus a political argument, with an appeal to mediaeval notions of contract of government, as well as a biblical argument,

were not immediately necessary to the problem at hand. Rutherford would later attempt to sort these out in the 1650's. I am grateful to John Coffey for this point.

¹⁶⁸J. B. Torrance, 'The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics and its Legacy', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 34 (1981), 236.

¹⁶⁹ See J. D. Douglas, 'Alexander Henderson (1583-1646), in ed., David F. Wright, *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Edinburgh, 1993), 397.

¹⁷⁰ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 172.

with its appeal to the Old Testament notion of Israel as a covenant nation and of the king in covenant with God and his people in the defence of the true religion.¹⁷¹

Henderson's National Covenant and its consequent success helped to craft a language of common discourse for Scotland. Henderson's distillation of covenant theology provided the dominant conceptual framework for the Scottish Kirk and Scottish society. And according to J.B. Torrance, 'it also provided a language of communication (virtually a theology of politics) which could be readily grasped by the man in the street, in a land struggling for freedom'.¹⁷² Edward Vallance argues that this kind of influence extended beyond Scotland, especially after 1643 when the idea of covenanting became a pervasive way of structuring the political discourse in England as well.¹⁷³

Broadening Effects of Covenantal Language

In speaking of covenant relationships, Henderson addressed all levels in society, which became an important element of his public statements.¹⁷⁴ Henderson and Wariston included the phrase in the National Covenant and later in the Solemn League and Covenant, 'Nobleman, Barons, Knights, Gentlemen, Citizens, Burgesses, Ministers of the Gospel, and Commons of all sorts'.¹⁷⁵ This was a genuinely broad appeal to the covenant community as Henderson conceived it. This placed a personal responsibility upon all men and women to consider their civic duties as part of their overall religious

¹⁷¹ See J. B. Torrance, 'The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics and its Legacy', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 34 (1981), 236.

¹⁷² J.B. Torrance, 'Covenant or contract? A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth Century Scotland', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 23 (1970), 53.

¹⁷³ See Vallance, 'Covenants and Allegiance, 1641-1646', in *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant*, 61-81.

¹⁷⁴ This touches on arguments asserting that at least one aspect of the radicalism of Protestant, Calvinistic resistance theories can be traced to their conviction that each and every person, including women, have individual responsibilities to maintain a covenant relationship with God. This argument is developed in Anne McLaren's 'Rethinking Republicanism: Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos in Context', *The Historical Journal*, 49, I (2006), 23-52.

duties. It also had a broadening effect in Henderson's appeal to resist the King's policies. The theological concept that all people had covenant duties before God would find its way into Henderson's pamphleteering campaign, as he argued that everyone had an obligation to act responsibly on what they knew.

Laura Stewart argues that this was an important element of the National Covenant and Scottish history:

The 1638 Covenant became one of the most profound experiences in Scottish history, not only because of a vast subscription campaign encompassing people of all social backgrounds, but also through the astonishing ambition of the vision behind it...its all-embracing inclusiveness was a genuine aspiration, not just a rhetorical device.¹⁷⁶

This becomes more apparent in his sermons, as Henderson announced a broad appeal regarding the covenant obligations of all people. The appeals were directed to the immediate obligations that all men and women have directly to God through Jesus Christ as their sovereign. Each individual had personal responsibilities immediately to God through Jesus Christ; not through mediating authorities. These obligations required individuals, if necessary, to resist mediating authorities, if such resistance was an act of direct obedience to God. This way of thinking established what Anne McLaren calls a 'bottom-up model of political engagement'.¹⁷⁷

There is some irony that the fifth commandment, which emphasizes submission to parents, was one of the arguments used in support of resistance to authority. Henderson used the fifth commandment to emphasize the duties that obligated a person to be faithful to God in social/political relationships: to everyone in their several places and

¹⁷⁵ *The national covenant, or, The confession of faith, of the Kirk of Scotland*, 3.

¹⁷⁶ Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 224.

¹⁷⁷ Anne McLaren's 'Rethinking Republicanism: Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos in Context', *The Historical*

stations as superiors, inferiors and equals.¹⁷⁸ This language would later find its way into the Westminster Shorter Catechism as it addressed the fifth commandment. The idea had roots in feudalism as fifth commandment obligations between superior vassals was a characteristic feature of the ancient feudal system, in which superiors exercised jurisdiction over their vassals.¹⁷⁹

Throughout its use in history, the emphasis tended to lean towards submission to those who were beneath superiors. According to Quentin Skinner, among early reformed teachers, it was generally taught that individuals who were not magistrates were to submit themselves to evil superiors without resistance, ‘submitting patiently to the yoke’.¹⁸⁰ Henderson argued that every individual, no matter what their station in life, had a divine obligation to resist, or to direct superiors to their covenant obligations.

Henderson said:

That we must obey an evill man in an evill thing but that Kings are to be obeyed so farre as their comaundements are not contrary to God’s comaundements and if God comaund one thing and they command the contrarie, in this case it is better to obey God then man.¹⁸¹

For Henderson, the fifth commandment cut both ways. This put an upward pressure on rulers to fulfil their fifth commandment obligations, and to rule in accord with God’s word. Henderson spoke not merely to the obligations that inferiors had to obey those who ruled over them, but also to the ascending relationship and covenant obligations that inferiors had in holding superiors responsible to God. According to Henderson, God demands everyone to fulfil their various covenantal obligations:

Every one from him that sitteth upon the throne to him that sitteth behind the mill; from him that heweth the wood to him that draweth the water, - every one,

Journal, 49, I (2006), 41.

¹⁷⁸ RKS, I, 142-43.

¹⁷⁹ Burgess, *British Political Thought*, 158.

¹⁸⁰ See Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, II, 214.

¹⁸¹ Henderson, ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’, np.

from the highest to the lowest. The highest is not exempted from this curse because of his greatness and majesty, or is the meanest overseen because of his baseness. Whoever thou be, magistrate or subject, lord or laird, high or laigh, if thou endeavour not to obey the law of God, then the curse and malediction of God shall be upon thee.¹⁸²

Everyone had direct divine obligations to submit to God and thus resist evil in whatever capacity they could resist it. This chapter confirms Margaret Steele's comment that the National Covenant called for an 'unprecedented solicitation of popular support in a formal oath'; thus, says Steele, it altered the conventional perceptions of ordinary men and women about their role in the political life of the nation.¹⁸³

Submissive Resistance

Henderson's broad appeal to all men and women was not a call to everyone to rise up without direction. Henderson was trying to walk a fine line between what he argued was godly resistance and what his critics would call ungodly rebellion. These lines had been developing for a long time not only in reformed and Protestant thought but in Catholic thinking as well.¹⁸⁴

Distinction between rebellion and resistance was a significant point, not simply because Henderson desired to avoid the charge of treason, but because rebellion was universally condemned as ungodly, while resistance was increasingly cast as defensive and therefore as godly. Indeed, there is a strong strain in Henderson's thinking that resisting the king's false actions was a blessing to the king, because defending true religion, in

¹⁸² Henderson, *Sermons*, 4. The phrase Henderson uses is close to Joshua 9:21-27, which speaks of the hewers of wood and the drawers of water in reference to the Gibeonites trickery, but in Henderson it seems to be merely a commonly known biblical reference to manual labourers.

¹⁸³ See Steele, 'the 'Politick Christian'', 45.

¹⁸⁴ See Skinner, 'The Duty to Resist', in Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, II, 189-238.

the long run, blesses both Kirk and Kingdom.¹⁸⁵ At the same time, Henderson rarely used words like ‘resist’. He turned attention to the ‘duties’ and ‘obligations’ of godly submission.

Most central to Henderson’s activity was the question, ‘how is it possible to obey God’s command to be submissive to one’s rulers when one is actively resisting them’?

Submission was a key issue to the overall arguments that Henderson was crafting. He subtly and almost imperceptibly argued for armed resistance as an act of submission, while smoothing over the paradoxical character of his arguments. Thus, submission to God translated into resistance to all evil, even if the evil came from one’s own ruler.

According to Henderson, this was for the ultimate good even of the ruler that one might be resisting. In order for their actions to be godly, Henderson argued that it had to take the form of orderly resistance through God-ordained civil magistrates. Later, when it came to the possibility of actual armed resistance, Henderson supported his actions, saying:

Againe difference wold be but betwixt some privat persons taking armes for resistance & inferior magistrates counsellours, judges nobles and Peeres of the land, Parliament men, Barons, Burgesses & the whole body of the kingomde except some Statesman, Courtiers, Papists¹⁸⁶

Henderson argued that it was perfectly appropriate for him to organize to resist the king so long as the resistance was godly and lawful, which meant that it occurred in concert with lower magistrates. He believed that the National Covenant was the consequence of this attempt.

¹⁸⁵ Henderson, *Sermons*, 29.

¹⁸⁶ Henderson, ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’, np.

His response in crafting the National Covenant was an attempt to create what John Morrill refers to as a campaign of corporate passive disobedience.¹⁸⁷ Morrill's characterization is apt, since Henderson argued for the theological necessity of 'godly resistance', which meant resisting lawful authority using 'lawful' means. Henderson very carefully avoided the notion of disobedience and rebellion. He meticulously argued that his efforts were acts of self-defence and therefore they constituted not merely 'lawful' activity, but 'godly' activity. In fact, he went beyond merely asserting that his individual efforts were acceptable; he argued that all godly men and women were obligated to act 'every one of us, according to the measure of our light'.¹⁸⁸ This would be central to the debates that would later arise with the Aberdeen Doctors who represented a substantial intellectual challenge to Henderson and the Covenanters.

In the National Covenant, the king was repeatedly encouraged to know that his authority and power were not being undermined, but rather enhanced. So, Henderson said later, 'The pillars of true regall power are religion and righteousness.'¹⁸⁹ Indeed, far from undermining regal authority, he taught that godly resistance to false religion actually strengthened the king's realm.

Henderson's tentative appeals for specific redress, rather than for overarching revolutionary changes, indicated that he was not at least initially aiming for a grand programme of revolutionary changes. This is important to bear in mind as the

¹⁸⁷ John Morrill, 'The National Covenant in its British Context', in Morrill, ed., *The Scottish National Covenant*, 11.

¹⁸⁸ Henderson, *Answers*, 21.

¹⁸⁹ *The Remonstrance of the Nobility*, 5.

resistance later turned to revolution, and as theologies of general change morphed into hardened patterns of jure divino presbyterianism.¹⁹⁰

Henderson displayed sensitivity to the existing order of civil government. For example, the National Covenant carefully avoided any hint of revolution per se and/or of attempting to make radical changes in civil government. One might even say that the National Covenant was an attempt to present the Covenanters as self-sacrificing defenders of the work of God. Henderson wanted to portray the Covenanters as preserving the genuinely reformed traditions against popish innovations. The National Covenant was stridently careful to insist that the covenanting actions were for the King's well-being. There were no direct discussions of the nature of tyranny or its relationship to the origins of civil order. This is because Henderson argued that they were seeking the safety and security of his majesty's rule.

One could argue that tyrants are ordained of God in the sense that they are given by his providence. Or one could argue that rulers are ordained of God 'until' they become tyrants. Henderson avoided this dilemma by directing his resistance not against the King, but against his uninformed actions. Henderson argued ironically that this kind of godly resistance was actually in the king's own best interest and as such for the welfare of the nation as a whole; for Kirk and Kingdom. Resisting the king's uninformed and ungodly actions was actually doing good on behalf of the king.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ At least in regard to his public statements, from 1641-43 Henderson moved into more hardened and inflexible patterns of reorganization and ecclesiology rather than general principles of reformation which guided him at the outset of the Service Book riots.

¹⁹¹ Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, II, 227.

It is helpful to note that Henderson did not use the word tyrant or tyranny in the National Covenant with reference to the king.¹⁹² He used it only with reference to the Pope and Roman Catholic doctrine. This was a clever way of warning the king without openly warning the king. It had subtle but chilling implications; if Charles I did not support the National Covenant, he would be turning away from his fundamental call to rule on behalf of God and for the welfare of the people. The unspoken implications are quite profound. The National Covenant argued that the health and welfare of the Kirk is the premiere foundation of the health and well-being of the nation. Henderson said:

We perceive that the quietness and stability of our religion and Kirk doth depend upon the safety and good behaviour of the King's Majesty, as upon a comfortable instrument of God's mercy granted to this country for the maintenance of His Kirk, and ministration of justice among us.¹⁹³

Thus, by implication, if the king refused to support the National Covenant, he was mistakenly supporting not merely false doctrines but the inevitable tyranny that comes with such false doctrines. Henderson and Wariston circumvented the direct charge of tyranny. They argued that they were perfectly happy to maintain the king in his rightful place of authority, but with enormous qualifications regarding what they believed to be biblical direction.

¹⁹² Henderson's circumspection at this point confirms John Morrill's essay, which was directed at the English parliament's similar reticence when publicly articulating their perceptions of Charles I's misgovernment, especially early in their struggles. Morrill points out that, while allegations of tyranny and arbitrary government were thick, the word 'tyrant' was little used. See Morrill, 'Charles I, Tyranny and the English Civil War', in Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993), 285-306. This was due in part to the understood legal remedies that would have been necessary if such declarations were made. I see parallels to Morrill's essay and Henderson's actions in so far as Henderson was using circumspect and carefully crafted language simply because he did not contemplate actions or remedies that would have been legally necessary if he had declared Charles I a tyrant. Not the least of which was also that Henderson never indicated in any of his public or private statements that he actually believed that Charles I was a tyrant. See Morrill, 'Charles I, Tyranny', in *Ibid*, 296. Henderson never indicated publicly or privately that he sought to do anything other than limit the king's arbitrary actions; not to dethrone him.

¹⁹³ *The national covenant, or, The confession of faith, of the Kirk of Scotland*, 3.

The Reformation and the Hope of Blessings

Henderson placed covenant obedience at the centre of the hope of God's blessings. He anchored covenant obedience in his own version of promoting true religion and the continuing of the Reformation. In this way, Henderson tethered the National Covenant as the necessary means of procuring blessings for Scotland, and perhaps for the whole world. Submission to God may mean resistance to rulers, but it was justified as worthwhile because it could ultimately mean blessings for the land. This was true of Scotland, because Scotland had been blessed with genuine Reformation, as opposed to the tyranny of Roman Catholicism.

The first section of the National Covenant was a litany of criticisms and condemnations of doctrines that Henderson believed were basic to the Reformation and basic to the falsity of Roman Catholic teachings. The National Covenant was a thoroughgoing reversal of the Canons of 1636, and as such, it did not leave a single doctrine in the Canons untouched. The Confession of 1581 was an early reformed confession, but it reflected an essentially negative approach to the Roman Catholic Church. Common to sixteenth-century Reformed confessions, it explicitly rejected ecclesiastical beliefs and structures that denied a person's direct access to God: the authority of the pope, the efficacy of the mass, saints intercession between God and humans, punishment in purgatory, and veneration of pictures, images, or relics of saints.¹⁹⁴

The common appeal was negatively to condemn all those things which for decades the nonconforming, now Covenanters, had been attacking as 'popish':

Our consciences in all points, as unto God's undoubted truth and verity,
grounded only upon His written Word; and therefore we abhor and detest all

¹⁹⁴ Arthur Cochrane, ed., *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century* (Louisville, Ky, 2003), vii.

contrary religion and doctrine, but chiefly all kind of papistry in general and particular heads, even as they are now damned and confuted by the Word of God and Kirk of Scotland.¹⁹⁵

Using a confession from 1581 that had also been used in the past as a standard for king and Kirk was quite shrewd, because, while the confession was old, it was now placed in a different context. The same thing was true of the laws Henderson and Wariston used in the document. The laws and acts of parliament were old, but were now used to push for a newer, though not completely novel, liturgical context. Likewise, the concept of covenant was old and well used, but now it was simplified, and directed away from the issues of works, redemption, and grace; it was now wielded for what later might look like a partisan political cause. This relates to Mullan's statement about the National Covenant providing historians with 'pronounced ambiguities and uncertainties'.¹⁹⁶

The Tables had organized themselves into a provisional government on 22 February.¹⁹⁷ Henderson and other Covenanter leaders called for a day of fasting and prayer on Sunday, 23 February, preceding the public signing of the National Covenant the following week.¹⁹⁸ Henderson used Old Testament imagery to convey the hope of the blessings of God on the nation. He called the nation to join him in seeking the blessings of God, quoting II Chronicles 15:15, 'And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about'.¹⁹⁹

Henderson wanted his fellow Scottish Christians to imagine a blessed future, in which Scotland would lead the world to the hope of the Reformation. Henderson structured

¹⁹⁵ *The national covenant, or, The confession of faith, of the Kirk of Scotland*, 5.

¹⁹⁶ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 207.

¹⁹⁷ Macinnes, *The British Confederate*, 108.

¹⁹⁸ Rothes, *Relations*, 71.

¹⁹⁹ Henderson, *Answers*, A, 3.

the National Covenant so that the nation might imagine that this was the dawning of a new age of Reformation. Remarking on the National Covenant, Margaret Steele makes a salient yet ironic point saying, ‘in its style, content and language it is distinguished more by a cerebral legalism than by any visceral appeals to popular sentiment’.²⁰⁰

The irony of Steele’s comment was that massive numbers of people not only subscribed to the National Covenant, but when they did, the signings were described as resembling religious revivals more than political meetings. For instance, at one of the many church services all over the nation at which the parishioners were requested to support the National Covenant, Wariston records the response at the service at Currie parish church in Lothian in March 1638:

At thair standing up and lifting up thair hands, in the twinkling of ane eye thair fell sutch an extraordinarie influence of Gods Spirit upon the whol congregation, melting thair frozen hearts, watering thair dry checks, chainging thair verry countenances, as it was a wonder to seie so visible, sensible momentaneal a change upon al, man and woman, lasse and ladde, paster and people that Mr. Jhon, being suffacat almost with his awin tears, and astonisched at the motion of the whol people, sat downe in the pulpit in amazement, bot presently rose againe quhen he saw al the peole alling doune on thair knees to mourne and pray, and he thay for ane quarter of ane hour prayed verry sensibly, with many sobs, tears, promises and voues to be thankful and fruitful in tym-coming.²⁰¹

This description corresponds with Schmidt’s images of the Covenanter revivals of the 1620’s. The same notion of revival spread quickly across the nation and captured the popular imagination, connecting the National Covenant not merely to the work of men, but linking it to the cause of God himself.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Steele, ‘The ‘Politick Christian’: The Theological Background to the National Covenant’, from Morrill, ed., *Scottish National Covenant*, 37.

²⁰¹ Wariston, *Diary*, 327-28.

²⁰² See Steele, ‘Politick Christian’: The Theological Background to the National Covenant’, from Morrill, ed., *Scottish National Covenant*, 32.

This scene depicted popularly in the work of nineteenth century authors and artists was reported with unabashed zeal:

Even in the Highlands the Covenant was welcomed with perfectly amazing cordiality. Clans that rarely met but in hostile strife, and if they did so meet, never parted without exchanging blows, met like brothers, subscribed the bond of national union and parted in peace and love.²⁰³

Such descriptions were certainly exaggerated, yet they had some level of weight, especially with the Covenanters themselves, and providing them a genuine sense of destiny regarding their cause, which they believed was the cause of God. Even though the majority of the National Covenant was filled with theological and legal jargon, Henderson and Wariston crafted it to contain language that united large numbers of Scots. Henderson concluded the National Covenant with a phrase intended to capture a sense of hope in the future blessings of God:

Most humbly beseeching the Lord to strengthen us by his Holy Spirit for this end, and to blesse our desires and proceedings with a happy successe, that Religion and Righteousnesse may flourish in the Land, to the glory of God, the honour of our King, and peace and comfort of us all.²⁰⁴

Convinced that God was on their side, they would now need to wait to see if Charles I was also on their side.

Conclusion

One cannot approach Alexander Henderson's covenanting without noting its overtly and comprehensively religious character. As such this chapter hopes to reorient historians of the National Covenant to consider Henderson's religion when studying his role as the leading public figure. This orients the historian away from an overly Whiggish narrative such as Aiton's biography or the religiously sanitized versions found in the

²⁰³ Hetherington, *History of the Church of Scotland: From the Introduction of Christianity to the Period of the Disruption in 1843* (Edinburgh, 1844), 284.

²⁰⁴ *The national covenant, or, The confession of faith, of the Kirk of Scotland*, 12.

more recent political histories of David Stevenson and especially Alan Macinnes. This chapter provides a much-needed update on Henderson's covenanting and comports with his actual writings and his public work in a manner that does not diminish the theological character of Henderson's work as a Covenanter.

Henderson's labour as a Covenanter highlighted the fact that for him and his fellow Scottish Covenanter's, resistance to Charles I was a religious duty, and not 'merely' a political right. This is also necessary because, not only have his nineteenth century biographers blurred or conflated some of his theologically nuanced ideas, especially regarding the issue of idolatry; the most recent historians of early modern Scotland have ignored them altogether.

G.D. Henderson noted that the National Covenant succeeded admirably in its purpose because it purported to be a mere confirmation of what royalty had itself ordained in 1581 and maintained a shrewd vagueness, avoiding explicit or detailed references to recent events with regard to which there might be differences of opinion. It was worded so as to be difficult to decline, while the association with former covenanting, the biblical terms, the anti-popish bias, and the loyal and patriotic phraseology stirred enthusiasm.²⁰⁵ The confession was devoid of positive or constructive direction as to the nature of what it meant to be 'truly' Reformed and Presbyterian. Yet Henderson and Wariston's method was a shrewd tactic of carefully crafting the covenant to suggest that the real enemy of the continued Reformation was Romanism, and this would indicate that anyone who opposed the Covenant did so because of popish inclinations.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ G.D. Henderson, *The Burning Bush* (Edinburgh, 1957), 64.

This fostered the idea that the National Covenant was a divine means of continuing the work of Reformation, which acted like the light dawning in the darkness of Roman Catholic superstition and popish tyranny. This accords well with Edward Vallance's arguments that this covenant idea was prevalent in England and Scotland because it was so basic to and structured the political thinking of John Knox in Scotland and Christopher Goodman in England.²⁰⁷

The National Covenant provided Scotland with one of its most potent symbols of national identity as a 'covenanted nation'.²⁰⁸ Indeed, Scotland more than other nations which were similarly committed to reformed and federal theology embraced the covenant idea as a central part of their identity as a holy nation.²⁰⁹ Alexander Henderson was one of the most important people in fostering this sense of covenantal

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 80.

²⁰⁷ Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant*, 8.

²⁰⁸ This has been documented in multiple historical studies of Scotland as a 'covenanted' nation. See J.H.S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London, 1960), 210-257; S.A. Burrell, 'The Covenant Idea as a Revolutionary Symbol: Scotland, 1596-1637', *Church History* 27 (1958); Ian B. Cowan, *The Scottish Covenanters: 1660-1688* (London, 1976), 11-12; G.D. Henderson, *The Burning Bush* (Edinburgh, 1957), 61-74; James Kerr, *The Covenant and the Covenanters* (Edinburgh, 1895), 29-30; Torrance, 'Covenant or Contract?'; James B. Torrance, 'The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics and Its Legacy', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34 (1981); Hugh Watt, *Recalling the Scottish Covenants* (Edinburgh, 1946). Holsteen argues that covenant theology took special root in the Scottish context finding its way into the common practices of banding and contracts that by Henderson's time were an important part of early modern Scottish life; Holsteen, 'The Popularization of Federal Theology', 41-42.

²⁰⁹ Nathan Frazier argues that perhaps more than any other Protestant European nation, Scotland was informed by covenant theology, and according to Frazier, a covenant paradigm emerged as the overarching structure for individual, ecclesiastical and national piety in Scotland, which informed both Church and State of its vision for what the Covenanters believed was a godly commonwealth. See Nathan M. Frazier, 'Maintaining the Covenant Idea: The Preservation of Federal Theology's Corporate Dimensions Among Scotland's Eighteenth-century Evangelical Presbyterians', Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, New College, 2009). The Dutch Republic was sympathetic to covenantal or federal theology and political theory, and according to Groenhuis, federal theology influenced their social institutions, yet they never fully embraced the covenant idea as an overarching structure and society. See, G. Groenhuis, 'Calvinism and National consciousness: The Dutch Republic as the New Israel', in A.C. Duke and C.A. Tamse, eds., *Britain and the Netherlands, VII Church and State since the Reformation* (The Hague, 1981), 129. Likewise, according to Bozeman, English Puritanism was fragmented between Episcopalians, Baptists, Independents, and Presbyterians, and apart from assisting in developing the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, never established a comprehensive covenantal society. See Theodore Dwight Bozeman, 'Federal Theology and the 'National Covenant': An Elizabethan Presbyterian Case Study', *Church History* 61 (2004).

identity. He did so as he framed the Scottish struggle with Charles I within a biblical narrative using the language of liberty and tyranny, but in the theologically nuanced context of early modern Scottish ideas of godly worship and idolatry, all of which were framed in the context of the prevalent notions of covenantal obedience and the hope of eschatological blessings. It was precisely this religiously infused activity that enabled Henderson not only to justify his resistance to Charles I, but to create a document that inspired the nation to follow him with what can genuinely be described as religious zeal.

Chapter 3

Alexander Henderson: The Preacher

Alexander Henderson's preaching had a notable effect on the success of the Covenanter cause, especially in the year 1638, and his sermons were arguably one of his most important contributions as a public leader. This chapter characterizes Henderson's preaching as evangelical, covenantal, and eschatological, especially as it generally concluded in calling his listeners to a strong sense of providential optimism in the cause of the covenant. Henderson's sermons provoked tear-filled, emotional responses, earning him a national reputation as a powerful preacher. His close friend Archibald Johnston of Wariston, summarized his preaching saying, 'it moved the affections most powerfully as the first moves the judgment wonderfully'.¹ Henderson's sermons cultivated in his listeners not only a theology of the topic he was addressing, but also a theology of preaching, which dressed his public calls to action with a weighty sense of 'divine rhetoric'.²

Described as having a 'calm tone', his sermons were characterized by a simple, conversational style arranged loosely around a text of scripture, followed by explicit as well as implicit covenantal encouragements.³ With the use of 'plain' illustrations and personally engaging queries, Henderson urged his listeners to participate in the cause of the covenant, encouraging them to an optimistic hope of the future blessings of heavenly comfort, but also in the more immediate hope of temporal, national blessings

¹ Wariston, *Diary*, 411.

² Henderson's self-conscious style and substance lends itself to the kind of analysis urged of historians in the work of Mary Morrissey's 'Interdisciplinarity and the study of early modern sermons', *Historical Journal*, 42 (1999), 1111-23. Morrissey argues for the combination of the disciplines of literary criticism and history. Morrissey's emphasis on having a 'keen sense of the circumstance of individual sermons' is quite important to Henderson's sermons, since they were connected to the politically charged moments at which he often preached them (for instance in the various signings of the National Covenant, etc.). See Morrissey, 'Interdisciplinarity', 1115.

³ See William G. Blaikie, *The Preachers of Scotland: From the Sixth to the Nineteenth Century*

related to the National Covenant.

While they contained calls to personal, evangelical faithfulness, Henderson's sermons were also strikingly political. As such, they reflected the distinctive characteristics of the Reformed political tradition, especially regarding theories of resistance that focused on the issue of idolatry. In his preaching, Henderson pressed his listeners with the claims of God as mediated through well-received notions of covenant theology and providential views of history. Henderson's preaching must be credited at least partly with transforming the National Covenant, which was a legal document, devoid of emotive power, into a document possessing an almost sacred symbolic quality and the signings of which provoked revivalist scenes all over that nation in its support.⁴

Henderson's sermons had the pathos of a pleading father to a son, and he did not tend to dole out the blistering threats of a condemning prophet. His sermons were somewhat unique among his Scottish peers in so far as he emphasized the expectation of blessings rather than fear of divine curses. His preaching included warnings against covenantal disobedience, but these warnings acted as minor planks in calling his listeners towards a divine destiny in which he encouraged them to participate. This positive call to destiny was made particularly effective as Henderson personalized the nation's situation. This 'personalization' of the national context not only galvanized his listeners, but it may have played a role in helping to form Scotland's sense of national consciousness around the National Covenant.

(Edinburgh, 1888), 99.

⁴ See David Stevenson, *The Covenanters: The National Covenant and Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1988), 35.

The Study of Preaching in Early Modern Scotland

One of the hallmarks of the Reformation in Scotland was an emphasis on the centrality and importance of preaching. In 1560, the First Scots Confession noted that the first mark of a true church was the 'true preaching of the word of God'.⁵ There is little doubt that in early modern Scotland, preaching was the minister's primary calling. According to Dargan's survey of the history of preaching, the pulpit in Scotland was a living factor of the age. 'It gave and received', said Dargan, 'potent influence in the stirring events and movements of the times'.⁶ It is almost impossible to overestimate the centrality of preaching in early modern Scottish culture. Even critics agree that preaching was of central importance to life in early modern Scotland. One such critic noted:

The sermons were so long and so frequent that they absorbed all leisure and yet the people were never weary of hearing them. When a preacher was once in the pulpit, the only limit to his loquacity was his strength. Being sure of a patient and reverential audience, he went as long as he could. If he discoursed for two hours without intermission, he was valued as a zealous pastor, who had the good of his flock at heart.⁷

Buckle's statements are exaggerated, but they highlight the importance of preaching in Henderson's day. According to Alexandra Walsham, 'for Calvinists the sermon was the very hinge upon which the post-Reformation church service hung'.⁸ According to Margo Todd, in early modern Scotland, 'particularly in the Calvinist version of the faith, the sermon came to be the central event of feast and fast, of regular Sunday worship and sacramental seasons'.⁹ The Covenanter sources corroborate Todd's conclusions, especially as they relate to the crisis surrounding the Service Book.¹⁰

⁵ *First Scots Confession*, 75.

⁶ Charles Dargan, *The History of Preaching: From the close of the Reformation period to the end of the nineteenth century, 1572-1900*, II (New York, 1905), 137.

⁷ Henry Thomas Buckle, *Scotland and the Scotch Intellect* (London, 1970), 171.

⁸ Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), 53.

⁹ Margo Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (London, 2002), 24.

¹⁰ Row, *History*, 405.

As central as preaching was to the Covenanters in early modern Scotland, there are only a few older studies on this subject, and there are no contemporary studies of Henderson on this topic. The bulk of the historical work on the subject of preaching is very similar to the historiography of early modern studies in general; they are heavily weighted to studies of England and America. There have been numerous studies, both scholarly and popular, on English and American Puritan preaching. Since the late nineteenth century, there have been a steady stream of books and articles related to Puritan preaching in early modern Britain, but they have been almost entirely dedicated to Puritanism as manifested in English contexts. In fact, the number of studies on preaching and English Puritanism are too numerous to outline in this thesis.¹¹

Historians have dedicated specialized studies to English and American preaching, such as J.C.C. Clark's *The Language of Liberty*. These kinds of studies are ongoing, as is evident from the title of Jerome D. Mahaffey's study of eighteenth century preaching, *Preaching Politics*, which links George Whitefield's preaching to the political/social identity of early America. Scotland, however, has nothing to compare to Yale historian Harry Stout's exhaustive and scholarly study of preaching entitled *The New England Soul*.

In the fourth volume of his massive survey on Christian preaching, Hughes Oliphant Old dedicates an entire chapter to the Puritans, yet all of his examples are English. Old devotes chapters to early modern preaching in Protestant Germany, France, and the

¹¹ For the most thorough bibliography on puritan preaching and other forms of preaching, see Arnold C. Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge, 2010).

Netherlands, but he says nothing about preaching in Scotland.¹² In order to find a study of early modern preaching in Scotland, one must go back more than a hundred years to Dargan's *History of Preaching*. Dargan dedicated a small section to Henderson, but he offered only generalized statements about Henderson's preaching, and he did not provide an extended analysis or development of its style and substance.¹³

John F. Wilson's book, *Pulpit in Parliament*, published in 1969, is an excellent outline of the sermons preached on various fast days and special occasions at Parliament's request, beginning with the Long Parliament in 1640 to the year 1648. Wilson touches on the construction and content of these sermons as they reflect what he argues is a distinctive tradition of religious literature. These sermons, according to Wilson, provide a means by which historians can understand how the Puritans conceived of the world and how they attempted to make their world intelligible to themselves and to those who heard them.¹⁴ Wilson's book is quite instructive, in so far as he includes brief references to Henderson and the other Scottish commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, who preached during these times. Wilson operates on the assumption that the Scottish ministers who attended the Westminster Assembly were Puritans. His work supplements and develops Trevor-Roper's essay, 'The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament'.

A helpful but limited resource is Crawford Gribben's chapter, 'George Gillespie and the Scottish Revolution', in his book, *The Puritan Millennium*, published in 2000. This is useful in providing a study of the relationship between Scottish Presbyterianism and

¹² Huges Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church: The Age of the Reformation*, IV (Grand Rapids, 2002), 251-471.

¹³ Dargan, *History of Preaching*, II, 138-142.

¹⁴ John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament, Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton,

Puritanism as it manifested itself in the millennial ideas of George Gillespie. Still, since Gribben's focus is limited in scope to Gillespie and to the subject of Puritan eschatology, it offers only indirect help with a study of Henderson's preaching.

David George Mullan's work, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638*, published in 2000, provides one of the best, and one of the more recent, summaries of early modern Scottish preaching as it fits into the general perimeters of 'puritanism', especially in the chapter, 'A Ministry of the Word'. Mullan's study provides a brilliant outline of some of the items found in Henderson's preaching. In fact, Henderson's sermons confirm many of Mullan's arguments about preaching in early modern Scotland. However, Mullan does not analyze Henderson except by way of brief remarks as he peppers his chapter with comments from various Scottish ministers whom he uses to summarize different aspects of the pulpit ministry in early modern Scotland. Margo Todd's book, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, published in 2002, provides a helpful analysis of preaching in her chapter, 'The Word and the People.' However, Todd does not deal specifically with Henderson.

Chad Van Dixhoorn's booklet, *A Puritan Theology of Preaching*, provides a distinct and valuable study of Puritan preaching for this thesis, and he narrows the scope from Puritan preaching in general to that which was summarized most pointedly at the Westminster Assembly. Like Wilson's study, Van Dixhoorn's analysis operates on the assumption that the Scottish delegates to the Westminster Assembly can suitably be referred to as 'Puritans', at least as it relates to preaching. Van Dixhoorn argues, 'The Presbyterian Scots and England's Presbyterians and Independents alike provide a

1969), ix.

similar portrayal of the pulpit'.¹⁵

The most recent survey specifically dedicated to Scottish preaching, and which includes the early modern period, is William G. Blaikie's work, *Preachers of Scotland*, published in 1888. Blaikie's work is limited, as it is a survey of well-known preachers, and it is similar to William Taylor's book, *The Scottish Pulpit*, published a year before Blaikie's in 1887. These books are dated and are deliberately arranged as surveys of preaching in Scotland.¹⁶ Blaikie and Taylor cover Henderson, but only by way of a general review of his style, and neither study analysed the substance of his sermons in detail. All of Henderson's biographers have mentioned his role as a preacher, and all of them have noted his importance, but none of them have made extensive efforts to analyse his preaching. Wilson's work helps on some levels with Henderson's preaching, at least in regard to the sermons he preached before Parliament, but I am offering the first substantive analysis of Henderson's preaching, especially as it related to his public role at the outbreak of the British Revolutions.

Henderson's Sermons

Originally ordained to preach at Leuchars in 1612, Henderson was a preacher in the Kirk at Leuchars until 1639, when he agreed to take a call to St. Giles High Kirk in Edinburgh. With the normal practice of two sermons per Sunday, Henderson may have

¹⁵ Chad Van Dixhoorn, *A Puritan Theology of Preaching* (London, 2005), 51.

¹⁶ Since the nineteenth century there has been an astonishing dearth of studies dealing explicitly with early modern Scottish preaching. G. D. Henderson included a chapter, 'The Scottish Pulpit in the Seventeenth Century', in his work, *Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1937), 190-219. Henderson is mentioned briefly as 'a powerful expository preacher' in a section under the heading, 'Preachers', in Nigel Cameron, ed., *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology* (Edinburgh, 1993), 666. In this section it is worth noting that the author cites Dargan's 1905 survey of preaching as well Blaikie's 1888 work on Scottish preachers as sources for his article. Although he says very little about Henderson, another work worth consulting is Adam Milroy, *Scottish Theologians and Preachers during the first Episcopal Period, 1610-1638* (Edinburgh, 1891).

preached as many as 100 or more sermons a year.¹⁷ From his ordination in 1612 to the summer of 1638, Henderson may possibly have preached more than two thousand sermons at Leuchars alone. This does not include special fast days, national celebrations, and special meetings for communion, such as one where Henderson preached in 1633, which Wariston noted in his Diary as a great blessing.¹⁸

Henderson probably preached at weekly presbytery meetings, at which there were opening and closing sermons, adding to his already astonishing collection of sermons.¹⁹ Unfortunately, there are no extant sermons of Henderson prior to 1638. This lack of sermon evidence limits the historical study of Henderson's preaching significantly. Without earlier sermons, for instance, one may not determine if Henderson's preaching changed or developed significantly from his earliest days as the minister at Leuchars to his public sermons from 1637 forward. Still, Henderson's preaching as it relates to his public role as a leader during the British Revolutions can be analysed thoroughly.

In this chapter, I examine Henderson's preaching style and substance, primarily from the extant sermons preached in the summer of 1638. However, I also use a variety of other primary sources, especially sources related to Henderson's role at the Westminster Assembly. For instance, Chad Van Dixhoorn has identified eight clusters of comments about preaching that are sufficiently concentrated and focused so as to be labelled 'debates'.²⁰ Henderson was personally involved in five of these eight sessions.²¹

¹⁷ Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism*, 28.

¹⁸ Wariston, *Diary*, 37.

¹⁹ Henderson, *Government & Order*, 48.

²⁰ Van Dixhoorn, *A Puritan Theology of Preaching*, 8.

²¹ I have used a new source in the work of Chad Van Dixhorn's heretofore unavailable and now updated minutes to the Westminster Assembly that were appended to his Ph.D. thesis at Cambridge. See Chad Van Dixhoorn, 'Reforming the Reformation: Theological Debate at the Westminster Assembly 1643-1652', Ph.D. thesis (Cambridge University, 2004).

All of Henderson's surviving sermons in printed or manuscript form relate specifically to his public role as leader of the Covenanter cause. He preached in August of 1639 at the opening of Parliament in Edinburgh on the institution, power and necessity of magistracy.²² Travelling to Newcastle during war, Henderson preached in August 1640.²³ Aside from a substantial collection of sermons from 1638, only five other sermons were published.

The first, and perhaps the most famous of his sermons as a public leader, was the one that is sometimes referred to as 'The Bishops' Doom', a sermon from the text of Psalm 110:1 that was preached before the General Assembly of Glasgow in 1638 on the occasion of the excommunication of the Bishops. Another was published as a sermon preached before the sitting down of the General Assembly in 1639 taken from Acts 5:33, which was printed in 1682.²⁴ The English Parliament printed his sermon to the Honorable House of Commons at their late solemn fast Wednesday, 27 December 1643; this sermon used the text of Ezra 8:23. A fourth was printed as a sermon preached before 'the right Honorable the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament upon Thursday 18 July 1644 it being the day of public thanksgiving for the great mercy of God in the happy success of the forces of both kingdoms near York against the enemies of the King and Parliament', taken from Matthew 14:31. The last of these public occasions was printed in 1645 as Henderson's sermon preached before 'the Right Honorable House of Lords in the abbey church at Westminster, Wednesday 28 May, 1645, being the day appointed for solemn and public humiliation' and using the text of

²² Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, III, 64.

²³ Balfour, *Works*, II, 388.

²⁴ I have not found any reason for the delay in printing this sermon, nor why it was printed in 1682.

John 18:36-37.²⁵

The last four published sermons were preached during Henderson's tenure as a Scottish commissioner to the Westminster Assembly. However, twenty four of his sermons, all from the year 1638, were printed in 1867. The editor, R. Thomson Martin, noted that he used manuscripts of Henderson's sermons that had been given to a member of his congregation, but which are no longer extant.²⁶ These manuscripts had apparently been copied by an admirer of Henderson and preserved up to the publication date of 1867. This sermon series included Henderson's prayers and pulpit addresses, which altogether comprise over five hundred pages of indispensable resources. They are perhaps the single most important group of Henderson's sermons, and because of their context nationally, they are conceivably the single most important group of sermons of the early covenanting period. These sermons reflect Henderson's use of what could be called a rhetoric of prophetic and pastoral persuasion. Henderson used preaching to gain support for the cause of the covenant, as well as to shape public opinion and attitudes about what it meant to be 'godly'.

Of the twenty four sermons from 1638, fourteen are from the New Testament and ten are from the Old Testament. Eight of the ten Old Testament sermons are from the Psalms. Henderson preached five of his New Testament sermons from Hebrews and four from Ephesians with a few others from Galatians, Philippians and 2 Corinthians. Some of these sermons appear to have been taken from an expositional series that Henderson used probably at Leuchars when he preached through certain books of the

²⁵ See Henderson, *Sermons*, iii-iv; William Taylor, *The Scottish Pulpit: From the Reformation to the Present Day* (1887) (London, 1887), 73; Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 239-268.

²⁶ According to Thomson, Mr. James Lawrie, a member of his congregation, gave Thomson the manuscripts that had been given to his family as gifts, which heirloom included rare sermons from John

Bible. These sermons reflect Henderson's training as a minister educated in early modern Scotland, and they provide one of the best evidences for what many in his own day considered excellent preaching.²⁷

Similar to Harry Stout's observations regarding New England, Henderson's sermons offer the historian essential insight into one of early modern Scotland's most important mediums for shaping the cultural values, meaning, and sense of purpose for the people of early modern Scotland.²⁸ Many of his contemporaries considered Alexander Henderson one of the most important preachers of their time. Even Charles I commented at Newcastle in 1646 that Henderson was the best preacher in the town.²⁹ Henderson's sermons in 1638 are pivotal for a full understanding of the role of preaching in the conflict that was developing into the British Revolutions.

Preaching the Cause

After the signing of the National Covenant in Edinburgh in February 1638, copies of the Covenant were sent out all over the nation. As the National Covenant arrived in local areas across the nation, people gathered to sign it. Henderson helped to organize and divide the nation into sections to which preachers were sent in order to help rally support at these signings.³⁰ This was quite important in some areas, especially where the ministers had not yet been convinced to support the National Covenant.

Appreciating the power of preaching in this context may help to make sense of the irony to which Margaret Steele alludes when she notes that in its style, content, and language

Brown of Wamphrey. See Henderson, *Sermons*, iii-iv.

²⁷ Blaikie, *Preachers of Scotland*, 99.

²⁸ Harry Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (Oxford, 1986), 3. See also *The Culture of Protestantism*, 24-25.

²⁹ Blaikie, *Preachers of Scotland*, 99.

³⁰ Rothes, *Relations*, 82.

the National Covenant is ‘distinguished more by a cerebral legalism than by any visceral appeals to popular sentiment’.³¹ Her query relates to the seemingly inexplicable emotions that attended the National Covenant’s reception throughout the nation. However, when one links the National Covenant with the sermons that usually attended its signing, it is easier to appreciate its moving implications. For instance, in his sermons, Henderson attached support of the National Covenant to personal godliness as well as to the hope of national blessings; this was at least part of how Henderson helped to transform an otherwise cerebral document into a symbol of divine hope for the nation.

According to contemporary accounts, Covenanter preaching was a key part of the nationwide success of the Covenanter cause.³² For instance, Henderson was assigned to travel to the most publicly intransigent area of Aberdeen.³³ His preaching ventures to Aberdeen had an important effect. Henderson’s opponents, the Aberdeen Doctors, lamented his successful use of preaching in the cause of the National Covenant, because they understood that preaching was at the heart of the debate.³⁴ For instance, on 7 June 1638, the Aberdeen Doctors knew that the Covenanters planned to come to Aberdeen to persuade the people of their town. In response to Henderson’s coming, according to Row, they set themselves to preaching.³⁵ We do not have record of the sermons, but only of the responses of those who heard them.

³¹ Steele, ‘The ‘Politick Christian’: The Theological Background to the National Covenant’, from Morrill, ed., *Scottish National Covenant*, 37.

³² Row, *History*, 494-496; Spalding, *Troubles*, I, 69-73; *Duplies of the Ministers and Professors of Aberdene, to the second Answers of some reverend Brethren, Concerning the Late Covenant* (Edinburgh, 1638), G3.

³³ Rothes, *Relations*, 82.

³⁴ *Duplies*, G3.

³⁵ Row, *History*, 494.

Henderson joined the ministers David Dickson and Andrew Cant in a delegation sent to Aberdeen to preach in support of the National Covenant on 20 July 1638. This initiated a battle of preaching between the opposing sides that lasted the rest of the month and which developed into a pamphlet series published later as *Answers and Duplies*.³⁶ According to one source, Henderson's arrival in Aberdeen set 'a new edge on the Doctors in their sermons to cry down the Covenant'.³⁷ On 22 July 1638, Henderson and the other ministers preached three sermons in a single Sabbath. Henderson preached at three in the afternoon after the other men had preached at seven in the morning and at noon.³⁸ Henderson returned the following Sabbath, preaching the noon service.³⁹

His preaching did more than stir up intellectual opposition; it stirred up the whole town. Henderson and the other ministers refused to stop preaching, even though the ministers of Aberdeen denied them access to their local pulpits, which had important theological significance.⁴⁰ He and his fellow Covenanter ministers took to the streets preaching in homes and other areas wherever they were welcomed.⁴¹ Row records a story of a young man, who threw clods of dirt at Henderson when he was preaching in an open area. Like many of these kinds of stories, Row indicated that the young man would later pay dearly for resisting Henderson as God exacted just revenge in taking his life.⁴²

For Henderson, preaching and the preacher were the most important keys to the success of their cause. As the outgoing moderator of the General Assembly of 1638, he opened the subsequent assembly of 1639 with a sermon focused almost entirely as an

³⁶ Ibid, 494-96.

³⁷ Ibid, 494; Spalding, *Troubles*, I, 69.

³⁸ Row, *History*, 495.

³⁹ Ibid, 495.

⁴⁰ William D. Maxwell, *A History of Worship in the Church of Scotland* (London, 1955), 94.

⁴¹ *Duplies*, G2.

exhortation to ministers. ‘We are all crying’, said Henderson, ‘for good ministers’.⁴³

He dramatically called the men of the Assembly to liken themselves to the Israelites who came out of Egypt.⁴⁴ Their zeal, he exhorted, should never grow cold, but the nearer it is to the end, the hotter it ought to be.⁴⁵ This is quite typical of Henderson’s style. He called the ministers to a forward direction as he urged them to move onward to the great things that he believed God would do through them.

In his ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’, he pointedly charged pastors, as those with the foremost responsibility and duty to lead the nation forward. He said:

That ministers and professors acquaint themselves with the Acts of Assemblie’ especially that against Episcopacie with the protestation, and with the ansewers to the declaration made by the commissioner and to the declinature of the Assemblie by the Bishops That from these they may be able promptlie both to answer the objections of the (flauersars or slaversars) and to remove the scruples of the weake.⁴⁶

He reminded them that their efforts as preachers would be the central means by which God would revive the gospel and save not only Scotland, but through Scotland continue the Reformation to the whole world. Henderson’s positive and destiny-laden call to the future seems to have been one factor in his effectiveness. Henderson consistently exhorted his listeners to an intense sense of hope for the future. This hope was not merely an individual hope, but a covenantal and national hope as well. He urged his listeners to enjoy and meditate on this hope, saying, ‘Surely it shall be a refreshment to you and to your children that you should have lived when the light of the Gospel was almost extinguished now to feel it quickened again after all the Troubles’.⁴⁷

⁴² Row, *History*, 496.

⁴³ Henderson, *Preached* 1, 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 15.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 15.

⁴⁶ Henderson, ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’, *np*.

Divine Calling

For Henderson the role of the minister as a preacher did not originate with the minister; it originated from God. This is partly why Henderson stressed that ministers did not possess a standing as preachers because of their education. According to Henderson, academic training was not enough to equip one to be a preacher. Henderson argued that someone could be quite learned and knowledgeable yet devoid of the saving and sanctifying grace necessary to be a preacher.⁴⁸ For Henderson, one must not only possess learning and letters, but godliness. In this sense, the minister's calling to preach was not the result of erudition, but of divine calling. 'Yet although thou wert as Learned as Gamaliel', said Henderson, 'if thou have not more, thou art not meet to be a Minister of Christ.'⁴⁹

Henderson argued that preaching was the minister's primary role as a pastor and a minister's most fundamental means of shepherding his people. Henderson believed that this derived from a preacher's passion and calling from God, which created a zealous concern for the sheep under his care. The preacher would care for his sheep by feeding them God's word, and his divine call was to provide him a deep desire to do so.

Henderson taught that a preacher must have a passion for his calling; so much so that he must be able to say, 'woe is me if I preach not the gospel'.⁵⁰ 'There is a special relation between a pastor and his people', Henderson preached, 'and the ordinary pastor has a blessing promised upon his labors whilk another who is not ordinary has not promised'.⁵¹ According to Mullan, this is why for so many Covenanter ministers they

⁴⁷ Henderson, *Preached* 1, 16.

⁴⁸ Henderson, *Sermons*, 25.

⁴⁹ Henderson, *Preached* 1, 8.

⁵⁰ Henderson, *Sermons*, 34.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 362.

found their 'greatest comfort in preaching'.⁵²

This minister's call for Henderson was not merely an internal desire, but it was this desire working in concert with the church. The Kirk confirmed a minister's divine calling in his ordination, and after his ordination, preaching became his divine duty.⁵³

Much of what Henderson preached in his own sermons was connected to his ecclesiology. For instance, a preachers' calling was confirmed by a presbytery in his ordination, which distinguished him as one who was 'sent by God'.⁵⁴ This links Henderson's teachings to a favourite Puritan term in speaking of ministers as 'ambassadors'. Preachers were ambassadors of God because they were 'sent' by him to proclaim his word.⁵⁵ Like Old Testament prophets, the preachers of Henderson's day were called and sent to speak on behalf of God. This was also rooted in Henderson's heritage as a minister trained in early modern Scotland.

Mullan lists the variety of metaphors used to describe the pastors' functions in early modern Scotland. They were called stewards, watchmen, builders, ambassadors, soldiers, overseers, shepherds, ploughmen, harvestmen, and physicians.⁵⁶ Cohen states that Puritan ministers considered many activities to be vital to their role as pastors, but they considered preaching to be what Cohen calls the 'sine qua non' of their ministry.⁵⁷ In this sense, perhaps the most important referent for the preacher in early modern Scotland would be the word prophet.

⁵² See Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism 1590-1638* (Oxford, 2000), 68.

⁵³ Henderson, *Sermons*, 277.

⁵⁴ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, II, 151; Van Dixhoorn, *A Puritan Theology of Preaching*, 24.

⁵⁵ See Van Dixhoorn, *A Puritan Theology of Preaching*, 22-27.

⁵⁶ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 55.

⁵⁷ Charles Lloyd Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (Oxford, 1986), 163.

The minister's calling for Henderson was that of a prophetic voice for the nation, and this voice was in no way limited to private spiritual issues; it was also decidedly temporal. In fact, Henderson criticized his fellow ministers for their failings in this regard saying, 'One thing should move our hearts that the Commons of the Land are so ignorant that they know not God; and from that proceeds such wickedness. If that Pastors had been more diligent in instructing, this Church had had better farere now'.⁵⁸

Henderson's preaching reflected this approach. So T. F. Torrance notes:

In this Reformation theology of John Knox and his colleagues there took place a radical shift from the medieval set of mind, away from an abstract theology of logically ordered propositions to a lively dynamic theology, addressed not primarily to the salvation of the individual soul, but to the nation as a whole.⁵⁹

Preaching with Authority

Preaching with 'authority' was a hallmark of what the Covenanters considered good preaching. Sermons in this sense matched Harry Stout's claim that in New England 'sermons were authority incarnate'.⁶⁰ This derived partly from the Covenanter's belief that preaching was the proclamation of God's word. For Henderson a preacher was to preach the word of God; not his own thoughts. Otherwise Henderson argued the preacher's words were merely 'the wind of a man's voice'.⁶¹ 'There is a very great difference between the sayings of men', said Henderson, 'and the sayings of God: for man's sayings are nothing else but the expression of his thoughts and affections of his mind'.⁶²

⁵⁸ Henderson, *Preached, I*, 3.

⁵⁹ T.F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh, 1996), 3.

⁶⁰ Stout, *The New England Soul*, 23.

⁶¹ Henderson, *A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly which sat at Glasgow anno 1638, On occasion of pronouncing the sentence of the greater excommunication against eight of the bishops, and deposing or suspending the other six, by Mr. Alexander Henderson, moderator of that and several subsequent assemblies* (Edinburgh, 1639), 15; hereinafter, 'Bishops Doom'.

⁶² *Ibid*, 3.

Henderson believed, for instance, that the scriptures were the preacher's primary weapon to wound and to heal the hearts of the people of God.⁶³ 'The word of God', said Henderson, 'is like a twoedged sword lively and weighty in operation it either pricks or cutts, it is either a Word to cure thee or to kill thee'.⁶⁴ This did not make Henderson unique among seventeenth century Scottish preachers. Coffey notes, 'Rutherford and other Puritans do not take the trouble to articulate a formal theory of biblical inspiration, but the reason for this is simply that they felt no need to do so, as biblical authority in the strictest sense was rarely challenged'.⁶⁵

Any attempt to appreciate Henderson's work as a preacher must recognize this setting. This confirms what David George Mullan argues when he says, 'It is clear that any attempt to deal with Protestant piety in Scotland, from the very beginning of the Reformation movement, must take into consideration its belief in the divine inspiration and unassailable authority of the Bible'.⁶⁶

This did not mean, however, that a minister could be careless in how he crafted his sermons. To the contrary, Henderson believed that taking the text of scripture and crafting it into a meaningful sermon required concentrated effort and care.

Henderson encouraged presbyteries to nurture the preacher's abilities in these areas, so the presbyters planned monthly theological topics for which they were expected to prepare thoroughly. Henderson stated:

Once every moneth some common place or controversie is handled; unto which

⁶³ Henderson, *Preached 1*, 5.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 5.

⁶⁵ John Coffey, *Politics, Religion, and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford*. (Cambridge, 1997), 78.

⁶⁶ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 46.

the exercise giveth place for that day. The ground is read in Scripture; the state of the question propounded, the arguments for the truth pressed and vindicated from the sophistication of the adversaries.⁶⁷

Here the ministers not only had to practice ‘what’ they preached, but ‘how’ they preached it. This reflects Henderson’s training at St Andrews, especially in the area of rhetoric. As noted in chapter one, Melville used Ramus’ reforms at St Andrews, which had emphasized the pragmatic use of education, especially in rhetoric.⁶⁸ According to Reid, this tended to place far greater emphasis on the importance of practical argument, the ability to create rhetorical strategies, and techniques to influence an opponent.⁶⁹ It also taught the student how to use certain methods of rhetoric intent on achieving a rhetorical and emotional effect. Likewise, the speaker was expected to educate his audience while he spoke to them.⁷⁰ Henderson was brilliant at this dual approach to public speaking in his sermons.

For Henderson, ‘boldness’ was another element in crafting a good sermon. In this regard a minister of the gospel was never to tailor his words in a sermon in order to please the whims and fancies of anyone but God. Improper deference in a sermon to the King, the queen or any other ruler, was considered a ministerial weakness. A well-known Scottish minister who was a contemporary of Andrew Melville, Robert Rollock, warned preachers against an unseemly fawning to the pressures that came from royal courts. ‘A minister’s grace,’ Rollock said, ‘came straight from God, and God alone needed to be pleased by what a minister did and said.’⁷¹ Thus, a minister sometimes consciously had to resist the pressure to conform to the interests of monarchs, noblemen, and anyone or anything that would pressure him to say something less than

⁶⁷ Henderson, *Government & Order*, 50.

⁶⁸ Stephen Reid, “Education in post-Reformation Scotland: Andrew Melville and the University of St Andrews, 1560-1606”, Ph.D. thesis, (University of St Andrews, 2008), 23-27.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 21.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 22.

⁷¹ Rollock quoted in Mullan *Scottish Puritanism*, 74.

what God wanted him to say. Henderson believed that if a minister capitulated to such pressure, it would naturally lead him away from his calling. Henderson said:

Indeed, this is the duty of those who are ministers and are ordained to preach the gospel not to attend any civil charge in the world, although they might have never so great gain or never so great glory thereby; because they are separated for another charge than anything of the civil estate.⁷²

If a preacher arranged his sermons with too much deference to royalty or any earthly authority, he was worse than weak; he was held in serious contempt. On this point, the Covenanters were hardly obsequious; to the contrary Covenanters viewed such ‘courtlike preachers’ as contemptuous and cowardly.⁷³ In fact, it appears that the Covenanters understood that boldness in defying authority was at least one important part of what it meant to preach well. For example, later in August of 1644 when Henderson and Robert Baillie were at the Westminster Assembly, Baillie commented, ‘Mr. Palmer and Mr. Hill did preach that day to the Assemblie, two of the most Scottish and free sermons that ever I heard anywhere’.⁷⁴

Baillie went on to explain that a ‘Scottish’ sermon was set in contrast to the deferential sermons he had been hearing in England. According to Baillie, even the best of the preachers at the Assembly attempted to show such profound reverence and respect to Parliament ‘as truelie took all the edge from their exhortations, and made all applications to them toothless and adulatorious’.⁷⁵ For Baillie and Henderson, it was this kind of ‘adulatorious’ and overly deferential preaching that caused preaching to lose its bite and authority.

⁷² Henderson, *Sermons*, 34.

⁷³ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 74.

⁷⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 220.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, II, 221.

Henderson was definitely not a ‘courtlike’ preacher in regard to deference although he was accused of being too deferential in 1641, when he preached before Charles I. Henderson had been deliberately polite and respectful when preaching, because he was convinced the King was not in a position to be scolded, but encouraged. Baillie recorded that this caused some of his fellow Covenanters to criticize Henderson for being ‘too sparing with his Majestie’.⁷⁶ In spite of this brief incident, Henderson used the pulpit to press what he believed were the claims of King Jesus, even if such claims came into direct conflict with the claims of King Charles I. This was an important factor when areas of the nation were uncertain of their support of the National Covenant. Henderson travelled there preaching sermons that were intended to press what could be considered a partisan, political cause.⁷⁷ At the same time it is hard to describe Henderson’s method or style as particularly unique among his Scottish peers with regard to making scriptural arguments with authority.

For instance, the Aberdeen Doctors also made similar claims from the authority of the word of God in their preaching and teachings. Their claims, however, were different, especially as they related to Henderson’s call to respond to idolatry with resistance. Henderson preached that the sovereignty of God was first as a doctrine and that the sovereignty of God ordered other doctrines aright.⁷⁸ He argued that all other truths are limited by God’s word and logically inferior to the sovereignty, majesty and power of God.⁷⁹ God’s sovereign rule, Henderson preached, over the affairs of history according to his own irresistible will gave him the right to claim absolute authority over the whole

⁷⁶ Ibid, I, 395.

⁷⁷ Henderson, *Sermons*, ix.

⁷⁸ Henderson, *Bishops Doom*, 6. The Aberdeen Doctor’s sermons were published at least partially in their ‘Duplies’ to the Covenanters, which provides the historian with some substantive comparison, but it is very limited in providing a comparison of style regarding homiletical methods, delivery, etc.

⁷⁹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 45.

earth.⁸⁰ This was true most evidently in the area of idolatry.

In his preaching, Henderson argued against the idea that a King or any ruler had ‘absolute and undoubted power’.⁸¹ According to Henderson, no earthly authority in church, state or family can claim ‘absolute and undoubted’ power because this belongs uniquely to God who is sovereign over all and from whose authority all earthly authorities derive their direction and purpose.⁸² Henderson preached that if a lower magistrate failed to support the cause of the Covenant, then their authority was contrary to God and must be resisted. ‘I avow and attest here before God’, Henderson exhorted, ‘that what ye do is not against authority, but for authority’.⁸³ Indeed, Henderson preached that his listeners must stand against human authority on behalf of and in obedience to divine authority.⁸⁴

This suggests that preaching styles in early modern Scotland may not have been specifically related to a fixed ‘method’ per se, as much as to the perceived substance and direction of a sermon. For instance, the ministers to whom Baillie referred to as ‘toothless’ were simply not stressing what he believed they should stress. This also suggests that it may not be easy to distinguish a ‘Scottish’ style as Baillie indicated.⁸⁵ Morrissey suggests that some of the categories that historians have used to analyse preaching in Stuart England may have not been as important to the homiletics of the

⁸⁰ Ibid, 378.

⁸¹ Henderson, *The Answers of Some Brethren Concerning the Late Covenant*, (Edinburgh, 1638), 33.

⁸² Gordon Donaldson, *Scottish Historical Documents* (London, 1970), 201.

⁸³ Henderson, *Sermons*, 27.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 67.

⁸⁵ Later in 1654 Robert Baillie criticized Hew Binning and Robert Leighton as using a ‘new guyse of preaching’, which Baillie argued, ignored ‘ordinarie’ way of expounding and dividing text and placing more emphasis on using emotive rhetorical devices that Baillie believed deemphasized the text, while overemphasizing ‘tickling’ the ears with tricky rhetorical techniques. See Baillie, *Letters*, III, 258-59.

original preachers.⁸⁶ She also argues that historians are sometimes too quick to designate a style as 'Puritan' because the sermon is 'forceful', rather than by analysing all the elements of the sermon.⁸⁷

Henderson did not show deference to the King's authority if he believed that it was found to be in conflict with the word of God. Mullan notes, 'This defense of the freedom of the pulpit was a Presbyterian commonplace and lay near the heart of that polity's readiness to assume the stance of nonconformity.'⁸⁸ It was precisely this kind of public speech that the Canons had attempted to prohibit, and it was exactly this kind of speech that caused the prophetic model of preaching to clash with the King's desire to control the pulpit.

Style and Substance

It is worth noting that Henderson's preaching ministry is very limited to historians due to the fact that the only extant sermons begin and end as those bathed in the public moment of the struggle, primarily from 1638-1645. This peculiar context for Henderson's sermons should point the student of Henderson's preaching to Morrissey's reminder that early modern sermons were complex and carefully structured arguments that began with a text from Scripture and then used this text to create interpretations capable of providing moral and political instruction in the 'here and now' of the sermons' 'application'.⁸⁹

Given the body of Henderson's extant sermons, one finds a remarkable similarity in

⁸⁶ Mary Morrissey, 'Scripture, Style and Persuasion in Seventeenth-Century English Theories of Preaching', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 53 (2002), 686.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 1121.

⁸⁸ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 73.

style and substance. In 1638, he preached sermons travelling around the nation to foster support for the National Covenant, and from 1643-1645 he preached at least annually at St Margaret's chapel at the request of the House of Commons for special occasions. In all of these various sermons he followed the same basic structure, which for the sake of comparison reflects the popular style among English Puritans as well.

According to Margo Todd and Walter Foster, Buckle greatly exaggerated the length of Scottish preaching when he spoke of it as lasting for hours.⁹⁰ Sermons would commonly last no more than an hour, and presbyteries even tried to encourage half-hour sermons at their meetings.⁹¹ Some sermons were much longer than others; some were as brief as a short address, depending on the occasion. Since he believed that preaching and doctrine must be appropriated and felt, Henderson argued that sermons should not tax the listeners. He also gave room for the preacher to have leave to preach as long or as short as he deems necessary, which was his own practice. Some of his sermons were very brief addresses that acted as quick calls to action, as before signing the National Covenant. Other sermons were longer and included the listing of several points to underline the theme of the text.⁹²

Yet whether long or short, he delivered his sermons in simple, almost conversational style.⁹³ This is a style that links him with his Puritan counterparts in England, especially to William Perkins' famous work, *The Art of Prophesying*, published in 1606. Perkins summarized a method adopted by many seventeenth-century Puritans, a method

⁸⁹ Morrissey, 'Interdisciplinarity', 1117.

⁹⁰ See Foster, *The Church Before the Covenants: The Church of Scotland, 1596-1638* (Edinburgh, 1975), 94. See also, Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism*, 48.

⁹¹ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 94.

⁹² Henderson, *Sermons*, 163-83.

⁹³ Taylor, *The Scottish Pulpit*, 74.

which was characterized by a plain style of preaching. Perkins argued that the preacher should read the text out of the canonical scriptures, give a sense and understanding of it, collect a few profitable points of doctrine out of the natural sense, and then apply it to the lives of his hearers in a plain and simple sense. The sermons were to maintain an easy to grasp progression of exegesis, doctrines, proofs, and uses.⁹⁴ Like the subject of preaching with authority, preaching with simplicity and plainness was not always crystal clear, and it occupied a significant amount of concern for Henderson.

Morrissey and Appleby warn historians against ‘methodological laziness’, because they say that sometimes historians can be too quick to use Perkins as a grid by which to read sermons without careful analysis of the sermon itself.⁹⁵ In this sense it would be better to use a closer source in analysing Henderson’s preaching. The best source is a document on preaching that Henderson himself had the largest hand in creating, the *Directory for Public Worship*.⁹⁶ Henderson urged the minister when preaching to keep the introduction to his text brief, perspicuous, and drawn from the text itself.⁹⁷

Henderson warned the preacher against burdening the memory of his hearers with too many divisions or troubling the minds of his listeners with obscure references to art.⁹⁸ He urged preachers to use good illustrations that were full of light and that would convey the truth into the hearer’s heart with spiritual delight.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ See Joseph A. Pipa, ‘William Perkins and the Development of Puritan Preaching’, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary (1985), 216-217.

⁹⁵ See Morrissey, ‘Interdisciplinarity’, 1121. See also David J. Appleby, *Black Bartholomew’s Day: Preaching, polemic and Restoration nonconformity* (New York, 2007), 64-65.

⁹⁶ According to Baillie, Henderson wrote the bulk of this document while he was a commissioner at the Westminster Assembly. See Baillie, *Letters*, II, 250.

⁹⁷ *A Directory for publique worship of God throughout the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland together with an ordinance of Parliament for the taking away of the Book of common-prayer, and for establishing and observing of this present directory throughout the kingdom of England and dominion of Wales* (London, 1645), 13-14.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 14.

Henderson argued that good preaching was to have ‘simplicity’ of style and presentation.¹⁰⁰ This emphasis made itself evident at the Westminster Assembly, where in June 1644, Henderson entered into discussions on this very matter of simplicity in preaching. Here the ministers were discussing the Directory for Public Worship and possible guidelines for the valid use of Latin and Greek quotations in sermons. Henderson directed them away from using Latin or Greek in such a way that the people would not understand them. In one place he stated, ‘I would know how any can use such words as the people understand not’.¹⁰¹ In these discussions, Rutherford joined Henderson in decrying specific rules for preachers to follow, but rather ministers should use general principles and good sense.¹⁰² They should preach with simplicity and clarity. This left a large measure of discretion for proper ‘methods’ in early modern Scottish preaching.

Henderson argued that a minister should not ignore humane learning and the original languages, but he also argued that such learning should be put to practical use of teaching or instructing the listeners with simplicity.¹⁰³ Calderwood had accused the bishops of filling their sermons with unnecessary and arrogant displays of rhetorical flourishes that did little more than flaunt their learning.¹⁰⁴ Such parades of learning may impress a listener with the speaker’s eloquence, but according to Henderson, they had little of the power to inflict the wounds which healed the soul, which according to

⁹⁹ Ibid, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Henderson, *Sermons*, 283.

¹⁰¹ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, II, 144.

¹⁰² Ibid, II, 146.

¹⁰³ Ibid, II, 144.

¹⁰⁴ Calderwood, *The pastor and the prelate, or reformation and conformitie shortly compared by the word of God, by antiquity and the proceedings of the ancient Kirk, by the nature and use of things indifferent, by the proceedings of our ovvne Kirk, by the vveill of the Kirk and of the peoples soules, and by the good of the commonvvealth and of our outvvard estate with the answer of the common & chieftest objections against everie part: shewing vvwhether of the tvvo is to be follovvved by the true Christian and countrieman*’ (Holland, 1628), 15.

Henderson was one of the primary purposes of godly preaching.¹⁰⁵

By simplicity, Henderson did not mean that preaching should be dull in content, but that it need not be decorated with unnecessary rhetoric or showy displays of learning that might distract the humble listener from plucking the fruit of the sermon.¹⁰⁶ ‘Simplicity’ in preaching for Henderson did not mean the lack of using illustrations or rhetorical devices per se. When teaching this approach to his listeners, Henderson used several rhetorical devices such as illustrations to exhort them further saying:

The text it is the tree, the interpretation is the fruit that grows upon the tree, the application thereof is the hand whereby the fruit is plucked off the tree.¹⁰⁷

Henderson believed that preachers should use sermons to persuade the people of God to respond to God’s word in active faithfulness, and sermons were God’s primary instrument for such persuasion.

Pulpit Performance?

Henderson deliberately preached so as to provoke a response from his listeners. When he urged ministers to preach with ‘simplicity’ and ‘plainness’, he did not mean without emotions. Referring to preaching, Henderson said, ‘The doctrine deduced, is explained and confirmed by Scripture, and fitly, and faithfully applied, all in such methode, manner and expression as may most edifiie the hearers’.¹⁰⁸

Henderson spoke of ‘method, manner, and expression’, from which we may conclude

¹⁰⁵ Henderson, *Preached* 1, 5.

¹⁰⁶ Henderson, *Sermons*, 52.

¹⁰⁷ Henderson, *Sermons*, 52. Henderson’s illustration seems to draw from ancient images of the sermon as a tree. It appears that thirteenth and fourteenth century manuals on preaching likened the sermon as a tree with its roots in the text, its theme is the trunk, its divisions and subdivisions as branches and twigs and finally the fruit of application. See Matthew Vogan, ‘Samuel Rutherford and the Theology and Practice of Preaching’, *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal*, 1 (2011), 20.

such things that Francis Bremer referred to as the ‘tools to stir the emotions’ that were common to successful puritan preachers.¹⁰⁹

Bremer speaks of stomping, cavorting, kneeling, mimicking, shouting and breaking into tears.¹¹⁰ Without references from others around him, it is hard to conclude too many things about Henderson’s gestures and actions when he preached. But a variety of references suggest that Henderson was quite animated in his preaching. Using extant sermons that sometimes described his actions we can discover at least a few of Henderson’s gestures and habits from his sermons themselves, which indicated that he paid careful attention to his audience and interacted with them directly. In one sermon, he paused for a moment after reading the scriptures, making the following remarks:

I think the very naked reiding of thir same words should have moved you more than I can see any appearance amongst you. I perceived by many of your countenances and gestures that ye did not so much as to take heed what was reading; many of you would have heard ane idle tale better, and would have bended your ear to it.¹¹¹

This kind of close personal interaction with his listeners suggests that Henderson was actively and immediately engaged with his hearers when he preached. He did not merely read from a script, but he pushed his hearers to be engaged, as he preached to them.

Mullan argues that authentic preaching ministry in early modern Scotland was defined and measured by affective outcome in the lives of others. Preaching that was not ‘toothless’ in early modern Scotland was expected to be ‘affective’. Mullan further argues that, according to early modern standards, if a minister could not point to an

¹⁰⁸ Henderson, *Government & Order*, 16.

¹⁰⁹ Francis J. Bremer, and E. Rydell, ‘Performance art? Puritans in the pulpit’, *History Today*, 45, 9 (1995), 50.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 50.

affective outcome from his preaching, then perhaps, but not categorically, his preaching might have been at fault.¹¹² Wariston described the important effect towards ‘peace and rest in Christ’ that Henderson’s sermons had on him.¹¹³ In this sense, Henderson’s preaching gained him a reputation as a great preacher; so much so, that people came from all over the nation just to hear him preach.¹¹⁴ Mullan notes that less than a generation after Henderson’s death Scottish Covenanters were already portraying Henderson as a preacher who was one of the former ‘giants of the land’.¹¹⁵

The setting for his sermons indicated that since Henderson at times preached in fields at conventicles and in the streets of Aberdeen surrounded by sometimes hostile crowds, he was not always fixed to reading from notes, but speaking from memory and speaking directly and personally to his audience with passionate appeals. Apparently he did not merely ‘speak’ but was described as someone who ‘thundered’ in his doctrine, indicating that he shouted or raised his voice appropriate to the occasion before him.¹¹⁶

There were times when Henderson’s preaching had such a dramatic effect that one listener described his opening sermon at the Westminster Assembly as making the whole nation feel that his cause was infallible.¹¹⁷ Henderson’s ‘thundering’ appeals had a definite affective and emotional outcome. His sermons and addresses were poignant, and the people that heard them described them as ‘moving their affections’.¹¹⁸ David Appleby notes that Puritan preaching was characterized by the expectation of ‘mingling

¹¹¹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 2.

¹¹² David George Mullan, *Narratives of the Religious Self in Early Modern Scotland* (London, 2010), 94.

¹¹³ Wariston, *Diary*, 37.

¹¹⁴ Mullan, *Narratives of the Religious Self*, 98.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹¹⁷ *Mercurius Britannicus: Communicating the affairs of great Britaine: For the better Information of the People, from Tuesday the 19 of September, to Tuesday the 26 of Sept. 1643*, 45.

¹¹⁸ Wariston, *Diary*, 411.

tears' with each other upon hearing a moving sermon.¹¹⁹ As a preacher, Henderson mingled tears with his hearers. Baillie, for instance, described a gripping scene when one of Henderson's orations was received with great applause and with 'so heartie affections, expressed in the tears of pitie and joy by verie manie grave, wise and old men'.¹²⁰

A Theology of Godly Listening: Expectations of the Listeners

One element of Henderson's success as a preacher may be related to his self-conscious instruction to his hearers in the method of preaching while he was actually preaching. Henderson deliberately instructed his hearers as to their obligations in what might be called 'godly listening'. 'In the hearing of the word', said Henderson, 'let us not only take heed what we hear, but let us also take heed to how we hear'.¹²¹ According to Henderson, the godly listener bears a responsibility to be active hearers of the preaching. Henderson's exhortation to active or pious listening became a virtual plank in what could be called a Puritan theology of preaching. This emphasis was so common to some areas in early modern Scotland that they went so far as to appoint an officer who wielded a red staff that he used to awaken sleepers during the sermon.¹²²

At the conclusion of a sermon preached, probably at St Andrews in the summer of 1638, Henderson exhorted his listeners, 'Therefore I leave it to ilk ane of you who has heard me, to put up your hand and pull down the branch, pluck of the fruit that is meetest for you, and eat of it'.¹²³

¹¹⁹ David J. Appleby, *Black Bartholomew's Day*, 58-9.

¹²⁰ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 90.

¹²¹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 283.

¹²² Todd, *Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, 40.

¹²³ Henderson, *Sermons*, 52.

According to Margo Todd, the Scots encouraged the habit of listening to the preacher such that people were expected to be able to repeat the main points of the preacher's sermon to a master or parent.¹²⁴ Those who heard the word preached were under a divine obligation to meditate on it and to recall it to their hearts.¹²⁵ So Henderson said:

Therefore pray to the Lord, that whenever ye come to hear the word, ye may understand what is spoken to you and lay it up in your heart, that ye may have faith to believe, that ye may keep it into your memory, and the Spirit may bring it to your remembrance and that ye may have the word of promise also into your mouths to bring it out there as need is.¹²⁶

Henderson warned his listeners against the pitiful problem that sometimes both the preachers and hearers do not have faith as they listen to preaching.¹²⁷ He taught that if his listeners would humble themselves to the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching, then God would bless them. Henderson's belief in the centrality of the work of the Holy Spirit through preaching accounts for why each of his sermons usually began with a long prayer of preparation. 'This is faith', said Henderson, 'when I hear of Christ, of the promises made by him in the gospel, I believe in him, and believes his promises; and not only I believe his promises, but all other things that are contained in his word, threatenings and precepts and all by one and the same faith; faith takes hold of all things in the word of God'.¹²⁸ Henderson warned his listeners:

Except ye humble yourselves now when ye have health, wealth, and peace the Lord sall cause you to humble yourselves under heavy and sore straits, when ye cannot get yourselves helped. There is no way for you to prevent the wrath of God, that has been masking (brewing) in a cloud above you this long time, but only by humbling yourselves before God.¹²⁹

Henderson taught that preaching was God's most central instrument in demonstrating

¹²⁴ Todd, *Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, 42.

¹²⁵ Henderson, *Sermons*, 418.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 419-20.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 523.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 523-24.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 3.

the power of the Spirit of God.¹³⁰ Todd confirms Henderson's emphasis, saying that preaching had the following purpose:

To bring men and women in the pews an experience of the word that would fundamentally shift the way they organized their lives, defined themselves as individuals and families and understood their relationship with the divine.¹³¹

This is what Henderson self-consciously tried to do. In one sermon he challenged his listeners saying, 'we may not say we have the promises because we have the Bible in our house, or in our cabinet; we must have them in our heart'.¹³² He promised his hearers that if they would follow after the word of God with a humble disposition and a believing heart then God would bless them.¹³³ He called the people in one sermon to be 'ravished in admiration' for the grace of God at work in them.¹³⁴

Evangelical Faithfulness

Henderson's preaching was 'evangelical'.¹³⁵ There are multiple references to what could be called a gospel statement about salvation. For instance, Henderson instance, 'Jesus Christ is come into the world, and has taken on our nature, to satisfy for our sins'.¹³⁶

He went further saying, 'Although thou wouldst shed all they own blood for sin, yet there is nothing can satisfy for it, but only the oblation and sacrifice of Jesus Christ'.¹³⁷

This is what might be called 'evangelistic' preaching. However, in all of Henderson's extant sermons, these doctrines are also used almost like stepping stones to move his audience to respond to the cause of God, which he inevitably related to the cause of the

¹³⁰ Ibid, 42.

¹³¹ Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism*, 26.

¹³² Henderson, *Sermons*, 416.

¹³³ Ibid, 394.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 131.

¹³⁵ By 'evangelical' I simply mean that he called upon his listeners to believe the 'evangel' or gospel and follow after Jesus in what could be described from Henderson's sermons as 'evangelical faithfulness'.

Covenant. Evangelical faithfulness was translated into political action.

Since most of his extant sermons are set in public rather than parish contexts, they are marked by a conspicuous lack of call for conversion that characterized so many of the Puritan sermons printed in the early modern times, as well as those reprinted generations later.¹³⁸ This lack of call to a conversion experience makes sense because of Henderson's intended audience was a group of people already assumed to be converted. In one sermon Henderson seemed to downplay the importance of a 'conversion' experience saying:

What was the time that grace was begun in them, what man was the speaker of that whilk began it, at what preaching or prayer, &.; yet these things are not necessary for every one to know; but this is necessary for every one to know that they are in Christ.¹³⁹

While not emphasizing the importance of a dramatic conversion experience, Henderson's sermons called his listeners to what could be described as 'evangelical faithfulness'. By this Henderson maintained an intense and consistent call to personal repentance and personal renewal that was expected to characterize those whom Henderson believed were genuinely converted. He emphasized repentance as an active response to the word of God, but he left little room to speculate or wonder what that action might look like. Henderson made explicit connections in the word of God from which he was preaching and how this word applied to his listeners.¹⁴⁰ Usually this meant that his listeners were called upon to support the National Covenant in some way.

Henderson followed a common approach of seventeenth century preachers of

¹³⁶ Henderson, *Sermons*, 392.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 397.

¹³⁸ See Stout, *The New England Soul*, 24.

¹³⁹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 291.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 419.

confronting and humbling the listener in order to outline what he believed God was demanding the godly hearer to do in response.¹⁴¹ The pathos of Henderson's sermons conveyed the feelings of a pleading father more than a scolding prophet.¹⁴²

On the whole Henderson preached with a sense of prophetic authority but he also approached his hearers as a sensitive pastor. He rarely took a scolding tone but rather he engaged his listeners as a fatherly pastor. He preached to them using illustrations common to their experiences and engaged them with accessible stories and illustrations. In one sermon he stated:

I would exhort you, in the name of Jesus Christ, to be acquainted with the promise; for they are pabulum fidei, the food and nourishment of faith; and therefore, lay up the word of promise into your hearts, that ye may feed upon it.¹⁴³

Henderson preached against what might be called 'common sins'. Profaning the Sabbath, drunkenness along with swearing and cursing were practical examples of the sins common to his listeners.¹⁴⁴ Even at these points Henderson connected the lack of personal piety with the nation's woes. Henderson believed that the national decay and nationwide idolatry was partially related to personal failures, but also the result of failures in family piety. Families had ceased using what he called 'family exercises', which should have involved daily Bible study and catechizing the whole family.¹⁴⁵

Regulative Principle & Idolatry

In Henderson's capacity as a public spokesman, the most pressing matter for the godly

¹⁴¹ Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature & Theology, 1550-1682* (Dublin, 2000), 112-14.

¹⁴² There is a notable exception ironically in a sermon that appears to have been preached before his home kirk in Leuchars. See Henderson, *Sermons*, 409.

¹⁴³ Henderson, *Sermons*, 419.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 7, 117.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 7.

minister to address in his preaching, was the problem of idolatry. In a prayer concluding one sermon, Henderson prayed that God would ‘make idolatry and will worship hateful to our king’s Majesty, and make him only to love the simple truth’.¹⁴⁶ Idolatry was an important animating factor in Henderson’s preaching and also for Covenanter theories of resistance. Henderson’s preaching offers a nuance to Mullan’s argument that ‘the difficulty of liturgical matters notwithstanding, the underlying source of disaffection for radicals was episcopacy’.¹⁴⁷ In his preaching, Henderson indicated that idolatry or false worship was the premiere issue upon which the blessings and curse of God would bear upon the nation. The curse would undoubtedly come upon Scotland, said Henderson, ‘if we had all of us peaceably received the Service-book and Book of Canons and practiced them through the land’.¹⁴⁸

Here we see that at one level idolatry is simple, yet on another level it more complicated and rooted in liturgy, theology as well as tangled together with Henderson’s notions of kingship. It was at this point that Henderson built on the legacy of John Knox who had used the issue of idolatry as the ultimate point at which the divine obligation of resistance was not only legitimate but required. According to Roger Mason, ‘the avoidance of idolatry was transformed from a simple scriptural precept into a clause in a formal ‘contract’ drawn up between God and the elect’.¹⁴⁹

The regulative principle of worship was a guiding principle for Henderson in this

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 136.

¹⁴⁷ See Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 76. While Henderson certainly criticized prelacy, especially their abuse of pastoral power, his sermons in 1638 primarily addressed the issue of idolatry. This would most definitely morph into a concern that only sound ecclesiology could protect against idolatry, but Henderson’s initial sermons were used to push for support of the National Covenant, which focused primarily on issues related to worship.

¹⁴⁸ Henderson, *Sermons*, 82.

¹⁴⁹ See Mason, *Kingship and the Commonwealth: Political Thought in Renaissance and Reformation Scotland* (East Linton, Scotland, 1998), 144-45.

matter. This was the idea that the sole guide for worship was the word of God, and if one could not find explicit scriptural support for an action, it ought to be condemned. Henderson and his fellow Covenanter ministers construed it in the following fashion: whatever God has not specifically commanded in worship is thereby forbidden. George Gillespie's famous book, *English Popish Ceremonies*, outlined this very thoroughly, but Henderson preached this in many of his sermons. With the biblical figures of Nadab and Abihu as his example, Henderson argued, 'If it can be said that there is no warrant from the truth of God for whilk we do, it is enough to convict us that it is wrong'.¹⁵⁰

It was such a driving issue in the Covenanters' fight against the Service Book that Henderson outlined it specifically in his preaching. Again he noted, 'we must take heed that we obey nothing, whilk is not warranted by God himself in the matters of his worship'.¹⁵¹ Idolatry was the primary issue on which Henderson and his fellow Covenanters felt constrained to stand in resistance because this was the ultimate matter for which the whole nation would eventually be judged.¹⁵² According to Henderson, anyone who did not take up the cause of the National Covenant, would fall under the same curse as Belial and Hiel, who attempted to rebuild the walls of Jericho after God had destroyed it.¹⁵³ Henderson drifted to the illustration of Jericho in many sermons as he preached that 'every carnal heart is a spiritual Jericho'.¹⁵⁴ This was common for his preaching as he translated the national struggles into the realm of personal spiritual battles.¹⁵⁵

Henderson pressed his hearers that they were not allowed to remain passive or silent in

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 47.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 49.

¹⁵² Ibid, 57, 136; Henderson, *Bishop's Doom*, 14.

¹⁵³ Henderson, *Sermons*, 41, 146.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 150.

the matters before them.¹⁵⁶ Idolatry would provoke the displeasure of God, so much so that their property and their businesses were all at risk of incurring the wrath of God.¹⁵⁷ If anyone failed to take idolatry seriously, then God's wrath and displeasure would lead them to a slavery worse than the people of Israel when they were under Egyptian slavery.¹⁵⁸ Passivity in the face of such slavery was the same as compliance with it and placed one in a position of being a 'hater of Sion'.¹⁵⁹ He preached that in reference to idolatry, there could be no middle road.¹⁶⁰ For Henderson this was most pointedly true of idolatry, since the sin of idolatry was evidence of the worst curse, 'for then the fear of God is out of the land, when idolatry is in it there can be no peace where the fear of God is away'.¹⁶¹

Idolatry provoked the worst kinds of slavery to sin. Henderson's emphasis on slavery was used in nineteenth century histories that were more whiggish in their understanding of slavery and liberty. For instance, Henderson's primary scholarly biographer, John Aiton, often equated Henderson's theological work with that of a political liberator. Aiton even referred to Henderson and his fellow Covenanters as the 'foster fathers of liberty in Britain'.¹⁶² Aiton's use of Henderson is not entirely fair since Henderson was speaking primarily to the theological issue of idolatry in a seventeenth-century context and not so much to political liberty in nineteenth century context. In this sense, Aiton tended to add a nineteenth century edge to Henderson's seventeenth century words.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 150.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 49.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 67.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 67.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 265, 305.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 307.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 241.

¹⁶² Aiton, *The Life and Times*, viii.

At the same time Henderson did use the language of slavery and tyranny, so there was some genuine tension and ambiguity. However, it appears that his language should be understood as circumscribed by the regulative principle and his theology of idolatry. Henderson preached using familiar biblical images of the covenant and the blessings of deliverance from the slavery of idolatry and sins. This language is particularly important to the ongoing debates among historians about political ideas. John Coffey argues that the language of idolatry and slavery were closely linked to iconoclasm and deliverance.¹⁶³ Coffey is right to point out that Calvinist resistance thinkers believed that the conflicts that they faced were something of a ‘re-run of Old Testament clashes between the godly and idolaters’.¹⁶⁴ This is why Henderson publicly urged the Queen to be a ‘hater of idolatry’ in order to assist her husband and the nation in their present woes.¹⁶⁵

In fact, Coffey notes that the biblical narrative of the Exodus from slavery provided the combatants with a spiritual language of ‘deliverance’. Coffey says:

Unlike Roman law, biblical narrative did not provide Parliamentarians with legal arguments to justify their rebellion. But it gave them something just as important – a story that legitimized resistance and forced them to choose between the garlic and onions of their Egyptian captivity and the long arduous trek towards freedom. The familiar biblical account put narrative flesh on abstract concepts of liberty and slavery, invested them with intense spiritual significance.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Coffey argues that the language of idolatry and liberty are key concepts, especially as it relates to the ongoing debates among such prestigious historians as Quentin Skinner and John Morrill. Skinner suggests that the political language used in parliamentary arguments in Stuart Britain derived fundamentally from the concepts of classical antiquity. Morrill on the other hand, argues that the political language derives more fundamentally from post-Reformation religious ideas. Coffey argues for something of a middle way, suggesting that the political language of the Stuart struggles derived more fundamentally from scriptural images of deliverance. See Coffey, ‘England’s Exodus: The Civil War as a War of Deliverance’, in Charles W.A. Prior, & Glenn Burgess, eds., *England’s Wars of Religion, Revisited* (Burlington, VT, 2011).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 3.

¹⁶⁵ Henderson, *Sermons*, 184.

¹⁶⁶ Coffey, ‘England’s Exodus: The Civil War as a War of Deliverance’, 6.

This applies extremely well with Henderson's sermons because he used the images and language of the Old Testament pervasively in his sermons. He warned, for instance, his listeners to hate the former ways of slavery in Egypt, saying:

Even now in the days of the gospel for there are evermore some whose hearts are going back to Egypt and when their hearts have been there a while then their mouths and their pens they testify to the world a bad inclination they have to Egypt and to idolatry.¹⁶⁷

Appreciating idolatry as a central part of Covenanter political views is an important matter for historians who attempt to understand the overall 'political' views of the Covenanters, which is evident in Henderson's preaching. While Aiton seems to have misappropriated Henderson's emphasis on idolatry, other historians have missed it altogether.

Quentin Skinner for instance, has argued that seventeenth-century Calvinistic thinkers did not make any essential contributions to the development of Christian theories of civil resistance. Skinner notes that the arguments they used in the 1550's were Lutheran; the arguments from the 1570's were largely scholastic. Skinner argues that the main foundations of the Calvinist theory of revolution were in fact constructed entirely by their Catholic adversaries.¹⁶⁸ He disputes Michael Walzer's arguments as exaggerated. Michael Walzer's *Revolution of the Saints* argues that Calvinists thinkers brought distinct development to theories of resistance as they taught previously passive men the styles and methods of political activity and enabled them successfully to claim the right of participation in that ongoing system of political action that is the modern state.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Henderson, *Sermons*, 41.

¹⁶⁸ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Volume One: The Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1978), 321.

¹⁶⁹ Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge, Ma, 1965), 18.

Using preaching as an historical source adds some weight to Walzer's assertions that Calvinists political contributions were a unique addition to the development of early modern political theory. This is especially helpful when combined with the arguments of Carlos Eire's work on Calvinism and idolatry.¹⁷⁰ It may be that Skinner misses the pervasive doctrinal issues that Eire uses because Skinner does not make extensive use of one of the key sources of political theory in early modern Scotland, the sermon. In this sense, sermons may be one of the most important yet overlooked sources of early modern Scottish history for historians to consider, especially as it relates to drawing conclusions about political theory, *per se*.¹⁷¹ As an important source for early modern Scottish history, Henderson's political sermons reflected the distinctive character of the Reformed political tradition, which provides support for Walzer and Eire in contrast to Skinner.

The Covenant Community

In his preaching, Henderson did not limit his exhortations to the elite leaders of society, nor did he consider himself to be an elite. Henderson's preaching adds weight to Laura Stewart's assertion that in order to gain support for the National Covenant, the subscription campaign appealed to all social levels and was 'demonstrably anything but elitist in its composition'.¹⁷² Henderson preached broad obligations to all of his listeners, which offers some corroboration of Walzer's assertion that Calvinist thinkers switched the emphasis of political thought from the prince to the saint, which

¹⁷⁰ As noted in chapter 3, Carlos Eire's argued that Calvinist theories of resistance did not differ from the earlier arguments in some ways, but in the 'reasons' for the arguments. Eire asserts that the struggle against idolatry as a social phenomenon related to the whole body politic was a central and distinguishing element of Calvinists theories. See Carlos Eire, *War Against Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986), 308.

¹⁷¹ See Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 5-21.

¹⁷² Laura A. M. Stewart, *Urban Politics and the British Civil Wars: Edinburgh, 1617-53* (London, 2006), 236.

constructed a theoretical justification for independent political action.¹⁷³ Henderson had a curious argument from the fifth commandment, as noted in the previous chapter, in which upward pressure could be exerted on leaders through the fifth commandment, thus demanding all people to do their duty as ‘superiours, equals, and inferiours’.¹⁷⁴ According to Henderson, an individual’s civic duties did not depend on any mediating authority over them, but directly on God.¹⁷⁵ This confirms Mullan’s conclusions that Scottish Covenanters, like their English and New England counterparts, emphasized a lay devotion, ‘directed towards those who lived their lives not in cloisters but in the daily round of mundane activity’.¹⁷⁶

Henderson argued that every single person had an individual responsibility before God to be faithful.¹⁷⁷ This focused the authority of God’s word as something each person should receive in their own hearts, which according to Louise Anderson Yeoman had somewhat radical effects on social order. She argues that it caused presbyterian believers, ‘To construct theories of authority which did not work on traditional hierarchical lines, but which instead could give high measures of influence to members of traditionally disenfranchised groups’.¹⁷⁸

While he carefully avoided specifying what these duties were for the common person, Henderson preached that men, women and children all had religious obligations to support the National Covenant. He combined the concept of the sovereignty of God, the authority and centrality of the scriptures with the broad obligations of the covenant to

¹⁷³ Walzer, *Revolution of the Saints*, 2.

¹⁷⁴ Henderson, *Sermons*, 456.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 411.

¹⁷⁶ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 2.

¹⁷⁷ Henderson, *Sermons*, 423.

¹⁷⁸ See Louise Anderson Yeoman, ‘Heart-work: Emotion, Empowerment and Authority in Covenanting

potent effect. He preached pointedly, saying:

Seeing that it is so, sall ye then make yourelves like to asses and slaves, to be subject to all that men pleases to impose on you? No, no; try anything that they impose upon you, before ye obey it, if it is warranted by God or not; because God is the only superior over you.¹⁷⁹

Everyone had a covenant duty to stand for the defence and preservation of true religion, 'according to their vocation'.¹⁸⁰ Nobody in any social or political sphere could miss the broad obligations that Henderson urged them to consider. 'I may say', Henderson preached, 'many obligations enforces many duties; and many obligations being broken will not miss to bring on many judgments upon the breakers, and manifold wrath'.¹⁸¹

As an ordained minister, Henderson believed he had a position of legitimate authority. Yet as a pastor and fellow Christian, Henderson appealed to the whole covenanted community of which he was a part. He urged each of them to consider their personal responsibility before God to take up his or her obligations of the covenant. Linking the personal with the national, Henderson preached that it was selfish to think about one's 'private estate' alone. 'Our principal aim', he argued, 'should be to get our hearts and our thoughts enlarged to think upon God's dealing towards others, especially towards the Kirk'.¹⁸² Speaking to the perceived ruination of the Kirk, Henderson preached, 'If this be not your chiefest sorrow, and if it be not your chiefest joy also, even the estate of the Kirk, then your joy and sorrow is not right'.¹⁸³ Henderson preached to his listeners as those who had covenant obligations to respond to the truth of God's word in whatever station in life God had given them, including women.

Times', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, (University of St Andrews, 1991), 275.

¹⁷⁹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 14.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 90.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 90.

¹⁸² Ibid, 364.

Henderson shared the patriarchal assumptions of his age, which explains why he would refer to women as ‘the weaker sex’.¹⁸⁴ Yet he did make strikingly open appeals to women on many occasions to take up their covenant obligations to support the cause in whatever way they could. Henderson’s exhortations to women in his sermons confirms what historian Sarah Waurechen argues when she notes that the Covenanters’ imagined public sphere can therefore be said to be ‘strikingly open’.¹⁸⁵ It also adds weight to Diane Willen’s argument that Puritan communal life ‘created a unique context in which godly women as well as godly men acquired legitimacy and spiritual authority’.¹⁸⁶

This made for a broad appeal to his listeners to take up their social and political obligations. ‘God takes notice of grace’, preached Henderson, ‘wherever it is, both in young and old, and in all sexes’.¹⁸⁷ Henderson’s sermons were marked by a consistent call to women to take up the obligations of the covenant in whatever manner was appropriate to their calling as women of God. Henderson said, ‘We must not judge grace as we do nature; for there may be Christian courage in women as well as in men, albeit courage be not so natural to them; and they may adhere to Christ even when men forsake him’.¹⁸⁸

When preaching Henderson appealed to his listeners to do whatever they could do to resist evil and to promote the good. In his sermons he appealed to the humble of

¹⁸³ Ibid, 374.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 217.

¹⁸⁵ See Sarah Waurechen, ‘Covenanter Propaganda and Conceptualizations of the Public During the Bishop’s Wars, 1638-1640’, *The Historical Journal*, 52, I (2009), 71. Waurechen does not consider Covenanter theology nor Henderson’s preaching very seriously when making this comment, but her insights corroborate Henderson’s broad appeal to a ‘public’ when he was preaching.

¹⁸⁶ D. Willen, ‘Communion of the Saints’: Spiritual Reciprocity and the Godly Community in Early Modern England’, *Albion* 27(1995), 20. See also Margaret Steele, ‘Covenanting Propaganda’, 217.

¹⁸⁷ Henderson, *Sermons*, 178.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 336. While distinguishing between formal (women could not hold ecclesiastical office or sit in assemblies) and informal settings, this is quite a striking comment, and it fits with the findings of recent scholarship, which argues that women sometimes enjoyed more space and opportunity for expression and

whatever station to promote the cause of the covenant.¹⁸⁹ He identified pride as the most fundamental problem to which a godly listener should be attentive which might keep him or her from supporting the Covenanter efforts.¹⁹⁰ If a listener would humble himself or herself before God, Henderson preached, then God would bless them. In one sermon he proclaimed:

Many of you will say, What good can I do to the kirk? Ay, indeed, all of you may do something. If ye can do no more but this, put up a prayer to God for her... the meanest of you all may sit at home in private corner of your own house and bless God for that which he has already done into the work and beseech him that he would prosecute it and go on into it as he has begun.¹⁹¹

Henderson preached that humility before God would provoke the mockery of the wicked, who would call them ‘puritans’ or other such names.¹⁹² In more than one place Henderson encouraged his listeners to ignore the common slur of Puritan that was attached to their cause and to face such persecution and mockery as their biblical forefathers had done in the Bible.¹⁹³

Henderson implored his listeners to consider themselves like the biblical examples of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the midwives of the Israelites, and the Apostle Peter, all of whom resisted civil magistrates that were promoting something contrary to God.¹⁹⁴ He preached that the gospel provoked social change as it changed the hearts of those who would humble themselves to it. So he preached:

When the gospel comes into a land, it makes a change, either in land or in person; and it runs first to the heart, and makes a change there, and then changes the outward, and so it makes that to come to pass...the wolf shall dwell with the lamb.¹⁹⁵

agency in the religious sphere than in the political. See Yeoman, ‘Heart Work’, 275.

¹⁸⁹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 238.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 350-56.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 374.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 358.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 434.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 240.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 240.

Henderson evoked images of the millennial blessings that would come to Scotland if his listeners supported the National Covenant. If everyone in the country sought humility before God, Henderson believed that Scotland would be a happy and blessed nation.¹⁹⁶

Covenant Theology – Blessings and Curses

Henderson preached what could be described as a basic covenant pattern: If you obeyed, you would be blessed; if you disobeyed, you would be cursed.¹⁹⁷ ‘Ye may perceive here’, said Henderson, ‘that all the ills that comes upon man, they come upon him for sin’.¹⁹⁸ The basic way of things, Henderson argued, offered his listeners a covenant framework for life.¹⁹⁹ ‘There is nothing that is comfortable to us but it is a blessing of God’, Henderson said, ‘and there is nothing that is hurtful to us but it is a curse of God’.²⁰⁰ This provided his listeners what he believed was a path of faithfulness. His hearers could listen to the preacher’s exhortations with a soft heart and be blessed, or they could refuse to listen with a hard-heart and be cursed.

Henderson’s view of sin was a vital component to this covenant framework. For Henderson, the major obstacle for his hearers was not so much ignorance per se, but the problem of sin. Sin was behind pride and was so basic to Henderson’s preaching that all of his extant sermons include a direct or indirect reference to it. According to Henderson:

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 255.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 254.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 3.

¹⁹⁹ This framework is common to the idea of providence in early modern Scotland. Walsham also notes that providence includes a kind of judicial providentialism, which provides urgent motives for people to repent in order to avert divine judgment and gain divine blessings. See Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, 18-19.

²⁰⁰ Henderson, *Sermons*, 2.

The sinner, till he repent of his sin, he is cursed already: if he live in that estate he is born into, he is void of grace, repentance and faith; and if he go on so, then he must perish in sin, and so he cannot escape the curse of God. And so evermore till we repent the curse of God is upon us, albeit we be not sensible of it.²⁰¹

Henderson preached that sin was the greatest obstacle to Scotland's blessings. He preached that sin had a self-destructive quality to it. As a violation of the will of God for humanity, anyone who sins against God also sins against themselves and others. 'They are', said Henderson, 'twining and twisting so many ropes to hang themselves, and when men begin to fight against God, he can take their own sword and sheathe it into their own side'.²⁰²

Henderson warned his listeners that they should be careful of sinning with impunity because one never knew when the cup of God's wrath would be full and God would no longer be patient or sparing.²⁰³ If a person or a nation turned back to their former sins after God had once rescued them, then they were like a dog returning to his vomit, from which there is little hope of escape.²⁰⁴ If Scotland, for instance, turned her back on God after the great blessings of the Reformation, then she would incur the judgment of God. Henderson believed that as a preacher he must warn with judgment so that his hearers may flee to the mercy of God, 'As there is a necessity laid upon us to preach the gospel, so is there a necessity laid upon us to pronounce this sentence'.²⁰⁵

Henderson openly encouraged his listeners to consider the weight of God's judgment, hoping that the people of the land would be 'stirred up to pray to God, as they have

²⁰¹ Ibid, 5.

²⁰² Ibid, 71.

²⁰³ Ibid, 159.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 40.

²⁰⁵ Henderson, *The Bishop's Doom*, 13.

professed to be desirers of a Reformation'.²⁰⁶ The words of God's covenant should be received by the humble as something comfortable to them since they were willing to listen and obey.²⁰⁷

Henderson's preaching included a consistent level of instruction about the current events. He used the pulpit to outline what he believed about the basic nature of the conflict in Scotland. For instance, he preached that the Service Book, which the bishops were trying to force on the Kirk, would undermine a godly view of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and ultimately undermine the preaching of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.²⁰⁸ Henderson believed that God intended the Kirk to be free to convene under its own authority, and if necessary, the Kirk was free to hold a general assembly without royal warrant. The lack of such assemblies, argued Henderson, was one of the basic causes of the conflict before the nation.²⁰⁹ Using the pulpit for this kind of teaching provided Henderson and the Covenanters with a kind of divine gravitas. Given the earlier outlined theological views of the authority and centrality of preaching as the word of God, this gave Henderson's view of the conflict an almost 'inspired' quality that added significant moral weight to his 'construction of the times'. In Henderson's preaching the Covenanters and their followers received clear moral direction combined with a strong sense of hope for the future.

National Covenanting – For Kirk and Kingdom

For Henderson, covenanting was personal as well as national, which made his appeals very persuasive. Henderson urged his listeners to 'enter in a covenant with God' in

²⁰⁶ Henderson, *Sermons*, 81.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 103.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 396-397.

order to be blessed.²¹⁰ His hearers were called to be ‘willing’ to enter into personal covenant with God, by which Henderson meant taking the opportunity to subscribe to the National Covenant. Mullan argues that Henderson did this because he felt the need to ‘personalize the national’.²¹¹ In his preaching Henderson transformed the National Covenant into the most important spiritual issue by which one should judge his/her own personal spirituality. In one instance, Henderson made the national troubles personal, ‘Surely the Lord will not take it in good part that we be crying for a reformation in the Kirk, if in the meantime we be not crying also and labouring earnestly for a refomation into our awin hearts’.²¹²

In this sense, Henderson taught that the National Covenant was ‘the’ major spiritual issue before the people of God in Scotland. Henderson understood the National Covenant not merely as a ‘political’ document. For him, the National Covenant represented a spiritual conflict that placed repentance and faith on par with support for the National Covenant. To be fair to Henderson, he believed that the National Covenant was a remedy to idolatry. Thus, it offered the nation an opportunity for repentance of their most significant sins.²¹³ Still, Blaikie made a salient point that the state of affairs had an unfavourable influence on the pulpit. More than ever, loyalty to Christ came to be associated with adherence to a certain outward course. Faithfulness to Christ meant supporting the policy of the Covenants; and opposition to this cause meant disloyalty to Christ. Some historians have rightly noted that adherence to the National Covenant came to be regarded with some equivalent to the whole duty of man.²¹⁴ Henderson’s

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 385.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 15.

²¹¹ Mullan, *Narratives of the Religious Self*, 321.

²¹² Henderson, *Sermons*, 120.

²¹³ Ibid, 5.

²¹⁴ Blaikie, *Preachers of Scotland*, 94. See a more updated critique in Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 80-1.

preaching contributed to this idea as he taught that the cause of the covenant was the cause of God.²¹⁵

Henderson preached that if the people accepted and followed the principles enunciated in the National Covenant, they would have the merciful visitation of heavenly blessings like Abraham had when he followed God: as the dew is multiplied upon the earth, so shall thy people be.²¹⁶ Wariston's description of the signings of the National Covenant as if they were revivals fits with Henderson's call to the people of Scotland to seek nation-wide revival in supporting the covenant. Henderson cautioned those who were wavering in their support that if they refused to support the National Covenant, they would be cursed.

Keeping the laws of the covenant would not earn one salvation, but it was a very important barometer of the soul's tenderness and faithfulness to God.²¹⁷ For instance, 'Saint Andrews', Henderson warned, 'shall be as Gideon's fleece; that all the kingdom about it shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and it shall only be dry'.²¹⁸ By July 1638, aside from the Highlands, most of Scotland was generally in support of the covenant, except for the northern regions, supported most importantly in city of Aberdeen. Henry Guthrie, a hostile contemporary, lamented that Henderson had become such a persuasive preacher for the Covenanter cause that he single-handedly defeated the Aberdeen Doctors.²¹⁹

Henderson's preaching drew explicit parallels between Israel's experience and

²¹⁵ Henderson, *Sermons*, 324.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 25.

²¹⁷ Stout, *The New England Soul*, 24.

²¹⁸ Henderson, *Sermons*, 26.

Scotland's troubles. According to Wilson, this was a pattern that was consciously construed as a normative pattern for Puritan preaching before Parliament during the Westminster Assembly.²²⁰ Henderson, like Gillespie and other Scottish preachers, likened Scotland to Israel, who as a covenanted nation was the bride of Jehovah.²²¹ The Kirk, said Henderson, can be understood 'under the name Israel'.²²² This meant that in his public addresses, Henderson's theology was less than exact. At times he blended the nation of Scotland with the people of God, as if to be Scottish was to be part of the people of God.²²³ This confirms Mullan's statement that in Covenanter theology, 'church and nation were ambiguously connected'.²²⁴

When preaching in July of 1638 to a 'huge confluence of people' in Aberdeen, Henderson appealed directly to them. According to one source, when Henderson finished preaching his sermon, the covenant was spread out and more than five hundred people signed it.²²⁵ On the next day he preached again, and more of the leaders and ministers joined them in signing the Covenant.²²⁶ Such appeals were persuasive, as preaching was used as one of the Covenanters' most important instruments in gaining support for their cause.

Henderson's preaching was blatantly political, as regards its push for people to support the National Covenant; still, he did not use a stridently polemical tone. His tone remained optimistic and hopeful. In this sense, Henderson's tone was less

²¹⁹ Guthrie, *Memoirs*, 37-39.

²²⁰ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 43-47.

²²¹ Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium*, 115; Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 223.

²²² Henderson, *Sermons*, 263.

²²³ *Ibid*, 14, 263.

²²⁴ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 72.

²²⁵ Spalding *Troubles*, I, 69-70.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, I, 70

condemnatory than his fellow Covenanter, Samuel Rutherford. According to John Coffey, Rutherford believed that condemnation went hand in hand with appeal.²²⁷ As noted, Henderson also believed that covenant warnings were a vital part of the overall covenantal approach to God. Yet, generally speaking, Henderson's covenant warnings acted as steps on his way to walking his listeners to an optimistic conclusion. In this sense, his preaching, though not dramatically different than Rutherford, maintained a discernibly more optimistic tone.

Scotland's Place in History

Henderson's preaching provided the nation a self-conscious view of itself and the conflict that was unfolding before it. Henderson was a preacher whom Wilson described as someone using the pulpit to create an official 'construction of the times'.²²⁸ For example, Henderson preached that in its past, and especially in the signing of the National Covenant, the Scottish Kirk held a special place in history.²²⁹ In fact, the pamphlets that Henderson would later write in the cause of the Covenanters reflected this same construction of the times.

At this point it is worth referencing Nicholas Guyatt's work, *Providence and the Invention of the United States*. Though Guyatt's work is directed primarily to America, he distinguished between different kinds of providentialism that prevailed in Britain and America in the seventeenth century. He argued that an important kind of national providentialism held that God had chosen some nations to play a special role in history, and that this anointment confirmed benefits and responsibilities that set them apart as a

²²⁷ Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 234.

²²⁸ Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 7.

²²⁹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 381.

special place and people from the rest.²³⁰ What Guyatt argues for New England, Coffey argues for Scotland, using Rutherford's belief that God was in the business not simply of calling the elect out from the nations, but he was in the business of calling nations too.²³¹ Henderson's preaching confirms both these arguments.

According to Henderson, God had given Scotland a peculiar place of blessings among the nations of the earth. 'He made a difference', said Henderson, 'between this land and other lands about us; we had almost lost all hope of continuing the light and purity of the gospel among us, that yet thou is pleased to work among us, and to make it as a resurrection from the dead'.²³² Here again, practical godliness for Henderson was translated into urging his listeners to join in the cause of the National Covenant. Sermons were one of the most important and pervasive sources of information for people of all social classes to learn about the events around them, and Henderson was not timid in using the sermon as a means of teaching his hearers how to interpret the times around them.²³³ He consistently outlined a particular view of history that connected the National Covenant with a strong sense of divine destiny that called his listeners to action on its behalf.²³⁴

Guyatt also distinguishes between 'historical' and 'apocalyptic' providentialism.

Historical providentialism taught that God had specially worked in history to prepare a nation for a role by divinely tailoring their past so that they are perfectly fitted to

²³⁰ Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607-1876* (Cambridge, 2007), 3.

²³¹ Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 228.

²³² Henderson, *Sermons*, 135. At this point Henderson was tapping into long-standing historical appeals from the works of Hector Boece and John Mair, who had produced Scottish histories, connecting God's special providential care deep into antiquity. According to John Coffey, these Scottish histories enabled the Covenanters to present historical justification for their cause, as well as to attract support from disaffected Scottish nobility. See Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 185.

²³³ Henderson, *Sermons*, 20.

²³⁴ *Ibid*, 135, 381, 459, 462.

achieve this divine mission.²³⁵ Henderson definitely preached this in his sermons.

However, the category of ‘apocalyptic’ providentialism is hard to fit in Henderson’s work exactly. According to Guyatt, apocalyptic providentialism was a belief that God was managing a nation’s destiny so as to cause this nation’s story to correspond to the narrative of Revelation.²³⁶ This is where Guyatt’s definition, though helpful, is not an exact fit for Henderson.

At this point, Henderson began to develop an emphasis on a strong providential hope, or what might be called an eschatological hope, especially as it related to Scotland’s role in the future blessings of the kingdom of God. I will refer to it as eschatology because, though Henderson never made references to the explicitly apocalyptic commentaries by Napier, Brightman or other well-known apocalyptic commentators, he began to develop a view of future kingdom blessings that focused on Scotland and her place in providential history.²³⁷ This corresponds to John Coffey’s work on Rutherford’s earliest position on eschatology.²³⁸

According to Coffey, Rutherford’s treatment of Scotland’s history was modelled after the pattern of the Hebrew prophet’s apocalyptic treatment of the history of Israel.²³⁹

Along with Rutherford, Henderson’s fellow ministers Robert Baillie and George Gillespie also stressed eschatology to greater or lesser extents. Baillie did not make apocalyptic predictions about the end of the world, while Gillespie went so far as to date

²³⁵ Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States*, 6.

²³⁶ Ibid, 6.

²³⁷ I generally avoid using the word ‘apocalyptic’. The word ‘apocalyptic’ means ‘unveiling’ and usually represents a particular type of eschatology dealing specifically with the interpretation of prophetic/apocalyptic books, and this usually in connection with predictions or related teachings regarding the coming of the millennial kingdom, either literally or spiritually. In regard to eschatology; see my definition provided in Chapter 3, Alexander Henderson: the Presbyterian’.

²³⁸ See Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 238.

²³⁹ Ibid, 227.

the collapse of antichrist to the year 1643.²⁴⁰ This indicates that there were various eschatological positions among the leading Covenanter ministers; yet they tended to share a growing hope for the future blessings of the kingdom of God as hinging on Scotland's response to God's special blessings.²⁴¹ This would become more explicit after the Glasgow General Assembly in 1638. In this sense Henderson preached a kind of eschatological providentialism.

Conclusion

In his sermons supporting of the National Covenant in 1638, Henderson combined providence and eschatology to great effect. He outlined the history of the world into seasons or ages that related to the ultimate progress of the Kirk. He spoke of the Kirk in her infancy, her youth, her perfection, and the final stage was her old age or maturity, in which Scotland was participating.²⁴² Henderson preached that the people of Scotland had great reason to bless God, because in Scotland God had provided 'special care and providence over his Kirk' and he was leading the Kirk to victory.²⁴³

Henderson preached that God was using stones to build the Kirk into a kingdom that would fight and prevail.²⁴⁴ This related to Henderson's growing interest in using eschatology in his public work, since as Coffey argues, the Covenanters saw themselves as building the temple described in Ezekiel's apocalyptic prophecy. This temple would be constructed about the time of the destruction of Antichrist and the conversion of the

²⁴⁰ See Ibid, 238. According to Crawford Gribben, George Gillespie openly preached at the Westminster Assembly using well-known apocalyptic images and ideas to persuade his English brothers to bring the synod to a quicker conclusion. See Gribben, 'George Gillespie and the Scottish revolution', in Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium*, 101-126.

²⁴¹ See Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 241. See also Arthur H. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the age of James VI* (Edinburgh, 1979), 142-43.

²⁴² Henderson, *Sermons*, 270.

²⁴³ Ibid, 273-81.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 279-80.

Jews.²⁴⁵ This was latent in Henderson's early sermons but it became more explicit in his later work.²⁴⁶ Henderson used images that pointed to the growth of God's kingdom and the blessings that would move concentrically outward to the whole world. He preached that 'the kirk of Scotland may truly say that their affliction was not in vain'.²⁴⁷ The sufferings of the godly, Henderson argued, would not be in vain, but they would bring forth 'the quiet fruits of righteousness'.²⁴⁸ Concluding with an optimistic call to support the covenant, Henderson stated, 'And if we be the people of God, and insist in wrestling against his enemies, we need not to fear but to be victorious'.²⁴⁹

In spite of constructing self-consciously Scottish sermons to handle particularly Scottish problems for his Scottish listeners, Henderson did not preach Scottish 'nationalism', per se. He taught that God was using Scotland, but not for Scotland's sake alone. Instead, Henderson's preaching contained a strain of what could be referred to as 'reformed catholicity'.²⁵⁰ Henderson taught that the success or failure of his cause would have important effects on other nations. In particular, Henderson hoped for God's blessings on Scotland's neighbour in the south, England.

It was this angle in Henderson's sermons that called his listeners to imagine themselves as a small but significant part of a larger divine destiny. He called, for instance, his

²⁴⁵ Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 246.

²⁴⁶ Crawford Gribben points to an important but sometimes overlooked reference in the *Directory for Public Worship*, in which ministers were directed to pray for the conversion of the Jews, which was to hasten the second coming of the Lord. See Crawford Gribben, 'The Church of Scotland and the English Apocalyptic Imagination, 1630 to 1650', *The Scottish Historical Review*, 88 (April 2009), 46. It is important to note that Baillie mentions on several occasions that Henderson was the Directory's primary author. See Baillie, *Letters*, II, 186, 250.

²⁴⁷ Henderson, *Sermons*, 281.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 278.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 279.

²⁵⁰ An emphasis on Scotland as an important nation did create some tension among the three kingdoms, especially later at the Westminster Assembly, but Henderson's reformed catholicity stands in contrast with S.A. Burrell's argument that the Covenanters had an 'insular sense of national self-confidence'. See

Scottish listeners to consider their actions and ‘cast our eyes through the rest of the world’.²⁵¹ He told his hearers that they should desire the prayers of all the reformed Kirks in Europe, with whom they would join in this grand cause.²⁵² In a similar manner Rutherford called on Scotland to consider its place in the grand scheme of redemption in bringing blessings to the nations as predicted in Isaiah 49.²⁵³ Henderson believed, preached, and publicly prayed that the blessings of the Kirk of Scotland would eventually move out to bless the Kirk in all parts of the rest of the world.²⁵⁴ This would become an agonizing part of Henderson’s later work at the Westminster Assembly, where he urged similar catholicity, but failed. Still, this call to a divine destiny was a positive and winsome element of his sermons in Scotland.

It was Henderson’s emphasis on Scotland’s role in history that helped to form a strong sense of Scottish national consciousness. Henderson preached using well-known categories of providence very effectively since, according to Coffey, such categories were readily accepted convictions in early modern Scotland.²⁵⁵ God’s providence was governed by his covenant faithfulness to punish evil and reward good. Henderson built on the shared assumptions that ‘God was the final cause of every occurrence without exception, earth-shattering or inconsequential’.²⁵⁶ He was also speaking to a ‘godly’ audience who was supposed to be ready and willing to ‘detect the hand of God in daily events’.²⁵⁷ The godly in Scotland were evidently ready to hear that God was bringing

Burrell, ‘The apocalyptic vision of the early Covenanters’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 43 (1964), 2, 16.

²⁵¹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 426.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁵³ Coffey argues that Rutherford believed that God had specially called out Scotland for a redemptive role in history that did not provide grounds for national pride per se, but which did provide motive for genuine hope in their cause as equated with God’s cause in history. See Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 228.

²⁵⁴ Henderson, *Sermons*, 249.

²⁵⁵ See Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 226-27.

²⁵⁶ See Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, 10.

²⁵⁷ Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 226.

them to a strategic place in his providence that held the key to the future blessings of the kingdom of God.

Henderson fused Scotland's frustration over Charles I's rule with the popular hope for a blessed providential destiny. His sermons were packed with a sense of prophetic mission that matched what James Darsey calls the rhetoric of radical reform, which he outlines, saying:

Rhetorics of radial reform in particular exhibit similarities with the discursive tradition of the Old Testament prophets. Both have in common a sense of mission, a desire to bring the practice of the people into accord with a sacred principle and an uncompromising, often excoriating stance toward a reluctant audience.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ James Darsey, *The Prophetic and Radical Rhetoric in America* (New York, 1997), 16.

Chapter 4

Alexander Henderson: The Presbyterian

This chapter argues that the centrality of presbyterian polity was due in large part to the public leadership of Alexander Henderson in promoting what could be called eschatological ecclesiology. As moderator of the Glasgow General Assembly of 1638, Henderson worked hard to manage the meeting on behalf of the Covenanter cause in which he presented presbyterian ecclesiology as more than a mere structure for church government. For Henderson, it represented the hope of the future. This confirms Crawford Gribben's argument that for the Scottish Covenanters presbyterianism represented an ideal millenarian order.¹ Henderson was a key proponent of this approach, as he blended ecclesiology and eschatology so as to combine the hopes of the millennium with the hopes of the presbyterian cause.² Henderson's public activity represented a theologically nuanced ecclesiology, yet because Henderson was the primary public spokesman for the Covenanters, his views are a good summary of the mainstream ideas of the movement.

Henderson's eschatological ecclesiology corroborates some of the findings in John Coffey's study of Samuel Rutherford. In *Politics and Religion*, Coffey argues that the Scottish past was moulded by two narratives: Buchanan's myth of the ancient constitution, and Calderwoods' tale of the covenanted and apostate Kirk. Henderson's public activity did not reveal a dependence on Buchanan, per se. However, he used biblical images and blended them with the basic narrative found in popular Covenanter

¹ Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature & Theology, 1550-1682* (Dublin, 2000), 116.

² Henderson, *Sermons*, 154.

histories such as Calderwood and Scot.³ Here Henderson's work on ecclesiology confirms what Coffey notes when he states that the apocalyptic story was the metanarrative into which these particular narratives could be fitted. 'Scotland's story made greatest sense', says Coffey, 'when it was placed within the context of God's redemptive plan for the consummation of history'.⁴

Historiographical Context

Henderson's most important biographer, John Aiton, provided an exhaustive outline of Henderson's public opposition to prelacy and its abuses. However, Aiton did not detail Henderson's positive arguments for Presbyterian ecclesiology, especially as they were connected to eschatology. This chapter argues for a long overdue assessment because it chronicles Henderson's positive arguments for Presbyterian ecclesiology, not merely that they were 'biblical', but as they were linked to his eschatological hopes for Scotland, and through Scotland to the world.

For instance, Crawford Gribben notes that Scottish Puritans, as compared to English Puritans, have continued to be neglected, 'both by literary and historical scholars in Scottish studies and by those working in puritan studies more generally'.⁵ If this is true

³ This confirms John Coffey's findings that Covenanter resistance arguments were not dependent on Buchanan's political ideas, as much as they were connected to a kind of second Reformation biblicism. Coffey comments that Buchanan's work differed from Covenanter writings in its 'humanist form, its urbane tone and its overwhelmingly classical citations'. Moreover, Buchanan's work had little or nothing to say about idolatry or the defense of true religion, which dominated Henderson's public concerns. As such, Buchanan's focus was on the tyranny of the papacy, not on its idolatry, which made him less relevant to Henderson as a source. See Coffey, 'George Buchanan and the Scottish Covenanters', in Roger Mason and Caroline Erskine, eds, *George Buchanan: Political Thought and History in Early Modern Europe and the Atlantic World* (Ashgate, forthcoming).

⁴ Coffey, *Politics and Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), 241.

⁵ Crawford Gribben, 'The Church of Scotland and the English apocalyptic Imagination', *Scottish Historical Review*, 88 (2009), 37.

generally, it is even more apparent in the theological sub-category of eschatology.⁶

Henderson's ecclesiology as linked to eschatology is an area of his public career that reflects the same kind of dearth in scholarship as do the other areas that this thesis is addressing overall.

S.A. Burrell wrote a seminal article in 1964 entitled, 'The apocalyptic vision of the early Covenanters'.⁷ His essay did not develop the various eschatological schools of thought, but he provided the necessary framework to argue that the Covenanters anchored their activities in the expectation that God would bless them with a hopeful future, especially if it were a 'Presbyterian' future. Burrell also argued that eschatology was not the purview of fringe extremists but was an idea central to the Covenanter hopes for the future. This is especially helpful for the study of Henderson because he was the primary clerical spokesman for the Covenanter cause, and in this sense his views articulated a consensus among the Covenanters.

Burrell's essay preceded an intense interest in apocalyptic studies in the 1970's, most of which were focused on English and New England puritans. Crawford Gribben notes that these studies did not produce a clear or felicitous taxonomy of terms, but they indicated a need for more study.⁸ Marjorie Reeves contributed with an essay on history and eschatology, though it stopped short of Henderson's time. Arthur H. Williamson published an important work, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI*, in which he outlined some of the major themes in the development of a Scottish consciousness that were rooted in apocalyptic and/or eschatological hopes for their

⁶ Ibid, 37.

⁷ See S.A. Burrell, 'The apocalyptic vision of the early Covenanters', *Scottish Historical Review*, 43 (1964), 1-24.

⁸ See Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium*, 13-19.

nation. Because he concludes his work with an epilogue on the National Covenant, Williamson does not cover Henderson's eschatology in particular.⁹ Still, Williamson's work provides a solid study of the generalized framework of eschatology in Scotland up to the time when Henderson took on the role of the nations' most important clerical leader.

Williamson's work has been supplemented in John Coffey's biography on Rutherford, *Politics and Religion*, in which Coffey develops the close connection between Rutherford's understanding of the overall struggle as a battle between Christ and Antichrist.¹⁰ To date, Crawford Gribben has provided the most developed studies involving the themes of early modern Scottish eschatology.¹¹ Particularly, his essay on George Gillespie in his study, *The Puritan Millennium*, provides indisputable evidence for the centrality of eschatology for Scottish Covenanter ecclesiology among Henderson's fellow Scottish ministers at the Westminster Assembly.¹²

In spite of the growth of studies on eschatology, some of the leading historians of this period still do not highlight eschatology in their work. As recently as 2005, Allan Macinnes published *The British Revolution*, which does not offer any sustained attention to eschatology.¹³ Macinnes does acknowledge that historians should take into account 'apocalyptic visions as well as baronial politics', but his own work is indifferent

⁹ Williamson does deal briefly with Rutherford, Baillie, Gillespie and Wariston, though he does little to develop their ideas. He does not, however, deal with Henderson. See Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness*, 143-46.

¹⁰ See Coffey, 'The National Prophet', in Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 225-253.

¹¹ Gribben, 'The Church of Scotland and the English apocalyptic Imagination' *Scottish Historical Review*, 88 (2009), 37.

¹² See Gribben, 'George Gillespie and the Scottish revolution', in Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium*, 101-26.

¹³ Macinnes' most recent biographical work similarly ignores eschatology. See Macinnes, *The British Confederate: Archibald Campbell, Marquess of Argyll, 1607-1661* (Edinburgh, 2011).

to the latest studies.¹⁴ In fact, Macinnes deliberately downplays eschatology, saying that during the Service Book controversy the purveying of apocalyptic visions was secondary to selective briefings of sympathetic nobles and gentry.¹⁵ This follows from Macinnes' commitment to what he calls the primacy of 'political process, not ecclesiastical issues'.¹⁶ He even argues that Henderson's role in the tract, 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', verifies this approach.¹⁷

Macinnes' argument is startling since Henderson, in the very document to which he points, actually raised the ecclesiastical controversy to an astonishing level, comparing it to the theological equivalent of the Council of Nicaea.¹⁸ In fact, in the opening statements of 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', Henderson told his audience that their battle was with those who had given themselves over to Satan.¹⁹

Henderson's Eschatology

Henderson's public statements on eschatology developed cautiously at first, but as the conflict with Charles I intensified, Henderson believed that he and the nation were involved in a cosmic battle between Christ and antichrist.²⁰ The King's liturgical policies had essentially attempted to legalize idolatry and had taken the King's cadre of

¹⁴ Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 7. Though Macinnes makes brief use of Williamson and Mullan, he does not cite a single reference from Burrell, Coffey, or Gribben whose recent works have highlighted not only the centrality of religion, but which have also shown detailed sensitivity to the nuances of Scottish eschatological ideas.

¹⁵ Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 113.

¹⁶ Macinnes, 'The Scottish Constitution, 1638-51: The Rise and Fall of Oligarchic Centralism', in Morrill, ed., *The Scottish National Covenant*, 107.

¹⁷ Ibid, 107.

¹⁸ See Henderson, 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', np.

¹⁹ Ibid, np.

²⁰ When speaking of 'eschatology', I am using a broad definition to mean the latter days or the end of the present order, which may be used to designate the consummation of God's redemptive purpose, whether or not an 'end of the world' is anticipated. See George E. Ladd, 'Apocalyptic,' in J.D. Douglas, ed., *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, 1962), 44; F.F. Bruce, 'Eschatology', in Everett F. Harrison, ed., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1960), 187. For a similarly broad usage in regard to John Knox's apocalyptic views, see Richard Kyle, 'John Knox and Apocalyptic Thought', *The Sixteenth*

bishops to the side of Rome and the antichrist. This conclusion motivated Henderson to take a more vocal position in his public activities, principally in pushing the idea that presbyterianism was God's appointed means to defend against the encroachments of antichrist.

When Henderson used the concept of eschatology he seems to have envisaged Presbyterian ecclesiology bringing an end to the old age while inaugurating a new period of redemptive history that was related to the coming of the Protestant Reformation. He is not clear in providing a specific definition per se, but he definitely speaks in language dressed in apocalyptic expectations, which expectations develop in his public work as his cause develops. This means that Henderson's use of eschatological or apocalyptic language lacked not only a crystal-clear definition, but it also had a kind of morphing, evolutionary character common to much of Henderson's public work.

Henderson became convinced that God was using Scotland, and in particular Scotland's ecclesiology, to usher in a new era of kingdom blessings. Referring to Henderson's assertions as 'millennial' might indicate a closer connection to specific exegetical positions on the apocalyptic writings of scripture, such as Daniel or Revelation. Henderson did not make public statements about the nature of the one thousand year reign of Christ from Revelation, per se. He did, however, deny that Christ's coming kingdom was going to be made manifest on earth. In fact, his last sermon before parliament in 1645 indicated that he was weary with predictions of a coming earthly reign of Christ. Henderson preached that the kingdom of God was a spiritual one that

Century Journal, 15 (1984), 449-469.

was ruled by Christ himself through the church and not an earthly or national kingdom. He preached, 'His Kingdome is not of this world; it is not an earthly or worldly Kingdome, and therefore by consequence must be a spirituall and heavenly Kingdome'.²¹

Even in his earliest sermons in 1638, Henderson commonly used Old Testament images that he associated with apocalyptic or eschatological future blessings, and he blended these with his understanding of covenantal blessings and judgments. He approached the Bible as containing images of blessings and judgments in the Old and New Testaments, which he believed prefigured the future of God's people primarily in the church. In this sense, his public teachings can appropriately be called apocalyptic or eschatological.

This suggests that Henderson's public activity connected Old Testament covenanting and eschatology as part of the cause. Henderson's understanding of the blessings/cursings model of covenant theology directed him to see that if Scotland followed the most central means of protecting the church against abuse in doctrine and liturgy, then God would be pleased, and Scotland would be blessed to play an important role in the prophecy of future blessings to the world. Henderson's eschatology may be characterized as 'covenantal optimism' that increasingly hinged on Scotland's full commitment to presbyterian ecclesiology.

Appeals for a General Assembly

In the National Covenant, per se, Henderson did not overtly link a fully formed

²¹ Henderson, *Sermon Preached*, IV, 11. Henderson's position acted as something of a foil for the more radical prophetic predictions that Wilson argues reflected some of the 'collective eschatological expectations of the commissioners at the Westminster Assembly'. See Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism during the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton, 1969), 189-96.

presbyterian ecclesiology with the conflict. However, in almost every appeal that he crafted, he argued for the calling of a free national synod or general assembly. From the beginning, Henderson was convinced that the Service Book could not be properly considered without the call of a general assembly. Thus, liturgy and ecclesiology were linked. This is significant because, though casuistic, Henderson and his fellow Covenanters linked liturgy, ecclesiology, and, increasingly, eschatology. Henderson believed that the closer Scotland moved to authentic faithfulness, the more vital it became to maintain godly ecclesiology so that the nation could worship God in purity and invoke his blessings on the land.²²

For Henderson, the call of an assembly was a fundamental component of a genuinely free church, and it was a key plank in his presbyterianism. His petitions prior to July of 1637 appealed to the King to call a general assembly.²³ As early as 23 August 1637, Henderson co-authored a supplication of the ministers of St Andrews presbytery, arguing for the calling of a general assembly.²⁴ He continued this supplication campaign up to the public signing of the National Covenant in February of 1638. The controversy that developed from March to November of 1638 was in multiple ways a battle over ecclesiology.

Henderson believed he was battling with the King on this matter in the same way that his Scottish forefathers had battled with James VI in the past. Calderwood's history included the theme of a king who was moving in the wrong direction, but who was met in valiant resistance by the godly, who merely wanted a free Kirk, and who were

²² RKS, I, 192; Henderson, *Government and Order*, 32.

²³ Rothes, *Relations*, 7

²⁴ Printed in Rothes *Relations*, 46.

humbly seeking the will of God.²⁵ These were the arguments Henderson was making, and according to Spalding, people were crowding into the streets to hear him preach these ideas. People were also listening attentively to his answers to the objections against the National Covenant.²⁶

In May 1638, the Marquis of Hamilton was dispatched north as the King's commissioner, which increased participation in the Tables that had been created in November of the previous year.²⁷ Henderson was meeting with the suppliants in June and travelling to Aberdeen to preach in July of 1638.²⁸ As one of the primary ministerial representatives, Henderson tried to negotiate with Hamilton while also travelling around the nation, attempting to gather continued momentum and support for the National Covenant. By this point, according to Guthry, Henderson had become virtually the primary spokesman for the Covenanter cause, and the only remaining hold outs against the Covenant were Aberdeen and a few northern regions.²⁹

Henderson wrote or co-authored multiple public petitions and statements with the repetitive theme of the need for a 'free' general assembly. In May of 1638, Henderson appealed to the King in what was called the 'Articles for the present peace of the Kirk and Kingdom of Scotland'. Henderson argued that a free general assembly would be one of the crucial elements for the resolution of the present troubles.³⁰

²⁵ Henderson, *Sermons*, 8; Wariston, *Diary*, 330-411; *RKS*, I, 3; Calderwood, *History*, vii, 513.

²⁶ Spalding, *Troubles*, 69.

²⁷ Macinnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement, 1625-1641* (Edinburgh, 1991), 184; Laura Stewart, *Urban Politics and the British Civil Wars, Edinburgh, 1617-53* (Boston, 2006), 234.

²⁸ Row, *History*, 495.

²⁹ Guthry, *Memoirs*, 46.

³⁰ Rothes, *Relations*, 102. Rothes attributed Henderson with sole authorship of this appeal. See Rothes, *Relations*, 100.

By 'free' Henderson meant that the general assembly could convene, determine its members, and direct its affairs without being subject to the will of the king or his representatives. Henderson believed that the general assembly had a divine right to direct its own affairs and was capable of acting in its own right without the King's authority. In early April of 1638, Henderson and Warriston penned another appeal entitled, 'The least that can be asked to settle this church and kingdom in a solid and durable peace', wherein they argued that long-lasting order in the nation can never occur, so long as the pastors and professors have the terror of the High Commission standing over their heads.³¹

Henderson preached to Hamilton in Leith without threats or menacing as if to emphasize that he was not interested in political aims, but he insisted on liturgical and ecclesiastical reformation. Henderson showed so much respect in this sermon that some of his fellow Covenanters thought he showed 'too much prudence' by not scourging the bishops in his preaching.³² Still in his official appeals, Henderson pressed forward in requiring the call of a free general assembly. Henderson was so vital for writing these appeals that he was usually the final editor in providing what Rothes called 'the smoother straine'.³³ By late June of 1638, Henderson and the other suppliants argued that the church essentially had a God-given right to convene itself to do the work of God, even if the King refused to be the one who officially called it together.³⁴ This was flowing naturally out of some of Henderson's first petitions, arguing that the Kirk had a liberty granted by Christ to be independent of royal domination. He argued, 'An independent kirke and her own pastors should be most able to decerne and directe

³¹ Rothes, *Relations*, 96.

³² Baillie, *Letters*, I, 86.

³³ Rothes, *Relations*, 162.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 154.

quahat doe best sime our mesour of reformatiaone and quahat may serve most for the good of the people'.³⁵

Henderson and his fellow Covenanters asserted ever more boldly, 'God forbid that any man should be so impious as to think that the royall prerogative doth containe or import any thing contrarie to the royall prerogative of Christ by whom kings reigne'.³⁶ He went further, arguing that the safety of the Kirk is the supreme law.³⁷

Henderson argued that Christ was the ultimate king of Scotland's Kirk and Kingdom, and thus it was Christ who granted liberty to the Kirk; it was Christ who directed the king to act on behalf of the church.³⁸ He agreed that the King had a right to call a meeting, but not to control it. Citing multiple acts of parliaments and examples from church history, he used biblical imagery and said, 'Moses may only blow the trumpet: the other is proper to the Kirk and her office bearers which neither is nor can be taken from her by any Act of Parliament'.³⁹

Henderson argued that rulers were called to oversee the church as 'nursing fathers', not as absolute authorities.⁴⁰ This was not an arbitrary authority to be used for royal purposes, but according to Henderson, God gave the King limited authority with limited perimeters that focused primarily on good order and protection of the Kirk. He said:

It intendeth no further but touching the circumstances of the place as in what town the assembly shall convene and of the time in what moneth of the year, and what day of the moneth as is evident by the act of 1592 which giveth this liberitie of time and place to the assemblie when the king's majestie or his

³⁵ Balfour, *Works*, II, 227.

³⁶ *Reasons for Assembly*, 2. According to John Leslie, Earl of Rothes, Henderson was intimately involved in preparing all of the pamphlets and supplications on behalf of the Covenanters in June of 1638. See Rothes, *Relations*, 158-168,

³⁷ *Reasons for Assembly*, 2.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 2.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 2

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 3.

commissioner doth not appoint them.⁴¹

Henderson and the Covenanters asserted that they not only had a divine right to meet in a free assembly, but they also had a divinely given duty to do so, without royal interference. Henderson believed he had to act 'lest our silence should be prejudicial to so important a cause as concerns God's glory and worship, our Religion and salvation, the Lawes and liberties of this Church and Kingdome'.⁴² This indicated that they planned to meet even without the King's approval, which led the King's commissioner to change his mind. With pressure increasing, the King through Hamilton acquiesced to Covenanter demands, and in September he called for a general assembly to meet on 21 November in Glasgow.⁴³

Managing the Millennium

Preparations for the Glasgow Assembly were underway, and Henderson was at the centre of the planning. From May to September of 1638, both sides had been busily moving throughout the nation, not only ecclesiastically but militarily.⁴⁴ As a commercial centre, Glasgow was second only to Edinburgh, but Hamilton had originally chosen Glasgow as the venue for the assembly because of its proximity to his own estates. This backfired partly because his mother, Anna Cunningham, had actually been managing the family's estates while he had been in England, and Stevenson described Anna Cunningham as an 'indomitable' figure who was a committed Calvinist and eventually a Covenanter.⁴⁵ She was a powerful local leader, and her influence in

⁴¹ Ibid, 2

⁴² RKS, I, 73.

⁴³ Ibid, I, 82.

⁴⁴ David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-1644: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (London, 1973), 93-104.

⁴⁵ See Stevenson, 'Covenanting, Revolution and Municipal Enterprise', in Jenny Wormald, ed., *Scotland Revisited*, 99.

the region created a stubborn and well-organized resistance to her son's direction.⁴⁶

The coming Glasgow General Assembly was increasingly seen as the fulcrum on which all the questions at hand would stand or fall. Consequently, the Covenanters began to make preparations to end episcopacy in Scotland forever. A bill of accusation was presented against the bishops to the presbytery of Edinburgh in 24 October 1638.⁴⁷ The stakes were high, and the hopes of many Covenanters were soaring. Even in the nineteenth century, Aiton wrote about this with biblical imagery, reporting that Calderwood, Scot, and Row were as old saints who 'had kept their garments clean for forty years' and who now were blessed of God to effect a second reformation.⁴⁸

At the Glasgow Assembly, Henderson openly linked presbyterian ecclesiology to liturgical theology, making it a key component of the ongoing questions relating to the ecclesiastical and civil authority. Here the idea of authority was also linked to the hope of good order. Increasingly, Henderson was arguing that there could be no true order in church or state without presbyterian ecclesiology. Henderson's appeals were presented on behalf of the Kirk and also on behalf of the Fifth Table, which had become the de facto executive branch of government in Scotland. Macinnes says:

In calling for free assemblies and parliaments, the intention of the fifth Table was not just to secure the redress of pressing grievances between Charles I and his Scottish subjects, but to effect a permanent check on absentee monarchy to safeguard the religious and constitutional imperatives of covenanting.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ According to John Scally, Lady Anna Cunningham was so intensely involved on behalf of the Covenanter cause that in 1639 she arrived in Leith at the head of her own troop of horse, brandishing pistols loaded with specially made silver bullets that she planned to use on her own son if he arrived to resist her. See Scally, 'James Hamilton, first duke of Hamilton (1606-49)', ODNB.

⁴⁷ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, I, 129.

⁴⁸ Aiton, *The Life and Times of Alexander Henderson: Giving a History of the Second Reformation of the Church of Scotland, and of the Covenanters, During the Reign of Charles I* (Edinburgh, 1836), 340.

⁴⁹ Macinnes, *The Making of the Covenanting Movement*, 175.

One of the first disputes between the King and the Covenanters was the question of who should attend the Glasgow Assembly. This would be one of the most important questions, because according to Stevenson lay elders were the key to controlling the agenda and actions of the Glasgow Assembly.⁵⁰ Hamilton argued that lay elders were unknown to the scripture and church history.⁵¹ The Covenanters argued that the King wanted to manipulate the process in order to fill the assembly with representatives sympathetic to him, while doing his best to block the Covenanters from attending.⁵² This was a practice that had been a longstanding criticism in Covenanter histories of the struggles.⁵³ Henderson led the Covenanters and planned for this question carefully.

At this point, Henderson shrewdly outmanoeuvred Hamilton, which highlights his exceptional ability in managing the Covenanter cause in Scotland. Working with Johnston of Wariston, Henderson drew up and sent out seven articles for the moderators of all the presbyteries across the nation.⁵⁴ Each presbytery was advised to send one baron or elder and up to three ministers.⁵⁵ Recalling a parliamentary act from 1597, each burgh in the presbytery was to send one burgess, with two from Edinburgh. The voting in presbytery was to include one elder from each kirk session.⁵⁶ Baillie expressed the intense emotions the Covenanters were feeling prior to the Glasgow Assembly, 'We know yet no other but that our religion, liberties, lives are in extreme

⁵⁰ See David Stevenson, 'The General Assembly and the Commission of the Kirk, 1638-51', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 19 (1975), 59.

⁵¹ RKS, I, 116.

⁵² Stevenson argues that the radicals essentially 'packed' the assembly with elders who supported and pushed their agenda. Stevenson offers an excellent outline of events using primary sources, but his language reveals something of a bias towards Henderson's methods, as he uses words such as 'impose', 'force', and 'packed', to describe the Covenanters' tactics in organizing and preparing for the Glasgow assembly. His article does, however, reveal the tension Henderson faced, as well as the fine line between managing and manipulating. See Stevenson, 'The General Assembly and the Commission of the Kirk, 1638-51', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 19 (1975), 59.

⁵³ Aiton, *The Life and Times*, 310.

⁵⁴ Wariston, *Diary*, 377.

⁵⁵ Spalding, *Troubles*, 81-82.

danger: the Lord help us'.⁵⁷

It is in this context that the Glasgow General Assembly began its business on 21 November 1638. Before the Assembly officially opened, Hamilton sought to control the agenda. Hamilton presented a letter from Charles I, and he used a temporary moderator and clerk to begin the meeting.⁵⁸ Because of the important issues facing the Assembly, determining how the meeting was to be managed was key, which is why the Assembly did not undertake any official business until after three days of wrangling over procedures. Both sides believed that determining procedures, protocol, and rules for actions would determine the ultimate direction of the meeting.⁵⁹ Hamilton immediately attempted to nullify, if not eliminate, the role of the massive numbers of Covenanter lay elders at the Assembly. The Covenanters resisted Hamilton's concerns until the Assembly chose a moderator and clerk. They argued that until a moderator was chosen, the Assembly could not act in good order to deal with Hamilton's concerns. Both sides understood that choosing of a moderator was essential to establishing the tone and direction of the Assembly.

This is where Henderson's previous private meetings paid great dividends. According to Wariston, Henderson held private meetings in the early weeks of November 1638, a few weeks prior to the opening of the Assembly. Like in his management of the lay commissioners, Henderson was also at the forefront of managing his own place as moderator. This does not mean that he pushed himself into the spotlight, but it does indicate that he was carefully planning the details of how to manage the Assembly.

⁵⁶ Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 105.

⁵⁷ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 71.

⁵⁸ RKS, I, 21; Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 116.

⁵⁹ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, I, 149.

According to Wariston, he and Rothes needed to convince Henderson in private meetings that he was the best man for the job.⁶⁰ Wariston recorded that the Covenanter lay leaders and ministers decided in advance that Henderson should be elected moderator, and they made it known privately to everyone that when the Assembly met, they were to elect Henderson as moderator.⁶¹ Wariston was genuinely convinced that God had specially chosen Henderson for this calling, and he made it his personal mission to convince others as well. He said:

I took such an impression of God's will in pointing out that man as the man quhos hand he had blessed hitherto and would blisse chiefly in that main work that I went through the noblemen an barons and maide every one sensible of that impression.⁶²

As a result, when the Assembly voted for moderator, Henderson was elected without dissent except for his own vote to the contrary.⁶³ The Assembly chose Archibald Johnston of Warriston as the clerk, which had also been arranged privately in advance of the meeting.⁶⁴

Because they believed he could serve the nation better, the Assembly voted to move Henderson from Leuchars to Edinburgh.⁶⁵ However, it was here at the Glasgow Assembly that Henderson's leadership moved from a place of central importance to a place of legendary significance among the Covenanters.⁶⁶ In reference to Henderson's election as moderator, Baillie made his often quoted statement that Henderson was

⁶⁰ Wariston, *Diary*, 400.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 401.

⁶² *Ibid*, 400.

⁶³ RKS, I, 131.

⁶⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 129; RKS, I, 132.

⁶⁵ RKS, I, 47, 183-86 & for a reference to the centrality of the city of Edinburgh to their cause see RKS, I, 131.

⁶⁶ Moving Henderson to Edinburgh was one part of the Covenanters' overall strategy to place Covenanter ministers in strategic locations so that the subsequent assemblies would be far easier to manage. Baillie recorded that the assembly did this with several men, including those who went with tears, yet did so out of a sense of the overall good of the cause for the Kirk. See Baillie, *Letters*, I, 173-75.

‘incomparable the ablest man of us all, for all things’.⁶⁷ Henderson’s adept ability in private, personal persuasion translated into even greater fluency in public speaking. As moderator, he was in charge of the proceedings, and as such, he spoke to every issue first, thus setting the tone and direction for the Assembly. Henderson used his voice as moderator to direct the Assembly in multiple ways. Row recorded that Henderson directed the opening proceedings using ‘grave, pithie, pertinent speeches’ to move the commissioners to action.⁶⁸ Baillie noted that Henderson’s eloquence and influence at the Glasgow Assembly extended even to his prayers, saying, ‘Among that man’s other good parts, that was one, a facultie of grave, good, and zealous prayer, according to the matter at hand; which he exercised, without sagging, to the last day of our meeting’.⁶⁹

Henderson’s first major test of leadership at Glasgow came when he refused to yield to the King’s direction regarding the bishops as Hamilton took decisive action. On 28 November 1638, on behalf of the King, Hamilton commanded the ‘pretended’ commissioners to depart forth of the city of Glasgow within twenty-four hours of the publication of his proclamation.⁷⁰ Henderson seized the moment.⁷¹

It was as if the King’s demands galvanized Henderson and the Covenanters to the opposite action for which they had apparently prepared. Henderson responded with what Baillie described as the kind of gravity and zeal that inspired his followers to move steadily forward.⁷² To Baillie and others, Henderson appeared to be God’s man for the moment. For the Covenanters, the Glasgow Assembly represented the culmination and victory of the dreams and aspirations of those who had been struggling since the first

⁶⁷ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 122.

⁶⁸ Row, *History*, 504.

⁶⁹ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 128.

⁷⁰ RKS, I, 119.

⁷¹ RKS, I, 71-73; Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, II, 4.

days of the Reformation parliament of 1560.⁷³

The most powerful nobleman in the land, the Earl of Argyll, though not an official commissioner, remained with the Assembly in support of their cause, which provided the Covenanters ‘great joy’.⁷⁴ Other nobles like Lord Erskine, who had previously wavered in support of the National Covenant, were now coming forward with ‘tears and begging’ to join the cause.⁷⁵ It is hard to capture the sense of excitement among the Covenanters, as the National Covenant, and now the Glasgow Assembly, seemed to be opening the future of Scotland to what Crawford Gribben describes as a new ‘robust hope’.⁷⁶

Gribben argues that the link between eschatology and ecclesiology became obvious in the rhetoric surrounding the General Assembly of 1638.⁷⁷ This is especially true in Henderson’s leadership as moderator. He offered a rousing announcement that placed their work in the context of a cosmic battle as he argued that the faithful at the Glasgow Assembly were essentially acting as combatants of God in the overthrow of the kingdom of Satan. According to one account, Henderson argued that since kings were Christ’s subjects, no member of the Assembly should suffer themselves either for fear or favour to any man, if it seduces them away from obedience to Christ’s commands.⁷⁸ Henderson publicly linked ecclesiology with eschatology, asserting that the Glasgow Assembly was poised to strike a decisive blow to Antichrist, and in so doing would

⁷² Baillie, *Letters*, I, 128.

⁷³ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, II, 3.

⁷⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 145; Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, II, 27. According Macinnes, Wariston’s eloquence in private meetings convinced Argyll that episcopacy was unscriptural. See Macinnes, *The British Confederate: Archibald Campbell, Marquess of Argyll, 1607-1661* (Edinburgh, 2011), 115.

⁷⁵ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, II, 3.

⁷⁶ Crawford Gribben, ‘The Church of Scotland and the English apocalyptic Imagination’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 88 (2009), 41.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 42.

begin to rebuild the ruins of beloved Zion. Gordon recorded Henderson's opening comments, as he argued that their work was against Antichrist, saying, 'Their work was prejudicial to the kyngdome of Satan and of Antichriste as also how acceptable it was to Chryste, the general of this combat, for to rebuild the ruines of his beloved Zion'.⁷⁹

Henderson argued that the Assembly acted in self-defence on behalf of Christ's church, and he overtly began connecting such actions with eschatological hope. Henderson believed that they were not merely seizing a moment in history, but that God was using them to storm the gates of hell. In referring to the detractors of the National Covenant as the haters of Sion, he had already made the connection to idolatry. He had already argued that God 'sall in his appointed time make Babel to fall to the ground, and set up his awin kirk'.⁸⁰ As moderator he made similar connections between ecclesiology and eschatology as another part of the ongoing battle between Christ and antichrist, in the fall of Babel, and in the rise of Jerusalem.⁸¹ Henderson warned the commissioners at Glasgow that, though the devil was opposing their work, 'we may be assured that the integritie of the Word of God cannot stand without Government and ecclesiasticall discipline'.⁸²

He argued for the defensive necessity of presbyterian ecclesiology in order to protect against future abuses.⁸³ Free assemblies comprised of ministerial and lay representatives from presbyteries and sessions all across the nation provided an indispensable check on what Henderson believed were abuses of human authority.

⁷⁸ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, II, 3.

⁷⁹ Ibid, II, 3.

⁸⁰ Henderson, *Sermons*, 154.

⁸¹ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, II, 3.

⁸² RKS, I, 154.

⁸³ Ibid, I, 71-73.

Most importantly, presbyterian government represented an ecclesiology that did not depend on the pleasures of any prince or earthly authority. To the contrary, Henderson led the Assembly in arguing that Jesus Christ was the only head and monarch of his own church.⁸⁴ This meant that an earthly king's royal prerogatives could in no way be used to harm the 'liberties and priviledges which God hath granted to the spirituall office-bearers and meetings of the church'.⁸⁵

Gordon Donaldson maintained that the earliest polity in the Reformed Kirk was not Presbyterian but could be described as congregationalism tempered by episcopacy and Erastianism, with only superficial elements of what the Covenanters would later argue was presbyterian polity.⁸⁶ If Donaldson is correct, then Henderson's work at the Glasgow Assembly marked a radical turning point. James Kirk has challenged the pervasiveness of Donaldson's arguments, but even if Kirk's argument for greater continuity is correct, the Glasgow Assembly still marked a pivotal, if not radical, turning point.⁸⁷

Either way, at Glasgow Henderson officially moved the centrality and authority of the general Assembly beyond what Donaldson had suggested as a temporary, though useful Assembly, to an essential part of godly ecclesiology, which would help govern the church, especially in the absence of a godly prince.⁸⁸ The significance of the Glasgow Assembly is reflected in Aiton dedicating almost one hundred pages to cover the time

⁸⁴ Ibid, I, 119.

⁸⁵ Ibid, I, 121.

⁸⁶ Gordon Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation: Based on the Birkbeck lectures Delivered in the University of Cambridge in 1957-8* (Cambridge, 1960), 147.

⁸⁷ See James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform: Continuity and Change in the Reformation Kirk* (Edinburgh, 2000). For a brief outline of their differences, see also David Stevenson, 'Scottish Church History, 1600-1660: A Select Critical Bibliography', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 21 (1983), 209-10.

⁸⁸ Donaldson, *The Scottish Reformation*, 144-46.

spent preparing for and holding the General Assembly of Glasgow of 1638.⁸⁹ The sweeping actions that the Assembly took, including the trial and condemnation of episcopacy, marked not merely the bishops' doom, but for Henderson, it marked the beginning of the rebuilding of Zion.

Actions of Glasgow General Assembly

McCoy noted that a lesser man than Henderson might not have been able to hold the Assembly together.⁹⁰ Henderson led the Assembly in a series of sweeping and radical changes that they believed would solidify almost everything that the dissenting ministers had dreamed of doing for decades, if not since the beginning of the Reformation.⁹¹ The Assembly took the kinds of actions that in one sense were breathtaking in their audacity. In a similar tone as the National Covenant, the Assembly passed motions completely undoing everything and anything that they perceived were contrary to their present agenda. For instance, they annulled the decisions of past assemblies, including:

Every one of them to have been from the beginning unfree, unlawfull, and null Assemblies, and never to have had, nor hereafter to have any Ecclesiasticall authoritie, and their conclusions to have been, and to bee of no force, vigour, nor efficacie.⁹²

Under Henderson's direction, the Assembly set itself to a systematic eradication of episcopacy from every ecclesiastical and parliamentary source which they believed in any way seemed to countermand or to contradict what they wanted to do. This included

⁸⁹ Aiton, *The Life and Times*, 270-368. Aiton's account is very thorough, especially as it relates to political maneuvering between Hamilton and the Covenanters, with an emphasis on the whole story as one part of an overarching struggle for Scottish liberty and independence. This somewhat 'whiggish' tone allows Aiton to tell a detailed story of the preparation for and activity of the assembly, but it has a decidedly nineteenth century flavor, and it contains nothing regarding the nuanced but important role of Henderson's calling the assembly to his actions as they relate to the enhanced role of presbyterian ecclesiology, especially when fused with eschatology.

⁹⁰ F.N. McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation* (London, 1974), 55.

⁹¹ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, II, 140-149.

⁹² *Acts*, 9.

the requirement to allow lay representation at presbytery, the rejection of the Canons and Service Book, rejection of the Articles of Perth, denying the Court of High Commission's jurisdiction over the Kirk, rejection of Arminian and popish theology, as well as the sweeping condemnation and abjuring of episcopacy of any kind.⁹³

The Assembly actually voted on something like a retroactive abjuring of episcopacy per the confession of faith of 1580. Prior to the vote, everyone but Robert Baillie concurred. Baillie offered a nuanced argument for what he called episcopacy 'simpliciter' such as in the ancient church or even in the early years of the Scottish Reformation.⁹⁴ He seemed reticent to argue that the confession of 1580 had annulled something that had remained in practice in Scotland for the following decades and which other reformed churches were still practicing.⁹⁵

Since so much was riding on their actions, Henderson wanted the Assembly to speak with a unanimous voice when it made its decisions. As moderator, Henderson intervened in a number of ways to direct the Assembly to this end. Row indicated that Henderson would sometimes use a preliminary 'show of hands' vote, which he used to judge the Assembly's readiness for an official vote.⁹⁶ Baillie recorded being conscious of Henderson's drive for unity: 'To make any publick dispuitt I thought it not safe, being myself alone, and fearing above all evils, to be the occasion of any division, which was our certain wrack'.⁹⁷ Henderson's shrewd personal managerial skills were an important part of his success at Glasgow.

⁹³ Ibid, 9-70.

⁹⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 158.

⁹⁵ McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation*, 58.

⁹⁶ See Row, *History*, 504.

As moderator, Henderson could direct and interrupt debates, as he did with Baillie. For instance, Baillie noted that Henderson ‘took me up a little accurtlie, showing I might draw the question so strait as I pleased, yet he had not stated it so’.⁹⁸ Henderson felt great liberty to direct debates, at times calling on different speakers in order to provide direction to the discussions. If he could not direct the debates, he would stop them in order to create committees to work out the differences in private.⁹⁹ When he had helped the committee to hammer out the details in private, he would reconvene the Assembly and move to a unified action. He did this in the instance of Baillie’s reticence over episcopacy; he stopped debates and called for a private conference. Henderson pulled Baillie aside with Lord Rothes and attempted to persuade him against continuing to voice his differences. According to Baillie, Henderson was sensitive to his arguments that the other reformed churches which still maintained bishops might be offended at the audacity of the Scots.¹⁰⁰

Henderson turned this argument on its head, contending that if Scotland took decisive actions in rejecting episcopacy ‘more straitlie than others’, it could act as a guide for other churches and lead the Reformation forward into the future.¹⁰¹ Baillie noted that Henderson pleaded with the Assembly to push through together in unity for the sake of the greater cause. Baillie felt the weight of Henderson’s desires, saying that he was ‘verie loathe to make any jar in the synod’s sweet harmonie’.¹⁰² Following Henderson’s direction, the Assembly was in no mood for nuanced refinements or motions on behalf of sensitive consciences. Hence, Baillie joined them and they unanimously abjured

⁹⁷ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 158.

⁹⁸ Ibid, I, 160.

⁹⁹ The records of the Glasgow Assembly indicate that with a tentative start on 21 November, Henderson moved to a place of evident dominance of the assembly by 4 December 1638. See RKS, I, 129-60.

¹⁰⁰ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 157.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, I, 157.

episcopacy with the same kind of sweeping radicalism that reached into the past and barred all exceptions into the future. Without equivocation the Assembly said:

That all Episcopacie different from that of a Pastour over, a particular flock, was abjured in this Kirk, and to be removed out of it. And therefore Prohibites under ecclesiasticall censure any to usurpe, accept, defend, or obey the pretended authoritie thereof in time coming.¹⁰³

Because the Scottish Reformation was tangled together with the place and practice of episcopacy, the Covenanters understood their actions as a colossal monument to the providential work of God.

This is where Henderson's leadership became decisive because he actively elevated presbyterian ecclesiology as equivalent to a 'fundamental' of the faith.¹⁰⁴ This is amazing on one level, since a 'fundamental' doctrine was one considered to be so vital that to reject it was to risk damnation.¹⁰⁵ In a stunning manner, Henderson pleaded with the Assembly not to get bogged down in the details of debates regarding this issue. Henderson implored them saying: 'It was a questione of great difficultie, to decerne what pointes are fundamentall and what not; and, if this whole Assembly were sett to it, it would take them to the morrow at this tyme'.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Ibid, I, 160.

¹⁰³ Acts, 36.

¹⁰⁴ On 29 November 1638 Balcanquhall, who had been sent to the Synod of Dort in November of 1618, argued that Henderson and the assembly did not have the right to elevate ecclesiology to a 'fundamental' of the faith, for instance, on the same level as matters related to soteriology, which as determined at Dort had damnable effects, and which were eternal and unchangeable doctrines of the church. See RKS, I, 141-42. See also, Anthony Milton, *The British Delegation and the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619* (Suffolk, UK, 2005), 148.

¹⁰⁵ This exactly what Balcanquhall argued at the assembly because he was startled by Henderson's assertion of the preeminent place of presbyterian ecclesiology. See RKS, I, 142. It was at this point that a later pamphlet was written entitled, *An Account of the Proceedings of the General Assembly at Glasgow, 1638, Taken Verbatim from a Letter written by one of the Members present to his Brother in the Countrey* (London, 1724). This pamphlet took Henderson to task for elevating the Glasgow Assembly to the place of equivalence with the Council of Nicaea. This pamphlet openly mocked Henderson with sexual satire, saying also that Henderson 'smelled something of popery', and implied that he bullied the assembly to get his ways. See *An Account of the Proceedings*, 8.

¹⁰⁶ RKS, I, 142.

This surprised some at the Assembly, since his reference was to Arminian doctrines, which many Covenanters believed to be a non-negotiable, fundamental of the faith.¹⁰⁷

Baillie in fact was worried that Henderson may have been too soft on the issue saying: 'I thought the Moderator als incircumspect to absolve all the Arminian errors, without a distinction of the cryme of heresie'.¹⁰⁸

When confronted with the nature of ecclesiology, Henderson accidentally had touched a nerve in discussing Arminian doctrines, but he was able to manage the Assembly back to the issue of condemning episcopal ecclesiology. For Henderson, ending the threat of episcopal ecclesiology had become the Assembly's greatest calling, and he was willing to blur heretofore distinct doctrinal matters in order to accomplish this end. The result was that Henderson elevated ecclesiology and soteriology on a single plane of dogma, leaving multiple numbers of contentious doctrinal issues to be sorted out at what he believed would be a later, more convenient time. He was able to do this because he pushed the Assembly to strike while the iron was hot or they might not have another opportunity.¹⁰⁹ Henderson had become convinced that presbyterian ecclesiology was the only way to secure the Kirk's future protection against the kind of abuse it had recently endured and which had led to the present crisis of idolatry. On this note, he was able to move the Assembly forward in unity in spite of deep doctrinal issues left unresolved.

In attacking episcopal ecclesiology, Henderson had a sympathetic Assembly. Bishops

¹⁰⁷ For a detailed discussion of Arminianism at the assembly see David Mullan, 'Arminianism in the Lord's Assembly: Glasgow, 1638', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 26 (1996), 1-30.

¹⁰⁸ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 140.

¹⁰⁹ This was the same tactic Henderson would later take at the Westminster Assembly, but with none of the same unifying results. In fact, at Westminster Henderson's tenacious insistence that presbyterian ecclesiology, as the Scots had developed, was the key to reformed unity, catholicity and blessings yielded

had long been considered the pawns who fulfilled the desires of the pope or the prince they served. Early criticisms of bishops were not specifically limited to church state relations. Donaldson noted that as early as 1547 the criticism of bishops as ‘dumb dogs’ and ‘idle bellies’ was as common among the reformers as noting that bishops were better at ‘lording’ and ‘loytring’ than shepherding the sheep and preaching the scriptures.¹¹⁰ It was very common to hear the earliest reformers in Scotland criticize bishops as lazy, sensual, and puffed up with pride. When their spiritual faith and works were compared to their lives they were judged to be ‘false’ shepherds.¹¹¹

It appears that the early reformers in Scotland believed that a godly, reformed bishop or superintendent, who possessed no sacramental superiority over ordinary ministers of the gospel, could provide valuable administrative benefit to the Kirk.¹¹² Donaldson argued that the history of the period from 1575-1690 was a history of the violent oscillations between two irreconcilable polities: presbyterians and episcopalians. According to Donaldson, it was the history of a series of attempts at compromise, with a view to satisfying the theories of ecclesiastics, especially the Presbyterians, while providing machinery that would care for and solve the practical problems of church-state relations and ecclesiastical administration that had been bequeathed by the last several centuries.¹¹³

Henderson led the Glasgow Assembly to change this as they summarily demanded that the bishops of Scotland stand before the Assembly to give an answer for all the ills they had perpetrated on the Kirk through a deliberate ecclesiastical tyranny, which had

the opposite results.

¹¹⁰ Donaldson, *Scottish Reformation*, 102.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 102.

¹¹² Ibid, 108.

allowed for the entrance of idolatry in worship and heresies in doctrine.¹¹⁴ Henderson called all the bishops to repentance and also called every commissioner in the Assembly to renewal and eschatological hope for the future.¹¹⁵ So, he said:

Let us labour with diligence and faithfulness in our office, and particularly to be faithful in this, to get them expelled and put out of the church whose office is not from God, such as these men against whom we are to proceed with the censures of the kirk.¹¹⁶

There is a consistent theme that, if they rejected bishops, God would bring ecclesiastical reform, and more importantly, he would shower them with eschatological blessings on the land.

Henderson taught that anyone who refused to resist the ungodly authority of the bishops was in essence resisting God. Speaking of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the godly, Henderson argued that unless they resisted unlawful authority, as well as resisting the unlawful commands from lawful authorities, they would not receive one drop of the ‘sweet influences of God’s Spirit’.¹¹⁷ For Henderson, ecclesiology had become central to the eschatological blessings of God. The oft-quoted quip of James VI, who said, ‘no bishop, no king’, could be modified and summarized in Henderson’s teachings as, ‘no bishops or no blessings’.

The Bishops’ Doom

Henderson led the Kirk in rejecting episcopacy, and immediately prior to abjuring episcopacy, he led the Assembly against the bishops, who had been serving up to this

¹¹³ Ibid, 215.

¹¹⁴ RKS, I, 180.

¹¹⁵ Henderson, *The Bishop’s Doom. A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly which sate at Glasgow anno. 1638 On occasion of pronouncing the sentence of the greater excommunication against the eight of the bishops, and deposing or suspending the other six. By Alexander Henderson, moderator of that and several subsequent assemblies. With a Postscript on the present decay of church discipline* (Edinburgh, 1792), 6.

point. All of them were systematically denounced as the Assembly went bishop-by-bishop, receiving and voting on charges presented to them primarily from the presbytery of Edinburgh.¹¹⁸ They began deposing and excommunicating each of the bishops on one level, simply for having been bishops, which the Assembly said was ‘condemned by the confession of Faith, and acts of this Kirk, as having no warrant, nor fundament in the word of God’.¹¹⁹ Following this, the bishops were then condemned for ‘pressing the Kirk with novations in the worship of God, and for sundrie other haynous offences and enormities’, which were outlined in detail for the next two days.¹²⁰ The Assembly’s decisions left the task of making the official pronouncement of these excommunications to ‘Mr. Alexander Henderson, Moderatour in face of the Assembly in the high Kirk of Glasgow’.¹²¹ This made Henderson the official spokesman of the whole Kirk and he would speak to the Assembly’s decision to excommunicate eight bishops and depose the remaining six.

For this occasion, Henderson preached a sermon from Psalm 110:1 that became so famous among the Covenanters that it was published the same year in 1638, and entitled it partially, *The Bishops Doom*. Henderson preached what he believed was the glorious exaltation and enthronement of Christ who rules from heaven. From heaven, said Henderson, God judges the obstinacy and contumacy of men such as the proud bishops of Scotland. He could not resist instructing his hearers as to the nature of *jure divino* ecclesiology in which all the offices of the church from the highest to the lowest must

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 6.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 7.

¹¹⁸ This is deeply ironic, since it was precisely this kind of summary judgment regarding the Service Book that Henderson had petitioned against. Henderson had previously begged the king to allow him to make an appeal for his case before passing judgment. Such was not allowed now for the bishops!

¹¹⁹ Acts, 19.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 19; RKS, I, 157-174..

¹²¹ Acts, 19.

have specific warrant from God.¹²²

God has ordered the offices of the church, warned Henderson, and no mere human authority can change this order. He called his listeners to repent of their own pride and seek the seal of heaven on their ministries as elders and ministers of the Kirk.¹²³ All men on earth, asserted Henderson, must live under the auspices of the God, who enthroned Jesus Christ in heaven, and who rules the earth as the King of kings. Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God with majesty, glory, and dominion over all creatures, and he will move the earth towards the right ordering of all things under his feet.¹²⁴

For Henderson, God allows for diversity among the ordering of civil offices, but he does not allow such flexibility in the government of the church.¹²⁵ Presbyterian ecclesiology was also pliable to every conceivable national context, making it an ecclesiology that can work with monarchy or any other sort of civil government, in any commonwealth, or in any future land where God would take it. The order of Christ is displayed most wonderfully in the government of the Kirk. He has given the church an order that is capable of keeping out heresy, false religion, and an enumeration of all kinds of evils. ‘As the order is beautiful’, said Henderson, ‘so it is powerful to keep out many corruptions’.¹²⁶

Henderson equated presbyterian polity with God’s will. He preached that those who supported bishops were siding with Antichrist and heading for a doomed future.

¹²² Henderson, *Bishops Doom*, 5.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 6.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 8-9.

¹²⁵ Henderson, *Government and Order*, 34, 59 & 66.

Henderson then dared the Assembly to look into the future for a blessed hope, citing the verse, ‘till I make thine enemies thy footstool’. In the pronouncements of excommunication, Henderson wove together a litany of abuses, heresies and corruptions that included everything from popery and Arminianism to adultery and Sabbath breaking.¹²⁷ With amazingly sweeping language Henderson linked all the aforementioned sins with the pride of resisting godly ecclesiology, and the hope of the future was just as closely linked with a submission to God’s order in the kirk.

Even Baillie, who had at first resisted pronouncing excommunication without a prolonged period for repentance, changed his mind and was moved to greater respect for Henderson.¹²⁸ When listening to Henderson’s sermon, Baillie commented, ‘My heart was filled with admiration of the power and justice of God, who can bring down the highest and pour shame on them...whence their ambition and avarice had pulled them down to the dunghill of contempt’.¹²⁹

So, the celebrity of Henderson arose among the Covenanters as he became a public leader, representing the aspirations of the Scottish Reformation, and pointing his followers to the hope of the future. He had apparently done in one Assembly what generations of reformers had not been able to accomplish. For admirers such as Baillie and others, Henderson had rid the nation of prelates, and in so doing he had opened the door of blessings on the nation, and possibly even on the whole world. Referring to Henderson as moderator and Wariston as clerk, Baillie noted, ‘These two alone are better than a thousand others, for all others are bot for themselves, bot yond two

¹²⁶ Henderson, *Bishop’s Doom*, 9.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 11-12.

¹²⁸ McCoy, *Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation*, 60; Baillie, *Letters*, I, 168.

¹²⁹ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 168.

represents all in law and reason'.¹³⁰

Government and Order

Following the Glasgow Assembly, Henderson was the most important spokesman for presbyterianism in Scotland. Because Henderson represented and summarized the public face of Covenanter theology, he provides historians with perhaps the most important source of consensus among the Covenanters of this period. Hence, his 1641 publication entitled *The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland* is one of the best sources for a summary of the Presbyterian ecclesiology of the Covenanters and offers Henderson's positive arguments for presbyterian polity. Many of the histories covering Henderson's leadership work primarily with his negative rebuffs of prelacy, while dealing only indirectly with his arguments on behalf of Presbyterian polity. They tend to portray him more as a hero than a public theologian.¹³¹ However, when Henderson's positive reasons are combined with an appreciation for his covenant eschatology, then it provides an updated and much needed contribution to studies of Henderson, and also to studies of early modern Scotland in general.

Henderson outlined the false exaltation of bishops above the ordinary and perpetual offices that he named as pastors, doctors, elders and deacons. According to Henderson, these were the normative offices, which were to remain with the church from the

¹³⁰ Ibid, I, 175.

¹³¹ See Aiton, *The Life and Times*, 270-368; Orr, *Alexander Henderson: Churchman and Statesman* (London, 1919), 166-190; J. Pringle Thomson, *Alexander Henderson, The Covenanter* (London, 1912), 49-60. These tend to portray Henderson as an unflinching hero, whose actions should be praised and followed. They do not cover the nuances of covenant theology and eschatology as this thesis attempts to do. It is possible that Henderson's nineteenth-century biographers were familiar with Carlyle's Heroes and Hero-Worship, with its romantic conceptions of the role of great men in historical change. This emerges in their writings as they portrayed Henderson as a hero of liberty. See Neil Forsyth, 'Presbyterian historians and the Scottish invention of British liberty', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 34 (2004), 100-110.

apostolic age to the present.¹³² Ministers are to exercise pastoral calling in a local parish as they are called by a congregation in concert with an examination by their presbytery.¹³³ Perhaps reflecting on his call to Leuchars, he reminded his readers that pastors are not to be obtruded on a local church without their consent.¹³⁴ Rather, a minister comes to a local church by means of a congregational call where he is to preach, teach, visit and catechize his people as a shepherd oversees a flock of sheep.¹³⁵ In the ideal presbyterian order, Henderson argued that hierarchy did not represent repression but ecclesiastical liberty. It was in this way Henderson believed that God was delivering Scotland from the bondage and yoke of episcopal slavery, and moving them into a new epoch of church history.¹³⁶

Synods

Under the general assembly, Henderson outlined three other courts of the church. If one reckons the general assembly as the highest court, then the next lowest was the provincial synod. Synods had traditionally met twice a year, and immediately prior to the Glasgow Assembly, they tended to be dominated by a presiding bishop who was essentially appointed by the King.

The role of bishops in the synod and through it to the presbytery had been a long-standing bone of contention among dissenting ministers. Until recently, Gordon Donaldson led historians in arguing that episcopacy was widely acceptable in pre-Revolution Scotland, and that the decision to jettison the office was ‘only a secondary development.’ Mathieson went even further, and argued that the majority of ministers

¹³² Henderson, *Government and Order*, B.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 1.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 10-11.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 12-14.

¹³⁶ This was an undefined eschatological era of blessings that would be ushered in with the fall of

had become reconciled to episcopacy, if not positively attached, even to the Articles of Perth.¹³⁷

Donaldson argues that there is little evidence from the 1560s to support the notion so dear to later generations of Scots that their country had received a special revelation as presbyterians.¹³⁸ Donaldson implies that large numbers of Scottish ministers has already acquiesced to episcopal ecclesiology. However, under Henderson's leadership a vast number of ministers supported the abolition of bishops. This could indicate an internal animosity that had been actively suppressed during the supremacy of the bishops. Vaughan T. Wells argued that such was likely the case; that ministers acquiesced for conscience sake, but acquiescence was not the same as conformity.¹³⁹ It could, however, just as easily indicate an apathetic acceptance of the status quo. More than likely many ministers who had previously been unconcerned or uninvolved were galvanized to a fierce reaction by the intense imposition of a Laudian programme.

Without clear evidence in one direction or the other it is difficult to conclude for certain. However, one thing is clear; Alexander Henderson emerged as a leader of the determined group of nonconforming ministers who believed that they were being faithful to their struggling forefathers, and when given the chance they actively resisted and openly challenged the authority of bishops, especially ones who supported the policies of Charles I.

antichrist and the mass conversion of the Jews.

¹³⁷ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 178. For a thorough outline of the question of continuity in Covenanter sources, especially their histories of the period, see Vaughan T. Wells, 'The Origins of Covenanting Thought and Resistance: 1580-1638', Ph.D. thesis, (University of Stirling, 1997).

¹³⁸ Donaldson, *Scottish Reformation*, 182.

¹³⁹ Wells, 'The Origins of Covenanting Thought', 59.

Presbyteries

Presbytery was the first regional court of the church after the local parish session, and it was the most important place of theological debate and oversight. Throughout Jacobean rule, the presbytery was an important source of growing theological dissent. According to Walter R. Foster, one of the reasons for the effectiveness of presbyteries was their insistence on the right to supervise the process of excommunication and ordination, which would seriously undermine the bishop's claim to superior jurisdiction.¹⁴⁰

Presbyteries could not depend on guidance from general assemblies because there were no assemblies held between 1618-1638.¹⁴¹ Likewise, in Henderson's area, the larger regional body, the Synod of Fife, met only twice a year (in April and October) and dealt primarily with necessary cases of discipline and oversight, leaving the most salient theological issues in the hands of the presbytery.¹⁴² By March of 1638, presbyteries were asserting their right to admit entrants to the ministry, and they were dispensing with the oath upholding episcopal government and the Five Articles.¹⁴³ This officially changed centuries of practice, because as Mullan argues the episcopate, at least officially, had been considered the source of spiritual and ecclesiastical jurisdiction on earth.¹⁴⁴ According to the Covenanters, this had to be changed because Christ had not committed ecclesiastical power to one, but to many.¹⁴⁵

Henderson argued that this was why the presbytery was an essential means of protecting

¹⁴⁰ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 100.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 120.

¹⁴² See *Synod of Fife*, 88-89.

¹⁴³ Macinnes, *The Making of the Covenanting Movement*, 186.

¹⁴⁴ Mullan, *Episcopacy in Scotland: The History of an Idea, 1560-1638* (Edinburgh, 1986), 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Limited Prelacie*, 5.

local parishes from the potentially tyrannical rule of larger, more distant metropolitan churches that were run by a ‘prelaticall dominion’.¹⁴⁶ In such arguments Henderson believed that he was as practical as biblical. Henderson thought that rule in the church should occur through a collegiate body of fellow ministers and elders. He said:

This would be accounted subsidium rather than dominium it would be looked at as rather auxiliary... than authoritative especially since they neither ordaine nor depose ministers... without the knowledge and consent of the congregation which is particularly concerned therein.¹⁴⁷

Henderson articulated one of the developing key issues that would eventually define the Covenanter’s ecclesiology, as it related to the issue of authority in the church. Local congregations had a close relationship with their local sessions. Thus, their authority was what Henderson called ‘intrinsical and natural.’¹⁴⁸

These local sessions were, in theory, to work in a collegial environment like that of an ‘ecclesiastical senate.’¹⁴⁹ This did not mean that higher church courts did not have jurisdiction. However, such jurisdiction had to be exercised in the aforementioned collegial manner, which ascended upward in natural order. The local kirk session was first, then the presbytery, the synod and the general assembly in ascending order. Henderson believed that this kind of presbyterian government was a natural insulation against ‘tyrannical,’ unnatural intrusion from outside authorities into the affairs of the local church.¹⁵⁰ This approach provided presbyteries with the context in which they had liberty to act somewhat independent from higher ecclesiastical authorities such as

¹⁴⁶ *Reformation of church-government in Scotland cleared from some mistakes and prejudices by the commissioners of the generall assembly of the Church of Scotland, now at London* (London, 1644), 24-25.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 25.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 25.

¹⁴⁹ *Reformation of church-government in Scotland cleared from some mistakes and prejudices by the commissioners of the generall assembly of the Church of Scotland, now at London* (London, 1644), 25.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 25.

synods that tended to be dominated by bishops who were permanent moderators.

This would become an important issue for when the Covenanters had to deal with some of their English brothers in regard to congregational authority. Understanding presbyterianism as linked with the eschatological hopes of kingdom blessings here on earth contributed to a kind of inflexibility that would later make it virtually impossible for Henderson to compromise with his English congregationalist counterparts at the Westminster Assembly. They cooperated quite well at first, because both opposed prelacy as ungodly.¹⁵¹

In 1641, there was an attempt to maintain an accord when a group of ministers met at the home of English Presbyterian Edmund Calmury in Aldermanbury, England. At the Aldermanbury meeting, they pledged themselves neither to speak nor to write, nor to take any other action against the views of the other side. At the same time, both groups pledged themselves to work against episcopacy and the spread of sectarian views.¹⁵²

The Scots became involved in a high level of community and cooperation between these English brothers in opposing prelacy. According to Baillie, Henderson wrote the preface to a 1641 pamphlet entitled *Petition for the Prelates Briefly Examined*, which was authored by Thomas Goodwin and Jeremiah Burroughes and their friends.¹⁵³ Due in part to an intractable connection between ecclesiology and eschatology as well as other multiple factors, this close friendship soured, causing mutual frustration, which is evidenced in the publication of the Congregationalist tract, *Apologetical Narration in*

¹⁵¹ Francis J. Bremer, *Congregational Communion: Clerical Friendship in the Anglo-American Puritan Community, 1610-1692* (Boston, 1994), 133.

¹⁵² Baillie, *Letters*, I, 311.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, I, 303. See also Bremer, *Congregational Communion*, 132-133.

1643.¹⁵⁴ Henderson and his fellow Scottish Covenanters at Westminster would be surprised and embittered when their English brothers rejected what they believed was God's way of eschatological blessings.

Henderson taught that presbytery did have a level of hierarchical jurisdiction that would mitigate against the confusion of multiple independent congregations from all the churches in all the regions. Presbytery was the court of first appeal in cases where someone appealed the rulings of a kirk session.¹⁵⁵ Perhaps most importantly, Henderson argued that presbytery was the court holding the right of ordination. For Henderson, godly ecclesiology contained lay accountability and original jurisdiction for congregations combined with a hierarchy of appeal, and all with appropriate oversight that included checks and balances.¹⁵⁶ Henderson and his fellow presbyterians believed that presbyterian polity would not allow for the confusions that they believed congregational ecclesiology would most certainly encourage.¹⁵⁷

The idea was that lower courts possessed original jurisdiction but not without oversight and the hope of appeal. According to Henderson, a presbytery exercised jurisdiction over 'all the ecclesiasticall matters of weight, which concern the particular Churches there represented.'¹⁵⁸ This confirms some of what Foster argued and also Macinnes'

¹⁵⁴ Hunter Powell's recent dissertation on the Dissenting Brethren takes issue that the *Apologetical Narration* evidenced frustration as much as it was the Dissenting Brethren's attempt to offer humble objections. I will argue in Chapter 6, 'Alexander Henderson: the Collapse of the Cause', that though Powell provides excellent evidence for a closer exegetical position between the Scottish presbyterians and the dissenting brethren at Westminster, I remain unconvinced that the Apologetical Narration was not the result of and source for much frustration between the Scots and their English Dissenting Brethren, although Powell makes an excellent point regarding the genuinely fundamental unity shared at the earliest stages of their work together. See Hunter Powell, 'The Dissenting Brethren and the Power of the Keys, 1640-1644', Ph.D. thesis (University of Cambridge, 2011), 36.

¹⁵⁵ Henderson, *Government and Order*, 48; Foster, *The Church Before the Covenants*, 90.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 2-14.

¹⁵⁷ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 311.

¹⁵⁸ Henderson, *Government and Order*, 48.

argument that the presbyteries were the key to managerial control over the general assembly.¹⁵⁹

For Henderson, presbyterian ecclesiology was a mixed polity, and in its ideal form included checks and balances that would provide harmony among the whole. The congregation elected their elders and deacons. The congregation also elected their minister in concert with their presbytery. The congregation elected the minister and the presbytery approved his call. One is hard pressed to say where the original jurisdiction or authority resided: in the local congregation or the presbytery. In this sense it was mixed. Henderson believed that this was God's design to bring order and harmony to the church as various courts of the church with divine direction acted in concert with the word of God and with each other.¹⁶⁰

The Local Session

The lowest court in presbyterian ecclesiology is the kirk session. The session met almost weekly, and it was composed of the minister and lay elders of a local church. The kirk session was the court of original jurisdiction regarding matters of discipline, morals and disputes in the congregation. When John Milton asserted that presbyterian polity indicated that 'new presbytery is but old priest writ large', according to Margo

¹⁵⁹ Macinnes, *The British Revolution, 1629-1660* (London, 2005), 118.

¹⁶⁰ Henderson's work tended to be directed to the popular level as public instruction in the Covenanter cause. This meant that Henderson did not leave a detailed record of his exegesis of the texts generally relating to church government. In some ways this contributed to the oversimplification of serious exegetical differences between Henderson's English counterparts at the Westminster Assembly known commonly as the dissenting brethren. Hunter Powell's recent thesis, 'The Dissenting Brethren and the Power of the Keys, 1640-1644', Ph.D. thesis (University of Cambridge, 2011), highlights the need for a careful and nuanced study of the exegesis and interpretation during the early modern period. However, Henderson's lack of interest in such nuanced distinctions contributed in some ways to the common narrative that separated differing ecclesiologies into straightforward categories of the congregationalists and presbyterians. While Powell properly highlights the complicated context that was developing, Henderson's efforts as a public figure tended to diminish such nuanced distinctions, thus contributing to an overly simplified narrative that most historians later used to describe the ecclesiastical debates of the

Todd, his comment was at once profoundly true while in other ways fundamentally false.¹⁶¹ Todd is keen to note the local and lay driven character of presbyterian polity. For instance, clerical power in early modern Scotland was closely circumscribed by the laity of the local parish. Ministers were called by congregations and held their calling as their performance was regularly reviewed by the congregation and the presbytery.¹⁶² Election of a minister pertains to the congregation, but it occurred in concert with a higher body. Ultimately the minister was to be elected by the congregation.¹⁶³

Perhaps even more important than congregational elections of ministers was the lay leadership who worked with these ministers; primarily, the elders. According to Donaldson, very early in Elizabethan exiles the minister, elders, and deacons were elected by the congregation, though there was some uncertainty as to the suffrage for the election of those officers and as to the desirability of a single chief pastor.¹⁶⁴ Subsequent to election, a minister was required to co-operate with the lay elders, who outnumbered him on the session. Presbyterian emphasis on the role of laity in ecclesiology has provoked many historians to connect presbyterian polity to the rise of democracy, or at least democratic ideas.

Presbyterianism and Democracy?

Henderson's push for presbyterian polity may have fostered social and cultural changes that many historians recognize as significant but which Henderson himself did not appear to have consciously intended. For instance, Maurice Lee argues that, by the 1580's, Scottish Calvinism had developed into what might without too much

Westminster Assembly. See Powell, 'Dissenting Brethren', 6.

¹⁶¹ Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, CT, 2002), 361.

¹⁶² Ibid, 361.

¹⁶³ Donaldson, *Scottish Reformation*, 119.

exaggeration by called a quasi-democratic form of church polity, at the hands of Andrew Melville and his fellow authors of the second Book of Discipline.¹⁶⁵ Lee argues that presbyterian polity with an emphasis on lay leadership in a local session tended to undermine not merely royal authority, but aristocratic influence. ‘As Kirk sessions grew in influence’, argues Lee, the local aristocracy correspondingly diminished’.¹⁶⁶ Even if Lee has exaggerated his claims, Henderson’s critics feared that presbyterian polity would foster the dangers and chaos of ‘democracy’.¹⁶⁷

Henderson wrote with a strong emphasis on the personal responsibility of all people from the highest to the lowest. At the same time, Henderson does not appear to have been a quasi-democratic leader. In fact, he wrote with sensitivity to the charge that presbyterian ecclesiology unleashed the confusion often equated with democratic ideas. At the conclusion of his tract, *Government and Order*, he stated:

They account all that is vomited out to the contrarie, as that they like Anarchie better than Monarchie, and that they would turne a Kingdome into a democratie, to be but the fictions and calumnies of the malicious enemies of God and this truth not unlike the lies which were devised against the Christians of old.¹⁶⁸

One does not find evidence in Henderson’s public activity that he intended to promote latent or quasi democratic ideas for reordering social/constitutional structures. In fact, Henderson made strenuous efforts to argue that presbyterianism agreed with monarchy in so far as the monarch submitted to the word of God.¹⁶⁹ At the same time he made a

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 107.

¹⁶⁵ Lee, *The Road to Revolution: Scotland under Charles I, 1625-1637* (Illinois, 1985), 230.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 231. Lee is persuasive, but does not deal with some questions relating to why presbyterian polity was seemingly so attractive to so many aristocrats such as the Earl of Argyll, etc. It could be the case that this form of ecclesiology fit well with the de facto aristocratic republicanism that was displacing the bishops in both church and state. Also, presbyterian polity offered the nobles a place at the local session, presbyteries and general assemblies all the while maintaining their political positions in parliament or on the Tables. In this sense, presbyterian polity allowed the aristocrats to have their cake and eat it too.

¹⁶⁷ Henderson was conscious of this charge and spoke to it briefly. See Henderson, *Government and Order*, 68.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 68.

¹⁶⁹ Henderson, *Bishop’s Doom*, 9.

concerted effort to encourage everyone in every level of Scottish society to engage in the present struggles as members of the covenant community. According to Henderson, presbyterian polity ensured that everyone who was a member of a local congregation would have a substantive part to play in the government of the church and thus in the surrounding cultural struggles relating to liturgy and worship.

Henderson argued against his critics who maintained that, without episcopal oversight, there would be a general confusion, and thus a dangerous scattering of the sheep.

Henderson contended that presbyterian government was the key to create stability that countered democratic confusions. Henderson believed that his emphasis on the personal responsibility of everyone from all levels of society need not lead to confusion or chaos, so long as God's good order is maintained in presbyterian ecclesiology.

At this point, Yeoman has argued that the presbyterian emphasis on personal conscience created a legitimate change which threatened existing hierarchies in early modern Scotland. She argued, 'All legitimate action had to begin rightly in this internal sphere before any external action could be valid before God'.¹⁷⁰

While Yeoman's point is helpful in one sense, she seems to argue more than Henderson did. Henderson emphasized the multiplicity of checks and balances in the presbyterian polity, which he believed would foster a community of the saints; not democratic individualism. A virtual theme that underlies Henderson's writings and statements on ecclesiology is that harmony and hope would come through and move beyond ecclesiastical structures.

¹⁷⁰ L.A. Yeoman, 'Heart-work: emotion, empowerment and authority in covenanting times', PhD thesis, (University of St Andrews, 1991), 117.

Henderson believed that presbyterian government provided a way to provide concord and stability in the church, which produced a kind of ripple effect into the rest of the kingdom. He proposed presbyterian ecclesiology as the ultimate means, which helps to fill the longings of every Christian's heart for peace. He said:

They do desire nothing more than that the sonne of God may reigne, and that with and under the Sonne of God, the King may command, and they, as good subjects to Christ and the King, may obey.¹⁷¹

Henderson did not appear to have been trying to create a democratic polity in church or in state. At the same time, he advocated a kind of polity that required laymen to take unparalleled levels of authority in the life of the Kirk. Presbyterian polity, in this sense, opened up heretofore unknown areas of fifth commandment duties for those at the lowest echelons of society. According to Donald:

Protestantism awakened an active religious consciousness through all ranks of the population. The Presbyterian organization which evolved, alongside the changes in civil order, promoted the roles of the lairds and lesser men in society; the feuing of kirklands benefited especially the same group.¹⁷²

David Scott argues that the Covenanters' ability to restructure Scottish government and engage more levels of society during the Bishops' Wars was, 'A testament to the remarkable power of the Covenant in unleashing human potential at all levels of Scottish society'.¹⁷³

The key for Henderson was presbyterian polity. While he did not specify how, he believed deeply that he could engage the popular consciousness without stirring up the dangers of 'democratic calumnies', while at the same time encouraging respect for and allegiance to the monarchy, all because of the divine order of presbyterianism.

¹⁷¹ Henderson, *Government and Order*, 68.

¹⁷² Donald, *An Uncounselled King: Charles I and the Scottish troubles, 1637-1641* (Cambridge, 1990), 7.

¹⁷³ David Scott, *Politics and War in the Three Stuart Kingdoms* (New York, 2004), 20.

Presbyterianism and Liberty

Connecting ecclesiology to eschatology lent itself to be used as a convenient metanarrative that seemed to show God leading Scotland out of the slavery of episcopacy and into the springtime of blessings. According to this idea, providence was inexorably moving the nation to blessings under the Covenanters' leadership. Michael Lynch referred to this as a 'one-eyed reading of the history of the Kirk since the Reformation of 1560'.¹⁷⁴ This was also something that later historians used to connect the history of the Covenanters to their own cause of liberty.

This seems true of men like Aiton, who were sympathetic to the Covenanter cause, but who did not seem to show sensitivity to the eschatological complexities of early modern Scotland. Henderson's approach, like the earliest Covenanters' histories, yielded a kind of liberty vs. tyranny narrative. As noted, Henderson did in fact speak of liberty vs. tyranny, but with liturgical and eschatological qualifications. This shaped much of the historical writing of the period from the earliest primary sources such as Calderwood and Scot to the prolific writings of the nineteenth century.

Aiton, Henderson's most scholarly biographer, wrote about Henderson following this kind of metanarrative generally, except with a decidedly nineteenth century bent. To Aiton's credit, it was a framework that the Covenanters created and nourished in their own activities such as preaching and pamphleteering. Still, it was a narrative that required measured consideration of many of the actual historical, and especially theological, complexities that were common to early modern Scotland, not the least of which was the issue of idolatry as it relates to eschatological hope. Henderson wrote

about ecclesiology as eschatological, which may also be why good historians such as Todd and Mullan can take such variant approaches to the importance of ecclesiology of the very same period.¹⁷⁵

Henderson's eschatological ecclesiology requires historians to be sensitive to the way in which Henderson wrote about liberation; not as a political or social liberation unto specifically new forms of constitutional demands, but as deliverance from idolatry through godly polity. This requires sensitivity to the way Henderson used the word 'liberty', as it was linked to issue of idolatry and eschatology, which placed it in the middle of intense spiritual warfare.¹⁷⁶ This spiritual warfare related to Henderson's consistent reference to slavery, as it was intimately linked to the unbiblical opposition to presbyterian ecclesiology.¹⁷⁷

In presbyterian ecclesiology, Henderson believed that God had begun to 'shake off the yoke whilk was lying upon us, whilk fourteen taskmasters did hold fast on'.¹⁷⁸ It is very important to keep Henderson's arguments against episcopacy anchored in his struggle against idolatry. If not, the arguments can be easily transformed into some kind of a political appeal for political ends or placed in a context relevant to a historian's own personal situation. Henderson argued that he was seeking to establish what he called an 'ecclesiastick reuplick', not a political one.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London, 1991), 264.

¹⁷⁵ Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, 406; Mullan, *Episcopacy in Scotland*, 1.

¹⁷⁶ Carlos Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship From Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986), 298.

¹⁷⁷ Henderson, *Bishop's Doom*, 10.

¹⁷⁸ Henderson, *Sermons*, 147.

¹⁷⁹ *Reasons for Assembly*, 2. It is hard to determine the extent to which Henderson's use here of the word 'republick' carries with it anti-monarchical undertones. Certainly it did not have strong anti-monarchical political implications because Henderson remained content with the idea of monarchy in the civil realm. At the same time, he was determined to root out what he believed was the monarch's improper influence in the Kirk, which indicates a strong emphasis on the 'two kingdoms' idea taught very early in the work

Presbyterian ecclesiology as a ‘republic’ did require social changes, but not in a radically democratic fashion or in specific constitutional forms. Coffey notes, ‘ultimately, therefore, despite their refusal to occupy civil office, the Presbyterians advocated a radical redistribution of moral authority from the civil magistrate to the clergy’.¹⁸⁰

Henderson believed that redistributing this authority to ministers with parishes was an ideal way to exercise godly authority in the nation. Ministers, unlike bishops, should have a local call to a particular church so they can exercise spiritual oversight and godly rule. If not, they would be tempted to use their clerical authority for their own benefit, like the bishops, who had not cared for the sheep but had cared only for their own prosperity, which threatened the ruin of the whole nation.¹⁸¹ For Henderson, presbyterian ecclesiology was the answer to this kind of abuse because it was not vested in a priesthood claiming supernatural sanctions.¹⁸² In this sense, Henderson believed that it answered beautifully to what he believed were the doctrinal errors of a Romish hierarchical tyranny.

For Henderson, one of the most important aspects of godly presbyterian government related to the nature of ecclesiastical authority. At the Glasgow Assembly, Henderson argued that the nature of ecclesiastical authority is declarative and ministerial.

Ecclesiastical power was, Henderson argued:

Not so much magisterial as ministerial power and though the power be great it is principally in his hand who is Lord and Master of the house the Son of God who has absolute power, and we are but his ministers and servants, Ye know it is

of Andrew Melville, and very common among Scottish Covenanters.

¹⁸⁰ Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 209.

¹⁸¹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 376.

¹⁸² Gordon Donaldson, *Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh, 1985), 226.

required in a servand, and especialie in a steward (and we are called stewards and dispensatoures of the misteries of God) that they be found faithful.¹⁸³

The key to his view of faithfulness was a submission to what Henderson believed was the will and direction of God. Henderson penned his work on the order and government of the church as much for his southern neighbours as for his fellow Scots.

By 1641, Henderson taught that Scottish ecclesiology was settled. Yet there were still so many of his godly English brothers who were ‘much wearied of the Prelacy, who yet bow their shoulder to bear and couch down, between the two burthens’.¹⁸⁴ Since episcopal forms of ecclesiology were ungodly attempts to bring pretended order, they led to tyranny and oppression. Here as in so many places Henderson speaks of presbyterian ecclesiology in salvific and eschatological terms such as bringing light to darkness and order from confusion, or as in breaking the chains of tyranny. He actually encouraged his southern brothers that if they would look to their north as one would look to Sion ‘with their faces thitherward, the Lord would teach them his way’.¹⁸⁵

Henderson argued that God had brought bliss and peace to Scotland after long battles with antichristian prelates who had sought to burden the whole nation. According to Henderson, Scotland was now a land greatly blessed of God, and her presbyterian ecclesiology had led his native land to receive God’s unique blessings. Though he died with his own stipend two years in arrears, he portrayed Scottish church life in eschatological terms as peaceful and secure under presbyterian polity. ‘The ministers’,

¹⁸³ RKS, I, 154.

¹⁸⁴ Henderson, *Government and Order*, ‘To the Reader’, 1.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, ‘To the Reader’, 2. This metaphor was common among puritans, but in the context of the rebuilding of the temple of God; as noted in Ezekiel’s prophecies, it carries with it eschatological overtones. See Coffey, *Politics and Religion*, 246.

said Henderson, ‘beside their Gleab and Manse, are all provided to certaine’.¹⁸⁶

Regarding other social blessings, he said:

If the charge of their family be great, and their children put to Schooles or Colledges, they are helped and supplied by the charity of the people, which useth also to be extended, if need be, toward their widows and Orphanes, after their decease, of which the whole Eldership hath a speciall care.¹⁸⁷

He continued describing the poor of Scotland as finding food and hope, while the hospitals and public buildings were well-funded by law.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, for Henderson there was no place where the doctrine was more pure or where the worship of God was less corrupt and the pastors and people were more submissive and obedient to the Lord than in Presbyterian Scotland.¹⁸⁹ Henderson argued that presbyterian polity had ushered Scotland into a near edenic state of divine blessings, which he began urging on his neighbours to the south.

This view led Henderson and especially his fellow Scottish attendees at the Westminster Assembly to become increasingly frustrated with their English congregationalist brothers. Henderson would become befuddled with the increasing chaos among religious factions in England and the consequent resistance to presbyterianism, which he believed could mend the fractured ecclesiastical environment and bless both nations. Henderson and his fellow Scots believed that presbyterian ecclesiology held the key to social and political peace for any nation that submitted to it.

Conclusion

Increasingly, Henderson and his fellow Covenanters were connecting presbyterian ecclesiology with the recovery of order that the Reformation had at first disturbed, but

¹⁸⁶ Henderson, *Government and Order*, 32. See also Vaughan T. Wells, *The Origins of Covenanting*, 28.

¹⁸⁷ Henderson, *Government and Order*, 32.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 32.

which was now coming to fruition in presbyterian polity that might bless the whole world.¹⁹⁰ After all, Covenanter historians such as Calderwood and Scot had been arguing something similar to this for decades. Henderson's emphasis on presbyterian ecclesiology as a means to ultimate order became ironic, since it was precisely his intransigence in compromising his presbyterian ecclesiology that may have provoked some of the disorder at the Westminster Assembly.

Henderson and his fellow presbyterians believed that 'the plaine truthe of scripture, was obvious to every one who desires to know'.¹⁹¹ In this sense, presbyterian ecclesiology presented a divine test. If one could look at the obvious teachings of the scripture and say 'no', then it was as if one were siding with Antichrist. Rejecting prelacy and the antichristian character of church life under the pretended bishops was to side with God.¹⁹² There could be no allowances for 'sublties, sophistications and wranglings of humane wit'.¹⁹³ Since God had taken them so far, there could be no hesitation or admixture. Henderson compared Scotland and England to the men on Jonah's boat who had to purge their ship and act decisively to cast Jonah into the sea.¹⁹⁴ This image presented exactly the kind of judgment/blessing choice set before the nation of Scotland, and eventually, England.

This understanding pushed Henderson to a less and less flexible position. It did so because, according to his reasoning, to turn away from scripture was to depend on human wisdom, which invited the judgment of God. This essentially meant that anyone

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 'To the Reader', 3.

¹⁹⁰ Rothes, *Relations*, 90-92.

¹⁹¹ *Limited Prelacie*, 2.

¹⁹² Ibid, 2-3.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 17.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 13.

who argued against presbyterianism in Scotland was opposing Christ. While the Roman Catholic Church and Arminian theology had been the primary targets to this point, now anyone who opposed presbyterian ecclesiology was basically rejecting God's word, and thus provoking his curses. Henderson's eschatological hope for the future was also connected with his genuine sensitivity to the possible curses of God and drove him to become less and less flexible.¹⁹⁵ After all, how could one compromise with Antichrist?

Henderson made no overt efforts to gain constitutional or political advantage, per se. Rather, he argued that he was only pressuring civil authorities in so far as it related to the welfare of Sion. He believed that he was seeking to defend and to secure the divine rights of an independent Kirk. According to Henderson, all those who cherished and prayed for the 'welfare of Sion' would work to see prelacy removed and the ministry of Christ established in purity and power.¹⁹⁶

Since presbyterianism was the key to checking the advances of dangerous human authority, it was the central component for future social/political harmony. His last statement to the Glasgow Assembly indicated a high degree of hope in the peace and harmony that presbyterian ecclesiology would bring to Scotland and perhaps even the world. Henderson envisioned an eschatological hope that was coupled to ecclesiastical reform. He called Andrew Ramsay to conclude the Glasgow Assembly with the following:

As it was wonderfull so it was unexpected: for scarce ane in all Scotland could have any hope to see this dayes worke... But now it is reviving; the winter is over and gone; the floures appeare in the earth and the tyme of singing of birds

¹⁹⁵ According to Yeoman, a dominant idea associated with the apocalypse and eschatological warnings was that of avoiding 'mixture'. This included an emphasis that the people of God should never intermix with the people of Antichrist because such mixture usually indicated being 'lukewarm' and tended to open the door to divine judgment. See Yeoman, 'Heart-work', 95.

¹⁹⁶ *Limited Prelacie*, A3.

is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.¹⁹⁷

This means Henderson must be studied with a careful and nuanced reading of his view of covenant theology as well as how he connected eschatology with presbyterian ecclesiology. A closer look at the relationship of eschatology and ecclesiology in early modern Scotland ought to encourage more fruitful inquiries and foster scholarly conversation in this often overlooked area of early modern theology.

This chapter argues that any study of Henderson as a public, ecclesiastical leader needs to maintain sensitivity to the various nuances of theology that Henderson represented as a public spokesman. His public activity on behalf of the church, no less than his political activity and his preaching ministry, was laced with, and tangled together with, his commitments to Reformed Scottish covenantal theology, which after 1638 was inextricably linked with what one could call a nascent eschatological ecclesiology.

¹⁹⁷ RKS, I, 192.

Chapter 5

Alexander Henderson: The Pamphleteer

In this chapter, I argue that Alexander Henderson was the leading Covenanter pamphleteer, especially during the years 1638-1641, whose pamphlets revealed his conviction that the ideas and opinions of ordinary Scots and English folk were worth cultivating in order to achieve specific political ends.¹ This reflected Henderson's theological commitments as well as his underlying belief in the idea of a covenanted nation. As such, Henderson's pamphlets contained implicit and explicit arguments that godly people of all social stations had a responsibility to be informed, which included a commitment to the idea that God would use truth as a potent weapon in the conflicts that Henderson believed were as much eschatological as political and military. Henderson used the repetitive theme of godly self-defence littered with easily accessible illustrations that were targeted to persuade not merely the king and his counsellors, but the common people of Scotland, and especially England.² Henderson appears to have employed a self-consciously narrative style that corresponded to the actual substance of what he was trying to communicate in his pamphlets.

This chapter is the first specific study of Henderson's role as pamphleteer, particularly as it relates to the attribution and authorship of the Covenanter pamphlets. To date no Henderson biographer has dedicated significant efforts to analyse Henderson's overall role as a pamphleteer or propagandist. In fact, in his work on Henderson, John Aiton,

¹ See Margaret Steele, 'Covenanting Political Propaganda, 1638-89', Ph.D. thesis, (University of Glasgow, 1995), viii.

² As a working definition I have chosen to define a pamphlet using Joad Raymond's designation that a pamphlet typically consisted of between one sheet and a maximum of twelve sheets, or between eight and ninety-six pages in quarto. See Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), 5. This corresponds to Alexandra Halasz's market-oriented definition of pamphlets as 'baggage bookes' which were small and easily transported for what she refers to as 'mass market' usage. See Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early*

while offering scattered references to Covenanter pamphlets, devoted slightly less than one of his more than six hundred pages to Henderson's pamphlets during the Bishops' Wars.³ Henderson's other major biographer, Orr, mentioned that the Scots were shrewd in the 'publicity' regarding the war, but he did not develop the important public role Henderson played as the rhetorical leader of this 'publicity'.⁴

My analysis of Henderson's work as a pamphleteer corroborates and develops some of the most recent historical work in this area, such as, Joad Raymond's examination of pamphlets and pamphleteering in early modern Britain, yet with a necessary emphasis on Henderson's theology as a Covenanter minister.⁵ This is noteworthy given Raymond's assertion that pamphlets as a genre of written communication developed more and more sway in public discourse during the seventeenth century, becoming like 'paper bullets.'⁶ Raymond argues that the pamphlet 'became a pre-eminent model of public speech, a way of conceiving of the power of the word.'⁷ Henderson led the Covenanter's pamphlet campaign in nurturing the idea that people of all social ranks and status had a responsibility to know and to respond to the truth in accord with their covenant obligations. In doing this, Henderson used a style that was concise, simple and less hostile than previous and contemporary pamphlets or printed materials that were used to address the same issues.

Modern England (Cambridge, 1997), 1-2.

³ Aiton, *The life and times of Alexander Henderson: Giving a history of the second reformation of the Church of Scotland, and of the Covenanters, during the reign of Charles I* (Edinburgh, 1836), 441. Aiton did mention the prolific character of political pamphlets in a footnote, but he did not develop this comment; see *Ibid*, 519.

⁴ Orr, *Alexander Henderson: Churchman and Statesman* (London, 1919), 234-35.

⁵ As noted above, see Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*. See also Sarah Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda and Conceptualizations of the Public During the Bishops' Wars, 1638-1640', *The Historical Journal*, 52. 1 (2009), 63-86.

⁶ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 27.

⁷ *Ibid*, 26.

Henderson's work in this area is notable since, as Raymond argues, the historical significance of pamphlets lies in the fact that they were read and thereby exercised social influence. Raymond continues:

Between the mid-sixteenth century and the end of the seventeenth century, pamphlets became part of the everyday practice of politics, the primary means of creating and influencing public opinion... Put another way, pamphlets became a foundation of the influential moral and political communities that constitute a 'public sphere' of popular political opinion.⁸

Given Henderson's key role as the Covenanter's chief propagandist, this places him at the cutting edge of seventeenth century pamphleteering in Britain, and it offers an important contribution to Scottish Covenanter studies, as well as to related studies of Early Modern Britain.

Attribution: Henderson as Author and Editor

Attribution and authorship of many of the Covenanter pamphlets during the British Revolutions is a complex matter, and in some cases it is impossible to assess. The Scots intended to present a united Covenanter propaganda which makes attributing authorship to particular pamphlets often a difficult, if not impossible, task. One initial complicating factor is the Covenanter practice of consultation, interaction and editing, which often included a final approval process through the Tables or through a commissioned group of men.⁹

While a handful of studies have traced the mechanics for the printing of Covenanter pamphlets, none have concentrated on attribution, per se.¹⁰ In David Como's article on

⁸ Ibid, 26.

⁹ Walter Makey, *Church of the Covenant, 1637-1651: Revolution and Social Change in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1979), 27.

¹⁰ The closest study in this regard is Margaret Steele, 'Covenanting Political Propaganda'. Steele, however, does not direct her efforts to attribution, per se, and she studies pamphlets only as one piece of the overall Covenanter propaganda. See also articles: David Como, 'Secret Printing, the Crisis of 1640,

secret printing during the British Revolutions, he focuses on the technicalities of Scottish secret printing, especially as it related to the Cloppenburg Press, and the development of radical pamphleteering in England. Sarah Waurechen has done some very helpful work on Covenanter propaganda during the Bishops' Wars.¹¹

Waurechen's work is directed to the Covenanter's conception of the 'public' as it relates to their propaganda, especially in England. She analyses the Covenanters' printed pamphlets and selected manuscripts during the Bishop's Wars against the backdrop of a Habermasian model of the 'public'.¹² She concludes that the Covenanters believed that rational debate in a public forum would expose truth and persuade the English people to support their cause, which in turn would pressure the king into making the desired concessions.¹³ She does not, however, deal with the question of attribution relating to Henderson's role as an author and editor of the Covenanter propaganda, especially pamphlets.

Another difficulty of tracing the exact authorship of the Covenanter pamphlets is not only their joint approach to authorship, but also their provenance. For instance, the same pamphlet might be printed in Edinburgh, or by Dutch printers, or in England, all without attribution. Likewise, some of the same pamphlets were reprinted several times later

and the Origins of Civil-War Radicalism', *Past and Present*, 196 (2007), 37-82; and Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda', 63-86.

¹¹ Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda', 63-86.

¹² Waurechen uses Habermas as a point of contrast with the early modern approach to the public sphere. However, Peter Lake argues for a more nuanced approach. Lake argues for a new understanding and appreciation of the phrase 'public sphere'. While using some insights from Habermas, he also attempts to loosen the phrase 'public sphere' from what he argues is a rigid definition to the idea of the public sphere as 'emerging' and as situated in an early modern historical context and one which is less a sociological model and more historically grounded. Likewise, Lake argues for the use of manuscript and printed materials, as well as private sources, to supplement 'printed' sources, which he argues facilitates a broader approach to the idea of a public sphere; one that he refers to as a 'post reformation' sphere. See Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, eds., *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester, UK, 2007), 2-3.

with only minor changes and slightly different titles, also without attribution.¹⁴

Furthermore, because the pamphlets in most cases were illegal in England, where they were often distributed, attribution was deliberately not included, which makes it difficult to know for certain who wrote it and/or which group of Covenanters edited it.¹⁵

Because of these complexities, this chapter attributes authorship or primary editorship to Henderson only on those pamphlets that specifically name him as the author in the printed document or where extant primary sources attribute the work to Henderson. For attribution, this chapter relies most heavily on primary sources such as Gordon, Rothes, Wariston and Baillie, but also on other primary sources, especially general assembly minutes. In fact, nearly every one of the extant Covenanter sources records that Henderson played the most important editorial or rhetorical role throughout the whole process of creating and crafting propaganda for the Covenanter cause throughout the British Revolutions, but especially during the Bishop's Wars. It is in this process that Covenanter sources identify Henderson as having the most central place in what Steele calls 'ideological leadership', or what I describe in this chapter as 'rhetorical leadership'.¹⁶

Aside from his role as moderator at general assemblies, there is little evidence that Henderson had a direct role as it relates to the mechanics of printing and/or distributing

¹³ Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda', 63.

¹⁴ See David Como, 'Secret printing', 49.

¹⁵ The National Library of Scotland holds the Woodrow Quarto, XXIV, which is referred to as 'a collection of papers relating to the Covenanting period dating 1636-1639'. These appear to be someone's personal collection of documents relevant to the first phase of the Covenanters' struggle. A fair number of these were printed, and many of the same tracts were also available in manuscript copies, suggesting that it may have been common for Scottish political tracts of Henderson's period to have been widely circulated in manuscript as well as printed forms. This is also appears true of the National Library of

Covenanter pamphlets and propaganda. There are, however, a number of primary sources that disclose Henderson's role as an author and editor of Covenanter pamphlets and propaganda. These sources reveal that Henderson had a hand in drafting and/or editing the most influential pamphlets, especially leading to and including the Bishops' Wars of 1639-40. This corroborates Margaret Steele's contention that though the Covenanter pamphlets were originally produced through individual initiative, they underwent a thorough process of consultation and interaction among the ideological leadership before they were ultimately printed and made public.¹⁷

The Covenanters recognized that Henderson's public tone and temperament were perfect for the task of being the final spokesman of their cause. This was true of his role as mediator with the King and moderator at general assemblies, and it was also the case with their public, printed propaganda. Baillie used the words 'calmlie' and 'daintie' to describe Henderson's writing ability for pamphlets.¹⁸ He referred to one of Henderson's public statements as 'prettie'.¹⁹

As early as 1637, Wariston stated that he and Henderson worked closely on all the public statements made on behalf of the supplicants to the King.²⁰ Gordon said the same thing when he recorded that Henderson was the primary author of the Covenanters' written responses as the controversy grew.²¹ Rothes also confirmed Henderson's role, commenting that Henderson either crafted personally or edited and discussed the final touches of their public responses, such as the article for the present

Scotland, Woodrow Quartos, XXV, 'a collection of covenanting papers 1636-41'.

¹⁶ Steele, 'Covenanting Political Propaganda', 170.

¹⁷ Ibid, 170.

¹⁸ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 250 & 189.

¹⁹ Ibid, I, 285.

²⁰ Wariston, *Diary*, 283.

peace of Scotland.²² Rothes indicated that the Covenanters were so dependent on Henderson's drafting and editing skills that they made certain that Henderson had the final say not only in pamphlets, but even in official letters of correspondence that they used in their cause.²³ This provided what Rothes referred to as Henderson's 'smoother' and more 'amenable' tone.²⁴

According to Wariston, from the beginning of the crisis, every significant committee that related to producing the common views of the Covenanters involved Henderson.²⁵ In July 1638, Wariston noted that Henderson helped him with the writing of the pamphlet, *Information to England*, and he made it clear that Henderson's final advice and counsel was the normal process of writing anything they made public on behalf of the Covenanters.²⁶ Wariston recorded that Henderson also worked with him to craft the pamphlet, *Reasons for an Assembly*.²⁷ While Wariston may have drafted the first copy of a public statement, he then made sure to send it to Henderson for consultation and final editing. This is important because there are a great deal of histories of the period that off-handedly attribute Wariston with primary authorship of many of the Covenanter pamphlets without the qualification of Wariston's own disclosure of his dependence on Henderson for final editing and approval.²⁸ This would be easy to do, since even some primary sources incorrectly attribute authorship to Wariston singularly without being privy to Henderson's co-authorship in the editing and writing process per Wariston's

²¹ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, I,10.

²² Rothes, *Relation*, 100.

²³ Ibid, 84-105.

²⁴ Ibid, 162.

²⁵ Wariston, *Diary*, 330, 353, 360, & 377.

²⁶ Ibid, 360, 375.

²⁷ Ibid, 379.

²⁸ Peter Donald attributes almost all of the Covenanter pamphlets to Wariston without primary source references. See Donald, *Uncounselled King, Charles I and the Scottish troubles, 1637-1641* (Cambridge, 1990), 185-9. Walter Makey also attributes the Covenanter pamphlets primarily to Wariston. See Makey, *The Church of the Covenant*, 25.

own account.²⁹

Like Wariston, Baillie described the normal pamphlet-making process in the following way, ‘Great care was taken to set it down in so smooth, and yet so effective termes as was possible... Henderson then did rypelie advyse on all the words and syllabs’.³⁰

Wariston noted that this began as early as 1637, and Baillie confirmed that it continued up to the time of Henderson’s death in 1646.³¹

In one instance, Baillie recounted what could be described as the standard process for writing public statements on behalf of the Covenanters. He noted, ‘the reasons of the demand, drawn first by Mr. Archibald Johnstone then by Rothes and lastlie perfyted [sic] by Mr. Alexander (Henderson) in a verie prettie paper’.³²

In one case Baillie recorded that he drafted an entire pamphlet and then sent it to Henderson to be edited and prepared for publication. Regarding a pamphlet criticizing episcopal ecclesiology, Baillie noted, ‘the first draught and matter, was myne, though the last forme, as oft all our wrytes, was Mr. Henderson’s’.³³ His comment, ‘as oft all our wrytes’, confirms the full testimony of the closest Covenanters, who worked with Henderson in crafting public statements, especially pamphlets.

Baillie noted that Henderson had to be consulted for advice on official Covenanter public statements, whenever the matter seemed ‘weightie, and of grit consequent for the

²⁹ CSPD, 1625-1649, 602.

³⁰ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 289.

³¹ Wariston, *Diary*, 283; Baillie, *Letters*, II, 377-78.

³² Baillie, *Letters*, I, 285.

³³ *Ibid.*, II, 40.

publicit'.³⁴ He described the typical process, saying that he wrote a draft of a pamphlet and then sent it to Henderson 'to abridge and polish'.³⁵ The common practice was to wait for Henderson's draft copy or final editing work, then once he had finalized his redactions or editions with the consent of the rest of the leaders, 'gave out to print'.³⁶ Referring to a controversial public statement made at the 1641 General Assembly, Baillie said, 'at last Mr. Henderson fell on that model, which thereafter was voiced and printed'.³⁷ According to Baillie, this same assembly appointed Henderson to 'wryte a courteous answer to our Inglish brethren, which he did verie accuratelie'.³⁸

The Covenanters relied on Henderson's rhetorical skills, so much that when Henderson made a motion to create a confession of faith, the assembly responded in the affirmative and assigned the task to him.³⁹ While he declined to take on the project on his own, the assembly's selection testified to the amazing confidence they had in his rhetorical skills. Baillie is the most thorough source in detailing the common practice of sending his work to Henderson for approval.⁴⁰ Baillie described Henderson's role as so vital to all of their pamphlets and public responses that by 1642, Baillie had become accustomed to waiting for Henderson's response, so that it was only after hearing from Henderson that he said it 'did put my mynde to rest'.⁴¹

This created a trust and dependence on Henderson's rhetorical insights on matters of public expression or rhetoric whenever something was presented as the commonly

³⁴ Ibid, I, 241.

³⁵ Ibid, I, 280.

³⁶ Ibid, I, 250.

³⁷ Ibid, I, 362.

³⁸ Ibid, I, 364.

³⁹ Ibid, I, 365.

⁴⁰ Ibid, II, 27.

⁴¹ Ibid, II, 11.

shared Covenanter view. The Covenanter leadership trusted him so much that even when some of them were not pleased with the ‘straine’ of a particular paper, arguing that his tone was too conciliatory and even ‘submissive’, they ultimately yielded and Baillie noted, ‘little in it was altered’.⁴² The Covenanter production process for pamphlets and public statements depended heavily on group efforts, but in such efforts, according to the extant primary sources, Henderson played the most vital final role.

Early Efforts

In his pamphlets, Henderson worked hard at creating a public perception of deference and self-defence. In his earliest petitions in 1637, he crafted them as ‘appeals’ and ‘supplications’, using what Zaret describes as a traditional petition style to signify a deferential request for favour or redress of a grievance.⁴³ His style evolved as he became the lead editor of Covenanter propaganda efforts, but his deferential tone remained consistent. Throughout the year 1638, Henderson published arguments that originated from his sermons and appeals in support of the National Covenant. This initiated what Raymond refers to as the first phase of Covenanter propaganda.⁴⁴ Some of Henderson’s primary adversaries from Aberdeen pulled him into a series of pamphlets and counter pamphlets, arguing about the historical, theological, and biblical character of the conflict. Henderson and Dickson were the foremost ministers on a Fifth Table, which co-ordinated appeals through the pulpit.⁴⁵ They also self-consciously crafted their public response not as their ‘own private judgments’ but as those of their

⁴² Ibid, I, 204.

⁴³ See Rothes, *Relations*, 46. Regarding petition style see, David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, 2000), 83.

⁴⁴ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 173.

⁴⁵ MacInnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement, 1625-1641* (Edinburgh, 1991), 169.

cause.⁴⁶ They argued that their cause was more than simply the cause of a single group, but the cause of truth and light itself. So they said, ‘let it be ascribed not to us, but to the brightness of the Truth, and cause itselife and to the Father of Lights: to whom be all Glory’.⁴⁷

In response to *Duplyes of the Ministers and Professors of Aberdeen*, their arguments were published in 1638 as *Answers of Some Brethren of the Ministrie*. Henderson and Dickson presented a series of points, which were printed in Edinburgh and which became open for public debate and discussion. According to Donald, their adversaries readily acknowledged that the Covenanters encouraged open debate about the matters at hand.⁴⁸ These particular exchanges, however, did not originate from an open debate, but only as the Covenanters were forced to answer in printed form after the Aberdeen Doctors had been, according to Gordon, secretly recording their public addresses and sermons.⁴⁹ Gordon noted that this inaugurated a more concerted Covenanter effort that they believed they needed in order to sustain a public campaign of true information to counteract what they believed was the misinformation being spread by their adversaries.⁵⁰

A very important theme that is woven throughout the fabric of Covenanter propaganda was the hope of the inevitable triumph of truth over lies. Henderson and his fellow Scots believed that God would use truth to defeat his enemies. In the *Answers*, Henderson and Dickson asserted that the Scots were acting for the defence of ‘Kirk and

⁴⁶ *The Answers of Some Brethren Concerning the Late Covenant* (Edinburgh, 1638), 36.

⁴⁷ Ibid, sig. A4.

⁴⁸ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 190-91.

⁴⁹ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, I, 88-95.

⁵⁰ Ibid, I, 95.

Kingdome’ whereby ‘the naked Truth shall bee seene of all her lovers’.⁵¹ Arguing that their actions were entirely defensive, Henderson and Dickson answered their Aberdeen critics against the charge of rebellion. They contended that because they were using lawfully ordained means of resistance through lower magistrates, they were following the Bible.⁵²

Henderson insisted that their actions were not only lawful but morally necessary as a means of doing good to their neighbour. He appealed directly to ‘everyone in his own place and order’ to take up the lawful cause of self-defence.⁵³ Henderson compared the Covenanter cause to that of someone who sees his neighbour’s house on fire and must ‘runne to all roomes, where hee may quench it’.⁵⁴ He argued that when a ship springs a leak ‘every mariner, yea, every passenger ought to labour to stop it’.⁵⁵ Henderson employed simple, straightforward illustrations that he believed would ring true to his audience. He made direct appeals to them, commenting that ‘not threatnings have been used, except of the deserved judgment of God; nor force, except the force of reason’.⁵⁶ This indicates that Henderson was making self-conscious appeals to his readers, which was common in his public statements.⁵⁷

Henderson singled out pastors in particular as those who must lead the people of the nation in this cause, not as a matter of mere teaching, but as a matter of moral necessity

⁵¹ *Answers*, 9-10.

⁵² *Ibid*, 4.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 36.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 12.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 15.

⁵⁷ This was true in Henderson’s preaching when he deliberately instructed his listeners on ‘how’ to listen. He did some of the same things in his pamphlets, as he reminded them that, unlike his opponents, he was not using coercion, but persuasion as the moral force behind his cause.

in times of common danger.⁵⁸ Arguing from previous legal and religious actions, Henderson asserted the godly character of their struggle as that of self-defence, using such examples of the King's coronation oath.⁵⁹

The Aberdeen Doctors contended that the Covenanters were not fair in their use of legal precedents. They maintained, for instance, that Henderson was using conflicting and even rescinded parliamentary and legal documents to support his cause.⁶⁰ They also insisted that Henderson had oversimplified his case. Using the same commentaries that Henderson had used on Psalm 68, the doctors adeptly argued that Henderson and Dickson failed to make careful exegetical distinctions. For instance, the Doctors claimed that the same commentary that Henderson used as a basis for his case forbade resisting civil magistrates through novel means when existing legal means were available for them to use.⁶¹ Disputing Henderson's use of this commentary, they demanded answers as to why Henderson had not exhausted all of the existing legal remedies before taking his present course of defiance. The *Duplies* represented a forceful and thoroughly researched challenge to the Covenanters. They cited a variety of sources from the early church fathers to the most recognized protestant scholars such as John Calvin and Hugo Grotius.⁶²

Their research and arguments were thorough, but many of their subtle points remained unanswered, because Henderson and Dickson did not respond to them point for point. In fact, Henderson virtually ignored many of the more subtle arguments, such as those

⁵⁸ *Answers*, 12.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 33.

⁶⁰ *Duplies*, 22.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 25.

⁶² *Ibid*, 27-33.

that attempted to distinguish passive from active resistance.⁶³ This was a key point, because Henderson was arguing that active resistance was a moral necessity for the godly. Henderson had no interest in engaging in deeper or more sophisticated debates, at least in pamphlets. Henderson's pamphlets emphasized certain points with easy illustrations in short clear form, and apparently to popular effect.

There was also a decided difference in the brevity with which Henderson presented and concluded his cases and the Doctors' arguments. For instance, Henderson's and Dickson's popular appeal amounted to forty two printed pages, while the *Duplies* of the Aberdeen Doctors amounted to one hundred thirty three pages. Both were small by seventeenth-century standards, but Henderson's response matched the parameters that Raymond uses to describe what he called the 'emerging concept of a pamphlet as a small book'.⁶⁴

Henderson helped Wariston to produce *A Short Relation*, which was printed in July of 1638 and circulated throughout England also with great popular effect.⁶⁵ This was the first of many pamphlets with which Henderson worked closely with Wariston in order to construct a context in which they hoped their English audience would place their story.⁶⁶ A strong central theme was that of 'bad counsel'. Henderson argued that, because of bad counsel, the King had disrupted the peace and good order of Scotland, which left the Covenanters no choice but self-defence.

According to the *Short Relation*, the Kirk of Scotland after the reformation of religion

⁶³ Ibid, 20.

⁶⁴ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 5.

⁶⁵ Wariston, *Diary*, 361; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 189.

⁶⁶ Wariston, *Diary*, 360.

did by degrees attain to as great perfection both in doctrine and discipline as any other reformed Kirk in Europe.⁶⁷ Henderson and Wariston outlined the history of the conflict in a tone that was structured as much like a plea for help as an argument to resist. They created a narrative framework, into which they placed their cries and pleas for understanding. The Kirk of Scotland was portrayed as having an advanced state of peace and blessing beyond that of England, and into which others were intruding. The pamphlet argued that God had created a tranquil context, but the pretended prelates of Laud had obtruded themselves into it, creating the present strife. According to this account, the aggressive bishops had intruded into the peaceful and godly worship of the Scottish Kirk without provocation or threat from Scotland.

Henderson and Wariston recounted the story through the 1636 Canons, and then on to the imposition of the Service Book in 1637. Henderson portrayed the riot in 23 July 1637 as an exasperated and desperate response of the people's frustration with 'novations' in worship.⁶⁸ Word upon word, Henderson and Wariston attempted to portray the supplicants as helpless and defensive in character, and as those who were suffering, yet hopeful that through their patient supplications the king would eventually allow them to obey God as they desired.⁶⁹

Using a predominantly narrative style, they described being forced to act in self-defence to create the National Covenant as an orderly, legal response to their situation. The pamphlet made it appear that the whole nation of nobles, gentry, boroughs, ministers and commons wanted peace, but they were simply denied, which forced them to take the lawful and defensive action of banding together, giving their hope to God and to the

⁶⁷ *Short Relation*, 1.

good intentions of their southern neighbours.⁷⁰ According to this pamphlet, the Covenanters reluctantly had been forced into a position of being unenthusiastic defenders whose backs were against the wall and who were left with no options, so they acted to defend themselves.⁷¹

Baillie believed that the Covenanters pamphlets would provide a remedy in response to what he and the Covenanters believed were the ‘untruths’ of their foes. They also hoped it would rally the friends of truth to their side.⁷² Henderson and Wariston were working to woo their English audience as ‘brethren’ who they believed would sympathize with them in a common cause for truth and peace.⁷³ They connected with the growing concerns of many English subjects about the arbitrary, personal rule of Charles I. They did so indirectly in speaking of his bishops abusing the submissive ministers of pleasant parishes at ‘their pleasure’.⁷⁴

Originally made public in December of 1638, *The Protestation of the Generall Assemblie of the Church of Scotland* was expanded, reorganized and republished throughout the year 1638, evidencing a continually developing campaign of pamphlet or propaganda warfare.⁷⁵ As moderator, Henderson oversaw its changes. He relied on arguing certain points of self-defence that were repeated in various forms, and to great effect. This was a consistent element of the propaganda and pamphlet campaign throughout both Bishops’ Wars.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 1.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 4, 10.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 10-14.

⁷¹ Ibid, 13-14.

⁷² Baillie, *Letters*, I, 176.

⁷³ *Short Relation*, 15.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 2.

⁷⁵ See RKS, I, 71-74, 84-90.

Instructions for Defensive Arms

The Glasgow General Assembly set the stage for an inevitable war.⁷⁶ Both sides had already been preparing for this conflict throughout the year in 1638. In January of 1639, the nobles of Scotland, accompanied by the Earl of Argyll, met in Edinburgh, and signed a letter detailing the nation's response to the impending war with the King.⁷⁷ This letter was sent out to the various regions of Scotland, and the nation was making overt preparations for what historians call the Bishops' Wars. Shortly thereafter, the Tables requested Henderson, who Baillie referred to as 'our best penman', to write a public statement to prepare the nation of Scotland for conflict.⁷⁸

This would have been a tall order for any war, but a war with one's own king required even more strenuous efforts. Efforts for such a conflict had already been occurring for years, not the least of which was the National Covenant. Yet, with the coming of actual armed conflict, Henderson wrote his 'Instructions for Defensive Arms'. Baillie noted that Henderson wrote this as the 'common view' of the Covenanters and, according to Baillie, he wrote it more quickly than was his custom.⁷⁹

If Baillie was correct, this would account for its somewhat more abrasive and faster-paced tone than his other pamphlets. Another reason for the Instructions' unique tone was that it was not written to be printed as a pamphlet, but it was designed to provide ministers and public officials with an outline of the main reasons why their present

⁷⁶ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-44: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (London, 1973), 127.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 128.

⁷⁸ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 189; Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, II, 204.

⁷⁹ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 190.

conflict with the King was justified.⁸⁰ In the introductory portion of the manuscript, Henderson stated that the times required that the points following be pressed upon the people, both by the preachers in public and in private, and by those who had understanding.⁸¹ He called the nation to unity, saying, ‘that unitie be earnestly recommended as that which strengtheneth the cause and which being first holden with veritie will make us invincible’.⁸² Henderson divided his address into twelve sections, almost all of which contain subsections, with arguments or points to support his central theme of the right of self-defence. His address is succinct, and it provides a lucid outline of some of the Covenanters’ positions.

According to David Stevenson, most of Henderson’s arguments were old, though in a new guise.⁸³ For instance, Henderson said, ‘the people maketh the magistrate but the magistrate maketh not the people’.⁸⁴ In stating this, he was distilling a basic political idea from Johannes Althusius’ *Politica Methodice Digesta*.⁸⁵ At one point, he argued that the question was not whether we should honour the king or render to Caesar that which is Caesar’s, but whether honour should be given to an evil and wicked superior in an evil thing?⁸⁶ Henderson moved his listeners from believing that it was merely acceptable to resist an evil action of a superior, to arguing that they had a ‘duty’ to such resistance.

⁸⁰ Henderson did not originally publish his Instructions, but he wrote it as a manuscript to be used as a manual for pastors and others who might need a kind of ‘bullet-point’ guide for their public statements. The English Parliament published them later in 1642 with the title, *Some speciall arguments for the Scottish subiects lawfull defence of their religion and liberty, extracted out of the manuscripts of one of their chiefe reformers. Very usefull and necessary for these present times. The times doe require that the points following be pressed upon the people, both by the preachers in publick, and by understanding, and well-affected persons in private conference* (London, 1642).

⁸¹ ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’, np.

⁸² Ibid, np.

⁸³ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 133.

⁸⁴ ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’, np.

⁸⁵ Edward J. Cowan is keen to emphasize Althusius as an important source for the making of the National Covenant. See Cowan, ‘The Making of the National Covenant’, in Morrill, ed., *The Scottish National*

Even though most historians fail to mention it, Henderson's arguments throughout this address were primarily from the Bible.⁸⁷ For instance, in the third section, seven of the eleven arguments came directly from the scriptures. Section six contained points from Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. In the eighth section, five of the ten arguments came directly from the scriptures, while the other five points came from the examples of various reformed churches. Section ten argued primarily using the king's coronation vow, and section eleven argued from acts of parliament and from Scottish ecclesiastical and civil history.

If length of a section indicates significance, then section twelve was quite important. There was a whole paragraph and subsection dedicated to presbyterian ecclesiology, which was quite large considering the entire pamphlet on first draft was only five pages long. It appears that, while many of the other points were asserted as self-evident and widely accepted truths, at this point Henderson was moving presbyterian ecclesiology into the realm of heretofore unknown territory. He argued that presbyterian church government was as fundamental to Christian orthodoxy as the Nicene settlement. This must have been a sensitive point, since Henderson had so closely connected the cause of God at the Glasgow Assembly to the implementation of presbyterian ecclesiology and the hope of the future.

The Instructions were to be used as a call to the nation, and especially as a guide for ministers across the nation.⁸⁸ Henderson urged the people to resist their king as a matter

Covenant, 81.

⁸⁶ 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', np.

⁸⁷ See Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 133-137.

⁸⁸ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, II, 203-04; Baillie, *Letters*, I, 189.

of divine calling and godly duty. Henderson consistently attempted to drive home what he believed was the legality and constitutionality of the Covenanter cause.⁸⁹ He attempted to distinguish between rebellion against a superior magistrate and godly resistance through the use of lower magistrates. Henderson highlighted the significance of godly, orderly, and lawful defence through lower or ‘inferior magistrates’, which, said Henderson, would work to save the ruin of ‘Kirk and Kingdome’ from unjust violence and religious innovations.⁹⁰

Because the king had refused to uphold his own obligations to God and his subjects, according to Henderson, the Covenanters were simply using godly means to redirect him to his own duties as ruler; they were not engaged in rebellion but godly ‘defence’.⁹¹ Like many of his public statements, Henderson made an indirect appeal to the king as a humble servant of God and someone who had most certainly been misinformed. He used the classic trope of ‘evil counsel’ in order to insulate the king somewhat.⁹² Henderson noted that his majesty had certainly misunderstood the Covenanter cause, since he was ‘farre from us in another kingddome hearing the one partie and misinformed by our adversaries’.⁹³ Henderson pointed to the existing contractual obligations of the King to his subjects by virtue of existing legal standards, and according to his own coronation oath, ‘Our King professing with us the same religion and obliged by his fathers deed & his owne oath do defend us his own Subjects our

⁸⁹ Quentin Skinner confirms the notion that no Calvinist political theorist ever attempted to justify private or individual violence as a legitimate means of resistance, but rather through lower magistrates. See Skinner, ‘The Origins of the Calvinist Theory of Revolution’, in Barbara C. Malament, ed., *After the Reformation: essays in honor of J. H. Hexter* (Philadelphia, 1980), 321. See also, Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Volume Two: The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge, 1978), 215-238; Glen Burgess, *British Political Thought, 1500-1660* (London, 2009), 188-193.

⁹⁰ ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’, np.

⁹¹ *Speech Delivered, I*.

⁹² Como, ‘Secret Printing’, 64.

⁹³ ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’, np.

lives, religions liberties and lawes'.⁹⁴

Henderson packed his address with multiple illustrations that he believed proved the duty of self-defence. He argued that, if a private man is bound by the laws of nature to defend himself, the same thing applies to a lawfully bonded nation in defence against a prince or judge. According to common understandings of the law, said Henderson, a private man may repel violence with violence or a chaste women may defend her own body against adultery, servants may hold the hands of their masters seeking to kill them in their rage, the mariners and passengers may save themselves by resisting the one sitting at the helm if he intends to drive the ship against the rocks.⁹⁵ Henderson argued that if an individual could do so, then the whole nation lawfully bonded together in covenant before God could defend itself against any invasion whatsoever.⁹⁶ The argument of the 'lawful' obligation of self-defence would be a key plank of virtually all of Henderson's public statements throughout the conflicts.⁹⁷ It was a simple, yet driving, element of his pamphlets.

The Bishops' Wars (1639-1640)

Henderson was leading the Covenanters in a pamphlet and propaganda campaign which, according to Conrad Russell, produced a large body of printed material, industriously

⁹⁴ Ibid, np.

⁹⁵ Skinner notes the settled belief that political thinkers Catholic and Protestant alike argued that it was always legitimate for an individual to repel unjust force with force. However, Skinner also argues that it was not as settled that the same analogy carried over as equally true for using force against lawfully ordained civil magistrates. See Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, volume Two The Age of Reformation*, 199-201.

⁹⁶ 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', np.

⁹⁷ Henderson used the word, 'lawful' and not the word, 'right'. See 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', np. Glen Burgess argues that Covenanter resistance theory provided the people a duty, not a right, of self defence. However, he does seem to note some measure of development from the earlier pamphlets to the later more extensive work in Rutherford's *Lex Rex*. See Burgess, *British Political Thought, 1500-1660*, 190-91. In his pamphlets, Henderson seems to blend the idea of a natural God-given 'right' of defence with the more predominant notion of 'godly' obligations or duties of defence in the context of life in covenant with God. Henderson does display a concern for the possible tensions in using the legal language of self-defence and the theological language of duty. Thus, Henderson's public statements

and surreptitiously circulated in England throughout the years 1638-40. The ideas, the actions, and the sheer infectious force of their example, says Russell, did a great deal to encourage the English Parliament and its supporters, as they did to terrify other people back into Charles's camp.⁹⁸

According to the English short title catalogue and Sarah Waurechen's important study, there were sixty printed texts produced on both sides of the Anglo-Scottish border and in the Low Countries that overtly engaged with the Scottish crises during the Bishops' Wars. Of these printed texts, fourteen represent the 'official' Covenanter position as it relates to the historical, theological and political issues involved in the Anglo-Scottish crisis.⁹⁹ According to the testimony of Covenanter sources, Henderson was either the primary author or the final editor of all fourteen pamphlets.

Aside from the pamphlets and addresses Henderson wrote or edited prior to the Bishops' Wars, he was intimately involved with the following Covenanter pamphlets listed in chronological order: *An information to all good Christians within the kingdome of England* (February, 1639);¹⁰⁰ *The remonstrance of the nobility* (March, 1639);¹⁰¹ *The declinatour and protestation of the some-times pretended bishops, presented in the face of the last assembly, refuted and found futile*, printed first in Edinburgh in 1639.¹⁰² The Covenanters followed these with a series of pamphlets such as, *An information from the states of the Kingdome of Scotland, to the Kingdome of*

rarely have the kind of legal and theological precision found in something like Rutherford's *Lex Rex*.

⁹⁸ Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991), 43-44.

⁹⁹ Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda', 66. These pamphlets were printed in Edinburgh, the Low Countries and on what David Como calls the Clopenburg Press. See David Como, 'Secret printing', 41.

¹⁰⁰ *Diary*, 411-12. Baillie, *Letters*, I, 188-89.

¹⁰¹ Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda', 68.

¹⁰² Henderson's name is listed at the end of the NLS copy. See NLS 1.58(2), 96.

England (March 1640),¹⁰³ *A remonstrance concerning the present troubles from the meeting of the estates of the Kingdome of Scotland, Aprill 16 unto the Parliament of England* (April 1640),¹⁰⁴ *The intentions of the armie of the Kingdome of Scotland: declared to the brethren of England by the commissioners of the late Parliament, and by the Generals, Noblemen, Barrons and other officers of the armie* (August 1640),¹⁰⁵ which was edited and reprinted as *The Lawfulnesse of our Expedition into England Manifested* (October 1640).¹⁰⁶ Henderson also helped to craft *Our Demands of the English Lords Manifested Being at Rippon* (October 1640).¹⁰⁷

The first Bishops War took place from March to June of 1639. In May of 1639, the king's troops retreated at Kelso when confronted with a numerically superior Scots army. Even though it was not a battle, per se, the retreat of Charles I's cavalry stunned the entire force and, according to Fissel, the psychological impact was disproportionate to its actual military effect.¹⁰⁸

On 6 June, the Covenanters requested to treat with the King, which is sometimes referred to as the pacification of Berwick. These negotiations lasted into July of 1639, at which Henderson played an important role.¹⁰⁹ It became obvious that neither side considered the pacification to be a permanent settlement. Several conflicting and ambiguous items were left outstanding; not the least of which was the King's refusal to affirm the actions of the Glasgow Assembly.¹¹⁰ In his history of the conflict, Row made

¹⁰³ See Spalding, I, 212. See also Como, 'Secret printing', 41.

¹⁰⁴ See Como, 'Secret printing', 41, 49.

¹⁰⁵ *Diary*, 82. See also Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 206.

¹⁰⁶ See David Como, 'Secret printing', 41.

¹⁰⁷ See David Como, 'Secret printing', 41.

¹⁰⁸ Fissel, *The Bishops' Wars*, 29.

¹⁰⁹ Balfour's *Works*, II; 327, RKS, I, 228-229.

¹¹⁰ Fissel, *The Bishops' Wars*, 33-35.

it clear that no solid peace could be achieved without the king's approval of the acts from the Glasgow General Assembly.¹¹¹ The conflict ended in a shaky truce, and Henderson was busy creating pamphlets that attempted to influence the war of public perceptions, which they apparently were winning.¹¹² According to Stevenson, while Charles I had failed to invade Scotland successfully, the Covenanters had effectively defied the King, and their power in Scotland was unshaken, all of which greatly encouraged the King's English opponents.¹¹³

The Scots convened a general assembly in August of 1639, meeting in Edinburgh. Henderson opened the assembly, but in deference to his previous opposition to permanent moderators, he refused to become moderator and David Dickson was elected.¹¹⁴ The Edinburgh General Assembly confirmed the Glasgow Assembly's actions, so the conflict was still on. By now Henderson had been transplanted from Leuchars to Edinburgh and would continue to play an important role in crafting Covenanter propaganda from the capital. This propaganda was crucial, because by August of 1640, the Second Bishops' War was underway, except this time Scotland invaded England.

General Alexander Leslie led the Covenanter army across the Tweed and drove back the king's forces to the River Tyne, where the Scots defeated them at Newburn on 28 August. After this, the Covenanter armies entered the undefended city of Newcastle.¹¹⁵ By September 1640, the royal forces at Edinburgh Castle had been surrounded, and the

¹¹¹ Row, *History*, 523.

¹¹² Baillie, *Letters*, I, 189.

¹¹³ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 182.

¹¹⁴ RKS, I, 242. Since Dickson had worked closely with Henderson for the past several years and since they were close friends, Dickson was the perfect moderator to maintain Covenanter direction of the assembly.

Treaty of Ripon was signed on 26 October 1640.¹¹⁶ Though a treaty was signed, the peace was not yet concluded, and the Scots occupied English land, demanding payments. Even after the invasion, the Scots under Henderson's direction sent out statements pleading the defensive character of their cause, 'We are therefore constrained at this time to come into England, not to make warre, but for seeking our relief and preservation'.¹¹⁷

This left the King in desperate need of calling the English Parliament that he had already convened once but dissolved when they sought to redress grievances. Now the English Parliament had tremendous leverage to seek redress of grievances before they would agree to the King's demands for taxes to support his actions. Covenanter propaganda played a significant role in the overall conflict that would become the British Revolutions.

Brevity

Joseph Black argues that a century earlier, the presbyterians behind the Martin Marprelate propaganda campaign were conscious that brevity was connected to veracity. According to Joseph Black, presbyterians in England were responsible for the first and most important pamphlet series during the reign of Elizabeth I in England. These were famously entitled *The Martin Marprelate Tracts*. Martin adopted a satirical personae as he took on the form of a prelatical dolt or ecclesiastical clown in his pamphlets. Martin reflected an openly satirical approach that gained wide notoriety throughout England. Martin argued for a plain and unadorned reasoning that set his tracts in contrast with the obtuse and unconscionably verbose misrepresentations of

¹¹⁵ Fissel, *The Bishops' Wars*, 57-61.

¹¹⁶ Lynch, *Scotland: A New History*, 271; Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 205-213.

¹¹⁷ *Information from the Scottish Nation, to all the true English, concerning the present Expedition (St*

their prelatical foes.¹¹⁸ Martin argued, for instance, that form reflected substance, so that ‘honest and godly causes’ could be defended by ‘good proofs and clear style’.¹¹⁹ The pamphlets caused such a stir that they provoked in one case a one thousand four hundred page response, which Martin mockingly called ‘a portable book, if your horse be not too weak’.¹²⁰

Unlike Martin’s opponents, the Covenanters’ concentrated on brevity in their pamphlets and shared Martin’s sentiments for a brief, popular style.¹²¹ Baillie noted that in just a few ‘daintie’ pages Henderson was able to answer the ‘injurious dealings for oure innocencie’. This indicated that the Covenanters thought brevity was an ingredient of their success and that Henderson was a master of this brevity.¹²² Because of Henderson’s brief but powerful response, Baillie argued that ‘We, over all England, began to be much more pitied then before and our intraged partie, the bishops to be the more detested’.¹²³

Henderson attempted to express his ideas in pamphlets with brevity, clarity and simplicity. Some of this may have come from his training at St Andrews under the tutelage of Andrew Melville. When Henderson was at St Andrews, Andrew Melville took every opportunity available in the university environment to emphasis the problems with Aristotle’s logic, the use of Ramist logic, and what he believed were the blessings and clarity in the truth.¹²⁴ It appears that Melville’s efforts had their eventual effect on Henderson. Henderson’s writings contained an assumption of the simplicity

Andrews, 1640), 1.

¹¹⁸ Joseph L. Black, ed., *The Martin Marprelate Tracts: A Modernized and Annotated Edition* (Cambridge, 2011), xxv.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, xxv.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, xxv.

¹²¹ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 189-190

¹²² Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 174.

of persuasion and logic. His arguments were usually brisk and precise, and not filled with the agonizing syllogisms that tended to characterize Aristotelian logic. For instance, he argues, 'Princes principallie are for the people and their defence and not the people principally for them, the safetie and good of the people is the supreme law'.¹²⁵ Henderson did not argue as if he needed to 'craft' a highly structured syllogism. Instead, he asserted what he believed was a well-ordered argument based on what he thought to be self-evident reasons.

For Henderson, logic was not a tool reserved only for the 'well-trained' elitist; logic was something that any person could use in order to make sense of the world. Likewise, logic and reason were never supposed to be in conflict with religion, but rather they were seen as instruments of religion. Logic as an organization of 'right' thinking was no more a danger to true religion than individual words. Henderson believed that logic, like words, could be misused and misappropriated towards godless ends. In fact, a major theme in Henderson's pamphlets was that of misinformation, which could be corrected with the truth simply communicated. He stated in several different ways that if godly people were informed rightly, they would act responsibly. This characterized his preaching, teaching and especially his pamphlets as a public leader.

It appears that Henderson's university education was reflected in his work, at least to this extent. Indeed, one finds a general reliance on logic and what Henderson called 'reason.' Nowhere does one find Henderson separating reason and religion. Thus, when crafting an argument, Henderson according to his training was as comfortable with logic and/or natural reason as with scripture. Thus, the following introductory note

¹²³ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 189.

¹²⁴ Melville, *Diary*, 66-67.

was commonplace in his pamphlets: ‘all the books of God are perfect, the book of life, the book of nature, the book of providence, and especially the book of Scripture.’¹²⁶ As educated to do so, Henderson seems as comfortable arguing from ‘nature’ as from the Bible. In his disputation with King Charles I, for instance, Henderson noted, ‘Mine own will, or the will of another may command me to think upon a matter, but no will or command can constrain me to determine otherwise then my reason teacheth me’.¹²⁷

Scriptures were the ‘final’ source of authority, but reason was never pitted against them. To the contrary, Henderson believed that reason, rightly used, was always in accord with true religion. Hence, his arguments were peppered with phrases, almost in passing, that communicate his belief that reason and religion were allies in the cause of truth.

When reading Henderson pamphlets one constantly encounters phrases like the following: ‘it is not only against Religion, but Nature.’¹²⁸ Henderson argued, ‘Wayting for our owne destruction at the discretion of our mercilesse enemies... is not onely against Religion, but Nature; teaching and commanding us to study our own preservation’.¹²⁹

For Henderson, reason was a God-given faculty and God’s gift, as one of the many instruments that people were required to use to bring glory to their creator. This was not particularly unique to Henderson, but it was evident in his public work.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’, np.

¹²⁶ *Reformation of church-government in Scotland cleared from some mistakes and prejudices by the commissioners of the Generall Assembly of the Church of Scotland, now at London* (London, 1644), 4.

¹²⁷ *Certaine papers, which passed betwixt his Majestie of Great Britaine, in the time of his being with the Scottish army in New-Castle. And Mr. Alexander Henderson concerning the change of church government. Anno Dom. 1646* (London, 1649), 313.

¹²⁸ *The intentions of the army of the kingdome of Scotland, declared to their brethren of England and the commissioners of the late parliament, and by the generall, nobleman, barons, and others, officials of the army* (Edinburgh, 1640), 4.

¹²⁹ *Intentions of the Army*, 11.

¹³⁰ Richard L. Greaves, *The Puritan Revolution and Educational Thought: Background for Reform*, (New Brunswick, NJ, 1969), 121. Henderson’s use of reason and nature had a persuasive rhetorical effect as it provided him common ground with his audience, making his appeals seem reasonable, and avoiding the

Henderson's approach in this area offers more confirmation that Henderson was not a part of 'a gallery of intolerant bigots, narrow-minded martinets.' Neither was his approach to writing or theology overly restricted by 'scholastical' bigotry.

Scholasticism was, after all, listed in Trevor-Roper's litany of negative items, 'Scholastical bigots, and blinkered Augustinians, Hebraic fundamentalists had to be swept away before the Enlightenment could dawn'.¹³¹

If one considers the use of organized theological systems as 'scholastic', then in a broad methodological sense Henderson was a scholastic. However, his style of writing was hardly scholastic, if the term indicates an overly systematic method critically associated with obtuseness and verbosity.¹³² Because his main printed efforts were directed to Covenanter pamphlets and public propaganda, Henderson's style is amazingly pithy by seventeenth-century standards. This served him well, since the primary genre in which he made his lasting contributions was in sermons, pamphlets and public addresses.

Appearance of Moderation

Besides an emphasis on brevity, Henderson also contributed to the Covenanter pamphlet campaign using a style crafted to emphasize moderation. Henderson may have shared

potential charge that he and the Covenanters were militant theological warriors. This would prove especially helpful in convincing English readers that the Scots were not interested in pushing 'Scottish' theological agendas onto the English, but merely defending themselves from similar kinds of intrusions.

¹³¹ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century; Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change* (New York, 1967), 222.

¹³² This criticism is related to the ongoing discussions surrounding the idea that second Reformation Calvinist theologians were markedly different from Calvin himself, as characterized by their 'scholastic' approach, which was said to have corrupted the more pristine theology of Calvin with 'methods'. See Basil Hall, 'Calvin Against the Calvinists' in B.E. Duffield, ed., *John Calvin* (Grand Rapids, 1966). For a scholarly assessment of scholasticism in this context, see Carl R. Trueman & R. Scott Clark, eds., *Protestant Scholasticism: Essay in Reassessment* (Bletchley, UK, 1999). As a public theologian, Henderson cannot be said to have produced 'scholastic' works, neither in regard to a highly organized method, nor in regard to a rigid tone, and as such Trevor-Roper's criticism was misappropriated for Henderson.

Martin Marprelate's sentiment for brevity, but he deliberately tried to avoid the satirical provocations for which Martin had become so infamous. Martin had been too 'raucous, bawdy and uncouth' even for the English Presbyterians of his own time.¹³³ Martin in his own pamphlets told his readers that he was conscious of using a provocative and controversial style; Henderson was different.¹³⁴ This self-consciously satirical and polemical style was not characteristic of Henderson, but of English radicals such as Richard Overton.¹³⁵

Henderson's pamphlets were at odds with the more jarring ideas found in some of the later pamphlets that would characterize the religious and political radicalism of the later 1640's.¹³⁶ While Richard Overton and other English radicals would become quite content to be connected to the satirical and raucous Martin Marprelate, the Covenanters deliberately distanced themselves from this connection.¹³⁷

This could be missed, since some Covenanter pamphlets were reprinted with claims to be associated with 'Margery Mareprelate'. This has been chronicled in the pamphlet histories of the period, which have noted that some of the Covenanter pamphlets were printed first in Scotland, then reprinted in secrecy by the 'Cloppenburg Press', which made reference to 'Margery Marprelate'.¹³⁸ David Como argues that the Cloppenburg Press was operated in England by radicals who were happy to make these kinds of

¹³³ Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda', 84.

¹³⁴ Black, *Martin Mareprelate*, 53.

¹³⁵ See Joseph Black, 'Pamphlet Wars: Martin Marprelate Tracts and "Martinism", 1588-1688,' Ph.D. thesis (University of Toronto, 1996), 250-51.

¹³⁶ See Como, 'Secret Printing', 62.

¹³⁷ Patrick Collinson argues that the Martin tracts had provoked Bancroft in England to 'have them answered after their own vein in writing', thus creating a kind of Martin vs. Anti-martin series, both written in harsh, satirical style. See Patrick Collinson's, 'Ecclesiastical vitriol: religious satire in the 1590's and the invention of puritanism', from John Guy, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and culture in the last decade* (Cambridge, 1995), 156.

¹³⁸ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 181.

connections.¹³⁹ Raymond argues that the Margery Marprelate publications indicated a newer stage of pro-Scottish pamphlets that were not part of the official Covenanter publications and which consciously sought to revive the persona of Martin Marprelate.¹⁴⁰ However, unlike the Martin Marprelate Tracts, Henderson attempted to persuade his listeners, while trying to avoid appearing polemical or unnecessarily offensive. Henderson never shied away from condemning what he perceived to be wrong. Yet, he did so with the appearance of temperance and moderation.

It is important to appreciate that Henderson's rhetoric did not necessarily match the historical realities at the time. Makey, for instance, notes that the Covenanter writing 'depicted the revolutionaries as they chose to see themselves'.¹⁴¹ Yet in doing this, Henderson's pamphlets helped to create a perception of the Covenanters as moderate defenders rather than radicals. Henderson crafted this perception using a moderate tone, especially when set against the backdrop of the common religious rhetoric, which at times read more like the ranting of someone possessed of unyielding hatred rather than the words of a sound rhetorician.

Henderson's public approach was a decided break even from previous Scottish church leaders such as Knox and Melville. For example, Henderson did not blast his listeners as Knox had done in his *Blasts of the Trumpets against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. Henderson's pamphlets and public addresses had a self-conscious commitment to the priority of deferential and truthful persuasion, with threats tucked neatly into the fabric of a document, which was intended to convince a reader using what could be described as a pleading tone; not using intimidation or threats.

¹³⁹ See Como, 'Secret Printing', 49.

Henderson's academic training at St. Andrews under Melville had an apparent effect on his style in many ways. While following Melville's academic emphasis on brevity and the use of Ramist logic, Henderson's tone was decidedly different. In this way Henderson blazed a new path in the tone of the propaganda wars of his time. Thus, though some of Melville's ideas heavily influenced Henderson's basic theological structure and outlook, his tone and personality were unique to him. For instance, it was common for Andrew Melville to fill his polemical writings with a kind of invective that might have caused a reader to wince. Melville, for example, once wrote of the King's counsellors, calling them, 'Pernitius flatterers, carnall Atheistes, seditius and bludie idolaters, licentious libertines, filthie harlots, hellishe witches'.¹⁴²

Compared to the bombastic style of Melville, Henderson had a simple and even gentle technique when writing or crafting his pamphlets.¹⁴³ He used an open, conversational style, which seemed to have had a calming effect on the reader. Though not without significant glosses over reality, Henderson's method seemed to set the English readers at ease in listening to his case.¹⁴⁴ This enabled Henderson to play a significant role in influencing the public opinion of his English audience, as well as his Scottish listeners.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, the king's own propagandist would later lament that the Covenanters 'had the power and skill to persuade men who but by that persuasion could

¹⁴⁰ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 204.

¹⁴¹ Makey, *The Church of the Covenant*, 16.

¹⁴² Melville, *Diary*, 174.

¹⁴³ It may be worth noting that the previously listed abusive rhetoric was common in some of the personal writings of Scottish divines. George Gillespie, for example, used similarly insulting rhetoric referring to his opponents as in league with the 'whore of Babylon'. See Gillespie, 'Author's Preface', in Gillespie, *A Dispute Against English Popish Ceremonies Obtruded on the Church of Scotland, etc.* (1637), viii. This ought to be distinguished from the collective public statements that Henderson edited and which were intended to reflect the shared opinions of the Covenanters as a matter of official propaganda.

¹⁴⁴ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 187.

¹⁴⁵ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 26.

not have been seduced'.¹⁴⁶

Raymond notes, 'the Covenanters needed to present themselves as the wounded party goaded into action.'¹⁴⁷ Henderson did this and cleverly argued that Scotland's resistance to the King was never a threat to England, per se. For instance, in an influential pamphlet in 1639, sometimes referred to as *The Remonstrance of the Nobility*, Henderson pleaded with his audience to give a sympathetic ear to his words. He openly crafted his pamphlet in the style of a humble supplication, not a polemical screed. His plea throughout the *Remonstrance*, for example, was that Scottish actions had been so entirely defensive that 'all the judicious subjects of England may easily discern.'¹⁴⁸

A generation earlier, Andrew Melville had referred to his adversaries as 'bloodie and cruell locusts of the bottomless pit.'¹⁴⁹ Jenny Wormald argues that Knox and Melville employed rhetoric against their opponents, making the Scottish nastiness of those times peculiarly vitriolic. Referring to Melville, Wormald argues that Scottish ecclesiastical invective was 'of the purely bludgeoning variety, singularly lacking in style or wit'.¹⁵⁰ In comparison, Henderson's manner was conciliatory, and could even be described as friendly, as he explained to his English neighbours that 'it cannot but wound our hearts and grieve us sore; that we are brought to such an extremity.'¹⁵¹ His tone was not only different from his aggressive mentor at St Andrews, but it was also distinct from his

¹⁴⁶ Black, 'Pamphlet Wars', 256.

¹⁴⁷ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 177.

¹⁴⁸ *The remonstrance of the nobility, barrones, burgesses, ministers and commons within the kingdome of Scotland Vindicating them and their proceedings from the crymes, wherewith they are charged by the late proclamation in England* (Edinburgh, 1639), 5; hereinafter, *Remonstrance*.

¹⁴⁹ *Melville Diary*, 177.

¹⁵⁰ See Jenny Wormald, 'Ecclesiastical Vitriol: the Kirk, the Puritans and the Future King of England', from John Guy, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and culture in the last decade* (Cambridge, 1995), 173.

adversaries as well. The king's writers were quite belligerent and direct. Their abrasive diction included 'imputations of rebellion, sedition and libel.'¹⁵²

While his pamphlets included suggestions that some of the Covenanter critics were popish or atheistic, one rarely finds the kind of ranting that appears to have been common to the propaganda of his day. In fact, Henderson actually quoted his royal critics in some of his pamphlets as part of the challenge to his readers to compare and to consider if the rhetoric calling the Covenanters 'seditious', 'tumultuous', 'perverse', and 'traitorous' really matched their limited desires for peace and safety.¹⁵³ Henderson quoted his opponents, using a kind of rhetorical judo, apparently hoping that the charges he deemed to be false would not correspond to his conciliatory appeals, thus helping to manoeuvre his readers to his side of the argument.

Baillie noted that Henderson crafted pamphlets that were deliberately set in contrast to the 'spytefull venome' that passed for the public response of their adversaries.¹⁵⁴

Henderson portrayed his foes as so bedevilled by fears of 'puritans' that they were irrational. He used harsh language at times, but it was usually as an attempt to contextualize his foes. For instance, in one pamphlet Henderson used a supposed quote from the 'pretended' bishops' who called their own people, 'Lackanapes, Babbouns, perjured bitches, madde Dogges and that it were more lawul to pray for such as had lyen 500 years in hell then for them'.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ *Remonstrance*, 4.

¹⁵² Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 177.

¹⁵³ *Remonstrance*, 6.

¹⁵⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 190.

¹⁵⁵ *The declinatour and protestation of the some some-times pretended bishops, presented in face of the last assembly, refuted and found futile, but full of insolent reproaches, and bold assertion* (Edinburgh, 1639), 91.

Henderson's pamphlets were structured to portray his cause as reasonable and moderate, especially when compared to some of his critics, who described the Covenanters in the most lurid terms as:

Those scurvy, filthy, dirty, nasty, lousy, itchy, scabby, shitten, stinking, slovenly, snotty-nosed, logger-headed, foolish, insolent, proud, beggarly, impertinent, absurd, grout-headed, villainous, barbarous, bestial, false, lying, roguish, devilish, long-eared, short-haired, damnable, atheistical, puritanical crew of the Scotch Covenant.¹⁵⁶

Henderson moved the Covenanter pamphlets away from these kinds of rancorous threats, which characterized the public ministries of Knox and Melville, pushing the Covenanters into a self-consciously crafted image of reluctant defenders. Henderson created pamphlets that pleaded with listeners, as if the Covenanters were beggarly and dependant only on the words of truth to defend themselves. Donald refers to this as a 'restrained' tone.¹⁵⁷ Beseeching his listeners to give an open ear to his cause was part of the structure and substance of Henderson's pamphlets.

Henderson attempted to combine substance and style in his pamphlets, as he argued for justification of armed resistance to what he believed was the king's unjustified invasion. In a subsequent pamphlet in 1640 entitled *The Intentions of the Army*, he continued in the same theme of self-defence:

Before we stirred so much as with a petition, wee endured for many yeares, not onely the perpetuall opposition of the trueth and power of Religion by Prelats and Papists, but also the violation of all our Liberties, and almost the totall subversion of our Religion.¹⁵⁸

Even in the Scots' boldest military move, when they invaded England during the Second Bishops' War, they actually gave two weeks' notice of their intentions in a

¹⁵⁶ This quote is from Secretary Windebank's son, Thomas in CSPD 16/424/50. See also Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda', 84-85.

¹⁵⁷ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 189.

¹⁵⁸ *Intentions of the Army*, 3

pamphlet Henderson crafted.¹⁵⁹ This advance notice seems to have lent credence to their arguments that even an invasion was merely a defensive action, designed to prevent future intrusions by the King. According to Mark Fissel, Covenanter propaganda had been so convincing that apparently even the King did not believe that the Scots would invade England, and he planned his initial military activity with this in mind.¹⁶⁰

Henderson shrewdly argued for armed warfare in a tone that does not appear to have struck chords of hostility or aggression towards his English audience. In fact, the reader was positioned in the place of the author. Henderson's plea to the English reader was for them to consider what they would do if they were in the same place as their Scottish neighbours. Rhetorically, his style as well as his substance was one of self-defence. This would have a profound effect on the English opinion of the Bishops' Wars.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to chronicle the Bishops' Wars, except in so far as they form the context in which Henderson crafted his propaganda. Fissel argues that the nobility, gentry, and commonalty of England sympathized with the religious concerns of the Covenant, and an unpopular war against the Scots hampered royal strategy.¹⁶¹ Covenanter propaganda placed enormous pressure on Charles I to act a certain way in England, because of the mounting need to summon the English Parliament.

Eschatology and the Power of the Truth

Henderson's pamphlets revealed that he and his fellow Scots believed in the power of truth. Henderson included subtle references to eschatology in his pamphlets. It is true

¹⁵⁹ David Como, 'Secret printing', 56. See also Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 206.

that overt appeals to specific eschatological schemes from books like Revelation did not characterize Henderson, and they were especially sparse in his pamphlets, aimed at England. Nevertheless, Henderson sprinkled his pamphlets with constant reference to eschatological hope, especially with the hope that truth would rid Scotland and England of the false teaching of the popish bishops, who were plaguing their lands, and who had been ‘the main cause of their miseries’.¹⁶²

According to Peter Donald, the titles of ‘puritan and popery’ were labels used by opposing parties who sought to label with prejudice, which diminished their accuracy as labels.¹⁶³ Donald is correct to a certain extent. Still, when Henderson or his fellow Scots used the term ‘popish’, they were linking it primarily to idolatry and the terrible consequences they believed would come with false worship; not purely as a term of prejudice, but as an eschatological warning. Henderson’s pamphlets reflected a common theme in Covenanter literature, in linking Catholicism and high church liturgy with antichrist and the judgment of God.¹⁶⁴

Henderson did not seem to have exhibited a prejudice against Catholics as people, per se, in his pamphlets, but rather his writings addressed the assumed harm that their ideas would perpetrate against Kirk and Kingdom. Eire is helpful when he asserts that among reformed thinkers as early as the sixteenth century, the issue of idolatry was a real, motivating force, and not some sort of tool insincerely used in a grand social and

¹⁶⁰ Fissel, *The Bishops’ Wars*, 4.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁶² *Scots Declaration*, 2. Here as in chapter 4 I am using the word ‘eschatology’ in its broadest sense of indicating the consummation of God’s redemptive purpose, whether or not an ‘end of the world’ is anticipated.

¹⁶³ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 199.

¹⁶⁴ Steele, ‘Covenanting Propaganda’, 257.

political plot.¹⁶⁵ In this sense, Henderson's pamphlets did not exhibit 'anti-Catholicism' towards people per se. He did, however, hold a strident belief that Roman Catholic doctrines not only damaged social order but threatened the hope of eschatological blessings on their lands. Here, Henderson followed the same kind of Deuteronomic model of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience as he did in his preaching. These were not merely the blessings of heaven in the far away future. For Henderson, turning away from popish errors would bring 'temporall' blessings of prosperity and peace to Scotland, England and eventually the whole world.¹⁶⁶

According to this line of thinking, Popish idolatry encouraged the self-exaltation of the bishops, which in turn soured their pastoral interest in concern for the needy under their care. This had massive social implications, and Rutherford, for instance, was convinced that purging such idolatry from the land would ensure justice for the poor.¹⁶⁷ To be popish was to be linked with antichrist and all that was false and harmful. In his pamphlets Henderson used the threat of popery and its associated curses as set in contrast with the eschatological hope of truth.

Upon reading the various public statements and pamphlets the Covenanters published, it is clear that they trusted in the power of truthful information. Henderson believed that

¹⁶⁵ Eire, *War Against the Idols*, 308. Richard Kyle argues along the same lines as Eire, but with specific reference to John Knox, with whom Henderson had close theological affinities. According to Kyle, Knox believed that the primary function of civil government was protecting and promoting purity in faith and worship thus making idolatry the primary sin that concerned Knox. The issue of Idolatry was thus the ruler's highest obligation. See Richard Kyle, 'John Knox and the Purification of Religion: the Intellectual Aspects of his Crusade against Idolatry', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 77 (1986), 265-80. See also Kyle, 'Knox's Shocking Politics: Knox believed Christians should rebel against 'idolatrous' governments. Why?', *Christian History*, Issue 46 (2002).

¹⁶⁶ *Scots Declaration*, 2.

¹⁶⁷ See Coffey, *Politics, Religion, and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), 171.

God would use truth to bring the light of his blessings on the land.¹⁶⁸ Acknowledging Henderson's theological commitments in this area helps the historian to appreciate what seems to have animated him as he wrote and edited Covenanter pamphlets. He believed that the ninth commandment had broad obligations beyond merely 'telling the truth' as opposed to 'telling a lie'. Henderson believed that obeying this commandment would provoke the eschatological favour of God. For Henderson, the ninth commandment demanded the preservation of the truth in a way that had mammoth implications for public causes such as the one in which they found themselves involved.

God required active pursuit of truth whenever misinformation or lies were presented to the contrary. Though he died a year before the Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms were completed, Henderson's statements matched them closely. The Larger Catechism in question 145 maintained that the sins forbidden in the ninth commandment included, 'concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others'.¹⁶⁹

So Henderson in his pamphlet, *Information*, argued the same things saying:

lest by our silence the cause of GOD and our innocency in defending thereof, receive the smallest prejudice in the mindes of the well affected, and that we may yet more convince the consciences, if not close the mouthes, of our self-condemned enemies, we shall not wearie to make a summarie repetition and true application of what hath been formerly written at large.¹⁷⁰

Alluding to this pamphlet, Baillie noted that it was intended to 'clear ourselves of all slanders'.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 173.

¹⁶⁹ WLC, 308-09.

¹⁷⁰ *Information*, 4.

Connected to this, he believed that God used reasonable arguments to illuminate truth and to enlighten the hearts of readers, which would cause them to put godly pressure to bear on the king.¹⁷² This means, at least in theory, Henderson and the Covenanters did not try to use words as mere instruments of manipulation, but as the means by which they believed that God would teach people the truth and give their cause his favour.

Sarah Waruechen's insightful article on Covenanter propaganda helps to confirm this to some degree. Yet as helpful as Waruechen's work is, it tends to overlook some central theological themes in Henderson's approach.

The Godly as the Public

Waruechen speaks of Covenanter propaganda in terms of sociological models of the 'public' developed by Jurgen Habermas, thus missing small but key theological elements. For instance, Waurechen notes that current debates about 'public' swirl around two main questions: when did the public sphere first come into being, and what does it look like?¹⁷³ She notes helpfully that answering the question of 'when' depends on defining the 'what'. Those who use a Habermasian model of rational-critical and transparent debate aimed at reaching a consensus argue that this did not occur until the eighteenth century. Some others, according to Waurechen, argue that a public sphere never actually existed and scholars instead should think of 'multiple publics' as early as the sixteenth century.¹⁷⁴

Waurechen argues that the Covenanters believed that there was some sort of public sphere or networks of publics in operation, which enticed them to rely so heavily on the

¹⁷¹ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 188.

¹⁷² Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda', 69.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 64.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 64.

printed word. Here she is exactly correct, except she does not identify that this perceived 'public sphere' was, for Henderson, directed to the covenanted nations of Scotland and England, which contained the 'godly' who were his intended audience.

Waurechen's questions and her arguments move somewhat beyond the scope of this thesis, but her questions do point to the contribution that studying Henderson's pamphleteering may yield for related studies in early modern Britain. For instance, when one studies Henderson's public statements, then one finds that a Habermasian model about the nature of public spheres tends to be anachronistic. It is more helpful historically to speak of the emerging concept of the 'public', with sensitivity to the Covenanter theology that directed and tempered Henderson's work.

Henderson's theology of a covenanted nation affected the rhetoric of his pamphlets. This meant that Henderson's audience of Scots and English readers were assumed to be part of the covenant community of God, and thus were responsible to listen to, and respond to, the truth of their cause, as anyone who was godly was expected to do. He addressed them as such.

This may not have been intended to generate a 'public' as much as to build momentum in the public, which Henderson believed already existed; the covenant people of God. Covenant theology and the covenant community became the theological framework into which Henderson and his fellow Scots were speaking to the 'public'.

Appreciating Henderson's emphasis on the godly reader in pamphlets can also help the historian tackle the question relating to Henderson as an 'elitist'. In her study of

Covenanter propaganda, Margaret Steele consistently refers to Covenanter propaganda as ‘elitist’.¹⁷⁵ This does not actually fit Henderson or his fellow ministers. Aside from Johnston of Wariston, who was from the gentry, Henderson and his fellow ministers were the primary authors of most of the Covenanter pamphlets. Lynch makes a salient point arguing that the ‘typical minister’ of seventeenth-century Scotland was most closely connected with modest merchants, craftsmen or of small landed proprietors below the status of laird.¹⁷⁶ In this socio-economic sense, Henderson and his fellow ministers could not properly be classified as ‘elitists’. In fact, it does not seem felicitous to classify Covenanter propaganda in social terms as elitist, per se, but rather as representing a ‘theological point of view’ that was self-consciously constructed to persuade anyone who could read, listen and/or debate, from the highest to the lowest social ranks.

In his pamphlets, as he did in his sermons, Henderson taught that godly people had a covenantal responsibility to listen to the truth humbly, and to respond to it in the way the he believed God wanted them to respond. This meant that Henderson through propaganda encouraged a general openness to the propagation of the ideas that animated the Covenanter movement. This represented a shift in presuppositions away from thinking that common people represented a ‘many-headed’ monster whose irrationality precluded a role in politics, which according to Zaret had long dominated thinking on politics and society.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Steele, ‘Covenanting Propaganda’, vi.

¹⁷⁶ Lynch, *Scotland: A New History*, 255. Oddly, Lynch later argues that Henderson represented ‘elitist’, ‘urban’ ministers who were closely connected to Scottish nobility. This is especially odd, since the bulk of Henderson’s ministry was in the small parish of Leuchars (1612-1639), see Lynch, *Scotland: A New History*, 277. Lynch is not unique, but rather follows the socio-economic study of Walter Makey, who concludes that the leading Scottish ministers of the 1640’s were, socially speaking, a ‘mixed bunch’, which indicates that the ministers of this period seem to have entered the church for a variety of reasons quite unrelated to their social origins. See Makey, *The Church of the Covenant, 1637-1651*, 94 & 104.

¹⁷⁷ Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 53.

In this sense, Henderson led the covenanting movement into a self-conscious commitment to the importance that ideas should be known and understood, as well as that ideas played an important part of the overall activity for all people of every social station. From 1638 through the British Revolutions, Scottish general assemblies routinely encouraged ministers and elders to communicate with each other and the people under their care, so that everyone would be well-informed.¹⁷⁸ Henderson was active at these assemblies in crafting the official responses of the Kirk, which were directed to the godly of all social stations. Henderson did not attend the General Assembly in 1640 at Aberdeen, or in 1644 at Edinburgh. However, he did attend in 1639 at Edinburgh, in 1641 at Edinburgh, in 1642 at St Andrews, in 1643 at Edinburgh and finally in 1645 at Edinburgh.¹⁷⁹ Henderson was elected moderator of the 1638, 1641 and 1643 general assemblies.

At the Glasgow Assembly, Henderson led the Covenanters to their most momentous actions, taking the Covenanters to the furthest point in openly defying the King. From this point forward, as Stevenson notes, ‘war was virtually inevitable’.¹⁸⁰ The threat of war set Henderson and his fellow Covenanters to crafting written pamphlets or propaganda to press support for their cause. The Covenanters, according to Gordon, were concerned about false information that would be spread abroad to stir opinion against them.¹⁸¹ The Covenanter efforts were international, to the extent that their publications went to continental Europe, including specifically Holland and Sweden, as

¹⁷⁸ *Acts*, 88.

¹⁷⁹ The 1641 assembly was initially convened at St Andrews but because Henderson could not make it to St Andrews, the assembly adjourned and reconvened in Edinburgh where Henderson was elected moderator. See RKS, I, 292 & 303.

¹⁸⁰ Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 127.

¹⁸¹ Gordon, *Scots Affairs*, I, 107

well as to Ireland and England.¹⁸² There was even a rumour that one pamphlet was translated into French.¹⁸³ Donald argues that their primary target was ‘outside readership’, by which he points to an English audience.¹⁸⁴ However, Baillie noted, as the conflict developed, most of their writing efforts were directed to two simultaneous targets, ‘To waken up the spirits of our own countrymen... also for rousing up of our slipprie neighbours of England’.¹⁸⁵ This is significant because it appears that Henderson was sensitive to restraining personal attacks and open vitriol, especially in pamphlets that were targeted for the godly in Scotland and England.¹⁸⁶

Henderson intended to use Covenanter pamphlets as a means of influencing and even ‘pacifying’ the English army.¹⁸⁷ For instance, when the Covenanter army invaded England they not only brought cannons and muskets, they brought pamphlets full of information that they hoped would undermine support for the king’s policies. This approach provoked Joseph Black to dub Covenanter warfare as characterized by ‘pikes and protestations’.¹⁸⁸

Aware of Charles I’s growing problems in England, Henderson used carefully placed words to indicate that, while the Scots were doing their level best to follow the established, lawful means of activity, the king and his representatives were acting at their ‘pleasure’.¹⁸⁹ Donald argues that this was a successful exploitation in Scots pamphlets to highlight the perceived ‘mutuality’ of the Scots and English concerns.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸² Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 183-185.

¹⁸³ Black, ‘Pamphlet Wars’, 239.

¹⁸⁴ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 186.

¹⁸⁵ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 242.

¹⁸⁶ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 189.

¹⁸⁷ Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (London, 1992), 815.

¹⁸⁸ See Black, ‘Pamphlet Wars’, 231. See also Raymond, *Pamphlets & Pamphleteering*, 181.

¹⁸⁹ *A Short Relation*, 4.

¹⁹⁰ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 187.

This was a subtle and effective means of communicating to the English listeners that they were suffering under the same arbitrary rule of the King. As such the pamphlets described a solidarity between the Covenanters and their suffering English brothers, who both shared a need to offer limited and legal resistance to arbitrary rule. In some cases Henderson's words were not so subtle. So he wrote, 'Dutie obligeth us to love England as our selves, Your grievances are ours; The preservation or ruine of Religion & Liberties, is common to both Nations: We must now stand or fall together'.¹⁹¹

Against the backdrop of an effective Covenanter propaganda campaign, according to Fissel, the longer the King delayed in summoning the English Parliament in 1639 and 1640, the more irrational and arbitrary his activities appeared.¹⁹² Thus, through pamphlets and propaganda, Henderson on behalf of the Covenanters increased pressure on Charles I to summon a parliament that was certain to be sympathetic to the Scottish cause.

Conclusion

Joseph Black argues that Covenanter pamphlets triggered or unleashed a pamphlet onslaught from all directions that, in terms of quantity, changed the history of pamphlets and pamphleteering.¹⁹³ Como notes also that Scottish pamphlets had become so influential that they were cited in radical English pamphlets and adduced as legitimate examples of justifiable resistance.¹⁹⁴ He argues that Scottish pamphlets became one of the primary sources of radical arguments, and that they played a role in the

¹⁹¹ *Information*, 1.

¹⁹² Fissel, *The Bishops' Wars*, 9.

¹⁹³ Black argues that pamphlets complaining about the overwhelming quantity of publications became a recognizable sub-genre of pamphlets throughout the 1640's. This was especially true of royal critics of the Covenanter propaganda campaign. See Black, 'Pamphlet Wars', 249.

‘crystallization’ of other authors’ opinions.¹⁹⁵

While it is impossible to quantify the success of Covenanter pamphlets and propaganda, and an exhaustive study of British pamphleteering lies beyond the scope of this thesis, it appears that the overwhelming reception to the Covenanter pamphlets provoked exactly the response that Henderson and his fellow Covenanters desired; at least at first.

Though the numbers are sketchy, according to Joad Raymond, English writings do not seem to have attained the size of audiences that the Covenanters’ pamphlets did.¹⁹⁶

Raymond argues that, in comparison to the quantitatively larger English pamphlets, the Scottish pamphlets had a disproportionately greater effect in England.¹⁹⁷

The King and his representatives were convinced that Covenanter pamphlets and propaganda were a major source of their troubles.¹⁹⁸ Clarendon, the King’s defender and author of a massive history of this period, argued that if the Covenanter propaganda had been stopped, ‘the seeds of revolution might never have flowered’.¹⁹⁹ Scottish pamphlets became so pervasive that one English pastor complained that the pamphlets were being read aloud, to the laughing admiration of the listeners, which he believed perverted the minds of the most humble.²⁰⁰

While pamphlets were certainly not the single source of Covenanter success, they

¹⁹⁴ Como, ‘Secret Printing’, 65.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 66.

¹⁹⁶ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 183.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 181.

¹⁹⁸ According to David Scot, some of the leading Englishmen were being influenced by and influencing others with Scottish propaganda, especially at the initial stages of the Scottish invasion into England. Scot indicates that Scottish propaganda was having an important effect on people, regardless of social/political rank. See David Scott, ‘Hannibal at our gates’: loyalists and fifth-columnists during the Bishop’s Wars – the case of Yorkshire’, *Historical Research: The bulletin of the institute of historical research*, 70 (1997), 291-92.

¹⁹⁹ Black, ‘Pamphlet Wars’, 251.

played a significant role, especially if one judges by the King's response. By August 1641, Henderson had helped to achieve, in less than ten years, a complete reversal of the King's coronation scene. In 1633 when Charles I came to Scotland for his coronation, he had refused to attend Scottish worship, and he insisted that the hated Archbishop William Laud stand with him in public. By December of 1640, Laud languished in the Tower and the King was preparing to make serious concessions to the Scots.²⁰¹ In August of 1641, Charles I arrived in Edinburgh, and the scene had changed dramatically. The King said he had come to Scotland to end 'the unhappy mistakings between him and his subjects'.²⁰² He gave the Scots every one of their major political and ecclesiastical demands, including the recognition of the acts of the 1638 Glasgow General Assembly. According to David Stevenson, 'during his stay in Scotland Charles had practically surrendered the country to the Covenanters'.²⁰³

The King made conspicuous efforts to attend two Edinburgh church services, to the great delight of the Scottish public. He knighted Johnston of Wariston and began honouring many Covenanters who had once been his public opponents.²⁰⁴ In his work, *The Noble Revolt*, John Adamson highlights the ironic symbolism that Alexander Henderson played in this visit. According to Adamson, Henderson had been the man who through his public statements had caused the king to run 'starke mad'.²⁰⁵ In 1641, Henderson was now standing in the place of honour beside the king's chair during the sermon time. What was perhaps most deeply ironic was that Henderson was standing in the exact place of status that had been previously conferred upon Archbishop William

²⁰⁰ See Joseph L. Black, ed., *Martin Marprelate*, xv.

²⁰¹ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 217.

²⁰² Quoted in *Ibid*, 233.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 241.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 241.

²⁰⁵ John Adamson, *The Noble Revolt: The Overthrow of Charles I* (London, 2007), 348. See also, Baillie,

Laud during the King's coronation visit of 1633.²⁰⁶ Henderson was now recognized publicly as the leading minister in Scotland in a stunning reversal for the Covenanters.

Certainly Henderson's pamphlets contributed to the Covenanter success in Scotland.²⁰⁷

Henderson's accuracy and brevity propelled him to the forefront in the minds of his fellow Covenanter ministers. Joseph Black argues that the successful Covenanter pamphlet campaigns during the Bishops Wars contributed to an irrevocable idea that one of the primary ends of political discussion was to keep the people 'well informed'.²⁰⁸ According to Black, this marked an important change. Como takes

Raymond's and Black's arguments a step further, arguing that the Covenanter propaganda efforts represented an important development in European history.

According to Como, 'it was surely among the most systematic and concerted campaigns hitherto attempted by a foreign power to bombard a separate kingdom with propaganda, thereby using the printed word to manipulate political opinion, and fundamentally to alter the political process of another nation'.²⁰⁹

Scholars such as David Zaret have argued further, saying that the pamphleteering and propaganda wars of this epoch constituted nothing less than the birth of genuinely democratic political culture.²¹⁰ These arguments, though beyond the scope of this thesis, highlight the importance of studying the contributions of Alexander Henderson as the leading Covenanter pamphleteer. They also argue that a substantial study of Henderson from this point forward should include a serious consideration of his role in

Letters, I, 303-306.

²⁰⁶ Adamson, *The Noble Revolt*, 348.

²⁰⁷ Raymond, *Pamphlets*, 27.

²⁰⁸ Black, 'Pamphlet Wars', 256.

²⁰⁹ Como, 'Secret Printing', 57.

²¹⁰ See David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*. See also Jason Peacey, *Politicians and*

authoring and editing pamphlets and propaganda, which has heretofore been ignored in all previous Henderson biographers.

Pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum (Aldershot, UK, 2004).

Chapter 6

Alexander Henderson: the Collapse of the Cause

In this chapter, I agree with historians who argue that uniformity between the two churches of Scotland and England was an impractical dream that could not be realized.¹ I also contend that Henderson inadvertently contributed to this impracticality by doing the exact things that had provided him so much success in Scotland in the late 1630s. Insisting on a quick settlement at the Westminster Assembly and using presbyterian ecclesiology as the driving issue for such a settlement, Henderson attempted to streamline debates, which ironically lengthened them. His views on ecclesiology also heightened the divisions in the Assembly, making a quick settlement virtually impossible. At the Westminster Assembly, Henderson worked tirelessly, doing almost all of the things that had yielded him such successful results in Scotland, but none of them ultimately worked in England.

At the Westminster Assembly, Henderson's personal reputation became stellar among friends and foes alike. Paradoxically, while Henderson himself gained a positive reputation as a peacemaker, his approach to ecclesiology actually contributed to fracturing the Assembly, and his cause faltered under the weight of the complex obstacles he encountered there. This chapter adds a dimension to the ongoing studies of the Westminster Assembly, which must be weighed as historians make judgments regarding the nature of debate and division at the Assembly.

¹ From the abstract page in Jong-Lak Kim, 'The Debate on the Relations Between the Churches of Scotland and England during the British Revolution (1633-1647)', Ph.D. thesis (University of Cambridge, 1997).

Taking Sides

In 1642, the Scottish General Assembly sent a public notice of their desire to create uniformity of religion as soon as possible to advance not only peace between the two nations, but to advance the cause of the Reformation.² They soon received competing requests from the king and Parliament, which was a small taste of the complexities and difficulties they were going to face over the next several years. The king promised never to retract all the concessions he had made, while the English Parliament was dangling the hope that they would work for unity of religion between the two kingdoms.³ From 1642 to 1643, both King and the Long Parliament were making duelling efforts to secure Scottish support, or at least attempted to prevent them from helping their opponents.⁴

By the end of 1642, Charles I had removed himself from London and moved his court to Oxford, where he established an alternate Parliament.⁵ The king was at war with the Parliament in London, and Scotland was in the middle. In February of 1643, with other Scottish commissioners, Henderson met with the king at Oxford and attempted to negotiate between the two parties.⁶ The Scots thought that Henderson would ‘doe wonders with the King’, but instead he was given a cold reception.⁷ According to Baillie, the king made their lives ‘verie uncomfortable all the tyme at Oxford’.⁸ When the king made it clear that the Scots had no right to interpose in English affairs, and finally when he rebuffed Henderson’s best efforts at persuasion, the Scots were

² *RKS*, I, 325.

³ David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-1644: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (London, 1973), 251.

⁴ *Ibid*, 255.

⁵ Macinnes, *The British Confederate: Archibald Campbell, Marquess of Argyll, 1607-1661* (Edinburgh, 2011), 157.

⁶ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 66.

⁷ *Ibid*, II, 66.

⁸ *Ibid*, II, 66.

convinced the king was not seriously interested in their help.⁹ They turned to the English Parliament in London, which was happily soliciting their aid.¹⁰ This peace would prove hard to obtain, but Henderson was convinced that regardless of the many complexities, ultimate political and social peace had to be based on ecclesiastical uniformity.¹¹ Henderson was convinced that ecclesiology had brought Scotland blessings, and he believed that ecclesiology was the only sure basis of solid peace between the nations. This is affirmed in Chad Van Dixhoorn's statement that, 'to the extent that religion was a cause of the first civil war, this Assembly at Westminster was supposed to be a solution'.¹²

Westminster Assembly and the Solemn League

The Westminster Assembly had its first official meeting on 1 July 1643 in Henry VII Chapel at Westminster Abbey, under the prolocutor, William Twisse.¹³ When the debates inside the Assembly began, the parliamentary calling ordinances provided them their initial direction.¹⁴ According to Van Dixhoorn, many people interpreted Parliament's calling ordinances broadly, to include a wholesale restructuring of religion in England.¹⁵ This changed when the Scots became involved, because Parliament's

⁹ Ibid, II, 67.

¹⁰ Much of the basic narrative in this section follows the outline found in Stevenson's *The Scottish Revolution*, 262-63.

¹¹ RKS, I, 261.

¹² Chad Van Dixhoorn, 'Reforming the Reformation: Theological Debate at the Westminster Assembly 1643-1652', Ph.D. thesis (University of Cambridge, 2004), I, 2.

¹³ See Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the 'Grand Debate'* (Edinburgh, 1985), 71.

¹⁴ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the mechanics of the Assembly's origin and call in England itself. However, Parliament called ministers or divines from all over England with the mandate for 'settling of the Government and Liturgy, of the Church of England' and 'vindicating and clearing of the Doctrine of the said Church, from false aspirations and interpretations'. See C.H. Firth & R.S. Rait, eds, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum* (London, 1911), 180-84.

¹⁵ For more on this see chapter one of Van Dixhoorn, 'Reforming the Reformation', I, 2-54.

calling ordinances were essentially replaced with the Solemn League and Covenant that Henderson drafted with Johnston at the 1643 Scottish General Assembly.¹⁶

Henderson and his fellow Scots invested the Solemn League and Covenant and the Westminster Assembly with eschatological hope. It appeared that the Covenanters' apocalyptic dreams were finally coming to pass when the English Parliament sent Stephen Marshall and Philip Nye to the Scottish General Assembly in Edinburgh, at which Henderson was elected moderator.¹⁷ The English delegates brought a letter requesting 'godly' and 'learned' brethren to 'put their sickles with us into this Harvest, which is so great'.¹⁸ The Scottish Kirk chose Alexander Henderson, Robert Douglas, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie, and George Gillespie as ministers of the word, and John Earle of Cassilis, John Lord Maitland, and Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston as ruling elders, all of them 'men much approved here'.¹⁹ According to Baillie, each delegate was chosen because of the contribution they could make to the overall cause.²⁰

Both sides exchanged mutually exhilarating expressions of hope. Henderson asserted that they were on the verge of a long-anticipated era in history that would bring release to those 'now oppressed under the Antichristian bondage, and tyrannie of the Popish and prelaticall Faction.'²¹ Henderson said:

That the begun Reformation is of GOD, and not of man, that it shall increase, and not decrease; and that he to whom nothing is too hard, who can make mountains, valleys, crooked things, straight, and rough wayes, smooth, shall lead along and make perfect this most wonderful Work which shall be remembered to his glory in the Church throughout all generations.²²

¹⁶ See R. S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord*, 82.

¹⁷ RKS, I, 347-48.

¹⁸ Ibid, I, 352.

¹⁹ Ibid, I, 356.

²⁰ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 269.

²¹ RKS, I, 350.

²² *Acts*, 196; RKS, I, 356.

Invested with intense eschatological hope, The Solemn League and Covenant became the lens through which the Scots viewed the entire alliance with the English. According to Crawford Gribben:

The Solemn League and Covenant had been designed as a manifesto of an international Presbyterian revolution, imposing those forms of government in church and state that, its exponents believed, would anticipate, if not actually inaugurate, the latter-day glory itself.²³

Henderson's dedication to an eschatological ecclesiology explains partially why, in spite of various theological issues that he confronted at Westminster Assembly, ecclesiology remained his dominant issue.

Henderson led in the initial discussions in Edinburgh.²⁴ Baillie's comment that the English were for a 'civil league' while the Scots were for a 'religious covenant' has often been interpreted to mean that he thought the English were only concerned about civil matters, while the Scots were only interested in religious things.²⁵ Both sides seemed genuinely interested in religion, and Stevenson is right to note that it was a 'civil league' as well as a 'religious covenant', as it obvious in the title.²⁶ It was, however, this mixture of political and ecclesiastical goals that caused some later English critics to argue that it said too little while also saying too much. The Covenant, said one pamphlet, 'is charged withall: some points of it are divine, some morall, some civil: some are of higher, some of meaner concernment: and all of them thus odly compacted together swell it up into too rude a lump'.²⁷

Baillie believed that the English commissioners wanted an agreement that could give

²³ Crawford Gribben, 'The Church of Scotland and the English Apocalyptic Imagination', *Scottish Historical Review*, 88 (2009), 41.

²⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 90.

²⁵ Kim, 'Debate on the Relations Between the Churches of Scotland and England', 175.

²⁶ Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 286.

them Scottish military support, but that also would allow them a measure of liberty to ‘keep the doore open in England to Independencie’.²⁸ Henderson convinced him that this would never happen.²⁹

In later private letters, Henderson expressed feelings of betrayal, because he believed that his English brothers signed the covenant when they needed military help, but once they no longer needed the Scots military, they abandoned their commitments.³⁰

Henderson knew that the English needed Scottish troops, which he believed was providential leverage for negotiations. In the long run, it proved a greater frustration than Henderson had thought.³¹

The *Solemn League* contained six articles followed by a conclusion that called God as a witness to their present humiliation and repentance for the sins which had provoked his divine displeasure. Reminding the nations of the covenantal nature of their struggle, the preamble bemoaned the deplorable condition of the church and state in England, Ireland and Scotland and argued for the latest covenant as a defensive measure to save the three

²⁷ Henry Parker, *Scotland's Holy War* (London, 1651), 35.

²⁸ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 90.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 90.

³⁰ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 102, 130-31. This chapter relies heavily on Baillie because Baillie is the most extensive source of private correspondence and/or private record that corroborates the information found in a handful of letters that Henderson was sending to Scotland. Henderson's letters expressed clear frustration with those he referred to as 'Independents', and Baillie's *Letters* corroborate this with more detailed insight into his frustration. In this sense, I take exception to Hunter Powell's recent argument calling into question the use of Baillie as a reliable source for either the congregational divines or the Scottish commissioners. See Hunter Powell, 'The Dissenting Brethren and the Power of the Keys, 1640-1644', Ph.D. thesis (University of Cambridge, 2011), 13. An important element of Powell's thesis depends on ignoring or excluding Baillie's views on the relationships between the ecclesiastical parties at Westminster. Though exaggerated, Baillie's account cannot be ignored as a viable viewpoint of the Scottish commissioners, since Baillie in fact was one of the commissioners, and since Baillie's *Letters* have been a recognized primary source for historians of this period for centuries. In fact, Powell himself makes extensive use of Baillie to argue for the dating of documents and for establishing other relevant facts. See for example, Powell, 'The Dissenting Brethren', 26. Again, while Baillie's record is most certainly exaggerated at points regarding his opinions, his more detailed record corroborates Henderson's growing frustrations, as this chapter will outline.

³¹ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 104.

kingdoms from ‘utter ruin and destruction’.³²

Henderson designed four of the six articles to deal directly and indirectly with securing constitutional liberties.³³ The first two articles dealt with the reformation of religion and had a direct effect on work of the Westminster Assembly. The middle two articles spoke to the importance of civil liberties and the need to discover and punish the ‘incendiaries, malignants or evil instruments’ who were hindering God’s work and dividing the king from his people.³⁴ The last two articles pledged mutual defence and perpetuity to the Covenant. Henderson called his listeners to receive Christ in their hearts and to endeavour to walk worthy of this calling.³⁵ Adding the ever-present eschatological element, he finished the *Solemn League* by professing his desire that the *Covenant* would work to the ‘enlargement of the kingdome of Jesus Christ, and the peace and tranquility of Christian kingdoms and commonwealths’.³⁶

When they finished at Edinburgh, Henderson gave a ‘grave oration’ to the general assembly and read the Solemn League and Covenant to them. It was received with what Baillie described as the greatest applause that he had ever seen and ‘with so heartie affections, expressed in tears of pitie and joy by verie manie grave, wise, and old men’.³⁷

Henderson left for London to negotiate the full acceptance of the *Solemn League* with

³² RKS, I, 362.

³³ Ibid, I, 362. See also Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 286.

³⁴ RKS, I, 362.

³⁵ Ibid, I, 363.

³⁶ Ibid, I, 363.

³⁷ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 90.

the synod at Westminster.³⁸ At age sixty, Henderson was the oldest of the Scottish ministers sent to Westminster, and he arrived there in September with George Gillespie, who at age thirty was the youngest Scottish minister sent.³⁹ Baillie and Rutherford were received by the assembly in London on 20 November 1643.

The English proposed two significant changes related to the first two articles dealing with ecclesiology. The changes included modifications connected to the phrases, ‘according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed Churches’. The original covenant approved and subscribed in Edinburgh in August of 1643, stated the goal as ‘preserving’ the true Reformed Protestant Religion in the Church of Scotland, according to the word of God, and ‘reforming’ the English Church, according to the same including the example of the best reformed churches.⁴⁰

The final version subscribed by the English at Westminster Assembly had the following, ‘the reformation of religion... in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the Word of GOD, and the example of the best reformed Churches’.⁴¹

These changes became the source of no small controversy.⁴² The English moved the

³⁸ Chad Van Dixhoorn, ‘Scottish Influence on the Westminster Assembly: A Study of the Synod’s Summoning Ordinance and the Solemn League and Covenant’, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 37 (2007), 20.

³⁹ See Iain Murray, ‘The Scots at the Westminster Assembly: With Special Reference to the Dispute on Church Government and its Aftermath’, *The Banner of Truth*, 371-372 (August-September, 1994), 11.

⁴⁰ *The new oath or covenant to be taken by all persons within the two kingdomes of England and Scotland agreed upon at Edinburgh by the generall assembly, the convention of estates, and the commissioners for the Parliament in the kingdom of England, the 18th day of August, 1643 and sent to the Parliament of England for the like approbation*, London, 1643, 4. It is worth noting that Peterkin’s *Records of the Kirk of Scotland* has Westminster’s amended version printed in the section relating to the 1643 Scottish Assembly without notation, leading the reader to assume that the amended version was the original text.

⁴¹ RKS, I, 362.

⁴² See Chad Van Dixhoorn, ‘Scottish Influence on the Westminster Assembly’, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 37 (2007), 1-34. See also Kim, ‘The Debate on the Relations Between the Churches of Scotland and England’, 184-193.

phrase ‘according to the word of God’ away from its original position, modifying the Scottish Church, to its present position, modifying the English reformation. The possible effect might have been ‘to set a disjunction between the Church of Scotland and the scriptures’.⁴³ Prior to this move, the phrase praised the Scottish Kirk as already conforming to the scriptures; but now the possible effect might be to imply that the church in England might look not merely to Scotland but also to the scriptures, which may or may not be perfectly applied in Scotland. Some thought the net effect would be to allow the English the liberty to use a different model than Scotland if the model were ‘according to the word of God’. The next modification ‘and the best example of reformed Churches’ also could have been interpreted in a way to facilitate the Westminster Assembly to ignore Scotland and look to another national source.

At first these changes provoked a firestorm among some of the Scots.⁴⁴ However, for Henderson, the modifying phrases strengthened presbyterian ecclesiology, because it placed the potency for presbyterianism directly on the authority of the word of God, not the nation of Scotland.⁴⁵ For Henderson, it was not Scotland, per se, but the word of God that was the source of godly ecclesiology. Yielding to Henderson’s lead, the Scots were convinced that this strategy did not open the doors to alternative ecclesiology but actually forced the English to recognize the scriptural character and thus superiority of the Scottish Kirk. For Henderson, the phrase, ‘according to the word of God’, pointed everyone to the source of Scottish ecclesiology. Speaking of the Kirk of Scotland,

⁴³ Van Dixhoorn, ‘Scottish Influence on the Westminster Assembly’, 22.

⁴⁴ Van Dixhoorn argues that the changes brought the Solemn League into line with the Assembly’s original calling ordinance, making it more difficult for Independents to object. According to Van Dixhoorn, it was an adroit move aimed to put those divines who objected to the Covenant in an awkward position. How could Burges and friends, for example, object to the very phrases that they had tolerated only months before? See Van Dixhoorn, ‘Scottish Influence on the Westminster Assembly’, 23.

⁴⁵ *The Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland Cleered from some mistakes and prejudices, by the Commissioners of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland now at London* (London, 1644), 2.

Henderson argued that they ‘had no other rule and paterne of Reformation but the word of God’.⁴⁶

Also, Henderson did not believe the phrase ‘best reformed churches’ was elastic enough to include congregational polity. Henderson believed he had already qualified it to mean primarily Scotland.⁴⁷ In 1641, Henderson had already pleaded with his English brothers in pastoral but condescending tones, asking them but to look north to the godly example of the Scots.⁴⁸ Likewise, these same English brothers had already received clear advice from a 1641 Scottish assembly on this matter.⁴⁹

The new location of the phrase ‘according to the word of God’ seemed to give Henderson and other presbyterian advocates a greater claim to humility, and, ironically, a greater boldness. Henderson claimed that he and the Scots were humbly offering their contentions to ‘any who fear God, love the Truth, & desire to walk in truth and in love with their Brethren’.⁵⁰ Henderson believed that they were offering their arguments not from national prejudice or Scottish loyalties, but ultimately from the word of God. Plus, Henderson believed that the Scots were open to criticism if it involved minor developments to their existing polity. Henderson remarked that he welcomed such changes. ‘We are not’, said Henderson, ‘so ignorant nor so arrogant, as to ascribe the Church of Scotland such absolute purity and perfection, as hath not need or cannot admit of further Reformation’.⁵¹ In fact, Baillie was not only satisfied that nothing had been altered that weakened their position, but he noted with satisfaction that, ‘all the

⁴⁶ Ibid, 2.

⁴⁷ *A Short Relation*, 1.

⁴⁸ ‘To the Reader’. *Government & Order*.

⁴⁹ *Acts*, 108.

⁵⁰ *The Reformation of Church-Government in Scotland*, 2.

⁵¹ Ibid, 5.

alterations to be for the better'.⁵² While Scottish polity was open for 'fine-tuning', Baillie was convinced that the Solemn League guaranteed some form of presbyterianism in England.

An Optimistic Start

After receiving a warrant from both houses of Parliament to sit in the synod, Alexander Henderson rose to speak to the Westminster Assembly for the first time on Friday morning, 15 September 1643.⁵³ He joined Philip Nye in addressing the House of Commons and the Westminster Assembly jointly. He greeted them with kindness and his words were filled with optimism saying:

We did blesse God before our coming here for that we heard of this reverend assembly, soe now we much more blesse God for that which we see & heare with our eyes this day...We promise in the name of the church & kingdome of Scotland hearty affection to this worke and their hearty prayers for you.⁵⁴

He expressed his devotion to work with his English brothers, pledging, 'it is the desire & shall be the joy of our hearts to see it concluded'.⁵⁵

Because Henderson spoke at the first of many of these kinds of momentous occasions, it is easy to see how his iconic status rose in prominence among the Scottish histories of the times. When he spoke at such pivotal occasions, he used the language of destiny and hope, which gained him a reputation as a great leader from friends and foes alike. His sermon at St Margaret's was full of biblical and eschatological images of blessings. He said:

Our hope is through God, that the work begun this day, being sincerely performed and faithfully pursued; shall put to flight, not only the *Syrians* and *Babylonians*, but all other Enemies of the Church of God; of the Kings honour,

⁵² Baillie, *Letters*, II, 102.

⁵³ Ibid, II, 107 & Van Dixhoorn, WAM, III, 96.

⁵⁴ Ibid, III, 97.

⁵⁵ Ibid, III, 97.

and of our liberty and peace.⁵⁶

Henderson made it clear that their meeting held eschatological portent as Westminster was possibly at the door to the long-desired blessings for the nations of the earth.

Henderson's words at St Margaret's greatly encouraged the inauguration of this new relationship. One tract reported that Master Henderson, a grave Divine of Scotland, outlined the 'infallibilitie of successe' if conform ourselves to it.⁵⁷ Henderson said, 'It shall be the prevention of many evils and miseries, and a means of many and rich blessings, spirituall and temporall, to our selves, our litle ones, and the Posterity that shall come after us for many Generations'.⁵⁸

Using commonly understood images, he described the pope as Belshazzar, who though full of sacrilegious pomp, if he knew what this new covenant meant for the triumph of true religion would tremble; his head and mitre would shake and his joints would loose with fear.⁵⁹ The pope would have been shaking if he could have comprehended that this was a great eschatological moment in history. Henderson encouraged the godly to feel their hearts quickened as they experienced the jubilee and joyful deliverance from the yoke of Antichristian tyranny.⁶⁰ He ended as triumphantly as he had begun, saying:

We trust from this day forth, through the weight of this Covenant, cast the ballance, and make Religion and Righteousnesse to prevaile, to the glory of God, the honour of our King, the confusion of our common Enemies, and the comfort and safety of the people of God.⁶¹

On 28 November 1643 the Committee for Both Kingdoms signed the agreement.⁶²

⁵⁶ *Two Speeches*, 27.

⁵⁷ *Mercurius Britannicus: Communicating the affairs of great Britaine: For the better Information of the People, from Tuesday the 19 of September, to Tuesday the 26 of Sept. 1643*, 45.

⁵⁸ *Two Speeches*, 28.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 1.

The Scots Role at Westminster

The Scots opted for non-voting participation in the assembly, which they believed would give them more flexibility to work for the Scottish Kirk.⁶³ This allowed them to participate in all the debates, sit on committees, and otherwise do all the work of the assembly except vote. Sympathetic histories have exaggerated the Scots role at the assembly. J. Reid's *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines* (1811) and W. M. Hetherington's *A History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (1841) outlined a kind of folklore that tended to settle in nineteenth century histories of the period. Some of their accounts originated in Robert Baillie's colourful stories.⁶⁴

As Van Dixhoorn wrote, Baillie's embellished reports gave the impression that the Scots at Westminster were like some sort of elite theological strike-force or a four-man team of trained specialists who rushed into Westminster Abbey to rescue the hapless English, who were being held hostage by the Independents, Erastians and moderate Episcopalians.⁶⁵ Baillie did believe that the Scottish commissioners at Westminster were theologically superior and that their presence at Westminster was vital if it were going to succeed. He said, 'Had God not sent Mr. Henderson, Mr. Rutherford, and Mr. Gillespie, among them I see not that ever they could have agreed to any settled government'.⁶⁶

The Parties

One of the challenges of a scholarly study of the Westminster Assembly, says Richard

⁶³ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 110.

⁶⁴ W.M. Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Edinburgh, 1856), 146.

⁶⁵ Van Dixhoorn, 'Scottish influence on the Westminster Assembly', 6. As it turns out aside from Baillie's accounts the minutes of the Assembly do not record the same kind of Scottish dominance.

⁶⁶ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 177.

Muller, is ‘simply identifying who were the major figures and what were the major issues in debate’.⁶⁷ Van Dixhoorn argues that the traditional ecclesiastical divisions are necessary, but overly simplistic, and tend to diminish the importance of the Assembly as a place of significant importance for studying second reformation orthodoxy.⁶⁸ He contends that historians ought to move to a ‘new taxonomy’ for the assembly that shifts focus to a more theologically nuanced appreciation and beyond ‘mere’ ecclesiology.⁶⁹ Van Dixhoorn suggests that such groups might be related more to theological or hermeneutical considerations rather than merely ecclesiology.⁷⁰ However, Henderson’s work may be a major source of the over-simplified division of the assembly by virtue of his insistence on ecclesiology as a key to unity.⁷¹

Henderson’s role at the Assembly tends to argue against a wholesale change to the traditional divisions because of his strident and driving approach towards a quick

⁶⁷ Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford, 2003), 192.

⁶⁸ Van Dixhoorn went so far as to study the seating arrangements and voting patterns of the members of the Westminster Assembly, showing that clusters of divines sat together and voted together in debates over various issues, even though they disagreed over ecclesiology. This suggests that the traditional division of the Assembly into clearly demarcated ecclesiastical parties is not the most felicitous division and tends to diminish the theological complexity of the Assembly’s members, especially when they dealt with various theological subjects besides ecclesiology. See Van Dixhoorn, ‘Reforming the Reformation’, I, 139.

⁶⁹ Chad Van Dixhoorn, ‘New Taxonomies of the Westminster Assembly (1643-52): The Creedal Controversy as Case Study’, *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, 6.1 (2004), 82-106.

⁷⁰ Van Dixhoorn, ‘New Taxonomies’, 103-106.

⁷¹ There have been multiple studies regarding the nature of the divisions and difficulties at the Westminster Assembly. One of the best is Robert Paul’s *The Assembly of the Lord*. See also John R. DeWitt, *Jus Divinum: The Westminster Assembly and the divine right of church government* (Kampen, 1969). In *Jus Divinum*, DeWitt argues similarly to Paul that the Independents were the major source of the prolonged division and strife. Polly Ha has argued for a more careful look at the presbyterianism of the English delegates in her study, *English Presbyterianism, 1590-1640* (Stanford, 2011). See also Rosemary Bradley, ‘Jacob and Esau Struggling in the Wombe: A Study of Presbyterian and Independent Religious Conflicts 1640-48’, Ph.D. thesis (University of Kent, 1975). Hunter Powell’s recent dissertation on the Dissenting Brethren is a penetrating study of the exegetical developments in the writings of the dissenting brethren who he refers to as the ‘apologists’. Powell does a great job of highlighting the theological proximity between the Scottish Presbyterians and the apologists, while arguing that English Presbyterians and Robert Baillie were the source of division more than the apologists. See Powell, ‘The Dissenting Brethren and the Power of the Keys’. Powell’s recent work indicates that there are serious, ongoing scholarly discussions on the nature of division and debate at Westminster. Since his thesis does not use Henderson in any significant way, it highlights the need for this chapter on Henderson.

ecclesiastical settlement. For instance, Henderson discouraged what he perceived were unnecessary ‘metaphysical’ debates, and he tended to lump ecclesiastical groups together without regard for nuanced distinctions within groups.⁷² Right or wrong, Henderson’s consistent arguments against engaging in prolonged theological debates most likely contributed to the traditional divisions of the assembly into ecclesiastical factions, rather than into more nuanced theological groups as Van Dixhoorn is suggesting.

Robert S. Paul’s work, *The Assembly of the Lord*, provides a clear and sufficiently detailed portrait of the ecclesiastical parties that developed at the assembly, especially as the Scots understood them.⁷³ Paul argues that it was at the Westminster Assembly where ecclesiastical lines became so hardened that ‘Puritanism was virtually squeezed out of the Anglican Church and sympathy for episcopacy was similarly squeezed out of the Puritan movement’.⁷⁴

Henderson and Baillie believed that the Independents and Erastians were easy to identify as the basic problem, but Henderson considered the Independents his most troublesome opponents.⁷⁵ The first major ecclesiastical disagreements at Westminster concentrated on the relationship of ruling elders to the local church and the local church to regional bodies. Van Dixhoorn’s work highlights at least part of the Scots problem; they had an overly simplistic view that the English would simply capitulate to their

⁷² Van Dixhoorn, WAM, III, 313.

⁷³ See Paul, ‘Descriptive Interlude: The Parties’, in *The Assembly of the Lord*, 101-132.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 101. It appears that Henderson contributed to what Paul described as the ‘hardening’ of the ecclesiastical parties at Westminster because Henderson spent considerable energy attempting to ‘squeeze out’ congregationalism as a viable option for reformed churches in England and Scotland.

⁷⁵ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 110-11.

ecclesiastical direction, which would bring everything to a peaceful solution.⁷⁶ Van Dixhoorn's arguments reveal that ecclesiology was one of many topics on which there was very little specific agreement. Yet, regardless of the topic at hand, Henderson kept insisting that Independent ecclesiology was the major obstacle to the assembly's concluding their matter quickly.⁷⁷

The Independents at Westminster, as a general rule, believed that the highest ecclesiastical authority on earth was that of the local church under the leadership of godly elders. While most Independents recognized the need for ecclesiastical connection and accountability through associations, synods or other regional bodies, they were not willing to cede hierarchical authority to these bodies, especially in the matter of excommunication.⁷⁸ For the Independents, ceding authority to a presbytery represented as much of a potential threat of abuse as bishops had posed in the past.

The Independent position has been commonly associated with the 'dissenting brethren', Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Bridge, Sidrach Simpson, and Jeremiah Burroughes. These ministers published a defence of their positions early in 1644 entitled, *An Apologeticall Narration*. This was frustrating for Henderson because he had worked closely with them in 1641, even writing the preface to Burroughs' antiprelatical tract.⁷⁹ The Dissenting Brethren were equally frustrated and published the *Apologeticall Narration*, most likely in response to a sermon that Henderson preached to the House of Lords on 27 December 1643, in which he made it clear that he would

⁷⁶ See, Iain Murray, 'The Scots at the Westminster Assembly: With Special Reference to the Dispute on Church Government and its Aftermath', *The Banner of Truth*, (1994), 22-23.

⁷⁷ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 110.

⁷⁸ Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord*, 103.

⁷⁹ Baillie, *Letters*, I, 303. See also Francis J. Bremer, *Congregational Communion: Clerical Friendship in the Anglo-American Puritan Community, 1610-1692*, Boston, 1994, 132-133.

not compromise with Independents.⁸⁰ In this sermon, Henderson spoke directly to the issue saying:

The present Epidenticall disease of this Land... so it pleaseth the Lord to give more then a taste of the bitter fruits of bad Church-government and a sad representation of the face of the Kingdom, if every man should be left to preach, professe and print what he will.⁸¹

With threatening overtones, Henderson continued his sermon warning, ‘Marke them which cause devisions and offences amongst you; be wise unto that which is good, & simple concerning evill; & the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you’.⁸²

Henderson’s sermons to Parliament are worth noting because Baillie mentioned that such sermons were used to ‘put an edge’ on the assembly’s work.⁸³ According to Francis Bremer, the Independents took notice of Henderson’s address because, a week after he preached it in December of 1643, the dissenting brethren registered and in late January of 1644 distributed copies of the *Apologetical Narration*, both in and outside the Assembly.⁸⁴ With Henderson leading the initial proceedings and now his clear movement to take the assembly quickly to his views, the dissenting brethren decided to publish their Apology without the official approval of the assembly.⁸⁵ This sparked

⁸⁰ S.J. Pearson argues that Henderson’s sermon contained serious, threatening language against the Independents and prompted them to print the *Apologeticall Narration*. See S. J. Pearson, “Reluctant Radicals: the Independents at the Westminster Assembly”, *Journal of Church and State* (1969), 475. Rosemary Bradley argues that Henderson’s sermon may not have provoked the Dissenting Brethren into printing their *Apology* because it did not explicitly condemn their version of congregational polity. Yet she also argues that when Henderson preached, the Dissenting Brethren had become concerned that their polity was increasingly being associated with other more radical ecclesiastical positions and thus needed clarification. See Bradley, “Jacob and Esau Struggling in the Wombe:”, 122.

⁸¹ *Preached*, II, 1.

⁸² *Ibid*, II, 1. Here Henderson’s sermon contributed to the ‘lumping together’ of the various polities apparently hoping that his words would ‘put an edge’ on the Assembly’s work. See Baillie, *Letters*, II, 157.

⁸³ *Ibid*, II, 157.

⁸⁴ Francis J. Bremer, *Congregational Communion*, 139.

⁸⁵ A few months later the Assembly formed a committee that was created to prepare a letter to both houses declaring that the Assembly had ‘noe hand in the Apology nor knowledge of it till published and to make report to this Assembly with all convenient speed before it be presented’. See Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 589. This indicates that the Narration created a stir in the Assembly and contributed to

what Van Dixhoorn has described as a ‘pamphlet war’ among the different ecclesiastical groups in the assembly.⁸⁶

Deception and Eschatology

In a letter to Robert Douglas in Edinburgh, Henderson wrote, ‘the multitude of their great burthens and a secreit malignant partie do so retarde the business’.⁸⁷ The letter is not dated, but it indicated that Henderson was in London and that the House of Lords had not yet officially accepted the Covenant, so this dates the letter probably at early September 1643. Another letter from November of 1643, indicated that Henderson believed the malignants, whom he called a ‘party of delays’, was in the Parliament, and there was ‘nothing to fear from within the assembly’.⁸⁸ Only a month later, Henderson indicated that the troubles were not isolated to Parliament, but they existed in the assembly as well.⁸⁹ Still, Henderson requested that his frustration be kept private, saying ‘those that have a special hand in the publict’ need to maintain an outward image of unity and progress as much as possible.⁹⁰

With the publication of the *Apologetical Narration*, the situation changed. According to Baillie, the Scots felt betrayed, and the debates as early as April of 1644 indicated an open and potentially ugly fight on the floor of the assembly between Henderson and Philip Nye.⁹¹ The actual minutes note that Nye was ‘called to order’, which was a form

growing ecclesiastical divisions at Westminster.

⁸⁶ Van Dixhoorn, ‘Reforming the Reformation’, I, 73.

⁸⁷ Wodrow, MSS, f, xxv, no.13, also printed in Aiton, *The Life and Times of Alexander Henderson: Giving a History of the Second Reformation of the Church of Scotland, and of the Covenanters, During the Reign of Charles I* (Edinburgh, 1836), 628.

⁸⁸ Wodrow, MSS, folio xxv, no. 16, NLS, n.p.

⁸⁹ Wodrow, MSS, folio xxv, no. 17, NLS, n.p.

⁹⁰ Ibid, np.

⁹¹ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 145-46. Hunter Powell argues that Robert Baillie was unique in his reaction to the Apology and should not be used as the representative voice of the Scots at Westminster. See Powell, ‘The Dissenting Brethren and the Power of the Keys’, 98-99. However, Henderson in private letters,

of censure, but the minutes do not record the same level of frustration as Baillie and other sources.⁹² Baillie stated that Henderson had accused Nye of acting as ‘Lucian and the Pagans’ who tried to turn the Roman Empire against the Christian religion.⁹³ Lightfoot also recorded that Henderson was horrified, saying that Nye spoke like ‘Sanballat, Tobiah, or Symmachus’, all of whom had opposed the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.⁹⁴ The Royalist newsbook, *Mercurius Aulicus*, reported that the fight was so fierce that Henderson tried to have Nye removed from the assembly.⁹⁵ The newsbook sympathetic to the Scots, *Mercurius Britannicus*, presented Nye as irresponsible and argumentative while portraying Henderson as a steady proponent in urging the assembly to move in the ways of the Reformation and away from going back to ‘reele like your Drunken Bishops and Clergy, that were staggering and falling back into Altars, and Priests and Crucifixes, and Idolatries’.⁹⁶

Britannicus portrayed Henderson as a seasoned and steady churchman who was merely trying to move the assembly to a solid resolution and to whom they should be looking for leadership. The newsbook urged the dissenters to fall into line with Henderson, reminding them of his reputation:

sermons and in the Assembly minutes provides evidence of similar frustration; not to mention the primary sources such as the newsbooks, which documented a clash on the floor between Henderson and Nye in a way that directly supported Baillie’s record of Henderson’s frustration with the Dissenting Brethren. At this point, Baillie’s record of Henderson is a reliable source.

⁹² After Nye’s speech, the minutes indicate a rupture into discord, saying that Nye was ‘called to order & much debate about it’. See Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 524. According to Van Dixhoorn, a speaker was called to order as a form of censure and the speaker was required to cease speaking on the floor for that debate. See Van Dixhoorn, ‘Reforming the Reformation’, I, 156-58. Philip Nye was censured and the prolocutor ordered the Assembly to proceed in the debate the next morning. The minutes noted that there was ‘much debate about it’, which was the clerk’s way of making record of the debate without recording the specifics of the fight as outlined in several sources such as the private notes of Baillie, Gillespie and Lightfoot, as well as the newsbook sources. See Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 524.

⁹³ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 146

⁹⁴ John Lightfoot, *Journal*, 169.

⁹⁵ See *Mercurius Aulicus*, Monday February 26, 1643. (the EEBO copy has the date at the top of the page as 1643, but the date of the debate was 1644). As noted above, while there is no record of Henderson attempting to remove Nye from the Assembly; Nye was censured mildly in being ‘called to order’. See Van Dixhoorn, ‘Reforming the Reformation’, I, 157.

So he hath confuted all your Archbishops, and Bishops &c. he hath held forth such a light, as they have melted before it, and the whole Prelacie is thawed into nothing...hath not providence and heaven let their hands to Master Henderson's confutations? Were all your Bishops able to stand before the gravity and Logick, and Divinity of Master Hinderson?⁹⁷

This launched a common Scottish interpretation of the events at Westminster. It went something like the following: everything would have been fine if the Independents had not deceptively betrayed the Covenanters, following their deception with a contumacy that was even worse.⁹⁸ To make matters worse, as Gribben argues, those who opposed the Scottish Presbyterian settlement began to be criticized in language couched in apocalyptic tones.⁹⁹ At the outset of the Assembly, Henderson had described his popish and prelatical opponents as 'incendiaries, malignants or evil instruments' who were hindering God's work and dividing the king from his people.¹⁰⁰ Now the major obstacles were those who only recently had been described as 'godly' brothers.

At Westminster Henderson had pushed the idea that Scotland was God's instrument sent south to destroy the evil one, uniting the Protestant nations in the first stage of a grand period of eschatological hope. Aptly summarizing Henderson's role throughout his public career, Gribben states 'eschatology was not something puritans studied so much as something in which they were involved.'¹⁰¹ Baillie echoed Henderson's feelings,

⁹⁶ Mercurius Britannicus, No. 27, Monday the 11th of March to Monday the 18th of March, 1644, Dd2.

⁹⁷ Ibid, Dd2.

⁹⁸ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 145-46. As noted above, Chad Van Dixhoorn's recent studies have argued that the Assembly taxonomy must maintain the ecclesiological classifications, but with further study towards a more nuanced theological taxonomy that may have been part of certain underlying hermeneutical, homiletical, exegetical, and practical theological considerations. None of these works have argued for a closer look at the role of eschatology as a contributing factor in divisions. I include eschatology as a contributing factor, as it was something that Henderson had brought with him to Westminster and one that he included latently, but clearly, especially in his sermons. Crawford Gribben is the primary historian who has developed and highlighted the role of eschatology in the rhetoric surrounding the Westminster Assembly. See Gribben, 'The English Apocalyptic Imagination'; Gribben, 'George Gillespie and the Scottish revolution', in Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature & Theology, 1550-1682*, 101-126.

⁹⁹ Gribben, 'The English Apocalyptic Imagination', 35.

¹⁰⁰ RKS, I, 362.

¹⁰¹ Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium*, 20.

indicating that, ‘the times of Antichrist’s fall are approaching’.¹⁰² Henderson even included this idea in the Directory for Public Worship so that the ministers would be conscious that their present conflict had eschatological dimensions.¹⁰³

Scotland’s perceived mission in England was God’s mission for the future, but making these kinds of eschatological connections had dangerous consequences and backfired badly. This imagery backfired in the process of what Gribben argues was a politicization of eschatology.¹⁰⁴ Gribben, for instance, points to Thomas Edwards’ publication of *Gangræna* as an intense example of the politicization of eschatology. Gribben notes that in *Gangræna*, Edwards cited the recognized eschatological conclusions of Thomas Brightman. According to Gribben, this drew on a range of popular and scholarly associations, which called on the English church to embrace its prophetic duty, in standing with the Scots, thus fulfilling the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant.¹⁰⁵

At the Glasgow Assembly in 1638, Henderson had used the image of Scotland standing at the door of eschatological blessings. Henderson had also elevated ecclesiology to a ‘fundamental’ of the faith, by which the blessings of God would stand or fall. For Henderson at Glasgow and now at Westminster, the key to opening the door to God’s eschatological blessings was presbyterian ecclesiology. As ‘the’ most fundamental part of evoking the future blessings of God, presbyterian ecclesiology would unite England with Scotland in putting to flight the enemies of God and inaugurating a period of great

¹⁰² Baillie, Letters, II, 192.

¹⁰³ ‘Of Publick Prayer Before a Sermon’, Directory for Public Worship, 1645, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Gribben, ‘The English Apocalyptic Imagination’, 35-36.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 52.

blessings.¹⁰⁶ In *Gangraena*, Edwards lashed out at opponents of the presbyterian settlement and infused his arguments with eschatological significance. According to Gribben, Edwards was arguing that the Scots were not the ‘Babylonish Beast’, but the promised agents of its destruction. It was not the Scots, but the sectaries and Independents, who were standing in the way of England’s millennial bliss.¹⁰⁷ The party of delay had taken the place of the prelates as agents of antichrist.

At the beginning of the Westminster Assembly, it was quite easy for Henderson to identify Popes and prelates as ‘the’ primary enemy. Henderson’s opening sermon indicated that the Scots had joined in their happy union for the defeat of antichrist, and for the blessing of the whole earth. What began easily enough changed dramatically during the Westminster Assembly. The sentiment among Presbyterians, both Scottish and English, was that the ecclesiastical issues should be concluded as quickly as possible, or else the centrifugal forces of division would spin the kingdoms into political and social chaos. Privately, Henderson expressed the ‘great evils of so long a delay of settling religion’.¹⁰⁸ This basically meant that Independents had replaced prelates as the malignants and evil instruments described in the *Solemn League*. After the *Apologeticall Narration* exploded into controversy, Thomas Edwards’ *Gangraena* pleaded that the reader would, ‘Discern the mischief of Ecclesiasticall Anarchy, the monstrosnesse of the much affected Toleration’.¹⁰⁹

The lack of ecclesiastical unity was like gangrene, which would rot the kingdoms from the inside out. Edwards wrote as if he were a prophet, arguing that his work was like the handwriting on the wall against Belshazzar and the flying scrolls that came over the

¹⁰⁶ *Two Speeches*, 27.

¹⁰⁷ Gribben, ‘The English Apocalyptic Imagination’, 52.

land in the days of the prophet Zechariah.¹¹⁰

Portraying the Scots as innocent victims of deception, Edwards lamented:

Besides their love, zeal and prayers for you begins to languish and grow faint. Our dear Brethren of *Scotland* stand amazed and astonished, and had they not seen these things, could not have beleaved them... they are grieved, offended, and much discouraged.¹¹¹

The notion of Scottish intellectual and theological superiority was combined with a common narrative that the Independents were not only theologically inferior, but were the deceptive agents of antichrist. This became pervasive in many of the nineteenth century histories.

Aiton, for example, described the Independents as a ‘lurking’ ‘motley faction’, who concealed their motives and measures until they acquired enough strength to strike a blow, which might have effected the ‘destruction of the Church of England and of the monarchy as a means to this end’.¹¹² He described them as a ‘moody and mischievous pack, with passions fierce and sombre, who tricked the sincerer Covenanters’.¹¹³ Aiton was not content to speak of mere deception; he connected this deception with Satan himself, describing the Independents as ‘subtle snakes’, who slithered deceptively into the confidence of the Covenanters, all the while preparing to strike ‘their venomous sting into the very heart whose blood had helped to warm them’.¹¹⁴

Aiton’s ideas can be traced as far back as the original newsbooks. For instance, the

¹⁰⁸ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 220.

¹⁰⁹ *Gangraena*, 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 6.

¹¹² Aiton, *The Life and Times*, 524.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 525.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 525.

Scottish Dove, a kind of newspaper of the times, spoke of Scots adversaries in London using eschatological language, even comparing them to ‘spiritual Babilon who hath beene long drunke with the blood of the Saints’.¹¹⁵ In a sermon Baillie offered to Parliament in February of 1643, he continued to charge the atmosphere with eschatological meaning, as is evidenced in the title of one of Baillie’s sermons, *Satan the leader in chief to all who resist the reparation of Sion*. In this sermon Baillie boiled down the two chief parties involved in the conflict: Christ and the devil. Men, preached Baillie, were but inferior and subservient agents of these two.¹¹⁶ He then applied this to anyone who retarded the progress of settling church government, or by implication, anyone who resisted presbyterian ecclesiology.¹¹⁷

The problem for Henderson and Baillie was that the categories of those who ‘resist the reparation of Sion’ were no longer as easy to identify and were shifting dramatically. Before this time, the common narrative was that faithful Protestants were engaged in an eschatological battle with antichrist, who was routinely identified as either the Pope or the Roman Catholic Church. Gribben argues the narrative was changing on both sides. Ironically for them, the Scots were being identified as the ‘Baylonish Beast’ of revelation by a growing number of English adversaries.¹¹⁸

This complicated things enormously for Henderson, especially since he had previously identified antichrist quite easily with popish prelates. Henderson preferred simple

¹¹⁵ *The Scottish Dove Sent out, and returning, Bringing Intelligence from the Armies, and makes some Relations of other observable passages of both kingdoms, for information and instruction as an Antidote against the poisoned insinuations of Mercurius Aulicus, and the errors of other intelligencers, from the 16 Feb. to the 23 of the same, 1643, np.*

¹¹⁶ ‘The Epistle Dedicatory’, *Satan the leader in chief to all who resist the reparation of Sion*. As it was cleared in a sermon to the Honourable House of Commons at their late solemn fast, Febr. 28. 1643. By Robert Baylie, minister at Glasgow. Published by order of the House of Commons. (London, 1643), A2.

¹¹⁷ ‘The Epistle Dedicatory’, *Satan the leader in chief to all who resist the reparation of Sion*, A3.

narratives like the one's he had used at the Glasgow Assembly in 1638. There he had offered Presbyterian ecclesiology as the only real eschatological hope for the future against basically one major enemy. In Scotland, Henderson had been at ease dividing the world into the godly and the 'haters of Sion'.¹¹⁹

This was the model he used to great rhetorical effect. This had become impossible at the Westminster Assembly because, as Gribben explains, 'the older and uncomplicated denunciation of Roman Catholicism had collapsed with the implosion of protestant solidarity'.¹²⁰ Gribben is correct to note that the earlier Scottish push to link eschatology with Scotland's role in the troubles backfired terribly. It was fine to associate one's opponents with antichrist at first when the categories were clear, but as the conflict dragged on, some English critics had transposed the former eschatological paradigm against the Presbyterians.

The military and political context in England was far too complicated for such a simple narrative. According to Underdown, the Scots were little concerned with the constitutional issues which were uppermost for many English allies, especially members of Parliament.¹²¹ Henderson had plunged into the conflict with the hope of a quick ecclesiastical resolution, connected to what they believed would have been a decisive military victory for the Covenanter armies. Yet as the war became a protracted conflict, the Scots found themselves unwittingly entangled in English politics. By the autumn of 1644, some parties turned to the Scots as political counter balances to Cromwell and

¹¹⁸ Gribben, 'The English Apocalyptic Imagination', 35.

¹¹⁹ Henderson, *Sermons*, 305.

¹²⁰ Gribben, 'The English Apocalyptic Imagination', 36.

¹²¹ David Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1971), 65.

Vane, who were associated with the sects and radicals.¹²²

Henderson's incessant push to end debates in the House and in the Assembly may have had the unintended consequence of contributing to English fears of the Scots. Valerie Pearl argues that a perceived English fear was that the Scots' ecclesiology may well bring an end to their notion of open constitutional debates on such matters.¹²³ This makes sense, given Baillie's desire to have Henderson 'get them quieted'.¹²⁴

Henderson had led Scotland into England to join with her in defeating the beast, but now English critics were switching the eschatological connections, seeing Scotland as the beast in their midst. A new narrative was growing among critical pamphlets and tracts that switched categories once reserved to popes and prelates. This came in the wake of changing sentiments to the Scottish presence in London. Shortly after Henderson and the Scots arrived in London, the newspaper, *Mercurius Aulicus*, reported that they were stealing the king's furniture to use in Worcester House, where they were staying during the Westminster Assembly.¹²⁵

By 1646 a pamphlet entitled *The Burthen of Issachar* argued that presbyteries were like a 'Papal Conclave' with too high and too vast powers.¹²⁶ Issachar went further, comparing the general assembly to the corrupt Sanhedrin, whose powers are above the

¹²² Ibid, 66.

¹²³ See Valerie Pearl, 'London Puritans and Scotch Fifth Columnists: a Mid-Seventeenth-century Phenomenon', in *Studies in London History*, A.E.J. Hollaender and William Kellaway, eds. (London, 1969), 330.

¹²⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 186.

¹²⁵ *The Scottish Dove Sent out, and returning, Bringing Intelligence from the Armies, and makes some Relations of other observable passages of both kingdoms, for information and instruction as an Antidote against the poisoned insinuations of Mercurius Aulicus, and the errours of other intelligencers, from the 16 Feb. to the 23 of the same*, np.

¹²⁶ *The Burthen of Issachar: or The Tyranical Power and Practices of the Presbyteriall Government in Scotland; in their I. Parochiall Session II. Presbyterie III. Provinciall Synods IV. General Assembly*,

king.¹²⁷ According to Henry Parker, Scotland had become like Antichrist using presbyterian ecclesiology as a ‘Trojan horse’.¹²⁸ In Parker’s tract, *The Trojan Horse of the Presbyteriall Government Unbowelled*, he asserted that the presbyterians had not mistakenly held a theory of church government, but they were ‘schemers’ deliberately seeking to overwhelm the state and to put ‘their hands into mens purses’.¹²⁹ In another pamphlet of a few years later, *Scotland’s Holy War*, Henry Parker argued, ‘The Pope claims no more in the pale of the *Italian Church*; the Popish Cardinals and Bishops in *Spain, France, &c.* claim lesse; the Protestant Prelates, whom we lately ejected for Usurpers, never claimed halfe so much’.¹³⁰

The *Apologeticall Narration* had unleashed a bitter propaganda war that became blistering and confusing.¹³¹ At first, Baillie highly praised Edwards’ *Gangraena*, which he thought might push things to a quicker conclusion. This seemed to be the kind of pamphlet considered necessary to push back their enemies. According to Ann Hughes, Edwards believed that since error led inexorably to worse heresy, blasphemy and schism, then ‘making neat distinctions was simply a time-wasting diversion’.¹³² Rather than silencing presbyterian critics, *Gangraena* seemed to have unleashed voices from

1646, 8.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 22.

¹²⁸ Henry Parker, *The Trojan Horse of Presbyteriall Government Unbowelled wherein is contained I. The power of the Presbyterian government, II. The persons in whom this power is placed, III. The exercise of the Presbyterian power in Scotland, and the lawes there imposed on the peoples necks*, London, 1646, 18.

¹²⁹ Henry Parker, *The Trojan Horse of the Presbyteriall Government Unbowelled*, 18.

¹³⁰ Henry Parker, *Scotland’s Holy War*, 29.

¹³¹ Hunter Powell argues that the *Apologeticall Narration* was not the initial source of the bitter divisions, but that it was merely a published paper that reflected others like it in the on-going debates and was not unlike many other papers the Scots had been writing. He also argued that the *Apologeticall Narration* caused no initial stir in the Assembly debates, nor did it receive a rebuke of any kind from parliament. See Powell, ‘Dissenting Brethren’, 99-109. Powell makes an excellent case for the dissenting brethren’s desire to foster unity; however, the first mention of the *Apologeticall Narration* in the Assembly does in fact indicate a ‘stir’, since the Assembly required a committee to be formed so as to deny the Assembly’s knowledge of or involvement in its publication. See Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 589. Furthermore, a letter the Assembly received in March of 1644, according to Lightfoot and Baillie, was very critical of the *Apologeticall Narration*. See Baillie, *Letters*, II, 143-47. Another letter from the synod of Zeeland, according to Baillie, reiterated the same points. See Baillie, *Letters*, II, 146-47.

¹³² Ann Hughes, ‘Gangrena and heresiological traditions’, in *Heresy, Literature and Politics in Early*

every conceivable direction. The newspapers, tracts, and pamphlets had become so voluminous that, when Baillie was asked about pamphlets, he complained that ‘there are so many I cannot choose; for I have some hundreds to myself’.¹³³ The whole context was a deep frustration for Henderson, since he had succeeded in Scotland by using a simple narrative, while fiercely maintaining an outward image of unity and progress. He had also succeeded by using pamphlets that made popular appeals. Now to his growing frustration, popular pamphlets were turned against him, and to great effect.

Henderson and Assembly Debates

At age sixty, Henderson’s most important role in the assembly was like that of a paternal guide who urged his squabbling children to agreement and concord.

Henderson was not primarily a theologian, nor was he the most dominant Scottish commissioner in debates. However, according to Baillie, if Henderson were absent even for a little bit it might not only retard progress, but it would ‘putt matters so farr wrong, as would not in haste be gotten righted’.¹³⁴

The minutes reveal that Henderson frequently engaged in debates, most especially to urge a quicker resolution to continuing discussions. For Henderson the driving issue was bringing the assembly to an ecclesiastical settlement. He summed up his own approach, saying, ‘the sovereign remedy is the establishing of the right government of the church’.¹³⁵

The bulk of Henderson’s statements in the minutes were practical and/or procedural

Modern English Culture, eds, David Loewenstein and John Marshall (Cambridge, 2006), 144.

¹³³ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 271.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 172.

¹³⁵ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, II, 252.

kinds of comments designed to bring a quicker resolution. This chapter does not attempt to quantify Henderson's speeches because on many occasions Henderson rose to speak only a few words as a question or as a brief statement to direct or redirect debate.¹³⁶ Often times his words were based on his previous work in private meetings. This indicated that much of his most influential work occurred behind the closed doors of committee meetings and private conferences, at which he attempted to prepare the assembly to come to a quicker resolution. Baillie made constant reference to Henderson's role as mediator and reconciler in these kinds of 'conferences.'¹³⁷

This does not mean that Henderson made no contribution to the debates at Westminster. To the contrary, he contributed on a few occasions to substantive issues. However, he fashioned himself as an elder statesmen, who should be heeded in order to blaze a path forward. One of Henderson's first major statements in debate was in November of 1643. Cornelius Burges asked him to speak to the question of the ordination of doctors and pastors as a distinct office. He rose as the senior spokesman for the Scots and prefaced his comments with the following statement:

You are at this time as a city set upon a mountaine; the eyes of England, Scotland, Ireland & of all reformed churches are upon you; a delight to this meeting; a desire & fervent expectation... Since the eyes of reformed churches are upon you, be tender of their judgment also. In your expressions be tender of that professed among them.¹³⁸

This was the kind of statement Henderson used to urge his brothers forward to a resolution. It is striking to notice that his initial speech in debates on the floor contain the aforementioned kind of grand overview or casting of an inspiring vision for the future. This did not continue throughout the debates, which I interpret as a sign of his

¹³⁶ In one case Henderson rose and asked, 'Show the places where warranted & not in those places'. See Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 416. In another place, the minutes read, 'Mr. Hinderson moved to know the mind of the Assembly about their motion in the morning'. See Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 690.

¹³⁷ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 110.

growing frustration.

It does not appear from Henderson's contributions to the plenary sessions that he refused to consider subtle points of ecclesiology. Rather, he expressed anguish that the Independents were essentially stalling the assembly, and as such were making themselves impediments to a speedy conclusion. In December of 1643, Henderson pleaded with the Assembly not to get bogged down. He said he was 'sorry the assembly is falled into this intricate dispute'.¹³⁹ He pleaded with them, saying, 'It is gracious that soe reverend an Assembly kept in debate in this point & make noe progress at all. Not stay soe long when Haniball is ad portas; when a constituted church that things might be debated at lardge'.¹⁴⁰

For Henderson, the cause of religious unity, as it was connected to the overall cause of the Reformation blessings, was too important to quibble over 'metaphysical' details of theology.¹⁴¹ Henderson pushed for quick resolutions that he felt could be followed only sometime later with discussions of finer points.¹⁴² For Henderson, the Westminster Assembly was not the time for members of the synod to vent, or to attempt to solve every whim of theological fancy, so he warned them not to 'descend to metaphisicall questions about distinctions'.¹⁴³

As early as November 1643, Henderson spoke with urgency saying, 'In this exigence of

¹³⁸ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, III, 312.

¹³⁹ This debate frustrated Henderson because in it William Bridge was arguing that God had appointed the government of the church in a general sense, but had left the 'perticulars' to be arranged according to the rules of prudence. See Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 406-07. This pointed to the difference between those who held to a 'jure divino' ecclesiology such as Henderson and his fellow Scots commissioners and those who believed that God had not specified in detail the exact arrangement and organization, especially in local churches.

¹⁴⁰ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 415.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, III, 313.

¹⁴² Baillie, *Letters*, II, 220.

¹⁴³ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, III, 313.

time, since ther is nothing but anarchy in the church of England, I wish for the present that you would proceed. Wish in my owne name & the name of my brethren that they would proceed'.¹⁴⁴ Basically he began to question the motives, rather than the exegesis, of his opponents.¹⁴⁵ Henderson laced his statements with stinging little barbs like the following: 'Who reading that chapter, not prejudiced before, & reads those doth not conceive'.¹⁴⁶ It was this little barb 'not prejudiced' that provided a glimpse into the growing frustration that Henderson and his fellow Scots felt at Westminster. Henderson appealed to what he believed were the 'obvious' character of his arguments, implying that bad intentions rather than sound exegesis was at the heart of his opponents' disagreements. He even went on to chide those with whom he disagreed, saying, 'we should be sparing in speaking too much of what is received by reformed churches'.¹⁴⁷ According to Henderson, the Independents were essentially wasting the assembly's time with items that he argued were already settled in Scotland and other reformed churches. Henderson pressured the assembly in a variety of ways to keep moving towards a conclusion. He stated, 'I speake it the rather that ther may be some expediiton made in this businesse'.¹⁴⁸ He argued that anyone who simply read his references without 'prejudice before' would concur.¹⁴⁹ He then urged that due to the 'exigence of time' and the anarchy of the church in England that they proceed to a conclusion.¹⁵⁰ Henderson was getting tired of what he perceived to be stalling over insignificant details

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, IV, 378.

¹⁴⁵ Baillie's comment early in the Assembly's start indicated that he had at least initially a sympathy to their concerns, saying, 'they see the hurt of their length, but cannot get it helped; for being to establish a new Plattforme of worship and discipline to their Nation for all time to come, they think they cannot be answerale, if solidlie, and at leaisure, they doe not examine every point thereof'. See Baillie, *Letters*, II, 109.

¹⁴⁶ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 378.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, IV, 378.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, IV, 688.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, IV, 378.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, IV, 378.

that he argued were not ultimately relevant for an overall ecclesiastical settlement.¹⁵¹

Perhaps one of the reasons that Henderson's reputation for moderation held strong was that he debated alongside his fellow Scottish commissioners, who were more direct and aggressive than Henderson. Henderson's patience could be set in contrast to his sharp-tongued Scottish colleagues such as Samuel Rutherford and George Gillespie. Though Henderson often bristled in his speeches and laced them with painful points, his fellow Scots were far more sarcastic and critical.¹⁵² Henderson did not seem to have been divisive when compared to Rutherford or Gillespie in debates, but the minutes of the Assembly and Baillie's *Letters* revealed that he grew exhausted and frustrated when progress was grinding, especially through the years 1644-45.

Westminster did not accord with Henderson's experience in Scotland, and it seemed that no matter what tack he took in the debates, he could not engineer a speedy conclusion. Henderson subtly chided his English brothers who kept on debating when Henderson argued that they should simply yield. For him, the matters were settled in the practice of Scotland and other reformed churches.¹⁵³

Almost every group of debates in which Henderson is involved is peppered with comments pushing for progress. 'I desire', said Henderson, 'the Assembly would enter upon that which is yet to be done and necessary to be done'.¹⁵⁴ He was frustrated that the committees he had formed were not bringing parties together on an agreement. He said, 'it was our desire that the grand committee might be called for expediting & they

¹⁵¹ Ibid, IV, 407.

¹⁵² Ibid, V, 8.

¹⁵³ Ibid, V, 165.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, VI, 92.

tooke things into consideration for that end. We desire the assembly would ponder the best wayes for expedition'.¹⁵⁵

Citing continental reformers such as Bucer, Calvin, and Beza, he spent a lot of time arguing for what could be described as a reformed catholicity, which he thought would bring them to a conclusion.¹⁵⁶ In October of 1644, regarding baptism, he argued for a conclusion, because they can find it practiced universally in all the reformed churches.¹⁵⁷

On occasions, Henderson tried to leverage the debates, saying once in November 1644, 'We did write unto the church of Scotland & did receive their answer. Good men have suffered soe much for it that they can...Otherwise we must say something for the saving of the liberty of the church of Scotland'.¹⁵⁸ Like a father scolding his children, Henderson reminded them to 'consider, whether convenient or tolerable to sit debating those things acknowledged by all churches and not come to the perticulars'.¹⁵⁹ After which, Henderson made a motion to require the assembly to stay seated till they have done the business they needed to do.¹⁶⁰

Henderson became furious because he thought the Independents were deliberately stalling. In December of 1643, Baillie privately convinced Henderson to avoid a public rupture with the Independents. Baillie recorded with uncharacteristic sympathy that the Independents were simply unfamiliar with presbyteries as practices in Scotland, and

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, V, 262.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, V, 388, 394.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, V, 387.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, V, 455.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, V, 282.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, V, 282.

thus they needed careful clarity and more prolonged debates.¹⁶¹ Henderson heeded his friend's advice, and though he was frustrated in private, he tempered his public statements.

Henderson's sermon in December of 1643 reflected something of this tempered but unambiguous frustration, which may have been due to Baillie's influence. Even Baillie commented that they had been in 'a pitifull labyrinth these twelve days about ruling elders; we yet stick into it'.¹⁶² Henderson's ability to maintain a public image of diplomacy and calmness seem to be why some of the staunchest critics of the Scottish Presbyterians distinguished between the devilish intentions of the Scots in general, while singling out Henderson as minister of an 'apostolicall spirit'.¹⁶³

In February of 1644, Henderson's frustration emerged again as he noted, 'it is the same argument soe long insisted on, and it receives the same answer'.¹⁶⁴ In the middle of March 1644, Henderson noted that there was a 'spirit of division that catcheth all occasions', after which he pushed for a vote, which might have stopped debate if a majority had agreed.¹⁶⁵ By the summer of 1644, the debates had worn on, and by June of 1644, Henderson seemed more actively engaged during a series of debates about preaching.¹⁶⁶ Even in regard to preaching, Henderson drove the debates back to ecclesiology saying, 'The soveraienge remedy is the establishing of the right

¹⁶¹ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 117.

¹⁶² Ibid, II, 115.

¹⁶³ *Scotland's Holy War*, 20, 35, 36.

¹⁶⁴ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 493.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, IV, 606. Henderson wanted to push the dissenting brethren to a point to see where they would agree and where they would not agree particularly regarding the relationship of particular congregations to a presbytery. They had only recently published the *Apologeticall Narration*, which Powell argues was an attempt to push the Assembly to recognize their ecclesiastical commitments, which by this time they were not able to accomplish. See Powell, 'Dissenting Brethren', 104. This being the case, Henderson believed that it was time to push forward in unity rather than holding onto what he believed were unnecessarily minor distinctions that were keeping the synod from full accord.

government of the church. This way will take up much time. Everyone give in his expression for the settling of it'.¹⁶⁷

Through the summer and into the fall of 1644, Henderson was primarily entered into the records as mentioning the practice of the Church of Scotland, and as urging movement towards a conclusion. On one occasion, he interrupted a speaker, pushing ecclesiology forward as the more important topic, and then proceeded to rebuke the assembly because, if everyone took the time to give their own personal opinions on every matter, it would take too much time.¹⁶⁸

A month later he vented again saying, he did not think that if the assembly took their present route that they could finish their work if they were given four assemblies to do it.¹⁶⁹ Henderson was angry at the delay, stating that the assembly had become 'mightily clogged' and later adding his perplexity at how they had 'fallen into this long & intricate debate'. In March of 1645, Henderson reminded them that they were 'sailing out into the deepe I desire you would enter upon some compendious way how the matter maybe concluded'.¹⁷⁰ His frustration with the Assembly seems to have gotten worse as his health declined.¹⁷¹

Though multiple numbers of theological topics were debated and discussed, the issue of

¹⁶⁶ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, V, 138-154.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, V, 252.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, V, 252.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, V, 266.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, VI, 92.

¹⁷¹ It appeared that Henderson's comments and sermons reflected a settled disposition that the Dissenting Brethren were simply being stubborn even though they were outnumbered. Powell makes a brilliant point that even the presbyterian majority (English and Scottish) had significant questions about ecclesiastical power that they were willing to sideline in order to coalesce around the practicalities of presbyterian government. Yet, Powell almost begrudgingly admits that the longstanding debates on ecclesiology were 'compounded by the unwillingness of the congregationalists in the Assembly to give up the jurisdictional prerogatives exclusive to the particular church', which confirms the growing sentiments found in

ecclesiology kept surfacing as a major obstacle to agreement. For instance, in September of 1645, there were debates concerning the nature of sanctification and its relationship to justification, effectual calling, and more. During these debates the Assembly directed the Dissenting Brethren to prepare their judgments on ecclesiology to be brought to the floor in April of the same year.¹⁷² Thomas Goodwin even requested to be excused from other assembly duties to work on these matters, which means that simultaneous to the ongoing work of ordaining ministers, working on and debating the directories for public worship and the confession of faith, Henderson was almost always wrangling over ecclesiology to some degree.¹⁷³

His failing health and difficult circumstances must have been devastating, especially when one considers the gruelling daily schedule that Baillie described for the Scottish commissioners, ‘We sitt daily from nyne till near one; and afternoone till night we are usuallie in committees. Saturday, our only free day, is to prepare for Sunday, wherein we seldom lack from preaching in some eminent place of the city’.¹⁷⁴ Throughout the whole year of 1645, Henderson’s health was so bad that he had to take off, sometimes for weeks, from his duties in order to recover his health. He even travelled to Epsom Springs to attempt to regain his health.¹⁷⁵

Private Conferences

Henderson’s most important activity at Westminster may have been his private meetings. From Baillie, we discover that Henderson worked tirelessly behind the scenes to create a format for the debates on ecclesiology that he hoped would bring

Henderson’s debates and sermons. See Powell, ‘Dissenting Brethren’, 244.

¹⁷² Van Dixhoorn, WAM, VI, 179.

¹⁷³ Ibid, VI, 179.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, II, 244.

everyone to a genuine agreement.¹⁷⁶ For instance, Baillie described Henderson as ‘travelling betwixt’ the parties in order to create a format by which the matters at hand might be debated.¹⁷⁷ Henderson often prepared the points that were to be followed and debated in a way that might lead to an agreement. When his points did not bring a conclusion, Baillie described Henderson as going back and continuing to work on different ways to direct the debates to an agreement.¹⁷⁸ Baillie described Henderson’s efforts to ‘put them to the spurs’ as one of Henderson’s most significant labours.¹⁷⁹ Yet it seemed that no matter how hard Henderson worked to direct the debates, or to forge a compromise in private, the Assembly got bogged down on issues related to ecclesiology, which drew out the debates even longer.

In Scotland, Henderson had been a master at managing church assemblies using private meetings at appropriate times, and in appropriate ways, so that parties at odds could come together for a cause. Henderson had done this among several key aristocrats during the petitioning campaign in 1637. He made it a practice to meet with people privately in committees and conferences in preparation for unveiling and ratifying the National Covenant in February of 1638. He used these mediating skills at the pivotal Glasgow Assembly in 1638, and to great effect. At Glasgow, he navigated the Assembly through a labyrinth of potentially destructive issues relating to choosing a

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, II, 295,296,297,342,382.

¹⁷⁶ Robert Paul noted that when one reads the minutes and records of Assembly debates, the subjects for debate appears to arise more or less at random, but they were not random because they came at the direction of the committees. See Paul, *Assembly of the Lord*, 79. Here I am suggesting that Henderson’s role in using committees and private meetings to direct debate may have been one of the most important factors in directing debates on the floor at least as it relates to the issue of ecclesiology. This is especially significant, since Hunter Powell argues that in regard to the ultimate ecclesiastical settlement, the Dissenting Brethren were outmanoeuvred on procedural grounds. Powell does not indicate the source of the manoeuvring, which according to Baillie, was Henderson. See Powell, ‘Dissenting Brethren’, 201-03. See also Baillie, *Letters*, II, 110.

¹⁷⁷ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 110.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, II, 110.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, II, 131. Henderson’s work in this regard undermines to some extent Hunter Powell’s recent study

moderator, choosing a clerk, seating members, and moving forward using theological and procedural motions, which created a brilliant outcome for his cause.¹⁸⁰

Henderson's fellow Scottish ministers had been friendly to his cause, and they had watched him earn their nation great success in the struggle for the covenant. The nobles and lairds, with whom Henderson met through the end of the Bishop's Wars, all had a common and singular problem in the rule of Charles I. Baillie noted that Henderson's leadership was trusted as he moderated the Scottish assemblies, even though sometimes he did so with a sternness that fit the occasion. Because of the great respect Henderson had earned, his fellow Scots heeded his leadership and moved forward in agreement.¹⁸¹ Henderson was able to use carefully arranged and well-organized meetings prior to the open debates on the floors, so that the public witnessed a unanimous vote, having never heard what Baillie described as 'jangling' arguments and angry exchanges in the private meetings.¹⁸² Henderson had a way of translating the 'jangling' of private meetings into a public image of a united Kirk. In Scotland, when Henderson urged his colleagues to come to order, Baillie records that out of respect and deference to Henderson's judgment, the Scots would keep moving forward even with great differences.¹⁸³ This did not happen at Westminster!

The context in England was dramatically different. Henderson attempted to use the same kind of private personal appeals to make similar progress. While he did have some success in crafting the Directory for Public Worship, he could not bring unity on

arguing that the sole source of such Scottish manoeuvring was Baillie. See Powell, 'Dissenting Brethren', 13.

¹⁸⁰ See David Stevenson, 'The General Assembly and the Commission of the Kirk, 1638-51', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, XIX, part 1, 1975, 59-79.

¹⁸¹ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 76.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, II, 94.

the issue of ecclesiology. At one point in May of 1644 in London, Henderson took part in a worship service and in what Baillie referred to as a 'short sweet conference' at which he was able to direct the members attention away from fighting each other, and they temporarily agreed to focus on other sects such as Anabaptists and Antinomians.¹⁸⁴

Henderson tried to do the same things he had done in Scotland in arranging debates in advance.¹⁸⁵ Henderson worked in private to create papers and points for the assembly to use as platform for debate on the floor.¹⁸⁶ During debates he would call for a break in order to confer on matters or write a paper in an attempt to persuade others towards his position.¹⁸⁷ At one point Lightfoot's minutes record that Cornelius Burges presented the items of debate from his committee using Henderson's propositions as a guide.¹⁸⁸ At this debate Henderson was said to have spoken only 'once or twice' on the floor, but his work in private had created the guide for the entire discussion.¹⁸⁹

In these meetings Henderson also attempted to play the role of peacemaker, just as he had done in Scotland. Once in November of 1644, when a motion was made to publish the sins and perceived wrongs of the members of the Assembly, Henderson urged against it. His patient advice prevailed when he argued 'not to carry yourselves as adversaries out of the assembly or suggesting to write pamphlets to the prejudice of the assembly'.¹⁹⁰ Yet, even as his activities made some headway, they did not bring anything to the kind of quick resolution that he and his fellow Scots had desired.

¹⁸³ See Ibid, II, 76, 83,95.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, II, 185.

¹⁸⁵ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, V, 360.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, VI, 51.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, V, 388.

¹⁸⁸ John Lightfoot, *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, D.D.*, XIII (London, 1824), 57.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, XIII, 57.

¹⁹⁰ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, V, 105.

Even though he was not the prolocutor, Henderson tried to engineer certain outcomes through urging the parties to consider the greater cause, exactly as he had done in Scotland. He tried to encourage public peace, insisting that no sins of the members of the assembly be published as some suggested. He stated, ‘consider whether it be fitting or necessary to lay open the weaknesse of the assembly... Reformed churches when they hear of it will not thinke of it’.¹⁹¹

By January of 1645 on the floor of the Assembly, Henderson was calling for more private meetings. He said once, ‘I humbly move that if any conference with our dissenting brethren may prepare it more for the publique debate, it may be done’.¹⁹² Goodwin heartily agreed saying ‘the motion now made is a good one’.¹⁹³ Though Goodwin agreed, and the Assembly seemed to be coming to agreement on ecclesiology; it was ‘too little, too late’. It seemed that no matter what Henderson attempted to do in public or private, he could not, as Baillie hoped ‘get them quieted’.¹⁹⁴

Henderson thought that, if it had not been for ecclesiastical sticking points, the Assembly’s work might have been finished in a matter of weeks and months rather than years.¹⁹⁵ After all, the confession they finally used was remarkably similar to James Ussher’s Irish Articles of 1615.¹⁹⁶ The endless character of the debates on ecclesiology seemed to gnaw away at Henderson as he repeatedly made references to ‘scripture, the

¹⁹¹ Ibid, V, 168.

¹⁹² Ibid, VI, 39.

¹⁹³ Ibid, VI, 39.

¹⁹⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 186.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, II, 186

¹⁹⁶ See W.D.J. McKay, ‘Scotland and the Westminster Assembly’, in J. Ligon Duncan, ed., *The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century*, (Ross-shire, Scotland, 2003), I, 233.

surest ground', combined with the examples from the Church of Scotland.¹⁹⁷

Still, some members of the Assembly kept questioning, while weeks tuned into months, and months turned into years. Henderson tried to pressure the Assembly, reading portions of letters on the floor from the likes of the Earl of Argyll, apparently so he could mention the nobleman's concerns for their progress.¹⁹⁸ He made numerous motions to call the Assembly to a vote on the matters at hand rather than continuing debates.¹⁹⁹ Henderson's role on the floor of the Westminster Assembly could be likened to that of a father, urging his children to stop squabbling so they can move on to more important things. To extend the metaphor, it appeared that Henderson's English children felt themselves to be adults, and did not take kindly to being told what to do. Henderson's methods did not work, and English members continued to debate in a way that Henderson found exhausting. Van Dixhoorn rightly comments that these controversies 'ate away at the unity between the men and cemented the partisan positions of the Assembly'.²⁰⁰

Parliamentary Sermons

Henderson's public addresses and sermons reveal the same kind of growing frustration, as his debates and private meetings reveal. For instance, his first address in September of 1643, as already noted above, was not only cordial, but filled with eschatological hope for both kingdoms. When he preached in December of the same year, he packed his sermon with clear but still subtle warnings to his ecclesiastical adversaries. He made it clear that they should stop resisting presbyterian ecclesiology and join together

¹⁹⁷ Van Dixhoorn, WAM, IV, 377.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, IV, 642.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, IV, 690.

²⁰⁰ Chad Van Dixhoorn, 'Unity and Disunity at Westminster Assembly (1643-1649): A Commemorative

for the blessing of the two kingdoms.

Throughout 1644 to 1645, Henderson was busy on the floor with debates. He was holding private conferences, writing and receiving letters, composing and editing pamphlets, working on a psalter, working on the committee for the Directory for Public Worship, working to help craft the confession of faith, helping to organize presbyteries in England, and more.²⁰¹ When he was asked to attend the Scottish General Assembly in 1644, Baillie argued that Henderson was so essential to that he could not be spared at all.²⁰² He did not attend in the Assembly as he and most of the Scottish commissioners were busy at the business of Westminster. Henderson did all of this as his health was declining badly, and by the fall of 1644, Montrose was pillaging the Scottish countryside, so it seemed that Henderson's hopes were collapsing from every conceivable direction.²⁰³

He preached to the House of Lords on two more occasions, in July of 1644, and finally in May of 1645. His July 1644 sermon was a commemoration of the Scottish victory at York and their joint victory with the English Parliament at Marston Moor. Henderson reissued a call for rapid movement toward ecclesiastical unity in light of what he argued was God's providential signs. Henderson's sermon combined a providentialist and an eschatological view of history with a sense of urgency to take hold of God's blessings. For Henderson, if the English did not take hold of this evident blessing from God, they would certainly regret it, since it evidenced for them a coldness or lukewarmness to what God had done for them. We ought he said, 'to stir up ourselves to take hold of

Essay', *The Journal of Presbyterian History*, 79 (2001), 106.

²⁰¹ See Baillie, *Letters*, II, 165-251.

²⁰² *Ibid*, II, 172-73.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, II, 234.

him, lest he hide his face and depart from us'.²⁰⁴

Henderson argued for urgency; otherwise God would note the hardness of their hearts, and he might very well turn away from them. It was in his sermon in July of 1645 that Henderson revealed a growing exhaustion with the demands of public service. He said:

When from my sense of my self, & of my own thoughts & wayes (which many thousands may observe, and no doubt doe observe of themselves) I begin to remember, how men who love to live obscurely and in the shadow, are brought forth to light, to the view and talking of the world, how men that love quietnes are made to stirre, and to have a hand in publique busines; how men that love soliloquies and contemplations are brought upon debates and controversies, how men who love peace, are made to war and to shed blood; and generally how men are brought to act the things, which they never determined, nor so much as dreamed of before.²⁰⁵

Henderson pleaded with those he believed were causing schism in the Kirk. He begged them to be careful, because their hearts and actions would divide the church and provoke the anger of God. Schism, he noted, destroys the unity of the Kirk, profanes the heart and life, and spoils the holiness of the Kirk, which he later connected with heresies such as Pelagianism, Arminianism, Socinianism, and Antinomianism.²⁰⁶ This statement confirms something of R.S. Paul's argument that ecclesiology hardened the lines of perceived orthodoxy among the 'godly'.²⁰⁷

By 1645, for Henderson it appeared that the lid would be blown off civil and social order, as apparently men, who had formerly been level headed, were now advocating a radical kind of toleration for unheard of groups such as 'Turks, Jews, and Papists'.²⁰⁸ At times earlier in the meetings, Baillie seems to have been able to distinguish between the Independents or what might be termed Congregationalists who advocated a limited

²⁰⁴ *Preached*, III, sig. A2.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, III, sig. A2-3.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, III, sig. A4.

²⁰⁷ Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord*, 101.

liberty of conscience on ecclesiology only from the more radical Independents who advocated complete religious liberty. This is a distinction that, according to Francis Bremer, many historians fail to make.²⁰⁹

At first, Henderson was trying to distinguish between the multiple numbers of various parties who were in Parliament with political motives versus his brothers in the Assembly with an interest in the church. However, in his exhaustion and frustration by the end of 1645, Henderson began lumping together all Independents not only with each other, but with various other ‘errors’.²¹⁰ Henderson has been noted as the most winsome and moderate of the Scots. Yet, when he preached his last sermon in May of 1645, Henderson was much less cordial than his usual style. For instance, as he closed his sermon, he used the words Independency and Independents five times in his final paragraph; most significantly, without the nuanced qualifications such as those noted above.²¹¹ Henderson’s increased frustration seemed to be leading him to conflate the congregational or parliamentary Independents together with those who advocated for liberty of conscience for all religions. Henderson’s public words cast a broad net, as he began to link Independency together with a host of other heresies and errors. He said:

Can any wise man imagine that such a chaos of Anarchy, Libertinisme, and popular confusion, as now covereth the face of this kingdome, and wherein all errors and sects cover their Heads under the Catholick Buckler of Independency.²¹²

By the end of his time at Westminster, Henderson was no longer veiling his threats, and he dropped concerns for finer theological distinctions.²¹³ He had become quite ill and

²⁰⁸ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 181.

²⁰⁹ Bremer, *Congregational Communion*, 139-40.

²¹⁰ *Preached*, IV, A4-5.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, IV, A5.

²¹² *Ibid*, IV, A4-5.

²¹³ At this point, one finds that Powell’s argument that Baillie was the sole source of the overt frustration with the dissenting brethren seems tenuous. While Baillie’s accounts are sometimes animated and

had grown exhausted with what he perceived could be boiled down to stubbornness in the Independents. Still, when compared to Edwards' *Gangreana*, Henderson's lumping or conflating of errors and sects was quite tame. Like other areas of his public work at Westminster, when compared to other more strident and inflammatory people, Henderson appeared to be a moderate, even though his positions were almost exactly the same.

Directory for Public Worship

The Directory for Public Worship was Henderson's most lasting theological legacy from the Westminster Assembly. According to Baillie, Henderson either entirely wrote or had the most influential role in crafting the Directory for Public Worship.²¹⁴ Baillie noted that Henderson had 'drawne it up, by way of a practicall directorie, so calmlie' that only the obstinacy of the Independents would keep it from passing the Assembly.²¹⁵ Henderson was able to move the Assembly so smoothly that Baillie said, 'if we continue this race, we will amend our former infamous slowness'.²¹⁶

The Directory attempted to act as a 'guide' to the principles of worship. As a 'directory' the minister was encouraged to pray 'to this or the like purpose', after which would follow a recommended prayer for the occasion.²¹⁷ Ian Murray has stated that the Directory was actually a comprehensive manual of pastoral theology.²¹⁸ As a

exaggerated, if they are combined with the Assembly record of Henderson's growing frustration in debating the Dissenting Brethren, as well as his growing frustration evidenced in his public sermons, it indicates that Baillie's accounts, though exaggerated at points, are essentially a reliable record of the tensions between the Scots and the Dissenting Brethren. See Powell, 'Dissenting Brethren', 99.

²¹⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 250.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 250.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 186.

²¹⁷ 'Of the Administration of the Sacraments', *Directory for Public Worship*, 1645, n.p.

²¹⁸ Iain H. Murray, 'The Directory for Public Worship', in John L. Carson and David W. Hall, eds, *To Glorify and Enjoy God: A Commemoration of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly* (Carlisle, Penn, 1996), 173-74.

‘directory’, it offered pastoral guidance for pastors on how to love and care of their church. It covered advice from birth to burial, marriage services, visitations of the sick, and Sabbath observance. Though historians seldom mention it, Henderson’s contributions to this document was pervasive.²¹⁹

The Directory reflected Henderson’s commitment to genuine compromise where it was possible. The Scots and their English Independent brothers had serious disagreements over the frequency and manner of communion.²²⁰ Baillie referred to the Independents practice of weekly communion as ‘irreverent’.²²¹ Without forcing a change of principles on either party, Henderson crafted the Directory to include specific relief for the differences, saying, ‘How often, may be considered and determined by the ministers, and other church-governors of each congregation, as they shall find most convenient for the comfort and edification of the people committed to their charge’.²²²

This section has all the marks of authentic compromise on differences in practices without compromising on theological principles. This was where Henderson was at his best. Henderson’s work on the topic of preaching is included in the Directory. Van Dixhoorn argues that preaching was one of the greatest points of unity between the Presbyterians and Independents at Westminster.²²³ Still, no matter how much progress they made, they could not agree on polity.

²¹⁹ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 250.

²²⁰ Ibid, II, 195.

²²¹ Ibid, II, 148-49.

²²² ‘Of the Celebration of the Sacrament of Communion or the Lord’s Supper’, Directory for Public Worship. n.p.

²²³ Van Dixhoorn, ‘Unity and Disunity’, 109.

Meeting with the King at Newcastle

By the summer of 1646, the king realized he had been defeated, so he decided to flee to the Scottish army. In so doing, a new hope arose among Henderson and the Scots. By July of 1646, presbyteries were being established in London, and according to Baillie the Directory of Public Worship, the Catechism, and the Confession of Faith were all essentially finished, except for Parliament's work with the Independents 'miserable unamendalbe designe to keep all things from any conclusion'.²²⁴ If, however, the king would subscribe to the covenant and establish ecclesiastical unity, the whole strife might well be over.

Scottish hopes were linked to Henderson's ability to negotiate an agreement.

Consequently, Henderson met with the king at Newcastle to discuss an ecclesiastical settlement. Henderson had already negotiated with the king on the same issue at Uxbridge a year earlier with little progress.²²⁵ Yet, for weeks Baillie wrote and recorded that all the hopes of the entire cause now seemed to rest on Henderson's meeting with the King.²²⁶

With a calm, almost resigned demeanour, Henderson wrote a series of exchanges between himself and the King. In Henderson's articles, he offered the king multiple opportunities to change his mind and blame it on his ill-informed counsellors, or perhaps on his misinformed clergy. Henderson's statements included theological arguments draped in royal protocol, with numerous offers structured, so that the world would know that it was through the king's magnanimous character and sharp

²²⁴ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 378.

²²⁵ See *Correspondence of the Scots Commissioners in London* (1644-46), (Edinburgh), 57-58.

²²⁶ Baillie, *Letters*, II, 365-388.

theological insight that he agreed with presbyterian polity.²²⁷

Henderson offered the king the examples of Asa, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, all of whom, when confronted with idolatry in their kingdom, responded as Henderson was now urging Charles I to respond. Henderson argued in such a way that there would be no shame or harm in moving one's kingdom towards the good. Indeed, said Henderson if Charles would support presbyterian polity, he would share the biblically glorious statement that he was like the great biblical kings about whom it was said, 'like unto him there was no king before him'.²²⁸ This was a common image that the Covenanter used to encourage the king to support their cause.²²⁹

Henderson noted his frustration with the past theological disputes which had held up a resolution under the extreme circumstances. He made it clear that his concern was not with the 'civil' affairs or the king's relationship to the English Parliament, as much with the polity of the churches in both kingdoms.²³⁰ Henderson basically promised to make no troubles as a minister regarding the civil settlement that followed from the recent wars; his concerns were entirely with ecclesiology.

Henderson addressed the issue of conscience. It was, after all, an appeal to conscience that provoked Henderson to resist the king's liturgical changes in the first place. The king pleaded similar grounds for liberty of conscience. Henderson argued that liberty of

²²⁷ *Certain papers, which passed betwixt his Majestie of Great Britaine, in the time of his being with the Scottish army in New-Castle. And Mr. Alexander Henderson concerning the change of church government. Anno Dom. 1646* (London, 1649), 5.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

²²⁹ Gillespie, *A Treatise of Miscellany Questions* (Edinburgh, 1849), 86.

²³⁰ *Certain papers, which passed betwixt his Majestie of Great Britaine, in the time of his being with the Scottish army in New-Castle. And Mr. Alexander Henderson concerning the change of church government. Anno Dom. 1646* (London, 1649), 33.

conscience did not intend a general liberty to believe what one desires, but rather to have one's desires come under the scriptures. One's conscience was only a sure guide if bound under the words of God. This, however, was a rather significant begging of the question, since the very issue between them was their understanding of the nature of scripture's teaching on polity.

This was a deep frustration for Henderson, who had grown weary of the quibbling, and wanted his opponents to take his side for the sake of ecclesiastical unity. Henderson argued that the king must 'lay aside such a conscience, it being a part of the old man'.²³¹ For Henderson it was better to do violence to an ill-informed conscience than to see the violence that was presently at hand.²³²

As in the case of the Independents at the Westminster Assembly, Henderson was unable to persuade the king. A Scottish tract noted sadly, 'M. Alexander Henderson is gone from Newcastle into Scotland sick'.²³³ He left Newcastle for Edinburgh and died a few weeks later on 19 August 1646.²³⁴ Wodrow retells a story that Henderson had become so exhausted with this life that his death was a relief, as Henderson was rumoured to have said, 'never a schoolboy that was more desirouse to get the play then I am to have my leave of the world'!²³⁵

²³¹ Ibid, 35.

²³² Ibid, 35.

²³³ *A Perfect Diurnall of some passages in parliament and from other parts of this kingdome, from Monday the 10 of August till Monday the 17 of August 1646*, np.

²³⁴ Soon after his death a rumour circulated that he recanted his positions. This was published in 1648 as *The Declaration of Mr. Alexander Henderson, Principall Minister of the word of God at Edenburgh, and chiefe Commissioner from the Kirk of Scotland to the Parliament and Synod of England: Made upon his Death-bed*, 1648. This chapter judges that it was adequately exposed as a fraud based on content and style as described in a Scottish General Assembly report of 1648. See also Baillie's *Letters and Papers* (Edinburgh, 1775), II, 232 where he claimed to have written evidence from Henderson to the contrary.

²³⁵ Robert Wodrow, *Wodrow Anelecta or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences; Mostly Relating to scotch Minister and Christians*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842), I, 358. Wodrow cites Livingstone as having seen Henderson peaceful prior to death, see Wodrow, *Select Biographies* (Edinburgh, 1845), I,

Conclusion

Henderson's role at the Westminster Assembly offers a window into many of the emerging tensions of early Britain's godly revolutions. In one sense, this chapter asks more questions than it answers. In fact, this chapter invites more studies on Henderson, the Westminster Assembly, and the issues related to them. For instance, Henderson's passionate commitment to defend religion according to his conscience was one of the primary reasons that he resisted Charles I originally. Yet his work at the Westminster Assembly confirms that, ironically, this same passion drove him to push the English in a way that provoked them to similar kinds of resistance against his own efforts.²³⁶

What Henderson used in Scotland to such amazing success ultimately failed in England. How could one approach have succeeded so gloriously in Scotland while it failed in England? Along with massive military and political complications, Williamson suggests that eschatological or apocalyptic visions of grandeur, when combined with the destiny-laden character of Scotland's National Covenant, assured that the Scottish Presbyterian design would fail in England.²³⁷ The irony and agony that Henderson experienced at the Westminster Assembly seems to reflect the emerging changes in early modern British history.

Henderson's use of destiny laden rhetoric was a marvellous success in Scotland. Prior to the Assembly, Henderson's role in pamphleteering and propaganda leading up to the Westminster Assembly, invited an open investigation of the events at hand. Henderson probably played a role in opening up a messy public sphere that once opened, proved

312.

²³⁶ See Coffey, *Politics, Religion, and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), 188.

²³⁷ Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness*, 146.

impossible to direct or to manage to a unified theological end. Sarah Waurechen argues that, in opening up the public sphere, the Covenanters success encouraged others to try to do the same, 'but it was not a tool which was so easily controlled, so unitary, or so focused as initially envisaged'.²³⁸

Lastly, Henderson's public career at the Westminster Assembly provides a challenge for historians of early modern British history to reconsider definitions of moderate and radical. When historians use a moniker such as moderate or radical, do they carefully qualify it using the standards of style, substance or both?²³⁹ For instance, Henderson brought a driving and arguably radical ecclesiastical vision to England and the Westminster Assembly. Yet, his mediating tactics at Westminster involved personal, congenial and diplomatic methods by which he has been almost universally judged a 'moderate'.

His position on ecclesiology never changed; he maintained an uncompromising and narrow position that ultimately gave him no flexibility on the one point of major disagreement. At the same time, though committed to an inflexible ecclesiology, he worked tirelessly for mediating compromises in other areas, which has allowed him to be judged by friends and foes alike as a moderate among radicals.²⁴⁰ Even the most strenuous critics of Henderson's positions somehow separated Henderson and his

²³⁸ Sarah Waurechen, 'Covenanter Propaganda', 85.

²³⁹ See Conal Condren's, 'Will all the Radicals Please Lie Down, We Can't See the Seventeenth Century', in *The Language of Politics in Seventeenth-Century England*, Conal Condren, ed. (London, 1994), 140-168. See also Ethan Shagan, 'Beyond Good and Evil: Thinking with Moderates in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), 488-513. This includes such printed materials as original Scottish pamphlets using the title, '*The Moderate: Impartially communicating the Martial Affaires to the Kingdom of England*', 1649.

²⁴⁰ See David Stevenson, 'The Radical Party in the Kirk, 1637-45,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 25 (1974), 135-165; Stevenson, 'The General Assembly and the Commission of the Kirk, 1638-51', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 19 (1975), 61-63.

committed beliefs from his fellow Scots. Henry Parker, who was a strident critic of the Scots as ‘radicals’, said the following of Henderson:

But moderation as yet kept both within reasonable bounds, Mr. A. Henderson was then living, and conversant in those businesses, and surely he was a man of an Apostolicall spirit, and though a great lover of his Countrey, yet He knowingly durst not interpose in an ill action, for his Countreys advantage: and I am perswaded He did very good offices and kept us from further jars during his life: and if He had lived longer, would have prevented much of what has hapned since.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ *Scotland's Holy War*, 35.

Conclusion

Every year at the opening of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, the wife of the moderator is given a silver brooch that was created in 1843 to commemorate the Disruption, which gave birth to the Free Church. Fashioned into a wreath of thistles, a central section depicts the burning bush, a symbol of the Church of Scotland, and has five tombstones with the names of those who the founders believed were important historical figures. The brooch heralds A[ndrew] Melville, J[ohn] Knox, D[avid] Welsh, J[ames] Renwick, and A[lexander] Henderson, and it is symbolic in multiple ways.¹ It is used by a very small faction, and time has dulled Henderson's name, which is barely visible even with a magnifying glass. With Henderson's image fading even among a small group of those who cherish his memory, this thesis hopes to revive an interest in Henderson and the covenanting movement he led.

In this updated study, I have reassessed Henderson's public leadership in its seventeenth century context, especially in regard to the central role of religion. This is necessary because the memory of Alexander Henderson was not served well with the outdated, hagiographical biographies, and because the newer political histories of the Covenanter revolution have not done him justice either. While the updated political histories have established the political development of the Covenanters with great clarity, they have been less interested in clerical leadership and religious ideas. In this sense, my thesis picks up where Mullan left off, and it also provides a study of the Covenanter's leading

¹ The silver 'Disruption Brooch', created to mark the Disruption of 1843, in addition to the above description was marked with ribbons emanating from the central scene with the names of Chalmers, Dunlop, and Candlish, who were ministers and members of the 1843 protesting party, as well as important dates relevant to their cause. While several are still extant, I was able to examine one held in the archives at the Free Church of Scotland College and another in the University of Edinburgh Cultural Collections.

cleric to sit alongside Allan Macinnes' recent study of the movement's leading aristocrat, Archibald Campbell, Earl of Argyll, helping us to gain a balanced picture of the Covenanter movement.²

The centrality of religion in his public activity was in many ways expressive of the heart of the culture in early modern Scotland, which suggests that historians can no longer overlook Henderson's public career, or as David George Mullan has warned, 'our picture of events is bound to be skewed'.³ In this thesis, I argue for at least two major elements to this effect. First, I offer a recovery of Henderson's ideas/arguments with sensitivity to their seventeenth century religious context, and second I present a fresh study of Henderson's methods of communication, especially in preaching and pamphleteering.

In this thesis, I have recovered Henderson's major ideas and arguments, giving careful attention to covenant theology, idolatry, providence, ecclesiology, and eschatology in the context of early modern Scottish history. Moving beyond older biographies of Henderson that portrayed him either primarily as a hero in the cause of liberty, or as part of a group of Calvinistic villains, I have explored Henderson's various means of public communication, his self-fashioning as one of the leading ministers, and how he was effective as a public leader in early modern Scotland. Consequently, this thesis helps to deepen our appreciation not only for Alexander Henderson's public career, but also to broaden our understanding of the Covenanting movement and its rather expansive role

² Allan Macinnes, *The British Confederate: Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll, 1606-1661* (Edinburgh, 2011).

³ See David G. Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638* (Oxford, 2000), 7. This thesis calls attention to the dearth of similar studies, and I hope it will spur further research into the neglected area of early modern Scottish studies, especially those with an interest in the religion that was so central to this era. If Mullan is correct, then not only Henderson but many other clerical leaders such as Henderson's friend

in early modern Scottish history.

Alexander Henderson's education at St Andrews as a Calvinistic humanist and his relationships as part of a 'puritan brotherhood' generated and sustained a passionate vision for the Covenanter cause as essentially a religious one.⁴ In this cause, Henderson carefully nuanced and thoughtfully crafted his rhetoric around the organizing motif of covenant theology, which became an important part of early modern Scotland's identity. As a Covenanter, Henderson spoke using old and deeply cherished beliefs that Scotland was a covenanted nation like that of ancient Israel, and he taught that if the people of Scotland would follow the ways of the covenant, then like Israel of old they would be blessed.

Scotland, more than other nations which were similarly committed to reformed and federal theology, embraced the covenant idea as a central part of their identity as a holy nation. In co-authoring the National Covenant of 1638, Alexander Henderson provided Scotland with one of its most potent symbols of national identity as a 'covenanted nation'. Henderson did this as he developed his ideas on covenanting because he believed it offered a legitimate means of resistance to idolatry.

In his preaching, Henderson personalized the national struggles and fused Scotland's frustration over rule of Charles I with the popular hope for a blessed providential destiny. His sermons were packed with a sense of prophetic mission, and the 'personalization' of the national context not only galvanized his listeners, but it played a role in helping to form Scotland's sense of national consciousness around the National

and fellow preacher, David Dickson, do not have updated monographs dedicated to them.

⁴ Ibid, 44.

Covenant. Henderson pressed his listeners with the claims of God as mediated through well-received notions of covenant theology and providential views of history. His preaching should be credited with helping to transform the National Covenant, which David Stevenson described ‘as devoid of emotive power as a shopping list’, into a document possessing an almost sacred symbolic quality, and the signings of which provoked revivalist scenes all over that nation in its support.⁵ This thesis also asserts that sermons are a vital source of study for early modern Scottish history.

As the moderator of the pivotal 1638 Glasgow General Assembly, Henderson led the Kirk in direct defiance of the king’s authority, and his activity offers historians a case study for this period of clerical politicking. The centrality of presbyterian polity at this assembly was due, in large part, to the public leadership of Alexander Henderson in promoting what I describe as eschatological ecclesiology. As a presbyterian, Henderson believed that his mission in guiding the Kirk to classical presbyterian ecclesiology was like that of Athanasius, who stood at times against the world. He believed that godly polity provided not merely ecclesiastical order, but the eschatological hope of entering a new stage of redemptive history that would usher peace and security into the world, as Antichrist fell in defeat.

Henderson used biblical images and blended them with the basic narratives found in popular Covenanter histories such as Calderwood and Scot. Henderson’s work on ecclesiology confirms what John Coffey notes when he states that the apocalyptic story was the metanarrative into which these particular narratives could be fitted. ‘Scotland’s story made greatest sense’, says Coffey, ‘when it was placed within the context of

⁵ See David Stevenson, *The Covenanters: The National Covenant and Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1988), 35.

God's redemptive plan for the consummation of history'.⁶ Henderson's emphasis on presbyterian ecclesiology as a means to ultimate order became ironic, since it was precisely his intransigence in compromising his presbyterian ecclesiology that may have provoked at least some of the disorder at the Westminster Assembly.

Having argued that Henderson's key role as the Covenanter's chief propagandist positioned him at the cutting edge of seventeenth century pamphleteering in Britain, I have sought to offer an original contribution to Scottish Covenanter studies in this regard. One historian argues that Covenanter pamphlets unleashed a wave of pamphlets from all directions, which in terms of quantity changed the history of pamphlets and pamphleteering.⁷ Como notes also that Scottish pamphlets had become so influential that they were cited in radical English pamphlets and adduced as legitimate examples of justifiable resistance.⁸ Scottish pamphlets became one of the primary sources of radical arguments, and they played a role in the 'crystallization' of other authors' opinions.⁹

Henderson's pamphlets revealed his convictions that the ideas and opinions of ordinary Scots and English folks were worth cultivating in order to achieve specific political ends. In this sense, scholars such as David Zaret argue that the pamphleteering and propaganda wars of Henderson's epoch constituted nothing less than the birth of democratic political culture.¹⁰ These arguments highlight the importance of studying

⁶ Coffey, *Politics and Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), 241.

⁷ Joseph Black, 'Pamphlet Wars: Martin Marprelate Tracts and "Martinism", 1588-1688,' Ph.D. thesis (University of Toronto, 1996), 269.

⁸ David Como, 'Secret Printing, the Crisis of 1640, and the Origins of Civil-War Radicalism', *Past and Present*, 196 (2007), 65.

⁹ *Ibid*, 66.

¹⁰ Though most likely exaggerated, Zaret's argument points to the need to assess such claims with my newly argued case for Alexander Henderson's leading role in covenanter pamphleteering. See David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Princeton, 2000).

the contributions of Alexander Henderson as the leading Covenanter pamphleteer. They also argue that any substantial study of the Covenanters from this point forward should include a serious consideration of Alexander Henderson's role in authoring and editing pamphlets and propaganda, which has heretofore remained undeveloped by all previous Henderson biographers.

Parts of Scottish Calvinism represented movement from older more medieval modes of thought and life, but such movement did not bring the kind of order for which Henderson and his fellow Covenanters believed they were fighting. Henderson entered England in 1643 preaching the grand hope of Protestant unity by which presbyterian order would bring victory against the Roman Antichrist. However, when he left England in 1646 to return to his home in Scotland, he was dying and no presbyterian unity seemed possible.

In a sense, Henderson's story is a narrative of progress, but not one that he intended, nor one that his older biographers have presented. Henderson worked hard as a Covenanter leader to bring legitimacy to his cause and unity to his nation, but he ultimately failed. He preached to inspire the nation of Scotland to support the cause of the covenant and, though he initially succeeded, the cause he loved so dearly would eventually founder. He worked tirelessly to manage the end of episcopacy in the hopes of a new order of the ages. Henderson maintained an uncompromising and narrow ecclesiology that ultimately gave him little flexibility on this same point, which was the key point of disagreement. Believing that Scottish ecclesiology was God's primary means of bringing the world closer to a kind of millennial order, he attempted to impose this order on England, and in so doing he participated in replacing the hope of eschatological

blessings with the expansion of what he believed was religious chaos and ruin.

Henderson had hoped for British unity of religion, but religious diversity was growing, and Protestants were more fragmented than ever before.

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