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**In Mitiozem Partem:
Robert Leighton's Journey towards
Episcopacy**

Alan James Hamilton

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Theology and Religious Studies
School of Critical Studies
College of Arts
University of Glasgow

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Abstract

Robert Leighton (1610/11-1684) was a significant Scottish churchman of the seventeenth-century. He has been the subject of religious confessional history-writing which continues to skew our understanding of him. This thesis offers a radical reassessment of the first fifty years of Leighton's life based upon the available primary evidence. The formative influences of Leighton's Puritan anti-Episcopal father and his student years at the Town College of Edinburgh are re-evaluated. The possibility that he studied in Huguenot France in the 1630s is posited. Using his relationship with the Earl of Lothian to illuminate his involvement in the Covenanting movement, he is placed in Scotland from 1638. Leighton's commitment to the Covenant and to Presbyterianism is reconsidered by charting Leighton's career as minister of Newbattle (1641-1653) and his appointment as Principal of the Town College by the English occupiers in 1653. His decision to become a Restoration bishop in 1661 is reviewed having regard to a new understanding of his journey towards Episcopacy and by careful attention to his own words and actions. This study concludes that our comprehension of the Church of Scotland during the Covenanting, Interregnum and Restoration periods is heightened by re-discovering the real Leighton.

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above all, to my wonderful wife, Hazel, for her patience and for telling me to when to stop. To her, I dedicate this thesis.

... the transcendent and supreme end of all is THE GLORY OF GOD; all things returning in a most beautiful circle to this, as the original source from which they at first took their rise.

Robert Leighton, 'University Lecture II' in WW, II, 86

Abbreviations

- 1683* Burnet, Gilbert, ‘Harl. MSS, 6584’ in *A Supplement to Burnet’s History of My Own Time*, ed. by Helen Charlotte Foxcroft (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 2-99.
- AGACS* *The Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland from the year 1638 to the year 1649 inclusive* (Edinburgh: [Mosman], 1691).
- A&P* *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland from the year 1560*, ed. by Thomas Thomson, 3 vols (Edinburgh: [Maitland Club], 1839-1845).
- Ancram-Lothian* *Correspondence of Sir Robert Kerr, First Earl of Ancram and his son William, Third Earl of Lothian*, ed. by David Laing, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1885).
- APS* *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland: 1124-1707*, ed. by Cosmo Innes and others, 12 vols ([Edinburgh]: [Great Britain Record Commission], 1814-1875).
- Baillie* Baillie, Robert, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, A.M.*, ed. by David Laing, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Ogle, 1841-42).
- Burnet-Leighton* ‘Certain Papers of Robert Burnet, afterwards Lord Crimond, Gilbert Burnet, afterwards Bp. of Salisbury and Robert Leighton, sometime Archbishop of Glasgow’, ed. by Helen Charlotte Foxcroft, in *Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, 13 vols (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1893-), II: 1904, 312-370.

- Charters 1583-1858* *Charters, Statutes, and Acts of the Town Council and Senatus: 1583-1858*, ed. by Alexander Morgan (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1937).
- CSPD 1628-1629* *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I: 1628-1629*, ed. by John Bruce (London: Longman, 1859).
- CSPD 1629-1631* *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I: 1629-1631*, ed. by John Bruce (London: Longman, 1860).
- CSPD 1638-1639* *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I: 1638-1639*, ed. by John Bruce and William Douglas Hamilton (London: Longman, 1871).
- CSPD 1640* *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I: 1640*, ed. by William Douglas Hamilton (London: Longman, 1877).
- CSPD 1651-1652* *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series: 1651-1652*, ed. by Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longmans, 1877).
- CSPD 1657-1658* *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series: 1657-1658*, ed. by Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longmans, 1884).
- CSPD 1661-1662* *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles II: 1661-1662*, ed. by Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longman, 1861)
- DSCHT* *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. by Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993).
- Epitome* Leighton, Alexander, *An Epitome or Briefe Discoverie, from the beginning to the ending, of the many and great troubles that Dr. Leighton suffered in his body, estate, and family, for the space of twelve years and upwards* (London: I. D., 1646).

- ERBE 1642-1655* *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1642 to 1655*, ed. by Marguerite Wood (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1938).
- ERBE 1655-1665* *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1655 to 1665*, ed. by Marguerite Wood (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1940).
- FES* *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae: the Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, ed. by Hew Scott and others, 11 vols (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd; St Andrews Press; Clark: 1915-2000).
- HMOT* Burnet, Gilbert, *Burnet's History of My Own Time*, ed. by Osmund Airy, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898-1900).
- RCGACS 1646-1647* *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland Holden in Edinburgh in the Years 1646 and 1647*, ed. by Alexander F. Mitchell and James Christie (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1892).
- RCGACS 1648-1649* *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland Holden in Edinburgh in the Years 1648 and 1649*, ed. by Alexander F. Mitchell and James Christie (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1896).
- RKS* *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. by Alexander Peterkin, Alexander (Edinburgh: Sutherland, 1838).
- RPCS* *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, 2nd Series, ed. by P. Hume Brown, 8 vols (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1896-1908).
- RSLT* *The Records of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale: 1589-1596, 1640-1649*, ed. by James Kirk (Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1977).

- SP* Leighton, Alexander, *An Appeal to the Parliament; or Sions Plea against the Prelacie* ([Amsterdam]: [n.pub.], [1629]).
- WD 1632-1639* *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston: 1632-1639*, ed. by George Morison Paul (Edinburgh: Constable, 1911).
- WD 1650-1654* *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston: 1650-1654*, ed. by David Hay Fleming (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1919).
- WD 1655-1660* *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston: 1655-1660*, ed. by James D. Ogilvie (Edinburgh: Constable, 1940).
- WW* *The Whole Works (as yet recovered) of the Most Reverend Father in God Robert Leighton D.D.*, ed. by William West, 6 vols (London: Longmans Green, 1869-1875).

Chapter 1

Reassessing Leighton: Historiographical Challenges

Introduction

Robert Leighton (1610/11-1684) was a major figure in the Restoration Church of Scotland.¹ Best known for his involvement in two indulgences offered to dissenting ministers in 1669 and 1672, he remains of considerable interest to historians, theologians and proponents of certain expressions of church unity. His sermons and other theological writings are still valued, not only as fine examples of seventeenth century preaching and teaching, but as devotional material for contemporary use. Through them, Leighton has made an important contribution to Reformed spirituality.²

Leighton's has been described as 'an ambiguous life in ambiguous age which has attracted misunderstanding from the seventeenth century to the present day.'³ The complexities of the times through which he lived – the personal rule of Charles I, Covenanting revolution, Independent English occupation, and Restoration monarchy – were matched by the twists and turns of his personal journey towards the summit of his career as Archbishop-Commendator of Glasgow (1671-1674). Portrayed by his admirers as a deeply pious and irenic man of God, he was accused by detractors of careerist trimming and doctrinal bankruptcy. Apparently willing to fall in with whoever held power in Scotland, he has been lauded as saintly for his dogged espousal of religious tolerance and Christian unity.⁴ Much

¹ Ouston, 'Leighton'; Douglas, 'Leighton', 478-479.

² Macleod, 'X-Factor', 37.

³ Gribben, 'Leighton', 182.

⁴ Many have seen Leighton as a model of ecumenical churchmanship particularly for greater institutional church unity between Presbyterians and Episcopalians in Scotland. Leighton has been described as having sought 'an area of compromise, a *via media*, which, alas, no longer existed in the Scottish ecclesiastical scene' and his accommodation proposals held up as a model for church unity (Louden, 'Leighton', 205-209; Halliday, 'Ministry'). In the mid-twentieth

has been written about Robert Leighton since his death in 1684; much of this is now ripe for reconsideration. This thesis focusses on the first 50 years or so of Leighton's life.⁵ It concludes with an examination of his decision to accept consecration as Bishop of Dunblane in 1661.

The purpose of this thesis is to offer a radical reassessment of the journey Leighton made towards Episcopacy during the fifty years of his life. Contemporaries, subsequent biographers and historians have tended to concentrate on the period after the 1660 Restoration. In contrast, his first five decades having been received relatively little attention. What has been written is significantly marred by inaccuracy and misconception. This study will address these errors and offer a contextual re-evaluation of Leighton's journey towards Episcopacy. Not only is this task important in its own right, but it will also provide a more secure platform from which future scholars may consider Leighton's Episcopal career.

To this end Leighton's journey is considered in four stages: Chapter 2 covers his childhood and student years (1610/11-1631); Chapter 3 addresses the subsequent years up to and including his ordination (1631-1641); Chapter 4 considers his parish ministry at Newbattle (1642-1653). His university career in Edinburgh (1653-1662) and his decision to accept consecration as Bishop of Dunblane within the Restoration Church of Scotland in December 1661 are the subjects of Chapter 5.

The remainder of the first chapter considers the principal historiographical challenges thrown up by the secondary literature and by Leighton's theological writings.

century, Leighton Clubs existed in both Edinburgh and Glasgow. These were ecumenical clerical societies (Wright, 'Leighton Club', 478).

⁵ Leighton's date of birth is uncertain and this thesis examines his words and action up to the end of 1662. Therefore the period of Leighton's life covered in this study is roughly fifty years and all future references to its temporal range should be construed accordingly.

Secondary Literature

The historiography of Robert Leighton is dominated by Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715).⁶ In the first volume of his *Own Time*, published posthumously in 1724, Burnet included a brief account of Leighton's life.⁷ Future commentators, both admirers and detractors, built upon Burnet's framework, largely uncritically. Burnet also set the tone for much of the hagiographical secondary literature which has, by and large, prevailed over the less laudatory assessments of Leighton's critics.⁸

When describing Leighton's life and times, Burnet and those who followed him did so using the conventions of religious confessional history-writing.⁹ The standard works, up to and including Knox's 1930 *Robert Leighton*, were composed not just or even primarily as works of historical study. Instead, their authors chose to write about Leighton not only because of their personal, Christian interest in his life but also to propagate their particular religious beliefs. These works were materially skewed by the desire to explain Leighton's actions to the satisfaction of each particular writer. Insofar as his early life was addressed, the predominant reason for doing so was to underpin a particular interpretation of Leighton's reasons for accepting consecration as Bishop of Dunblane and his subsequent conduct. This encouraged retrospective revision of Leighton's first fifty years, the period covered by this thesis.

Confessional Purposes

Secondary historical literature, by its very nature, embodies 'elements of selectivity and interpretation beyond the interpretative tendencies already present in the primary documentation.'¹⁰ However, this inherent problem is exacerbated when the author engages in religious confessional history-writing. The confessional accounts of Leighton's life

⁶ See pp. 16-20.

⁷ Burnet, *HMOT*, 214-228.

⁸ Cheyne, *Studies*, 46.

⁹ See pp. 10-12.

¹⁰ Bradley and Muller, *Church History*, 41.

present particular challenges to those investigating his life, thought and actions. Earlier confessional biographies of Leighton do have value. Not only did they keep interest in Leighton alive, but they preserved valuable evidence which might otherwise have been lost. Within their own frames of reference as works of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century religious apology, and as windows into the concerns and circumstances of their authors, they stand on their own merits. Nevertheless, the heightened level of selectivity and interpretation inherent in confessional biographies have presented Leighton as some have wished him to be rather than as he really was.

Religious confessional history is a form of reductionism which assumes ‘particular claims of the truth of this or that Christian confession’.¹¹ Consequently, it generates analyses which are ‘skewed by substantive, frequently anachronistic religious claims,’ and it ‘often privileges and seeks sympathy to understand a given tradition at the expense of explaining others in reductionist terms’.¹² Gregory characterises this as ‘particularly objectionable in a field such as early modern Christianity, which witnessed the formation of distinct, divisive, and compelling Christian traditions that themselves engendered modern confessional history’.¹³ Another useful way of viewing religious confessional history is to understand it as religious or denominational history written from the standpoint of a religious or denominational ‘insider’ who tends to view the raw data of history as ‘only an “external” side of religion, while “religion” or “faith” belongs to an inner, ultimately superhuman or supernatural side’. For the ‘insider’ wishing to advance or redeem a particular religious or denominational perspective, history itself ‘serves only as a vehicle for the “incarnation” of transcendent truth’.¹⁴

Leighton’s life, his recorded acts and utterances, have been consistently and unashamedly employed as a vehicle to present his biographers’ theological opinions as transcendent truths. While detractors have also indulged in this practice, it has been Leighton’s admirers who have adopted the most extreme positions, sometimes characterising him as saintly.¹⁵

¹¹ Gregory, ‘Other Confessional History’, 135.

¹² *Ibid.*, 135. Also Gregory, *Catholicism*, 2-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 135-136.

¹⁴ Rudolph, ‘We Learn’, 329.

¹⁵ For example, *HMOT*, 239, 242; Pearson, ‘Life’, cxvii, Knox, *Leighton*, 48, 344, 493, 510.

His life has been presented as the ‘incarnation’ of the ideas and purposes which the ‘insiders’ writing about him wished to present as divine revelation.

Confessional treatments of Leighton’s life have not only obscured his complexities and contradictions but they have also circumvented ‘studied engagement with the history and culture’ of his religious ideals. As Rudolph suggests, those who identify most closely with Leighton often have the least understanding of the ‘so-called essence’ of his Christian faith.¹⁶ Writers who believed that Leighton would have agreed with their own theological or ecclesiological standpoints had he only been alive to do so, tended to neglect the political, social, cultural and personal factors that led him to particular positions as well as ignoring evidence which is simply but inconveniently inconsistent with their preferred approach. Even although this may serve a confessional purpose admirably, it is nothing less than slippage into ‘erroneous ahistoricism’.¹⁷ Within the Leighton historiography, this manifests itself particularly in the work of those who espouse and privilege the causes of religious tolerance and institutional church unity as viewed and understood according to their own - anachronistic - world-view and not from within the frame of reference of Leighton and his contemporaries.

The results of this confessional approach prevalent within the secondary literature have gone largely unchallenged. Although a great deal has been written about Leighton, much of it is derivative, dependent upon these flawed reconstructions and, therefore, inaccurate or incomplete. Study of Leighton continues to be significantly hampered and distorted by uncritical transmission and reception. Regrettably, this includes the more recent studies of Leighton’s theological and philosophical thinking by Torrance, Allan and Gribben which are otherwise of considerable interest and value.¹⁸

If Leighton’s life, particularly his first fifty years, is to be usefully reconsidered, he must be freed from the confessional confines of the secondary literature. How far can this be achieved?

¹⁶ Rudolph, ‘We Learn’, 330.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 339. Also Gregory, *Catholicism*, 2-3.

¹⁸ Torrance, *Scottish Theology*; Allan, ‘Reconciliation and Retirement’; Gribben, ‘Leighton’.

Religion and History

This study sits athwart the interface between history and religion, arguably one of the areas most susceptible to the subjective and transient worldview of the individual historian.¹⁹ The vexed question: ‘What is religion’s place in the writing of history?’ appears in sharp relief. In all the circumstances, is it possible to offer a view of Leighton’s life that is not religiously confessional?

The thesis seeks to move beyond the necessary preliminaries of ‘the establishment of certain objective facts, such as dates, places, numbers, names, and the like’ and towards ‘the ultimate purpose of a historical inquiry’ which is ‘the encounter with living being’ who was Leighton.²⁰ Leighton was not just a man who lived and worked and spoke and acted in the past. He also professed a deep religious belief which shaped his thoughts and determined his actions. Moreover, he taught others about his religious beliefs and encouraged them to live in accordance with those beliefs. He did so from within a religious organisation and in a country which was awash with religious ideas which provoked discussion and controversy and drove violent conflict. What is more, Leighton continues to communicate his religious convictions to this day. He does so directly when his extant religious writings are read and indirectly when his actions are interpreted. A meaningful understanding of Leighton therefore demands a reorientation away from a world in which the only will worth considering is the will of the human being.²¹ The Reformed Protestant God was intrinsic to Leighton’s worldview and to view Leighton otherwise would be to recast him as someone who he was not. As Gregory has argued, ‘the most important prerequisite for analysing religion consists in seeing that one’s own beliefs, regardless of their content, are simply and literally irrelevant to understanding the people whom one studies’.²² One consequence of this is that a history of Leighton can be religiously confessional as long as it is Leighton’s religious views that are confessed.

¹⁹ Shaw, ‘Modernity’, 1-2; McIntire, ‘Transcending Dichotomies’, 81-83.

²⁰ Florovsky, ‘Predicament’, 353.

²¹ Shaw, ‘Modernity’, 3.

²² Gregory, ‘Other Confessional History’, 147.

All historians start in their own present, with their own knowledge and presuppositions, from which they look back to identify and choose and interrogate and understand sources of all types: ‘the knowledge of the past is necessarily indirect and inferential [...] always an interpretation’.²³ Historians describe the past from their own present standpoint: ‘the past is never simply the past’.²⁴ No less so than the writers of the secondary literature, the author of this thesis has current, ‘culture-specific,’ perspectives which exclude the possibility of complete objectivity in description and evaluation of past events.²⁵ Rather than being a cause for despair, such acknowledgment is the first step towards what Bradley and Muller have called ‘a methodologically constructed and controlled objectivity’ in which ‘presuppositions, opinions and existential involvement’ are honestly recognised.²⁶

It is possible for the historian of a subject such as Leighton consciously to minimise the imposition of ‘any metaphysical beliefs or moral judgements’ which he, the historian, holds. Gregory accepts that such self-restraint is almost certainly going to be imperfect. This does not mean simply substituting secular for religious confessional history: the reduction of religion ‘to something social, political, economic, cultural, psychological, or natural’ thereby disapproving of and discounting the transcendent reality of the believer-practitioner’s core religious life-shaping convictions.²⁷ This is the consequence of evaluating the religious views of a person or organisation against only secular frames of reference, such as those generated by modern social sciences.²⁸ Instead, in order to understand a subject such as Leighton, the historian must endeavour to set aside his own beliefs as far as possible and to ask of the events and encounters, ‘What did it mean to Leighton?’²⁹ A useful test, suggest Scribner and Gregory, is ‘Would they, whoever they are, recognise themselves in what we say about them?’³⁰

²³ Florovsky, ‘Predicament’, 349.

²⁴ Bradley and Muller, *Church History*, 2-3, 33.

²⁵ Rudolph, ‘We Learn’, 329.

²⁶ Bradley and Muller, *Church History*, 49; Florovsky, ‘Predicament’, 359.

²⁷ Gregory, ‘Other Confessional History’, 137.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 136-138; Scribner, *Popular Religion*, 15.

²⁹ Scribner, *Popular Religion*, 15.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 15; Gregory, ‘Other Confessional History’, 148; Gregory, ‘No Room’, 519.

This does not mean that the history should ‘do nothing more than try to understand past people on their own terms’.³¹ ‘Questions about the truth of religious claims’ and ‘moral questions about religious behaviour or the human past’ are not excluded but instead are treated as ‘distinct’ and ‘kept separate from the attempt to understand religious believers’.³² Neither is responsibility for interpretation or identifying causes or construing significance abdicated. It remains incumbent upon the historian to identify mendacity or inconsistency or self-deception or error on Leighton’s part. This involves a commitment to identifying the frames of reference, secular as well as religious, in which Leighton lived and worked. Furthermore, it means respecting Leighton’s own explanations of how and why he spoke and acted as he did. It also means eschewing judgements about Leighton which might be made on the basis of the historian’s own inability to understand Leighton’s motives or deeds or his disagreement with them. Seeking to comprehend Leighton’s religious beliefs and the actions which flowed from them with reference to the information he had and the convictions he held facilitates engagement with Leighton on his own terms.

Finally, it must be recognised that ‘in the actual lives of religious people, other very concrete and very different concerns often play a role’ and that ‘every religious experience is embedded in a social, cultural and historical world from which it cannot be abstracted, even as a point of departure for reflecting upon religion as such’.³³ Leighton lived in, and contributed to, an era of intermingled religious and political agitation, anxiety and conviction. Therefore, insofar as the available evidence allows, he should not be separated from the political, social, economic, cultural and ideological contexts in which he lived.

The Leighton historiography is typified by writers projecting their own religious preferences and life situations back upon Leighton. Often this has been done overtly; at other times under the guise of historical narrative. Leighton deserves to be taken seriously as his own man in his own time and place. Respecting Leighton as he really was does not preclude offering judgements about him and his motives. Such judgements can and should be offered but only after Leighton himself has been understood on his own terms and not in

³¹ Gregory, ‘No Room’, 516.

³² Gregory, ‘Other Confessional History’, 147-148.

³³ Rudolph, ‘We Learn’, III, 339.

the course of trying to understand him. The following three sections survey the secondary literature in which Leighton has been described but often in terms which reveal more about the authors than their subject.

Gilbert Burnet

Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715) has disproportionately influenced our understanding of Leighton.³⁴ Many of Burnet's assertions of fact and his judgements about Leighton have gone unchallenged and continue to skew modern scholarship. Burnet was a complex character, a prolific author and an energetic, although sometimes inconsistent, churchman. As a window upon his own life and times, Burnet's writings are invaluable. As a historian of Leighton, he must be treated with caution.

Burnet left two selective sketches of Leighton's life, both of which are contained in larger accounts of events in Scotland and England during the author's lifetime. The second, *History of My Own Times*, was written in 1703-04. Posthumously published in two volumes in 1724 and 1734, it was both the principal source and tone-setter for subsequent biographies of Leighton.³⁵ In fact, *Own Times* was a recension of an earlier draft which Burnet had begun in 1683 and of which manuscript fragments still survive.³⁶ The manuscript portions most relevant to this thesis were written in 1683.³⁷ They have not been referred to in any previous treatment of Leighton. Although, Burnet had little first-hand knowledge of Leighton before 1662, it is possible that he discussed the years covered by this thesis with Leighton himself or other eye-witnesses.³⁸

Historian, theologian, polemicist and Episcopalian churchman, Burnet was born and educated in Scotland. His father, Robert, a staunchly Calvinist Episcopalian was exiled for

³⁴ Greig, 'Burnet'; Douglas, 'Burnet', 112.

³⁵ Burnet, *HMOT* (1724).

³⁶ 1683; *Supplement to Burnet's Own Time*, i- xxx.

³⁷ *Supplement to Burnet's Own Time*, xxxi.

³⁸ Burnet, *Autobiography*, 460-461; Bradley and Muller, *Church History*, 40-41.

refusing the Solemn League and Covenant.³⁹ His mother was Wariston's steadfastly Presbyterian sister. Ordained in 1665, Burnet attacked the Scottish bishops for their extravagance and mismanagement.⁴⁰ Lauderdale employed him in the unsuccessful 1669 accommodation scheme intended to draw dissenting Presbyterian ministers into the Episcopalian Church of Scotland.⁴¹ As Professor of Divinity at Glasgow University from 1671 to 1674, Burnet remained an active advocate for moderation and was a leader of the 1672 indulgence, the failure of which convinced Lauderdale towards more repressive policies against Presbyterian non-conformists. In 1674, having lost favour with the King and Lauderdale, Burnet left Scotland never to return. He built a reputation as a preacher in London, cultivated opposition politicians and produced well-received defences of the Church of England. Having spent 1685-8 in exile on the Continent, Burnet accompanied the invasion force in November 1688 as William of Orange's chaplain, ecclesiastical advisor, propagandist and chronicler.⁴² From 1689 a diligent and energetic Bishop of Salisbury, he was particularly concerned about the quality of and provision for his clergy. However, as a Whig and Latitudinarian he had limited influence within the wider Church of England.⁴³ His efforts to encourage dissenters to return had little success and he suffered sustained criticism for his apparent moderation and selective willingness to employ toleration and ecclesiastical flexibility in the cause of Christian unity.

³⁹ Robert Burnet (1592-1661) favoured 'moderate Episcopacy' and refused both the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, explaining his opposition to the Solemn League and Covenant in a document written sometime between 1647 and 1649. He disapproved of what he saw as an attempt to enforce uniformity of belief about 'Circumstantial points of Church government' which were not of the 'verie fundament and substance of religion' (*Burnet-Leighton*, 335-340). He was appointed to the bench as Lord Crimond in 1660 (*Burnet-Leighton*, 315-328). Without specifying why, Foxcroft believed that Robert Burnet was 'among those who influenced [Leighton's] development' (*Burnet-Leighton*, 316).

⁴⁰ *Burnet-Leighton*, 340-358.

⁴¹ John Maitland, Duke of Lauderdale (1616-1682) was a Covenanter diplomat who, after supporting the Engagement, returned to Scotland with Charles II in 1650 only to be captured after Worcester and imprisoned in England until 1660. Replacing Lothian as Secretary of State in 1660, his opposition to the reintroduction of Episcopalianism into Scotland was unsuccessful. However, he secured the downfall of Middleton in 1663 and became the dominant figure in Scottish politics (Hutton, 'Lauderdale').

⁴² Schwoerer, 'Propaganda', 811-815, 872; Claydon, 'Gilbert Burnet', 1.

⁴³ Greig, 'Bishop Gilbert Burnet', 247-262. For a discussion of Burnet's place among the Latitudinarians, see Claydon, 'Latitudinarianism', 579-584, 596-597.

Burnet's credibility and reliability as a historian have long been debated.⁴⁴ Airy, editor of the 1898-1900 edition of *Own Times*, admitted that: 'Probably no historian of Burnet's rank and importance has ever been so vigorously or continuously challenged on the ground of prejudice and inaccuracy'.⁴⁵ Airy offered only limited reassurance, conceding that he was 'frequently inaccurate in detail' particularly 'when Scotland and Scotsmen [were] his theme'.⁴⁶ Burnet was concerned to fortify his 'own ecclesiological position within the Church of England' against his high church opponents, so he wrote on many theological and ecclesiological subjects in order 'to influence the way English Church and society thought about itself'.⁴⁷ More generally, he 'looked at history in theological terms, in which the historian's task was to vindicate the ways of God to man'.⁴⁸ Claydon describes him as 'a historian-polemicist' who, writing after the 1689 Revolution, viewed 'the Reformation's descent into its most recent difficulties' as having 'started around the time of the Stuart Restoration in 1660'.⁴⁹ For the purposes of this study, it is sufficient to flag up areas of particular concern about his treatment of Leighton.

Burnet made no secret of his profound admiration for Leighton.⁵⁰ As soon as volume one of *Own Times* was published in 1724, the portrayal of Leighton by Burnet, a Whig, was

⁴⁴ Preston opines that, in fact, 'Burnet was among the first of the church historians to really come to grips with the problem of bias', albeit that he tacitly recognised that 'the goal of objectivity was something to be approached rather than attained'. Although, he took 'refuge in original sources and documentation [...] he failed to develop a method of criticism or to realize that bias could be displayed in the process of selectivity' (Preston, 'English Ecclesiastical Historians', 213). As a historian of the English Civil War, MacGillivray rated Burnet as a careful researcher who demonstrated 'a valuable detachment from the passions of the various factions', and showed 'development of opinion' in his writings (MacGillivray, *Restoration Historians*, 186).

⁴⁵ *HMOT*, I, v. Burnet's habit of writing in 'an obtrusive, first-person narrative' also generated suspicion since the public preferred their histories to be written in 'aloof, third-person narratives' (O'Brien, 'History and the Novel', 400-1).

⁴⁶ *HMOT*, I, v-vii.

⁴⁷ Starkie, 'Gilbert Burnet's Reformation', 138. Also Starkie, 'Contested Histories', 351.

⁴⁸ Straka, 'Final Phase', 643. Also MacGillivray, *Restoration Historians*, 187-188.

⁴⁹ Claydon, 'Gilbert Burnet', 1, 7.

⁵⁰ In his 1685 *Life of Bedell*, written just before Leighton's death, Burnet described him in extravagant terms: 'as great and as exemplary' as anyone Burnet had ever met 'in all ecclesiastical history'; practicing 'the strictest of all the Ancient Canons' and 'a pitch of Vertue and Piety beyond what can fall under common imitation, or be made the measure of even the most Angelical rank of Men' (12). Also Burnet's 1692 *Pastoral Care*, 246-247. Burnet's panegyrics did not go uncensured (Hicks, *Some Discourses*, 23-24). George Hickes (1642-1715), chaplain to Lauderdale 1676-1679, was deprived as Dean of Worcester in 1690 but was subsequently consecrated as a nonjuror bishop (Harmsen, 'Hickes').

criticised by the latter's political opponents. The Jacobite Bevil Higgons snidely remarked that Burnet's Leighton was rather too 'wonderful' and 'romantick' and 'an odd sort of Man'. Burnet had 'put some of his own Sentiments into [Leighton's] Mouth'.⁵¹ Indeed, there are a remarkable number of convergences of opinion between Burnet and the Leighton he describes, in particular, in Burnet's Erastian Episcopalianism,⁵² his broad church approach to Protestant unity,⁵³ his belief that forms of church government and worship 'were of their own nature indifferent'⁵⁴ and his antipathy towards Presbyterianism,⁵⁵ scholasticism⁵⁶ and Catholicism.⁵⁷ In his 1687 'Justification', Burnet attributed to himself many of the same qualities and opinions that he claimed to admire in Leighton including prayer and fasting, lifelong self-cleansing and disregard of material things, popularity and preferment.⁵⁸ Burnet's Leighton also displayed a Burnet-like ability to transfer his allegiance to whoever was in power.⁵⁹

Of course, it may simply be that Burnet and Leighton did share the same views and values. However, Burnet's almost unqualified approval of Leighton and his desire to represent himself as a most trusted confidant with an unparalleled knowledge of Leighton's life cannot but trigger concerns about his objectivity, even by the standards of his own time.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the resulting suspicion that Burnet was personally invested in Leighton, not only as a friend and mentor whose reputation Burnet felt bound to protect and burnish, but also as a self-perceived and self-appointed archetype for his own broad Erastian churchmanship, should not be ignored.

⁵¹ Higgons, *Historical and Critical Remarks*, 134. Higgons (1670-1763) was a Jacobite historian and poet (Courtney, 'Higgons').

⁵² Burnet, *Reformation*, III, xxii; Burnet, *Exposition*, pp. 385-6; Burnet, *Reflections*; 18-19; Starkie, 'Contested Histories', 345; Starkie, 'Gilbert Burnet's Reformation', 138-153.

⁵³ Burnet, *Exposition*, i, vi-vii; Greig, 'Heresy Hunt', 581-582.

⁵⁴ Burnet, *Exposition*, ix-x.

⁵⁵ Burnet, *Autobiography*, 459-460.

⁵⁶ Burnet, *Exposition*, ii-iii.

⁵⁷ Claydon, 'Latitudinarianism', 588-893.

⁵⁸ Hughes, 'Missing "Last Words"', 223-224.

⁵⁹ Stewart, 'Gilbert Burnet's Politics', 37-60.

⁶⁰ 1683, 30; *HMOT*, I, 240, 245-247; Burnet, *Autobiography*, 461-462; Clarke and Foxcroft, *Life of Gilbert Burnet*, 28-30, 89, 127, 146.

1690s to 1900

This and the following section concentrate on a selection of the more important biographical works which range from sketches to full-length biographies. None of Leighton's ardent critics has done more than mention him in wider histories of his period. Writing within a generation of Leighton's death, Wodrow,⁶¹ Kirkton⁶² and Row⁶³ were each broadly sympathetic to the Covenants and profoundly influenced by antipathy towards the Restoration settlement of the Kirk. Their assessments of Leighton reflect those views and, perhaps because of this distaste, they did not give any greater attention to him.

Burnet was not the first commentator who eulogised Leighton. Predating Burnet's published *Own Times*, in the 1690s Fall described Leighton's Christian character as revealed in his sermons with extravagant praise.⁶⁴ James Fall (1646/7-1711) was Principal of Glasgow University and an Episcopalian clergyman in the Churches of Scotland and England. Deprived of his university post in 1690 for his non-conformity to the newly restored Presbyterian Church of Scotland, he was appointed, by the influence of Burnet, Precentor of York Minister in 1692, before becoming Archdeacon of Cleveland in 1700.⁶⁵ As the editor of the first printed collections of Leighton's theological writings, Fall was the only editor to have known Leighton in life; he worked closely with his relatives and had access to the manuscripts as Leighton's study was being broken up after his death.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Robert Wodrow (1679-1734) was a Church of Scotland minister and ecclesiastical historian whose father had been a conventicle preacher who had narrowly escaped capture. Wodrow knew persecution for his family's Presbyterian convictions. As minister of Eastwood from 1703, he wrote his *History* which was based on painstaking research of original sources. Although 'rambling and undeniably pro-Presbyterian' it remains a reliable and key resource for study of the post-Reformation Church (Yeoman, 'Wodrow'; Lachman, 'Wodrow', 881).

⁶² James Kirkton (1628-1699) was deposed in 1662 for non-conformity (Grant, 'Kirkton', 462).

⁶³ William Row (c.1614-1698) was Robert Blair's son-in-law. Minister of Ceres from 1644, he was deprived in 1665 and refused indulgence in 1680 and only returned in 1689 (*FES*, V, 131).

⁶⁴ *Sermons preached by Dr Robert Leighton* (i- viii); *Practical Commentary* I, i-iii; II, i-iii.

⁶⁵ Clarke, 'Fall'.

⁶⁶ *Sermons preached by Dr Robert Leighton* (1692); *Rmi. D.D. Roberti Leighton* (1693); *A Practical Commentary* (1693-1994).

Fall's laudatory prefaces were the first in a succession of prefixed encomia to printed collections. Doubtless these were written to heighten the formative spiritual experience of reading Leighton's sermons and lectures as well as for general interest. However, there was also a commercial purpose: each editor sought to persuade his readers that Leighton was worth reading.

So it was with the first biographical sketch which appeared in the Eighteenth Century. This 'Account' was written by or for David Wilson, a bookseller on the Strand, as an introduction to his 1746 *Select Works of Archbishop Leighton*. The writer admitted that it was derivative, relying almost entirely on Burnet's *Own Times*.⁶⁷ In 1767, a brief and unsatisfactory summary of Leighton's life appeared in *A Supplement to the New and General Biographical Dictionary*.

Prefixing an 1804 collection of Leighton's sermons, Erasmus Middleton offered a sketch of Leighton's life, again reproducing Burnet with little original comment.⁶⁸ Jerment's 'Life', published in 1807, has the distinction of being the first biographical essay on Leighton with substantial original content.⁶⁹ Although heavily dependent upon Burnet, Jerment expanded the narrative by reproducing a number of Leighton's letters and adding his own extended hagiographical meditation on Leighton's life and sermons. One notable feature is Jerment's unfounded but repeated assertion that Leighton had always wished to retire from the world.⁷⁰ Jerment, who himself struggled to encourage inter-denominational unity, emphasised what he understood as Leighton's personal holiness and ecumenism.

Although Thomas Murray was licensed to preach by the Church of Scotland, he was not ordained and later worked as a printer and author.⁷¹ Described as 'a patient, if not

⁶⁷ 'Some Account' (Wilson), vii.

⁶⁸ Middleton (*bap.*1739-1805) was a Church of England clergyman and Methodist sympathiser (Levin, 'Middleton').

⁶⁹ Jerment (1759-1819) was minister of the General Associate Synod, born and educated in Scotland but whose ministry was predominantly in London. A founder of the interdenominational London Missionary Society, for which he suffered criticism, he worked strenuously for the union of the General Associate and Associate Synods which occurred just after his death (Wright, 'Jerment').

⁷⁰ Jerment, 'Life', viii, xix, xxvi, xxviii, xxxviii, xliv, lxiii, xciii, xcvi.

⁷¹ Stronach, 'Murray'.

profound, scholar,' he made no secret of his pro-Presbyterian and Covenanter views, arguing that previous accounts of Leighton's life were neither 'sufficiently impartial' nor did they display 'adequate knowledge' of his time.⁷² Yet, he did little other than put a mildly Presbyterian spin on Burnet's account. Like Jerment, he believed that Leighton 'longed to depart from a world where he saw so much wickedness and persecution, so much deadness or indifference in matters of religion, lamentably abound'.⁷³

Murray was critical of John Norman Pearson's 1825 'Life', which prefixed a four volume collection of Leighton's writings, and regretted 'the spirit in which it [was] written'.⁷⁴ In fact, Pearson too had put spin on Burnet's narrative but this time a mildly Anglican one.⁷⁵ The confessional tenor of Pearson's 'Life' is encapsulated in his remark that, in Leighton, 'the sterling integrity of the christian [sic] was refined, without being impaired, by secular accomplishments'.⁷⁶

Although he was the author of a number of historical works, James Aikman (1779?-1860) remains an obscure figure.⁷⁷ His pro-Presbyterianism and Covenanting sympathies are evident in his 1832 'Life'.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Aikman was broadly sympathetic to Leighton, describing him as 'this excellent Prelate' and opining that he was 'wholly uninfluenced by sordid or secular motives'.⁷⁹ Aikman's 'Life' was heavily dependent upon Burnet.

The year 1883 saw the publication of three biographical sketches of Leighton, all three written by Scottish Presbyterian ministers. John Tulloch (1823-1886), Church of Scotland

⁷² Murray, 'Life', Preface.

⁷³ Ibid., 206-207.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 229.

⁷⁵ Pearson (1787-1865) was an evangelical Church of England clergyman and first principal of the Church Missionary Society's college (Power, 'Pearson').

⁷⁶ Pearson, 'Life', cli.

⁷⁷ Aikman translated Buchanan's *History of Scotland* and wrote *Annals of the Persecution in Scotland* and *An Historical Account of Covenanting in Scotland*. His 'Life' was prefixed to an 1832 collection of Leighton's sermons.

⁷⁸ Aikman characterised the years from the Reformation until the National Covenant as troubled by 'contests for religious and civil liberty on the part of the people, and for priestly power and absolute despotism on the part of the Crown' (Aikman, 'Life', vii. Also Aikman, *Annals*, 2-3, 6-7, 25-32).

⁷⁹ Aikman, 'Life', xxii, xxvii. Also Aikman, *Annals*, 68.

Moderator (1878) and Principal of St Mary's College, St Andrews (1854-1886), used Leighton as an exemplar of the broad and theologically inclusive churchmanship which he himself espoused.⁸⁰ Tulloch believed that 'all parties acknowledge Leighton as a saint' and, as such, that he was a rare figure in the 'rugged and turbulent religious life of Scotland'.⁸¹ Leighton was blessed with 'the chief requisite for a great theologian – largeness of mind,' the ability to 'see the bounds of Christian knowledge' and a theological perspective which meant that 'the really small never became to him great'.⁸² William Garden Laikie (1820-1899), Free Church of Scotland Moderator (1892) and Professor of Apologetics and Pastoral Theology at New College, Edinburgh (1868-1897), was highly critical of Leighton's facility in 'ecclesiastical arrangements' and in allowing 'himself in public life to fall into the hands of a set of men who were the bitter enemies of evangelical religion'.⁸³ Yet Laikie understood Leighton to have been a true Calvinist evangelical who belonged 'to the Church universal' and 'to a broad church in the best sense of that term'.⁸⁴ Laikie's underlying aim was to show 'how one may be a member of the school of Calvin, and at the same time a scholar, a gentleman, and a saint'.⁸⁵ William Blair D.D. (1830-1916) was the minister of the United Presbyterian congregation in Dunblane from 1854 until 1900 and Moderator in 1898-1899.⁸⁶ His brief 'Memoir', which prefixed his selection of Leighton's sermons and lectures, is a remarkably balanced and well-researched contribution. He hoped that 'with the Divine blessing', his work would be 'productive'.⁸⁷

Charles Frederick Secretan (1820-1868) produced a short account of Leighton's life in 1866.⁸⁸ Secretan was Curate of Holy Trinity, Westminster (1852-1864) and Vicar of Longdon, Tewkesbury (1864-1868).⁸⁹ Among his published works was a biography of 'the

⁸⁰ Tulloch, 'Archbishop Leighton', 140; Needham, 'Tulloch', 830-831; Cheyne, 'Church Reform', 399-405.

⁸¹ Tulloch, 'Archbishop Leighton', 109.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 147.

⁸³ Laikie, 'Archbishop Leighton', 179.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 175, 179, 189-191, 199-208.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁸⁶ *Fasti United Free*, 311.

⁸⁷ Murray, 'Life', viii.

⁸⁸ Secretan, *Troubled Times*.

⁸⁹ *Crockford's*, 588.

pious Robert Nelson’ to whom Secretan commended his readers for his ‘orthodox teaching and charitable labours and sober piety, in a latitudinarian age, and amid all the bitterness of religious partisanship’.⁹⁰ Likewise, Secretan extolled Leighton as a man of ‘eminent personal holiness’ whose ‘meek and gentle temper’ contrasted with the ‘angry humour of the times’ in which he lived.⁹¹ Secretan exhibited strong Episcopalian leanings but his primary purpose in writing about Leighton was to promote him as model of transcendent calm amid ecclesiastical storms willing ‘to subordinate theological differences to the pursuit of practical holiness’.⁹²

Twentieth Century

Dugald Butler (1862-1926) was born and educated in Glasgow. Ordained into the Church of Scotland in 1890, he served the charges of Abernethy, Perthshire (1890-1902), the Tron, Edinburgh (1902-1907) and Galasheils and Bolside (1907-1918).⁹³ The author of numerous books he was made Doctor of Divinity by Glasgow University in 1907. Butler’s 1903 *Life* is the longest, best-researched and most insightful of all the secondary sources. Butler was an admirer of Leighton without being an uncritical eulogiser. He argued that, in the cause of “uniting the faithful” within a comprehensive national Church, Leighton ‘guilelessly associated himself’ with an untrustworthy King and his unscrupulous advisers who wanted to restrict the Church’s spiritual autonomy and to reintroduce a form of church polity to which there was ‘a strong hatred’.⁹⁴ Butler was also an apologist for the historic cause of the National Covenant and for the continued spiritual independence and integrity of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland while being an advocate of religious tolerance, at least between Episcopalians and Presbyterians.⁹⁵ Butler idealised institutional unity among

⁹⁰ Secretan, *Nelson*, viii. Robert Nelson (1656-1715) was a philanthropist and religious writer and a nonjuror who maintained a constructive relationship with the Church of England (Cook, ‘Secretan’).

⁹¹ Secretan, *Troubled Times*, 3-4.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 97.

⁹³ *FES*, II, 180; 8, 150.

⁹⁴ Butler, *Life*, 312, 546-547 551-553.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 548-549.

Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches but was only prepared to countenance it on his own Presbyterian terms which preserved the existing powers of presbyteries and kirk sessions against bishops.⁹⁶ Realising that ‘visible unity’ was unlikely in his own time, Butler pressed for ‘the invisible and spiritual unity of all the Church’.⁹⁷

Published in 1902, a year before Butler’s *Life*, Mathieson offered an assessment of Leighton’s efforts to promote church unity in Scotland after the Restoration.⁹⁸ In an interesting study, Mathieson did not hide his own opinion that Leighton embodied the ‘pious, liberal and enlightened opinion’ which had been ‘dissipated by the storms of the Covenant’ and which held that ‘the mode of church government is immaterial, but peace, concord, kindness and goodwill, are indispensable’.⁹⁹ Edmund Knox (1847-1937), evangelical retired Anglican Bishop of Manchester (1903-1920), wrote the second full-length biography of Leighton.¹⁰⁰ From the opening words of his preface, Knox made no secret of his religious motivations in writing, asserting that, ‘not the least important among ideals is that of a nation united in its worship of God and obedience to the laws of His Kingdom’.¹⁰¹ Intended as a formational work, it has two purposes: to promote Leighton as a model of personal saintliness; and to support church unity in Scotland, particularly the 1929 union of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland.¹⁰² Clearly a confessional biography, Knox explained that ‘world-history is in truth the working out of a Divine idea of which the secret is with the Almighty’.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 569-570.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 573. Butler advocated re-union within fractured Scottish Presbyterianism and anticipated the union of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church in 1929 (Butler, *Life*, 568-569).

⁹⁸ William Law Mathieson (1868-1936) was Scottish historian who had a particular interest in ‘movements, especially in the connection between church and state’ (Meikle, ‘Mathieson’).

⁹⁹ Mathieson, *Politics and Religion*, II, 256.

¹⁰⁰ Gregory, ‘Knox’.

¹⁰¹ Knox, *Leighton*, vii.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, vii-viii, 124.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 20.

Henderson made multiple references to Leighton in his 1937 *Religious Life* but these were largely and uncritically based upon Butler and Knox.¹⁰⁴ For Henderson, Leighton was ‘a beautiful soul and a man of fine sense, but scarcely a typical seventeenth-century Scot’.¹⁰⁵ Published in 1960, Niven offered a brief synopsis of Leighton’s life which concluded with the assessment that ‘in an age of utmost strife he adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour by a holy life and by [a] meek and gentle spirit’.¹⁰⁶ In 1990, in his few pages Cheyne cast a wry glance back over past biographies, remarking on the ‘kind of conspiracy’ among earlier biographers to ‘acclaim the union of learning and piety discernible in the young Leighton’.¹⁰⁷ However, dependence on those same biographies limited Cheyne’s contribution.

Thomas Torrance (1913-2007) was arguably the foremost British theologian of the twentieth century and a leading Scottish churchman. Among his many interests was ecumenism and, since ‘narrow nationalist or ecclesiastical sentiments were alike abhorrent to him’, he supported institutional union of Presbyterian and Episcopalian churches. Torrance was critical of what he regarded as hyper-Calvinism which was, he believed, epitomised in the Westminster Confession of Faith.¹⁰⁸ Torrance devoted a chapter to Leighton in his 1996 *Scottish Theology*. This does not purport to be biographical but offers a critique of Leighton’s sermons with particular reference to federal theology.¹⁰⁹ In his preface, Torrance explained his antipathy towards federal theology which he believed had radically altered Calvin’s biblical concept of covenant and led to the ‘imposition of a rigidly logicalised federal system of thought upon Reformed theology that gave rise to many of the problems which have afflicted Scottish theology’. He also described the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant as having ‘politicised theology in

¹⁰⁴ George David Henderson (1888-1957) was a Church of Scotland minister, Moderator (1955-1956) and Professor of Divinity and Church History at Aberdeen University (1924-1957) (Johnstone, ‘Henderson’).

¹⁰⁵ Henderson, *Religious Life*, 217.

¹⁰⁶ Niven, ‘Leighton’, 94.

¹⁰⁷ Cheyne, *Studies*, 40. The Reverend Professor Alexander Campbell Cheyne (1924-2006) taught church history at Edinburgh University from 1958 until 1986.

¹⁰⁸ Fergusson, ‘Torrance’; McGrath, ‘Torrance’, 94-102.

¹⁰⁹ Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 165. Insofar as Torrance offers a biographical framework for his theological analysis, he relies uncritically on Burnet, Butler and Pearson.

a rather misleading and unhelpful way’ and lamented ‘our unhealed Church divisions’.¹¹⁰ Therefore, it is unsurprising that Torrance should have been attracted to the Leighton of earlier confessional biographies whom he regarded as ‘the most loveable of Scottish Churchmen, and the most irenic’. He also approved of Leighton’s wide knowledge of Greek and Western philosophy, Jewish mysticism, the Church Fathers and the works of the Reformers, not least Calvin.¹¹¹ In essence, Torrance’s interest in Leighton was as a tool to dismantle federal theology.

Allan’s work on Leighton demonstrates the dangers of uncritical reliance upon confessional accounts of his life, at least insofar as the period to 1662 is concerned. Allan identifies Leighton with ‘the pessimistic progress of European neo-Stoicism [...] with its alternating constancy and retirement’.¹¹² Only by relying primarily and uncritically upon Jerment and Butler, is Allan able to justify his assertion that ‘Leighton’s non-confrontational and eirenical postures in public life, as well as his periodic attempts to enter into secluded retirement, were each related in some way to the philosophical ideas to which he was particularly exposed and susceptible’, that is, Stoicism.¹¹³ Furthermore, Allan projects speculative analysis of the contents of Leighton’s library as it was at his death in 1684 back in time to the 1650s, 1660s and 1670s. Ignoring Leighton’s repeated emphasis on the priority of Scripture over philosophy, Allan overlooks not only the possibility that Leighton may have been motivated by simple human nature but also his professed desire to be obedient to the Christian God. While Leighton was probably familiar with and may have been influenced by Stoicism, Allan’s over-eagerness is best illustrated by his approval of an ‘inspired’ description of Leighton as ‘rather a Christianised philosopher than a Christian theologian’.¹¹⁴

Gribben’s 2006 study of Leighton’s years as Principal is refreshing in its focus upon this particular period and in his use of Leighton’s theological works.¹¹⁵ Insofar as it seeks to set

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, x-xi, 62.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 162-163.

¹¹² Allan, ‘Reconciliation and Retirement’, 278.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 257.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 274.

¹¹⁵ Gribben, ‘Leighton’.

Leighton against the other Professor of Divinity at the Town College, David Dickson, it is, however, over-ambitious.¹¹⁶

This brief and necessarily selective survey confirms that those who have written other than incidentally about Leighton have rarely ventured beyond the path laid out by Burnet and have been guided by their own confessional compasses. These writers will be referred to for their comments on each stage of Leighton's first five decades in the knowledge that their contributions must be treated with caution lest he remain hidden behind their religious prejudices.

¹¹⁶ See pp. 218-219.

Leighton's Theological Writings

Leighton's theological writings are important primary evidence. His parish sermons and university lectures and addresses throw up interesting problems about which judgements have to be made. These arise because none of the original manuscripts of Leighton's theological writings have survived or are traceable, few of the texts were dated and the reasons why some texts survived to be published and others did not are unclear.

A number of printed collections of Leighton's theological writings have been published.¹¹⁷ West's *Works*, published in 1870-1875, is the latest of these.¹¹⁸ Grosart, Blair and Eble have criticised the literary merits of West's versions of the texts originally written by Leighton in English.¹¹⁹ However, these criticisms did not go so far as to allege that West had materially altered Leighton's meaning. Comparisons of selected passages from different collections confirm that Grosart, Blair and Eble's reservations were primarily stylistic and limited in scope. This study is not concerned with textual transmission and criticism or with possible literary deficiencies which do not materially alter the meaning of the texts, particularly since the original manuscripts are not available.¹²⁰ A number of passages from the university lectures delivered by Leighton in Latin are referred to in this thesis. West's translations of these passages are reasonably accurate and render the original meaning faithfully.¹²¹ Furthermore, they do not diverge materially from the only earlier

¹¹⁷ During the early 1800's there were at least five different editions on sale in the United Kingdom. Leighton was popular for both his devotional teaching and his prose style (Eble, 'Prolegomena', 3).

¹¹⁸ William West was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1857, having graduated BA from Trinity College Dublin. He held a number of incumbencies, including that of St Columba, Nairn from 1864 to 1880. He seems to have either died or retired after 1900 (Crockford's, 1446).

¹¹⁹ Grosart, 'Archbishop Leighton's Works', 353-355, 357, 359-360, 372, 384-385; Blair, *Selections*, 71; Blair, 'Bibliography', 418; Eble, 'Prolegomena', iv, 2, 97-105. Also Butler, *Life*, 161. Alexander Balloch Grosart (1827-1899) was a Scot who had entered the ministry of United Presbyterian Church before accepting charges in England. A powerful preacher, he was also well-known as a theologian and a literary scholar (Sherbo, 'Grosart').

¹²⁰ On Eble's textual analysis the editors of all collections from Fall to West edited the manuscript texts in minor ways to make them more easily readable (Eble, 'Prolegomena', 18-67). Leighton did not intend his manuscripts for publication and it is clear from Fall's remarks that there were erasures, interlineations and gaps in the manuscript texts (*Sermons preached by Dr Robert Leighton*, ii-iii; *Rmi. D.D. Roberti Leighton*, iii; Eble, 'Prolegomena', 194).

¹²¹ I am grateful to Dr E. Knott-Sharpe for her advice.

translations contained in the collections published by Wilson in 1748 and 1763.¹²² West's *Works* is the most widely accessible and the most comprehensive collection, including as it does forty-two items which are not found elsewhere. It has also recently been applauded as 'by some margin the finest edition' and an example of 'exhaustive mid-Victorian scholarship'.¹²³ Accordingly, West's *Works* is referred to here.

West's *Works* comprised six volumes numbered II-VII, volume I being a projected biography which was never published. *Works* II contains thirty-eight sermons, all but one of which are undated. West stated that thirty-seven of them were written and delivered during Leighton's tenure as minister of Newbattle (1641-1653).¹²⁴ *Works* II also contains nine charges delivered by Bishop Leighton to his diocese of Dunblane, only the first of which, dated 15 September 1662, falls within the scope of this thesis. *Works* III and IV contain sixty-six undated sermons which together form Leighton's Commentary on 1 Peter. West believed that these were also written and delivered by Leighton throughout his ministry at Newbattle and that they 'contained many allusions to the Sword, Famine, Pestilence, and other miseries of that eventful and troubled time'.¹²⁵ *Works* V contains fifteen expository lectures on Psalm 39, all undated but which West ascribed to 1651 or 1652.¹²⁶ That volume also contains expository lectures on Psalm 8, Isaiah 6, Matthew 1-9 and Romans 12:3-12, all of which were ascribed by West to Leighton's Newbattle years.¹²⁷ Finally, *Works* V contains expositions of the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, dated by West to Leighton's time as Principal of the Town College as well as a Short Catechism to which West did not ascribe a date.¹²⁸ *Works* VI contains three meditations, all undated, on each of Psalms 6, 32 and 130, twenty-four lectures, eight exhortations to graduating students and Leighton's farewell address to his students. All of these have been translated from Latin and, without dispute, have been attributed to

¹²² *Expository Works; Theological Lectures*. The Latin texts appear in Fall's 1693 *Rmi. D.D. Roberti Leighton* and in Scholefields's 1837 *Praelectiones theologicae*. West was critical of both (*WW*, V, ii-iv).

¹²³ Allan, 'Reconciliation and Retirement', 253.

¹²⁴ *WW*, II, ii.

¹²⁵ *WW*, III, i, 1.

¹²⁶ *WW*, IV, 1.

¹²⁷ *WW*, V, 89, 77, 86, 107, 186-187.

¹²⁸ *WW*, V, 203.

Leighton's time as Principal. Also included in *Works VI* are 'Rules and Instructions for Spiritual Exercises' ascribed by West to Leighton and two letters of spiritual comfort and counsel which are undated and are not considered further here.¹²⁹ *Works VII* contains two further expository lectures and twenty more sermons, all undated. However, these are based upon transcriptions or sermon notes made by others. West does not attempt to date them and, in light of his own account of how he discovered these and that Leighton was named as author of only four, they are not considered further.¹³⁰ Of the remaining items in *Works VII*, all but two letters which are considered in Chapter 5 fall outwith the time-frame of this study.

Despite West's assertion that he was the first to ascribe the sermons and lectures contained in West's *Works II-V* to the years before 1662, only five sermons had been expressly attributed by previous editors to a later period.¹³¹ Doddridge and Wogan were the editors who sought to do so and their reasoning is unconvincing.¹³² While, West's attempts to date individual sermons to particular years or events during Leighton's Newbattle ministry are less persuasive, he is probably correctly to attribute them generally to this period. Their style, tenor and content are consistent with having been written before 1653 and are different from those of the university lectures which appear in *Works VI*. There are no obvious references to the Restoration and there is no compelling internal evidence to place them after 1662. The sermons have the flavour of preaching delivered week-by-week by a minister to his congregation. Their content and style are also consistent with the criticism that, as minister of Newbattle, Leighton did not 'preach up to the times' and with his

¹²⁹ Chadwick doubts that the Rules were written by Leighton (Chadwick, 'Robert Leighton', 124).

¹³⁰ *WW*, VII, v-ix; Grosart, 'Archbishop Leighton's Works', 367.

¹³¹ *WW*, VII, 352-356. See also Fall's Prefaces to *Sermons preached by Dr Robert Leighton* (iv) and *A Practical Commentary* (I, iii). James Fall (1646/7-1711) was Principal of Glasgow University and an Episcopalian clergyman in Churches of Scotland and England. Deprived of his university post in 1690 for his non-conformity to the newly restored Presbyterian Church of Scotland, he was appointed, by the influence of Burnet, Precentor of York Minister in 1692 before becoming Archdeacon of Cleveland in 1700 (Clark, 'Fall'). Fall was the only editor to have known Leighton in life. He worked closely with Leighton's relatives and had access to the manuscripts as Leighton's study was being broken up after his death.

¹³² *Expository Works*, II, 144; *Eighteen Sermons*, 336, 123, 280. Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) was a leading independent minister, writer and lecturer (Rivers, 'Doddridge'). William Wogan (1678-1758), was a religious writer and Anglican evangelical (Gardiner and Gardiner, 'Wogan'). Wogan edited *Eighteen Sermons* anonymously (*WW*, VII, 302-305; Eble, 'Prolegomena', 20).

rejoinder that he should be ‘suffered to preach on eternity’.¹³³ In short, there is no reason to challenge what has become the standard chronology accepted, *inter alios*, by Grossart,¹³⁴ Butler,¹³⁵ Knox,¹³⁶ and Eble.¹³⁷

Although Leighton’s extant theological writings take up five, perhaps six, volumes of West’s *Works*, they can only be a small fraction of his total output of sermons, lectures and addresses over more than thirty years as a minister, principal and bishop. Furthermore, very little survives from the period after 1661. Consequently, it must be acknowledged that these extant writings may not provide a complete picture of Leighton’s thinking or what he proclaimed in public from pulpit and lectern. In the absence of a discovery of many more manuscripts, this cannot be remedied. However, it does militate against over-dependence on what is a limited sample of his theological writings. They must be read alongside other evidence, direct and circumstantial, of what he was doing and saying.

A further concern is whether the writings which survive have done so because of selective preservation by Leighton in life or by his executors or others after his death. If so, the value of the surviving writings would be diminished because selective preservation would indicate an attempt to manipulate how Leighton was understood after his death. However, it seems unlikely that Leighton himself selectively culled his writings: his stated desire was that they remain unpublished.¹³⁸ On balance, it appears that, if any writings survived Leighton’s death but were not published and do not exist now, this was due to human error rather than deliberate suppression of particular material.¹³⁹ The records relating to the setting up of the Leightonian Library in Dunblane do not support the possibility that large numbers of items survived Leighton’s death but were later destroyed by his executors.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Jerment, ‘Life’, ix.

¹³⁴ Grosart, ‘Archbishop Leighton’s Works’, 360.

¹³⁵ Butler, *Life*, 144.

¹³⁶ Knox, *Leighton*, 107-109.

¹³⁷ Eble, ‘Prolegomena’, 3, 91.

¹³⁸ *Sermons preached by Dr Robert Leighton*, ii-iii; *Praelectiones*, iii; Eble, ‘Prolegomena’, 194. In his will dated 17 February 1683, Leighton left ‘only his Books’ to ‘the Cathedrall of Dunblane in Scotland, to remaine there, for the use of the clergie of that Diocess’ and appointed Sapphira and Edward Lightmaker, his sister and nephew, to execute his instructions (PRO PROB 11/37).

¹³⁹ Douglas, ‘Account of the Foundation’, 265, 270-272; *A Practical Commentary*, II, iii.

¹⁴⁰ Douglas, ‘Account of the Foundation’, 248, 251-252, 257, 263-264.

Indeed, all the evidence points to his executors having diligently preserved and transmitted those documents which they did discover in his study.¹⁴¹ Neither is there anything to suggest that Fall had a motive for destroying documents. Indeed, it seems that he was keen to publish all that he could source. Furthermore, it is unlikely that later editors or collectors deliberately destroyed any of Leighton's writings. As demonstrated by their repeated reprinting, they evidently had commercial value as well as theological interest.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 236-237, 241, 246; Blair, 'Bibliography', 412.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 265.

Conclusion

Leighton's life and work are ripe for reassessment. Despite the carapace of confessional assertions which have grown around him, this is not an impossible task. By avoiding being sucked into the confessional debates of the past and by careful and contextual use of the available primary evidence, not least his theological writings, a more accurate understanding of Leighton is possible.

Chapter 2

The Early Years: Birth to Graduation

Introduction

This chapter covers Leighton's life from birth in 1610 or 1611 until graduation in 1631, a phase which has been sadly neglected. What limited treatment it has received has been largely selective, inaccurate and driven by confessional motives. The erroneous assertions about Leighton's childhood and student years which the secondary literature has generated have gone unchallenged and, consequently, have distorted the ways in which his later years have been understood. This chapter aims to reconstruct Leighton's early years in London and in Edinburgh and to offer a critical reassessment of prior accounts of this period.

The four main sections cover Leighton's birth and childhood; his father, Alexander; the state of the Church of Scotland as he would have discovered it to be when he arrived in Edinburgh; and his experiences as a student there from 1627 to 1631. It concludes by offering a revised appreciation of the formative influences to which Leighton was exposed in these first twenty years and their importance for his later life.

Birth and Childhood

Leighton spent his first years in London, remaining there until he left home for Edinburgh in 1627. This section explores the circumstances of Leighton's upbringing, focusing on his relationship with his mother and with his siblings, at least two of whom played important roles after the deaths of his parents. His father, Alexander, is of particular interest and will be considered in the next section.

Fortunately, nothing of significance turns on identifying the exact date and place of Leighton's birth since neither can be known for certain. Pearson was the first to suggest a date for his birth. He posited 1611 on the basis of the inscription on Leighton's tomb which stated that he had died on 25 June 1684 in his seventy-fourth year.¹ However, the import of the inscription is that Leighton was born sometime between 26 June 1610 and 25 June 1611. Although there is no other information to narrow down the range of possible birth dates, this does refute Jerment's assertion that Leighton was born in 1613 and renders unlikely Ouston's claim that he was baptised on 1 October 1612.²

Pearson stated that Leighton was born in Edinburgh but did so on the erroneous predicate that Alexander, his father, was 'at that time professor of moral philosophy in Edinburgh College'.³ However, there is no record of Alexander ever having held a teaching position in the Town College and so this can be discounted. On the basis of a baptismal record, Ouston claims that Leighton was baptised in St Nicholas Church in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 1 October 1612.⁴ The record relates to a Robert Leighton, son of Alexander Leighton, with no other information being provided. This coincidence of name gains some support from the possibility that Alexander may have been in the Newcastle area as late as 1612.⁵ However, the real possibility of infant death makes it unlikely that his father would have waited over a year to have his son baptised. The other possibility is London but, although

¹ Pearson, 'Life', xiii, cxlviii; Butler, *Life*, 511.

² Jerment, 'Life', v; Ouston, 'Leighton'.

³ Pearson, 'Life', xiii.

⁴ International Genealogical Index, 'Robert Leighton, 1612'.

⁵ See p. 43.

Leighton probably spent most of his childhood in that city, it is not certain he was also born there.⁶

A further consequence of the paucity of information for this period of Leighton's life is that the identity of Leighton's birth-mother and the question of when she died are matters of disagreement. Knox gave her name as 'Mrs Means, widow of an Edinburgh merchant who had been an intimate friend of Alexander,' but did not cite his source.⁷ Condick suggests that her name might have been 'Mears' and states that she was the mother of four of Alexander's children: Leighton, Elisha, James and Elizabeth.⁸ However, Condick's sources are equally unclear. Eble's analysis is both the most thorough and the most convincing. He believes that Alexander was married three times and his marriage to Isobel Musgrave, his third wife, did not take place until after the death of her second husband in 1643.⁹ In Alexander's 1641 petition to Parliament in which he sought compensation for his mutilation and imprisonment following his conviction for sedition in 1630, he asked for a speedy resolution of his claim due to his age and sickness and the 'weakness of his long distressed wife.'¹⁰ By Eble's reckoning Alexander would have been referring here to his second wife who clearly did not have long to live. Assuming, as is generally agreed, that Leighton's birth mother died when he was very young, Alexander must have married the woman who would have raised Leighton some time after 1610/11. Although her identity is unclear, what evidence there is points to a close and affectionate relationship between Leighton and his step-mother during his student years and, by implication, before then.¹¹

Despite this paucity of information, Leighton's 'mother' has been enlisted as a character in a myth which appears in the secondary literature. Previous biographers had to recognise the improbability that Alexander, a strong personality, exercised no influence upon his son. So, as a counter-balance, they required an even stronger force of nature; a sweet and gentle mother who passed on her irenicism to her son either genetically or through upbringing.

⁶ Jerment, 'Life', v.

⁷ Knox, *Leighton*, 59-60.

⁸ Condick, 'Alexander Leighton'.

⁹ Eble, 'Mothers', 177-178; Irving, *Scottish Writers*, II, 120-121.

¹⁰ *Epitome*, 91.

¹¹ Butler, *Life*, 55-61, 213.

Eble correctly identifies Tulloch¹² as the initiator of this ‘genetic tug-of-war’ between a fanatical father and a peace-loving mother.¹³ Yet, none of the writers who perpetuated this myth – Tulloch, Blair and Butler – offered any evidence for their surmise nor, indeed, the name or background of their candidate for the role of Leighton’s mother.¹⁴

Leighton, the eldest of Alexander’s children, had three younger brothers and two younger sisters. Which of them were half-siblings is not known for certain, although the younger Leighton was when his birth-mother died the less likely they are to have been full brothers and sisters. James is said to have gone abroad and disappeared.¹⁵ Elisha (*d.* 1685), who changed his name to Ellis, was a royalist courtier and government official.¹⁶ Caleb died as a cornet of horse in Ireland.¹⁷ Elizabeth or Eliza married a Mr Rathband of Essex, while Susan (originally Sapphira) married a Mr Lightmaker of Sussex.¹⁸ Knox briefly indulged a fantasy of an idyllic life in the Leighton household before admitting that there was ‘some measure of uncertainty’ about the reality of the family’s life.¹⁹ Nevertheless there does seem to have been an abiding affection among the siblings, and also a sense of mutual responsibility.²⁰

There is no evidence to suggest that Leighton spent significant periods away from his family during his childhood.²¹ It is not clear whether Alexander’s then wife and children followed him to Leiden in 1617 for the duration of his medical studies but, in any event, these did not last beyond two years. Whether or when Leighton lived outside London is not clear. When enrolling at Leiden in 1615, Alexander was described as ‘Anglus Londinensis,’²² evidence that he had been living in London before then, perhaps for some

¹² Tulloch, ‘Archbishop Leighton’, 117.

¹³ Eble, ‘Mothers’, 175.

¹⁴ Blair, *Selections*, 2; Butler, *Life*, 49-57.

¹⁵ Knox, *Leighton*, 68.

¹⁶ Hayton, ‘Elisha Leighton’. See pp. 227-228, 236.

¹⁷ Knox, *Leighton*, 68.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 68. See p. 32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁰ Butler, *Life*, 212-213, 290-291.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 49-50; cf. Knox, *Leighton*, 70.

²² *Album*, 61.

time. In 1619, Alexander returned to London to begin medical practice. From at least 1628, the family home was Alexander's 'house on the top of pudle hill, near Blackfriars gate, over against the King's wardrobe'.²³

Where and how Leighton was educated before he went to university is unknown but, again, there is nothing to suggest that he studied away from home.²⁴ However his education was imparted, he arrived in Edinburgh a well-trained scholar of Latin and Greek.²⁵

²³ Secretan, 'Letters', 106-107.

²⁴ Knox, *Leighton*, 69-70

²⁵ See p. 77-79.

Alexander Leighton

Leighton's relationship with his father has troubled past biographers, many of whom portrayed Alexander as a dangerous, anti-Episcopalian, Puritan polemicist whose son only became the saintly bishop they wished him to have been once he had escaped his father's influence.²⁶ It would, however, be very surprising indeed if Alexander had not exercised some degree of influence over his son. He was probably an ordained minister and certainly an active preacher and religious writer as well as a theologian of considerable learning if not much subtlety. Furthermore, it is evident that Leighton remained a respectful and loving son until his father's death in 1649.²⁷ The impact of Alexander's influence has received only cursory attention and always with a confessional purpose. This section begins with a brief survey of the secondary literature, followed by an account of Alexander's life and then a more detailed contextual analysis of *Sions Plea*, his major and best-known work. Finally, a revised assessment of Alexander's influence upon his son is offered.

The secondary literature

A notorious anti-Episcopal, Puritan martyr, Alexander's existence was a problem for many of his son's biographers. Swayed by their confessional aims, they sought to distance Leighton from his father as far and as fast as possible. This has distorted the ways in which both men have been understood.

As always Burnet set the tone. In his published *Own Times*, he dismissed Alexander's influence as a regrettable, although insignificant and soon forgotten, stage on his son's road to greatness. In contrast with Leighton, Alexander was 'a man of violent and ungoverned heat'. Any sway that he exercised over his son soon dissipated and having 'been bred up with the greatest aversion imaginable to the whole frame of the church of

²⁶ The Scottish context of the term 'Puritan' is discussed at p. 62.

²⁷ See pp. 59, 75, 160, 173.

England', Leighton 'quickly broke through the prejudices of his education' shortly after his ordination which took place in late 1641.²⁸ However, in his earlier unpublished 1683 manuscript, Burnet had acknowledged Alexander's 'ill-usage' at the hands of Laud and been less dismissive of his continuing influence:

[Leighton] was sent again by his father into Scotland in the year [16]38 [?], and was at the assembly of Glasgow; he told me he was even then disgusted with their heats and the manner of their proceedings, but these prejudices were not yet strong enough in him to overcome education.²⁹

Burnet apparently recognised that Leighton had been shaped by his father's religious beliefs and that their influence continued from childhood into the early 1640s.

Of Leighton's subsequent biographers, only Jerment and Blair treated Alexander more charitably. Jerment believed that he was an exemplarily patient father, a man who 'was eminent alike by his office, his learning and his piety'. Bold and vehement, in speech and in writing, 'against the arbitrary measures of the Court, as well as against the conduct and character of the Bishops under the influence of Laud,' Alexander was 'honourably distinguished' by his 'faith and patience [...] courage and usefulness.'³⁰ Blair attributed to Alexander 'something of the mild and meditative spirit of his son,' suggesting that he was a kind and loving father and 'in certain elements, a larger, stronger, wider-brained man, than his saintly son'.³¹ Knox admitted that Alexander was a man of learning who owned an extensive library but lamented that this had not softened his character.³²

When these writers came to assess the extent of Alexander's influence, there was broad agreement that it was short-term but strong. His treatment at the hands of Laud was thought likely to have driven Leighton into his father's camp. Even Pearson, who alleged that Alexander was 'of a cross, untowardly disposition' and that his book was 'outrageously scurrilous and inflammatory' and written with 'mischievous purpose', had to concede that probability. He thought that Leighton's aversion to Episcopacy would have

²⁸ *HMOT*, I, 239-240.

²⁹ 1683, 10.

³⁰ Jerment, 'Life', ii-iii.

³¹ Blair, *Selections*, 2.

³² Knox, *Leighton*, 81.

been ‘augmented by a pious resentment of his father’s suffering’.³³ Uniquely, Murray believed that, despite his upbringing, Leighton’s ‘Presbyterian predilections [...] seem never to have been very strong.’³⁴ Only Jerment and Blair were prepared to argue that he did not shake off the anti-Episcopalian views of his father until after he became principal of the Town College.³⁵

In the most thorough but nevertheless limited treatment of this issue, Butler characterised Alexander as the ‘extremest of the extreme Puritans’ and believed that there was ‘very little in the son to suggest the father’.³⁶ Nonetheless, he noted the ‘fine affection and respectful obedience’ and ‘beautiful filial spirit’ evidenced in Leighton’s letters to his father.³⁷ He thought that their relationship was ‘of a beautiful kind’ and that Leighton was ‘singularly devoted’ to his father and grateful to him ‘notwithstanding the differences that must have existed between them on Church questions’.³⁸ Furthermore, Butler conceded that Leighton’s Newbattle sermons were influenced by ‘a Puritanism which he received from his father’ and that, although he departed from the ‘stern Presbyterianism of his father,’ he ‘never wavered from the fundamental principles of the Reformed Church’.³⁹

The secondary literature thus does not ignore Alexander. Nevertheless, even those writers who did not denigrate him viewed his influence upon Leighton as essentially transitory. Those who wished to establish an early date for Leighton’s disillusionment with Presbyterianism were harshest upon his father. Jerment and Blair offered little in the way of analysis of how they believed Leighton was shaped by his father. A clearer understanding of Alexander is a first step towards redressing these deficiencies.

³³ Pearson, ‘Life’, xviii.

³⁴ Murray, ‘Life’, 59.

³⁵ Pearson, ‘Life’, 4-6; Blair, *Selections*, 28.

³⁶ Butler, *Life*, 17, 48, 68.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 59, 211.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 212-213.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 148, 543, 561.

Alexander's life

Alexander Leighton (1568(?)-1649) was born in Scotland, possibly near Dundee.⁴⁰ He graduated MA from St Andrews, possibly in 1587.⁴¹ Little else is known of his first four decades, other than that he married Mrs Means, was probably widowed and remarried, and fathered Leighton and his siblings. It is likely that he was ordained, probably in the Church of England, and he may have been employed as a lecturer in churches in and around Newcastle-upon-Tyne between about 1603 and 1612.⁴² Alexander later claimed to have forsaken 'great Preferment' in order to keep 'a good conscience.'⁴³ In 1617, he graduated in medicine from the University of Leiden.⁴⁴ However, once back in London, Alexander failed to secure a licence from the College of Physicians because, under their rules, he could not both practise medicine and be an ordained minister.⁴⁵ On 24 September 1619 he was interdicted from practising by the College and was prosecuted by them on at least four occasions in the period to 1631, the last for practising while a prisoner in the Fleet prison. The tenor of the complaints against him was that he was unlicensed, was 'in Presbyter's orders' and that he did not 'stick to his Ordination'. In response, Alexander admitted that he was 'a preacher' but he stated that he was 'against all Ceremonies'.⁴⁶ After his arrest in 1630, Alexander admitted that he had been involved in conventicles and collective fasts, although he refused to concede that what he had been doing was illegal.⁴⁷

Alongside his illegal medical practice, Alexander was also a polemicist. By the mid-1620s, he had attained a modest degree of notoriety with both the king and his Bishop of London, William Laud.⁴⁸ He seems to have been a sought-after speaker outside London.⁴⁹ In 1624,

⁴⁰ Condick, 'Alexander Leighton'; Foster, *Notes*, 14-39.

⁴¹ Butler, *Life*, 15.

⁴² See below and p.46. Brand, *Newcastle*, I, 321, 323, 375, 412; Gardiner, *History of England*, VII, v-vi; Foster, *Notes*, 15, 84; Condick, 'Alexander Leighton'.

⁴³ *Epitome*, 56-57.

⁴⁴ Peacock, *Index*, 61. Alexander's 1617 thesis was on mental illness, a favourite topic of Puritan physicians (Alexander Leighton, *Disputatio*; Birken, 'Dissenting Tradition', 213).

⁴⁵ Birken, 'Dissenting Tradition', 205.

⁴⁶ Goodall, *Historical Account*, 401. The entry is undated but appears to summarise proceedings against Alexander from the final years of James' reign.

⁴⁷ *Epitome*, 6-7; 'Speech of Sir Robert Heath', xiv-xv.

⁴⁸ *Epitome*, 67.

he wrote, in the then popular style of a military treatise, against Episcopacy and advocating military intervention in Europe in support of Protestantism.⁵⁰ That year he also published a treatise in support of Calvinist predestination.⁵¹ This caused trouble for him and his family but, he claimed in his 1646 *Epitome*, he was able to secure the protection of the King.⁵² His next work, *Against Stage Playes*⁵³, published anonymously, was a denunciation of theatrically-produced plays.

In 1628 Alexander wrote *Sions Plea*. Writing in about 1641, he explained that he had not acted alone but with the agreement and encouragement of ‘some of the better sort’, about five hundred of ‘the Godliest, Learned, and most Judicious of the land, Ministers and others,’ including parliamentarians.⁵⁴ Originally intended as a petition to Parliament against ‘the Prelates’ who were, ‘in a cruell and unnaturall manner’, ‘surprisers’ and ‘sackers of the Church and State’, the petition was directed against the hierarchy of bishops of the Church of England.⁵⁵ Alexander expanded the petition into a book the purpose of which was to call for a root-and-branch ‘Extirpation of the Prelates, with all their Dependances, and Supporters.’⁵⁶ He travelled to the Netherlands to have it published, largely at his own expense, in the knowledge that he was risking severe consequences.⁵⁷ Alexander only confessed to being the author of *Sions Plea* during his third interrogation after arrest.⁵⁸ He admitted to having sent just two copies to England in early 1629.⁵⁹ When he discovered in March that year that Parliament had been dissolved and its protection lost, he remained in the Netherlands intending that his family join him there. However, in July 1629 Alexander returned to England having gained and lost the position of minister of the

⁴⁹ CSPD 1629-1631, 426. Apparently, Alexander was welcomed by non-Conformists in Leicester ‘with great joy and jollity, as if he were some great man’.

⁵⁰ Alexander Leighton, *Speculum Belli Sacri*; George, 494-495; Foster, *Notes*, 24.

⁵¹ Alexander Leighton, *Friendly Triall*.

⁵² *Epitome*, 68.

⁵³ Alexander Leighton, *Against Stage-Playes*.

⁵⁴ *Epitome*, 1-2.

⁵⁵ On Alexander’s place in the culture of petitioning parliament in the late 1620s, see Kyle, ‘Broadside to Pamphlet’, 23.

⁵⁶ *Epitome*, 1-2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

English church at Utrecht in the space of three months.⁶⁰ He had to be removed by the town authorities after having been dismissed for refusing to preach on Good Friday and indicating that he would not preach on Christmas Day and other holy days.⁶¹ In his absence, his family had been housed by Dr John Bastwick, whom he had met in Leiden.⁶² On Alexander's return, Bastwick found him a medical post in Colchester, but he was soon back in London.⁶³ He complained that all this upheaval was to the 'great detriment' of him and his family.⁶⁴

Although some time had passed since the publication of *Sions Plea*, Alexander was not safe. Arrested on 17 February 1630 as he was 'coming out of Blacke-friers Church' he was imprisoned in squalid conditions, interrogated, charged and finally, in June 1630, tried before the Star Chamber for sedition.⁶⁵ Among the judges was William Laud, Bishop of London, who was especially bitter in his condemnation.⁶⁶ Alexander's counsel 'acknowledged the Equity of [his] Cause, and freedome from Guilt' but was too afraid to represent him and so Alexander had to draft his own Answers and to defend himself at trial.⁶⁷ Alexander's denial that he was either 'malitious or seditious' and his assertions that he had acted in the interests of king, country and church were disregarded.⁶⁸ So also were arguments for leniency from within the Court.⁶⁹ He was convicted and sentenced, in the presence of his 'weak, distressed wife,' to pay a fine of £10,000, to be degraded from holy orders, to be pilloried and whipped at Westminster, to have both ears cut off, both sides of his nose slit and his face branded with 'SS' (for 'sower of sedition') and then to be

⁶⁰ Alexander to his wife, 4 March 1629 (TNA SP 16/138/23; *CSPD 1628-1629*, 487; Butler, *Life*, 32).

⁶¹ Sprunger, 'Sabbatarianism', 29.

⁶² John Bastwick (1595?-1694) was a religious controversialist and pamphleteer who formed a warm friendship with Alexander in Leiden. Similarly, he suffered disfigurement and imprisonment for his beliefs (Condick, 'Bastwick').

⁶³ Condick, 'Alexander Leighton'.

⁶⁴ *Epitome*, 2-3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 74. William Laud (1573-1645) became Archbishop of Canterbury and had some responsibility for the 1637 Scottish Prayer Book (see pp. 129-130; Milton, 'Laud').

⁶⁷ *Epitome*, 29.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

imprisoned for life.⁷⁰ Alexander claimed that, after sentence was passed, Laud, who had pressed for the harshest punishment, took off his cap, held up his hands and ‘gave thanks to God, who had given him the victory over his enemies’.⁷¹

Alexander was degraded from holy orders on 4 November 1630 and, although he escaped from prison and was at liberty for two weeks, his judicial flogging and disfigurement took place on 26 November.⁷² Alexander later claimed that the Court of High Commission’s officers had dealt with his wife and children in a ‘cruell and barbarous’ manner, frightening them and threatening one of his young children ‘by holding a charged Pistoll to his head’. In the course of searching the family home, the officers broke up ‘Presses, and Chests’, tore off doors and removed letters and other documents. As a result of his imprisonment, his family was ‘utterly undone, having no meanes to maintain them’.⁷³ Following his mutilation, Alexander was very ill but, despite the offer of surety from his friends, he was not allowed to recover at home and was transferred to the Fleet prison.⁷⁴ There, the conditions of his imprisonment were harsh and violent.⁷⁵ There is little doubt that, as he claimed, Alexander ‘suffered all this harsh, cruell and continued ill-usage’.⁷⁶

At no time did Alexander give up the names of his supporters, although he would probably have avoided flogging and disfigurement had he done so.⁷⁷ Interspersed with descriptions of his physical privations, Alexander later recounted his multifarious challenges to the legality of his arrest, imprisonment and examination. He also reiterated that, while his opposition to ‘the Hierarchy’ of bishops within the church was of long-standing, it was motivated neither by a ‘hatred to their persons’ nor by ‘envie to their places, whence their wealth, honour, and ease might accrue’. Alexander ‘wished them as well as’ himself and part of his concern was for the bishops’ own well-being since they were ‘highly

⁷⁰ Ibid., 77.

⁷¹ Ibid., 78.

⁷² Ibid., 84-85; Legg, ‘Samuel Johnston’, 723-742.

⁷³ *Epitome*, 17, 68, 89.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 82.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 85-86.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 90.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 12-14; ‘Speech of Sir Robert Heath’, 10.

indangering' themselves before God by their actions. His attack was based upon the belief that 'superiority in the Ministerial Function, must have no place under the Gospel'. Neither their 'Places' nor their 'Authorities' were 'of God' and, in exercising office, they were acting outwith the laws of both God and man 'to the prejudice and abusing of the Kings graunts' and to 'the heavie detriment of the Subjects'.⁷⁸

By the time of his conditional release in late 1640, Leighton's health had been broken. He stated that he could 'neither see, hear nor walke'.⁷⁹ In November 1640, he petitioned Parliament for compensation for his imprisonment and the injuries sustained by him, both physical and pecuniary.⁸⁰ In April 1641, Parliament declared that his conviction, sentence and punishment had all been illegal and awarded him unquantified damages as 'good Satisfaction and Reparation, for his great suffering and damages'.⁸¹ It is unlikely that Alexander ever received any compensation for, in February 1647, 'being in daily expectation of death', he was still petitioning for payment.⁸² However, he had been fit enough to travel to Scotland and was visited in London by Leighton. He also seems to have resumed writing for publication, for two further works have been attributed to him: a 1642 pamphlet on kingship and a 1648 pamphlet urging Londoners to resist the army and its generals.⁸³ Moreover, Alexander was compensated in another way. In 1642, he was appointed Keeper of the parliamentary prison established in Lambeth Palace and, as such, was able to charge fees to his prisoners, who included Laud himself.⁸⁴ According to another inmate, Sir Roger Twysden, Alexander 'loved money, would not abate one peny though he were very rich' and extorted 'rent' from those who would not pay.⁸⁵ Alexander died in 1649, a comparatively wealthy man.⁸⁶

⁷⁸ *Epitome*, 5-6, 12-13, 19.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁰ Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (1721), IV, 20 42, 61, 64.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 228-229.

⁸² *Sixth Report of the Royal Commission*, I, 158; Lambert, 'Committees, Religion, and Parliamentary Encroachment', 89.

⁸³ Alexander Leighton, *King James and Too all the Honest*; Condick, 'Alexander Leighton'; Foster, *Notes*, 83; Butler, *Life*, 48.

⁸⁴ Laud, 'Own Diaries', 65.

⁸⁵ Larking, 'Twysden's Journal', 177.

⁸⁶ Condick, 'Alexander Leighton'.

Alexander is almost always described as a non-Conformist Puritan. However, although he may have had ‘possible ties’ to and may have mingled with ‘London’s sectarian fringe,’ it is going too far to suggest, as Condick has done, that he was a member of Henry Jacob’s semi-Separatist church.⁸⁷ Alexander was not a Separatist.⁸⁸ Alexander stated that he had been arrested ‘in Black-Friers, coming from the Sermon’ and it may be that he worshipped at the Church of England church at Blackfriars of which the future Westminster Divine and Presbyterian Dr William Gouge (1575-1653) was minister.⁸⁹

Insofar as Alexander acquired any lasting reputation, it was as the martyred author of *Sions Plea*. Its publication had catastrophic consequences for him and his family and defined him as intemperate and intolerant in the eyes of most of his son’s future biographers.

Nevertheless, only Butler made any attempt to scrutinize what Alexander actually wrote but, even then, he did so cursorily and without considering whether any of Alexander’s arguments might have guided his son in his ecclesiastical career.⁹⁰ With this possibility in mind, the substance of Alexander’s arguments and the manner in which he made them will now be considered.

Sions Plea

Sions Plea was an extended argument for a root-and-branch extirpation of the hierarchy of the Church of England and its replacement with ‘the purities of Christs ordinances’.⁹¹

These were not explicitly defined and, as Foster points out, Alexander did not stipulate the form of church polity he would have substituted for Episcopacy.⁹² However, *Sions Plea*

⁸⁷ Foster, *Notes*, 18-19. Condick links Alexander to Jacob through his publishing connections (Condick, ‘Alexander Leighton’). Henry Jacob (1562/3-1624) was a semi-separatist minister based latterly in Blackfriars (Wright, ‘Jacob’; Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 7-14; Brachlow, *Communion of Saints*, 220-225).

⁸⁸ Condick, ‘Alexander Leighton’.

⁸⁹ *Epitome*, 87; ‘Speech of Sir Robert Heath’, xvii; Butler, *Life*, 33; Usher, ‘Gouge’.

⁹⁰ Butler, *Life*, 34-37.

⁹¹ *SP*, 6.

⁹² Foster, *Notes*, 19.

was not a manual of ecclesiastical government: it was a closely reasoned argument that the ‘ould rotten or plaugie house’ of Episcopacy should be ‘removed, or consumed with fire before a new Frame be set up’.⁹³ Insofar as he moved beyond his primary purpose, Alexander’s preferred alternative was clearly Presbyterianism.⁹⁴ Analysis of the substance of Alexander’s objections to ‘the Hierarchie’ of the Church of England is instructive. Not only does it enable a fuller understanding of the reasons why he wrote and why his writing provoked such a fierce reaction, but it also provides a backdrop against which to view Leighton’s later actions.

Alexander’s fundamental objection to bishops was that their existence distorted God’s plan for the government of His church. This was never intended to be ‘a Monarchie like unto the Kingdoms and Dominions of temporall Princes’.⁹⁵ Instead, the church was to be governed by elders, ruling and teaching. Bishops were teaching elders and were simply ministers like all others, with all having a voice in council. There was to be no hierarchy of ministers.⁹⁶ Bishops, as prelates, had no ‘place’ nor were ‘of anie use in Gods house’.⁹⁷ They were ‘the knobs & wens and bunchie popish flesh which beareth down, deformeth and deadeth the bodie of the Church’ and the only cure was ‘cutting off’.⁹⁸ By their exercise of diocesan power and their arrogation to themselves of the sole right to ordain ministers, they were tyrants doing the work of Satan. They betrayed the apostles from whom they claimed succession and were ‘assistants to the Pope in his universall government’.⁹⁹ Their assumption of ‘titles, power preheminance, office and courts,’ including ‘titles which are onely proper to Christe,’ revealed their papist agenda.¹⁰⁰ Their existence was a device by which ‘the Kingdome of Christ’ was subordinated to ‘the civill Kingdome’.¹⁰¹ In their arrogance, they would brook no challenge to the validity of their

⁹³ *SP*, 242.

⁹⁴ See pp. 52-53.

⁹⁵ *SP*, 7.

⁹⁶ *SP*, 7-8.

⁹⁷ *SP*, 10.

⁹⁸ *SP*, 11.

⁹⁹ *SP*, 11-13.

¹⁰⁰ *SP*, 16.

¹⁰¹ *SP*, 16, 313.

office even when it was based upon the word of God.¹⁰² For Alexander, ‘their Lordly pomp’ had to end; the bishops needed to ‘lay away their Lording, & do the worke of the Ministerie’ and make space for Christ ‘whom they have kept so long at the doore, to come in and reigne among us’.¹⁰³ They exalted themselves above the church, which was ‘Antichristian’.¹⁰⁴ To maintain themselves in power, the bishops had replaced elders and deacons, ‘Gods true Officers,’ with Episcopal counterfeits who implemented the hierarchy’s liturgical policies and kept out ‘holy Pastors’.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, their office was idolatrous being unwarranted in Scripture and they themselves encouraged ‘superstitious worship’ by insisting upon rites which had not been commanded by Christ.¹⁰⁶ They had downgraded preaching within worship.¹⁰⁷ Beyond the spiritual, greedy bishops had ‘extorted’ vast sums from the realm, the church and its people.¹⁰⁸ Having misled, deceived and dishonoured the king, they had intruded into the administration and great offices of the state and had usurped secular powers ‘in tyrannising over [the] soules and bodies’ of the people.¹⁰⁹

Consequently, Alexander believed that ‘the Hierarchie, or Government of the Lord Bishoppes and their dependent offices’ were responsible for ‘the ruine of religion’ and ‘the sinking of the state’.¹¹⁰ Their existence was the ‘maine nationall sinne’ which required to be ‘sought out and removed’.¹¹¹ Their offices were ‘unlawfull and Antichristian’ and were inconsistent with ‘soundnes of doctrine, sinceritie of Gods worship, holines of life, the glorious power of Christ’s government’ and ‘the prosperities of safetie of the common wealth’.¹¹² Despite their claims to legitimacy under the law of God, the prelacy was only a

¹⁰² *SP*, 16.

¹⁰³ *SP*, 257.

¹⁰⁴ *SP*, 281-283.

¹⁰⁵ *SP*, 123-124, 314-315.

¹⁰⁶ *SP*, 278, 318-319.

¹⁰⁷ *SP*, 327.

¹⁰⁸ *SP*, 121-122, 264.

¹⁰⁹ *SP*, 118-124, 272, 311-312.

¹¹⁰ *SP*, 1.

¹¹¹ *SP*, 2. The theme of punishment for national sin appeared in his earlier works e.g. *Against Stage Playes*, 3.

¹¹² *SP*, 3-4.

creation of the royal prerogative. What is more, obedience to the hierarchy of bishops was actually incompatible with ‘the loyaltie of obedience’ to the crown since the bishops abused what power they had been given ‘to the grievous vexation’ of the people and ‘the dishonouring’ of the king.¹¹³ As a consequence of their existence, the country had suffered ‘unparelled changes, bloudye troubles, devastations, desolations, persecutions of the truth, from forraines or domesticks’.¹¹⁴ All the ‘present evils of sinne & judgement’ which afflicted the country, as well as ‘the blacke desolation’ of Protestant churches abroad, were the offspring of ‘the Hierarchie’.¹¹⁵ In short, ‘Episcopall government [was] Antichristian, and opposite to the government of Christ’.¹¹⁶ Alexander prophesied that English bishops would not only ‘splitt our Ship upon the rock’ but also ‘rent the veyle of three Kingdomes’.¹¹⁷ Therefore, ‘the Hierarchie’ needed to be ‘removed’ and ‘the scepter of Christs government, namely Discipline’ given its true place.¹¹⁸ Only then would God restore his favour, the church and commonwealth be repaired, their enemies smitten and ‘a glorious prosperitie [...] rest upon Zion, King, state and commonwealth’.¹¹⁹

As noted above, Alexander did not offer a detailed description of his preferred scheme of church government. He preferred to talk of ‘Discipline’ and ‘the government of Christs house’, both of which, he claimed, pre-existed and had been usurped by Episcopacy.¹²⁰ Church ‘Discipline’ was defined by him as being ‘a power given by Christ to his Church, to teach, admonish, reprove, correct, yea to inflict the highest punishment of giving men over to Sathan, if they so deserve’.¹²¹ He believed that it was properly implemented by ‘the true and Lawfull Officers’ of the church, who were the elders.¹²² Hence the prelates hated

¹¹³ *SP*, 4.

¹¹⁴ *SP*, 5.

¹¹⁵ *SP*, 5.

¹¹⁶ *SP*, 191.

¹¹⁷ *SP*, 226.

¹¹⁸ *SP*, 5.

¹¹⁹ *SP*, 6.

¹²⁰ *SP*, 110-111, 242.

¹²¹ *SP*, 188.

¹²² *SP*, 188.

‘Discipline’ and denied the church the ‘good government’ by elders that Christ had ordained.¹²³ Instead they imposed ‘the bad government of the Beast’.¹²⁴

Despite the paucity of detail, it is clear that Presbyterianism was Alexander’s preferred form of church polity. He did not advocate Congregationalism. Nowhere did he suggest that a national Church of England was contrary to the will of God or that the godly should seek to live and worship outside it. Instead, his purpose was to save the Church of England from what he saw as the satanic grip of the bishops so that it could truly be the church that Christ intended it to be. He was a Puritan non-Conformist, not an Independent.

Furthermore, his sporadic references to Presbyterians indicated that he had a special regard for their scheme of ecclesiastical government. Alexander defended Presbyterians from accusations of disloyalty to the crown and antipathy to ecumenical councils.¹²⁵ He referred to Calvin, Beza and the English Presbyterian Thomas Cartwright as the ‘Learned, & worthy maintainers of the puritie of Christs ordinances, or opposers of the Romish trash, and Hierarchicall government’.¹²⁶ He argued admiringly that the Presbyterian Scottish Kirk had been the antithesis of the Episcopalian Church of England.¹²⁷ He quoted, with approval, King James VI’s 1590 description (when Alexander may still have been in Scotland) of Church of Scotland as being ‘as pure a Church (if not purer) as any, since the time of Christ’ and noted that the King had ‘thanked God, that it was his lott to live in it’.¹²⁸ Alexander claimed that the Scots had been protected by God against the power of Catholic France, so that they were eventually able to lay ‘the verie Coapstone of reformation’.¹²⁹ ‘Christs sacred sceptre’ had ‘swayed’ the Scots for fifty years from their reformation ‘without rent schisme or haeresie’.¹³⁰ This was in marked contrast to the English who were in the grip of the ‘Imperious Prelates.’¹³¹

¹²³ *SP*, 189.

¹²⁴ *SP*, 189.

¹²⁵ *SP*, 242, 262, 301.

¹²⁶ *SP*, 262. Thomas Cartwright (1534/5-1603) was theologian and early proponent of presbyterianism within the Church of England (Collinson, ‘Cartwright’).

¹²⁷ *SP*, 282.

¹²⁸ *SP*, 224. Also Calderwood, *History*, V, 106.

¹²⁹ *SP*, 226. Also Alexander Leighton, *Speculum Belli Sacri*, 118.

¹³⁰ *SP*, 20.

¹³¹ *SP*, 20-21.

Alexander did not directly address the Scottish situation as it was at the time of his writing. Although he cannot be placed in the country of his birth, there is sufficient evidence in both *Speculum Belli Sacri* and *Sions Plea* to indicate dissatisfaction. He would have known that while Reformed, Scotland was not completely Presbyterian. As Todd has observed, by the 1620s ‘the kirk operated *de facto* a system of prelacy within presbytery’ and, while the Presbyterian system of church courts was neither eradicated nor deprived of all of its functions, it was largely circumscribed by the power of the Scottish bishops.¹³² Alexander seemed to be referring to the imposition of bishops upon the Scottish church when he described Scotland as suffering ‘the stinking carkasse of the interred whore [...] raked out of the grave’.¹³³ Similarly, in *Sions Plea*, he bewailed the corruption of King James who, when exposed to the Church of England, forgot his commitment to ‘the Anti-Episcopall government (with which he was trained up from his cradle, and which by word and writ he had maintained) and promised to preserve at his comming out of Scotland’.¹³⁴

Yet, despite his extravagant denunciations, the remedies which Alexander proposed were measured and entirely non-violent. He asserted, and the prosecution at his trial accepted, that he had not called for personal injury to any bishop since it was ‘the evils of their callings’ and not the persons which he opposed.¹³⁵ His proposals were progressive, beginning with a call simply to recognise the faults of the prelacy, from which beginning the people could be educated ‘towards a holy hatred of the Prelates’.¹³⁶ He did not want the people to separate from the church but, instead, the church to be separated from the evils of prelacy.¹³⁷ The bishops were not above the church. They should be challenged from within the church and censured even if that meant a critic losing his ministry.¹³⁸ A minister who so feared reprisal that he would not challenge the hierarchy deserved to lose his position.¹³⁹

¹³² Todd, ‘Bishops’, 305-306.

¹³³ Alexander Leighton, *Speculum Belli Sacri*, 121-122.

¹³⁴ *SP*, 74-75.

¹³⁵ ‘Speech of Sir Robert Heath, 1, 4; *SP*, 81.

¹³⁶ *SP*, 269-280.

¹³⁷ *SP*, 281-281.

¹³⁸ *SP*, 286, 297.

¹³⁹ *SP*, 298.

Next, a ‘Councill’ should be called ‘wherein the authoritie of the Prelacie, their superioritie [...] their leiturgie, and maintenance, may be thorowly examined.’¹⁴⁰ Alexander gave little guidance as to the nature of such a council except that it should be under the guidance of ‘the word’ and lawful.¹⁴¹ Despite this absence of detail, the totality of Alexander’s discussion of councils bore a marked resemblance to the Presbyterian national or General Assembly.¹⁴² Indeed, he specifically defended Presbyterian synods against charges that, because they were ‘without an archbishop’, they were ‘but conventicles.’¹⁴³ If such a council could not be called because of opposition from the bishops, then the godly would have to gather themselves ‘in serious humiliation & reformation’ coming before the Lord with hearts ‘knitted’ together ‘in the band of love’.¹⁴⁴ This was a ‘speciall remedie’ but one appropriate for the gravity of the situation.¹⁴⁵ He drew a comparison with ‘the reformation of the State of Scotland’ when, led by a ‘mightie man of God’ (i.e. John Knox), the nobles and people ‘humbled and reformed’ themselves and ‘intreated’ God so that the Queen Mother and her French troops and the Papacy itself were removed from Scotland.¹⁴⁶ If these measures were not sufficient then the bishops should be starved of money, money which they themselves had stolen from the nation. Men only wanted to be bishops for the ‘delicious faire, gorgeous apparell, and pompous train’ not for the benefit of the church.¹⁴⁷ The final means for the removal of the bishops was the continued sitting of parliament ‘till the tenets of the Hierarchie be tryed, by God, and the Countrie, that is, by the Lawes of God, and the Land’.¹⁴⁸

This summary barely does justice to the complexity, scope and underlying erudition of Alexander’s 344 pages of argument. In an examination of ‘the place of theology amid the languages of politics’ in early Stuart ideological conflict, Prior has identified a number of intersections between sovereignty and constitutional theory and the ecclesiology of the

¹⁴⁰ *SP*, 301.

¹⁴¹ *SP*, 303.

¹⁴² *SP*, 301-329.

¹⁴³ *SP*, 306.

¹⁴⁴ *SP*, 330.

¹⁴⁵ *SP*, 331.

¹⁴⁶ *SP*, 332.

¹⁴⁷ *SP*, 334.

¹⁴⁸ *SP*, 337.

Church of England, a church ‘established’ by law.¹⁴⁹ Without going as far to as to maintain that the English Civil War was solely a religious war, he argues that ‘debate on religion could become the occasion for comment on politics’ and that it generated competing ‘narratives of civil and ecclesiastical authority,’ such as *Sions Plea*.¹⁵⁰ Alexander’s polemical stance is only properly understood within this context. Viewed in isolation, as Alexander tended to be by his son’s biographers, he was easily caricatured as an ill-tempered extremist. He is more sympathetically understood when he is given his proper place within the continuum of challenge to and defence of the Episcopalian polity of the Church of England. As an anti-Episcopalian critic, his work was predated by such Elizabethan forerunners as the Marprelate tracts of 1588-9 and succeeded by Bastwick, Burton and Prynne in the 1630s.¹⁵¹ When he strayed beyond theology to the state of the nation and the laws of the land, he was doing more than simply exaggerating his case. He addressed issues of politics, foreign policy and secular law because he needed to challenge such diverse concerns as the interface between royal and ecclesiastical authority and the legality of depriving non-Conforming ministers of their livings in order to challenge the bishops themselves.¹⁵² These were real problems which had arisen because ‘religion and politics inhabited the same sphere’.¹⁵³ In the scheme and scope of his arguments, he was following and responding to previous contributions from both sides. Rather than being denigrated and dismissed, Alexander’s complex and detailed contentions against Episcopacy were a meaningful contribution to an important and sophisticated debate that went to the heart of the relationships between church and state and between the Sovereign and his people.

Neither was the tone of Alexander’s contribution out of keeping with the tenor of this debate.¹⁵⁴ At his trial, Sir Robert Heath, the Attorney General, remarked sourly upon the

¹⁴⁹ Prior, ‘Ecclesiology’, 856, 858. Also Milton, *Catholic*, 449.

¹⁵⁰ Prior, ‘Ecclesiology’, 859-860.

¹⁵¹ John Bastwick (1595?-1654), Henry Burton (*bap.* 1578, *d.* 1647/8) and William Prynne (1600-1669) were Puritan, anti-Laudian controversialists (physician, minister and lawyer respectively) who attacked the hierarchy of bishops and who, having been tried together, suffered similar punishment to Alexander in the 1637 (Condick, ‘Bastwick’; Gibson, ‘Burton’; Lamont, ‘Prynne’).

¹⁵² Prior, ‘Ecclesiology’, 875-877.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 875, 884.

¹⁵⁴ Aikman, ‘Life’, ii; Blair, ‘Bibliography’, 419; Webster, *Godly Clergy*, 161, 310-312.

length of Alexander's arguments; a 'whole volume' without 'one discreet and temperate page in it'.¹⁵⁵ It is interesting to compare the language which Heath used to describe Alexander: he was 'exquisitely wicked and malicious', 'soe full of piety that he utterly forgets charity [...] the common fault of such fiery spirits', a liar, stupid, arrogant, prideful, treasonous, irreligious, 'brainsick', 'half-witted' and 'ignorant' and 'an ingrate viper'.¹⁵⁶ Heath's litany of insults was reflected in the works of anti-Presbyterian polemicists such as William Covell,¹⁵⁷ Francis White, Bishop of Ely,¹⁵⁸ Giles Widdowes,¹⁵⁹ Humphrey Sydenham,¹⁶⁰ Samuel Hoard¹⁶¹ and Christopher Dow.¹⁶² Of course, the severity of Alexander's punishment was even more eloquent of the bitterness which his book generated.

Yet, for all that he was a man of his time writing of the issues of his day in the manner of his co-disputants, Alexander's intervention was very dangerous for him because it was perceived by Charles I and Laud as dangerous for them. 'One consequence of the holistic view of church and commonwealth was that religious issues were very easily politicised' and personalised.¹⁶³ As Milton has remarked in his study of censorship in early-Stuart England:

Charles I and Archbishop Laud are notorious for having discerned the threat of puritan populism in a whole range of political and religious beliefs and patterns

¹⁵⁵ 'Speech of Sir Robert Heath', 1.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2, 4, 5-8.

¹⁵⁷ Covell, *A Modest and Reasonable Examination*, 35-8. Covell (d. 1613) was a Church of England clergyman and anti-Puritan writer (Wright, 'Covell').

¹⁵⁸ White vigorously condemned *Sions Plea* in the dedicatory epistle to his *Treatise of the Sabbath-Day*. White (1563/4-1638) was Bishop of Ely and a leading anti-Catholic polemicist and Laudian Arminian (Wadkins, 'White').

¹⁵⁹ Giles Widdowes (1588/9-1645) was a Church of England clergyman and supporter of Laudian innovations in church government and liturgy who disputed with Prynne (Hutton, 'Widdowes').

¹⁶⁰ Humphrey Sydenham (1591-c.1650) was a Calvinist, anti-Puritan controversialist (McGee, 'Sydenham').

¹⁶¹ Hoard, 37. Samuel Hoard (1599-1658/9) was a Calvinist turned Arminian, a Church of England clergyman and religious author (Greaves).

¹⁶² Dow, *Innovations*, 141, 180, 193-7.

¹⁶³ Prior, 'Ecclesiology', 868.

of behaviour where other contemporaries would have seen nothing of the kind.¹⁶⁴

They were able to manipulate the apparently objective criteria for what constituted a threat according to their own doctrinal position on any issue.¹⁶⁵ In their reaction to criticism, they were more extreme than James VI/I had been as evidenced by their ‘startling overreaction’ to *Sions Plea*.¹⁶⁶ They had no difficulty in characterising Alexander’s attack on the bishops as an attack on the king himself.¹⁶⁷ In short, to ‘reject the discipline of the church under the Bishops’ was to ‘reject the government of a kinge and interteyn a popular government’.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, the clandestine publication and unlicensed distribution in England of *Sions Plea* was a highly provocative challenge to Laud and to his king.¹⁶⁹ For obvious reasons, Alexander did not seek a licence to print *Sions Plea*. His anti-Episcopal, anti-ceremonial, anti-Arminian publication was essentially anti-Laudian and it would never have been granted a license in England.¹⁷⁰ So while few writers have felt able to justify the terrible punishments inflicted upon Alexander, there was a broad consensus that he had brought those consequences upon himself as one, ‘that dar’d to fly in the face of Majesty, and Abuse all that Adher’d to Church and Crown’.¹⁷¹

Leighton’s biographers were not alone in maligning Alexander. Even such a careful scholar as Milton has caricatured *Sions Plea* as ‘violently anti-episcopal’, while Foster dismissed its author as ‘just another pamphleteer, distinguished from the rest principally by a greater lack of caution’.¹⁷² Alexander’s style was certainly robust and provocative and

¹⁶⁴ Milton, ‘Licensing’, 626-627. Also Thompson, ‘Licensing’, 653-678.

¹⁶⁵ Milton, ‘Licensing’, 627.

¹⁶⁶ Bellany, 164.

¹⁶⁷ ‘Speech of Sir Robert Heath’, 1, 3, 9.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹⁶⁹ Thompson, ‘Licensing’, 662-663.

¹⁷⁰ Milton, ‘Licensing’, 644. Milton’s definition of Laudianism is adopted here: ‘The term Laudian is applied to all those clerics who were closely associated with Laud and who were unequivocal in their support for his ecclesiastical policies in the 1630’s. This agenda included anti-Sabbatarianism; the placing of the communion table at the east end of the church; the freeing of the clergy, their courts and their maintenance from lay control; and a general de-emphasis on preaching and forms of voluntary religion in favour of the “beauty of holiness”, greater ceremonial and more lavish church adornment’ (Milton, *Catholic*, 9).

¹⁷¹ An exception was Baron, *Just Defence of the Royal Martyr*, 108, 179.

¹⁷² Milton, *Catholic*, 521; Foster, *Notes*, 15.

there is an intolerant and self-righteous quality to his prose and to the illustrations which appear at the beginning of the book which is unattractive to modern eyes.¹⁷³ Yet, the critical question is not how we perceive Alexander but how he was perceived by his son. This will now be considered.

Leighton's relationship with his father

Leighton appears to have cared for and respected his father. His letter to his mother dated 12 March 1629 and written from Edinburgh is illustrative.¹⁷⁴ Apparently Leighton had received a brief letter from Alexander in which his father had warned of 'the danger that he would in all likelihood incur of the booke which he hath bin printing'; clearly a reference to *Sions Plea*. Consequently, Leighton was frightened for his father as well as being convinced of the validity of his cause and condemnatory of his opponents. He called upon God to 'frustrate the purpose of wicked men' and to 'appease the matter and limite the power of wicked men, who, if they could doe according to their desire against God's children, would make havock of them in a sudden'. He further desired God to 'stirr up' Alexander's supporters 'to prayer to god to defend and keepe his children and his cause, least the wicked getting too much sway cry out where is their God become'. Anticipating 'trouble', Leighton wrote that he and his family should 'sink' under it for:

a comfortable thing it is to suffer for the cause of God, and the greater the crosse be, if it be for righteousness, the greater comfort it may afford, and the greater honour it will be to goe patiently through with it, for it be an honour and blessedness to be reviled for Christ's sake, it is a far greater honour to be persecuted for his sake.¹⁷⁵

There is no hint that Leighton either resented his father's risk-taking or differed from his attack on the bishops of the Church of England. Nothing in the two other extant letters of

¹⁷³ Pierce, 'Anti-Episcopacy and Graphic Satire', 837-840.

¹⁷⁴ Butler, *Life*, 59-60. Leighton's letters of 6 May 1628 (TNA SP16/103/39), 12 March 1629 (TNA SP 16/138/10; *CSPD 1628-1629*, 486) and 20 May 1629 (TNA SP 16/142/114; *CSPD 1628-1629*, 554) are held in the National Archives, London. Together with Alexander's letter of 4 March 1629 (see p. 45), they were probably removed by Laud's agents when the Leighton home was searched after Alexander's arrest in 1629 (see p. 46).

¹⁷⁵ Butler, *Life*, 55-61.

1628-9 qualifies this impression of an affectionate and admiring son.¹⁷⁶ This closeness continued into adulthood. Alexander was present at Newbattle visiting his son at the time when Leighton signed the Solemn League and Covenant and the minutes of the Presbytery of Dalkeith record Leighton's trips to London to visit his father. Leighton is likely to have been in London when his father died there in 1649.¹⁷⁷

Aside from the testimony of his son, Alexander seems to have been an attractive figure. Bastwick proclaimed that 'his jests and drolleries quite won my heart'.¹⁷⁸ Even Twysden, the prisoner who had been so bitter about Alexander's demands for 'rent', 'parted with great kindness from Dr Leighton, the man being no ill-dispositioned person'.¹⁷⁹ Condick suggests that the fact that 'the Leighton family remained united and affectionate' was at least partly due to Alexander's personal charm.¹⁸⁰

There is no evidence that Leighton held any personal antipathy towards his father. It is almost inconceivable that Leighton was not affected by the suffering of his father and his family. Even in his hostility towards Alexander, Knox allowed that Leighton 'must have been sickened and infuriated' by his father's punishment.¹⁸¹ Alexander's physical torment is self-evident. In his *Epitome*, he recounted his anguish at being separated from his wife and children and he provided moving insights into the terror which his wife and younger children experienced at the hands of the authorities acting under Laud's direction.¹⁸² Condick has identified two poems written by him while incarcerated in the Fleet.¹⁸³ While 'not great poetry' they reveal a savagely honest appreciation of the damage done to his face and body and the revulsion that this would engender in others. He likened himself to St Francis and to the apostle Paul in grim recognition that suffering is often the calling of

¹⁷⁶ Secretan, 'Letters', 106-107.

¹⁷⁷ See pp. 59, 75, 160, 173.

¹⁷⁸ Bastwick, *Flagellum*, 69-70.

¹⁷⁹ Larking, 'Twysden's Journal', 175.

¹⁸⁰ Condick, 'Alexander Leighton'.

¹⁸¹ Knox, *Leighton*, 77.

¹⁸² *Epitome*, 17.

¹⁸³ Condick, 'Self-Revelation', 196-203.

the faithful follower of Jesus Christ.¹⁸⁴ Alexander represented ‘one of most extreme examples of Archbishop Laud’s ferocity’.¹⁸⁵ Even if Leighton had differed with his father on the question of church polity, it is difficult to envisage him being drawn towards Episcopalianism until many more years had passed.

Having reviewed Alexander’s life and writings and the evidence for his relationship with his son, the reasons why the majority of Leighton’s biographers felt the need to attack his father are easier to comprehend. Alexander seems to have been a much more attractive figure than he has been given credit for: courageous if rash, erudite if prolix, and non-violent if robust in his opinions. Furthermore, he was a martyred participant in a much larger debate in which it was his opponents who resorted to censorship, intimidation and terrible violence. Therefore, as these biographers wished to discount Alexander’s influence as early as possible for their own confessional purposes, they needed to repackage him as someone so unappealing that his saintly son would quickly have reacted against him and rejected his opinions.

Instead, when Alexander’s actions and arguments are examined, it is evident that, even when his son moved towards Episcopalianism in 1660-1661, there was much in his father’s understanding of the will of God for His church and its governance which Leighton carried into the office of bishop. It is quite possible that Leighton’s expression of Episcopacy would have met many of Alexander’s criteria for good and godly church government. While youthful support for a persecuted father did not mean that Leighton could not differ from Alexander in later years, there is much in Leighton’s later career which evinces Alexander’s lingering influence. As will be discussed in Chapters 3-5, Alexander continued to shape Leighton’s life and ecclesiastical career long after he had graduated from the Town College of Edinburgh. The next section addresses the state of the Scottish church when Leighton was a student there. As the narrative moves to the start of

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 202-203.

¹⁸⁵ Acheson, *Radical Puritans*, 31-32.

the first phase of Leighton's life in Scotland, it is instructive to note that Alexander was admired not only in England, but by contemporaries north of the border as well.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Booy, *Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington*, 121-122; Webster and Shipps, *Diary of Samuel Rogers*, 155; Row, *Historie*, 351-352.

From London to Edinburgh

This section plots the continuity and discontinuity in theological consensus and church polity and worship which Leighton experienced when he travelled north to Edinburgh. Leighton's journey was not just a separation from home and family and advancement to university-level education but also meant leaving behind the Puritans of Blackfriars for the theological context of a foreign country. Before Leighton arrived in Scotland in 1627, what he knew of the Kirk was hearsay. Now he was to have first-hand experience of a church which, by the 1620s, had become truly national. It dominated the religious life of the country, with church buildings and ministers in almost all lowland parishes and a significant presence in the Highlands and Islands.¹⁸⁷ Its ministers, predominantly university trained, were powerful local leaders and, acting in concert, they could have considerable regional and national influence. In the lowland parishes, the Church of Scotland directed the provision of education and care for the poor and also set and enforced standards of moral conduct and spiritual formation. Overseeing the church, diocese by diocese, were two archbishops, eleven bishops and the machinery of Episcopacy. Alongside and subordinate was a co-existent Presbyterian structure: kirk sessions in parishes and regional synods and presbyteries. There was also provision for a national General Assembly but, in the absence of royal warrant to do so, it had not met since 1618.

Theological Transition

That Alexander fits within the spectrum of early seventeenth-century English Puritanism is incontrovertible. There is no evidence that he encouraged his son to develop his faith much beyond the boundaries within which he himself was comfortable. What differences in theological climate did Leighton discover in Edinburgh?

¹⁸⁷ Kirk, *Patterns*, 486-487; Dawson, 'Calvinism and the Gaidhealtachd', 250.

This is not the place to debate whether the term ‘Puritan’ can properly be applied to Scotland.¹⁸⁸ However, the insights generated by that debate are of assistance here. In her ‘yes and no – but then again, yes’ contribution to the debate about Scottish Puritanism, Todd shows that there was no item on the English Puritan wish-list for reform which was not ticked in Scotland: abolition of saints and other holy days with only Sundays remaining on the liturgical calendar; abandonment of clerical vestments; removal of images and altars in church; simple vernacular liturgy with no equivalent (until 1637) of the English Book of Common Prayer; the elevation of preaching to a central place in worship; and, insistence on catechism and strict Sabbath observance enforced by the local kirk session which included the parish minister and also had primary responsibility for moral discipline and spiritual formation.¹⁸⁹ Todd opines that the religious ‘heat’ said to be a mark of English Puritanism was also ‘very real’ within the kirk, manifesting itself as ‘unusually fervent Protestant religiosity entailing anxious self-scrutiny for signs of election, along with individual devotion to sermons, Bible-reading and prayer’.¹⁹⁰

Mullan has demonstrated the existence of a commonality among ministers, both Presbyterian and Episcopalian, which he calls a ‘puritan brotherhood’, that transcended differences on issues of polity and kneeling at communion by its ‘shared understanding of the Bible and the immediacy of Holy Spirit’, its ‘moral austerity and emotional intensity of [...] religious experience’ and its common dedication ‘to the work of ministry, beginning with the preaching of the Spirit-inspired Word, and labouring for the conversion of sinners’.¹⁹¹ This was part of a substantial Calvinist consensus which existed across the Scottish church; an ‘almost unchallenged commitment to a reformed theology’ which ran from 1560 to well-beyond the Restoration of 1660.¹⁹² In Scotland, Arminianism was more a fear than a reality.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 1-12. Also Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, 402-412; Coffey, ‘Puritanism’, 67-90; Margo Todd, ‘Problem of Scotland’s Puritans’, 174-188; cf. Brown, ‘Review of Scottish Puritanism’, 396. Also Provand, *Puritanism*, 23.

¹⁸⁹ Todd, ‘Problem of Scotland’s Puritans’, 175; 178-181.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁹¹ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 44. Also Todd, ‘Bishops’ 302.

¹⁹² Mullan, ‘Theology’, 608-609; Coffey, ‘Puritanism’, 76; Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, 405.

¹⁹³ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 2; Mullan, ‘Theology’, 617; Mullan, ‘Arminianism’, 30.

When Leighton arrived in Edinburgh, therefore, he would have entered a theological milieu which would have been broadly similar to that of his father and consonant with his religious upbringing in London. This is hardly surprising for ‘zealous protestants in both lands had a strong affinity and formed a community of discourse’.¹⁹⁴

The Church of Scotland

During the late 1620s and the early 1630s, there was relative stability within the Church of Scotland.¹⁹⁵ This stability may have been uneasy and fragile; it may have been at pens drawn, but it existed nonetheless. Foster believes that ‘one of the most striking characteristics of the Jacobean church was its largely unspoken but deep commitment to unity’.¹⁹⁶ This is worthy of further examination. Insofar as the church remained a functioning, single institution within which ministers, elders and their fellow Scots who held divergent views on polity and liturgy could worship and witness, he is correct. Nonetheless, it was also a unity imposed by the state. To dissent openly was to risk expulsion from pulpit and manse: with no real alternatives on offer, most ministers preferred just to get on with their lives and their ministries, however disgruntled they might feel.¹⁹⁷ So, it is probably going too far to describe the church, as Todd does, as ‘markedly irenic’.¹⁹⁸ Although, Charles I eventually squandered even this unity, he had not yet begun to do so by the time Leighton graduated. Charles would later depart from his father’s policy of being willing to manipulate and bully the Church while never entirely ignoring its sensibilities, but his fatal attempt to introduce the Scottish Prayer Book unilaterally was still a few years off.¹⁹⁹ The apparent ecclesiastical calm of this period was possible because the fundamental issues of royal supremacy, and the form that supremacy should take within the church, had been settled, albeit temporarily.

¹⁹⁴ Coffey, ‘Puritanism’, 72. Also Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 5-6.

¹⁹⁵ Todd, ‘Bishops’, 301.

¹⁹⁶ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 203.

¹⁹⁷ MacDonald, ‘British Ecclesiastical Convergence’, 901.

¹⁹⁸ Todd, ‘Problem of Scotland’s Puritans’, 178.

¹⁹⁹ MacDonald, ‘Consultation and Consent’, 294; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 13. Cf. Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 201.

When Leighton arrived in Edinburgh, James VI/I had been dead for over two years but his ecclesiastical policies still lived on with, as yet, little interference from his son. From the turn of the seventeenth century James had gained considerable, although not complete, control over the Church of Scotland; enough that, in many important matters, it was effectively an arm of the state. Within the life of the church, this control was manifested principally in two areas: polity and worship. An important goal for James after 1603 was to achieve convergence,²⁰⁰ or at least congruity,²⁰¹ between the Churches of England and Scotland. In order to do so, he needed to move on these two aspects of Scottish church life.

James wanted his Scottish church to be obedient and his preferred way to achieve this was by controlling it through bishops, who were, in law and practice, his appointees.²⁰² He was opposed by those who were committed, to varying degrees, to the sole and unqualified headship of Jesus Christ over His church and to parity of ministers, which effectively meant government by committee free from royal influence. Various expressions of Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism had ebbed and flowed within the Kirk since 1560, but neither had ever succeeded in washing out the other entirely. They had mingled together in fluctuating concentrations. By the 1620s, a working compromise was in place.²⁰³ This was not to the satisfaction of those convinced of the exclusive divine mandate or political necessity of their preferred polity. Nevertheless, it did provide a working church for the people of Scotland as well as meeting ‘the practical need to reconcile the conflicting interests of various forces – the crown, the nobility, landholders, and different parties within the ministry’.²⁰⁴

However, this compromise was held in place by the balancing of competing forces. By 1612, James had rolled Episcopal government forward to its furthest pre-Restoration point. Bishops were crown-appointees and were not answerable to the General Assembly.

²⁰⁰ MacDonald, ‘British Ecclesiastical Convergence’, 889; Croft, *King James*, 164-165. Cf. MacDonald, *Jacobean Kirk*, 183-186.

²⁰¹ Morrill, *National Covenant*, 8-9; Morrill, ‘A British Patriarchy?’, 222-226; Smith, *History of the Modern British Isles*, 49.

²⁰² MacDonald, ‘British Ecclesiastical Convergence’, 887.

²⁰³ Todd, ‘Bishops’, 301.

²⁰⁴ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 199.

Permanent moderators of the synods and presbyteries within their dioceses, they were the dominant voices in these courts, just as the King had been in the three Assemblies held in 1616, 1617 and 1618, the only ones to take place between 1610 and 1638.²⁰⁵ As the controllers of stipends, they exercised considerable influence over individual ministers. Entry into the ministry or into a particular charge, like deprivation therefrom, were within the exclusive jurisdiction of the local bishop who was also charged with visitation and supervision. The supreme court of ecclesiastical appeal, the High Commission, was headed by the two archbishops.²⁰⁶ Ministers were required to swear obedience to both King and bishop – effectively an acknowledgement of royal supremacy.²⁰⁷ The King had reshaped the structure of the Church so that it could ‘operate without General Assemblies’ under the delegated authority of bishops. As MacDonald puts it, the Kirk’s ministers would not be allowed to run ‘their own show’.²⁰⁸ Until 1637, this mechanism of church government was held in suspension; unable to retreat against the royal will, unable to advance against sustained opposition within the Church at all levels. Locally, the operation of kirk sessions, which placed considerable power in the hands of the parish minister and elders, was encouraged. Regional presbyteries and synods were not suppressed and their work continued to be ‘of immense importance in establishing law and order within the bounds of their jurisdiction’.²⁰⁹ Yet, they functioned as part of an Episcopal church and, even if the Scottish bishops were not given the same revenues or power as those enjoyed by the bishops of the Church of England, they were in charge.²¹⁰

Guthry explained that once James VI/I had achieved ‘a uniformity in government,’ he then was able ‘to press that there might be an uniformity also in worship betwixt them.’²¹¹

Control of the words, structure and patterns of worship was a second effective means of

²⁰⁵ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 125.

²⁰⁶ MacDonald, ‘British Ecclesiastical Convergence’, 890.

²⁰⁷ MacDonald, *Jacobean Kirk*, 146.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

²⁰⁹ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 109.

²¹⁰ MacDonald, ‘British Ecclesiastical Convergence’, 889; Mullan, *Episcopacy in Scotland*, 113.

²¹¹ Guthry, *Memoirs*, 7-8. Henry Guthry (1600?-1676) was a Church of Scotland minister who had supported the National Covenant but opposed conventicling. Deposed after the failure of the Engagement, he became Bishop of Dunkeld after the Restoration (Stevenson, ‘Guthry’).

encouraging obedience and discouraging ‘individual divergence’.²¹² James achieved this in two tranches. The first was to legislate, initially through Parliament and then through the 1616 Aberdeen Assembly, that all ministers should celebrate communion on Easter Day. The second was the Five Articles of Perth, which were agreed by the 1618 Perth General Assembly and endorsed by Parliament in 1621.²¹³ In fact, it took James two attempts (the 1617 St Andrews Assembly as well as that at Perth) to drive his reforms through. His bishops felt the full brunt of his anger after what he saw as their failure to secure agreement to the Five Articles in 1617. The 1618 Assembly was firmly managed to assure success.²¹⁴

This was the high-point of James VI/I’s intervention in the Church of Scotland. It remained controversial among a section of the religious elite which comprised leading ministers and elders. A minority refused to obey any of the Articles and after about 1622 no real attempts to enforce conformity were made. The reality was that the Articles made very little difference to ordinary Sunday worship and only impacted at the infrequent celebrations of communion which, in many parts of the country, were only once a year.²¹⁵ That said, the relatively minor practical impact of the Five Articles should not be confused with their latent power as a symbol of royal intrusion into the church of Christ. They also, as Foster suggests, triggered ‘the creation of a permanent nonconforming party’.²¹⁶ Charles I was to discover this to his cost when he tried to introduce further liturgical reforms in 1637. Indeed, even during Leighton’s student days, Charles took actions which, with hindsight, revealed his medium-term intentions for the Church of Scotland. Deep concern about the Articles of Perth still lingered and, emboldened by the unofficial moratorium on enforcement, non-observance began to spread. In 1626, Charles indicated that he would forgive past failures to adhere to the Five Articles, but that, in the future, no minister was

²¹² MacDonald, ‘British Ecclesiastical Convergence’, 887.

²¹³ The Articles made five innovations: the requirement to kneel when receiving the elements of bread and wine at communion; the requirement to observe holy days (including Good Friday, Easter Day and Christmas Day); the requirement to be confirmed by a bishop; the allowing of private baptism; and the allowing of private communion (Calderwood, *History*, VII, 249).

²¹⁴ Fleming, *Scotland’s Supplication*, 40-42; Calderwood, *History*, VII, 332.

²¹⁵ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 3, 200-201. Private baptism and communion and confirmation appear to have been little employed. The observation of Easter Day communions and holy days was patchy (Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 183-186).

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 192.

to speak against either his authority in matters of church government or against the Articles themselves. All newly ordained ministers were to subscribe to a band of conformity.²¹⁷ A 1628 request by two Edinburgh ministers that they be excused kneeling to receive the communion elements was refused. Charles ordered that they be censured ‘exemplarlie, that others may be terrified from attempting the like’.²¹⁸

Just how Leighton perceived the Church of Scotland we cannot know for sure. It is more likely than not that he saw it through his father’s eyes: tainted by Episcopacy and ceremonies, thwarted in its godly mission by royal interference and misgoverned by bishops. Even if the tentacles of Laudianism did not have firm hold on the Kirk, there was much that a young man trained by a father such as Alexander would have found uncomfortable or even unpalatable. However, even if he did not recognise or value it at the time, Scotland gave Leighton his first experience of bishops and presbyteries existing and functioning in concert, if not in harmony. Such a Kirk might not represent the unalloyed will of God, but it was able to serve both the people of Scotland and the kingdom of heaven. This experience was to be supplemented by life in the Town College, where teachers of differing ecclesiastical opinions were able to co-operate and to deliver an excellent education to their students. The key factors were a determined sovereign and a determined core group within the ministry, each willing to compromise their preferred politics in the interests of a working compromise which enabled the Kirk to deliver worship, education and social cohesion all to the glory of God.

²¹⁷ Charles I to Bishop of Ross, 12 July 1626 (*Alexander, Stirling’s Register*, I, 62-63).

²¹⁸ Charles I to Archbishop of St Andrews, 11 July 1628 (*Alexander, Stirling’s Register*, I, 296). Also Charles I to Archbishop of St Andrews, 27 November 1628 (*Alexander, Stirling’s Register*, I, 324-325).

Student years – 1627-1631

Leighton was a student at the Town College of Edinburgh from 1627 until 1631 when he graduated Master of Arts. In general, scholars have shown little interest in this period. With the exception of Butler and Gribben, discussion is cursory, dismissive or non-existent. However, there is sufficient information available to allow a much fuller and more accurate reconstruction of Leighton's student years. This will show that Leighton's time in Edinburgh was significant and formative and that it should be not dismissed as inconsequential.

This section begins with a brief overview of the secondary literature. Next, the sources which cast light on Leighton's personal experiences are scrutinized. Then the nature and function of the Town College, as Leighton would have experienced it, are established. This is followed by an analysis of the curriculum. With this information, the relative value of Leighton's Edinburgh education is assessed. His teachers are then identified and, from the available information, their influences upon him considered. Finally, the significance of this period is evaluated.

Secondary Literature

Insofar as Leighton's student years are considered at all in the secondary literature, the College and its teachers are dismissed as unimportant in Leighton's formation, either because they were thought to have been second rate or because it was assumed that Leighton later realised the error of what he had been taught.

Burnet set the tone. In his unpublished 1683 manuscript, Burnet remarked that Alexander chose to send Leighton to Edinburgh because 'he looked on the English universities as much corrupted'.²¹⁹ However, in his published *Own Times*, Burnet did not mention the Town College or Edinburgh. Instead, he related that Alexander 'sent his eldest son Robert

²¹⁹ 1683, 9.

to be bred in Scotland'.²²⁰ It was in Scotland that Leighton was encouraged in 'the greatest aversion imaginable to the whole frame of the church of England'. However, Burnet recognised that Leighton received a grounding, at least, in Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Scripture while there.²²¹ Burnet continued his narrative by asserting that:

From Scotland his father sent him to travel. He spent some years in France, and spoke that language like one born there. He came afterwards and settled in Scotland, and had presbyterian ordination; but he quickly broke through the prejudices of his education.²²²

This equation of Leighton's Scottish education with Presbyterianism is likely to have been the reason why Burnet felt able to ignore the College as he did.

Jerment was the first to mention the Town College. He also offered a fuller summary of Leighton's student career, claiming that Leighton had 'a strong desire to serve God in the sacred ministry,' that 'his studies were directed with that important view' and that the boy 'soon commanded the admiration of his fellow students by his quick progress in the mathematics and philosophy, and by his familiar acquaintance with the learned languages,' as well as by his gentle, prudent personality. Jerment reported that Leighton 'finished his academical course with great success and applause'.²²³ Murray was the first to mention Leighton's teachers and, although his list is incomplete and inexact, his comments are worth noting. They were all of them men of 'respectability and of eminence', but two of them, namely, Rankin and Fairley, were supporters of Episcopacy; therefore, said Murray, it was 'not improbable that [they] exercised considerable influence on [his] future character and principles'.²²⁴ Murray was also the first to suggest that Leighton's student years might actually have begun to sway him away from Presbyterianism.²²⁵ Pearson referred to a now-untraceable letter in which one of Leighton's teachers congratulated Alexander 'on having a son, in whom Providence has made him abundant compensation for his sufferings'.²²⁶ By

²²⁰ *HMOT*, I, 239.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 239.

²²² *Ibid.*, 240.

²²³ Jerment, 'Life', vi.

²²⁴ Murray, 'Life', 43.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

²²⁶ Pearson, 'Life', xiv.

contrast, the hyper-Presbyterian Aikman condemned Leighton's College teachers as being 'chiefly men who were attached to the mongrel, semi-episcopal, semi-presbyterian latitudinarianism, which was the court religion of the time in Scotland'.²²⁷ Aikman thought that Leighton might have been attracted by the 'mixed system of Episcopacy then taught in the Scottish school'.²²⁸ Secretan's contribution was to draw attention to the surviving letters which Leighton wrote to his parents from Edinburgh.²²⁹ Tulloch was offhand about Leighton's teachers and Blaikie did not mention them or the College at all.²³⁰ Writing at about the same time, Blair introduced James Stewart, the Edinburgh merchant to whom Alexander entrusted his son, but offered little else.²³¹

Butler made more effort than any of his predecessors to unpack Leighton's College education. Despite his whimsical speculations and the inaccuracy of some of his facts, he offered new and valuable insights. Drawing upon the 1628 College regulations, he was the first biographer to allow that Leighton benefitted from his studies in Edinburgh.²³² He opined that there was no evidence to suggest that either Rankine or Fairley were likely to have influenced Leighton towards Episcopacy. Instead he was content to concede that it was 'most likely that Robert Leighton reached his later opinions by his own growth, and as result of contact with another environment'.²³³ Butler believed that Leighton was educated 'both at home and college' amid 'strong Puritanism' and concurred with Burnet's assessment that Leighton's upbringing had prejudiced him against the Church of England.²³⁴ He also believed that Leighton might have caught something of 'the glow' of 'the earnestness of the early Reformed Church' as well as an appreciation of the 'high ideal of the preacher's vocation'.²³⁵ In an endnote, Butler remarked that the training that Leighton received at the College 'certainly produced information, enlightenment and

²²⁷ Aikman, 'Life', iii.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, iv.

²²⁹ Secretan, 'Letters', 106-107.

²³⁰ Tulloch, 'Archbishop Leighton', 119-120; Blaikie, 'Archbishop Leighton', 175-208.

²³¹ Blair, *Selections*, 3.

²³² Butler, *Life*, 66.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 51.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 51-52. Also Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 165.

power in disputation’ and explained much that was in him.²³⁶ Nevertheless, Butler’s approach was too idiosyncratic, undeveloped and unsupported by reference to primary sources to convince subsequent biographers to give Leighton’s student years serious consideration. Niven, Cheyne and Knox all ignored Butler’s work.

Rather than discussing Edinburgh, Knox lamented that Alexander had not sent Robert to be educated at either Oxford or Cambridge and, fancifully visualising Leighton was ‘a Fellow of his college’, he claimed that ‘the Cambridge of the Cambridge Platonists was his spiritual and intellectual home’.²³⁷ Alexander’s decision to send his son to Edinburgh for higher education was, for Knox, ‘a fateful moment’ for which his admiration for Sir James Stewart was responsible. Knox dismissed the Town College as ‘no more than a college’ and as ‘almost a Protestant “house of religion”’.²³⁸ Adamson, the Principal, had ‘attained no great celebrity’ and ‘Leighton probably owed little to him’. His other teachers made no ‘lasting impression’ on him since they were all ‘mediocre men conformable to the royal designs’.²³⁹ Knox wrote off the curriculum since it did not specify his preferred classical Latin or Greek writers and concluded that ‘it was not at Edinburgh that Leighton acquired his remarkable familiarity with classical authors’.²⁴⁰

Gribben, like Butler, offers new perspectives on Leighton’s student years. He suggests that Alexander was ‘no doubt glad to see [his son] leave the volatile and divided world of London Puritans’.²⁴¹ Yet, believes Gribben, there was ‘confusion’ within the College which ‘was already an important forum for the ecclesiological debate that would shape the history’ of seventeenth century Scotland. However, Gribben’s assertion should be treated with caution since it is based solely upon his analysis of the circumstances of the expulsion of Samuel Rutherford from his post as Regent in 1626. Rutherford, says Gribben, was probably a victim of ‘internal college tensions’ because he was ‘a vigorous advocate of the

²³⁶ Knox, *Leighton*, 66.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 70-71.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 73-74.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁴¹ Gribben, ‘Leighton’, 159.

Presbyterian cause'.²⁴² Gribben is on safer ground in contrasting the other faculty members as 'generally political pragmatists'.²⁴³

Confessional imperatives dictated that, until Butler in 1903, no biographer did more than glance at this important period of Leighton's life. Butler and Gribben have shown that there is much to be discovered about Leighton's student years.

Leighton as student

Robert Leighton would have arrived in Edinburgh in time to enrol for the start of the 1627 academic year which began on 1 October. Although there is no compelling evidence to support Gribben's belief that Alexander wanted his son safely out of London, it was certainly the father's choice that Leighton study at the Town College.²⁴⁴ In *Sions Plea*, written not long after Leighton left home, Alexander grumbled that:

if our Children prove Schollers, at the first entry to the University, they must be matriculated with an unlawfull oath, and be nusled [nursed?] in Popish practices or [there is] no proceeding for them.²⁴⁵

Leaving aside the fact that a son of Alexander Leighton might not have been entirely welcome at either Oxford or Cambridge, graduation from either would have entailed Leighton's swearing the oaths of allegiance and supremacy and subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. He would also have been exposed to King James' 1619 requirements that students worship according to the Anglican rite which, for Alexander, was becoming rather

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 160-161. Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661), Church of Scotland minister and university teacher and administrator. A leading Covenanter and Protestor and a Scots Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, Rutherford was arguably the greatest theologian of Scotland's so-called Second Reformation. The ostensible reason for his dismissal from the Town College in 1626 was fornication with his future wife (Coffey, 'Rutherford'; Coffey, *Politics*, 37-38; Isbell, 'Rutherford', 735-736).

²⁴³ Gribben, 'Leighton', 161.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 159.

²⁴⁵ *SP*, 145.

too influenced by William Laud.²⁴⁶ So like many other dissenters, Alexander decided that his son should be educated outside England.²⁴⁷

The choice of the Town College of Edinburgh was made because of Alexander's friendship with a young Edinburgh merchant, James Stewart (1608-1681) whom he had met when the latter had visited London on business.²⁴⁸ According to Stewart, in Leighton's presence, Alexander 'entreated' Stewart to 'train [Leighton] up in the true presbyterian forme'. Leighton, for his part, was 'strictly enjoined, with his father's blessing, to be steady in that way'. Thus, Alexander put Robert under James Stewart's 'patronage for his education at Edinburgh' and his son attended the College 'under Sir James Stewart's eye'.²⁴⁹ At first glance, the choice of James Stewart as his son's 'patron' was a surprising one since he was only two or three years older than Robert. Nevertheless, Alexander's decision reveals much about his ambition for his son. Not only was James gifted with great commercial and political acumen, but he was a convinced Presbyterian. Despite his relative youth, James Stewart seems to have been a fond and attentive guardian and he was soon called upon to help his charge out of trouble. Yet Stewart was not uncritical of Leighton, observing of him later in life that he was:

a man of learning, elocution, and eminent piety, and was a sanct traveling for heaven, sincerely but in dubious steps as a ship loaded with rich cargoe sailing to harbour, but without ballest, which, though she attain to port and harbour was in danger of shipwrack.²⁵⁰

In his first, or bejan, year, Leighton was expelled from the College. This was the disproportionate penalty for penning 'a piece of false witt then fashionable' which was, in fact, a piece of satirical doggerel lampooning the Provost of Edinburgh, David

²⁴⁶ Porter, 'University and Society', 49; Twigg, *University of Cambridge*, 9.

²⁴⁷ Shepherd, 'University Life', 4.

²⁴⁸ Sir James Stewart of Kirkfield and Coltness (1608-1681) was a successful merchant and banker in Edinburgh. He represented Edinburgh in the Scottish Parliament and was Lord Provost in 1649, 1650, 1658 and 1659. A leading Covenanter and Protestor, he presided over the execution of Montrose. At the Restoration, he was deprived of office and imprisoned before being pardoned in 1671 (*Coltness*, 2-5, 14-15, 19-21, 29-39, 337-342; Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 90, 291-293, 294, 297, 342).

²⁴⁹ *Coltness*, 22.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

Aikenhead.²⁵¹ Commenting unkindly on Aikenhead's pimply face, it ran something like this:

If what is said were justly said,
That's Head of Aiken timber's made,
His fyrie face had long agoe
Sett all his head in blazing glow.²⁵²

Denham noted that James Stewart was out of Edinburgh at the time of Leighton's expulsion but that, upon his return, had Leighton 'reponed'.²⁵³

This episode reveals a streak of mischief in Leighton's character. It also caused Leighton to write one of three letters in his hand which survive from this period, that of 6 May 1628.²⁵⁴ Addressed to his father, its tone was contrite and self-exculpatory. He told his father that the Principal and the Regents had not thought it 'so heinous a thing.' 'Verses of apology' had been written; whether by Leighton or not, is unclear.²⁵⁵ Leighton expressed sorrow before reminding his father of his own advice that good could be reaped even from adversity. He, too, hoped 'to reap some good out' of the episode and asked Alexander to pray for him that he might be kept 'from like falls'. He hoped not to grieve God or his 'dear parents' again.

Leighton graduated on 23 July 1631 and, signing the Laureation Album as 'Robertus Leighton', he subscribed to the 'sponsio' or 1581 Confession of Faith.²⁵⁶

²⁵¹ *Coltness*, 21-22. Also Stewart, *Urban Politics*, 96, 341.

²⁵² *Coltness*, 22. Other versions are extant (Secretan, 'Letters' 106-107; 'Fugitive Pieces' 3; Butler, *Life*, 54; 'Archbishop Leighton and Provost Aikenhead', 150-151). Verses of apology, supposedly written by Leighton, appear in Maidment, *Analecta*, I, 304-305. Butler attributes other verses to Leighton (57), but the evidence connecting him to them is flimsy (*Various Pieces*, vi, 1).

²⁵³ *Coltness*, 22.

²⁵⁴ Butler, *Life*, 55-56.

²⁵⁵ 'Fugitive Pieces', 3-4; Butler, *Life*, 54-55.

²⁵⁶ *Catalogue of the Graduates*, 46.

Town College of Edinburgh

The Town College was established in 1583 by the civic administration of Edinburgh as a Protestant college capable of offering ‘godly’ education in ‘philosophie theologie and humanitie’.²⁵⁷ The first after the Scottish Reformation, the College was one of three such late sixteenth-century foundations in Scotland.²⁵⁸ Together, these formed the Scottish expression of a rapid, Europe-wide expansion in contemporary higher education, both Catholic and Protestant, the purpose of which was the regional consolidation of their respective expressions of the Christian faith.²⁵⁹ A common factor, even if interference was limited in practice, was their subordination not to the local or national church but to the administrations, royal or magisterial, which set them up.²⁶⁰ The Town College shared many similarities with the French Huguenot academies and, like them, was rooted in the model of the Genevan Academy which had been founded in 1558.²⁶¹ However, unlike the Genevan Academy, the Town College was degree-conferring from its inception, although this only received overt royal endorsement in 1621.²⁶²

The College’s foundation received royal impetus through sporadic and limited reallocation of resources in its favour in 1567, 1582, 1584 and 1612.²⁶³ Although James VI/I decided in 1617 that the Town College was ‘worthy to be honoured’ with his name, for most purposes it seems to have continued to be the Town College.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, local funding avoided dependence on the monarch and jealous supervision by the Town Council discouraged his interference.²⁶⁵ This relative independence from royal influence may have been another factor in Alexander’s decision to send his son to be educated in Edinburgh.

²⁵⁷ *Charters 1583-1858*, 48-52. Also Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 201, 203; Lynch, ‘Creation of a College’, 4-6; Shepherd, ‘University Life’, 4, 13.

²⁵⁸ The others were in Fraserburgh (1592) and New Aberdeen (Marischal College (1593)).

²⁵⁹ Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 201-201; Maag, *Seminary or University?*, 1; Lynch, ‘Creation of a College’, 4.

²⁶⁰ Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 201-202.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 202-203, 249.

²⁶² Maag, *Seminary or University?*, 121, 190; *Charters 1583-1858*, 48; Horn, *University of Edinburgh*, 6.

²⁶³ *Charters 1583-1858*, 2-45.

²⁶⁴ Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 70-71; *Charters 1583-1858*, 48-52.

²⁶⁵ *Charters 1583-1858*, 49, 106-108, Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 233, 249-250; Lynch, ‘Creation of a College’, 3, 18; Shepherd, ‘University Life’, 1.

Curriculum

The basic shape and content of Leighton's studies was outlined in the College regulations of 3 December 1628.²⁶⁶ In fact, they reflected the curriculum as it had been followed for many years and quite possibly from the College's foundation in 1583.²⁶⁷ The regulations reveal that Leighton's studies would have been founded upon regular periods of revision and testing and frequent disputations and presentations. The first goal was that all students should have a firm grounding in both Latin and Greek, the latter gained through the study of the New Testament and the works of Isocrates, Phocilides, Hesiod and Homer.²⁶⁸ Ramist logic was a topic only in the first year, apparently a propaedeutic course to provide a basis for logical disputation before moving on to the study of "real logic" in the shape of Aristotle', as Reid describes it.²⁶⁹ This was delivered in the second year through study of Aristotle's Organanon, with particular reference to the Prior Analytics, Topics and Sophistical Refutations, and Porphyry's Isagoge. Arithmetic was also taught in second year together with further Latin and Greek exercises.²⁷⁰ Third year studies included Hebrew and additional work on Aristotelian logic through reading the Posterior Analytics. Aristotle was further mined for instruction on ethics and natural philosophy.²⁷¹ The heavy Aristotelian emphasis continued into the fourth year as the class studied cosmology and physics.²⁷² Unsurprisingly, this was reflected in the examination regulations.²⁷³ The printed theses defended corporately by Leighton's 1631 graduating class, which covered logic, ethics and natural philosophy, likewise mirrored this Aristotelian bias.²⁷⁴ Alongside these studies were theological courses based upon initially 'the Catechisme' and then, in years three and

²⁶⁶ *Charters 1583-1858*, pp. 60-72, 110-125.

²⁶⁷ Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 210; *Charters 1583-1858*, 55-58.

²⁶⁸ *Charters 1583-1858*, 66, 110-111.

²⁶⁹ Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 210.

²⁷⁰ *Charters 1583-1858*, 60, 111-112.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 61-62, 112-113.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 62-63, 113-114.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 115-117.

²⁷⁴ Rankine, *Theses Philosophicae*.

four, on ‘the commoun plaices of Theologie mixing thairwith some doctrine of the contraversies’.²⁷⁵

Feingold has established that the regulations governing the curriculum for an early modern university are unlikely to have circumscribed the range of teaching within a subject or, indeed, the range of subjects themselves. Instead such regulations set the basic curriculum leaving individual teachers scope to develop their own interests and direct their students beyond the core texts.²⁷⁶ There is evidence that Leighton’s Edinburgh teachers, especially senior and accomplished scholars such as Adamson, Charteris and Sharpe, would have taught in similar fashion.²⁷⁷

Reid opines that the Town College’s provision of ‘cheap and effective education’ to the sons of Edinburgh and the surrounding area could not be matched by the older universities. He identifies the Edinburgh’s Town College and Aberdeen’s Marischal College as being, together, ‘the greatest success story in early-modern Scottish education.’²⁷⁸ This is borne out by the enrolment figures which, between 1601 and 1634, rose by about a third.²⁷⁹ Reid characterises the education offered by the Town College under its first principal, Robert Rollock, as both practical and rigorous, designed through repetition and memorisation of key texts, sustained language training and the honing of rhetorical skills to equip its students for the Reformed ministry or a career in law or administration.²⁸⁰ As noted above, there is no reason to believe that the studies undertaken by Leighton thirty-five years after Rollock’s death were essentially different or that, as a 1631 graduate, he left the College any less well-equipped.

²⁷⁵ *Charters 1583-1858*, 60-63, 111-114. The catechism is likely to have been that published by the Principal, John Adamson, in 1627.

²⁷⁶ Feingold, ‘Aristotle’, 136-138.

²⁷⁷ Forbes, ‘Philosophy’, 30-35.

²⁷⁸ Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 266.

²⁷⁹ Stevenson, *King’s College*, 90.

²⁸⁰ Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 212. Robert Rollock (c. 1555-1599) was a minister, first Principal of the Town College and a biblical commentator. Having studied and taught at St Andrews he moved to Edinburgh in 1583 (Kirk, ‘Rollock’; Isbell, ‘Rollock’, 726).

Value to Leighton

Leighton's education at the Town College may not have impressed later biographers but it compared with any provided by a northern European university at that time. With regard to the core content of its curriculum, the College was sailing in the mainstream of early-modern, European intellectual development. Although the flow of ideas was far from stagnant, both Catholic and Protestant universities in northern Europe continued to emphasize scholastic method and Aristotelian terminology and methodology as the basis for learning and debate.²⁸¹

As Principal of the Town College from 1653 to 1661, Leighton had little patience with scholasticism.²⁸² For a prospective minister of a Reformed church, whether Presbyterian or Episcopalian, and a future teacher of Reformed doctrine, familiarity with and the ability to handle Protestant scholastic method was invaluable to Leighton, even if he was later to reject it. Properly understood, scholasticism was not a system of beliefs but a:

relatively uniform method of exposition, with its clear structure, its patterns of reasoning and standard practices of making distinctions, neatly dividing and subdividing topics, its brief citation of texts, its monotonous use of formulae, and its impersonality of style.²⁸³

So, Muller argues, it was neither 'determinative of doctrine nor determined by doctrine' and when deployed 'scholastic method did not determine the result'.²⁸⁴ It evolved into a primary tool used to express and develop early-modern Protestantism, not least in Scotland. Locally, leading Scottish ministers and theologians had a 'keen appetite' for Reformed scholastic theology from across Europe.²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 234, 261, 270; Muller, *Dogmatics*, I, 196, 361-367; Brockliss, 'Curricula', 582; Maag, *Seminary or University?*, 36, 38-39.

²⁸² See pp. 202, 222.

²⁸³ Muller, *Dogmatics*, I, 35. Also James, 'Peter Martyr Vermigli', 66.

²⁸⁴ Muller, *After Calvin*, 82.

²⁸⁵ Ryken, 'Scottish Reformed Scholasticism', 198, 204.

As his university lectures and addresses make clear, Leighton was not uncritical of the continuing influence of Aristotle upon theological study.²⁸⁶ Yet, as Muller has observed, the ‘intellectual hegemony of modified Christian Aristotelianism’ remained across Europe, both Catholic and Protestant.²⁸⁷ Aristotelianism was not abandoned but was revisited through better texts and critical interplay with the ideas of other ancient philosophers and more recent humanist learning. With reference to Oxford and Cambridge, Aristotelianism has been described as being the ‘the old skin into which new wine was poured’.²⁸⁸ Despite the suspicion of earlier Reformers, Aristotelianism continued, throughout Leighton’s lifetime, to provide ‘the norms of classical logic and rhetoric’ and to provide tools which helped Protestants to understand God and His world. Indeed, Muller argues that it is more accurate to view the attitude of the first Reformers as a hyperbolic expression of their recognition that philosophy, when overused or abused, could lead to ‘excessive speculation and abuse of reason in theological matters’.²⁸⁹ So Protestant scholars continued to use Aristotelian logic and rhetoric as means toward a clearer understanding of the substance of their faith, albeit within the circumscriptions imposed by their understanding of divine revelation and, in particular, the supremacy of scripture. All Scottish universities afforded Aristotle the function of ‘central fount of knowledge’ and by the 1620s non-Aristotelian logic, not least Ramism, had a limited place in the curriculum.²⁹⁰ Nevertheless, as is apparent from the humanist *ad fontes* emphasis on languages evident in the Edinburgh curriculum, students were not only encouraged and equipped to study Aristotle’s works in their original Greek, but were eased away from the limitations of medieval commentators.²⁹¹ Thus, students trained at Scottish universities received a higher education which matched the generally accepted standards and emphases of early-modern European higher education.²⁹²

²⁸⁶ See p. 223.

²⁸⁷ Muller, *Dogmatics*, I, 367; Goudriaan, *Reformed Orthodoxy*, 28-36, 325-326.

²⁸⁸ Feingold, ‘Mathematical’, 393-394. Also Brooke, ‘Syllabus, Religion and Politics’, 513-514.

²⁸⁹ Muller, *Dogmatics*, I, 367

²⁹⁰ Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 256-7. Also Forbes, ‘Philosophy’, 30-33.

²⁹¹ Stevenson, *King’s College*, 42.

²⁹² Muller, *After Calvin*, 59-60.

Doubtless Leighton continued to read and study widely throughout the rest of his life. He did so from the foundation of his Edinburgh studies through which he received an education of the scope and standard typically offered across northern Europe in both Protestant and Catholic universities. At the Town College he was trained to take his place within a living and constantly evolving theological tradition. When he subsequently became Principal in 1653, he seems not to have seen any necessity to innovate upon the basic curriculum under which he had been taught twenty and more years before.

Leighton's Teachers

The College Principal, who was also the *primarius* Professor of Divinity, the second Professor of Divinity and his class Regent all had direct involvement in teaching Leighton. None of the available evidence suggests that they were anything other than capable scholars. Within Scotland, they were men of considerable consequence, the Principal and Professor in particular. Leighton seems to have been a diligent student who would have listened carefully to his teachers. It is highly unlikely that they did not just educate Leighton but influenced him in other ways as well. However circumspect or politic his teachers may have been in expressing their views on theological issues, such as church polity, the possibility cannot be discounted that the opinions of individual teachers were communicated to their students.

The class Regent, Robert Rankine, was the least significant scholar to teach Leighton. However, Leighton would have spent most time with him. At this period in the College's development a 'regent' was a tutor, generally a graduate of the College and comparatively ill-paid, who did not specialise in one subject but took a class or year group through all subjects required for graduation for all four years from enrolment.²⁹³ A regent was with his class, often from early morning until late evening, seven days a week throughout the academic year. He taught and supervised in the classroom, acted as examiner, led daily prayers, ensured that his charges attended church on the Lord's Day and oversaw their

²⁹³ Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 61, 65; Reid, *Humanism and Calvinism*, 26, 269; Shepherd, 'University Life', 4.

recreation time ‘in the fields’.²⁹⁴ A 1622 College Graduate, Rankine succeeded Fairley as regent in 1625.²⁹⁵ Although he was not the preferred candidate of the Principal, the Town Provost succeeded in having him appointed because he was ‘a very able young man, and son of a burgesse’ and had ‘spent two years in the University of Cambridge’.²⁹⁶ In 1627, he began as Regent of the ‘43rd class’ among whose forty-three members was Leighton.²⁹⁷ On 26 September 1638, along with one other Regent, he was deposed by the Town Council for ‘obstinately’ refusing to subscribe the National Covenant.²⁹⁸ What happened to Rankine thereafter is not clear.

John Adamson (1576-1651?) was Principal throughout Leighton’s time at the Town College.²⁹⁹ He would have been well-known to Leighton, a figure of authority and influence. The 1628 College regulations provided that, in addition to the Principal’s duties of administration and oversight, he should lead daily ‘public prayers unto God’ at the ‘public meeting of all the scholars’. Furthermore, every Wednesday, he was to instruct the students in Scripture and the Christian life. So Leighton would have heard Adamson lead prayers and preach every week of the academic year.³⁰⁰ In addition, Adamson was also a regular preacher at the ‘Colledge Kirk’ in Edinburgh which his students attended every Lord’s Day.³⁰¹

Adamson was a serious scholar and a significant church politician as well as a university teacher and administrator. Principal of the Town College of Edinburgh from 1623 until 1651, which was probably the year of his death, his successor was Leighton himself. Born in 1576, the son of a provost of Perth, Adamson graduated MA from Edinburgh in 1597 and was a regent in philosophy there from 1598 to 1606.³⁰² He subsequently served as

²⁹⁴ *Charters 1583-1858*, 60-71, 110-122.

²⁹⁵ Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 100.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 102-103. Also Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 83-84.

²⁹⁷ Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 118.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 133. Also *Baillie*, I, 64, 91, 110-111; *WD 1632-1639*, 329; Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 106-107.

²⁹⁹ Handley, ‘Adamson’.

³⁰⁰ *Charters 1583-1858*, 65-66, 120, 124.

³⁰¹ Row, *Historie*, 353. This was the town’s Trinity Church (*FES*, I, 125).

³⁰² Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 42, 56, 62; Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 29.

parish minister in North Berwick and then, from 1609, at Liberton until his return to the Town College as principal.³⁰³ Adamson was a leader of the 1616 Aberdeen General Assembly, one of only three Assemblies held between 1610 and 1638. Although it was subsequently condemned by the 1638 Glasgow Assembly, Foster believes that the 1616 Assembly was ‘a notable example of the achievements which such an assembly could make in improving the ordinary administration of the church’ and that it showed what might have been achieved by bishops and presbyteries working together.³⁰⁴ Among the measures adopted in 1616 was ‘a true and simple Confession of Faith’, in the drafting of which Adamson was involved.³⁰⁵ Solidly Calvinist and ‘admirably suited for disciplinary purposes’ the Aberdeen Confession of Faith appears to have been acceptable to the wider church until its expurgation in 1638.³⁰⁶ Adamson was also appointed to committees tasked with preparing a new catechism and a new ‘uniforme ordour of Liturgie or Divyne Service’ although they appear not to have produced the required documents.³⁰⁷ To general admiration, Adamson presided over the public disputation held at Stirling Castle before James VI in 1617 to mark his return to Scotland.³⁰⁸ Adamson was closely involved in preparing the welcome for Charles I’s entry into Edinburgh in June 1633. Adamson produced a number of published works in Scots and Latin, prose and verse including a Latin catechism for his students. Other indications of Adamson’s standing included his being entrusted by the earl of Angus with the religious education of his son in 1629 and by the Scottish Privy Council with examining several Latin grammars in the early 1630s.³⁰⁹

Adamson’s predecessor as principal, Robert Boyd (1578-1627), had served for only a few weeks (December 1622 - January 1623) before he was forced to resign by the king.³¹⁰ Boyd, an opponent of Episcopalianism, had offended James with his opposition to the

³⁰³ Handley, ‘Adamson’; Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 97.

³⁰⁴ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 132; *A&P*, III, li.

³⁰⁵ *A&P*, III, 1125, 1127. Also Scott, *Apologetical Narration*, 243; Calderwood, *History*, VII, 187; cf. McCrie, *Confessions*, 29-30.

³⁰⁶ Foster, *Church Before the Covenants*, 130. Also *A&P*, III, 1113-1119;.

³⁰⁷ *A&P*, 1127-1128; Also Fleming, *Scotland’s Supplication*, 47-48.

³⁰⁸ Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 82-85; Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 65-71.

³⁰⁹ Handley, ‘Adamson’.

³¹⁰ Marshall, ‘Boyd’; Kirk, ‘Robert Boyd’, 92.

liturgical innovations contained in the 1618 Articles of Perth.³¹¹ Adamson had served as a regent ‘with great commendation’ and his unanimous appointment as Principal by the Town Council in 1623 indicates that they were confident that he would not incur royal displeasure by overt opposition to James’s ecclesiastical policies.³¹² Bower believed that to secure his appointment, Adamson must have commended himself both to the King’s advisors, including the bishops, and to the Town Council and, therefore, cannot have been an open opponent of Episcopalianism.³¹³ Grant asserted that Adamson was ‘a courtier as well as a scholar’ who had commended himself to the King through the 1617 Stirling disputation.³¹⁴ Nevertheless, Adamson also had considerable merit as a scholar and as an administrator. Bower recorded that Adamson was ‘universally admitted to have been a man of genius’ and ‘of extensive learning.’³¹⁵ As Principal, he was not only ‘of a very active mind, and very expert in the management of business’ and highly thought of by Spottiswoode, Archbishop of St Andrews, but also possessed of ‘great prudence and moderation’, qualities which enabled the College to avoid being caught up in the difficulties of the time.³¹⁶ Perhaps this was his reason for agreeing, in 1634, to give the Bishop of Edinburgh written assurance that he would celebrate the sacrament of communion on Easter Day and serve each worshipper with his ‘awin hands’ having first taken it himself upon his knees. This assurance was also given by Fairley and other Edinburgh ministers.³¹⁷

However, all the available evidence points to Adamson becoming a convinced, although moderate, Covenanter in 1638.³¹⁸ He wrote against ‘the corruptions of the books of Service, Canons, Ordination and High Commission’ and, on 21 January 1638, preached that it was ‘papal, antichristian, tyrannical to any bishops to do anything in God's matters

³¹¹ Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 176.

³¹² Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 97; Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 79-80.

³¹³ Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 153-154.

³¹⁴ Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 245.

³¹⁵ Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 223-224.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 153-155, 223-224.

³¹⁷ Row, *Historie*, 374-375.

³¹⁸ Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, 51.

without consent of the whole church'.³¹⁹ From the pulpit of Greyfriars, Adamson was among those ministers who preached in Edinburgh churches on 22 February 1638 in favour of the 1581 Negative Confession and in opposition to the King's proclamation condemning the supplicants against the 1637 Prayer Book.³²⁰ In a March 1638 letter, an Episcopalian Edinburgh minister identified him as a leader in the persecution of those who refused to sign the National Covenant.³²¹ A prime mover in consolidating Covenanting control of the Church, he played a leading part in the 1638 Glasgow General Assembly.³²² He represented the Town College at subsequent Assemblies, being considered for the post of Moderator on a number of occasions.³²³ He was a regular member of Commissions of Assemblies throughout the 1640s.³²⁴ In 1647, he was appointed to a team tasked with revising 'the Paraphrase of the Psalmes sent from England'.³²⁵ Without offering any supporting evidence, Makey suggests that Adamson was sympathetic to the 1647/8 Engagement.³²⁶

During the period 1627-1631, three men held the post of second Professor of Divinity who was tasked with teaching the students 'the right method of learning Theology; what they should read first, or at the beginning and what is necessary afterwards; and in all things which they should chiefly exercise themselves in'.³²⁷ This was to be done by twice-weekly public lectures, by the Professor's presence at a weekly 'exercise in Scots of the students in Theology' and by moderating a weekly 'disputation' to be held in private during which a student was to 'make trial privately in Latin upon some head of Theology'. He was also

³¹⁹ *Baillie*, I, 148. Also *WD 1632-1639*, 306.

³²⁰ *Baillie*, I, 52.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 463-464.

³²² *RKS*, 19, 22, 138-139, 149, 152, 168, 262, 286; Gordon, *History* II, 29, 127; III, 50, 218; Dalziel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 110; *Baillie*, I, 122, 130, 137 and 147-148.

³²³ *Baillie*, I, 122, 252, 363; *RKS*, 304.

³²⁴ *Baillie*, II, 85; III, 543; Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, 92; *RCGACS 1646-1647*, 3, 7, 16, 20, 21, 27, 37, 77, 102, 146, 153, 156, 168, 173, 191-192, 282, 301, 318, 343, 349, 367, 384, 415, 459, 475, 489, 514, 534, 570; *RCGACS 1648-1649*, 3, 176, 295, 300, 339.

³²⁵ *Baillie*, III, 543. Also *RCGACS 1648-1649*, 295, 339.

³²⁶ Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, 92; Handley, 'Adamson'.

³²⁷ *Charters 1583-1858*, 66, 109.

required ‘to teach something of the Hebrew tongue’.³²⁸ Each of these three Professors was a major figure in Scottish church life and two were considerable scholars.

When Leighton enrolled at the Town College, the Professor of Divinity was Henry Charteris (c.1565-1629) who died in post in July 1629.³²⁹ The son of a prominent Edinburgh bailie and printer, he had been one of the first graduating class of the College in 1587. Having served as a regent from 1589, he was appointed Principal in 1599 in succession to Rollock on his deathbed recommendation. Charteris’ only surviving work is his life of Rollock, although he also edited numerous collections of the latter’s lectures and commentaries. Apparently shy and rather reticent, he was manoeuvred out of his underpaid post in March 1620 when he became minister of North Leith. He returned as Professor on 19 April 1627 at double his previous salary but died at the end of Leighton’s second year. Craufurd regarded Charteris as being ‘certainly one of the most learned men of the time, both in tongues, and in philosophy and divinity, but he had too low thoughts of himself’.³³⁰

Charteris’s successor was James Fairley who held the post throughout Leighton’s third year, from July 1629 to October 1630, when he was moved sideways by the Town Council to the second charge of Greyfriars.³³¹ Although, ‘considered to be a man of abilities’ and the preferred choice of the ‘Calvinistic ministers of Edinburgh’, Fairley appears to have been a stop-gap appointment.³³² The son of a prominent Edinburgh burgess and a College graduate, Fairley had served as a regent there (1607-1625), in which post he was said to be ‘both able and painful’.³³³ He made a positive impression on his sovereign at the 1617 Stirling disputation and became minister of South Leith (1625-29).³³⁴ After his brief spell as Professor and his Greyfriars ministry, he was consecrated as Bishop of Argyll in August 1637. He had been backed by Archbishop Laud, who had been told that Fairley would

³²⁸ *Charters 1583-1858*, 66,109.

³²⁹ Handley, ‘Charteris’; Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 113.

³³⁰ Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 113. Also Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 156, 183.

³³¹ *FES*, I, 45, 165, 327.

³³² Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 280; Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 172-173; Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 114-115.

³³³ Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 68.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 82-85

support his policies, against Archbishop Spottiswoode's preferred candidate.³³⁵ Having tried but failed to read the Scottish Service Book from the Greyfriars pulpit on 12 July 1637, Fairley was deposed by the 1638 Glasgow General Assembly.³³⁶

That Fairley sought to persuade his students for Episcopacy and against Presbyterianism, seems unlikely. There is no evidence to indicate that he was strongly convinced one way or the other. Ironically, Fairley was one of Archibald Johnston of Wariston's favoured preachers during the lawyer's spiritual and emotional crisis in 1633-1634 which followed the death of his first wife.³³⁷ Given Johnston's fervent support for Presbyterianism it seems unlikely that he would have chosen to sit under the preaching of a minister who explicitly expressed support for Episcopalianism.³³⁸ Johnston's final mention of Fairley in his diary was in the context of the prayer-book riots of 23 July 1637 - 'that blak doolful Sunday to the Kirk and Kingdome of Scotland'.³³⁹ Perhaps Fairley was more of an opportunist rather than a convicted Episcopalian. Unlike his unsuccessful rival for the See of Argyll, he foreswore Episcopacy no later than 1641, signed the National Covenant and, in dire poverty, eventually found a congregation who would accept him.³⁴⁰

In the early weeks of Leighton's fourth and final year, John Sharp or Scharpe (1572–1647) was appointed to the chair of divinity by an enthusiastic Town Council.³⁴¹ Craufurd believed that a parish ministry was found for Fairley in order that he might vacate in favour of Sharp.³⁴² The most eminent of the three Professors, Sharp, a courageous and convinced Presbyterian, was a published theologian of international reputation. Having graduated from St Andrews in 1592, he undertook further studies under Andrew Melville, his thesis

³³⁵ Lee, *Road to Revolution*, 191; *Baillie*, I, 6; *Fasti 1638*, 37. John Spottiswoode (1565-1639) was Archbishop of St Andrews from 1615 and acted as 'the main channel through which James VI and later Charles I sought to Anglicize the Church of Scotland' (Pearce, 'Spottiswoode'; Kirk, 'Spottiswoode', 789).

³³⁶ *WD 1632-1639*, 265; *Baillie*, I, 18, 165; Gordon, *History*, II, 141-142; III, 126; Row, *Historie*, 172.

³³⁷ *WD 1632-1639*, 56, 128, 150, 168, 193-194, 206, 232.

³³⁸ See pp. 106-108.

³³⁹ *WD 1632-1639*, 265.

³⁴⁰ *Baillie*, II, 54, 93. See pp. 115.

³⁴¹ Wells, 'Sharp'; Stevenson, 'Sharp', 769.

³⁴² This was reflected in his high salary (Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 117-118; Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 174-177; Dalziel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 101).

being published in 1600. He was minister of Kilmany in Fife from 1601-1605, a ministry that was cut short when he was banished for life having been convicted of treason and imprisoned. An open opponent of Episcopalianism, Sharp's punishment was triggered by his acting as clerk to the 1605 Aberdeen General Assembly which met in defiance of James VI/I.³⁴³ Appointed as Professor of Theology at the Huguenot college of Dié in south-eastern France, which had been founded in 1604, Sharp remained an unwavering proponent of Presbyterianism. He may also have held a nearby pastoral charge.³⁴⁴ Although he could have returned to Scotland in 1618, his unwillingness to compromise prevented this until 1630, by which time he had been expelled from France.³⁴⁵ He was inducted as Professor of Divinity on 17 November 1630 and remained in post until his death. He too preached in the 'Colledge Kirk'.³⁴⁶ In 1637, Sharp signed Edinburgh Presbytery's supplication against the prayer book and, in 1638, the National Covenant.³⁴⁷

This survey of the Leighton's Town College teachers confirms that the Adamson, Charteris and Sharp were eminent scholars. There is no reason to think that Fairley and Rankine were not fit for their posts as Professor and Regent respectively. Together, they would have been capable of delivering the education promised by the College curriculum to the standard to be expected of any northern European university.³⁴⁸ Leighton was not disadvantaged by being under their tutelage. As a bright student he would have had the same opportunity to thrive in Edinburgh as anywhere else. Of course, his education was not complete: Leighton's teachers gave him the tools for further study, something which, as Principal, he encouraged his own students to undertake.³⁴⁹ Contrary to Knox, Leighton did not require further formal study at a French Catholic university during the 1630s in order to produce work of the scope and quality of his theological writings.³⁵⁰

³⁴³ Spottiswoode, 487-9, 499; Calderwood, *History*, VI, 280; 284-285, 292, 203.

³⁴⁴ Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 176-177.

³⁴⁵ Craufurd, *University of Edinburgh*, 117.

³⁴⁶ Row, *Historie*, 352.

³⁴⁷ *Baillie*, I, 47; *WD 1632-1639*, 329; Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 280.

³⁴⁸ Whytock, "An Educated Clergy", 54-55.

³⁴⁹ *WW*, VI, 275.

³⁵⁰ Knox, *Leighton*, 70-74.

A difference of views on church polity among the Town College staff seems quite possible. Rankine appears to have been an uncompromising Episcopalian. Although Fairley's ambition led him to become a bishop, he was probably not an Episcopalian by conviction. Adamson was willing to work within the polity of the Church until he had a chance to express his Presbyterianism. Sharp would not relinquish his Presbyterian ideals. Just what they said to their students about ecclesiastical government, we do not know. However, there is no reason to think that the bias towards Presbyterianism which Alexander had inculcated in his son was threatened during his student years. This is borne out by his actions in the 1630s and 1640s.³⁵¹

³⁵¹ See Chapters 3 and 4.

Conclusion

However inconvenient it may be for confessional historians, Leighton's childhood and student years were of foundational importance. Leighton was the son of Alexander, a loving father to a dutiful son. Their affection for one another seems to have been diminished neither by Leighton's leaving home, nor by the things he learnt in Edinburgh, nor by the people he met there. There is no evidence that the young Leighton was embarrassed by his father's polemics or resentful of the hardships which they brought upon his family. Alexander was a powerful figure whose formative influence upon his son cannot be discounted in the absence of compelling reasons to do so. Rather, Leighton's conduct over the next two decades confirms that the Calvinism and Presbyterianism which Leighton would have heard his father expound had a seminal effect upon him.

His years as a student in Edinburgh were unlikely to have discomfited him theologically. He would have encountered teachers, ministers and fellow-students whose understanding of God and His world would have been broadly similar to those of his own Puritan, Calvinist upbringing. An excellent Town College education would have prepared him admirably for the preaching, teaching and churchmanship which marked his future career.

Leighton may have drawn later upon what he witnessed in the Church and the College. In Scotland he experienced a living and effective church which was allowed to function among the people of Scotland by virtue of an ethos of mutually expedient co-existence among its ministers and elders. Ministers could complain about royal interference, even agitate, but their frustration, if not too publicly expressed, was tolerated. Neither the grumbles of groups of ministers nor pockets of non-compliance were allowed to disable the core functions of the church or to split either church or nation. Similarly, differences among the staff of the Town College were not permitted to interfere with its core purpose of educating young Protestant men. For future decades, Leighton had practical experience of a model of Episcopalians and Presbyterians working together in the cause of the kingdom of God

However, in the short term observation of such accommodations seems to have had little impact upon Leighton. Within eight years he was to be found at the heart of the

Covenanting movement which swept away Episcopalianism in favour of Presbyterian hegemony. No doubt, Alexander approved of his son's decision.

Chapter 3

1631-1641: Lost and Found

Introduction

What became of Leighton in the ten years between his graduation in 1631 and his induction as minister of Newbattle on 16 December 1641? During this period of early adulthood, Leighton was at his least visible. Indeed, the limited direct evidence affords mere glimpses of him and then only from 1638 onwards. However, supplemented by circumstantial evidence, it is possible to recreate the general shape and direction of this phase of his life. These are likely to have been formative years during which Leighton, having left childhood and formal education and now in his twenties, had to make his own way in the world. Alexander remained incarcerated in London and, as the son of an anti-Episcopal Puritan martyr admired by some but reviled by the English state, life was unlikely to have been straightforward for the young Leighton. He would have learnt much about himself and about the complex and religiously fraught world of early-modern northern Europe. His Protestant faith would have been tested and tempered.

This chapter can be usefully divided into two sections. The first runs from graduation in 1631 to August 1638, when Leighton surfaced in the Edinburgh home of Archibald Johnston of Wariston. This was the first of a series of indications that Leighton was living in Scotland for all or part of the years from 1638 to 1641, which are the focus of the second section.

1631-1638: Lost to sight

Leighton is lost to sight from 1631 to 1638. Between his graduation on 23 July 1631 and his appearance in Wariston's home in August 1638, no record survives, or has yet been uncovered, to establish where Leighton was and what he was doing. Nevertheless, taking account of the information which is available for the years preceding and succeeding 1631 to 1638, it is possible to discount the suppositions posited by past biographers and to offer a more plausible alternative.

Leighton entered adulthood, the product of both his upbringing and his education. It is highly improbable that, at such an early stage in his life he had abandoned the Puritan, Calvinist, anti-Episcopal teachings for which his father had been mutilated and imprisoned. These beliefs are more likely to have been bolstered than challenged during his Edinburgh studies. The choices which he made from 1638 onwards bear this out.

Those of Leighton's biographers, whose confessional purpose was to portray him as a singularly saintly churchman, unique in Scottish terms for his toleration and irenicism and for his principled move from Presbyterianism to Episcopalianism, had already set the trajectory of their narrative by revising his childhood and student years. As those biographers continued that trajectory into the 1630s, they parted further from the realities of Leighton's life. Through unchallenged repetition, however, it has been their confessional version of his life that has been most influential.

The Secondary Literature

On this occasion, fault cannot be laid at the door of Burnet. In his published *Own Times*, he recounted that:

From Scotland his father sent [Leighton] to travel. He spent some years in France, and spoke that language like one born there. He came afterwards and

settled in Scotland, and had presbyterian ordination; but he quickly broke through the prejudices of his education.¹

Burnet's 1683 manuscript included an additional claim that Alexander had sent Leighton 'into Scotland in the year [16]38[?] and was at the assembly of Glasgow'. He claimed that Leighton told him that 'he was even then disgusted with their heats and the manner of their proceedings' but, in contrast to the published text, that 'these prejudices were not yet strong enough in him to overcome education'.² Burnet's published account offered no encouragement for later writers to take Leighton out of Reformed Presbyterianism in the 1630s. Yet that is what they did.

Jerment was the first to add a new twist to Burnet's skeletal account. He claimed that, after graduating, Leighton was 'sent abroad, and lived several years in France; particularly at Doway [*sic.*], where some of his relations resided'. Jerment added the gloss that Leighton's proficiency in Latin enabled to him quickly to acquire 'the French language' and that he 'could speak it almost with the fluency and accent of a native'.³ Murray claimed that Leighton would have been unable to find a parish in Scotland 'on account of the predominance of prelacy' and that he was sent to 'the continent' by his father 'for the purpose of enlarging or liberalising his mind'. Although he acknowledged that 'Roman Catholic youths from Britain repaired' to the Catholic seminary at Douai for their education, Murray did not claim that Leighton himself had studied there. However, he implied that Leighton's contact with individual Catholics had resulted in him 'insensibly' losing 'that rigid adherence' to Presbyterianism and that his 'contemplation of different ecclesiastical systems' and his ability to find 'good men and right principles [...] in each of them' influenced him in his later career.⁴ Pearson was the first to place Leighton in the seminary itself, stating that it was there that Leighton 'appears to have met with some religionists, whose lives were framed on the strictest model of primitive piety.' Despite being 'keenly alive to the faults of popery', Pearson believed that Leighton was able not only to recognise the 'better portions' of the 'corrupt establishment' of Catholicism but also that 'the frame' of Presbyterianism 'was not entirely gold' and that the 'sweeping

¹ *HMOT*, I, 240.

² 1683, 10.

³ Jerment, 'Life', vi-vii.

⁴ Murray, 'Life', 44-46. Also Aikman, 'Life', iii-iv.

extermination' of the Scottish Reformation had cast out 'some of the noblest formularies and most useful institutions of the primitive church'. 'It was probably from this time,' he speculated, 'that his veneration for the presbyterian platform began to abate'.⁵ Unsurprisingly, the Presbyterian Aikman was unconvinced by this.⁶ Both published in 1883, Blaikie's and Tulloch's short biographical sketches introduced Jansenism for the first time.⁷ This theme was taken up enthusiastically and at length by Butler and adopted by Cheyne and Gribben.⁸ However, with singular inventiveness, Knox eschewed Douai and offered the Jansenist Port Royal community in Paris as Leighton's 'spiritual home' and the Scots' College at Paris as his place of study. Knox saw this as the best explanation of how Leighton had made up for the deficiencies in his Town College education.⁹ Niven preferred Knox's Parisian setting.¹⁰ For those of Leighton's biographers who wanted to move Leighton quickly past his Calvinist Presbyterian beginnings, Jansenism was a useful vehicle. They caricatured Jansenism as Catholicism-lite or as a half-way house between Rome and Geneva. By leaving unclear exactly how they understood Jansenism to have influenced Leighton, they were able to project it as a generally liberalising influence upon the young man. Gribben attempts, if unconvincingly, to explain further the influence of this movement by examining Leighton's Newbattle sermons. What Gribben perceives as 'the radical discrepancy that exists between Leighton's theology and the Westminster tradition' was, he asserts, the result of Leighton's exposure to Jansenism.¹¹

This short summary of the secondary literature reveals the insidious effect of successive, confessional biographers having seized the opportunity offered by a genuine gap in our knowledge of Leighton to introduce convenient but unsupported claims. Little evidence was adduced for the Catholic-Jansenist connection which has proved so popular and, having gone unchallenged, so influential. It is clear that Burnet cannot have been the

⁵ Pearson, 'Life', xv. Also Secretan, *Troubled Times*, 14.

⁶ Aikman, 'Life', iv.

⁷ Blaikie, 'Archbishop Leighton', 184; Tulloch, 'Archbishop Leighton', 119.

⁸ Butler, *Life*, 66-111; Cheyne, *Studies*, 41; Gribben, 'Leighton', 179.

⁹ Knox, *Leighton*, 78-82. Also Clark, *Strangers*, 136-137. Allan preferred the possibility that Leighton spent time both at Douai and Paris among the Jansenists (Allan, 'Reconciliation and Retirement', 253).

¹⁰ Niven, 'Leighton', 87.

¹¹ Gribben, 'Leighton', 179-181.

source since he did not mention Douai at all. Furthermore, although his published *Own Times* appeared after the town had been ceded to France in 1668, having been captured from Spain by Louis XIV the previous year, Burnet was aware that Douai was not within France during the 1630s. Elsewhere in *Own Times*, he recounted its capture.¹² What references he did make to Flanders and to Jansenism appeared in the context of Leighton's principalship at Edinburgh and his decision to accept the bishopric of Dunblane and therefore occurred at least fifteen years later.¹³ Neither can the Catholic-Jansenist claim be attributed to Wodrow. In his *History*, Wodrow made one reference linking Leighton to Douai but only as a correspondent and in the context of his 1661 consecration.¹⁴ The claim could simply be written-off as untenable in view this paucity of evidence and of Leighton's upbringing and family circumstances. However, the process of rebuttal advances further exploration of Leighton's whereabouts in the period from 1631-1638.

Contrary Evidence

One good reason for dismissing the Catholic-Jansenist claim is that no record of Leighton appears in the extant records of the Scots or English Colleges at Douai.¹⁵ Neither is there any evidence of his attendance at the Scots College in Paris which, during most of the 1630s, was in a most unsatisfactory state with few students.¹⁶ In any event, the Catholic Scots Colleges required their students to be Catholics to minimise the risk of infiltration by spies who would report the names of students back to Scotland.¹⁷

Even more compelling are a series of other factors, most of which have been ignored by previous biographers. The first is this: for Leighton to have ventured into Catholic

¹² *HMOT*, II, 120, 388, 397.

¹³ *HMOT*, I, 244; 1683, 13.

¹⁴ Wodrow, *Historie*, I, 102.

¹⁵ *Records Scots Colleges; Douay College Diaries; Douai College Documents*. The Scots College at Douai seems to have offered a basic general education (McInally, *Sixth Scottish University*, 83, 131).

¹⁶ Halloran, *Scots College*, 6-7, 11-12, 29-30; Halloran, 'Chambers'.

¹⁷ McInally, *Sixth Scottish University*, 131.

theological circles would have required an extended period of aberration from what otherwise seems to have been a lifelong suspicion of Catholicism.¹⁸ Sympathy for Catholic teachings would have featured neither in his upbringing as Alexander's son nor in his education in Edinburgh. Secondly, as discussed later in this chapter, his appearance in Calvinist, Covenanting circles by 1638 at the latest weighs further against this possibility, countering as it does any supposition that Leighton was persuaded to depart from his upbringing and education during the 1630s. The third factor relates directly to the quality of Leighton's education at the Town College. As has been demonstrated in chapter 2, Leighton would have received a higher education which matched the generally accepted standards and emphases of early-modern European higher education. It was sufficient to familiarise him with the patristic, pre-Reformation and classical Greek and Latin authors whom he quoted or to whom he alluded in his theological writings or, at the very least, to give him the training needed to handle their work competently.¹⁹ A spell at a Catholic university in France or elsewhere is, therefore, not necessary to account for his erudition. Fourthly, neither was it necessary for him to have travelled furth of Scotland or England to have learnt the toleration and ecclesiological compromise which has been attributed to him as Bishop and Archbishop. Nor need he have ventured beyond Calvinism. As will be discussed in chapter 5, Leighton was not unique in Scotland or, indeed, within the Reformed churches.²⁰ Finally, assuming that Burnet is correct and that Leighton's facility in the French language was gained while living in France, the probability is that Leighton was studying amongst Huguenots rather than Roman Catholics. It is to this possibility, which has not been considered before, that this study now turns.

Huguenot France

Smout points out that outmigration from Scotland in the seventeenth century, 'involving one young man in five of the Scottish population' was 'paralleled in contemporary Europe

¹⁸ See pp. 194-195, 222, 236.

¹⁹ See pp. 73-91.

²⁰ See pp. 261-266.

probably only by Switzerland'.²¹ In the early to mid-1600s, there were Scots located in community, business and family throughout Europe.²² It is entirely possible that Leighton lived and studied abroad during the 1630s.²³ In this section, Burnet's statement that Leighton 'spent some years in France' is explored.²⁴

If Leighton did live in France before August 1638, then the Protestant or Huguenot community was a far more likely home for him than among the Catholics. He may have studied at one or more of the Huguenot academies. In the 1630s, the population of France included a vibrant, if at times somewhat beleaguered, Protestant community. Although numerically relatively small, it was strong in family and business and trading links and sustained by local, national and transnational religious solidarity.²⁵ At the turn of the century, in the aftermath of the 1598 Edict of Nantes which secured a substantial degree of toleration after 30 years or so of periodic religious wars, the Protestant population numbered just over one million.²⁶ Almost eighty per cent lived in the South and South-West in a Huguenot crescent which ran from Poitou to Dauphiné. Despite the deleterious impact of abjuration, emigration, war and plague in the 1620s, there were still more than 750,000 Protestants living in France during the 1630s.²⁷ This community was spiritually self-sufficient, able to educate its young men and prepare them for the pastorate. Residence in France among its Protestant community might well have appealed to Leighton: it offered excellent academies for further study in the context of a broadly Presbyterian church polity and with strong Scottish connections.

The Edict of Nantes permitted the Huguenots to set up their own system of education – albeit in defined localities – the third tier of which comprised academies. Influenced by Calvin's Genevan Academy, the Huguenot academies had been set up along lines similar

²¹ Smout, 'Foreword' to *Scottish Communities*, x.

²² Smout, 'Culture of Migration', 111-117; Murdoch and Grosjean, 'Introduction' to *Scottish Communities*, 3-15; Worthington, 'Introduction' to *British and Irish Emigrants*, 1.

²³ Smout, 'Culture of Migration', 109-113.

²⁴ *HMOT*, I, 240.

²⁵ Grell, 'Creation', 619-636; Bosher, 'Huguenot Merchants', 77-102; Kettering, *French Society*, 108, 140.

²⁶ Armstrong, *Calvinism*, 3.

²⁷ Benedict, *Faith and Fortunes*, 40, 92-95; Diefendorf and Reinburg, 'Reform', 196; Holt, *French Wars*, 181-182.

to Town College of Edinburgh. These ‘successful Calvinist “semi-universities”’ were part of ‘a dense network of theological seminaries and schools of theology’ across Western Europe.²⁸ The Huguenots required universities to train their own pastors in sufficient numbers and under their own synodal oversight. They needed ‘clergy whose orthodoxy and academic achievements were beyond question’.²⁹ Since the academies followed the broadly similar Calvinist curriculum of their Swiss, Dutch and German counterparts they ‘served to integrate the Huguenot centres of learning into the network of Protestant academies and universities visited by a stream of young men across Europe’.³⁰

Funded by their local synods, each Huguenot academy included a faculty of theology. The Statutes of Alès (1620) guided the content of courses, one of the primary aims of which was to teach distinctive Protestant doctrine.³¹ A student initially undertook a two-year arts course which consisted mainly of philosophy. Thereafter, he could study theology for a further three years. A solid grounding in Hebrew, Greek, grammar and rhetoric enabled thorough engagement with theological works, with particular emphasis upon Patristic and Biblical texts. Some academies also offered courses in law and medicine.³² The Statutes of Alès also laid down how the professors were to teach. They were to:

abstain as much as possible from arcane topics and the vain scholarship of Catholic scholastics. Except where necessary in interpreting passages of Holy Scripture, they will not deal at length with the refutation of heresies which have never surfaced here. Their explanations in dogmatic instruction should be serious and straightforward, following the tone in the writings which God has used in these recent times to rekindle the flame of the Gospel.³³

Avoidance of arid theological debate in favour of clear, practical and inspiring theological instruction was a hallmark of Leighton’s later preaching and teaching.³⁴

²⁸ Hammerstein, ‘Relations With Authority’, 126. Also Frijhoff, ‘Patterns’, 63.

²⁹ Maag, ‘Huguenot Academies’, 141.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 148.

³¹ ‘Diverse Matieres Concernant les Academies and les College’ in *Synodes Nationaux*, II, 203-206; Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 239-40.

³² Maag, ‘Huguenot Academies’, 140-149.

³³ ‘Diverse Matieres’, 203, trans. in Maag, ‘Huguenot Academies’, 149. Also Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 229.

³⁴ See pp. 207-208, 195-196, 222-223.

Even when co-existence was relatively peaceful, French Protestant communities felt under pressure from their Catholic neighbours, the Catholic Church and the Catholic state. So the Huguenot academies were tasked with training their students to engage in ‘effective Protestant apologetics’.³⁵ Huguenots ‘made no distinction between the simple pastor and the theological controversialist’ since all needed to be Protestant apologists.³⁶ Therefore, alongside the emphasis on Biblical studies, ‘scholastic theology still had an honoured position’ and the Statutes of Alès provided for the appointment of a professor of *loci communes* to provide training in theological problem-solving throughout the students’ theological training.³⁷ In common with Catholic institutions, their study of moral and dogmatic theology focussed on the *Summa* of Aquinas and their final disputations centred on a theological *quaestio* and not on a biblical passage.³⁸

However, the ‘highly cerebral’ similarity amongst the Huguenot academies in curriculum and emphasis did not mean uniformity.³⁹ So, for example, Saumur was considered more liberal than the theologically conservative Sedan, although both operated within the bounds of orthodox Calvinism.⁴⁰ While, to universal Huguenot approval, Arminianism was condemned at the 1620 Synod of Alès, attempts led by Pierre Du Moulin of Sedan to condemn the hypothetical universalism of Moïse Amyraut of Saumur at the Synods of Alençon and Charenton in the 1630s failed.⁴¹ The Huguenot cause was badly damaged by this intra-confessional squabble.⁴²

³⁵ Turchetti, 24. Also Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 232.

³⁶ Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 232.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 232.

³⁸ *Synodes Nationaux*, II, 209; Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 198, 232-3; Brockliss, ‘Curricula’, 596, 598-599; Maag, ‘Huguenot Academies’, 149.

³⁹ Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 232.

⁴⁰ Maag, ‘Huguenot Academies’, 149; Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 247-9.

⁴¹ Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 248.

⁴² Moïse Amyraut’s doctrine of hypothetical universalism declared that God intended salvation for all of humankind but granted the required belief only to those whom He had predestined. Although, Amyraut was accused of Arminianism by fellow Huguenots and by Dutch and Swiss theologians, it is clear that his understanding of salvation and predestination was essentially Calvinist (Van Stam, *Controversy*, 42-43, 55-56, 453-454; Armstrong, *Calvinism*, 69-211, 269; Brockliss, *French Higher Education*, 248.

As important as the content and manner of teaching, were the teachers themselves. Well-known professors with high academic standing were sought in order to attract students and funding.⁴³ This included foreign academics such as the Scot, John Cameron, who taught at Bordeaux, Sedan, Saumur and Montauban as well as at Glasgow.⁴⁴ By attracting distinguished teachers from outside France, by sending their own teachers and students abroad and by publishing and engaging in correspondence, the academies ‘contributed to the development of a Europe-wide Protestant culture’.⁴⁵

In the 1630s, Leighton would have had the choice of studying at the degree-conferring Huguenot academies of Montauban, Nîmes, Orange or Die in the south and Saumur and Sedan in the north. Had he done so, he would not have been alone. Young Scots and Englishmen were attracted by their academic prestige and the possibility of study abroad in the theological safety of a Protestant university.⁴⁶ This was of particular interest to Englishmen who were unable to subscribe to the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles as required for matriculation at Oxford or Cambridge.⁴⁷

Another attraction for Leighton may have been the broadly Presbyterian polity of the Huguenot church. No local church had primacy and all ministers were equal. Church government was effected through national and provincial synods and regional colloquies, each with moderators appointed for fixed periods. Locally, consistories performed similar roles to kirk sessions with responsibility for poor relief and the maintenance of morals.⁴⁸

⁴³ Maag, ‘Huguenot Academies’, 150-151.

⁴⁴ John Cameron (1579/80–1625), educated at Glasgow University, was a Reformed minister and theologian. Among other disputes over the Calvinist understanding of salvation, he argued against Beza for the doctrine of hypothetical universalism. Cameron’s tenure as Principal of the University of Glasgow was brief (1622-1623) due to his unpopular royalism and unfounded allegations about his Calvinist orthodoxy from professional rivals. He had earlier served as Professor of Greek there (1599-1600). Ironically, in 1625 he sustained injuries, from which he never recovered, trying to break up a brawl between two Huguenot factions in the town of Montauban over the issue of using violence to defend religious rights. Cameron’s reputation at Saumur was secure after his death and his pupil, Moïse Amyraut, continued his work. Elsewhere in Protestant France, he was posthumously attacked, as he had been in life, for alleged Arminianism (Brockliss, ‘Cameron’; Kirk, ‘Cameron’; Armstrong, *Calvinism*, 42-70).

⁴⁵ Maag, ‘Huguenot Academies’, 150.

⁴⁶ Pittion, ‘Académies Réformées’, 200; Smout, ‘Culture of Migration’, 112.

⁴⁷ de Ridder-Symoens, ‘Mobility’, 428-429, 439.

⁴⁸ Van Stam, *Controversy*, 14-16; Mentzer and Spicer, ‘Introduction’ to *Society and Culture*, 4-7; Greengrass, ‘Informal Networks’, 92-94.

He would also have been following well-trodden Scottish footsteps.⁴⁹ John Cameron and Leighton's former teacher, John Sharp, were not alone: there was a steady flow of Scots teachers and ministers to France in the early to mid-1600s including Andrew Melville,⁵⁰ Robert Boyd of Trochrig,⁵¹ George Thomson,⁵² John Scot,⁵³ Zachary Boyd,⁵⁴ Alexander Colville⁵⁵, Gilbert Primrose⁵⁶ and John Welsh.⁵⁷ In his comparative study of French and Scottish religious narratives, Mullan opines that:

there was no dividing abyss between [the French and Scottish] expressions of Calvinism. Rather, we are reminded less of a fragmented religious movement and more of the strength of a transnational Reformed culture.⁵⁸

Leighton would have found Huguenot France an attractive and welcoming destination.

Finally, assuming that Leighton did live and study among French Protestants for a period of years during the 1630s, he would have gained more than just the opportunity for advanced study within a congenial ecclesial model. He would have shared the experience of a confessional minority living with the reality of having been restricted geographically, politically and socially by the Catholic majority. If Leighton did arrive in Protestant France in or shortly after 1631, he would have found himself living amongst a community that was still reeling following the military reverses of the 1620s. Greatest of these was the fall of La Rochelle, the disastrous campaign for the relief of which Leighton's future patron

⁴⁹ Talbott, 'My Heart', 199-203.

⁵⁰ Kirk, 'Melville'.

⁵¹ Robert Boyd of Trochrig (1578–1627), Principal of Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities, pastored and taught in France from 1597 to 1614 (Marshall, 'Boyd'; Kirk, 'Boyd of Trochrig', 92).

⁵² Mullan, 'A Hotter Sort', 48.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁴ Zachary Boyd (1585–1653) studied and taught in France from 1611-1623 (Atkinson; Kirk, 'Zachary Boyd', 92).

⁵⁵ Alexander Colville (1595/6-1666) taught in France from 1619 to 1642 and from 1656-1662 when he became Principal of St Mary's College, St Andrews (Tucker, 'Colville').

⁵⁶ Gilbert Primrose (1566/7-1642) was a Reformed minister in France from 1596-1623 (Littleton, 'Primrose').

⁵⁷ John Welsh (1568/9-1622), minister of Ayr, was banished by James VI in 1606. He was a Reformed minister in France from 1605-1620 (MacDonald, 'Welsh'; Kirk, 'Welsh', 861).

⁵⁸ Mullan, 'A Hotter Sort', 69.

Lothian was involved in.⁵⁹ The ‘corporate existence of the Huguenots’ was totally destroyed, ‘leaving them as heretics in a Catholic world’.⁶⁰

A short-term effect of Leighton’s time among the Huguenots of France might have been that his Protestant convictions became radicalised. In 1638 he chose to support the National Covenant, a decision which may be attributable to a fear that Scottish Presbyterians might be similarly marginalised by Charles I’s Anglicanisation of the Church of Scotland. Moreover, it is quite conceivable that the young Leighton – the soon-to-be Covenanter – was influenced by the remnants of Huguenot republicanism which saw the development of a theory of lawful rejection of and resistance to a tyrannical sovereign. Described as Calvinist in character, it adumbrated many of the biblical and historical themes by which the Covenanters justified their revolution.⁶¹

In the longer term, however, Leighton’s experience of living in the context of a community that knew persecution and feared future oppression may have affected him in rather different ways. During the years of the Covenanting regime and, after the Interregnum, the Restoration, sections of the Scottish population knew the disadvantages of being in a confessional minority. Although Leighton did not find himself within such a group in Scotland after 1638, the insights which he gained among the French Protestants would have supplemented those from his own family’s persecution. Unless he was particularly lacking in empathy, Leighton must have understood at first hand the anxiety and resentment that accompanied religious discrimination.

Leighton would also have seen how Huguenot and Catholic neighbours lived alongside one other, their common bonds and shared values generally overcoming confessional antagonism. Most ordinary Frenchmen managed to put aside religious differences in favour of ‘peaceful religious co-existence’.⁶² Leighton would have witnessed local accommodation in action: tense and, sometimes fractious, but largely non-violent and

⁵⁹ See p. 125.

⁶⁰ Holt, *French Wars*, 186-7. Also Herman, ‘Huguenot Republic’, 254-5.

⁶¹ VanDrunen, ‘Use of Natural Law’, 143-167; Skinner, *Foundations*, II, 302-308; Parrow, ‘Neither’, 705-716; Racaut, ‘Religious Polemic’, 29-43.

⁶² Diefendorf and Reinburg, ‘Reform’, 197. Also Kettering, *French Society*, 109; Herman, ‘Huguenot Republic’, 23-24.

mutually advantageous.⁶³ Secondly, he would have observed the strategies which the Huguenots, as a national community, employed to ensure their survival. Paradoxically, it was after the devastating reversals of the 1620s that the Huguenot community found a degree of security. A sharp numerical decline was halted and, as Protestants were no longer perceived as a threat to ‘the Gallican mantra of “one king, one faith, one law”,’ so their image as ‘the demons and pollutants of Catholic culture’ softened.⁶⁴ By the 1630s, the Huguenots had adopted what has been described as the only strategy for survival left to them: collective and demonstrable loyalty to the French crown.⁶⁵

In summary, Jerment, Pearson, Knox and others erred in assuming that Leighton could only have become the man they wished him to be by venturing into Catholicism and by creating an unlikely myth to support that confessional objective. While it is quite possible, as Burnet indicated, that Leighton spent a portion of the 1630s in France, it is far more probable that he did so living and studying within the Huguenot community. This would have been a natural choice for the Leighton who graduated from the Town College in 1631. It would also have been consistent with his actions once he returned to Scotland no later than August 1638.

⁶³ Luria, *Sacred Boundaries*, xvi-xxx; Hanlon, *Confession and Community*, 7-12, 193-223, 262-266.

⁶⁴ Holt, *French Wars*, 187-188.

⁶⁵ James, ‘Huguenot Militancy’, 223; Kettering, *French Society*, 109.

1638-1642: Scotland

Five clusters of evidence affirm the probability that Leighton was habitually resident in Scotland during the period from 1638-1642 and that he was a committed supporter of the Covenanting Movement.⁶⁶ Four of these each coalesce around a particular piece of documentary evidence: a diary reference from August 1638; a statement in Burnet's *Own Times*; a reference to Leighton in a letter dated 30 April 1639; and the records of the Presbytery of Dalkeith for 1641-2. The fifth arises from Leighton's relationship with Sir William Kerr, Earl of Lothian. The 1638 diary reference appears in none of the biographies of Leighton. The existence of the 1639 letter was noted by Butler but he did not analyse it or discuss its implications. Parts of the records of the Presbytery of Dalkeith were noted by Butler and Knox but their significance is ignored. In essence, either none of Leighton's previous biographers knew of his close association with Covenanters or they were unwilling to acknowledge it as inconvenient for their purposes.⁶⁷

The Diary of Johnston of Wariston

Sometime in August 1638, Archibald Johnston of Wariston (bap.1611-1663) noted in his diary: 'On Saturday I was idle with Mr R. Lighton.'⁶⁸ This entry is undated but it appears between two others dated 2 and 11 August 1638. No further details about 'Mr R. Lighton' were given by Wariston but the editor of the 1632-1639 volume of his diaries, G. M. Paul, identified him as being Leighton.⁶⁹ Further references to 'Mr R. Lighton' appear in the volume of Wariston's diary covering the early 1650s. In Wariston's entry from 19 July 1651, he noted that he was persuaded by 'Lighton', among others, who sent him a message

⁶⁶ As Young has pointed out, the Covenanting movement 'did not represent nor constitute a single, uniform set of political values and strands'. It was 'composed of radical and conservative elements and religious grievances did not represent the sole component of the covenanting agenda' (Young, 'Scottish Covenanting Radicalism', 343).

⁶⁷ For example, Aikman believed that Leighton chose 'not to mingle in the fray,' only returning to Scotland to accept the charge of Newbattle (Aikman, 'Life', iv).

⁶⁸ *WD 1632-1639*, 371. Also Coffey, 'Wariston'; Stevenson, 'Wariston'; Stevenson, *Voices*, 151-173.

⁶⁹ *WD 1632-1639*, 37.

seeking to dissuade him from attending the July 1651 St Andrews General Assembly. He followed Leighton's advice and, through his wife, sent his 'testimony'.⁷⁰ In 1654, Wariston recorded that, on Tuesday 18 April, Leighton had 'diverted' him in the afternoon.⁷¹ The editor of that volume of the diaries, Hay Fleming, likewise identified 'Lighton' in both entries as being Leighton. In three later diary entries in the 1650s Wariston made further mentions of 'Lighton' which, from their contexts, are clearly references to Leighton.⁷² It is impossible to exclude beyond doubt that the August 1638 reference might be to another 'Mr R. Lighton', but there are no other obvious candidates. Accordingly, since Wariston recorded that he was in Edinburgh when he entertained 'Mr R. Lighton' in August 1638, that entry is compelling evidence that Leighton was in the city at that time.

The significance of this casual diary entry goes beyond simply locating Leighton's whereabouts. In August 1638, Wariston was a leader of the Covenanting movement: indeed, as the co-author of the 1638 National Covenant and clerk to the 1638 Glasgow General Assembly he was its principal legal advisor. He was also a propagandist and, as such, was immersed in securing support for the cause. His diary records, for example, that on 28 July 1638 Wariston was in Glasgow seeking to browbeat the University's reluctant regents into signing the Covenant and refusing to compromise on its terms, declaring that anyone who offered only qualified endorsement was guilty of 'temeritie and disobedience'.⁷³ Still in Glasgow, on 30 July 1638, Wariston read personally, at the mercat cross, the Covenanters' Protestation against the King's July 1638 Proclamation promising a free General Assembly and Parliament and demanding obedience from his subjects.⁷⁴ During this period, he seems also to have socialised with or listened to the preaching of leading Covenanters such as Robert Blair and Henry Rollock. Therefore, it seems unlikely that Wariston would have chosen to spend his precious leisure time with someone who was not, at the very least, sympathetic to the cause. This assumption is supported by the nature of Wariston himself. He seems to have been a man of obsessions, both religious and political, and fanatical in his support of the Covenant. Viewed by most commentators as

⁷⁰ *WD 1650-1654*, xxxvii-xxxviii, 83.

⁷¹ *WD 1650-1654*, 254.

⁷² *WD 1655-1660*, 5, 36, 96.

⁷³ *WD 1632-1639*, 368-369.

⁷⁴ *WD 1632-1639*, 369.

‘deeply unpleasant’ and quite possibly a manic depressive, his character left little room for compromise or tolerance of those who opposed him or his ideas.⁷⁵

Glasgow General Assembly

As noted above, in his 1683 manuscript, Burnet stated that Leighton had been sent by Alexander ‘into Scotland in the year [16]38[?] and was at the assembly of Glasgow’.⁷⁶ The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland held in 1638 took place in Glasgow. It convened on 21 November and continued sitting until 20 December.⁷⁷ Burnet’s assertion has a ring of truth about it since he followed it with a statement to the effect that not even Leighton’s disgust at the Covenanters ‘heats and the manner of their proceedings’ was sufficient to turn him against Presbyterianism.⁷⁸

Although he could not have taken an active part in its proceedings, for Leighton to have been present at the 1638 Assembly is significant since he would have witnessed first-hand how radical the Covenanting movement had become. Episcopacy and the liturgical innovations of James VI/I and Charles I were swept away; full-blown Presbyterianism was established. Macinnes describes the 1638 Assembly as one of ‘constitutional defiance’ but Leighton, contrary to Burnet’s claim, seems not to have been dissuaded from supporting the cause of the National Covenant.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Stevenson, *Voices*, 151, 155. Also Yeoman, ‘Archie's invisible worlds’, 156-158.

⁷⁶ 1683, 10.

⁷⁷ See pp. 114,136,139-142.

⁷⁸ 1683, 10.

⁷⁹ Macinnes, ‘Scottish Moment’, 128.

Colville-Balmerino Letter

On 30 April 1639, Alexander Colville,⁸⁰ the recently inducted minister of Trinity Parish, Edinburgh, wrote to Lord Balmerino.⁸¹ In that letter, Colville told Balmerino that he had sent drafts of secret correspondence to both Leighton and Lothian. This is the third piece of evidence which places Leighton in Scotland prior to 1641. It also sets him within Lothian's circle. Furthermore, it signals that he had made a personal and public commitment to the cause of the National Covenant and that he was known to and trusted by its leaders.

In the opening sentence of his letter, Colville referred to documents which he had recently received: two draft letters and what he described as 'the secret articles'.⁸² All had been sent by Rothes⁸³ with the request that Colville review and discuss them with Balmerino.⁸⁴ The

⁸⁰ William Colvill or Colville (*d.* 1675) was a Church of Scotland minister and, in succession to Leighton, principal of the Town College of Edinburgh. Having graduated from St Andrews in 1631, he was, first, minister of Cramond (inducted 1635) and then of Edinburgh's Trinity Parish (from January 1639 to December 1641). Having been transferred in 1641 to the Tron Church, also in Edinburgh, suspicions of his support for the Engagement (which he denied) resulted in his deposition in July 1649, after which he became minister of the English congregation in Utrecht. Chosen by the Town Council to be principal of its College, he was usurped by Leighton. In 1654 he became minister of Perth and, on Leighton's resignation in 1662, finally assumed the principalship (Pearce, 'Colville'; Stevenson, 'Colville'; *FES*, I, 10, 126, 134). See pp. 166-167, 183-184.

⁸¹ Dalrymple, *Memorials (Charles)*, 57-59.

⁸² Neither the substance nor the purpose of 'the secret articles' was revealed. Later in the letter, Colville reassured Balmerino that he would neither 'add nor pair' them but invited him to consider their terms carefully and advised that 'they need not be subscribed by any.'

⁸³ John Leslie, sixth Earl of Rothes (c.1600-1641) was a leading nobleman who opposed the ecclesiastical policies of James VI and Charles I and chafed against what he perceived as moves towards royal absolutism. He was not an anti-royalist and having supported the National Covenant, he appeared to be moving towards support of Charles by the time of his death in 1641. Nevertheless, in 1639 he was one of the foremost Covenanters (Wells, 'Rothes').

⁸⁴ John Elphinstone, second Lord Balmerino (*d.* 1649) was a prominent politician and Covenanter. Throughout the 1620s and 1630s, he opposed royal reform of the Church of Scotland, voting against the Five Articles of Perth in 1621 and opposing Charles I's revocation. In 1634 he was imprisoned (having been sentenced to death) for having possession of a petition critical of Charles' ecclesiastical policies. Although released in 1635, this episode did much to damage to the king. Balmerino was prominent in the protest movement against the Prayer Book which culminated in the signing of the National Covenant and the 1638 General Assembly, within the committees of which he was active. A leader during the First Bishops' War, Balmerino was elected president of the Scottish parliament held during Charles' 1641 visit. Throughout this period until his death, Balmerino was a militant Covenanter leader, active in guiding and raising finance for the movement. He was violently anti-papist and uncompromising in his defence of Presbyterianism. Having opposed the Engagement, his death prevented him leading negotiations with Charles II (Coffey, 'Balmerino').

draft letters were intended ultimately for the King of France and the States of Holland. Colville was critical of their undiplomatic style and the poor quality of the French in which they had been written. He expressed the hope that ‘my Lord of Lothian will say all I say’ and told Balmerino that he had sent both letters to ‘my Lord of Lothian and Mr. Robert Leighton’s better judgements and better experience’. Colville also advised that both letters should be signed by as many as possible, presumably when they had been finalised.

Both Dalrymple and Butler believed that the ‘Mr. Robert Leighton’ referred to by Colville was Leighton himself.⁸⁵ In light of other evidence for Leighton’s involvement with Lothian and the Covenanters, together with Burnet’s assertions about his expertise in the French language, this is almost certainly correct.⁸⁶

Colville was an important player within the Covenanting movement who had been entrusted with delicate, dangerous and highly confidential negotiations. That he was willing to include Leighton as well as Lothian in these, is clearly demonstrative of a high degree of trust and points to more than casual or peripheral participation by Leighton in the movement. The draft letters and ‘secret articles’ which Colville forwarded to Lothian and Leighton formed part of the Covenanters’ ongoing secret preparations to contact the French and the Dutch to ask for understanding of their cause and for diplomatic support. They were well aware that this was a high-risk strategy, since even to seek foreign intervention would antagonise Charles I.⁸⁷ Therefore, in May 1639 it was decided not to make overtures to foreign powers unless the Covenanters’ military position deteriorated.⁸⁸ It is not certain that Lothian and Leighton accepted Colville’s invitation to revise the drafts or whether, if they did, their revisions were ever used. Certainly, in early 1640 the plan to contact Louis XIII was dusted off and put into operation, with remarkable incompetence but, paradoxically, disastrous consequences not for the Covenanters but for Charles.

⁸⁵ Dalrymple, *Memorials (Charles)*, 58; Butler, *Life*, 72. Butler refers to the letter only to support Burnet’s assertion that Leighton was proficient in French.

⁸⁶ See pp. 93, 106-147.

⁸⁷ *Baillie*, I, 190-191.

⁸⁸ *Baillie*, I, 191.

By early 1640 it was apparent that the Treaty of Berwick, which had concluded the First Bishops' War, had failed and that a second round of hostilities was imminent. The Covenanters were alarmed by the reconstruction of Edinburgh Castle, which was held for the King, and the reinforcement of its garrison.⁸⁹ They decided to send Colville to France to plead the cause of the Covenant. Despite their attempts at secrecy, an undated but signed copy of the letter addressed to the French King and which Colville was carrying very quickly fell into the hands of Charles. Since Colville himself held and delivered a signed copy it is not entirely clear why another ever came into or remained in existence. Stevenson suggests that the copy which reached Charles was an earlier copy but that it had been superseded because the seven covenanters who signed it had not done so in order of precedence. However, the second letter which reached Louis XIII had different signatories. It is quite possible that this earlier copy was the draft which was sent to Lothian and Leighton and which they may have revised.⁹⁰ The document which was presented to Charles by the Earl of Traquair in later February or early March 1640 had passed through a number of hands.⁹¹

The Covenanters' fears about Charles' reaction proved well-founded. His attitude towards them hardened and he decided to use the letter as a goad to provoke the English Parliament to support his next campaign against the Scots. He made public his outrage in April 1640. The subscribing nobles were accused of having committed 'a very high offence' by having addressed the letter to Louis XIII with the words 'Au Roy' and summoned to London to explain themselves. According to a contemporary chronicler, John Spalding, Charles was 'michtellie and most justlie agreivit and astoneishit with their rebellious deallings of his unnaturall subjectis'.⁹² One of the signatories, Lord Loudon, who was present in London as part of a delegation of Scottish commissioners tasked to negotiate with Charles, was

⁸⁹ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 179-180; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 227-228.

⁹⁰ Stevenson, *1637-1651*, 180-184; *CSPD 1640*, xii; Lothian, *True Representation*, Pt 2, 88; Gardiner, *History of England*, IX, 91-93; Hyde, *History of the Rebellion*, I, 170-173. The letter carried by Colville was dated 19 February 1640 but must have been signed earlier. It was signed by a different group which included only Rothes and Montrose of the original signatories as well as Argyll and Lothian.

⁹¹ John Stewart, first Earl of Traquair (c. 1599-1659) was a politician with particular skill in financial affairs who was appointed Lord High Treasurer in 1636 (Sizer, 'Traquair').

⁹² Spalding, *Memorialls*, I, 266. Spalding (b. 1624?, d. in or after 1669) was a committed royalist and Episcopalian who offers an valuable and contemporaneous alternative to pro-Covenanter histories (Stevenson, 'Spalding').

arrested, as were the other three commissioners in the party, even although they had not signed the letter.⁹³ The other signatories (including Rothes and Montrose⁹⁴) refused a royal command to come to court to explain themselves.⁹⁵ Loudoun may well have been sentenced to death but, if so, he was released by July 1640, apparently on condition that he would try to persuade the Scots to disband their army, a promise on which he reneged.⁹⁶ In the event, the Short Parliament of April/May 1640, summoned by Charles with the expectation that its outrage at the Scots overtures to Louis XIII would match his own, was disinterested and unwilling to fight the Covenanters; it refused to vote for war taxes. Charles' position was significantly weakened, as the second Bishops' War was to reveal.

The Colville-Balmerino letter is thus an important piece of evidence. Although the original of the letter seems to have been lost, the available copy can be relied upon with confidence.⁹⁷ It appears in a printed collection of letters and other papers edited by Sir David Dalrymple (1726-1792).⁹⁸ Dalrymple, a judge, historian and man of letters, was a careful antiquarian who applied his legal mind to his historical work, having a particular regard to the evidence of contemporary documents.⁹⁹ In his preface to his *Memorials and Letters- Charles I*, Dalrymple asserted that 'the truth of history' was his 'aim' and offered this defence to criticisms made of an earlier work:

If King James and his courtiers have been placed in an unfavourable point of view, the fault is not mine: when I presumed to publish what they wrote, I did

⁹³ John Campbell, first Earl of Loudoun (1598-1662) was an early opponent of Charles I's religious policies and a leading Covenanter until he signed the 1647/8 Engagement, although he later switched to the kirk party. Having been appointed Lord Chancellor in 1641 by Charles I as a concession to the Covenanters, he was allowed to resign after the Restoration but was fined £12,000 Scots (Stevenson, 'Loudoun').

⁹⁴ James Graham, first Marquess of Montrose (1612-1650) initially fought for the National Covenant but by 1641, chafing under the dominance of Argyll, had begun secret negotiations with the King. Arrested as a 'plotter' in June 1641, he was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle until November. In 1644, Charles recognised Montrose as his military commander in Scotland. After a succession of victories in 1644-45, defeat at Philiphaugh sent him into exile. Returning to Scotland in 1649, Montrose was captured after a short and disastrous campaign and executed in 1650 (Stevenson, 'Montrose').

⁹⁵ *CSPD 1640*, viii-xi, 610-611; Stevenson, *1637-1651*, 183.

⁹⁶ Stevenson, 'Loudon'.

⁹⁷ It may have been included at some stage in the collection of Thomas Wodrow (Dalrymple, *Memorials (Charles)*, vii).

⁹⁸ Dalrymple, *Memorials (Charles)*, 57-59. Also Cadell, 'Dalrymple'.

⁹⁹ Dalrymple, *Memorials (James)*, 4.

not suppress any letters which might have done honour to their understanding or their morals; my readers, therefore, instead of censuring me, ought to lament the scantiness of my materials.¹⁰⁰

A later work of Dalrymple's, *Annals of Scotland*, was described by Samuel Johnson in 1773 as:

a new mode of history, which tells all that is wanted, and, I suppose, all that is known, without laboured splendour of language or affected subtilty of conjecture. The exactness of his dates raised my wonder.¹⁰¹

On another occasion that year, Johnson is recorded as commending Dalrymple's honesty as a historian ('for he tells equally what makes against both sides') while, nevertheless, deprecating his style.¹⁰² Cadell remarked that the *Annals of Scotland*, originally published in 1776 and 1779, 'marks the point at which almost for the first time Scottish history was studied in a scientific manner'.¹⁰³ Dalrymple's care is apparent in his admission that when he saw and copied it, the original of Colville's letter was 'miserably torn and mutilated'. His printed copy scrupulously indicates the location of the missing or uncertain words. Fortunately, the passages relevant to this thesis were unaffected. Therefore, Dalrymple's copy can be treated as a reliable piece of evidence that in 1639 Leighton was still in Scotland, a known associate of Lothian and closely involved with the Covenanting leadership.

Ordination – Presbyteries of Edinburgh and Dalkeith

In the second half of 1641, the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and Dalkeith decided to endorse and accept Leighton as a suitable candidate for the ministry of the Kirk. This is a very strong indication that he had chosen to offer public support for the Covenanting cause. Furthermore, it signals that his support was for the Covenanting cause as it had developed

¹⁰⁰ Dalrymple, *Memorials (Charles)*, vi.

¹⁰¹ *Boswell's Johnson*, II, 423.

¹⁰² *Boswell's Johnson*, II, 237.

¹⁰³ Cadell, 'Dalrymple'. Patrick Cadell (1941-2010), archivist and former Keeper of the Records of Scotland (Shaw, 'Cadell').

by that time. These facts have been ignored by all previous biographers. In this section, after a brief overview of the Covenanters' policy on excluding their opponents, the key evidence – the minutes of the Presbytery of Dalkeith – is reviewed.

From about February 1638, the Covenanters began to take charge of Scotland.¹⁰⁴ As they gained secular power, they also moved to take control of the Kirk. This was the beginning of what Stevenson has characterised as the first of the three major seventeenth-century purges of ministers of the Church of Scotland which, in total, resulted in about 1000 depositions. In contrast, in the period between 1560 and 1638, only about 50 ministers had been deprived of their charges.¹⁰⁵

The 1638 Glasgow General Assembly deposed not only the two archbishops and twelve bishops but also eleven ministers in addition to four who had already been removed by regional synods. Being in receipt of numerous complaints from Covenanters against many other ministers, the Glasgow Assembly set up 'Commissions through the Kingdome for discussing of complaints and Lybells given in against Ministers'.¹⁰⁶ These Commissions, which were packed with Covenanters, both supplemented and, where necessary, supplanted local presbyteries in removing opponents. Of the fifty-two depositions effected in 1639, at least twenty-eight were by Commissions. Almost all took place in central and southern Scotland where complaints were forthcoming from Covenanters and where they had sufficient strength to push through the removal of local ministers. In the Presbytery of Edinburgh, nine ministers were deposed. In subsequent years, depositions, nationally, tailed off with only eleven in 1640, five in 1641, seven in 1642 and three in 1643. Nevertheless in the period from 1638 to 1643, the Covenanters deposed about ninety-three active opponents from the ministry, amounting to more than ten per cent of its strength. In

¹⁰⁴ Stevenson, *1637-1651*, xvi.

¹⁰⁵ Stevenson, 'Deposition', 321, 335. Coming in two waves (1638-1643 and 1647-1651), the first purge (1638-1651) resulted in about 236 depositions by the Covenanters. The other two were the Episcopalian purge of Presbyterians following the 1660 Restoration (about 270 in 1662-1663) and the Presbyterian purge of Episcopalian following the 1688 Revolution (about 500 from 1688-1690). As was explained by Alexander Henderson to the 1638 General Assembly of which he was moderator, 'deprivation' and 'deposition' were used synonymously to mean the removal of a minister from his charge by a court of the Church. A minister who had been deprived of his 'benefice' had also deprived of his 'office' (*RKS*, 160).

¹⁰⁶ *RKS*, 181.

the synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, which included both the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and Dalkeith, almost fifteen per cent of ministers were deposed between 1639 and 1643: one in 1638, twelve in 1639, three in 1641 and one in 1643. In short, ‘the Covenanters were not ashamed of deposing men for opposing them’.¹⁰⁷

Within the bounds of the Presbytery of Dalkeith, the case of James Fairley demonstrates the tight grip that local Covenanters had upon the appointment of ministers. Fairley had been the Professor of Divinity at the Town College during Leighton’s third year of study and was the deposed Bishop of Argyll, having been deposed but not excommunicated, by the 1638 General Assembly.¹⁰⁸ Given the short time that he had been in post, it was said of him that he should be deposed only, and not excommunicated, since he had ‘sleipit but few nights in his Episcopall nest, and was not weill warmed in his Cathedrall chyre.’¹⁰⁹ His case came before the 1641 Aberdeen General Assembly, when he received rather easier treatment, it being ‘much regretted’ that ‘having given so long ago satisfaction’ he was unable to find a post which would ‘deliver him of that extremity of poverty’ which he was suffering.¹¹⁰ In 1642 and 1643, having not yet found a parish, his case was referred by the General Assemblies of those years to the Commission of Assembly.¹¹¹ Fairley appeared before the 1643 General Assembly in a tearful state to complain that he would never get a charge if his appointment were left in the hands of local congregations and presbyteries. He cited the refusal of the congregation of Largo and the Presbytery of St Andrews to accept his presentation by the patron of that parish. He was said to have ‘long been in extreme misery.’ Although sympathetic, the General Assembly declined to interfere with the prerogatives of local church courts.¹¹² Eventually, Fairley did find a congregation: Lasswade, in the Presbytery of Dalkeith, accepted him ‘verie willinglie’ in March 1644

¹⁰⁷ Stevenson, ‘Deposition’, 323, 325-326. However, at least twenty-two were reinstated upon suitable repentance being made and assurances given. The next wave of depositions in the period 1647 to 1650 is considered in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁸ For details of Fairley’s ecclesiastical and academic careers, see pp. 86-88.

¹⁰⁹ *RKS*, 27-28, 45

¹¹⁰ *Baillie*, I, 372; see also Guthry, *Memoirs*, 35. Baillie seems to have softened in his attitude to Fairley (cf. *Baillie*, I, 165).

¹¹¹ *RKS*, 333, 361.

¹¹² *Baillie*, II, 53, 93-94.

and the Presbytery inducted him in December.¹¹³ By 1647, Fairley was sufficiently rehabilitated to be appointed to the Commission of Assembly.¹¹⁴

Fairley's is a good example of the control exercised by the Covenanters over entry to parish ministry, at local, regional and national level. Although deposed ministers were allowed to re-enter the ministry, a succession of measures made it increasingly difficult for them to do so by raising the standards by which repentance was to be deemed genuine and sustained.¹¹⁵ Fairley first passed the test at national level and then, eventually, to the satisfaction of the regional and local church courts.

The minutes of the Presbytery of Dalkeith provide three pieces of evidence which are of relevance to Leighton's induction to the charge of Newbattle: that it supported both the Covenant and the Covenanting movement as it evolved in the early 1640s with enthusiasm; that it was prepared to ordain and induct Leighton; and that it did so on the basis of a testimonial from the Presbytery of Edinburgh. From these three observations flows the inescapable inference that Leighton himself was a public supporter of the Covenant and its cause as it had evolved in the early 1640s, and that both the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and Dalkeith were satisfied that his commitment was genuine.

On 15 March 1638, the Presbytery of Dalkeith declared that 'the breaking of the Covenant of God by the land had brought it under fearful guiltiness and judgement' and all members swore the National Covenant. A fast was ordered and arrangements made for the people of the constituent congregations to swear the Covenant also.¹¹⁶ On 4 May 1637, the Presbytery had baulked at an instruction from the former Bishop of Edinburgh to 'be cairfull to keep the festivals of ascensioun and pentecost' and to bring money to the next synod meeting to buy two service books for parish use by taking 'it for their consideration', which was hardly an enthusiastic response.¹¹⁷ By November 1637, they were adding their voices to the Supplication 'against the service book, book of canons,

¹¹³ *FES*, I, 329. Also NAS CH2/424/3/143-144.

¹¹⁴ *RKS*, 477; *RCGACS 1646-1647*, 301.

¹¹⁵ Stevenson, 'Deposition', 326-327; *RKS*, 205, 293, 349, 427; Gordon, *History*, III, 54.

¹¹⁶ NAS CH2/424/2/113.

¹¹⁷ NAS CH2/424/2/104.

corruption in doctrine and present government of the kirk.¹¹⁸ On 29 March 1638, the Presbytery agreed to replace its moderator since he had been appointed by the ‘episcopall power’ of a bishop.¹¹⁹ The following month, on 12 April, it was reported with evident satisfaction that all but a few ‘inconsiderable’ people had sworn the National Covenant.¹²⁰ Further fasts were ordered in July and September, the latter being for the purpose of enlisting God to change ‘the king’s heart to grant’ a General Assembly.¹²¹ On 6 September 1638, Lothian nominated Andrew Cant to Newbattle.¹²² On 20 September, the Presbytery gave thanks that the king had allowed ‘a free generall assemblee to be kept in Glasgow the 21 of November 1638.’¹²³ Following a vote, on 24 September 1638, Lothian was selected ahead of other local magnates as the sole ruling elder to represent the Presbytery.¹²⁴ On 25 October 1638, the Presbytery ordered ‘a solemne humiliation’ in order that the forthcoming General Assembly might be blessed by God.¹²⁵ On receiving the report of its commissioners on 27 December 1638, the Presbytery ordered a thanksgiving fast for the ‘happie effects’ of the 1638 Assembly and instructed each minister to read the decisions of the Assembly to his people.¹²⁶ At its meeting of 8 July 1639, the Presbytery enthusiastically welcomed the forthcoming Edinburgh General Assembly as a further opportunity to defend the Reformed faith, again appointing Lothian its only lay commissioner.¹²⁷ On 18 July 1639, another fast was appointed in preparation for that General Assembly.¹²⁸ Throughout 1639 and 1640 the Presbytery’s minutes contain no entry which indicates a diminution in its enthusiasm for the National Covenant and for the decisions of the 1638 General Assembly. The minute for 12 December 1639 records condemnation of the Five Articles of Perth.¹²⁹

¹¹⁸ NAS CH2/424/2/109-112.

¹¹⁹ NAS CH2/424/2/113.

¹²⁰ NAS CH2/424/2/114.

¹²¹ NAS CH2/424/2/115-116.

¹²² NAS CH2/424/2/116. For the significance of this, see p. 121.

¹²³ NAS CH2/424/2/116.

¹²⁴ NAS CH2/424/2/117.

¹²⁵ NAS CH2/424/2/118.

¹²⁶ NAS CH2/424/2/119.

¹²⁷ NAS CH2/424/2/139.

¹²⁸ NAS CH2/424/2/139.

¹²⁹ NAS CH2/424/3/19, 25.

Against this backdrop of the Presbytery of Dalkeith's unswerving backing of the Covenanters, it is difficult to view Leighton's induction and ordination as anything other than the acceptance of someone who held and espoused similar views. The Dalkeith presbyters would have been very unlikely to welcome a new minister who was opposed to the cause of the Covenant as it had developed in 1641 or even one who was known to be lukewarm in his support. Neither can it be said that they accepted Leighton without really knowing him. When Leighton was inducted into his charge on 30 December 1641, this was the culmination of an exhaustive process. On 22 and 29 July 1641, Leighton had been examined on Romans 2:1-3 and 2:4 and his doctrine approved.¹³⁰ On 30 September he had preached on Matthew 25:1-2 and, on 28 October, had been examined on 'the common heid *De propagatione Peccati*' and his doctrine approved again.¹³¹ He underwent a further series of examinations before the Presbytery on 11 and 25 November 1641, including being 'tried in the languages, chronologie, and difficult places of Scripture,' before it was agreed that he be ordained.¹³² The congregation of Newbattle is mentioned only twice in the records of this process. The Presbytery minutes of 2 and 9 December 1641 noted that the 'parochiners of Newbattle' accepted Leighton as their minister. It appears, however, that they had only a limited role in the appointment.¹³³ In fact, Leighton owed his appointment to Lothian for, in exercise of his, or his wife's, right of patronage, Lothian requested the Presbytery to appoint Leighton as minister at Newbattle. Lothian's right of patronage was a property right and, subject to qualification requirements and some minor restrictions, he was able to present whomever he wished to the Presbytery from within the pool of existing ordained ministers or those qualified to be ordained.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ NAS CH2/424/3/75-76.

¹³¹ NAS CH2/424/3/79.

¹³² NAS CH2/424/3/81.

¹³³ NAS CH2/424/3/81-83.

¹³⁴ Lothian may have acquired the Lordship of Newbattle, and the legal right of patronage attached to it, through marriage in 1630 to Lady Anne Kerr who, upon the suicide of her father in 1624, became Countess of Lothian in her own right. In a letter to his father dated 7 March 1634, Lothian refers to feu duty in respect of the right of patronage as ten merks (*Ancram-Lothian*, I, 83). Whatever the legal position, it is clear the Presbytery of Dalkeith considered the Earl to be patron and, therefore, to have the right to present his a candidate of his choosing whenever the parish of Newbattle fell vacant. Lothian's decision to present Leighton is discussed further in the next section (see pp. 121-147).

The approval of the Presbytery of Edinburgh was also a requirement of Leighton's admission as minister of Newbattle. Whether or not he had been licensed there, it is apparent that Edinburgh was Leighton's home presbytery and that, as such, its sponsorship was necessary before the Presbytery of Dalkeith would consider his candidature. He must have been sufficiently well known to the Edinburgh ministers for them to be able and willing to provide a suitably supportive reference. The minutes of the Presbytery of Dalkeith record that, on 15 July 1641, Leighton was instructed to produce 'a testimonial' from the Presbytery of Edinburgh and that, by 22 July, he had done so.¹³⁵ The Presbytery having decided to 'admit' Leighton as minister of Newbattle, the 'concurrence' of the Presbytery of Edinburgh was sought on 9 December and, presumably, obtained, for on 16 December 1641, Leighton was ordained 'with imposition of hands and solemn prayers' in the presence of 'Commissioners from Edinburgh': two Edinburgh ministers, one of whom was Robert Douglas.¹³⁶ Had Leighton not been in good standing with the Presbytery of Edinburgh, it is highly unlikely that they would have agreed to support him for, in 1641, Edinburgh was a presbytery held tight in the grip of the Covenanters.¹³⁷ Of the twenty-three ministers who had held charges within the Presbytery before 1638, seven were deposed or otherwise disciplined by it or by the regional Commission.¹³⁸ Among the Edinburgh presbyters featured a number of convinced Covenanters including William Colville,¹³⁹ William Dalglish,¹⁴⁰ John Charteris,¹⁴¹ Matthew Wemyss,¹⁴² Alexander

¹³⁵ NAS CH2/424/3/75.

¹³⁶ NAS CH2/424/3/83.

¹³⁷ For details of ministers of the presbytery of Edinburgh see also Dunlop, *Kirks of Edinburgh*. Presbytery records for period 1638-1701 were destroyed by fire in 1701 (*FES*, I, 1).

¹³⁸ William Ogston from Colinton was deposed in 1639, having refused to take the Covenant and thereby incurring the wrath of the Edinburgh mob. James Hannay was deposed in 1639 from St Giles having, as Dean of Edinburgh, read the Prayer Book on 23 July 1637 and later defended it and having declined to recognise the 1638 Glasgow General Assembly. David Mitchell was deposed in 1638 from the Old Kirk for having taught Arminianism and having declined the authority of the 1638 Assembly. James Elliot appears to have been forced out of Trinity in 1640 for his support for the Prayer Book while offering only lukewarm support of the National Covenant. William Wishart was deposed in 1639 from Restalrig for 'erroneous doctrine'. Andrew Learmonth was deposed in 1639 from Liberton for opposing the Covenant. David Fletcher of the Second Charge of the Old Kirk who was deposed in 1639 for reading and defending the Prayer Book and for declining the authority of the 1638 Assembly but was reponed later that year. (*FES*, I, 2, 56-57, 70, 74, 131, 161-162, 171).

¹³⁹ Minister of Cramond (1635-1639), Trinity (1639-1641) and of the Tron (1641-1647) (*FES*, I, 10, 126 and 134-135). See pp. 109, 166-167, 183-184.

¹⁴⁰ Minister of Cramond (1639-1662) (*FES*, I, 10-11).

¹⁴¹ Minister of Currie and son of Henry Charteris (1631-1663) (*FES*, I, 15).

Henderson,¹⁴³ Henry Rollock,¹⁴⁴ Andrew Ramsay,¹⁴⁵ William Arthur,¹⁴⁶ Robert Douglas¹⁴⁷ and George Dunbar¹⁴⁸. Even Andrew Fairfoul of North Leith (1636-1652), who was consecrated Archbishop of Glasgow at the same time that Leighton was consecrated bishop of Dunblane, seems to have been publicly enthusiastic for the Covenant at that time.¹⁴⁹

Having established that Leighton was able to satisfy both the presbyters of Dalkeith and of Edinburgh of his adherence to Covenanting principles as they had evolved by late 1641, the focus now shifts to his patron, the Earl of Lothian.

¹⁴² Minister of Canongate (1635-1645) (*FES*, I, 24).

¹⁴³ Minister of St Giles (1639- 1647) (*FES*, I, 57-58). See p. 140.

¹⁴⁴ Minister of the Second Charge of St Giles (1639-1641) (*FES*, I, 64).

¹⁴⁵ Minister of the Greyfriars (1614-1641) and of the Old Kirk (1641-1648) (*FES*, I, 38, 70; Wells, 'Ramsay').

¹⁴⁶ Minister of St Cuthberts (1626-1649) (*FES*, I, 95).

¹⁴⁷ Minister of the Second Charge of St Giles (1639-1641) and of the Tolbooth (1641-1649) (*FES*, I, 64, 118; Holfelder, 'Douglas').

¹⁴⁸ Minister of Mid-Calder (1638-1641) (*FES*, I, 176-177).

¹⁴⁹ *HMOT*, I, 238; *FES*, I, 155.

Leighton and Lothian

On 23 September 1641, William Kerr, third Earl of Lothian, (c. 1605-1675) presented Leighton to the charge of Newbattle.¹⁵⁰ The parish of Newbattle contained Lothian's seat of Newbattle Abbey. Leighton would become his and his family's minister under whose preaching they would sit. As patron, Lothian could have presented whomsoever he wished from among the pool of eligible Church of Scotland ministers and candidates for ministry. That he chose Leighton signalled he approved of and trusted in Leighton. The fact that Lothian wished Leighton to be his parish minister implies that he had come to know Leighton sufficiently well to make such a judgement and, therefore, that they had spent considerable time in each other's company. Lothian lived in Scotland during late 1630s and early 1640s and this is therefore further evidence that Leighton can be placed in the country for some or all of this period, reinforcing the inferences drawn from the 1639 Colville-Balmerino letter. Lothian's patronage also confirms that Leighton's commitment to the Covenanting cause had not significantly diminished by late 1641, even as the Covenanters took control of Kirk and country, dealt ruthlessly with their opponents and went to war with their sovereign.

It would surely be going too far to claim complete identity of opinion between Leighton and Lothian on religious and political matters. Yet it is likely that Lothian would have satisfied himself that Leighton shared the same Covenanting ideals. Leighton's predecessor at Newbattle was Andrew Cant (1584/1590-1663).¹⁵¹ Cant was an ardent Covenanter who had been part of the delegation sent to Aberdeen in July 1638. Having been presented by Lothian, Cant was inducted to Newbattle on 20 May 1639. After a short spell as an army chaplain in 1640-1641, Cant was released to accept the charge of St Nicholas in Aberdeen in December 1641. Baillie reported that Lothian would 'vehementlie oppose' Cant's transportation since it was 'sore against his heart'.¹⁵² It is improbable that Lothian would have accepted anyone who was not committed to the Covenant as Cant's replacement.

¹⁵⁰ NAS CH2/424/3/79; Coffey, "Lothian"; *Ancram-Lothian*, xlv-cxii.

¹⁵¹ Blaikie, 'Cant'; Sefton, 'Cant', 135.

¹⁵² *Baillie*, I, 248. Robert Baillie (1599-1662) was Professor of Divinity (1642-1661) and, subsequently, Principal (1661-1662) of Glasgow University. He moved from support for limited Episcopacy to active membership of the 1638 Glasgow Assembly and the Covenanting movement, although he remained a royalist. A fine scholar, he was a commissioner to the

In this section, Lothian's life is reviewed, taking particular note of his upbringing, his actions after his return to Scotland in 1630, his support for the 1637 Supplication and the 1638 National Covenant, his leading role in the Covenanting movement and its defeat of Charles in the Bishops' Wars of 1639-40, and his participation in the Covenanting government of Scotland from 1641 onwards. Particular use is made of Lothian's own correspondence. Lothian's involvement in Leighton's call to the parish of Newbattle in 1641 is then considered. Finally, Lothian, and by implication, Leighton are viewed against the backdrop of the national revolution which followed the National Covenant.

Unlikely Covenanter

This section examines Lothian's background, his defiance of upbringing, father and king to support the Covenant, and his actions as a leading Covenanter. Alongside his actions, the terms of his surviving correspondence are noted. This allows the conclusion to be drawn that Lothian's support of the National Covenant was not a matter of family or political convenience but deep personal conviction. However, it is important to state at the outset that Lothian was never anti-royalist. Chapter 4 below includes an examination of Leighton's relationship with Lothian after 1641.

Lothian's support for the cause of the Covenant was a marked departure from his upbringing in and around the royal court in London. Indeed, his father's career as loyal courtier had brought considerable advancement to the family and, not least, to Lothian himself: to defy the king was to jeopardise his father's position at court and his family's fortunes. In supporting the National Covenant, Lothian thus appears to have been acting against his own interests and those of his family.

Westminster Assembly. An active opponent of the Remonstrants/Protestors, he declined a bishopric at the Restoration. His letters offer invaluable personal accounts of the great events of 1637-1662 (Stevenson, 'Baillie; Douglas, 'Baillie').

Lothian, born William Kerr, was the eldest son of Robert Kerr (1578-1664) by his first wife.¹⁵³ From his youth, Robert had seen his path upwards from minor Scottish lowlands gentry to be in service to his monarch. As a result of the regal union of 1603, royal power and patronage relocated to London.¹⁵⁴ By 1604, Robert had left Scotland and joined the influx of Scots to the court of James VI/I in London as part of the household of James' two eldest children, Henry and Elizabeth. After a short time abroad, Robert Kerr held various offices at court until, in 1612 upon the death of Prince Henry, he became a gentleman of the bedchamber to Prince Charles. As the holder of this office, Robert was among those who controlled access to the Prince and, later, King. Robert remained in Charles' service until the mid-1640s. He travelled to Spain in 1623 to support Charles' attempts to woo the Spanish Infanta. Brown opines that Robert was among a group of Scottish courtiers who owed their advancement on Charles' accession to their subservience not only to the King but to his favourite, Buckingham.¹⁵⁵ Robert held seats in the English Parliament in 1625 and 1628-9, was awarded several royal pensions and, in 1631, was made a baronet and admitted to the Scottish Privy Council. As Master of the Privy Purse, Robert accompanied Charles on his coronation visit to Scotland in 1633: he was created Earl of Ancram in that year. However, the father may have paid the price of his son's support for the National Covenant since, in 1639, Robert ceased to be Master of the Privy Purse; however, this may equally have been due to his ill-health.¹⁵⁶ Continuing as a gentleman of the bedchamber until about 1644, Robert's political and financial fortunes deteriorated with the capture and execution of King Charles I and he died in straitened circumstances in Amsterdam in 1654. As an apparently intelligent and perceptive man, Lothian must have known that his father's position at court could be damaged by his actions and would be threatened by the Covenanters, of which he was one. While it may not have come about directly as a result of the son's personal actions, the cause which he supported eventually led to his father's ruin.

Yet there is nothing to indicate that Lothian acted as he did out of ill-will or even indifference towards his father. Judging by the terms of the extant correspondence, they

¹⁵³ Stevenson, 'Ancram'; *Ancram-Lothian*, I, v-xliv.

¹⁵⁴ Brown, *Kingdom*, 9.

¹⁵⁵ Brown, *Kingdom*, 99.

¹⁵⁶ *Baillie*, I, 116.

seem to have shared a mutual affection, even in disagreement. Stevenson notes that Robert Kerr's ambition was primarily for his family and to advance the status and landholdings of his eldest son.¹⁵⁷ On 9 December 1630, William married Lady Anne Kerr, eldest daughter of the late Robert Kerr, second Earl of Lothian, through whom he acquired title to the Earldom as well as the Newbattle estates. The countess bore him fourteen children, Robert (1636-1703), future first Marquis of Lothian, being their eldest son. Letters and legal documents indicate that, having acceded to and advanced William's wish to take the title of Earl of Lothian rather than of Newbattle, the elder Robert then fought off challenges from disgruntled kinsmen of the late Earl on his son's behalf.¹⁵⁸ He also transferred his Scottish properties to William and disencumbered the Newbattle estates of debt once his son had acquired them through marriage. William was confirmed in his title to his estates by the King in 1634, shortly after he had acquired them.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, it seems highly unlikely that Lothian would have been personally troubled by the King's deeply unpopular Revocation scheme of 1625-1626. Not only did he have a secure title granted by the King in majority but he also had the comfort of his father's high standing at court.¹⁶⁰ Thus far, Lothian seems an unlikely candidate as a rebel against his king.

Although it is not possible to be certain, Lothian's disaffection with the King's religious policies in Scotland may have had its seeds in his short military career in late 1620s. Following a period of study at the University of Cambridge beginning in 1621, Lothian travelled to Paris in 1624 to begin a journey through France, Italy and Switzerland.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Stevenson, 'Ancram'.

¹⁵⁸ *Ancram-Lothian*, I, 56-57 and II, 488-489; *RPCS*, IV, 418, 441-443). William wrote to Robert on 9 December 1631 recounting that he had been 'told off' by the Earl of Traquair for seeking a title before his father (*Ancram-Lothian*, I, 56).

¹⁵⁹ Charter in favour of Lothian disposing Lands, Barony and Earldom of Lothian dated 1 March 1634 (*Register of the Great Seal*, IX, 27-29; *Ancram-Lothian*, I, 81).

¹⁶⁰ Described by Macinnes as a piece of 'authoritarian sophistry', the Revocation was presented as a legal device to enable royal property alienated to the prejudice of the monarch during his legal minority to be recovered. Ostensibly in line with previous royal revocations, it was of such swingeing scope and so without credible precedent that it provoked great apprehension and resentment among a significant section of the Scottish nobility and landed gentry. Charles was unable to enforce his Revocation scheme due its extreme complexity, his administration's half-heartedness and the passive intransigence of the landholders affected. Nevertheless, it generated lingering mistrust and dislike of the king (Macinnes, *Charles I*, 52-72; Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, 2-14; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 17-22).

¹⁶¹ *Ancram-Lothian*, I, 16.

Nothing in his travel journal indicates any nascent disaffection.¹⁶² By 1627, Lothian had begun a short career as a soldier in the disastrous and unpopular 1627-29 war against France which included accompanying Buckingham to the Île de Ré in 1627 and Morton and Lindsay to La Rochelle in 1628. Both attempts to relieve French Protestant garrisons were unsuccessful. Lothian did participate in the successful Dutch siege of 's Hertogenbosch where the Spanish garrison surrendered on 14 September 1629.¹⁶³ Again he was fighting in the Reformed cause.

Yet, while he seems to have become more attentive to the struggles of Protestant communities abroad, for the first twenty-five years or so of his life Lothian appears to have had little reason to be concerned with royal ecclesiastical policy in Scotland. This was to change when he moved to live north of the border.

Proto-Covenanter – the 1637 Supplication

The first clear signs of hostility shown by Lothian towards Charles' ecclesiastical policies appeared once he had settled in Scotland following his marriage. There is no evidence to indicate that he had spent much time north of the border prior to 1630. However, according to Guthry, Lothian's anti-Episcopal views could be traced back to before Charles' 1633 coronation visit to Scotland.¹⁶⁴ This is supported by two letters written to his father in 1634. The author of the first letter was the former government lawyer, William Haig, who had not yet fled abroad to escape the consequences of having drafted in 1633 a Supplication critical of royal policies which petitioned against ecclesiastical, financial and constitutional innovations.¹⁶⁵ Haig had been instructed to act for Ancram and Lothian as

¹⁶² NLS MS 5785. At that time, Lothian appears to have been little concerned with religion except to note where mixed Protestant and Catholic populations co-existed in towns. He was more interested in fortifications, garrisons and armaments.

¹⁶³ Lothian to Ancram, 11 October 1627, 14 November 1628, 19 September and 20 November 1629 (*Ancram-Lothian*, I, 44-45, 47-51).

¹⁶⁴ Guthry, 10. Henry Guthry (1600?-1676) was a Church of Scotland minister who signed the National Covenant in 1638 but baulked at the more extreme manifestations of Presbyterianism which followed. An Engager he was deposed in 1648, returning to ministry in 1656, and was consecrated Bishop of Dunkeld in 1665. (Stevenson, 'Guthry').

¹⁶⁵ See pp. 126.

they sought to secure Lothian's title to the Lothian estates. The King's agreement to the transfer was required and Haig advised how to respond if Charles refused to sign because of Lothian's 'carriage' during the 1633 parliament.¹⁶⁶ The second, dated 19 March 1634, was written by a Church of England clergyman, John Carse, who complained that Ancram's 'young and hopefull' son was fighting with his friends on account of his 'cause' at a time when they and it already had 'many enemyes'. Carse also warned that Lothian's 'cause in Scotland' little pleased the King and that, while 'right in his zeale' his 'act in the parliament house of Scotland' reflected badly on his father.¹⁶⁷ However, the first extant public record of Lothian's opposition to Charles' ecclesiastical and constitutional innovations was his subscription of a Supplication against the Service Book on 20 September 1637.¹⁶⁸ This was quickly followed by a Supplication and Complaint dated 18 October 1637, again signed by Lothian, which was of wider scope and which attracted greater support.¹⁶⁹ This latter document, which is referred to here as the '1637 Supplication', is of considerable interest both in its own right and as a way-marker on the road to the National Covenant.

The 1637 Supplication was an expression of long-standing concerns held by a significant cross-section of the nobility, the lesser landholders, the merchants and professionals who controlled the burghs and the ministers of the Kirk. Insofar as it was triggered by a particular event, it was the attempt by clerics obedient to the monarch to introduce the Scottish Prayer Book on 23 July 1637. The popular resistance to the Prayer Book manifest in both Edinburgh and Glasgow had been well-organised in advance. That it was possible to mobilise such a sustained and public response, reflected a complex meld of national anxieties – political, ecclesiastical and economic – which had coalesced into resistance to both Charles' policies and his manner of government in Scotland. Just why each of the leaders of this opposition, including Lothian, felt sufficiently aggrieved to become involved was, no doubt, peculiar to them as individuals.

¹⁶⁶ NAS GD40/2/13/86.

¹⁶⁷ NAS GD40/2/13/81.

¹⁶⁸ 'Royal Letters', 409-413.

¹⁶⁹ The terms of the 1637 Supplication are reproduced in Fleming, *Scotland's Supplication*, 60-66.

The king's inability, or unwillingness, to recognise the ways in which his conduct was perceived in Scotland and the anger that he was provoking among a significant number of national leaders, has been well documented.¹⁷⁰ His visit to Scotland in 1633 was, in many ways, personally damaging. It enabled his intransigence and insensitivity to the aspirations of the Scottish body politic to be experienced at first hand. His heavy-handed manipulation of the Scottish parliament and deployment of the bishops as instruments of the royal will left behind a residue of resentment and suspicion. When he returned south, Charles made inadequate provision for communication with Scotland which encouraged 'a one-way system of clientage for officials, councillors and, indeed, all members of the political nation seeking royal favour,' and which left him isolated 'from the developing realities of Scottish politics and their British ramifications.'¹⁷¹ Since his ascension to the throne, Charles had proposed various schemes for reorganising the administration of justice in Scotland, all of which would have had the effect of limiting the power of the nobility who were already offended by his Revocation scheme. His plans for promoting economic uniformity between Scotland and England by means of monopolies, common fishing and tariff reform damaged the Scottish economy and generated widespread discontent. By alienating the traditional administrators of his northern kingdom, Charles, willingly or not, found himself having to rely more and more on the Scottish bishops to represent and pursue his interests, a transition which he had initiated as early as 1626.¹⁷² In 1635, Archbishop Spottiswoode was appointed Lord Chancellor; the first churchman to hold that post since the Reformation. This too was resented. What Macinnes has described as 'rampant anti-clericalism' was fuelled by wild rumours that the clergy would be rewarded with the clawing-back of properties formerly held by the church which had passed into secular hands.¹⁷³

In Scotland, Charles further heightened anxiety about the Church by introducing a succession of measures designed to secure compliance with the liturgical requirements of the Five Articles of Perth and greater control of the Church by the bishops at the expense

¹⁷⁰ For example, Makey, *Church of the Covenant*; Lee, *Road to Revolution*; Donald, *Uncounselled King*; Macinnes, *Charles I*.

¹⁷¹ Macinnes, *Charles I*, 87-88.

¹⁷² In 1626, Charles reshaped his Scottish Privy Council so as to include both archbishops and five bishops, including the Bishop of Winchester. (*RPCS*, I, 249).

¹⁷³ Macinnes, *Charles I*, 90-91.

of the General Assembly and presbyteries.¹⁷⁴ When in Edinburgh during his coronation visit, Charles showed further impatience with the Kirk and insisted on the use of liturgy which was seen as English and alien. He pushed through legislation which secured and increased his control of the Church, both by virtue of the royal prerogative and through the bishops. His harsh treatment of Lord Balmerino, who was caught in possession of a copy of Haig's 1633 Supplication provided further evidence of Charles' unbending and ruthless determination.¹⁷⁵

Perhaps as early as the 1633 coronation parliament and certainly by 1637, Lothian had been drawn into a circle of disaffected nobles which included Argyll, Rothes and Balmerino.¹⁷⁶ Lothian thus became one of the growing number of the 'nobles, gentry, burgesses and clergy who composed the political nation' who were first unsettled and then outraged by Charles's 'dogmatic conviction in his own rightness [...] his remorseless promotion of conformity to English practice...and his relentless pursuit of administrative, economic and religious conformity.'¹⁷⁷ The outstanding symbol of this drive for religious conformity, which was perceived to be Anglicisation of a Scottish institution, was the proposed introduction of a version of the English Prayer Book into the life of the Church of Scotland.

¹⁷⁴ *RPCS*, I, 92; Row, *Historie*, 343, 345-346; Alexander, *Stirling's Register*, I, 271-272; Hyde, *History of the Rebellion*, I, 145.

¹⁷⁵ Macinnes, *Charles I*, 135-141; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 31-34; Row, *Historie*, 376-381; *Source Book*, III, 79-80). Haig had to flee to Holland. Balmerino was sentenced to death for 'the hearing of the said infamous libel, and [for] concealing and not revealing of the said Mr William Haig' but was later pardoned at the behest of the Earl of Traquair, who feared popular revolt, and against the wishes, it was said, of the bishops (Salmon, *Tryals for High-Treason*, I, 184-193; Balfour, *Historical Works*, II, 216-220; Row, *Historie*, 375-390; Baillie, I, 429).

¹⁷⁶ Macinnes states that 'as a political operator' Argyll 'maintained his guiding influence on the younger nobility through' Lothian (*British Confederate*, 17). Argyll was Lothian's wife's uncle. Lothian's daughter, Vere, married Lord Neil Campbell, Argyll's second son in 1668 (*Ancram-Lothian*, I, cvii, 59). Archibald Campbell, eighth Earl and first Marquis of Argyll (1605/7-1661) was a leading Scottish nobleman and politician who, in contrast to his father's conversion to Catholicism, was a dedicated Calvinist and Presbyterian. He was a leader of the Covenanting movement both militarily (although with little success) and politically, and opposed the Engagement. Defeat at Dunbar in 1650 precipitated loss of power and he refused to participate in the 1651 invasion of England which ended with the disaster at Worcester. In 1660, he travelled to London to 'kiss hands' of the newly restored King Charles II. He was arrested and returned to Edinburgh where he was tried on charges of treason and complicity in the execution of Charles I. Executed in May 1661, he was seen by many Scots as a martyr in the godly cause of the Covenant (Stevenson, 'Argyll').

¹⁷⁷ Macinnes, *Charles I*, 1-2. Also Guthry, *Memoirs*, 63; Leslie, *Relation of Proceedings*, 32.

Donaldson's careful reconstruction of the making of the Scottish Prayer Book is of great value to historians who want to know how it reached Edinburgh pulpits on 23 July 1637 in the form which it did.¹⁷⁸ He has convincingly exposed the accusation that it was merely 'Laud's Liturgy' as an inaccurate, if conveniently inflammatory, label, noting that the 'process of liturgical revision' which culminated in the 1637 Prayer Book had been ongoing since 1601 and that there had been native involvement in both of its phases.¹⁷⁹ The first phase ended in 1621 when James VI/I deemed it prudent to push no further after he had obtained reluctant ratification of the Five Articles of Perth by the Scottish Parliament. Donaldson viewed James's attempts at liturgical innovation as largely ineffective.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless he posited that the very limited use of the English Book of Common Prayer north of the border, together with the greater exposure to English liturgy of influential Scots drawn to court in London, had gone 'some way to overcome the distrust in Anglicanism' in Scotland.¹⁸¹ The second phase of the process of liturgical revision began in 1629 and right at the outset Charles I heard representations on behalf of the Scottish bishops to the effect that any future liturgical changes would be better received if they were framed from within the Scottish church.¹⁸² In 1633, Charles visited Scotland; the English Book of Common Prayer was used in all the services he attended and not just those held at the Chapel Royal. That same year, a Scottish edition was published.¹⁸³ By 1634, Charles had decreed that, until a Scottish liturgy was in place, the English Book of Common Prayer should be used in the Chapel Royal and the universities, a move which Donaldson characterised as 'insinuation' rather than 'imposition'.¹⁸⁴ In that year the preparation of a liturgy for Scotland began, although in its early stages it was 'an English revision of the English Prayer Book' probably at the King's own hand. However, by 1635 the Scottish bishops had secured Charles' endorsement of a liturgy revised by them, the exact terms of which have since been lost. Nevertheless, the process of revision continued

¹⁷⁸ Donaldson, *Scottish Prayer Book*. Also Fleming, *Scotland's Supplication*, 47-48; Hacket, *Scrinia Reserata*, 64; *Baillie*, I, 439.

¹⁷⁹ Donaldson, *Scottish Prayer Book*, 28-39, 78-82.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 39-41.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 38-40.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

and a further set of amendments were sent north by Laud in 1636, although these were based upon suggestions made by the Bishop of Dunblane, James Wedderburn. Even this was not the end to the modifications travelling to-and-fro across the border. Nevertheless, by April/May 1637 the Prayer Book, in the form made public, was printed.¹⁸⁵ Whether Donaldson is correct in arguing that its ‘chief characteristics’ were the responsibility of the Scottish bishops, is open to debate.¹⁸⁶ The Book was based substantially upon the English Book of Common Prayer and any amendments which the Scottish bishops succeeded in making were subject to the approval of Charles who was heavily influenced by Laud.¹⁸⁷

Whatever the truth, it is beyond doubt that a substantial section of the landed classes, burghs and the Kirk within southern and central Scotland were either convinced – or were willing to behave as though they were convinced – that the imposition of the Prayer Book was an unwarranted, unconstitutional and unbiblical intrusion of English error into the Scottish Church.¹⁸⁸ Guthry believed that Charles’ approach alienated even those who might otherwise have favoured the Prayer Book.¹⁸⁹ True to form, in the weeks following the attempt to introduce the new Prayer Book on 23 July 1637, Charles handled the ensuing crisis with obstinate ineptitude. The flow of protests was great in volume and geographically and demographically wide in source.¹⁹⁰ The most significant protest was the Supplication and Complaint of 18 October 1637, to which Lothian was a signatory.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 44-59.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁸⁷ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 35-36; Macinnes, *Charles I*, 144-147.

¹⁸⁸ It was declared by the Scottish Privy Council that the new Prayer Book was ‘the onelie forme quhilk his Majestie, having taken the counsell of his clergie, thinkes fitt to be used in God’s publict worship heir.’ (*RPCS*, VI, 352-353, 448-449). A Book of Canons, which had been ordered by the 1616 General Assembly, was printed in Aberdeen in 1636 and a copy delivered to the King on 16 February 1637. It was predicated upon the ‘royall supremacie in causes ecclesiasticall’ and church government ‘under his Majestie’ by bishops, and any person who challenged that prerogative was to be excommunicated. Providing for strict adherence to the, as yet, unpublished Book of Common Prayer, and the rites and ceremonies of the church as presently existing, the Book of Canons prohibited the ordination of any minister who refused to subscribe obedience to its terms. In other strictures, it sought to prohibit dissent in any form against the royal will in the governance of the church (*Baillie*, I, 439; Fleming, *Scotland’s Supplication*, 49-50).

¹⁸⁹ Guthry, *Memoirs*, 18-19

¹⁹⁰ The Scottish Privy Council sought to restore calm by demanding that all protests against the Prayer Book cease but soon recognised the weakness of its position. However, the king refused advice to suspend further attempts to introduce the Prayer Book and insisted that the Privy Council ensure its purchase and use. For further details of these complex and significant

The 1637 Supplication attacked Charles' ecclesiastical innovations, as well as, by implication, those of his father. It also warned him against any further similar reforms. It targeted three grievances: the Book of Common Prayer; the Book of Canons;¹⁹¹ and the hierarchy of 'archbishops and bishops' who had been 'intrustit by his Majestie with the government of the affairs of the Kirk of Scotland' and who had abused that trust by drawing up and imposing Books.¹⁹² The bishops were further charged with being the sowers of 'the seeds of divers superstitions, idolaterie and false doctrine, contrair to the true religion' and also, in preparing the Scottish Prayer Book, with 'abusing' the English Service Book by tampering with it so that it contradicted 'the gracious intention of the blessed Reformers of religion in England'.¹⁹³ The Book of Canons was characterised as a weapon intended to be used by the bishops to enforce such false and unscriptural liturgy and doctrines as were contained the Prayer Book and, by its disregard of established church discipline, as 'opening a doore for what farder innovation of religion their pleis to mak' and for even greater 'error and superstition'.¹⁹⁴ The power seized by the bishops, both to introduce and to demand compliance, on pain of 'arbitrarie' punishment, with their own innovations was an illegal usurpation having never been 'seen nor allowed in anie Generall Assemblie'.¹⁹⁵ The King did not escape censure, even although it was implied rather than stated directly. The hierarchy was his choice of government for the Kirk; he not only imposed that polity but he had also chosen or allowed to remain in office the men who were acting so unscripturally and illegally. Furthermore, both the Prayer Book and the Book of Canons had been issued and imposed under 'his Majestie's royall hand and letters patent'.¹⁹⁶ His 'loyall subjects' had been forced to make a choice between 'excommunication' and the 'ruine' of their 'estates and fortunes' or, by 'breach of [their] covenant with God and forsakeing the way of true religion', falling 'under the wrath of

developments see: Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 55-79; Macinnes, *Charles I*, 155-166; Fleming, *Scotland's Supplication*, 53-60.

¹⁹¹ *Canons*. These were a new set of regulations governing ecclesiastical discipline, church order, the administration of the sacraments and the use of church assets which reflected the innovations of Charles I and his father (Steele, 'Politick Christian', 33-34).

¹⁹² Fleming, *Scotland's Supplication*, 60.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

God.’ The latter was ‘more grievous than death.’¹⁹⁷ However, the supplicants offered their king a way out. It was recognised that his intentions were ‘pious’ and that he wished to preserve ‘true religion’ in Scotland. So, the supplicants recognised that he, too, had been

highlie wronged by the saids prelates, who [had] so farr abused their credite with so gude a King as thus to insnare his subjects, rent [their] Kirk, undermynde religion in doctrine, sacraments, and discipule, move discontent betuix the King and his subjects, and discord betuix subject and subject, contrair to severall Acts of Parliament.’¹⁹⁸

The supplicants, therefore, urged the King to initiate a review of the actions of the bishops ‘according to the lawes of the realme’ and, meantime, to suspend their power.¹⁹⁹

As the first public statement of dissent to which Lothian was prepared to put his name, it is worthwhile teasing out the strands of concern which the 1637 Supplication articulates both directly and indirectly. The Supplication spoke in bold phrases designed to convey strength of commitment to ‘true religion’ and determination to resist unscriptural innovations. It maintained that moves towards uniformity between Scotland and England in the expressions of Christian faith permitted in each country were as unwelcome as uniformity in government or taxation, because these were perceived as Anglicisation to the detriment of the Scottish national identity.²⁰⁰ Liturgically, the Supplication offered a challenge to the introduction of what was seen as ‘a reading and not a preaching ministry’ in which a far higher proportion of services was read from a script, prepared not by the individual minister responding to the needs of his parishioners and guided by the Holy Spirit, but pre-determined and pre-packaged by an Erastian, papist-leaning and foreign prelacy.²⁰¹ The Five Articles of Perth had provided a taste of anglicised liturgy and, since enforcement of

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 61.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 62.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 62.

²⁰⁰ Rather than being straightforward Anglicanisation or colonisation, Morrill characterises Charles ecclesiastical innovations as ‘a naked authoritarianism [...] which transcended or only partially involved an assertion of Englishness.’ Furthermore, he believes that the King primarily sought not Anglicisation but ‘uniformity of practice’ and royal control. Not until 1639 at the earliest did the Scots blame the English. Instead they blamed their own king and bishops (Morrill, ‘National Covenant’, 5, 9, 17-19).

²⁰¹ Steele, ‘Politick Christian’, 33; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 37.

its provisions was gradually being tightened up, the Scots had no reason to believe that use of the Prayer Book would be left to individual conscience.²⁰²

Politically, the Supplication was nothing less than an attack on Charles and his bishops.²⁰³ It went well beyond simply complaining about erroneous religious doctrine. Charles' own judgement was impugned not just because, as King, he must have approved the Prayer Book and the Book of Canons but because of his own personal identification with the reforms, the prelatic polity imposed upon the Kirk and his choice of bishops since 1625. It was an acknowledged political reality that 'a church with bishops meant [...] subordination to the crown.'²⁰⁴ Furthermore, by accusing the bishops of generating national discord and damaging the national Church and effectively demanding their removal, the supplicants were challenging the right and competency of the bishops to take part in the government of the country and its national Church. This complaint reflected deep resentment about their encroachment into affairs of state as well as ecclesiastical matters. The supplicants' underlying message was that it would be legally correct – and far more efficacious – to restore Parliament and General Assembly.²⁰⁵

²⁰² Although the Court of High Commission, empowered to impose severe ecclesiastical and secular penalties, was little used during the reign of Charles I, its very existence was a threat and a provocation to those who were reluctant to conform to his and his father's innovations. Its use in 1636-1637 by Thomas Sydserff, bishop of Galloway, to remove non-conforming ministers in his diocese, including Samuel Rutherford, heightened these anxieties (Macinnes, *Charles I*, 143; Fleming, *Scotland's Supplication*, 54, 155).

²⁰³ The Scottish episcopate was by no means united over the issue of the Prayer Book with about one-third unwilling to offer public support. The newer bishops appointed by Charles were all 'court clients' who 'tended to form a cadre fit to act as Laud's vanguard within the Scottish administration.' They were denigrated as 'Canterburians' and accused of Arminianism. (Macinnes, *Charles I*, 143-147; Steele, 'Politick Christian', 35-36). In fact, Arminianism had very little impact in Scotland except as a fear against which Calvinist Scotland could unite (Brown, *Kingdom*, 74; Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 239; Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, 411).

²⁰⁴ Brown, *Kingdom*, 47.

²⁰⁵ Macinnes, *Charles I*, 144-147, 158-166; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 38-42. Cf. Donaldson who conceded the existence of opposition to the Prayer Book but saw it as being rooted in 'the more pressing matter of ecclesiastical polity' which was itself the product of Scottish Presbyterian antipathy to the Episcopalian hierarchy of the English church (Donaldson, *Scottish Prayer Book*, 27).

Not all agreed with the terms of the 1637 Supplication: many were unwilling to subscribe. There were only 482 signatories.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, it did represent ‘a national movement’ which articulated a growing sense of national alienation and alarm.²⁰⁷ Insofar as it sought to replace the existing government of the Church and, in a more limited way, the state, it can be said to have been a revolutionary movement. As his later writings reveal, Lothian appears also to have identified with the covenantal motifs which so engaged the popular imagination.²⁰⁸ However, the revolution, such as it was, did not extend to replacing the King himself as sovereign. While he was chastised he was not personally threatened and neither, in broad terms, was his right to govern.²⁰⁹

Examination of his later letters indicates the strong likelihood that, in 1637, Lothian was primarily exercised by concern for the doctrinal purity of the Reformed Church of Scotland and a desire for a Presbyterian polity. He was also outraged by the attempts of the King and his advisors to dilute Scottish national identity. It is not clear whether Lothian was also motivated by a wish to play a greater part in the government of his country, an ambition thwarted by the King’s reliance upon the bishops. He certainly does not mention this in his correspondence.²¹⁰ However, his willingness to accept high office under the Covenanters and at the hand of Charles II might indicate that he saw himself as a natural leader and was keen to exercise such leadership. Whatever his motivations, in 1637 Lothian would have identified himself with outright opposition to royal policies and the King’s chosen instruments of achieving uniformity across the borders of his two principal kingdoms.

²⁰⁶ Thirty nobles, 281 gentry, forty-eight burgesses and 123 ministers subscribed: half of the nobles as well as burgess from all the principal burghs except Aberdeen, St Andrews and Inverness (Fleming, *Scotland’s Supplication*, 67; Macinnes, *Charles I*, 166).

²⁰⁷ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 37,

²⁰⁸ See pp. 144-146.

²⁰⁹ Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 41-43. As Morrill points out, when the Covenanters demanded that the king abolish episcopacy in 1639, they were inducing him to violate his coronation oath (Morrill, ‘National Covenant’, 3).

²¹⁰ Despite his opposition to Episcopacy and the prayer book, Lothian protected the deeply unpopular Sydserff from the enraged Edinburgh mob on 18 October 1637 (*Ancram-Lothian*, I, 93-99).

1638: National Covenant

Lothian was a signatory to the National Covenant.²¹¹ Undoubtedly, so was Leighton. As explained below, the Covenant did not reflect the full extent of the ecclesiastical and political reforms sought by Lothian and many other leaders in the subsequent Covenanting movement. Nevertheless, our understanding of Lothian and, as has been argued above, Leighton in the late 1630s and early 1640s can be advanced further by brief consideration of the terms and context of the National Covenant.

The National Covenant was a pivotal document in seventeenth-century Scottish history. It has been described as ‘a great manifesto’ which ‘reflected the underlying causes as well as the immediate occasion of the revolt’ which followed upon its promulgation and widespread subscription.²¹² It was drafted between 23 and 27 February 1638 by, among others, Archibald Johnston of Wariston. Subscription began in Greyfriars’ Church in Edinburgh on 28 February, with Lothian being one of the first to sign. The Covenant was both a denunciation of the popery which it claimed was being forced upon the Church and a declaration of loyalty to Charles I; competing concerns which were reconciled under the meta-priority of an obedience to God, articulated within the Covenant as for the good of Church, nation and monarch.²¹³ Royal adherence to the rule of law and recognition of the place of Parliament were demanded alongside an implied threat to withdraw support for the King if he did not meet the Covenanters’ just demands.²¹⁴

Nevertheless, despite its radical import, the National Covenant was framed with considerable astuteness so that it was capable of being read in differing ways and thus able

²¹¹ Numerous copies of the National Covenant are in existence. Lothian’s signature almost always appears amongst the first few of the first-rank nobility. None survive in which Leighton’s signature can be identified. For a full list, see Stevenson, ‘National Covenant’.

²¹² Donaldson, *Scotland*, 313. Macinnes goes further in his description of the National Covenant as ‘essentially a revolutionary enterprise binding the Scottish people together to justify and consolidate revolt against absentee monarchy’ (Macinnes, *Charles I*, 173).

²¹³ Macinnes, *Charles I*, 176.

²¹⁴ *Source Book*, III, 95-104. For a detailed analysis of the National Covenant, see Steele, ‘Politick Christian’, 38-43; Macinnes, ‘Covenanting Ideology’, 201-203.

to assuage the concerns of individual subscribers.²¹⁵ It was carefully drafted as a ‘big tent’ document which would allow the greatest number of Scotsmen to sign it.²¹⁶ Having been drafted so as to garner as much support from as widely as possible, its terms were both more restrained than the 1637 Supplication and more enigmatic and open to wishful construction. Donaldson, for instance, is right to say that the National Covenant ‘took good care not to condemn episcopal government’. So, for example, in early 1638, Robert Baillie was able to convince himself that his support for the National Covenant was not support for removal of the bishops.²¹⁷ However, Donaldson’s claim that ‘it was obviously the intention to revert to the moderate episcopalian regime which had existed during most of the period between the Reformation and King Charles’s innovations’ is unlikely to have held true for many of those who subscribed and most certainly does not represent the expectations of the core Covenanters, Lothian amongst them.²¹⁸ When seen in the context of surrounding events, not least the November 1638 Glasgow General Assembly, it is highly likely that removal of the bishops, repeal of the Five Articles of Perth and a return to Presbyterianism were among the ultimate aims of the vast majority of the signatories to the 1637 Supplication, including Lothian. The barely disguised Presbyterian agenda of the principal Covenanters was adumbrated by the assertion in the National Covenant that the

²¹⁵ Morrill describes the National Covenant as ‘at once a very precise and an infuriatingly imprecise document’ which is ‘easy to understand but [...] horrifically difficult to interpret’ (Morrill, ‘National Covenant’, 11). Macinnes believes that the National Covenant ‘deliberately maintained a studied ambiguity not just to attract support from all classes and from every locality, but primarily to avoid specific imputations of treason’ (Macinnes, ‘Covenanting Ideology’, 200). Cf. Hewison, *Covenanters*, I, 357.

²¹⁶ Steele believes that the National Covenant was an ambitious and ‘unprecedented departure from the accepted norms of public protest’. Since ‘formal petitioning on behalf of the political nation’ had produced only stalemate, the National Covenant was intended to compensate for ‘the inadequacies of the elitist campaign’ which included the 1637 Supplication. Hence the ‘direct, formal canvass of the Scottish people for a loyalty oath known as the National Covenant’ (Steele, ‘Politick Christian’, 37).

²¹⁷ *Baillie*, I, 52-54. Wariston attempted to bully the reluctant regents of Glasgow University who did not wish to condemn episcopacy into subscribing (*WD 1632-1639*, 367-369).

²¹⁸ Donaldson, *Scotland*, 314; also Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 85. Donaldson’s personal distaste for the National Covenant is evident in his remark that it ‘provided national conceit with a theological foundation’ (Donaldson, *Scotland*, 316; also Donaldson, *Sixteen Centuries*, 84). While Morrill has no doubt about the ‘yearning for presbyterian forms’ which lay behind the National Covenant, he laments that it is ‘infuriatingly unspecific about the fate of bishops’ (Morrill, ‘National Covenant’, 11, 12) At least insofar as insights into Lothian’s ultimate aims are sought, Macinnes’ recognition of the barely disguised anti-Episcopal agenda articulated in the National Covenant is to be preferred (Macinnes, *Charles I*, 175).

ecclesiastical innovations complained of would be disregarded unless and until they had been approved both by free General Assemblies and the Scottish Parliament. This is unsurprising since at ‘the core of the future covenanting movement’ were Lothian and his fellow Supplicants.²¹⁹

Notwithstanding the elasticity of the National Covenant which enabled it to be ‘as truly national as any such document can ever be’, it is important to recognise that the Covenanting movement was not homogenous.²²⁰ Neither was it static. Its ecclesiastical aims remained broadly the same from 1637 to 1651: the freeing of the Church from royal control and the removal of what were caricatured as papist or Arminian innovations. However, the detail of what exactly these broad aims involved was often the cause of debate and sometimes deep division. Furthermore, the means for achieving these aims also changed over time, not least in shifting from ecclesiastical mutiny directed against Erastian control of the Kirk, to revolt against the monarch to enlisting his son as an adherent – albeit an unwilling one – to the cause of the Covenant. Neither is it the case that all Scots or even all lowland Scots were enthusiastic supporters of the National Covenant. Morrill estimates that almost one-half of the Scottish nobility did not support it.²²¹ There was sustained opposition in the North-East centred around Aberdeen.²²² Significant numbers of individuals, including ministers, were deeply uneasy about the tactics and purposes of the Covenanters. Even within the Covenanting leadership there was rarely unanimity; but often antagonism and sometimes rupture. However, since the purpose of this section is not to offer an account of the Covenanting movement, the focus of this section now narrows to one particular Covenanter, Sir William Kerr, Earl of Lothian.

²¹⁹ Morrill, ‘National Covenant’, 14.

²²⁰ Burleigh, 218. Also Morrill, ‘National Covenant’, 15.

²²¹ Morrill, ‘National Covenant’, 15.

²²² Spalding, *Memorialls*, I, 100-121; Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 101-102, 138-148.

1638-1641: Leadership of the Covenanting Cause

Lothian appears to have been among the core leadership of the Covenanting movement from its inception.²²³ From 1637 onwards, this role involved him in the government of nation and Kirk, in leadership of an army of invasion and occupation, and in high-stakes international diplomacy. That he could have assumed these roles so quickly after setting himself against the King by signing the 1637 Supplication was possible only because Charles allowed his control of the country to slip from his grasp. The National Covenant was drafted February 1638 in very different circumstances to those in which the 1637 Supplication had been prepared just four or so months before. Without having had any ‘master-plan to take over the government of the country’, the Supplicants and their supporters had moved to fill the political vacuum left by the removal, on Charles’ orders, of the principal institutions of national government, the weak and fractured Scottish Privy Council and the Court of Session, from Edinburgh.²²⁴ Intended as a punishment to the Town Council and people of the capital, their departure instead ‘yielded a critical advantage’ to the Supplicants and their supporters, who from November 1637 were able to assume the mantle and means of government.²²⁵ Yet, despite the Covenanters’ having acquired control of the lowlands and having attracted real support among all classes of the population, and against the advice of his Scottish Privy Council, Charles was unwilling to compromise. He offered apparent concessions but these were nothing more than attempts to buy time as he prepared to quash the Covenanters’ rebellion by force. The Covenanters were not taken in. The tortuous ebb and flow of proclamations, declaration, letters and pamphlets generated by innumerable meetings and underpinned by countless parish sermons, have been charted elsewhere.²²⁶

The Covenanters were in no mood to make concessions to their sovereign. Careful not to declare themselves openly against Charles, they continued to assail him by attacking his

²²³ Rothes’ account of this period is replete with his first-hand recollection of Lothian being present at a succession of important meetings (Leslie, *Relation of Proceedings*, 29, 59, 61, 80, 83, 98, 141, 147, 147, 160, 170, 183).

²²⁴ Stevenson, *1637-1651*, xi.

²²⁵ Macinnes, *Charles I*, 166. The process by which this was achieved is explained in detail in Stevenson, *1637-1651*, xi-xx and Macinnes, *Charles I*, 166-172.

²²⁶ For example, Macinnes, *Charles I*, 183-189; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 172-200; Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 88-116.

advisors and, in particular, his bishops. In south and central Scotland, they consolidated their control of the church, usurping the bishops in some of their most important functions such as the inducting of ministers and the moderating of presbyteries. By the end of May, signatures to the Covenant had been gathered from local populaces and their leaders and ministers throughout all of Scotland except Aberdeenshire, Banffshire and the western highlands and islands north of Argyll. The King's commissioner, the Marquis of Hamilton, was met with a united front of suspicion and truculence when he arrived in Scotland in June 1638.²²⁷ Such a reception was justified: Stevenson describes Hamilton's task as being 'as much to gain time and prevent open rebellion by keeping negotiations going, until the King was ready to crush the covenanters, as to work genuinely for a negotiated settlement'.²²⁸ The Covenanters, too, were arming themselves in preparation for conflict.²²⁹

After a round of offers and counter-demands, in September 1638 Charles agreed to revoke the Prayer Book, Book of Canons and the Court of High Commission, to prohibit observance of the Five Articles of Perth and to limit the power of the bishops. Hamilton was to call both a General Assembly, beginning on 21 November 1638 and the first to be held since 1618, and the Scottish Parliament, to sit on 15 May 1639. On the monarch's instructions, the Privy Council signed the 1581 Negative Confession and anti-Catholic band of 1589 which together became known as the 'King's Covenant'.²³⁰ Distrustful of the King's sincerity and piqued at the apparent generosity of his concessions which they feared would diminish their authority, the Covenanting leadership quickly set about ensuring that the forthcoming Assembly was packed with their co-adherents.²³¹ Elders, as well as ministers, were elected, although 'only the greatest – in secular terms – of the presbytery elders had any chance of election'.²³² Thus, Lothian's election by the Presbytery of

²²⁷ James Hamilton, first Duke of Hamilton (1606-1649) was a Scottish lowland magnate and politician based mainly at the royal court in London. A convinced Presbyterian, he was tasked by the King in April 1638 to resolve the troubles in Scotland but he found himself isolated even from his own kinsmen and unable to persuade Charles to accede to the Covenanters' demands until September. Hamilton could not control the 1638 Glasgow General Assembly and left Scotland towards the end of 1640 (Scally, 'Hamilton').

²²⁸ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 95.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 99.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 102-103, 108-112.

²³¹ *Ibid.*; Macinnes, *Charles I*, 185.

²³² *Ibid.*, 107.

Dalkeith was an indication of his high local standing as well as his willingness to be part of a General Assembly which, he was well aware, would drive forward the emerging Covenanting agenda for change to the Kirk and challenge to the King. He was a signatory of the letter of instructions sent to all presbyteries which gave strong hints of the line the Covenanting leadership was proposing to take at the forthcoming Glasgow General Assembly.²³³ Lothian's presence at the Assembly was recorded by Baillie.²³⁴ His sympathies were evident to the King's commissioner. Writing on 27 November 1638, the day before his futile attempt to dissolve the Assembly, Hamilton wrote at length to his monarch naming Lothian in a list of noblemen who were 'the main contrivers' of the Covenanting cause.²³⁵

Within days of its sitting, Hamilton's position as the King's representative at the Assembly had become untenable. He could control neither its membership nor its business. Henderson was elected moderator and Wariston, clerk.²³⁶ When he tried to dissolve the Assembly, Hamilton was ignored; with the embodiment of royal authority over the Kirk having stalked from Glasgow Cathedral where it was meeting, the Assembly was free to do what the Covenanting leadership had planned all along.²³⁷ While there seems to have been unease at the abjuration, although not the removal, of bishops and the Five Articles, only one voice was raised in opposition, that of Robert Baillie.²³⁸ The ministers, who made up the majority of voting members, were either entirely persuaded or were unwilling to risk the wrath of their colleagues, their congregations and their local grandees and voted all the measures through with barely a ripple of dissent. If not entirely under the control of the Covenanting nobles and their supporting lawyers, the 1638 Glasgow General Assembly

²³³ *Baillie*, I, 409, 470-472.

²³⁴ *Baillie*, I, 124.

²³⁵ *RKS*, 114. Lothian had been among the noble signatories of a letter to Hamilton which disclosed that he had been among a group who had met with the king's commissioner and complaining of about the king's attempts to bring arms into Scotland (*RKS*, 92).

²³⁶ *Stevenson, 1637-1644*, 116-123. Alexander Henderson (1583-1646) was possibly the leading Covenanting minister: co-author (with Wariston) of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant; moderator of the 1638 Assembly and Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly (Coffey, 'Henderson'; Douglas, 'Henderson', 397).

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 122-126.

²³⁸ *Baillie*, I, 156-7, 158-159, 177-179, 181-184.

was certainly held under their stern and penetrating gaze.²³⁹ It declared Episcopacy abjured and removed from the Kirk, deposed all fourteen bishops and archbishops, excommunicating eight and suspending the other six under threat of future excommunication unless they submitted to the authority of the Assembly. The bishops had been prevented or intimidated from attending and their protestation ignored. The Church of Scotland was henceforth to be Presbyterian in polity, governed by four levels of church court: kirk session, presbytery, synod and general assembly. In future, General Assemblies were to be held annually, the next to meet in July 1639. Ministers were no longer to hold civic posts and so would not be able to sit in Parliament. In addition, the Prayer Book, the Book of Canons and the Five Articles of Perth were abjured and removed. The decisions of past Assemblies and other legislation which had fashioned the Church of Scotland under James VI/I and Charles I, were nullified as unlawful.²⁴⁰ Nevertheless, in 1638 it was clear that the Church had not escaped entirely from state control. The Glasgow Assembly ‘made no claims to clerical autonomy’.²⁴¹ Such was the power of the new rulers of Scotland, including Lothian, that ‘many must have feared that the kirk had exchanged domination by king and bishops for that of nobles and lairds.’²⁴²

The 1638 Glasgow General Assembly was a defining moment for the Covenanters. The decisions which it reached, and the disregard for the King which it showed in doing so, may not quite have ‘in effect amounted to a declaration of war against’ Charles, but it was certainly a trigger for armed conflict.²⁴³ It was also the first concrete expression of what the core Covenanters, including Lothian, had hoped to achieve through the National Covenant.²⁴⁴

²³⁹ Mason, ‘Aristocracy’, 9; Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 114-115, 120-121.

²⁴⁰ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 123-126; Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 116-119; *Baillie*, I, 118-176; *RKS*, 21-47. For an interesting eyewitness account of the 1638 Assembly, in addition to those of Baillie and Peterkin, see *Religious Controversy*, 137-148.

²⁴¹ Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 119.

²⁴² Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 126.

²⁴³ Mason, ‘Aristocracy’, 7. Also Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 119.

²⁴⁴ Macinnes, ‘Scottish Constitution’, 113. A ‘Glasgow Declaration’ was added to the National Covenant by order of the 1638 Assembly. This provided, in effect, that its decisions were to be retrospectively read into the National Covenant. (*RKS*, 40).

War did, indeed, ensue. The two Bishops' Wars (1639-1640) served to highlight the King's military and political weaknesses, to bolster the confidence of the Covenanters and to confer upon them the appearance of military strength and competence. A Covenanter-dominated government ruled from Edinburgh and was able to do so effectively and with apparent support from all but a few of the political classes of Scotland.²⁴⁵ Lothian remained at the heart of that government. Even amidst the convolutions of domestic and international affairs, he is easily spotted occupying positions of trust and influence.²⁴⁶

Lothian's military career began soon after the close of the 1638 Glasgow General Assembly.²⁴⁷ On 22 March 1639, Lothian was one of the commanders of a force which captured Dalkeith House, the King's residence, along with the regalia of Scotland and substantial arms and ammunition.²⁴⁸ Having raised a mounted regiment, he is recorded as having been with the Covenanting army at Duns in June. The first Bishops' War formally ended with the Treaty of Berwick of 18 June 1639.²⁴⁹ On 26 June 1639, Lothian was in Edinburgh among a group of Covenanting nobleman who gave short shrift to the reading of the King's Declaration at the Mercat Cross.²⁵⁰ Lothian was among six Covenanting leaders who met Charles at Berwick from 17 to 20 July 1639 at his invitation. There was concern that Lothian might be turned by his King when they met.²⁵¹

The 1639 General Assembly was held in August in Edinburgh and, again, Lothian attended as a commissioner sent by the Presbytery of Dalkeith. In June 1640, he was appointed to key committees of the Scottish Parliament.²⁵² At the outbreak of the second Bishops' War, having raised a regiment of 1200 men, he was a colonel in the Covenanting army which

²⁴⁵ Macinnes, *Charles I*, 183-213; Stevenson, *1637-1651*, xix-xxix; Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, 32-58.

²⁴⁶ For fuller accounts of this period, see Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 127-213; Paterson, *Land Afflicted*, 21-70; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 201-319; Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 118-130.

²⁴⁷ Brief accounts are to be found in *Ancram-Lothian*, lvii-lviii; Coffey, 'Lothian'.

²⁴⁸ *RKS*, 197.

²⁴⁹ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 154; Balfour, *Historical Works*, II, 327-332.

²⁵⁰ Balfour, *Historical Works*, II, 333. The Declaration has been issued as part of the Treaty of Berwick and it was this declaration to which Lothian responded in 1640 in *A True Representation* (see p. 145).

²⁵¹ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 159-160; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 167.

²⁵² Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 23-24.

entered England on 21 August 1640 and comprehensively defeated Charles' army at Newburn.²⁵³ On 31 August, Lothian was appointed governor of Newcastle upon Tyne.²⁵⁴ Lothian remained in that post, albeit wearying of the town and chafing at being kept out of the peace negotiations in Ripon and then London, until late 1641.²⁵⁵ However, he was intermittently absent from Newcastle while still governor and may not have been as constant in his residence there as his letters would suggest. In order to take up his appointment on the session committee – the committee which ordered the business of the Scottish parliament – Lothian returned to Edinburgh in June 1641.²⁵⁶ This enabled him to be in the capital to arrest Montrose on 11 June 1641.²⁵⁷ Lothian also acted as a representative of the parliament at the St Andrews-Edinburgh General Assembly which met from 20 July to 9 August 1641.²⁵⁸ On 18 November 1641, Lothian's name appeared among the forty-six members of a newly constituted Scottish Privy Council and among the four-man committee appointed to fill the much-coveted office of Treasurer.²⁵⁹ Later that month and in the context of rebellion in Ireland, Lothian travelled to London as the lead commissioner in the continuing Treaty negotiations with the English parliament with written instructions which began the process which led to the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant.²⁶⁰

This survey of Lothian's Covenanting career to the end of 1641 confirms that the man who nominated Leighton to be his parish minister was a senior and radical leader in the movement. Lothian's understanding of the cause of the Covenant is now considered.

²⁵³ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 205-212; Coffey, 'Kerr'.

²⁵⁴ *Baillie*, I, 257.

²⁵⁵ *Ancram-Lothian*, I, 122.

²⁵⁶ *Baillie*, I, 378; Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 30.

²⁵⁷ *Ancram-Lothian Letters*, I, 124-126. Montrose was released on 17 November 1641, the date upon which the Scottish Parliament was dissolved and by which 'Charles had practically surrendered the country to the Covenanters' (Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 224-225, 241; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 309-317).

²⁵⁸ *Baillie*, I, 374; Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 232-234; Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 40.

²⁵⁹ *RPCS*, VII, 143-144; Guthry, *Memoirs*, 102.

²⁶⁰ *RPCS*, VII, 163; Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 244-245.

Covenanter by Conviction

Lothian and Ancram seem to have remained on very cordial terms. Even in their differences, they remained, as their surviving correspondence reveals, close to and concerned for one another. In a small number of letters written from Newcastle dated 21 October and 27 February 1640 and 22 March 1641, Lothian moved beyond domestic issues as he sought to explain why he was supporting the Covenant. Lothian was anxious to reassure his father that he was not and never would be ‘in direct oposition’ to the King. In fact, the Covenanters would prove themselves ‘good and faythfull subjects, and better then these his Majestie hath a better opinion of’.²⁶¹ They would ‘never refuse the King civill and temporall obedience’. However, ‘if more be demanded’ they could not give it and in their ‘laufull defence’ they would die.²⁶² Lothian’s priorities were, in descending order, ‘the honer of God, the good of my country, and the Kings service when it is not contrarie to these’.²⁶³ Only because the Covenanters’ ‘reasonable demands’ had been refused had they, relying on God and justness of their cause, used ‘all ordinarie meanes’ to advance their cause.²⁶⁴ Lothian prayed that Charles I would lead ‘our armie [...] in a just and a holy warre for the advancement of religion and persisting this greate begun worke’.²⁶⁵ Even although they have moved into England, the Covenanters had done so only ‘to present [their] supplications and just greavances’ and had resorted to ‘armes’ to ‘save and defend’ themselves from their and the King’s enemies.²⁶⁶ Had the Scots intended to invade England they would have moved further South.²⁶⁷ However, they just wanted to return home having secured ‘with assurance to enjoy our religion in puritie, and our nationall liberties without relation to the customes of [England]’.²⁶⁸ Lothian hoped that England might ‘gett a reformation like’ Scotland’s. However, the Covenanters had ‘come not to reforme Church or State’ in England.²⁶⁹

²⁶¹ *Ancram-Lothian*, I, 104.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 104, 110, 114.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 104-105.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

Lothian seems also to have been a propagandist for the Covenanting movement. As part of the polemical exchanges which accompanied the Berwick Pacification, *A True Representation of the Proceedings of the Kingdome of Scotland* was circulated in 1640. It is generally attributed to Lothian. This pamphlet articulated the same religio-political theory which Lothian had explained to Ancram.²⁷⁰ At the centre of Covenanting ideology was ‘the seminal issue of sovereignty’ that is, the extent of the Crown’s right to exercise power’.²⁷¹ The Covenanters were committed to preserving the monarchy, but not necessarily an individual monarch.²⁷² They believed that the power of the monarch was limited insofar as he was prohibited from interfering with the ‘true religion’ and the church which practised it, i.e. Calvinism and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The corollary was that, although the people of God owed a duty of loyalty to the monarch, their higher allegiance was to the will of God. As Lothian wrote in *A True Representation*, the Covenanters could ‘fear God, and still honour the King’.²⁷³ Hence, the godly community was entitled to, indeed was bound, to fight a defensive war against Charles I to protect the Church.²⁷⁴ The Federal Theology of the Covenanters provided ‘a political morality that legitimised resistance to monarchical authority’.²⁷⁵ As Macinnes has explained, ‘Whereas obedience to God was unconditional and irresistible, the people’s obligations to the king were limited and conditional.’²⁷⁶

Consideration of Lothian’s life and writing in the period to December 1641, confirms that it is very unlikely that he would have presented Leighton as future minister of Newbattle had he not been confident that Leighton supported the National Covenant with no less fervour than he did. Therefore, it can reasonably be deduced that Leighton was supportive of the National Covenant, and with it probably also of armed conflict against the King in defence of the Calvinist Presbyterian Kirk.

²⁷⁰ Kerr, *True Representation*, 13-15, 24-25, 42-45

²⁷¹ Steele, ‘Politick Christian’, 59.

²⁷² Macinnes, ‘Covenanting Ideology’, 202.

²⁷³ Kerr, *True Representation*, 81.

²⁷⁴ Steele, ‘Politick Christian’, 56-57.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁷⁶ Macinnes, *Charles I*, 174.

Conclusion

In the 1630s Leighton did not stray from the Reformed faith or the Presbyterian church. Whether in France or Scotland, he remained true to the ideals of his father, Alexander. If he did live and study in France, it was probably among a confessional minority who were uncompromising in their determination to remain true to Calvinism and their broadly Presbyterian church polity. Upon his return to Scotland, he immersed himself in the revolutionary Covenanting movement and remained loyal to it when the monarch was defied and then engaged in armed conflict. Having ‘apparently fitted into the new order without difficulty,’ Leighton was inducted as a minister of the Covenanting Kirk by those who would have needed to be satisfied about his Covenanting credentials on the nomination of the radical leaders of the movement.²⁷⁷ Suggestions that he flirted with Catholicism or Episcopalianism therefore seem highly improbable.

²⁷⁷ Cheyne, *Studies*, 41.

Chapter 4

1641-1653: Parish and Presbytery

Introduction

From December 1641 until February 1653, Leighton was Minister of Newbattle. His tenure ended when the Presbytery of Dalkeith released him to assume the office of Principal of the Town College of Edinburgh. Leighton seems to have been a diligent parish minister and member of the Presbytery of Dalkeith and Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale. As a minister of the Presbyterian Kirk, much of his professional life was recorded in the minutes of the Presbytery of Dalkeith which have survived almost intact. It was also during this period that Leighton wrote most of his extant theological writings, including his commentary on 1 Peter. Together with other fragmentary evidence, including correspondence, these documents illuminate the context in which Leighton was living and working and what he was telling his congregation about the Christian faith. They also provide compelling clues about his family and his attitude towards the great events of the period, in particular the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant, the 1647/8 Engagement and the English occupation which began in 1650. The evidence demonstrates Leighton's continued commitment to Reformed Protestantism and Presbyterian polity throughout his time at Newbattle. Furthermore, it illuminates Leighton's decision to leave parish ministry and to take up office under the English military regime and casts light forward into his years as Principal, even as far as his decision to accept Episcopal office under Charles II.

This chapter begins with a brief account of how earlier biographers have understood this period. Next the Presbytery's minutes to 1653 are analysed in the context of other contemporaneous documents. Leighton's theological writings are then considered. The final section focuses on Leighton's decision to leave parish ministry in order to take up the post of College Principal.

Secondary literature

Burnet's account has flavoured all subsequent descriptions of this period of Leighton's life. Burnet claimed that, soon after his induction to Newbattle, Leighton 'quickly broke through the prejudices of his education'.¹ Furthermore:

He soon came to see into the follies of the presbyterians, and to hate their covenant, particularly the imposing of it, and their fury against all who differed from them. He found they were not capable of large thoughts: theirs were narrow, as their tempers were sour. So he grew weary of mixing with them: he scarce ever went to their meetings, and lived in great retirement, minding only the care of his own parish at Newbotle near Edinburgh. Yet all the opposition that he made to them was, that he preached up a more universal charity, and a silenter but sublimer way of devotion, and a more exact rule of life than seemed to them consistent with human nature: but his own practice did even outshine his doctrine.²

Burnet also averred that Leighton 'declared himself for' the 1647/8 Engagement and that, when some former Engagers 'were ordered to make public profession of their repentance for it,' he rebuked them for their conduct but not for supporting the cause itself. Leighton, claimed Burnet, was only saved from punishment by Lothian who 'had so high esteem for him that he persuaded the violent men not to meddle with him: though he gave occasion to great exception'.³ Leighton also 'entered into great correspondence with many of the episcopal party, and with [Burnet's] own father in particular, and did wholly separate himself from the presbyterians'.⁴ In his earlier unpublished 1683 manuscript, Burnet went even further:

[Leighton] openly owned his esteem of all the episcopal party, and when my father was absconding for refusing to swear the covenant he visited him often; he wished that the presbyterians would have questioned him for those things or put him again to the renew the covenant that so he might have found a fair

¹ *HMOT*, I, 240. Also 1683, 11.

² *HMOT*, I, 241. Also 1683, 12.

³ *HMOT*, I, 241-242. Also 1683, 11-12.

⁴ *HMOT*, I, 242.

colour for breaking with them, but they thought it more advisable to leave him alone.⁵

According to Burnet, Leighton's decision to accept the job of Principal post-dated not only his decision to leave 'the presbyterians' but to withdraw 'from his cure' because 'he could not do the things imposed on him any longer'. He parted from his parish 'in a silent manner' because he 'hated all contention so much' and wished to avoid 'disputes'.⁶ However, his saintliness led to him being 'prevailed with to accept' the post of Principal when offered it by 'the city'. Wholly inaccurately, Burnet stated that that position had fallen 'vacant some time after' Leighton's departure from Newbattle. He also claimed that Leighton was willing to accept the post only because 'in it he was wholly separated from all church matters'.⁷ However, in his 1683 manuscript, Burnet alleged that Leighton had 'found that his English accent, and that politeness to which he had accustomed himself, made him less capable of doing good among the commons; and so he thought he could not hold a living with good conscience, where he was a stranger and almost a barbarian to the greater part'. Therefore, said Burnet, Leighton had retired 'into England'.⁸

Although they added their own glosses, subsequent biographers largely and uncritically adopted Burnet's narrative.⁹ These variations ranged from the belief that Leighton acted dishonourably in continuing as Presbyterian minister¹⁰ to quiet satisfaction that he had begun to realise the benefits of Episcopacy.¹¹ Only the Presbyterian Blair insisted that, during this period, Leighton 'continued loyal to the régime of Presbytery' despite its

⁵ 1683, 12. After returning from exile in 1648, Robert Burnet spent some months at Dalkeith before moving to his Aberdeenshire estate (Greig, 'Burnet'; *Burnet-Leighton*, 323-324). There is no reason why Leighton would not have met Robert Burnet. However, Gilbert's claim that Leighton was waiting for an opportunity to disown the Covenants is contradicted by his conduct (see pp.152-213). None of the letters mentioned by Burnet (*HMOT*, I, 241) survive or are traceable. It would have been uncharacteristically rash of Leighton to have committed support for Episcopacy to paper.

⁶ *HMOT*, I, 242.

⁷ *HMOT*, I, 242. Also 1683, 12.

⁸ 1683, 12.

⁹ For example, see: 'Some Account' (Wilson), viii; Middleton, 'Life', xx-xxi; Murray, 'Life', 47-61; Pearson, 'Life', xvi-xxiii.

¹⁰ Murray, 'Life', 55-57.

¹¹ Jerment, 'Life', xiii-xiv. Cf. Murray, 'Life', 60-61.

‘severities’ which finally compelled him ‘to seek refuge’ in resignation.¹² Secretan opined that Leighton’s months in England in 1652, ostensibly negotiating for the release of captive Scottish ministers, ‘weaned him from his parochial ties’ so that he decided ‘to abandon his cure at Newbattle’.¹³

Alongside a panegyric to Leighton’s tolerance, Butler, however, acknowledged that Leighton’s Newbattle writings ‘exhibit a covenanting spirit’ and that, at least until 1648, his attachment to ‘moderate Presbytery’ was ‘unfeigned’.¹⁴ Contrary to Burnet’s assertion, Butler also affirmed that Leighton was a faithful member of Presbytery and had supported the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant.¹⁵ Although Butler thought that Leighton’s ‘disagreement with Scottish Presbytery’ surfaced at the Engagement, his decision to leave Newbattle was not presented as a break with Presbyterianism.¹⁶

While positing that Leighton was unhappy with the Church’s conduct, Knox agreed that Leighton was not disillusioned with Presbyterianism as such.¹⁷ He was concerned to quash the suggestion that Leighton was ‘any ordinary time-server’ in realising the ‘hopelessness of resistance to English power’ and accepting employment from Cromwell.¹⁸ Knox devised elaborate scenarios in which Leighton met Cromwell and the Cambridge Platonists and was influenced by both.¹⁹

These various – and often mutually contradictory – claims are now tested against the primary evidence.

¹² Blair, 17. Also Cheyne, *Studies*, 37; Niven, ‘Leighton’, 87.

¹³ Secretan, *Troubled Times*, 33. Also Tulloch, ‘Archbishop Leighton’, 127.

¹⁴ Butler, *Life*, 157, 178.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 178-179, 183-198.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 208-21; 216-217, 219. Also Blair, ‘Bibliography’, 423-427.

¹⁷ Knox, *Leighton*, 114-116, 137, 150-152.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 151-155. Butler was the first to suggest that Leighton had contact with Cromwell (Butler, *Life*, 246-247).

Covenanting Minister: 1641-1652

This section covers the period from Leighton's induction to his first attempt to obtain release from his charge in December 1652.

Presbytery of Dalkeith

The minutes of the Presbytery of Dalkeith are the principal primary source for this period.²⁰ Within its bounds lay sixteen charges, each of whose minister was a member of presbytery. The Presbytery was moderated and clerked by two of its ministers. From time to time, their identities are disclosed in the minutes. Including visitations to the charges within its bounds, and taking account of the bi-annual meetings of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale of which it was part, the Presbytery met almost weekly until 1650.

Thereafter, meetings were less frequent with extended gaps due to English invasion. Although the lay 'ruling elders' are referred to collectively, they are rarely named; a strong indication that this Church court was, in its week-to-week business, dominated by the ministers.

Leighton was evidently well regarded by his colleagues without being an outstanding figure. Of the twenty-two ministers who served from 1641-1653, eleven were sent by the Presbytery to General Assemblies as commissioners. Adam Penman and Hew Campbell were nominated three times, as was Leighton. No-one was nominated more often. There is no record that Leighton served as either Moderator or Clerk.

1642-1647: A diligent Covenanter

Leighton's parish ministry began just after Charles I had effectively surrendered power in Scotland to the Covenanters.²¹ The Treaty of Ripon, signed on 26 October 1640, formally ended the second Bishops' War (1640) but allowed the Scots army to remain in England

²⁰ The Presbytery minutes are held by the National Archives of Scotland (NAS CH2/424/2 and 3). A reliable transcript of all entries containing other than formal references to Leighton was made by a later minister of Newbattle, Thomas Gordon (Gordon, *Records*, 459-489).

²¹ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 241; Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 140-141.

and be paid for by English funds pending further negotiations in London.²² Only under the subsequent Treaty of London between the English and Scottish Parliaments, which was ratified by the King on 10 August 1641, did the Scottish army withdraw. The Scots had introduced demands for unity in religion and uniformity in church government as well as closer political union. Neither the King nor the English Parliament was prepared to make meaningful concessions on either point.²³ Nevertheless, these demands signalled the Scots' desire for 'a programme of confessional confederation to establish a godly monarchy in association with godly commonwealths in all three Stuart kingdoms'.²⁴ In essence, they hoped that England would become a Presbyterian country. Their reasons were threefold: to spread the benefits of Presbyterianism as they saw them; to deny Episcopalianism a base from which to retake Scotland; and to decrease the chances of conflict between the two countries.²⁵ For, despite success on the battlefield and around the negotiating table and obtaining substantial concessions from the King on his subsequent visit to Scotland in late 1641, the nascent Covenanting regime knew that if Charles regained political power in England then their revolution would probably be short-lived. What gains they had made would be lost if the monarch were to be victorious in his struggle with the English Parliament and then turn his attention, and recouped resources, upon Scotland.²⁶

The Church of Scotland stood solidly alongside the Scottish Parliament. Its 1642 General Assembly petitioned the King and the English Parliament for 'unity of religion' with 'one Confession of Faith, one directory of Worship, one publike Catechisme, and one forme of Kirk Government' across 'all His Majesties Dominions'.²⁷ For the first time, the Covenanting Kirk appointed a 'Commission for publike affairs for this kirk' or Commission of Assembly. It was given the specific remit of promoting 'this great Work in the Union of this Iland in Religion and Kirk-Government'. Unlike future Commissions,

²² Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 212-213; Donald, *Uncounselled King*, 270-272; Rushworth, *Historical Collections (1686)*, 1306-1307; RKS, 301-303; Stewart, 'English Funding', 576-579.

²³ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 220-221; Macinnes, *Union*, 69; RKS, 333-335.

²⁴ Macinnes, *Union*, 69.

²⁵ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 220-221, 310-315; Paterson, *Land Afflicted*, 54. The English Parliament also recognised the value of diminishing the possibility of future religious clashes (RKS, 323-324).

²⁶ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 242.

²⁷ RKS, 323, 324-326. Also Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 250-251.

which tended to include most or all of the commissioners to a General Assembly, this first Commission of Assembly had a small and select membership of leading Covenanters.²⁸ Leighton was among their number.²⁹

By the time the 1643 Edinburgh General Assembly ended on 19 August, the Solemn League and Covenant had been entered into, in effect between the Scottish Parliament and Church and the English Parliament. Preceded by the despatch of a Scottish army to Ireland in April 1642, continuing struggle between radical Covenanters and Royalists in Scotland and the onset of war between King Charles and the English Parliament in August 1642, the Solemn League and Covenant articulated a determination by the Covenanting regime 'to be actors and no longer spectators in the English civil war'.³⁰ Macinnes observes that the Covenanting movement 'was in the driving seat in British Revolutionary politics' and sought to use its ascendant position to achieve its civil and religious goals.³¹ As Stevenson has pointed out, the Solemn League and Covenant was both a 'civil league' and a 'religious covenant'.³² Yet, as Baillie lamented, 'The English were for a civill League, we were for a religious Covenant.'³³ Its first Article undertook to preserve Covenanting Presbyterianism in Scotland, to reform religion in England 'according to the Word of God, and the example of the best Reformed Churches', which the Scots understood to be Presbyterianism, and to bring the Churches of both countries 'to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in Religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government, Directory for Worship and Catechizing'.³⁴

²⁸ It was 'formidable' in its Covenanting zeal (*RKS*, 342). Also Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 251-252; Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 267.

²⁹ *RKS*, 330-331.

³⁰ Hamilton to Charles I, 18 May 1643 (NAS GD 406/1/1846). Also Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 243-275; Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 149.

³¹ Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 150.

³² Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 286. Macinnes characterises the Solemn League and Covenant as 'representing an extension of confessional confederation to achieve common spiritual and material aims while maintaining distinctive national structures in church and state' (Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 150).

³³ *Baillie*, II, 90.

³⁴ *Source*, III, 122-125.

With characteristic enthusiasm, the Kirk moved to endorse the Solemn League and Covenant.³⁵ The 1643/4 Commission of Assembly was empowered ‘to command and enjoine’ its subscription and swearing ‘by all members of this Kirk’ under threat of censure.³⁶ On 27 August 1643, the Scots agreed to send an army to England to advance the ends of the Solemn League and Covenant. It occupied Berwick-upon-Tweed on 20 September 1643 and entered England on 16 January 1644.³⁷

Leighton signed the Solemn League and Covenant in October 1643. On the copy bought by the congregation of Newbattle, his signature appears to the right of Lothian’s and is followed by those of 158 parishioners.³⁸ He gave no sign that he disagreed with the international trajectory of the Covenanting cause. Alexander, his father, was likely to have been at Newbattle at that time.³⁹

In his first full year as minister, Leighton preached twice before the Presbytery in June 1642, was appointed one of three commissioners to the 1642 General Assembly and was instructed to speak to Lothian about a murder case.⁴⁰ He also served on the ‘formidable’ 1642/3 Commission of Assembly.⁴¹ Present at forty of forty-six meetings of Presbytery, two absences arose because he was attending the General Assembly.⁴² In 1643, Leighton preached four times before the Presbytery and was appointed to admonish the murderer, one James Ramsay, from the pulpit.⁴³ He was absent on six occasions out of forty-five, once because of ill-health.⁴⁴

³⁵ *RKS*, 353.

³⁶ *RKS*, 359-360.

³⁷ Stevenson, *1637-1644*, 286-287, 294-296; Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 150-153.

³⁸ Gordon, *Records*, 486; *Ancram-Lothian*, I, lxxi. Lothian must have signed later since he was absent from Scotland from December 1642 until March 1644 at the earliest (Coffey, ‘Lothian’). On the fly-leaf is written in Leighton’s hand: “Octob. 20.1643. This book belongeth to The Kirk of Newbattell.” (Douglas, ‘Account of the Foundation’, 231-232).

³⁹ *Ancram-Lothian*, I, 154-155, 158-159.

⁴⁰ NAS CH2/424/3/91-93.

⁴¹ AGACS, 164; *RKS*, 330.

⁴² NAS CH2/424/3/89.

⁴³ NAS CH2/424/3/97-98, 108.

⁴⁴ NAS CH2/424/3/98-99, 106-108, 113.

At the turn of 1644/5, Scotland was gearing up for war, both civil and foreign. In addition to the Covenanting army in Ireland and soldiers retained for anti-Royalist operations in Scotland, a force of over twenty thousand was put into the field in England, the largest anti-Royalist army deployed in the conflict.⁴⁵ Although they made no spectacular advances, the active involvement of the Scots and the territorial gains which they consolidated were of considerable strategic value to the English Parliamentary forces. Consequently, for a time in 1644, the Scots led domestic and foreign policy in Scotland and England.⁴⁶ However, after Cromwell's victory at Naseby on 14 June 1645, the Scottish army declined in strategic importance as the power of the Independents grew.⁴⁷ The Royalist army capitulated in March 1646 and, on 5 May, Charles I surrendered to the Covenanting army at Newark. On 30 January 1647 he was handed over to English Parliamentarians without the Scots having obtained any guarantees about his personal or constitutional futures or, indeed, a permanent peace settlement with England.⁴⁸ The Scottish army withdrew north over the border. By June 1647, Charles was in the hands of the Independent-dominated New Model Army.

Amid the ebb and flow of armed conflict and the political vacillations and often inconclusive rounds of open and covert negotiations among the various Royalist, Parliamentary and Covenanting factions, the Scots did achieve considerable success. True, their goal of establishing Presbyterianism in England was not realised despite their willingness to accept Erastian Presbyterianism in England.⁴⁹ Yet Parliamentary victory had protected the revolutionary regime and its achievements in Scotland. As Macinnes has pointed out, 'the interests of the Covenanting movement were British and not just English'.⁵⁰

Civil war was not confined to England. Royalist forces, led principally by Montrose, had, by a mixture of guerrilla warfare and pitched battles, met with considerable success in both

⁴⁵ Paterson, *Land Afflicted*, 72-73; Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 156-157.

⁴⁶ Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 162-164. Macinnes, 'Scottish Moment', 125-126.

⁴⁷ Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 45-63.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁹ Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 170.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

Highlands and Lowlands, culminating with a ruthlessly executed victory at Kilsyth on 15 August 1645. The brilliance of Montrose was matched by the ineptitude of the Covenanting commanders and both sides were brutal and vengeful when given the opportunity. However, by 13 September 1645 Montrose had been defeated at Philiphaugh and meaningful Royalist resistance in Scotland effectively snuffed out.⁵¹ This left the Covenanters free to control most of the Lowlands through Parliament and the Church.⁵² However, the limitations of the Kirk's authority had become apparent. Its vehement opposition to the treaty which permitted Montrose to go into exile was ignored. The country was too weary of war, concludes Stevenson; 'without lay support [the ministers] were ultimately powerless, though they could raise much controversy and embarrass the regime'.⁵³

After he relinquished his command of Newcastle in August 1641, Lothian had continued as a senior figure in the Covenanting movement.⁵⁴ Having been appointed a Lord of Articles and a Scottish Privy Councillor in 1641, he was one of the Scots commissioners to the English Parliament despatched in December 1641. One of their tasks was to co-ordinate resistance to the rebellion in Ireland which had broken out in October 1641. Subsequently, Lothian was the absentee lieutenant-general of the Scottish Army sent to Ulster in April 1642.⁵⁵ From January to September 1643, he led an embassy to France which, although appointed by the Scottish Privy Council and intended to garner covert French support for the Covenanters, had royal approval.⁵⁶ When, upon his return to England, he reported to the King in Oxford, he was arrested and then imprisoned. His incarceration in Bristol Castle almost proved fatal and he was not released until March 1644, despite having been vindicated by the Scottish and English Parliaments in January 1644. Clarendon claimed that, thereafter, Lothian 'shewed the most implacable malice to the person of the King'.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 16-35; Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 175-178. At least ten thousand men, or one per cent of the Scottish population, were killed during Montrose's 1644-1645 campaign (Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 35).

⁵² Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 36-45.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁵⁴ Coffey, 'Lothian'; *Ancram-Lothian*, lxiv-lxxviii.

⁵⁵ Stevenson, *Scottish Covenanters and Irish Confederates*, 55-56, 69, 75, 77, 202.

⁵⁶ Macinnes, *British Confederate*, 166-168.

⁵⁷ Hyde, *History of the Rebellion*, IV, 383.

Once released, Lothian and his regiment played an inglorious part in the disastrous pursuit of Montrose.⁵⁸ He continued to be active in Parliament and government and was present at Newark when Charles I surrendered to the Scots, possibly having tricked him into doing so.⁵⁹ Having been one of the Scottish commissioners who failed in their attempts to negotiate with the King at Newcastle, he accompanied Charles to be handed over the English Parliamentarians in February 1647.

Leighton himself seems to have had no direct involvement in these great events. However, a letter written by him to Lothian on 8 June 1646 does offer intriguing glimpses of his opinions. Leighton addressed three matters. Firstly, he commented on the uncomfortable presence of the King among the Scottish army which was stationed at Newcastle. Initial delight at Charles' surrender had cooled as Charles proved unwilling to make real concessions to the Scots and the English Parliament resented his presence in their army. So, Leighton wryly observed: 'By your Lordship's letter [...] I perceive that they have least to retract, that were least taken with common sudden rejoycing at that late great occurrence.' The only good which Leighton could foresee was that God would use these difficulties to 'appeare most in his power, in commanding a calme' and to fulfil His 'maine worke'. Secondly, Leighton remarked upon the dislike which the King harboured towards Lothian: Charles 'still most mistakes those that wish him best'. Thirdly, Leighton encouraged Lothian in his wish for 'good intelligence betwixt the Kingdomes' as something 'most agreeable to the interest both of the cause of God, and of the happnesse of this Iland'. He hoped that those who 'affect and indeavor division' would be 'disappointed and ashamed'. Leighton also took the opportunity to remind his parishioner of 'the extreame vanity of earthly dependances' and encouraged him to continue 'to eye God alone, and His good acceptance in all, and to place [his] happnesse and joy solely in the light of His countenance'.⁶⁰

Leighton remained a conscientious minister of the Covenanting Kirk. In 1644, out of a possible forty-six meetings, Leighton was absent just six times, twice for ill health.⁶¹ He

⁵⁸ Paterson, *Land Afflicted*, 114-117; Coffey, 'Lothian'.

⁵⁹ Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 10-11, 55, 57; Macinnes, *British Confederate*, 190.

⁶⁰ *Amcram-Lothian*, I, 185-186. See *HMOT*, I, 28.

⁶¹ NAS CH2/424/3/115, 117, 125, 130.

preached at Lasswade and Penicuik, three times before Presbytery and once before the Synod.⁶² His involvement in pursuing justice against the murderer, Ramsay, continued.⁶³ For minister and congregation, the most significant event of 1644 was the Presbytery visitation to Newbattle on 23 May 1644. Minister, reader, heritors and elders were all ‘approved’. Leighton’s ‘lyfe and doctrine’ were endorsed by the heritors and elders ‘all with one voice’ and he was ‘exhorted to continue.’⁶⁴ The following year was even less eventful. In 1645, Leighton preached five times before his fellow ministers.⁶⁵ On 16 January, the Presbytery thanked Lothian for the books which he had donated for the use of the Newbattle minister ‘in all tyme comeing’.⁶⁶ Leighton was marked absent for three out of thirty-seven meetings.⁶⁷ The year 1646 saw Leighton take a leading role in investigating the alleged drunkenness of a fellow minister.⁶⁸ He preached before Presbytery on four occasions and once at Ormiston.⁶⁹ Having been a commissioner to the 1646 Edinburgh General Assembly, he was appointed to the 1646/7 Commission of Assembly.⁷⁰ He was marked absent from only two of forty-three Presbytery meetings.⁷¹ The next year began positively for Leighton. Together with James Robertson he was instructed by the Commission of Assembly to preach before the Scottish Parliament on 24 January 1647.⁷² However, by 25 February, Leighton had left for London, having been sent for by his father, Alexander, who was ‘lying sick’ there.⁷³ It appears that Leighton did not return until just before 20 May 1647.⁷⁴ In Leighton’s absence, his Kirk Session fell foul of the Presbytery

⁶² NAS CH2/424/3/121, 125, 129.

⁶³ NAS CH2/424/3/125.

⁶⁴ NAS CH2/424/3/121.

⁶⁵ NAS CH2/424/3/130-131, 138, 141.

⁶⁶ NAS CH2/424/3/131.

⁶⁷ NAS CH2/424/3/146-147.

⁶⁸ NAS CH2/424/3/150, 152-157, 163-167.

⁶⁹ NAS CH2/424/3/145, 152, 160-161.

⁷⁰ NAS CH2/424/3/143; AGACS, 342; RKS, 427-428. Leighton was a diligent Commission member having attended twenty-two meetings (*RCGACS 1646-1647*, 9, 14-16, 23, 26, 30-31, 39, 43, 45, 56, 66, 73-74, 104, 108, 110, 143, 147, 153, 160, 213, 219, 226). Leighton was appointed to a committee to deal with ‘rebells’ (*RCGACS 1646-1647*, 14).

⁷¹ NAS CH2/424/3/146, 147.

⁷² *RCGACS 1646-1647*, 164; NAS CH2/424/3/1172. Leighton also led prayers in the Scottish Parliament on 1 January 1647 (*RCGACS 1646-1647*, 163).

⁷³ NAS CH2/424/3/174.

⁷⁴ NAS CH2/424/3/180.

in their lenient dealings with ‘a known malignant’.⁷⁵ In September, Leighton referred an adulterous parishioner to the Presbytery.⁷⁶ Despite his absence in England, Leighton managed to attend twenty-nine out of forty-one meetings of Presbytery: ‘there were few more regular attenders’.⁷⁷

Leighton’s first six years as a member of the Presbytery of Dalkeith were thus unremarkable. There is nothing to indicate any disaffection with Presbyterianism or with the course of the Covenanting cause in either state or church. However, in 1648 he made three decisions which have been construed as evidence that he was becoming disenchanted with the Covenant in particular and Presbyterianism in general. In March 1648, Leighton failed to read a Declaration to his congregation which had been issued by the Commission of Assembly condemning the Engagement. Instead, he entrusted this task to his precentor. From March to May 1648 he was absent from Newbattle without having sought permission from the Presbytery. In June 1648, he refused to accept a commission to the forthcoming General Assembly. These decisions are now examined.

1648: Leighton and the Engagement

The Engagement was the name given to a treaty between King Charles I and Lauderdale, Lanark and Loudon purporting to act in the name of ‘the kingdom of Scotland’.⁷⁸ Signed on 26 December 1647 on the Isle of Wight, its opening section was framed as a series of undertakings by the King which were predicated on his being able to be present, ‘with freedom, honour and safety’, in a ‘free parliament’. When he was able to do so, Charles undertook to ‘confirm [...] presbyterial government’ in England for a three year period as a precursor to ‘free debate’ on church government. A final decision on church polity was to be made by the King and both Houses of the English Parliament. There was no guarantee

⁷⁵ NAS CH2/424/3/177-180, 182. A ‘malignant’ had originally been someone who opposed the Covenants but by 1647 the term included a supporter of Montrose (*RKS*, 362-363, 398, 423-427, 446-447, 448, 450, 469-470).

⁷⁶ NAS CH2/424/3/197.

⁷⁷ Gordon, *Records*, 468.

⁷⁸ Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 78-81.

that Presbyterianism would prevail. Arminianism, Separatism, Independency and other perceived blasphemies, heresies and schisms were to be suppressed. Royal promises of support for the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant were qualified and oblique. In exchange, the 'kingdom of Scotland' undertook to ensure that Charles reached 'London in safety, honour and freedom'. Recognising that this was unlikely to be achieved 'in a peaceable way and manner', the Scots promised to send an army into England 'for preservation and establishment of religion, for defence of His Majesty's person and authority, and restoring him to his government' with the aim of 'making a firm union between the kingdoms under His Majesty'.⁷⁹

Macinnes suggests that the Engagement was an implicit recognition by the lay political leadership of Scotland that 'the Covenanters had lost the political initiative within the British Isles'.⁸⁰ Confidence that they could influence England towards greater political union and religious uniformity had dissipated. The purposes of the Solemn League and Covenant were being frustrated. Old concerns about Scottish vulnerability had persuaded the majority of the Scottish nobility that a move towards closer union under a restored monarchy was the best course for themselves and their country. They were already uneasy both at the transfer of the King into the custody of the English Parliament in February 1647 and about the power of the Kirk's ministers. The Engagement offered a means of reasserting aristocratic dominance over Scotland.⁸¹ However, with few exceptions, there was little overt support for the Engagement among the ministers. The Commission of Assembly and the 1648 General Assembly moved swiftly to bring the weight of the Kirk to bear against it.⁸²

The Engagement was short-lived. Led by Hamilton, the 'tragedy-comedial' adventure 'soon began to unravel'.⁸³ The army sent into England to fulfil Scotland's obligations under the treaty was routed and dispersed by mid-August 1648 around Preston.⁸⁴ Within days, an

⁷⁹ *Source Book*, 134-137.

⁸⁰ Macinnes, *British Revolution*, 187.

⁸¹ Morrill, 'National Covenant', 20. Also Macinnes, 'Scottish Constitution', 125; Mackey, 73-75.

⁸² See p. 164.

⁸³ Macinnes, 'Scottish Constitution', 126.

⁸⁴ Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 95.

anti-Engager force from Ayrshire, Clydesdale and Galloway had moved on Edinburgh, in what became known as the Whiggamore Raid, forcing the Engager Committee of Estates to abandon the capital. With Argyll pressing, albeit ineptly, from the north and Cromwell advancing through southern Scotland, the Engagers ceded power on 27 September, encouraged by assurances that retribution would not be taken against their persons or property.⁸⁵ Installed by Cromwell, the rule of the 'Kirk Party' had begun, at least in central and southern Scotland.⁸⁶ Nothing less than a coup d'état, on 23 January 1649 Parliament passed an Act of Classes excluding former Engagers from public offices and political power.⁸⁷ Although there is no clear evidence that the state became subservient to the Church, by imposing requirements for repentance and recommitment to Covenanting 'radicalism', the Kirk 'gained a right of veto over office-holding' and so reasserted its own influence.⁸⁸ However, this drive towards 'radical purity' weakened the Scots leadership and contributed significantly to defeat at Dunbar on 2 September 1650 and English military occupation.⁸⁹

Lothian was numbered amongst the few nobles who opposed the Engagement from the outset.⁹⁰ When Cromwell arrived in Edinburgh in 1649, Lothian was one of those who 'haunted him most'.⁹¹ A firm adherent of his kinsman Argyll's party, with the collapse of the Engagement and consequent eclipse of Hamilton's Engagers, Lothian became a leader of the Kirk Party.⁹² On 10 March 1649 he assumed office as Secretary of State as part of the ensuing purge of 'malignants'.⁹³ In light of his committed resistance, Burnet's assertion

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 95-99.

⁸⁶ Stevenson's term for the anti-Engager party which took control and in which the ministers were dominant (Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 100).

⁸⁷ Macinnes, 'Scottish Constitution', 126-127; Young, 'Scottish Covenanting Radicalism', 345-353. Cromwell intervened on behalf of the Kirk Party hoping 'it would be more amenable to his own Independent party in England' (Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 8).

⁸⁸ Young, 'Scottish Covenanting Radicalism', 374; Macinnes, 'Scottish Constitution', 127.

⁸⁹ Macinnes, 'Scottish Constitution', 127; Young, 'Covenanters and Parliament', 158

⁹⁰ Rosse, 2; Guthry, *Memoirs*, 263, 273; *Baillie*, III, 35 and 54; Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 82.

⁹¹ Guthry, *Memoirs*, 298.

⁹² Young, 'Scottish Covenanting Radicalism', 372.

⁹³ Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 112-113.

that Lothian protected Leighton after he had shown support for the Engagement seems, at best, improbable.

In December 1648, Lothian had led a delegation to the English Parliament which sought to balance protest against the prosecution of Charles I, who was also King of Scotland, with maintaining good relations.⁹⁴ However, much they may have resented royal interference with their Kirk, the Covenanters believed themselves covenanted to a divinely appointed king. The King was executed on 30 January 1649 and on 5 February, the Scottish Parliament proclaimed his son as King of Great Britain, France and Ireland.⁹⁵ Barber has described this proclamation as giving Charles II ‘the blessing of the elite in Scotland to lay claim to the throne of England’ and so it was perceived by outraged English Republicans.⁹⁶ Ordered to travel from London to the Netherlands to treat with Charles II for his return as a monarch committed to Presbyterianism and the Covenants, Lothian was apprehended before he could set sail and deported to Scotland.⁹⁷

On 1 March 1648, the Commission of Assembly approved a Declaration which, in essence, was a root-and-branch condemnation of the Engagement as being a ‘great and imminent danger to Religion and the Cause of God’ and an attack on the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant by ‘malitious and crafty adversaries’.⁹⁸ On 13 March, presbyteries were ordered to ensure that every minister ‘read the sermon himselfe to the Congregation’.⁹⁹

For Leighton, 1648 had begun quietly and routinely. He preached to the Presbytery on 20 and 27 January as he had done on a number of previous occasions.¹⁰⁰ Yet, by April Leighton’s actions were under scrutiny by the Church’s courts and he faced being removed from his ministry. In Leighton’s unauthorised absence, it was recorded by Presbytery on 6

⁹⁴ RKS, 184; Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 107-108; *Ancram-Lothian*, I, 229-246; Coffey, ‘Lothian’.

⁹⁵ Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 224-225.

⁹⁶ Barber, ‘Scotland and Ireland’, 205. Also Macinnes, *British Confederate*, 250-251.

⁹⁷ Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 111-112.

⁹⁸ RCGACS 1648-1649, 373.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 390.

¹⁰⁰ NAS CH2/424/3/231-232.

April that all the ministers present had declared that they had read the Declaration themselves to their congregations. However, ‘Robert Porteous, the elder of Newbotle, declared that Mr Robert Leightoun had made the Precentor read it, and that because of the lownesse of his awne voice, which could not be heard thorow the whole kirk.’ The Presbytery instructed its Clerk ‘to report this in writt to the Commission’.¹⁰¹ Leighton was the only minister reported to the Commission by the Presbytery and one of only three reported by any presbytery.¹⁰²

On 12 April 1648, the Commission of the General Assembly received the report of the Presbytery of Dalkeith.¹⁰³ After considering it, the Commission resolved to hear Leighton ‘when he returnes to the countrey.’¹⁰⁴ On 2 May 1648, at the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, sitting in Edinburgh, the Presbytery of Dalkeith reported that all its ministers had read the declaration except Leighton. Leighton was not present and it was his unauthorised absence from his charge that appears to have exercised the Synod. However, no further action was taken by either the Commission or the Synod. It was merely noted that Leighton would preach before Parliament on the first Sunday in June and a substitute was nominated to stand in for him ‘if he com not home’.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, on 7 November 1648, Leighton was appointed to a committee which included senior anti-Engagers such as Robert Douglas, David Calderwood and Lothian and whose purpose was to try members of the Synod who had been Engagers.¹⁰⁶

When Leighton did return to Newbattle, he was examined by the Presbytery on 15 June both about his failure to read the Declaration himself and his unauthorised absence. On the first issue, he explained that to have done so he would have had ‘to extend his voyce [...] farr’ but that on the ‘Sabboth quhen the Declaration was to be red, he was so troubled with

¹⁰¹ NAS CH2/424/3/246-247. Leighton was self-conscious about his voice. In one sermon preached at Newbattle, he lamented: ‘Had I a strong voice, as it is the weakest alive’ (*WW*, II, 431. Also *Coltness*, 69).

¹⁰² The others were Andrew Ramsay and William Colville, both Edinburgh ministers (see pp.166-167).

¹⁰³ RCGACS 1648-1649, 442.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 442.

¹⁰⁵ *RSLT*, 246-247, 252; NAS CH2/424/3/250.

¹⁰⁶ *RSLT*, 255.

ane great defluction that he was [not] able'. This explanation appears to have been accepted for, like the higher courts, the Presbytery took no action other than to admonish Leighton for both failing to read the Declaration and for his unauthorised absence.

The Presbytery's decision to report Leighton to the Commission and Synod indicates that, even if Lothian had tried to pressure it to take no action, its members were unwavering in their duty. The same can be said of the Newbattle elder, Robert Porteous. Furthermore, given the harsh and fearful attitude of the anti-Engager dominated Church, it is highly unlikely that Leighton could have avoided severe punishment had it really been thought that he supported the Engagement. Stevenson calculates that at least 105 ministers were deposed between 1648 and 1651, almost all because of their actual or alleged support of the Engagement.¹⁰⁷ The 1648 General Assembly, which began on 12 July in Edinburgh, had elected the unrelenting anti-Engager George Gillespie as its Moderator.¹⁰⁸ The Assembly was uncompromising in its opposition and supporters of the Engagement were treated as 'malignants', regardless of their previous record.¹⁰⁹ All ministers were exhorted and charged 'that in no wayes they be accessory to this sinfull Engagement' upon pain of 'the wrath of God' and 'Ecclesiastick censures.'¹¹⁰ To support the Engagement in any way was cause for immediate deposition. Neither was neutrality any protection.¹¹¹ Ministers were instructed to preach against 'the unlawfull Engagement in War'. Those who were 'too sparing' or 'ambiguous' faced suspension or deposition.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Stevenson, 'Deposition', 329-335. The Kirk had about 910 ministers. At least twelve were deposed in 1647, twenty in 1648, fifty-two in 1649, twenty-eight in 1650 and five in 1651. Within the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, which had about 115 ministers, four were deposed in 1648, five in 1649 and one in 1650.

¹⁰⁸ *AGACS*, 610; *RKS*, 517. George Gillespie (1613-1648) was a Church of Scotland minister, presbyterian apologist and significant reformed theologian who had been commissioner to the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1643 (Holfelder, 'Gillespie').

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, the 'Act against sudden admitting deposed Ministers to particular Congregations' of 21 July 1648 (*RKS*, 496).

¹¹⁰ *RKS*, 504.

¹¹¹ Stevenson, 'Deposition', 329.

¹¹² *RKS*, 509-510. Also Young, 'Covenanters and Parliament', 134-139.

Andrew Ramsay (1574-1659) and William Colville, both more prominent Covenanting ministers than Leighton, discovered just how severely these provisions were to be applied. A former professor at Saumur, Ramsay had been Moderator of the 1640 Assembly. Having been a leading supporter of Laudian episcopacy in Scotland, he had failed to secure a bishopric and, in the mid-1630s, had joined the opposition to Charles I's ecclesiastical innovations. As Minister of Greyfriars in Edinburgh, he refused to read from the new prayer book on 23 July 1637. Thereafter, he was an enthusiastic and prominent supporter of the cause of the Covenant. Yet his unwillingness to preach against the Engagement in 1647 resulted in his suspension in 1648 and deprivation in 1649.¹¹³ Colville, a trusted Covenanter emissary, was the author of the 1639 letter to Balmerino. He, too, was suspended in 1648 and deposed in 1649.¹¹⁴ According to Baillie, who believed that he had been able to protect other ministers from similar punishment, Ramsay had, in fact, preached in favour of the Engagement while Colville, although suspected of being a sympathiser, had simply been silent.¹¹⁵ Baillie, who was no Engager, was concerned that 'all Ministers conversing with Malignants' were liable to sanctions. This worried him because the 'notion of Malignants' had, by then, been 'extended to very many.'¹¹⁶ Because he expressed these reservations, Baillie too was accused of being a malignant.¹¹⁷

There is thus no reason to suppose that Leighton would have escaped punishment had his opposition to the Engagement been doubted. Neither would Lothian have been able to protect him, even if had he wished to retain a minister who insisted on defying him and his beliefs and under whom he and his family would continue to sit. Furthermore, since Colville's alleged support for the Engagement rendered him unacceptable to the English military government as Principal of the Town College, the fact that that government insisted on Leighton's appointment further diminishes the likelihood that he was sympathetic to the Engagement. Even if Leighton was a secret supporter of the Engagement, it is difficult to see such approval as a step towards Episcopalianism. Under

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 557. Ramsay was reinstated in 1655 (Wells, 'Ramsay').

¹¹⁴ *RKS*, 557.

¹¹⁵ *Baillie*, III, 34-35, 63-64. Colville, who denied the charges, was reinstated in 1654 (Pearce; Colville).

¹¹⁶ *Baillie*, III, 63.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 92-93, 105.

the Engagement, radical Presbyterianism would have been left untouched in Scotland with no tolerance for any other expression of Christian faith. Albeit for a limited trial period and with only slim prospects of permanent establishment, Presbyterianism would have been forced on England. Neither would support for the Engagement have been the mark of a man of peace. The Engagers knew from the outset that they would probably need to invade England in order to achieve their aims.

1648: Absences

In 1648, Leighton failed to attend 15 of 41 meetings of the Presbytery.¹¹⁸ These non-attendances included the seven meetings which fell within the two-and-a-half months from 23 March until late May 1648 during which Leighton was absent without permission from his parish.¹¹⁹ The decision to leave Newbattle for this period in contravention of the law of the church is the second action by which Leighton has been said to have shown his disillusionment with Presbyterianism.

Unsanctioned absence by a minister from his parish was generally regarded as a serious breach of Church law. Yet, Leighton was not disciplined by the Synod and the sanction imposed by the Presbytery was very light, giving rise to the strong presumption that the explanations recorded in the Presbytery minute of 15 June 1648 were accepted. Leighton's first line of defence was that he had not intended to be away for more than two or three Sabbaths. When he realised that he would be away for longer 'he did acquaint som of the brether with it, and desyret them to excuse him'. Furthermore, when he arrived in York, he 'wrote an letter of excuse to the Brether, nothwithstanding it did not come to ther hands befor his coming home'. It seems that he had originally intended to travel to York on his own business, but finding 'non of his own' there, he required 'to go further and stay longer than he intendit'. Finally, his appearance at Presbytery was further delayed by two weeks because, upon his return home, he was 'surpryset with seikness'. Having heard these excuses, the Presbytery decided that he should be 'gravlie admonishit to amend'. Leighton

¹¹⁸ NAS CH2/424/3/165-181.

¹¹⁹ NAS CH2/424/3/239-253.

accepted this censure ‘humble, and promisit be the grace of God to amend’.¹²⁰ In all the circumstances, Leighton’s unauthorised absence in 1648 is best seen as a technical and inadvertent breach of the Church law and nothing more.

1648: Reluctant Commissioner

The third episode in 1648 which bears further examination for signs of discontent with the Kirk was Leighton’s refusal to accept a commission to the 1648 Edinburgh General Assembly which was due to begin on 12 July. On 22 June, Leighton was the only one of the four members of Presbytery (three ministers and one ruling elder) chosen to be commissioners who did not ‘accepte of the commission and [give] ther oath of fidelitie’. Leighton offered the following reasons ‘why he could not accept of the commission’:

1. Because he had an great charge.
2. He had his people to examine.
3. He was bot shortlie come home from England.
4. It was not long since he was commissioner to the General Assemblie.
5. The great attendance of the commission.¹²¹

His fellow presbyters were unsympathetic and gave him fourteen days to reconsider.¹²² However, when the Presbytery met on 6 July, Leighton did not attend and his commission was withdrawn. Nevertheless, the Presbytery insisted upon an explanation and questioned him on 31 August about why he had not returned to Presbytery to accept his commission. Leighton explained that on that day he was unwell with ‘an distillation’. To the larger question of why he would not accept his commission to the General Assembly, Leighton offered the excuses of ‘his own weaknes for the managing of that business’ and of being ‘very infirme’.¹²³ Yet, he assured Presbytery that, had he thought that no-one else could take his place, he would have attended the Assembly ‘notwithstanding of all his weakness of bodie, yes, although it had tendit to the great prejudice of his health’. The Presbytery

¹²⁰ NAS CH2/424/3/254.

¹²¹ NAS CH2/424/3/255.

¹²² NAS CH2/424/3/255.

¹²³ NAS CH2/424/3/258.

found his reasons ‘somewhat weak’. However, they decided that he behaved not out of ‘disaffection unto the cause of Christ, neither out of any disrespect unto the ordinance of his brethern’. He was simply modest and ‘infirm in bodie’ and it was resolved to admonish him.¹²⁴

It is possible to discern real affection for Leighton in the ‘charitable’ ways in which his brethren dealt with him in 1648. Nevertheless, as they demonstrated by their decisions to report him to the Synod and Commission of Assembly, they would not ignore disaffection. The Church was frightened of losing its influence within the country and the gains of the last ten years. A fearful Church was a ruthless Church, as many of Leighton’s colleagues had discovered. In seeking to comprehend Leighton’s actions, it is more prudent to allow the vigilant Kirk rather than the speculative Burnet and those who built upon his conjecture to be the judge. There is no evidence that Leighton supported the Engagement or that, in 1648, his support for Presbyterianism was waning.

1649-1652: Harsh Realities

Leighton weathered the storms of 1648, his Covenanting reputation intact and apparently as committed to the cause as before. However, the next four years presented even greater challenges as Covenanting Scotland fought with Independent England with disastrous results; native government was usurped by foreign military occupation, the people of Scotland were dislocated from the religious certainties to which they had adhered over the past decade and the Kirk lost its place as sole arbiter of church polity and theological truth. On a more personal level, Leighton’s patron, Lothian, reached the apogee of his political power and was then ejected from government as Covenanting Scotland collapsed.

As the newly installed Secretary of State, Lothian was part of the delegation which negotiated the terms under which Charles II was prepared to travel to Scotland and the Covenanters to receive him. The King landed in June 1650. Even before his arrival, he divided the regime with the most radical unwilling to accept their monarch unless he unreservedly endorsed the Covenants and all that had been achieved under them. Lothian was criticised for being too conciliatory and Charles for being insincere. The negotiations were tortuous, with duplicity on both sides, and Charles only signed the Covenants at sea

¹²⁴ NAS CH2/424/3/258.

off the Scottish coast on 23 June. It was widely agreed that, given the chance, he would recant his concessions.¹²⁵ Meanwhile, an attempt by Montrose to re-ignite his campaign against the Covenanters ended quickly with defeat at Carbisdale on 27 April 1650. Within days he had been captured, soon to be executed. International war was imminent, with England and Scotland each preparing to invade the other. Cromwell crossed the Tweed on 22 July and on 3 September 1650 defeated the Scots army at Dunbar. Four thousand Scots were killed and ten thousand captured, about half seriously wounded. Traditional Scots ineptitude had been exacerbated by a divided leadership and an army weakened by the recent purging of former Royalists.¹²⁶ This national disaster ceded control of the South-East to Cromwell; by the end of 1650 he had occupied the country south of the Rivers Forth and Clyde.¹²⁷ Rather than constituting a national crisis over which to unite, defeat provoked further squabbling among the Covenanters. This crystallised around the Western Remonstrance approved in Dumfries on 17 October 1650, which claimed that Scotland's reverses were divine judgement for accepting a King who had not truly repented of his ungodly ways and for failing to fully implement the 1649 Act of Classes by purging 'the judicatories and armies, and [filling] the places of truste and power with men of knowin good affection to the cause of God and of a blamles and Christian conversation'.¹²⁸ The Remonstrance was rejected by both the Committee of Estates and the Commission of Assembly although in mild terms and not without difficult internal debate.¹²⁹ Lothian sided with Argyll in opposing the Remonstrants.¹³⁰ By December 1650, the parlous state of the nation had convinced the Commission of Assembly, from which the disappointed Remonstrants had withdrawn, that Scotland could no longer afford to exclude all 'malignants' from service in its army.¹³¹ On 14 December 1650, the Commission resolved to this effect; its Resolution was protested by a wider group than the original Remonstrants who became known as the Protestors.¹³² As the old Kirk Party fractured, and his supporters

¹²⁵ Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 131-141.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 42-149; Grainger, 37-50.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 160-161.

¹²⁸ *RKS*, 604-606.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 608-610.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 608; Macinnes, *British Confederate*, 261.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 608.

¹³² Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 162-163.

resumed positions of power, the King's position was strengthened. He was crowned at Scone on 1 January 1651 with two of Lothian's sons acting as train-bearers. When the Scottish Parliament met at Perth on 13 March 1651, Lothian failed in his attempt on behalf of the remaining Kirk Party nobles to continue to exclude Hamilton and other leading Engagers from power and to bolster their own authority.¹³³ After two more months of manoeuvring, the Royalists secured control and the Act of Classes was repealed. The July 1651 St Andrews General Assembly was interrupted by the English victory at Inverkeithing and forced to reconvene in Dundee with about half its commissioners missing. The Kirk was in schism, with the radical minority who had hitherto driven policy having lost lay support and the acquiescence of a majority of ministers.¹³⁴ Faced with further defeats, the Scots, now Royalist-led, decided to invade England, only to be destroyed at Worcester on 3 September 1651.¹³⁵ Scottish independence had been 'fatally undermined' and over the next twelve months, the English military occupation of the whole country was completed.¹³⁶

English subjugation ended Lothian's political career. Although he continued to hold the title of Secretary of State, he retired to Newbattle. A futile attempt to recover expenses incurred on public business took him to London from June 1655 to May 1656 but otherwise he seems to have resided at Newbattle until the Restoration. Brodie recorded in his diary for 31 August 1655 that Argyll had told him that Lothian was 'tampering with the Protector, and inclinations to take employment'.¹³⁷ While it is unclear whether he was offered employment, it is certain that Lothian did not hold office under the English.

These upheavals could not but impact upon Leighton. The year 1649 began and ended with him preaching before the Presbytery.¹³⁸ Between times, he further demonstrated his antipathy for the Engagement in examining a candidate for ministry who was 'charged with thinking the Engagement lawfull'. Despite Leighton's testimony that the man had

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 166-167; Macinnes, *British Confederate*, 264.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 170-171.

¹³⁵ Grainger, 128-146.

¹³⁶ Macinnes, *Union*, 75. Also Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 41-42.

¹³⁷ Brodie, *Diary*, 150, 153.

¹³⁸ NAS CH2/424/3/284, 370-371.

repented, he was still suspended on 12 April.¹³⁹ Leighton was not among those obliged to sign a declaration disavowing the Engagement.¹⁴⁰ Neither did Leighton fail to read a further denunciation of the Engagement issued by the Commission of Assembly on 11 May 1649 and to exhort his congregation accordingly.¹⁴¹ On 31st May 1649, Leighton was granted permission to ‘goe and visite’ his father who was ‘under seakness’ and who had ‘written for’ his son.¹⁴² Leighton appears to have been absent for three months, his first subsequent attendance at presbytery being on 6 September 1649 when all ministers were ordered to report anyone in their parishes who had not recanted and atoned for their support for ‘the lait unlawful Ingagement’.¹⁴³ It is likely that Alexander died during this time. Aside from his visit to his father, in 1649 Leighton appears to have missed about fourteen of the thirty-one Presbytery meetings.¹⁴⁴ It is notable that during that year, absenteeism within the Presbytery increased significantly and Leighton’s attendance was comparable to many of his colleagues.

For the Presbytery of Dalkeith, the following year was not so tranquil. It did not meet from 25 July 1650 until 15 June 1651.¹⁴⁵ Although no reason is given in the minutes, this was probably due to Cromwell’s invasion. Dalkeith was on the English line of march and from mid-July 1650 was not only within the area of occupation but became their army’s headquarters. The quality of the minutes deteriorated and Leighton’s attendance is difficult to gauge. He appears to have been no less diligent than his colleagues. On 14 March 1650 he was given leave to travel to England on ‘weightie busnesse’ and was absent from mid-March until the end of May.¹⁴⁶ Aside from negotiations with Lothian about his stipend, Leighton ‘tried’ a Newbattle man who, having returned from thirteen years abroad, was

¹³⁹ NAS CH2/424/3/296-297.

¹⁴⁰ NAS CH2/424/3/300.

¹⁴¹ *RCGACS 1648-1649*, 252-258; NAS CH2/424/3/320.

¹⁴² NAS CH2/424/3/324.

¹⁴³ NAS CH2/424/3/335-336.

¹⁴⁴ NAS CH2/424/3/295-374. The recording of attendance and absence was patchy during this period.

¹⁴⁵ NAS CH2/424/3/429.

¹⁴⁶ NAS CH2/424/3/394. Leighton travelled to London to investigate the loss of £1000 of his inheritance from his father (Butler, *Life*, 212-213).

‘received to the covenant’.¹⁴⁷ He also ‘conferred’ with a man ‘who was scarcely satisfied that sett prayers were lawfull’.¹⁴⁸

The year 1651 was another difficult one for the Presbytery of Dalkeith. It met for the first time that year at 15 June, apparently at Dalkeith. A sparse minute records that it was decided to meet at Cockpen on 22 June to avoid the disorder in the town and the attentions of the English soldiers.¹⁴⁹ However, only nine members were present, including Leighton, and it was felt that Cockpen was no safer than Dalkeith.¹⁵⁰ The minutes from that date until 30 October 1651 are missing. Only three other meetings are recorded that year: 30 October, 14 November and 18 December.¹⁵¹ Meagre minutes show that Leighton was present on 30 October but not whether he attended the other two meetings.

In the meantime, the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale met on 4 November 1651.¹⁵² Leighton was appointed to a number of committees including one for ‘healing the present ruptures in the Kirk’.¹⁵³ Another was instructed to challenge those Protestor ‘brethern differing in judgement’ from the Synod.¹⁵⁴ A third committee was tasked with securing the release of ministers being held prisoner in England after the battle of Worcester on 3 September 1651.¹⁵⁵ To this end, the Synod decided to write a letter of ‘sympathie and fellow-feeling’.¹⁵⁶ More significantly, it decided to appoint ‘a fitt man of the Synod’ to go to London ‘with commission to negotiat their liberation and freedome, by all possible and lawfull meanes’. This emissary was to take advice from, among others, Johnston of Wariston.¹⁵⁷ Leighton was selected for this task, having been ‘unanimously chosen and

¹⁴⁷ NAS CH2/424/377, 380, 423.

¹⁴⁸ NAS CH2/424/3/425.

¹⁴⁹ NAS CH2/424/3/428.

¹⁵⁰ NAS CH2/424/3/428.

¹⁵¹ NAS CH2/424/3/429.

¹⁵² NAS CH2/424/3/436.

¹⁵³ NAS CH2/424/3/436.

¹⁵⁴ NAS CH2/424/3/437.

¹⁵⁵ NAS CH2/424/3/437.

¹⁵⁶ NAS CH2/424/3/441.

¹⁵⁷ NAS CH2/424/3/440.

earnestly desired by the Synod to undertake the charge'.¹⁵⁸ He was also appointed to yet a fourth committee charged with informing the Edinburgh magistrates and the ministers' relations of the Synod's decision.¹⁵⁹ It is difficult to see the Synod's decisions as anything less than expressions of confidence in Leighton's theological and personal soundness.

Just when Leighton set off on his mission is not clear. It is possible that he travelled to England towards the end of 1651 and returned to Scotland by March 1652. Although he had not left by 14 November 1651, on that date his presbytery had put in place pulpit supply for the period of 'his abod in England'.¹⁶⁰ He attended Synod on 3 March 1652 and Presbytery on 1, 15 and 22 April 1652.¹⁶¹ However, had Leighton been undertaking his task during this period, he would almost certainly have reported formally and this would have been minuted. No such report appears. At Synod, on 3 May, Leighton was included in a committee to deal with the consequences of fraternisation between local women and English troops. On 4 May, it was reported that 'the English Commissioner' had given little cause for hope for 'the freedome and maintenance' of the imprisoned ministers. Consequently, four ministers were instructed to confer with the Edinburgh ministers and Leighton.¹⁶²

It seems more likely that Leighton was in England from late April until November 1652 on Synod business. It is probable that he had left by 29 April, since, when Presbytery met on that day, he was absent and a letter from him was read asking his fellow ministers to 'supply' his Newbattle pulpit 'in respect he was going to sie if he [could] obtaine any sort of libertie to these Ministers who were keepet in the Tower and uther places'.¹⁶³ Leighton was also absent on 15 July when the presbytery investigated whether another minister, who was presumably standing in for him, had known that an excommunicated man had been

¹⁵⁸ NAS CH2/424/3/440.

¹⁵⁹ NAS CH2/424/3/440.

¹⁶⁰ NAS CH2/424/3/430.

¹⁶¹ NAS CH2/424/3/433-434, 448. From January to April, he was incontrovertibly absent for only three of eleven meetings (NAS CH2/424/3/430-435). The minutes for 1652 disclose that the Presbytery met on thirty occasions (CH2/424/3/430-4/5). Leighton was certainly present for at least six of these with some minutes failing to record absences.

¹⁶² NAS CH2/424/3/448.

¹⁶³ NAS CH2/424/3/432-433.

present as he prayed at the marriage of one of Lothian's daughters in the church and later 'at the tables at Newbotle Castell'.¹⁶⁴ Lothian's letter to his Countess, dated 6 December 1652, suggests that Leighton was back in Newbattle by the beginning of December at the latest.¹⁶⁵ Leighton is recorded as having attended the Presbytery of Dalkeith in person on only two more occasions: on 27 January and 3 February 1653 when he appeared to plead for release from his charge.¹⁶⁶ In December 1652, the Presbytery received the first written indication that Leighton intended to end his parish ministry at Newbattle. On 16 December, 'a letter from Mr Robert Lichtone' was presented in which he purported to demit 'his charge of his ministrie at Newbotle'. The Presbytery refused to accept his demission and the Moderator was instructed to write to him 'to desyre him to returne to his charge'.¹⁶⁷ At the next meeting, on 30 December, another letter was presented from Leighton 'quhairin he divests his charge *de novo*'. Again the Presbytery refused to accept and again the Moderator was instructed to write to him.¹⁶⁸ Leighton was not released until 3 February 1653.¹⁶⁹

Before examining the circumstances of Leighton's demission from his parish ministry and his appointment to the Town College, the circumstances of his mission to England on behalf of the Synod are considered.

1652: Mission to England

Scotland lost about ten per cent of her adult male population at Worcester: two thousand killed and another fourteen thousand captured, many badly injured and most never to return home. Of those who did not die of their wounds or sickness or mistreatment or

¹⁶⁴ NAS CH2/424/3/467.

¹⁶⁵ Gordon, *Records*, 478.

¹⁶⁶ NAS CH2/424/4/4-7.

¹⁶⁷ NAS CH2/424/4/3.

¹⁶⁸ NAS CH2/424/4/3-4.

¹⁶⁹ NAS CH2/424/4/5-7.

overwork draining the Fens, all but a few were transported to colonial America.¹⁷⁰ Ministers, too, were taken prisoner, although how many is not certain.¹⁷¹

The Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale was deeply concerned for its imprisoned ministers. Exactly why Leighton was chosen to go England to negotiate for their freedom is not apparent from any written record. It is reasonable to surmise that he must have been trusted to be diplomatic but not to compromise the Covenants in the course of his mission. Leighton had been living and working in occupied territory for more than a year, so perhaps it was known that he had developed a rapport with English officers or officials who might assist him. Maybe, his extended visits to London and the reputation of his father, Alexander, gave him information and contacts – and perhaps even status – which others in the Synod did not possess.

When Leighton left Scotland in April 1652, he departed a country conquered but whose Kirk was not cowed. Neither of the defeats at Dunbar and Worcester had resulted in widespread questioning of the Kirk's Covenant teaching. The divisions between Resolutioners and Protestors, which would continue to weaken the Kirk, challenged not the basic politics or theology of the Covenants, but their practical expression in Church and nation.¹⁷² Both Todd and Spurlock have highlighted the uniting effect of the Covenants upon the Scottish people: Scotland was 'a nation bonded together by religious conviction, ready to take up arms'.¹⁷³ That religious conviction was channelled by the terms of the Covenants towards maintaining and promoting Presbyterianism and upholding the monarchy. Moreover, the Scottish Covenanters believed themselves to be 'part of a wider covenanted interest, with adherents in all three kingdoms'. Since that interest encompassed

¹⁷⁰ Grainger, 145-146; Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 11; Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 174; *WD 1650-1654*, 136-137.

¹⁷¹ Robert Douglas, James Sharp and David Dickson were among the ministers captured at Alyth on 28 August 1651 (Row, *Life*, 281-282, 304; *ERBE 1642-1655*, 264).

¹⁷² On 11 October 1651, sixty-six Protestor ministers had met in Edinburgh and reiterated their condemnation of the Resolutioners. This, in turn, was condemned by a number of Synods, including Lothian and Tweeddale in November 1651 (Row, *Life*, 285-288; *WD 1650-1654*, 144-150). This episode re-opened divisions in the Kirk, something that the English were keen to encourage. They 'probably hoped that, by allowing Protestors and Resolutioners to vent their spleen on each other in their accustomed assemblies, they would weaken the church as a whole and so deprive the opposition to English rule of much of its strength' (Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 27; also Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 77).

¹⁷³ Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, 402. Also Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 14-16.

all the people of each of the three covenanted kingdoms, it was, in essence, a belief that they and God would be best served by national churches whose polity was Presbyterian.¹⁷⁴ Deviation was disobedience to God which would bring divine punishment and correction. Obedience would be blessed. Thus the Covenanting frame of reference was fixed, rigid and static. God would continue to act out of his sovereign power but his revealed will would be consistent with the terms of the National Covenant.¹⁷⁵

On 14 December 1650, the Resolutioner-controlled Commission of Assembly, sitting in Perth, which had not yet fallen, passed an Act which condemned any collaboration with the English ‘Sectarian Armie now infesting this Kingdome’ as a ‘grievous sinne agaynst God and scandall to Religion’. The ‘Sectarianemie’ had most unjustlie and perfidiouslie invaded’ Scotland, had ‘shed so much of the blood of God’s people’, and was ‘destroying the Land’. Anyone who co-operated would be excommunicated or censured.¹⁷⁶ The following month, on 7 January 1651, the Commission, again from Perth, published its *Solemn Warning* in which the country’s travails and reverses were explained as a ‘tryall’ from God for His people.¹⁷⁷ They should not be tempted to join or co-operate with their conquerors. To do so would be ‘unnaturall Treacherie [...] against their Native Countrey’, a personal violation of the Solemn League and Covenant and an act of opposition to the work of God and of oppression of the people of God, each of which would draw down ‘the Wrath of God, Who is a Severe Avenger of the breach of Covenants made in His name’.¹⁷⁸ Instead, the Scottish people should resist.¹⁷⁹ Just as God had brought the Israelites ‘under the oppression of forraigne enemies’ and had then raised them up ‘for their defence and delyverance’, so He would raise up His people in Scotland.¹⁸⁰ They should also remember ‘the first reformers of this Kirk’ who had acted against ‘the Queene Regent, and her faction of Frenches’ in the defence of ‘true Religion’.¹⁸¹ Two months later, in March 1651, the

¹⁷⁴ MacKenzie, ‘Oliver’, 142-144.

¹⁷⁵ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 35-36; MacKenzie, ‘Oliver’, 156-157.

¹⁷⁶ ‘Act for Censuring’, 18-19.

¹⁷⁷ *Solemn Warning*, 4.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

Commission of Assembly, still in Perth, issued its *Short Exhortation*. This pamphlet focussed more on the heretical nature of the English beliefs. The ‘Sectaries’ were ‘playne enemies’ to ‘true Religion’. Toleration was an ‘impious monster’.¹⁸² As a Covenanted people they were bound to ‘stand stoutlie and steadfastlie’ against such heresies.¹⁸³ Ministers had a particular role to ‘stirre up others both publickly, by free and faythfull Preaching, and privately, by admonishing everie one of his Duetie’.¹⁸⁴ Presbyteries were to be vigilant. The Commission also reminded everyone that they were bound to be loyal to their Covenanted King and should show loyalty to their country with its ‘Ancient Heritages and Houses’.¹⁸⁵

The Kirk was under huge pressure. The bitterness of the Church’s opposition to the occupiers was reflected in English acrimony and ill-will towards it. Spurlock has provided a detailed account of the war of words which preceded the English invasion of July 1650 and which continued until Scottish resistance had been largely crushed in late 1651.¹⁸⁶ In both Scotland and England, these volleys of propaganda were intended to garner domestic support for both defence and attack and to weaken the resolve of those who might resist invasion of their country or be persuaded to invade the other. The leaders of both claimed God’s approval for their actions. Therefore, although their ends conflicted, the rhetorical means employed reflected common points of reference.¹⁸⁷ Each country knew that defeat would result in immediate loss of sovereignty with consequent changes to government of church and nation. Scotland still considered itself to be a monarchy; England was not and Republican regicides were in power.¹⁸⁸ The Church of Scotland was militantly Presbyterian, had a monopoly on religious expression and had a great deal of influence in civil government as well as local power over its people. The Independents who controlled the English Parliament and army were determined to curtail the Kirk’s status and power in the name of religious tolerance. The Solemn League and Covenant remained the

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-7.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸⁶ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 7-38.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁸⁸ After Worcester, Charles II escaped to France in October 1650 (Seaward, ‘Charles II’).

expression of Scottish Covenanting ambition: to export Presbyterianism to England as the one, true polity for Reformed Christianity. Unsurprisingly, for the resentful English government, that Covenant symbolised the unrelenting and uncompromising determination of Scotland and, in particular, its Kirk to impose their alien, ungodly and intolerant aspirations.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, when the English army marched over the border, its largely Independent soldiers believed that their mission was primarily to protect their country from the Kirk's international aspirations and to put it in its place as just one of many godly options for Scottish Christians.¹⁹⁰ When they arrived they brought with them their chaplains to preach against the resident Kirk ministers. Many of their soldiers, although unordained, believed themselves called to preach not just to their comrades but to the local populace. The English occupation was far from being 'religiously benign'.¹⁹¹

Cromwell himself was 'not a natural supporter' of the Solemn League and Covenant. It offended his belief in limited religious tolerance and he had 'resented and feared' it as too high a price for Scottish military assistance.¹⁹² This was one reason why he had been unwilling to give meaningful credit to the Scottish army for successes against the Royalist forces.¹⁹³ MacKenzie suggests that, by the end of 1644, 'Cromwell had emerged as a dangerous troublemaker, bent on destroying the principles of unity and reformation which [the Covenanters] had strived for under the Solemn League and Covenant'.¹⁹⁴ His intervention on the side of the Kirk Party against the Engagers in 1648 had been partly in the hope of building a working relationship in which Presbyterianism would no longer be a requirement in England. In this he failed, and his interference in Scottish affairs was widely resented.¹⁹⁵ With the Scottish proclamation of Charles II as King of England and Ireland as well as Scotland, Cromwell's attitude hardened and his exasperation with the Scots' unwillingness to compromise their claims under the Solemn League and Covenant

¹⁸⁹ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 7-8.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 38-50.

¹⁹² Stevenson, 'Cromwell', 149-150; MacKenzie, 'Oliver Cromwell', 144.

¹⁹³ MacKenzie, 'Oliver Cromwell', 145-153.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*,. Also *Baillie*, II, 245; Stevenson, 'Cromwell', 152.

¹⁹⁵ Row, *Life*, 210; Stevenson, 'Cromwell', 153-155; MacKenzie, 'Oliver Cromwell', 153-154.

and with their support for the King grew. He came to believe that Covenanting Scotland should be invaded in defence of the Republican England that he had helped to create.¹⁹⁶

The English occupation was not exercised with a light touch. By 1652, as Terry notes, Scotland's 'government was extinct, her King in exile, her destinies in the hands of her conqueror'.¹⁹⁷ Cromwell's swingeing victories at Dunbar and Worcester, interspersed with numerous more minor military successes and the capture of the Committee of Estates at Alyth on 27 August, 1651, had 'impressed upon Scotland an experience which had not been hers since the days of Edward the First'.¹⁹⁸ In the immediate aftermath of Worcester, the English Parliament signalled that Scotland was to be regarded as a conquered province. However, a more moderate scheme for union of the two countries was later substituted for one of annexation. This scheme was embodied in 'A Declaration of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, concerning the Settlement of Scotland' which swiftly reached its final form in the English House of Commons on 24 December 1651.¹⁹⁹ The Declaration contained three sets of provisions. Parliamentary union of both countries and Ireland was enacted so that, together, they became one Republican state or Commonwealth comprising England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland. A mechanism for forced payment of a punitive indemnity was put in place. And, most devastatingly for Protestors and Resolutioners alike, Presbyterian hegemony was replaced by limited toleration as was in place in England.²⁰⁰ 'Sects' were to be tolerated, not least by the once dominant Church of Scotland.²⁰¹ This was reinforced by the Parliamentary Commissioners own 'Explanation and Addition' published at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh in February 1652:

Ministers whose consciences oblige them to wait upon God in the administration of spiritual Ordinances according to the order of the Scottish Churches, with any that shall voluntarily joyn in the practice thereof, shall receive protection and encouragement from all in Authority in their peaceable

¹⁹⁶ Stevenson, 'Cromwell', 158-159.

¹⁹⁷ *Cromwellian Union*, xv.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, xv.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, xxi.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, xxi-xxii. Both Baptists and Quakers fell under suspicion of fomenting unrest and were oppressed during the later 1650s in Scotland. (Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 158-184).

²⁰¹ 'Sectarians' were 'the religious groups who entered Scotland as part of Cromwell's army and their Scots proselytes' (Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 6).

and inoffensive exercise of the same; and also shall others, who, not being satisfied in conscience to use that form, shall serve and worship God in other Gospel way, and behave themselves peaceably and inoffensively therein.²⁰²

Therefore, the Kirk was a church under assault and locked into a desperate defence of its godly role and privileges. The main factions of Protestors and Resolutioners were prepared to attack each other but neither would have countenanced acquiescence before the English Independent onslaught.²⁰³ Although they were coming to terms with the possibility that Cromwell and his army were a punishment from God, they were in no doubt that his invasion was an outrageous breach of the Solemn League and Covenant which they maintained was both still in force and still the will of God.²⁰⁴ It is highly improbable that the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale would have commissioned a minister whom they feared would betray Presbyterianism or concede anything to the English proponents of toleration. By choosing Leighton, they invested their confidence in him as a solid servant of the Covenants.

1652-1653: From parish to university

There is no record of how Leighton conducted his mission or what success he enjoyed. However, his return from England coincided with his request that the Presbytery of Dalkeith release him from his ministry at Dalkeith. Furthermore, his request was made at a time when the chosen candidate to succeed the late John Adamson in the post of Principal of Town College had not yet been installed.²⁰⁵ Leighton's entry into that office in February 1653 was not without controversy.

²⁰² *Cromwellian Union*, xxvi. Also Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 50-51.

²⁰³ Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 27-28; Stevenson, *1644-51*, 157.

²⁰⁴ MacKenzie, 'Oliver Cromwell', 156-159.

²⁰⁵ Adamson had probably died in 1651 (Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 160).

In 1652, the ‘tounis college’ was still controlled and largely funded by the Town Council of Edinburgh.²⁰⁶ It was ‘a civic-run college, answerable to the town council as it patron, mentor and funder’.²⁰⁷ Although not expressly empowered to appoint the Principal, the Council had done so from the outset in 1583.²⁰⁸ However, Leighton’s appointment was made at a time when the Council itself was able to function only with the permission and under the supervision of the English authorities based in Dalkeith.

Under English oversight, a new Provost and Council had been elected in Edinburgh over the period from 4 to 9 March 1652.²⁰⁹ The new Provost, Archibald Todd, had ousted Leighton’s old friend, Sir James Stewart. Stewart’s defeat was a blow for the city’s Protestors, of which he was one.²¹⁰ On 23 April 1652, the Council elected William Colville as the new Principal of the Town College, but not without incident. His name had been included on a short list of eight candidates among whom was also James Fairley. Even although ‘they thocht him a verie able and weill qualified man for the place’, four Edinburgh ministers objected to Colville because he had been deposed by the General Assembly as an Engager. The Provost replied that the Council’s responsibility was ‘to use all their indevoires for listing and electing the most learned godlie and wiell qualified man to their knowledge’ and that Colville had not been deposed ‘for any error in doctrine or scandall in his conversation [that would] make him incapable to be master in the Colledge’. Colville was duly elected. After being deposed by the 1649 General Assembly, Colville had been appointed as minister of the English congregation of Utrecht, so he was invited ‘to come with all conveniencie from [...] Holland’.²¹¹ On 30 April 1652, the Council took the opportunity of an appearance before it by the College Regents in connection with their stipends to ask ‘ther judgement’ of Colville. They ‘all unanimouslie acknowledged that [he] wes a verie able qualified man for the place and for themselfis and ilk ane of them they had not the liest thocht of an exceptioun agains him except in the

²⁰⁶ *ERBE 1642-1655*, xxxix; Lynch, ‘Creation of a College’, 3.

²⁰⁷ Lynch, ‘Creation of a College’, 18, 42.

²⁰⁸ *Charters 1583-1858*, 89-91.

²⁰⁹ *ERBE 1642-1655*, 270-272.

²¹⁰ Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 54; Stevenson, *1644-1651*, 158-170.

²¹¹ *ERBE 1642-1655*, 278-279.

difference betuix him and the Kirk'.²¹² The Council received a written acceptance from Colville on 18 June 1652.²¹³ However, in January 1653, Colville still had not arrived in Edinburgh, by which time his appointment was under threat from the English authorities.

The Council minute for 17 January 1653 records that a meeting with extraordinary deacons and five ministers had been convened. Rather cryptically it was noted that there had 'beine divers obstructiouns to [Colville's] admission' to the post of 'Primar of the Colledge' and that 'the Judge has bein labouring and interceiding for the electioun and admissioun of another' to the post. The Judge is not named in the minute but Dalzel identified him as Judge Edward Moseley, one of the seven Commissioners for the Administration of Justice appointed by the English Parliamentary Commissioners.²¹⁴ In an apparent reference to Colville's slowness, or inability, to return to Edinburgh to take up his post, the Council 'for the tyme passes fra [his] nominatioun and electioun' declared the post 'vacand to the effect another may be chosen therin in obedience to the Judge desyre'. Its decision was not to be taken as 'any disrespect or exceptioun agains the persone and qualificatioun' of Colville and it would be 'heartilie weill content with him if it sould pleis God to open a door to him for entrie to the call'.²¹⁵ That same day Leighton was elected.²¹⁶ On 30 March 1653, he appeared before the Council and accepted the office of Principal. It was noted that he was 'to be received burgess and gildbrother gratis'.²¹⁷

There seems little doubt that Colville's appointment was rescinded on the insistence of the Judge because the English administration wished Leighton to be appointed in his stead. He was 'admitted by the English'.²¹⁸ When Leighton was elected by the Council, the ministers

²¹² *Ibid.*, 279.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 283.

²¹⁴ Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 247.

²¹⁵ *ERBE* 1642-1655, 304. It appears the Colville arrived in Edinburgh sometime later since the Council decided, on 23 February 1653, to pay him a year's stipend to compensate him (*ERBE* 1642-1655, 307). On Leighton's elevation to the See of Dunblane in 1661, Colville was, at last, appointed as Principal. In his inaugural lecture, he criticised the English who had blocked his first appointment but praised his predecessor as a pious and modest man, 'free from all pride of learning' (Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 252-253).

²¹⁶ *ERBE* 1642-1655, 305.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 310.

²¹⁸ Lamont, *Diary*, 53.

present were asked to cast their votes. They chose not to do so explaining that they wished that ‘they had not bein calld to the electioun’ because, ‘albeit they wer weill content with the man’ they could not ‘give their voices to the electioun becaus they wer not cleir in the maner of the call’.²¹⁹

Moreover, it is improbable that Leighton did not know of the English decision and that he was not acting in reliance on it when he asked to be released from his charge in December 1652. Having received two written requests from Leighton in December that he be allowed to demit, on 13 January 1653 the Presbytery of Dalkeith appointed one of its ministers to preach at Newbattle and ‘speik to the Earl of Lauthian about Mr Lichtone’. The Moderator reported that he had written to Leighton as previously instructed.²²⁰ A fortnight later, Leighton appeared before the Presbytery ‘and desyred to be lowsed from his charge’. Appearing with him was the Edinburgh Town Council’s Treasurer to report that it had called Leighton to be Principal.²²¹ The Presbytery demanded that ‘his commissions’ be produced at their next meeting one week hence. A minister was instructed to preach at Newbattle and ‘to mak publick intimation to the parishioners, that if they had any thing to say against the lowsing of their Minister, they might appear befor the Presbyterie the nixt day’.²²² At that next meeting, on 3 February 1653, Leighton’s parishioners did not appear to object to his demission but the Council’s representative did attend, armed with the necessary paperwork. Rather bewilderingly, when asked whether he ‘wold embrace’ the post of Principal, Leighton replied that ‘he was not yet fully resolved’! Nevertheless, the Presbytery released him from the charge of Newbattle and declared it vacant. With uncharacteristic amplification, the minute recorded that its reasons for unanimously agreeing, ‘after mature deliberatione’ were that:

the gritnes of the congregacione farre exceeding [Leighton’s] strength for discharging the dewties thereof, especially the extreme weakness of his voice

²¹⁹ *ERBE* 1642-1655, 305.

²²⁰ NAS CH2/424/4/4.

²²¹ *ERBE* 1642-1655, 305.

²²² NAS CH2/424/4/4-5.

not being able to reach the haife of them when they are convened, which has long pressed him very sore, as he had formerly often expressed to us.²²³

Thus Leighton had moved from parish to university. However, questions remain: Why did he want to leave his parish? Why did he want to become principal of the Town College? And why did the English administration wish him to hold that post?

1652-1653: Departing Newbattle

Leighton's demission from Newbattle went against the wishes of his Presbytery. It also grieved Lothian, his patron. Did Leighton really want to leave his parish ministry simply because his voice would not carry the length of his church?²²⁴

Writing to his Countess from Edinburgh on 9 December 1652, Lothian expressed amazement and sorrow at her news that 'Mr Lighton' wished to leave Newbattle. The Countess was to 'again speak to him, and intreat that, whatsoever his resolutions be, that he would not this winter quite us, or at least not so suddenly and abruptly'. He lamented that, if Leighton were to preach to them no more, it would be 'a great grief' to him 'for never did [he] gett soe much good by any that stood in a pulpit'. He also predicted that the loss of Leighton would grow as time passed: 'a green wound is not felt, but we will fynde the want of him very bitter and sharpe ere long'.²²⁵

Beyond his expressions of admiration for Leighton and sorrow at his desire to leave, Lothian also provides useful information about why Leighton had decided to go. Apparently, Lothian had known that Leighton had wanted the job of Principal since before Colville's appointment in April 1652. In his letter of 9 December, he explained that he had hoped that Leighton would not leave 'unless the call he had to the Colledge here had been

²²³ NAS CH2/424/4/5-7. Alexander Dickson, son of David Dickson, Professor of Divinity at the College, and, from 1656, himself Professor of Hebrew there, was ordained and admitted to Newbattle on 7 October 1653 (NAS CH2/424/4/53-55; *Baillie*, III, 365).

²²⁴ Burnet claimed that Leighton 'had indeed a very low voice, and so could not be heard by a great crowd' (*HMOT*, I, 241).

²²⁵ *Ancram-Lothian*, II, 373.

made good, wherin there would have beene some dificulty'.²²⁶ The implication seems to be that, since Colville had been appointed instead, Lothian thought the danger of Leighton's leaving Newbattle had receded.

This led Lothian to a further regret: not only was Leighton leaving but he was leaving 'without going to some other imployment or charge'. This, he told his wife, was something that he 'did not thinke [Leighton] would have donne'. Therefore, it appears that, on 9 December, Lothian was unaware of any plan to terminate Colville's appointment in favour of Leighton. Instead, he believed, presumably because his wife had told him, that Leighton intended to 'withdrawe in England', a move Lothian had foreseen but hoped to delay. So he asked the Countess to persuade Leighton, even if he was no longer minister at Newbattle, to choose their family home as the 'corner' to which he intended to 'retyre [...] until spring' prior to moving south to England. She was to guarantee that the house would be 'as quiett to him as a monastery or a wilderness' and that Leighton would not be asked 'to prayer, nor soe mutch as to say grace to us'.²²⁷

Lothian's regret seems genuine; Leighton's excuse for leaving Newbattle less so. Leighton clearly desired the post of Principal. No doubt, his original failure to get on the short leet and Colville's selection had disappointed him. Yet, his ambition had not died. It is improbable that Leighton's decision to demit, which was known to the Countess before 9 December 1652 and first intimated to the Presbytery on 16 December 1652, was unconnected with the decision of the English administration to place him in the Town College ahead of Colville. Furthermore, it is improbable that the decision of the English Commissioners to prefer Leighton was unconnected with his recent return from London.²²⁸ Leighton had clearly arrived back in Newbattle by early December at the latest, but more likely in November. Newbattle was a short distance from the English military and administrative headquarters at Dalkeith. The Edinburgh Town Council minutes for that period show frequent journeys to Dalkeith to obtain approval or instructions from the

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 373.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 373.

²²⁸ There were contacts between Scottish prisoners and English Presbyterians (*Baillie*, III, 204). James Sharp, future Restoration Archbishop of St Andrews, was accused of securing his release from English captivity by agreeing 'to promote the designs of the Commonwealth' (*Row, Life*, 304).

English Commissioners. While it is not clear whether Leighton's appointment originated from London or from Dalkeith, it seems likely that Leighton had manoeuvred and networked his way into a job which he had coveted since before his journey to London in April 1652.²²⁹ Moreover, there are three other inferences to be drawn from Leighton's conduct that do not reflect well upon him. The first is that he delayed travelling to London to work for the release of his fellow ministers until he knew whether he would be appointed as Principal. The second is that he was less than entirely honest with the Earl and Countess of Lothian. And the third relates to the weakness of his voice. There is certainly evidence that his voice was not powerful and that he may have found difficulty in projecting it to all corners of his church. Yet, he had managed to cope for eleven years and he was moving to a job which would require him to speak each Sunday to hundreds of students and Edinburgh townfolk. It seems that Leighton felt the need for a pretext to leave Newbattle and his vocal weakness provided a convenient excuse.

Was there more to Leighton's decision than simply ambition? His conduct as minister reveals no discontent with the polity or policies of the Church of Scotland. But what was he telling his congregation from the Newbattle pulpit? His sermons are now reviewed.

An examination of Leighton's broader doctrine is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, given that Leighton has been alternately lauded and pilloried for Latitudinarianism and crypto-Catholicism, it is worth considering more measured and reliable assessments.²³⁰ Torrance was in no doubt that Leighton was a convinced Calvinist, but of a mild, evangelical variety. He believed that Leighton was 'very faithfully orthodox in his theology, profoundly trinitarian in his thought and worship'. Torrance probably went too far in asserting that Leighton was 'horrified at the obsessive attention given to predestination as a test of orthodoxy' but he was certainly correct that Leighton valued biblical exposition and preaching of the Gospel above 'doctrinal diatribes'.²³¹

²²⁹ Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 59; Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 247.

²³⁰ For example, Wodrow, *History*, I, 238; *Naphtali*, 301.

²³¹ Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 162-163. Also Henderson, *Religious Life*, 92; Gribben, 'Leighton', 175-176; Chadwick, 'Robert Leighton', 116, 121.

Nowhere in his sermons did Leighton reveal discontent with the Church's polity or policies.²³² Yet, neither did he give express approval. Insofar as he addressed these matters, he did so by implication and within the context of broader biblical exposition. This adds credence to Jerment's anecdote that, when Leighton was criticised by his Presbytery for not preaching 'up to the times', he responded by saying 'If all the brethern have preached to the times, may not one poor brother be suffered to preach on eternity'.²³³ However, across the body of extant sermons, the underlying impression is of a minister who is committed to supporting the Reformed, Presbyterian, Covenanting Kirk. He held a high view of its mission: 'the constant ministry of the word [...] not only for the first work of conversion, but also for confirming and increasing of His grace in the hearts of His children'.²³⁴ Insofar as he preached that the Church and its ministers were failing in this mission, he did so by blaming personal sin and inadequacy rather than institutional error or corruption.

Leighton encouraged his people to humbly thank God for Scotland's 'peaceable reformation' and, probably in reference to Charles I's ecclesiastical innovations, to 'profit' it despite 'this little past shaking of it'.²³⁵ In contrast, he said, other Reformed churches had been made 'fields of blood' and their sufferings should encourage the Kirk 'to become wiser and better' by 'repentance and personal reformation'.²³⁶ Equally, it was not sufficient

²³² It was said that it was 'ordinary' for Leighton 'to engage the Communicants at the Lord's Table to the Covenants' (Wodrow, *Analecta*, II, 361).

²³³ Jerment, 'Life', ix. Aikman, too, recognised Leighton abilities as a theologian as well as his holiness of character, but neither he nor Jerment were impressed by his desire to preach 'for eternity' rather than 'to the times' (Aikman, 'Life', v; Jerment, 'Life', ix). Leighton's style of preaching was not without its critics. Said by Hugh Binning, one of his admirers, to have been 'more plain and simple', Leighton preached without identifying and structuring his sermons around the 'heads of doctrine' which he had discerned from the biblical text (Wodrow, *Analecta*, I, 167). This did not dilute their theological content or blunt their applicatory message but it was criticised by Baillie as being of 'a high, romancing, unscriptural style, tickling the ear for the present, and moving the affections in some' but difficult to remember and understand (*Baillie*, III, 258-259; also Gribben, 'Preaching', 280-281). William Guthrie 'upon the fame of Leighton's affecting manner of preaching' sometimes travelled to Newbattle to hear him. Guthrie was 'in heaven' when listening to Leighton but 'could not bring one word with him, almost' once he had left the church. This was a criticism of Leighton's 'harranging way of preaching without heads' (Wodrow, *Analecta*, II, 349; III, 40). It was said that Leighton disliked the practice of reading sermons since 'it detracted much from the weight and authority of preaching' (Pearson, 'Life', lviii).

²³⁴ *WW*, III, 1. Also III, 153.

²³⁵ *WW*, II, 6.

²³⁶ *WW*, II, 6.

for an individual to be part of a Reformed church, if he was not himself reformed.²³⁷ Leighton encouraged personal holiness as the ‘hopeful forerunner’ of national repentance.²³⁸ Moreover, Leighton blamed the ‘promiscuous admitting’ of those who claimed to have embraced the Reformation but had done so ‘from fear of laws and authority’ rather than out of ‘conviction and conversion’.²³⁹ He did not make clear to what these imposters had been admitted, but his concern does resonate with the anxiety of post-Engagement Scotland. Similarly, he maintained that so-called ‘reformed churches’ elsewhere were often ‘unreformed’ since they knew not ‘the true God, nor the true religion and the true way of His worship’.²⁴⁰

Leighton believed that the Church shone with the received glory of God.²⁴¹ He explained that the Church ‘receives her laws and form of government, and her shining is, briefly, the pure exercise of those and conformity to them’.²⁴² In ‘the external or political kingdom of Christ’ which was ‘the visible Church,’ He had ‘absolute and supreme authority to appoint the laws of His Church, and rulers by these laws’. Although he did not identify Presbyterianism as the only God-decreed form of church government, neither did Leighton offer any indication that he believed that the polity by which the Kirk was then governed did not qualify as a form of church government received from God. Leighton’s preaching on 1 Peter 5:5 and, in particular, the place of ‘elders’ in the church had a distinctly Presbyterian flavour.²⁴³ His teaching did not evince support for wider ecclesiastical toleration which would have challenged Presbyterian hegemony in Scotland. He criticised ‘monarchical prelacy’ as a product of ‘human ambition’.²⁴⁴ In His providence, God

²³⁷ *WW*, II, 258-259. Also IV, 595.

²³⁸ *WW*, II, 6-7. Also I, 79-80, 138, and 158. ‘It is not foreign power, so much as sin at home, that ruins kingdoms’ (*WW*, I, 82).

²³⁹ *WW*, II, 317.

²⁴⁰ *WW*, II, 76. Also, III, 8.

²⁴¹ *WW*, II, 95, 108.

²⁴² *WW*, II, 21; V, 95, 108. Also II, 10. ‘God hath indeed been more express in the officers and government of His own house, His Church’ than in expressing his will for civil government (III, 286).

²⁴³ *WW*, IV, 719.

²⁴⁴ *WW*, III, 231. Also Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 161.

‘proportions all to the use He hath designed them for’ in the church as in the world.²⁴⁵ Leighton identified a great evil which was ‘the cause of most of the enormities and disorders’ in the church: leaders ‘who do grossly miscarry in the duties of their own station yet so readily fancy themselves capable of somewhat higher, and think themselves wronged if it be refused them’.²⁴⁶ Over-ambition and negligence were breaches of a church leader’s duty to advance ‘the peace and growth of the Church’.²⁴⁷ Equating ‘bishop’ and ‘pastor’, he believed that ‘it is the dignity of the ministers of the Gospel to have both [the] names’ of shepherd and bishop.²⁴⁸

Nevertheless, Leighton did warn against complacency within the Church. He abhorred sin within the Church as damaging ‘scandals’, all the more so if the sinner was an ‘emminent’ person.²⁴⁹ He also cautioned against a prosperous Church which encouraged ‘outward worship’ and hypocrisy.²⁵⁰ ‘Formality, and custom, and novelty’ might fill a church without ridding hearts of ‘the deceits and impostures’ of sinfulness.²⁵¹ Faith that brings salvation must be more than being ‘the civil neighbour, the good church-keeper, the formal painted professor’.²⁵² In contrast, a church that God had led into the wilderness would be more inclined to be ‘quiet to hear God, and to speak to Him, and [be] disposed to speak [...] humbly and repentingly’.²⁵³ Although he conceded that ‘some are too strait in their judgement concerning the being and nature of the Visible Church’, Leighton grieved that ‘the greatest part of churches are too loose in their practice’.²⁵⁴ Within this latter category he appeared to include the Kirk: ‘though lying far north’, Scotland had yet enjoyed ‘much of the Gospel sun’ and had bound itself by ‘promise, and covenant, and solemn oath to God, to be more fruitful’.²⁵⁵ So, what spiritual fruit had all Scotland’s ‘preachings,

²⁴⁵ *WW*, V, 192. Also V, 174.

²⁴⁶ *WW*, V, 190. Also V, 192-193.

²⁴⁷ *WW*, V, 193-194.

²⁴⁸ *WW*, III, 370-371. Also IV, 689.

²⁴⁹ *WW*, II, 76-77.

²⁵⁰ *WW*, II, 28. Also II, 297-298; IV, 482.

²⁵¹ *WW*, II, 89.

²⁵² *WW*, V, 147. Also V, 166, 180.

²⁵³ *WW*, II, 106. Also II, 192-194.

²⁵⁴ *WW*, III, 9.

²⁵⁵ *WW*, II, 172. Also V, 166.

sabbaths, fasts, and covenants' produced? The nation was 'still broke'. 'Who that had seen our first meltings into tears, or fair buds of stirring zeal, could have imagined we should have been so barren?' Leighton asked.²⁵⁶ The Church was God's 'orchard' and would be known by the fruit that it produced: woe betide a church which was 'barren of all the fruits of holiness as if [it] grew upon a common heath'.²⁵⁷ Accordingly, he judged that an apostolic letter written to the Kirk would begin, 'To the ignorant, profane, malicious, etc'.²⁵⁸

Although he did not make specific references to current or recent events, Leighton explained that no-one should ever seek to 'disburden and exempt the church from the cross, from the real cross of afflictions'. It was folly to 'make the crown or mitre' the badge of a church: its emblem should be 'the cross of affliction'.²⁵⁹ Such suffering did not occur despite God or against His will. Whatever God permitted 'His Church's enemies to do [was] for His own glory' but they would never overcome it.²⁶⁰ Leighton preached that the Church was in God's hands and that, within 'His supreme providence ruling the world', lay his 'special providence' which determined 'those changes and vicissitudes that befall His Church'.²⁶¹ The 'Church of God [was] neither in the frail hands of those that favour and seek it, nor in the hands of those that oppose it, however strong and subtle soever they may be'.²⁶² Rather, the Church was 'in His Almighty hand who doth in heaven and earth what pleaseth Him'. Leighton acknowledged that, from time to time, the Church did suffer 'desperate afflictions' which often followed upon the 'restoring' or 'remarkable reformation of the Church and revivings of religion'.²⁶³ Yet, these trials allowed God to glorify Himself 'by raising and restoring' the Church, far more so than if He had simply 'preserved her in constant ease'.²⁶⁴ A 'day of deliverance' would always dawn upon the church after a 'long night either of affliction or of defection, or both'. No-one should 'let

²⁵⁶ *WW*, II, 172.

²⁵⁷ *WW*, II, 171-172.

²⁵⁸ *WW*, III, 9. Also IV, 665, 671.

²⁵⁹ *WW*, III, 4. Also III, 326; IV, 669, 673.

²⁶⁰ *WW*, II, 101. Also IV, 754, 761.

²⁶¹ *WW*, II, 3. Also II, 4; IV, 527.

²⁶² *WW*, III, 4.

²⁶³ *WW*, IV, 687.

²⁶⁴ *WW*, II, 15-16. Also IV, 537-538, 582, 686.

go of their hopes of it', no matter what the apparent difficulties facing the church. Even if God seemed hidden from the believer's eye, faith assured him that 'no difficulties can hold back God's day and work of mercy from His people'.²⁶⁵ God would keep his promise that 'the true Church of Christ shall flourish and increase'.²⁶⁶

Leighton condemned the Church's enemies as being 'wicked' and 'malicious' and hot with a 'feverish distempering anger' which deprived them of 'solid reason' and rendered them 'inflexible' and 'incapable of wise deliberation'.²⁶⁷ Nevertheless, in His sovereignty, God used human opposition to his Church for His glory both within the persecuted Church and among the persecutors.²⁶⁸ If there had been 'no persecution, nor peril, nor sword, against believers', then believers would not have had to show the courage, patience and perseverance which had so characterised the Church from the beginning. Neither would the power of God's protection been so evident. 'The great monarchies and kingdoms of the world' had risen and fallen but 'the kingdom of Jesus Christ, though despicable in the world, and exposed to the wrath of the world in all ages, stands firm and cannot be removed'.²⁶⁹ In God's time, the Church's enemies would be 'utterly destroyed'.²⁷⁰

Affliction was also a means by which God chastised a sinful church and encouraged humble confession and repentance.²⁷¹ In addition to the 'common sins' of mankind, churches were also guilty of 'peculiar sins' such as 'contempt of the ordinances' by which God made himself known to the church and 'breach of the covenant' by which all were bound to God.²⁷² As long as a church remained 'ungodly' it could do nothing useful for

²⁶⁵ *WW*, II, 4. Also IV, 693-694, 742; V, 85-86.

²⁶⁶ *WW*, II, 5. Also II, 15-16, 94-96.

²⁶⁷ *WW*, II, 92.

²⁶⁸ *WW*, III, 199. Also IV, 478.

²⁶⁹ *WW*, II, 93-94. Also II, 133-134, 149, 162, 183-84.

²⁷⁰ *WW*, II, 126.

²⁷¹ *WW*, II, 107. Also II, 121-123, 179-180, 187-189; IV, 687-691; V, 58.

²⁷² *WW*, II, 180-181. Here, Leighton uses the term 'ordinance' non-specifically to mean something that God has prescribed for the Church according to his sovereign will. Also *WW*, II, 123, 135, 161, 164, 191-193; IV, 689, 692. Leighton distinguished between 'an external covenant with a people [...] such as may be broken by man's unfaithfulness, though God remain faithful and true' and the 'New Covenant of Grace' which could not be broken (*WW*, III, 257). For Leighton's teaching on the New Covenant, see *WW*, III, 38, 78, 102-103, 183, 225, 334, 339, 342; IV, 493, 525, 530, 564, 579, 663, 676, 758-759.

God who would withdraw His presence, thus inflicting the heaviest possible judgement.²⁷³ In one of his few references to ‘covenant’ which might be a reference to current events, Leighton explained that ‘an impenitent people’ would not be sheltered from ‘sharper correction’ simply because they had ‘a good cause and a covenant with God’.²⁷⁴

Throughout his life, Leighton was a vociferous critic of the Roman Catholic Church. During his Newbattle years, he accused ‘the emissaries of the Church of Rome’ of stealing ‘the diamonds’ from ‘the crown of glory’ that was ‘purity of religion and worship’ by ‘vitiating [...] religion with human devices’. Its priests had stolen away ‘the power of religion’ while filling their churches ‘with shadows and fopperies of their own devising’. He objected to ‘vanity’ which sought to ‘adorn the worship of God’ by dressing it up ‘with splendour’ and ‘with a multitude of gaudy ceremonies’. The ‘true glory’ of worship lay not ‘in pomp, but in purity and simplicity’.²⁷⁵ It was Christ Himself who decked ‘His Church with supernatural beauty’.²⁷⁶ The true Church was a suffering church and not one ‘known by prosperity, and outward pomp’.²⁷⁷ Leighton railed against the impertinence of the ‘Romish Church’ which presumed to validate the Scriptures instead of seeking to be itself validated by the Word of God.²⁷⁸ If the Church was to have authority, then it was an authority conferred by Scriptures alone.²⁷⁹ Jesus Christ was ‘the alone rock’ upon which the church was built ‘not Peter [...], much less his pretended successors’.²⁸⁰ He had no truck with the Church of Rome’s ‘roll of saints’ or monasticism.²⁸¹

Nevertheless, and presumably excluding the Roman Catholic Church, Leighton preached the blessings of ‘ecclesiastical peace’ within the Church so that it was ‘free from dissensions and divisions’.²⁸² Such divisions arose in all times to ‘haunt Religion, and the

²⁷³ *WW*, II, 181-182. Also II, 194-196.

²⁷⁴ *WW*, II, 100. Also II, 157; IV, 692-693.

²⁷⁵ *WW*, II, 8-9, 20-21. Also III, 29, 195-196.

²⁷⁶ *WW*, II, 33. Also II, 130-131; IV, 385.

²⁷⁷ *WW*, III, 3.

²⁷⁸ *WW*, II, 34. Also III, 129-130, 310.

²⁷⁹ *WW*, II, 34.

²⁸⁰ *WW*, III, 210-213. Also III, 223-224, 229, 340.

²⁸¹ *WW*, IV, 469-470; V, 129.

²⁸² *WW*, III, 29.

reformation of it' and were the work of human sin and the antithesis of Christian love.²⁸³ Just as Paul condemned 'divisions and contentions' in 1 Corinthians 1:5, so Leighton judged that 'there is not one thing that doth on all hands choke the seed of Religion so much, as the thorny debates and differences about itself'.²⁸⁴ He made special mention of the 'multitudes of sects' which had arisen 'at the breaking forth of the light in Germany in Luther's times'.²⁸⁵ Such division made it easy for 'profane men' to dismiss religion as too much trouble.²⁸⁶ In any event to be too preoccupied with 'new opinions and fancies' as opposed to 'solid religion' was to waste believers' energy and to divert them from 'sanctified useful knowledge and saving grace' while, at the same time, encouraging 'men's own conceits'.²⁸⁷ Thus he warned that:

Men having so many disputes about religion in their heads, and no life of religion in their hearts, fall into a conceit that all is but juggling, and that the easiest way is to believe nothing.²⁸⁸

Leighton contrasted 'the great things of the law, and so of the Gospel' which were not susceptible to compromise with other aspects of 'Divine Truth' which 'may be true, and still are of but less importance, and of less evidence than others'. On these, Leighton advised making concessions 'for the interest of this agreement of minds' which he commended.²⁸⁹

Closely related to arid theological squabbling was 'vain speculation'.²⁹⁰ Leighton invited his listeners to trust that God's 'thoughts are pure and altogether right in all that He does' and to accept that, although most are 'darkness to us,' yet His purposes are perfect in their foresight.²⁹¹ Therefore, in those instances where God 'is pleased to walk in the deep waters, and not suffer His footsteps to be known or traced,' they could, with confidence,

²⁸³ *WW*, III, 29. Also IV, 405-406.

²⁸⁴ *WW*, III, 29.

²⁸⁵ *WW*, III, 29.

²⁸⁶ *WW*, III, 29.

²⁸⁷ *WW*, III, 29-30. Also II, 108, 272, 299, 424; III, 30, 102-103, 151; IV, 398; V, 9, 14, 36, 54, 152, 176.

²⁸⁸ *WW*, IV, 394-395. Also II, 382.

²⁸⁹ *WW*, IV, 396.

²⁹⁰ *WW*, V, 28.

²⁹¹ *WW*, V, 57.

‘resign [their] reasoning and disputing of things’. To ‘search in that deep’ was to risk ‘being drowned there’. It was enough to know that God was wise even when they did not understand Him.²⁹² Perhaps with particular reference to his own lifestyle, Leighton explained that while some ‘philosophers’ spoke of ‘temperance’ they did so in a manner which tended ‘rather to puff up and swell the mind with big conceit and confidence of itself’. On the other hand, ‘in the school of Christ the first lesson of all [was] self-denial and humility’.²⁹³

In expounding 1 Peter 3:8, Leighton explained that for Christians to ‘be of one mind’ meant not only ‘union in judgement’ but also unity in ‘affection and action’.²⁹⁴ Expanding upon this idea, he stated that to be ‘of one mind’ meant:

in its full latitude, a harmony and agreement of minds, and affections, and carriage in Christians, as making up one body, and a serious study of preserving and increasing that agreement in all things, but especially in spiritual things, in which their communion doth primely consist.²⁹⁵

Accordingly, Christians should seek ‘each other’s spiritual good’ and ‘put one another in mind of Heaven and heavenly things’.²⁹⁶ There should be ‘a living sympathy amongst them, as making up one body, animated by one spirit’ which rejoiced ‘in the welfare and good of another as if it were his own’ and which shared ‘griefs and distresses’.²⁹⁷ He made a heartfelt plea that ‘now’ was ‘a fit time to exert’ such sympathy. Without making it clear to what particular reverses he was referring, Leighton described them as ‘the voice of those late strokes of God’s hand’ which should drive his church ‘to more humble and earnest prayer’. Men should ‘change their poor, base grumblings about their private concerns’ into ‘strong cries for the Church of God, and the public deliverance of these kingdoms from the raging sword’.²⁹⁸ He pleaded for ‘the whole Church of God within these kingdoms’ to

²⁹² *WW*, V, 57.

²⁹³ *WW*, V, 189.

²⁹⁴ *WW*, IV, 394. Also IV, 704,

²⁹⁵ *WW*, IV, 394.

²⁹⁶ *WW*, IV, 400.

²⁹⁷ *WW*, IV, 401-402. Also IV, 408-413.

²⁹⁸ *WW*, IV, 403. Leighton described ‘the fraternal love of Christians’ as ‘a golden chain, both more precious and more strong and lasting’ than the ‘friendships of the world’ (*WW*, IV, 406).

combine together in prayer.²⁹⁹ In a further passage from his commentary on 1 Peter, Leighton referred to the current sufferings of the church which indicated that being in covenant with God did not confer impunity from His judgement. So, God had ‘taken away His eminent and worthy servants’ who were ‘the very pillars of the public peace and welfare’ and had ‘from the rest’ removed ‘counsel and courage and union’. God had forsaken them in their ‘meetings’ and left them ‘in the dark to grope and rush upon one another’. The ‘unnatural burnings’ of ‘dissensions and jarrings in the State and Church’ threatened ‘new fires of public judgements’. Throughout the land, the gospel was despised, ‘profaneness’ abounded and ‘our great sin’ was unpurged. There existed a ‘general coldness and deadness of spirit’ and ‘want of zeal for God’. He pleaded for the people of God ‘to bestir’ themselves. It was a time of great need for prayer and repentance: ‘Are not these kingdoms at present brought to the extreme point of their highest hazard?’³⁰⁰ This entreaty would have been apposite in post-Engagement Scotland.

However, Leighton was at pains to warn that true unity did not arise from indifference or ignorance or unbelief.³⁰¹ While it was difficult, even impossible, to be certain of what were the fundamentals of religion, there was ‘some truth more absolutely necessary, and therefore accordingly more clearly revealed than some others’.³⁰² Therefore, he could condemn ‘all that implicit Romish agreement’ as but ‘a brutish ignorance of spiritual things’.³⁰³ Neither should attempts to achieve ‘fullest agreement’ in all things be allowed to strain it ‘too high’ and ‘break it’ since ‘an overindulgence in appointing uniformities’ might achieve the opposite.³⁰⁴ Accordingly, ‘leaving a latitude and indifference in things capable of it, is often a stronger preserver of peace and unity’.³⁰⁵ In his commentary on 1 Peter 3:8, Leighton offered ‘a few rules’ that would help towards ‘unity of mind’ among Christians. Firstly, his listeners and readers were to be aware of the ‘two extremes’ that so

²⁹⁹ *WW*, IV, 444.

³⁰⁰ *WW*, IV, 692-693.

³⁰¹ *WW*, IV, 394-395.

³⁰² *WW*, IV, 396.

³⁰³ *WW*, IV, 395.

³⁰⁴ *WW*, IV, 396-397.

³⁰⁵ *WW*, IV, 397.

often caused division: ‘captivity to custome’ and ‘affectation of novelty’.³⁰⁶ Secondly, they must ‘labour for a stayed mind’ and not be too easily ‘tossed with every wind of doctrine’.³⁰⁷ Thirdly, should note that ‘the weakest minds’ were often the most intolerant and intransigent in their convictions about ‘unclear and doubtful things’. In contrast, ‘stronger spirits’ were ‘usually more patient of contradiction and less violent, especially in doubtful things’. ‘Those who see furthest,’ he explained, ‘are least peremptory in their determination.’³⁰⁸ Fourthly, there might be no ‘abating’ of Christian affection over ‘every light difference’. Leighton recognised this as being a common problem.³⁰⁹ From Leighton’s own analysis, it appears that he had in mind the more abstruse points of doctrine which were not essentials of the Reformed faith as unworthy of unproductive debate. Whether as minister of Newbattle he would have regarded Presbyterian polity as such seems unlikely. If there was a change in his attitude, it probably did not enter Leighton’s thinking until after Cromwell had crossed the border in July 1650.

Leighton did not expressly mention the National Covenant or the Covenanting cause in his sermons. However, he gave implied approval for the revolution against Charles I, warning ‘Kings and other powers of the world, who are enemies and sometimes the enraged persecutors of our holy Religion’ that they were mistaken in thinking that such religion was their enemy. Rather, it would be a great support for their ‘just power’. A king who used his power ‘against religion’ would simply strengthen that religion. Furthermore, the Christian’s ‘prime object of conscience’ was ‘the authority and love of God’. Even if a king breached his ‘perpetual, unalterable engagement’ to God, then his subjects should not abandon theirs.³¹⁰ However, it was a ‘heavy plague’ when ‘kings and their people, who should be a mutual blessing and honour to each other, [were] turned into scourges one to another, or into a devouring fire’.³¹¹ Referring to Moses and Pharaoh, Leighton explained that ‘the indigestible insolvency and rage of tyrannical rulers hastening to be great [made] kingdoms cast them off’. This was consonant with God’s own wisdom who allowed the

³⁰⁶ *WW*, IV, 397.

³⁰⁷ *WW*, IV, 397.

³⁰⁸ *WW*, IV, 397.

³⁰⁹ *WW*, IV, 397-398.

³¹⁰ *WW*, II, 318-319. Also II, 12; III, 287-290.

³¹¹ *WW*, III, 290.

despot to be ‘the means of his own downfall’.³¹² Scotland herself knew great troubles.³¹³ Therefore, without elaborating on the nature of the ‘need’, Leighton commended prayer for ‘the whole land, these three kingdoms, [and] the Church of God throughout the whole earth’.³¹⁴ At a time when there were ‘strange changes in the condition of all ranks of person’, people should look to God for ‘riches, and friendship, and fulness’.³¹⁵ All in all as revealed in his Newbattle sermons, Leighton’s attitude towards secular authority was in harmony with the outlook of the Covenanting movement in general and Lothian in particular.

As a future educator of clergy, Leighton’s preaching about the role, education and qualities of ministers casts light on his decision to accept the post of Principal of the Town College. Leighton offered a high view of the ministry. All ‘true ministers of the Word’ were successors to the Apostles and ‘true ambassadors, under Christ, from God to man’.³¹⁶ Acting as ‘suitors’ for Christ, their duty was to ‘espouse souls to Him, and to bring many hearts to love Him’.³¹⁷ Spirit-filled, a minister was tasked by God to ‘bear His name to His people’ and to ‘preach constantly, live blamelessly, and [be] diligent and irreprovable in all the external parts of [his] walking’.³¹⁸ Ministers, Leighton knew, were particularly prey to temptation.³¹⁹ ‘A profane, a carnal, or a formal, dead minister’ was good for nothing.³²⁰ A minister should deliver ‘words of edification’: ‘jestings’ and ‘sports’ in a minister were unsavoury.³²¹ Regrettably, ministers, as well as their people, were guilty of ‘irreverence’ when speaking of God.³²² Ministers were to ‘preach and press repentance’, having laid

³¹² *WW*, II, 95. Also II, 97-99; 119. Leighton wryly observed that, ‘How small a commotion, small in its beginning, may prove the overturning of the greatest kingdom!’ (*WW*, II, 354).

³¹³ *WW*, II, 200.

³¹⁴ *WW*, II, 154. West believed this was an oblique reference to the Solemn League and Covenant (*WW*, IV, 527, 789).

³¹⁵ *WW*, II, 208. Also II, 231-232.

³¹⁶ *WW*, II, 407-408. Also III, 5, 94; 250-251; IV, 711-713; 776.

³¹⁷ *WW*, III, 76. Also III, 167.

³¹⁸ *WW*, IV, 316. Also IV, 542-546, 719.

³¹⁹ *WW*, V, 135.

³²⁰ *WW*, V, 146.

³²¹ *WW*, V, 146-147.

³²² *WW*, V, 94.

hold of salvation for themselves, and to ‘grieve for the sins of their people’ as the ‘chief mourners’ for the sins of the land.³²³ Yet, ministers should beware that ‘they do not hear their own voice’ as they preach and so become ‘hard’ and ‘formal dead’.³²⁴ ‘Daily and instant prayers’ offered ‘in secret’ for their people, was another duty.³²⁵ Furthermore, God would search their hearts for ‘a holy conscience of the weight and high importance of their holy calling, and faithful respect to the interest of their Master’s glory and His people’s souls.’³²⁶ Therefore, a minister needed to be ‘friends with God’ and ‘inward with Him’ so that he could ‘tell men what God hath done for his soul’.³²⁷ Also, a minister required ‘prudence, or dexterity to manage [his] Master’s affairs’; to be practical, skilled at reading people, able to communicate well and flexibly and to have ‘a readiness to love’.³²⁸ A minister required ‘much prudence’ in knowing how not to discourage ‘weak beginners’ with ‘too much rigour’ but not be too lenient.³²⁹ Additionally, he must ‘declare the whole counsel of God, not adding nor abating anything’ in a candid, God-centred and diligent manner.³³⁰ A minister was to sow the seed of the Gospel ‘liberally’ and ‘at all times’.³³¹ His preaching was to be both doctrinal and practical, exhorting ‘men to holiness and the duties of Christian life’ while ‘instructing them in the doctrine of faith and bringing them to Jesus Christ’.³³² Preaching should be carried out with fear of God lest the minister ‘miscarry’ the Word and always be accompanied by prayer.³³³ ‘Every humbled, self-knowing minister’ should wonder who he was to ‘handle such holy things, to stand in so high a service’.³³⁴ He should seek to be ‘touched with Divine power’.³³⁵ He would be required to reprove his congregation occasionally with ‘very sharp rebukes, cutting ones’

³²³ *WW*, II, 77, 85, 169; III, 5, 53, 98, 206, 263.

³²⁴ *WW*, V, 101-102. Also V, 122.

³²⁵ *WW*, III, 26.

³²⁶ *WW*, II, 316. Also III, 77, 126.

³²⁷ *WW*, II, 412-415. Also II, 260-261.

³²⁸ *WW*, II, 415-416; V, 98.

³²⁹ *WW*, V, 131.

³³⁰ *WW*, II, 416-418. Also IV, 658-661.

³³¹ *WW*, II, 396.

³³² *WW*, III, 263.

³³³ *WW*, III, 127; IV, 755-756.

³³⁴ *WW*, V, 133.

³³⁵ *WW*, V, 162.

but more often with ‘sweet entreaties’.³³⁶ A fourth quality, which Leighton identified, was what he called ‘magnanimity’: the ability to overcome difficulties and discouragements.³³⁷

A minister was not to be judged by his qualifications ‘either of common gifts or special grace’ but by whether the ‘Word of life’ dwelt richly within his heart.³³⁸ Yet, Leighton was clear that ministers needed to be naturally able. ‘Shall we think that the mentally blind and lame are good enough for the ministration under the Gospel, which exceeds in worth and glory?’ he asked. While God might ‘make use of unlettered and low-qualified men’ this was the exception rather than the rule.³³⁹ Ministers were entitled to be honoured and provided with ‘liberal maintenance’ by their people ‘given with cheerfulness and respect’, although ‘not such as to enrich them’.³⁴⁰ Leighton understood that the ministry was held in contempt by the world, but that should not be compensated for by annexing ‘excessive dignities, high titles of honour, [or] suitable revenues’. It was sufficient for any minister to be a minister and ambassador of Christ.³⁴¹ Men thought ‘ministers a needless commodity in the world’ but only if they ‘could live well without salt, and without light’ could they live without ministers.³⁴²

Leighton recognised that many were in the ministry for ‘their own ends’ and that even the very best were ‘sinful men’.³⁴³ Where there was ‘ignorance and atheism amongst the people’ this was attributable to ‘the corruption and sloth of ministers’. He inveighed against ministries that were ‘cold and lifeless’ and left their congregations ‘altogether destitute’.³⁴⁴ Nevertheless, ‘faithful ministers’ were not to blame if the church was barren of fruit.³⁴⁵ Even in Scotland, where there was ‘so much light and such plentiful preaching’

³³⁶ *WW*, III, 265.

³³⁷ *WW*, II, 418-421.

³³⁸ *WW*, II, 397.

³³⁹ *WW*, II, 410-411.

³⁴⁰ *WW*, II, 319-320, 409-411. Also III, 230; IV, 719.

³⁴¹ *WW*, II, 412-413.

³⁴² *WW*, V, 146.

³⁴³ *WW*, II, 223. Also IV, 475.

³⁴⁴ *WW*, II, 84. Also II, 413.

³⁴⁵ *WW*, II, 172. Also II, 173, 418, III, 153; IV, 400, 714.

there was ignorance of the ‘principles and fundamentals’ of the Christian religion.³⁴⁶ Some people grew ‘worse under the frequent preaching of the Word’.³⁴⁷

Leighton recognised the limitations of formal, human theological education: ‘the due furniture of learning’ gleaned in seminaries’ required enrichment by ‘wisdom from above’ which sanctified ‘all other endowments’.³⁴⁸ He recoiled from what he understood as scholasticism. ‘School-divinity’ was no substitute for the light of God’s grace which conferred sense and reason.³⁴⁹ ‘The many school-distinctions of Grace’ were not worth making ‘a noise’ about.³⁵⁰ Whatever the ‘Schools’ pedantry’ might hold, for a believer to know ‘divine truth’ he required ‘an inseparable intermixture of love with belief’ and a pious desire for that truth.³⁵¹ Leighton equated ‘Schoolmen’ with ‘Casuits’ and ‘Jesuits’.³⁵²

Although Leighton was clearly anguished about personal and national sin and the difficulties facing Church and nation, his extant theological writings from this period give no indication that he was anxious to leave his Newbattle ministry or the wider ministry of the Kirk. However, when read in the light of opinions he expressed after he had been installed as Principal, it is possible to detect a foreshadowing of some of his positive reasons for leaving Newbattle so that he might take up that post. These reasons are now considered.

1652-1653: Leighton’s reasons for leaving

If, as seems most likely, Leighton actively sought the office of Principal, there remains the question of why he was so keen to hold the post. He would have known that to accept office from the English administration would attract criticism from those who refused to

³⁴⁶ *WW*, II, 84.

³⁴⁷ *WW*, II, 88.

³⁴⁸ *WW*, II, 254. Also II, 415.

³⁴⁹ *WW*, III, 242-243. Also II, 254, III, 139; IV, 282.

³⁵⁰ *WW*, III, 27.

³⁵¹ *WW*, III, 75. Also IV, 632.

³⁵² *WW*, II, 415. Also III, 103.

co-operate with them.³⁵³ Baillie remarked that the appointment of Leighton and the new principals of Aberdeen and Glasgow would have the result that ‘all our Colledges are quicklie like to be undone’.³⁵⁴ Others, like Brodie and Wariston were initially unwilling to accept the offices offered to them. Despite rumours he had sought employment, Lothian never held office under the English administration. Therefore, Leighton must have had compelling reasons to seek the office.

Alexander Brodie of Brodie (1617-1680) recorded a conversation with Leighton which took place in Edinburgh on 24 May 1653.³⁵⁵ Leighton apparently wished to put the differences that existed between the two men in holy perspective:

He thought holiness, the love of God and our brethren, was the chief duty God was calling us unto, and sobriety and forbearance to one another. He knew not if it were not from his natural temper, or something in the English air; but he thought it was the safest to incline *in mitiorem partem*.

Having stated his preference for the gentler, milder or more charitable way, Leighton mourned that ‘much persecution’ had resulted from ‘our imposing upon one another, as if we were infallible, allowing none that differed from ourselves in the least measure.’ Consequently, ‘the Lord would break that which we would so fain hold up’, that is, the ‘judicatories’ or Presbyterian courts of the Church of Scotland. Such divine judgement had been imposed because the Church had been driven by human spirit rather than the Holy Spirit. Leighton proclaimed that ‘he had loathed [the Church’s courts] for the most part, and wearied of them’. Brodie noted that he agreed with Leighton that ‘our Judicatories’ had ‘these three or four years’ been ‘much deserted’ by the presence of God. He ascribed this to ‘our differences’, an apparent reference to the Resolutioner-Protestor schism. In a

³⁵³ MacKenzie, ‘Loyalty’, 170-174.

³⁵⁴ *Baillie*, III, 244.

³⁵⁵ Brodie, *Diary*, 42. As a contemporaneous record of a private conversation just two months after Leighton been installed, this account has particular value. The diary was never intended for publication and there is no reason to question Brodie’s wish or ability to record accurately what was said (Brodie, *Diary*, x-xi). Brodie was ‘a man of sincere and devoted piety’. Educated in England and at St Andrews and King’s College, Aberdeen, he was a convinced and theologically adept Covenanter, active in Parliament and Church. In 1649 and 1650 he was a member of the delegations to Charles II. Unconvinced by Charles’ sincerity he was outvoted by, among others, Lothian. Although he sympathised with the Protestors, he did not openly join them. Brodie’s judicial career was interrupted by Cromwell’s invasion; he initially refused office under English rule. Brodie’s only son, James, married one of Lothian’s daughters in 1659 (Brodie, *Diary*, xiii, xviii, xix-xx, xxxi, xxxvii, xxxiv, xli; Muir, ‘Brodie’; Grant, ‘Brodie’).

personal reflection, Brodie asked God to protect him from ‘errors and heresies’ as well as ‘that blind spirit of sinful untenderness’. Brodie finished his account of the conversation by noting a pious but obscure exchange between the two men about the spiritual blessings of differences and trials.³⁵⁶

It is important to be clear what Leighton did and did not say to Brodie. Leighton did not indicate dissatisfaction with the Presbyterian polity of the Church. Neither did he renounce either Covenant or disavow the revolution which ultimately overthrew Charles I. Instead, he focussed on the manner in which the Church’s courts had conducted themselves in ‘holding up’ Presbyterianism. Done coercively without love or gentleness, this had reflected human pride and ambition rather than godliness. Of course, Leighton was speaking after he had secured his position in the College and eighteen months after the hegemony of the Kirk had been broken. So, it is quite possible that he would not have spoken in such terms at the height of the Engagement crisis or in the immediate aftermath of Dunbar or Worcester. Nevertheless, Brodie’s diary entry does suggest that Leighton was reassessing an important aspect of the life and witness of the Church, an exercise which quite possible had begun before Leighton left Newbattle. Unless he was remarkably lacking in self-awareness, Leighton must also have reflected on his part in events since 1641 as a member of the Presbytery, the Synod and three General Assemblies and Commissions of Assembly. Yet, Leighton was doing no more than Brodie who remained loyal to Presbyterianism and the Covenants throughout the remainder of his life.³⁵⁷

In their disquiet over the recent actions of the Church, Leighton and Brodie were not alone. Resolutioners realised the debilitating effect of the purges. Protestors claimed the purges had not been radical enough. By October 1651, divisions within the Protestor party had begun to emerge. The Covenants themselves were denounced as illegal by John Menzies, Professor of Divinity at Marischal College and Minister of Aberdeen Greyfriars, and by Alexander Jaffray, former Provost of Aberdeen. John Livingstone warned against idolising the Covenants and treating them as equivalent to Scripture.³⁵⁸ The Presbyterian polity of

³⁵⁶ Brodie, *Diary*, 42.

³⁵⁷ Muir, ‘Brodie’.

³⁵⁸ Livingstone (1603-1672) was minister of Ancrum and a leading churchman and, latterly, Protestor. Banished after the Restoration, he served in Rotterdam (Gardner, ‘Livingstone’).

the Kirk was challenged. Less radical Protestors questioned the Church's continuing devotion to the Covenants.³⁵⁹ Although there was no 'cohesive movement', the diverse groups and individuals who had been dislodged from uncompromising support of the Covenants by the horrors of 1650-1651, had in common 'a general distrust of the Kirk's actions during the 1640's, and a sensitivity and receptiveness to the religious and political messages of the English'.³⁶⁰ For a small number, Independency in varying forms and degrees beckoned.³⁶¹

However, whatever their misgivings, the vast majority of Scots remained within the Covenanted Presbyterian Church of Scotland. So did Leighton. His move from parish to university was not a move out of the Church of Scotland. As Principal of the Town College of Edinburgh, Leighton could be expected to be an active member of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale and the General Assembly. He would work alongside ministers of the Church who were teaching in the College or had parishes in the town. Most importantly, one of the College's principal functions was to train future ministers of the Kirk. Of this Leighton was well aware; indeed, he appears to have relished the opportunity.

Leighton was not just Principal but also the *primarius* Professor of Divinity. He revived the practice of the Principal's Wednesday lectures, twenty-four of which survive.³⁶² In what was probably the first of these lectures and which was both an academic statement of intent and a pastoral manifesto, Leighton explained to his new students how he understood his role as Principal of the Town College. With Pauline diffidence, he admitted that:

With little strength I undertake a great work, yea, as one who is least of all, I venture upon a task which is of all others the greatest and most important: for among the various undertakings of men, can there be named a nobler one than

³⁵⁹ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 107-111. Menzies (1624-1684) and Jaffray (1614-1673) were at the heart of Aberdeen Independency (Sprott, 'Menzies'; Stevenson, 'Menzies', 559-560; Coffey, 'Jaffray'; Pyper, 'Jaffray', 439).

³⁶⁰ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 111.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 201-202.

³⁶² Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 263; *WW*, V, VI.

that which has for its object the formation of human minds anew, after the Divine Image?³⁶³

This work of formation, he explained, was ‘the true end and design’ of both pastors and ‘professors of divinity in universities’. Reflecting the high view of ministry which he had preached in Newbattle, Leighton conceded that, ‘in most respects, the pastoral office is evidently superior to the academical’. Yet, the persons whom ministers were called to ‘instruct’ were ‘mostly of the common sort, ignorant and illiterate’.³⁶⁴ By contrast, professors had more promising material to work with; their work was:

to imbue with heavenly doctrine minds of a more select class – namely, of youth who have had a learned education, and are devoted to a studious life; many of whom, it is hoped, will, by the Divine blessing, become preachers of the same salutary doctrine themselves.³⁶⁵

Therefore, the formative influence of an academic teacher was potentially much greater than that of a pastor since:

whatever lessons of Christian instruction and true piety they [instilled] into the tender minds of their pupils, [would] by them be spread far and wide, and in due time, conveyed, as it were, by so many canals and aqueducts to many part of the Lord’s vineyard.³⁶⁶

Leighton made no secret of his ambition to teach young and hungry minds and, through those who became preachers themselves, to reach their flocks.

Leighton then turned to his second theme which, again, was adumbrated in his Newbattle sermons: his holy calling was to teach ‘the knowledge of His truth’ and not the thoughts of man. He explained that, together and under the auspices of the Holy Spirit, he and his students would ‘endeavour to attain that true wisdom which tendeth unto salvation, and to walk in that path which leadeth unto life, by which [they might] rise above the world and the things of the world’.³⁶⁷ In their quest for ‘true wisdom’, Leighton promised his students that he would not ‘perplex [them] with curious questions, and lead [them] through the

³⁶³ *WW*, VI, 77.

³⁶⁴ *WW*, VI, 77.

³⁶⁵ *WW*, VI, 77.

³⁶⁶ *WW*, VI, 77-78.

³⁶⁷ *WW*, VI, 78-79.

thorny paths of disputation'. Instead, it was the wish of Leighton's heart, that he 'guide [their] feet into the way of peace'. He would journey with them as their 'fellow-traveller through the easy ways and pleasant paths of righteousness to the blessed life beyond'. He affirmed that it would be his 'great delight to fire [their] souls with fervent love and ardent longings for heavenly things'.³⁶⁸ However, this could not be achieved by teaching theology with 'pomp and circumstance' or by debating with 'noisy vehemence' as was the custom in divinity schools. That would be unfruitful and, since 'Divine teaching [was] characterised by utility not subtilty', Leighton would not indulge in it.³⁶⁹ This became a refrain for Leighton in his teaching at the Town College.³⁷⁰

Finally, Leighton explained that he had neither achieved his position nor could he fulfil his new duties on his own merit. He was Principal and Professor of Divinity only by the will of God; 'by the Divine dispensation'.³⁷¹ Accordingly, even though he was aware of his own unworthiness, he did not despair because he humbly depended 'upon the Divine goodness and favour'. He was reassured by knowing that 'in the hand of Omnipotence, all instruments are alike'.³⁷²

Accordingly, from the outset of his tenure as Principal, Leighton made no secret of his desire to reform both training for the ministry of the Church of Scotland, and through his students who would become ministers, the Kirk itself. This objective was not focussed on any great points of doctrine or church polity. Leighton's theological writings, both as parish minister and academic, disclose no discontent with either. Instead, he sought to dampen what he perceived as the sinful human tendency to argue, debate and, ultimately, fight about theology while igniting the desire to know God. It seems, then, that Leighton chose to leave Newbattle with a positive purpose: not to abandon the Church of Scotland or to express dismay at its polity, but to train its ministers. Retirement to England was not his plan. He had resolved upon a holy task for which, he believed, he had been divinely

³⁶⁸ *WW*, VI, 79.

³⁶⁹ *WW*, VI, 79.

³⁷⁰ See pp. 195-207, 222-223.

³⁷¹ *WW*, VI, 77.

³⁷² *WW*, VI, 78.

selected. He would be true to his own teaching: 'Retired contemplation may be more pleasing, but due Activity for God and His Church is more profitable.'³⁷³

1652-1653: The English choice

The English administration had both the military might and the political will to install whomsoever they wished in the post of Principal.³⁷⁴ So why did they choose Leighton?

The answer begins both with English antipathy towards the Kirk and with the policy of limited religious toleration which they wished to impose upon Scotland. Both to curb the power of the Kirk and to challenge its position of dominance among the people of Scotland, the English administration adopted a multi-layered strategy. The Church of Scotland was to be confronted and curtailed. English chaplains, as well as laymen, were enabled and encouraged to preach their versions of the gospel.³⁷⁵ 'Such ministers and persons of pious life and conversation' who were 'well affected to the Parliament of the Commonwealth' were to be funded and protected.³⁷⁶ When the Kirk attempted to censure those inclined towards the sectarians, it was prevented from doing so. However, its own ministers faced loss of parish and stipend if they were 'found scandalous in [...] their life and conversation' and warned that they could be replaced with 'other fit Persons'.³⁷⁷ Additionally, steps were taken to mould future ministers, almost all of whom would study at a Scottish university, by selecting those who would educate them.³⁷⁸ The English Parliament had sent Commissioners to Scotland 'for the Managing of the Civil Government and settling Affairs there, as may be best for the Advantage of this

³⁷³ *WW*, IV, 657.

³⁷⁴ On 11 March 1653, they had in effect appointed the new Regent of Humanity (*ERBE 1642-1655*, 308-309). Gillespie was appointed by 'the English Judges [...] according to their power' as Principal of Glasgow University (*Baillie*, III, 239).

³⁷⁵ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 44-50.

³⁷⁶ *Scotland and the Protectorate*, 393-398; *Cromwellian Union*, xxi.

³⁷⁷ *Scotland and the Commonwealth*, 44-45.

³⁷⁸ Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 30-33; Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 138-140. This was part of a wider policy of controlling institutions of education in England and Scotland (Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 261-262; Murphy, 'Religion', 12; Watson, 'State and Education', 65-66).

Commonwealth'.³⁷⁹ This included visitation of the Scottish universities, a task which, in turn, was delegated, by Declaration of 4 June 1652, to nine Commissioners appointed 'for Visiting and Regulating Universities and other Affairs relating to the Ministry in Scotland' all of whom were Englishmen.³⁸⁰ These Commissioners were empowered to 'remove out of' the universities 'such Person or Persons as shall be found scandalous in their lives and conversations, or that shall oppose the Authority of the Common-wealth of England, exercised in Scotland, and place other more fitly qualified in their room'.³⁸¹ Only St Andrews escaped the imposition of an English nominee as Principal.³⁸²

Patrick Gillespie (1617-1675) was appointed Principal of the University of Glasgow in February 1653.³⁸³ He was a leading Protestor who quickly proved himself willing to work closely with the English in their attempts to manage the Kirk. His faction facilitated the intrusion of English Independents into charges within the bounds of the Presbytery of Glasgow in what appears to have been a pact intended to keep Resolutioners from vacant parishes.³⁸⁴ Regarded as a betrayer of Presbyterianism by the majority of Protestors, Gillespie was commissioned by Cromwell to develop a new ecclesiastical settlement for Scotland which was subsequently known as 'Gillespie's Charter'.³⁸⁵ Intended to boost Independent and Protestor ministries across Scotland and within the Kirk itself, it was only partially implemented.³⁸⁶ Spurlock believes that Gillespie was attracted to the strict discipline exercised within Independent congregations.³⁸⁷ Throughout the 1650s Gillespie continued to work closely with the English regime.³⁸⁸ At the Restoration he was charged

³⁷⁹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, VII, 21.

³⁸⁰ Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 30-33, 58. One of the Commissioners was Edward Moseley who was also a Commissioner for the Administration of Justice (Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 52-55).

³⁸¹ *Scotland and the Commonwealth*, 44.

³⁸² Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 59-60

³⁸³ Holfelder, 'Gillespie'; Lachman, 'Gillespie', 360; McCoy, *Robert Baillie*, 158-161.

³⁸⁴ *Baillie*, III, 244; Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 140-141.

³⁸⁵ *Acts and Ordinances*, cxii-cxv.

³⁸⁶ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 143-145.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

³⁸⁸ McCoy, *Robert Baillie*, 139-199.

with treason but renounced his previous actions as a Protestor and collaborator and was pardoned.³⁸⁹

By mid-1652, under Jaffray's leadership, Aberdeen had become a centre of Independency, fuelled by a belief that Scotland had been punished not despite but because of its slavish adherence to the Covenants. These Scottish Independents perceived that the Covenants were predicated upon the assumption that all who adhered to them were godly until proven otherwise. Instead, they taught that the Church of Christ should include none but those who had made 'a profession of the Truth' and whose behaviour was 'blameless and gospel-like'. The only way to reconstitute the 'visible church' was to separate from the Kirk.³⁹⁰ Independency quickly came to dominate both King's and Marischal Colleges, a situation which was formalised by the appointment, in March 1653, of John Row (1598-1672) as Principal of the University of Aberdeen and Gilbert Rule (c. 1629-1701) as Sub-Principal.³⁹¹ The Aberdeen Independents found common cause with Gillespie's Protestors. John Menzies worked with Gillespie in preparing his eponymous charter.³⁹²

There is no suggestion that Leighton switched to Independency or that he ever facilitated the introduction of Independent ministries. Yet the English administration must have believed that to appoint him to Edinburgh would be to advantage or, at least, not to imperil their religious policy. They needed someone in this key position whom they could trust.³⁹³ Hence, the Engager Colville was unacceptable to them. The implication is that, either directly from his mouth or by third party accounts, the Commissioners heard enough to convince them that Leighton would not oppose what they were trying to achieve. There is

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 211-214.

³⁹⁰ Jaffray, *Diary*, 167-171. Also Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 122-124.

³⁹¹ *Baillie*, III, 244; Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 139-140; Holfelder, 'Row'; Stevenson, 'Row', 723-733; Du Toit, 'Rule'; Lachman, 'Rule', 733.

³⁹² Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 145.

³⁹³ Previously, on 14 and 30 July 1652, the Council had been unable to persuade the College staff and the Edinburgh ministers to choose a commissioner to represent the College at the 1652 General Assembly. This had been a protest against the Council whom they called 'objured apostates' for their willingness to break and renounce 'the Covenant' and swear obedience and loyalty to the English Parliament. David Dickson had been summarily appointed by the Town Council. He was a Resolutioner and moderated the 1652 Assembly and the Commission of Assembly in 1652 and 1653. He was the outgoing moderator at the 1653 Assembly which was forcibly dissolved before it could be constituted. (*ERBE 1642-1655*, 286-287; Nicoll, *Diary*, 88.).

no evidence to go beyond this. Nevertheless, at some stage after the 1651 invasion, there is a real likelihood that Leighton presented himself to the foreign invaders as someone who was willing to collaborate at least to the extent of ignoring the strictures against co-operation which had been issued by his Church. If Leighton gave any hint of such willingness, then that is to be found in the few surviving passages of his Newbattle sermons in which he argued for Christian union in 'judgement' and unity in 'affection and action'.³⁹⁴

³⁹⁴ See pp. 197-199.

Conclusion

In 1641, Leighton began his Newbattle ministry as a convinced Covenanting Presbyterian. If he relaxed his views, there is no evidence that he did so until the final year of his tenure. Even as late as 1652, he continued to act as he had done at the outset of his ministry and was trusted by his Synod accordingly. In fact, the only indication that he was willing to compromise was his eagerness for the post of Principal which he received from the hands – or through the irresistible influence – of the English occupiers. Leighton knew that the English Independents had brought with them a policy of limited ecclesiastical tolerance which offended the Presbyterian ambitions of both Resolutioners and Protestors alike. It is highly unlikely that he would have been appointed to the Town College, had the English not been satisfied that, at the very least, he was amenable to their policy and that he would not use the influence of his office to oppose it. Looking back to his sermons, it is possible to spot clues as to why, with the catastrophic and costly failure of the Covenanting cause, Leighton could moderate his views sufficiently to be able to work under the oversight of the English administration and within their vision for a religiously pluralist Protestant Scotland. However, such retrospective reinterpretation should be applied with caution: hindsight may be misleading if it isolates a few sentences from the personal context in which Leighton delivered them. Leighton's actions and surviving words point overwhelmingly to public loyalty to the Covenanting Kirk through all the vagaries of the 1640s and into 1652. The reservations which he expressed after his appointment as Principal did not constitute a wholesale repudiation of Presbyterianism or the Covenants. Neither did his assumption of the principalship amount to a rescindment of his commitment to the Presbyterian Kirk which was the product of the National Covenant and which the Solemn League and Covenant had sought to preserve. In fact, his decision to actively seek the post of Principal of the Town College can best be understood as a deliberate recommitment to the life and witness of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Chapter 5

1653-1662: From Edinburgh to Episcopacy

Introduction

Leighton held the post of Principal of the Town College of Edinburgh for a little over nine years. By the time of his demission, in or just before March 1662, he had been consecrated as Bishop of Dunblane and the Restoration settlement of the Church of Scotland had substantially reversed the successes of both the Covenanters and Cromwell. Synods, presbyteries and kirk sessions remained, but under the authority of an Episcopal hierarchy which Leighton had chosen – and been chosen – to join.

Leighton's reasons for accepting Episcopal preferment have long been a matter of speculation. For Episcopalians and those churchmen who espoused institutional integration in Scotland, this significant staging post on his ecclesiastical journey was a triumph of personal enlightenment. Convinced Presbyterians regretted what they believed to be naivety or inconstancy.

In this chapter, Leighton's years as Principal are reviewed and his decision to accept the See of Dunblane analysed.

Principal

At least two historians of the University of Edinburgh have followed Burnet in considering Leighton's period of office to have been 'a great blessing'.¹ A third stated that:

In the discharge of his public functions as a clergyman, and as the *primarius* professor of divinity, and, indeed, in arranging and conducting the complicated business of a university, he had few equals and no superiors.²

Baillie saw things differently. Conceding that things were 'more quiet' in Edinburgh than in the other universities, he remarked sourly that Leighton did 'nothing to count of, but [looked] about him in his chamber'.³ Wodrow propagated the anecdote that Leighton 'used to shut himself up in the room above the Library and discharged anybody to have access to him, and that for two days' during which he scarcely ate anything'. According to Wodrow, 'monkish retirement' spawned suspicions of 'Popery'.⁴ What evidence remains indicates that, despite the challenging times, Leighton's tenure was remarkably uneventful and suggests that he followed a deliberate policy of stability and quietude, eschewing engagement in the great controversies of the day.⁵

Leighton as administrator

As Principal, Leighton had limited powers. The Town Council controlled all staff appointments and the flow of funds to the College. All major decisions required its approval. The subordinate College Council, on which the Principal sat, managed the day-to-day operations although it is doubtful that Leighton had any real control over the

¹ *HMOT*, I, 242. Also Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 259; II, 249; Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 187.

² Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 263. Also Cheyne, *Studies*, 42; Whytock, "Educated Clergy", 71..

³ *Baillie*, III, 365-366. In the early 1650s, Baillie, a Resolutioner, feared deposition from his professorship of Divinity at Glasgow University by the Protestors who held a majority in Glasgow. Baillie's friend, John Strang, had been forced to retire from the Principalship in 1650 and Patrick Gillespie, a leading Protestor, had been appointed in his place by the English administration (see p. 210; Stevenson, 'Baillie'; Handley, 'Strang'; Holdfelder, 'Gillespie').

⁴ Wodrow, *Analecta*, I, 327.

⁵ Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 263; Lee, *University of Edinburgh*, 33, 59.

teaching staff.⁶ Leighton seems not to have instituted any formal changes to the basic curriculum which he himself had followed as a student more than twenty years before.⁷ His lectures and addresses were both an encouragement to engage with philosophy and a warning against elevating it above the Scriptures.⁸ On 28 July 1658, he complained to the Town Council that, because of the deficient education they had received at grammar school, his students ‘could not be so good proficientis in Philosophie’ and he recommended a number of improvements.⁹

Ongoing building works intended to improve and extend the College faltered in 1650 and were haphazard during Leighton’s time as Principal.¹⁰ The College’s financial position was precarious when he assumed office and there is little indication that it improved despite the efforts of the Town Council which itself owed substantial sums to the College.¹¹ Certainly, Leighton did not attract large donations from the English regime as did Gillespie to Glasgow and Row to Aberdeen.¹² Payment of bursaries and salaries and upkeep of buildings required astute management of funds.¹³ Sanitation was a problem and in 1659 the College was ordered to stop polluting other properties.¹⁴

On 22 July 1657, the Town Council invited Leighton to go to London to obtain ‘ane augmentation’ in the College’s income.¹⁵ In the petition which he presented to Cromwell on 25 August, Leighton narrated the ‘liberal’ annuities conferred on Aberdeen and Glasgow in 1654 for ‘the help of poor hopeful students’ and reminded Cromwell that he

⁶ *ERBE 1642-1655*, xxxix; *ERBE 1655-1665*, 69.

⁷ See pp. 77-79.

⁸ See p. 223.

⁹ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 108, 326. A new set of ‘Rudiements’ was published in 1660 (*Ibid.*, 205, 220).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, xxxix.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, xl-xli, 273, 288, 305-306, 370, 373-375; *ERBE 1655-1665*, 5, 7-8, 14, 18, 22-23, 32, 72-74, 135, 140-141, 168, 173.

¹² Coutts, *University of Glasgow*, 133-137; Mackie, *University of Glasgow*, 109-110; Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 147-148.

¹³ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 14, 16, 22-23, 26, 48, 71, 78-79, 87, 94, 102-106, 109-110, 114-115, 121, 124-125, 126, 144, 201, 204, 224, 279; Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 178-181.

¹⁴ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 148.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63; Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 176.

had intended to make a similar grant to Edinburgh. The Town College, said Leighton, had the largest number of students in Scotland but 'being a late foundation' was poor and had 'little provision for poor scholars'. Therefore, he renewed his request for funds and undertook to show how these could be made available 'without prejudice to the State'.¹⁶ On 19 June 1658 Leighton reported to the Town Council that he had secured a grant of £200 to be taken from unallocated kirk rents.¹⁷ The grant was to be used for supplementing staff salaries, granting bursaries, buying books and for emergency building repairs.¹⁸ However, since no unallocated church rents could be found, the grant proved worthless.¹⁹ In 1661, Leighton returned to London to seek funding from the Restoration government. On 31 July 1661, the Town Council appointed a committee to write to him since he was 'for the present at Londoun anent the affaires of the Colledge'.²⁰ Leighton replied by letter of 20 August 1661 indicating that money for the College was unlikely to be forthcoming.²¹ He was still in London on 25 October 1661 when the Town Council decided to write to him and others, as 'freindis at Londoun', to plead for financial assistance for the town's ministers now that income from former bishops' lands was being denied them.²² Despite these failures, according to Bower, Leighton's 'zeal for promoting the prosperity of the college was very exemplary'.²³ However, there is no record that his zeal was rewarded.

Having been discontinued in 1645 due to fear of the plague, public laureations or graduations only resumed in April 1655.²⁴ On 6 May 1653 Leighton and the other College staff advised the Town Council to agree that the students who were due to graduate be allowed to do so 'in a privat way' because of the dangers and financial privations of the

¹⁶ *CSPD 1657-1658*, 77; *APS*, VI(2), 765.

¹⁷ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 99. The Order was issued by the Lord Protector on 8 September 1658 (*APS*, VI(2), 877; *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, IV, 852-853).

¹⁸ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 99-100.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 109, 113-114; Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 250; Dalzel, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 182; Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 268. Baillie wrote that James Sharp had arranged for half of the grant to be allocated for Alexander Dickson's salary, which angered 'Mr Lightoun not a little' (*Baillie*, III, 366; *ERBE 1655-1665*, 100).

²⁰ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 250-251.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 435-436.

²² *Ibid.*, 264-265.

²³ Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 268.

²⁴ *ERBE 1642-1655*, xl, 329; *ERBE 1655-1665*, 27, 59.

time. However, it was made clear that this was not to be taken as a precedent since ‘such privat lauriatioun darkens the remembrance of the qualificatioun of ther literature and makes them pas current without distinctioun of their proficiencie and paines’.²⁵ A less elevated reason was that students who graduated privately were disinclined to donate a book to the College Library.²⁶

Both Torrance and Gribben have identified differences in approach between Leighton and the other Professor of Divinity, David Dickson.²⁷ Torrance discerns a contrast between Leighton’s mild, evangelical and Dickson’s high Calvinism.²⁸ Gribben identifies Leighton’s fear of theological speculation and his emphasis upon individual piety as a departure from ‘the vision of covenanted uniformity’ to which he believes Dickson subscribed.²⁹ However his suggestion that the Edinburgh faculty was ‘divided theologically’ with ‘a great gulf fixed between their approaches to the teaching of theology, philosophy and vocational identity’ goes further than the available evidence allows.³⁰ Nevertheless, Leighton and Dickson do seem to have clashed, although Dickson may have supported Leighton’s appointment as Principal in order to keep out James Guthrie, an arch-Protestor.³¹ In 1656 Dickson engineered the appointment of his son, Alexander, as Professor of Hebrew at a time when Leighton was in London. According to Baillie, upon his return Leighton tried hard, but unsuccessfully, to have Alexander removed even although the Edinburgh ministers had pronounced Alexander ‘verie fitting’

²⁵ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 314.

²⁶ *ERBE 1642-1655*, 314. Similar request had been granted in 1652 and 1654 (*ERBE 1642-1655*, 276, 336).

²⁷ David Dickson (c.1538-1662) was a major figure in the Interregnum Church. As the celebrated minister of Irvine, he was a leading radical who had been at the forefront of the Covenanting movement. Assuming the professorship of Divinity at Glasgow in 1640, he continued his career as preacher, teacher, author and church leader, breaking with his former allies when he sided with the Resolutioners in 1651. He remained a ‘zealous Resolutioner’ who was prepared to do business with Broghill’s administration in the mid-1650s (Holfelder, ‘Dickson’; Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 25-26).

²⁸ Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 158, 163.

²⁹ Gribben, ‘Leighton’, 175-183.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 165, 183.

³¹ *Baillie III*, 365. In fact, Guthrie (c.1612-1661) chose not to co-operate with the English administration throughout almost the entire Interregnum. He was executed on 1 June 1661 for treason (Holfelder, ‘Guthrie’).

for the post.³² Further, it was reported that Dickson objected strongly when Leighton recommended Thomas à Kempis' *De Imitatione Christi* to his students.³³

Despite the limited formal authority which was invested in Leighton as Principal, he did have influence. By his own account, a significant proportion of Scottish students were passing through his hands, many in training for ministry in the Church of Scotland. It is in his interaction with his students that Leighton's tenure as Principal can best be evaluated.

Leighton and his students

Leighton's deep pastoral concern for his students is evident from his lectures and addresses. He revived the practice of Wednesday lectures and, from October 1658, also began preaching to the students once or twice a month in the College Hall 'on the Sabbath day' in rotation with the other professors.³⁴ According to Bower, this was intended to supplement the practice of attending morning worship at which the Principal also preached.³⁵ Since there was no fixed place for the students to attend after lunch and no provision for church attendance to be recorded, Leighton evidently wished to do something about what Bower described as 'the inconveniences and injurious effects which resulted from their being allowed to wander from one place of worship to another'. As his teaching bears out, Leighton was 'strongly impressed with the indescribable importance of forming religious principles and habits in the minds of youth'.³⁶

³² *ERBE 1655-1665*, 33-34. Also *Baillie III*, 365-366. Baillie wrote that Lothian and 'many of the people' of Newbattle had become 'quickly so unkind' to Alexander Dickson, possibly by holding back his stipend and demanding more duties of him, that 'he was outwearied with them' (III, 365).

³³ Wodrow, *Analecta*, III, 452. Torrance points out that Calvin was indebted to à Kempis so that Dickson's objection was misplaced (Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 158).

³⁴ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 121. Also Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 263; Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 249-250.

³⁵ Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 269; Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 250; *ERBE 1655-1665*, 45.

³⁶ Bower, *University of Edinburgh*, I, 269. Also *HMOT*, I, 242.

Such sentiments no doubt triggered his complaint, made to the Town Council in July 1658, against ‘some suspect houses kept neir the Colledge’. Fearing that ‘the Schollers wer in danger to be corrupted,’ it was decided that the ‘suspected woemen’ were to be moved on.³⁷ On 26 January 1659, one Thomas Thomsonsone was prohibited from ‘keiping a bulyard board [...] quherby the schollers of the Colledge are withdrawn from their studies’.³⁸ At times, the students themselves required disciplining. On 30 November 1658, it was decided that the students were to pay for windows they broke or ‘any uther abuse quhatsomever’ and to be ‘censured according to the qualities of the abuse’.³⁹ In March and April 1659, the College and Town Councils agreed disciplinary regulations ‘anent the punishment and mulcts of rebellious schollers’.⁴⁰ On 4 January 1660, students were put on notice that unauthorised carrying and shooting of pistols would result in imprisonment and ‘extrusioun of the [...] Colledge for ever’.⁴¹ On 1 July 1660, the Town Council granted power to the College Regents to levy a returnable deposit from students in their final year of study as security for attendance and the ‘giving of reverend attentiou’ at classes.⁴²

It is through his lectures and addresses that Leighton’s concern for his students is most keenly experienced. Leighton’s lectures were academic neither in tone nor in content. Torrance describes Leighton as ‘essentially a scholar-preacher’ rather than an academic theologian. Nevertheless, he was ‘well versed in current theology’ and a careful biblical scholar whose ‘theological insights were profound and directed to the really central issues of the Faith’. Moreover, suggests Torrance, rather than engaging in ‘contentious argument’, Leighton was ‘concerned with the practical and devotional relevance of Christian doctrine’ and maintaining ‘the balance of Christian belief and obedience’.⁴³ Comprehensive theological analysis of Leighton’s lectures and addresses is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it can be said that Leighton extended many of the themes which he had preached at Newbattle, not least his concern with personal holiness.

³⁷ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 108.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 140, 145.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 204-205.

⁴³ Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 164-165.

As Grant has noted, Leighton's Wednesday lectures focussed on 'the knowledge of God' and the practical duties of his students as followers of Christ.⁴⁴ Reminding his students of the transitory nature of their academic achievements in his graduation addresses, Leighton 'showed himself as one who was overshadowed with the sense of eternity'.⁴⁵ Burnet believed that the Principal 'talked so to all the youth of any capacity or distinction that it had a great effect on many of them'. He enthused over Leighton's university lectures, claiming that he 'preached often' to his students and, 'if crowds broke in, which they were apt to do, he would have gone on in his sermon in Latin, with a purity and life that charmed all who understood it'.⁴⁶ In his 1683 manuscript, Burnet recorded that Leighton also wanted to discourage 'the English judges and officers' who were keen to hear him preach.⁴⁷ Yet, whoever infiltrated the congregation, it is clear that Leighton's primary audience was his students and that his principal concern was for their souls.

In his lectures, Leighton reiterated his Newbattle teaching about God's providential care for His church.⁴⁸ Christ's was the 'absolute and supreme authority to appoint the laws of His Church, and rulers by those laws'. When 'the word, and sacraments, and discipline' were used 'according to His own appointment', then he was acknowledged 'as King of his Church'.⁴⁹ The human fondness for 'outward pomp and magnificence' had no place in His church.⁵⁰ Likewise Leighton spoke to his students of the Christian imperative to 'rejoice in the happiness and salvation of one another' and to be 'glad at the graces which God bestows on their brethern'. All belonged to God and 'whatsoever diversity [was] in them' they were to 'agree and concentre' in God's service and in the 'good of the Church'. Their 'gifts and graces' belonged to and were to be used for the benefit of all within the church, each rejoicing 'in that which others have'.⁵¹ On one occasion, Leighton led the College in

⁴⁴ Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 149. Also Sibbald, *Autobiography*, 15; Cheyne, *Studies*, 42.

⁴⁵ Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 149-150. Also *WW*, VI, 260-262.

⁴⁶ *HMOT*, I, 242.

⁴⁷ 1683, 12-13. In an undated letter to Aird, Leighton told him that he would be preaching to an Edinburgh congregation which was meeting in the College hall (Butler, *Life*, 259).

⁴⁸ *WW*, V, 269, 305. Also VI, 13, 45.

⁴⁹ *WW*, V, 269-271.

⁵⁰ *WW*, V, 275. Also VI, 270.

⁵¹ *WW*, V, 231; 255.

prayers that the ‘internal dissensions’ of the church, those ‘fires’ which were ‘far hotter and more dangerous’ than ‘the world’s hatred’, might be ‘extinguished’.⁵² At the end of another address, he prayed for the worldwide church and particularly for the church ‘in these islands’ and asked God to apply His ‘healing hand’ so that ‘we shall presently be whole’. He continued, rather opaquely, ‘nor need we look elsewhere for other remedies than those we have so often tried, and found to be worse than the diseases themselves’.⁵³ Nevertheless, Leighton’s antipathy towards the Roman church remained.⁵⁴

Leighton decried ‘the education of youths in schools and colleges’ which mistook ‘disputing’ as ‘the end of learning’. He exhorted his ‘young gentlemen’ to ‘speedily extricate [themselves] from these unhallowed flames of strife and controversy’ and to allow themselves instead to be ‘enlightened by the pure and celestial fire of the Divine Spirit’.⁵⁵ They were to ‘fly far from that controversial, contentious theology, which consists in fruitless disputes about words, and rather deserves the name of [...] vain, foolish talking’.⁵⁶ Neither had his patience for theological speculation grown.⁵⁷ Likewise, his suspicion of ‘scholastic distinctions and theological systems’ remained unchanged.⁵⁸ The ‘philosophy which prevails in the schools is excessively windy, and more apt to inflate the mind than instruct it’.⁵⁹

In an address to returning students, Leighton explained that ‘all the knowledge that the greatest and ablest scholars can possibly attain to is [...] at best but very small.’ Nevertheless, he encouraged them to ‘do the day’s work while the day lasts’. That, after all, was the business of the College community. However, he exhorted the students to ‘acquire such a philosophy as is not barren and babbling, but solid and true’. They should ‘always give preference to sacred or Christian philosophy’. This was ‘the chief philosophy’

⁵² *WW*, VI, 264.

⁵³ *WW*, VI, 290. Also VI, 272-273.

⁵⁴ *WW*, V, 248, 251, 316, 320, 322-323, 326, 364-365,

⁵⁵ *WW*, VI, 282-283. Also VI, 61, 114-115, 117, 133, 157-159, 164, 265-266, 271, 275, 291, 295.

⁵⁶ *WW*, VI, 262-263.

⁵⁷ *WW*, VI, 93, 96, 115, 155, 173, 211, 214.

⁵⁸ *WW*, VI, 132. Also VI, 224, 266. Cf. VI, 184.

⁵⁹ *WW*, VI, 288.

and was pre-eminent ‘over every other science’.⁶⁰ Heathen philosophy rarely produced incontrovertible answers.⁶¹ Leighton’s lectures and addresses were replete with quotations and examples from a wide range of philosophers, not least the students’ ‘favourite philosopher Aristotle’, but always with the caveat that ‘our religion and most precious faith teaches with incomparably greater evidence than all the schools and books of the philosophers’.⁶²

Leighton did acknowledge that ‘the violence and unhappiness of the times’ might have interrupted his students’ studies and he encouraged them to make up for the loss by ‘subsequent reading and application’.⁶³ Otherwise, Leighton continued his practice of not preaching ‘to the times’. Leighton had plenty to say in his lectures about the ‘New Covenant’ but nothing about the National Covenant or Solemn League and Covenant. Neither did he deal specifically with ecclesiastical polity.

Surprisingly, he had little specific to say about ministers. He urged that ministers be spiritual fathers and, like Paul, become ‘all things to all men’.⁶⁴ He warned that those who had ‘been employed in [God’s] Church, and in the Divine offices’ and who had ‘not experienced His influence as a pure and shining light, [would] assuredly feel Him as a flaming fire’.⁶⁵ Those, who did their jobs properly, were entitled to ‘have honourable maintenance for their public service’.⁶⁶ However, they were to be ‘willing that their name, and estates, and lives, and all, [might] be a part of His footstool to step up to His throne; not forced as His enemies to be so, but willingly laying themselves low for His glory’.⁶⁷ In accepting consecration as Bishop of Dunblane, Leighton proved himself willing to pay a high price, at least by his own reckoning, for the peace and growth of the church and, therefore, for God’s glory.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ *WW*, VI, 252-253. Also VI, 221, 241-242, 278-279, 291.

⁶¹ *WW*, VI, 107.

⁶² *WW*, VI, 224.

⁶³ *WW*, VI, 275.

⁶⁴ *WW*, V, 203.

⁶⁵ *WW*, VI, 245.

⁶⁶ *WW*, V, 353.

⁶⁷ *WW*, V, 275.

⁶⁸ See pp. 257-261.

In all of this, Leighton exhibited a keen understanding of the challenges of student life for the young men in his charge. He encouraged the less able students and warned them all against the enervating dangers of ‘lust’ and too much eating, drinking and sleeping.⁶⁹

Leighton’s mission to his students is admirably summed up by Alexander Monro, Principal from 1685 to 1690, who noted that Leighton ‘did never oblige [his students] to write one word from his Mouth’ but, instead, ‘recommended to them, viva voce, the most excellent truths of the Christian Religion, in the most unimitable strains of the Piety and Eloquence’.⁷⁰

Beyond the College

Aikman believed that, during the Interregnum, Leighton was ‘conspicuous’ in his ‘incessant’ inculcation of ‘the doctrine of peace and charity’. He directed ‘his hearers to the more important matters of the law, and not by indifference to any fundamental truth’.⁷¹ This is borne out by Leighton’s teaching to his students. In contrast, Leighton appears not to have carried a similar message into the Presbyterian courts of the Kirk.

The records of the Presbytery of Edinburgh for this period have been lost. However, if Leighton’s absence at meetings of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale are indicative, it seems unlikely that he attended Presbytery with any regularity, if at all.⁷² Unlike David and Alexander Dickson who were frequent attenders, Leighton was recorded as being present at only one meeting of Synod from 1655 to 1661. That was in May 1661, just before he left for London on the trip from which he would return as Bishop of Dunblane almost a year

⁶⁹ *WW*, VI, 233-234, 253-254.

⁷⁰ Monro, *Presbyterian Inquisition*, 66.

⁷¹ Aikman, ‘Life’, xvii.

⁷² NAS CH2/252/3/1, 3, 17, 53, 107, 198, 240, 263; 4/1, 31, 72, 109. There was no record of attendance taken for the July and November 1657 and January 1658 meetings.

later.⁷³ Furthermore, in 1653 he had the opportunity to be part of the Resolutioner General Assembly due to sit on 20 July in Edinburgh. On 14 July, Leighton was unanimously elected as the College's representative commissioner by the staff. Despite being present at his election, within five days Leighton had left for England. A replacement had to be hurriedly appointed.⁷⁴ In the event, the Assembly was forcibly dispersed by Lilburne on 20 July.⁷⁵

Leighton's conduct suggests that he was anxious to avoid the Church's courts. This may have been in obedience to the wishes of the English administration who appointed him or he may simply have wished to remain apart from the conflicts which were being aired there. Not only was the Kirk continuing to chafe at what is perceived as the intrusion of Independency into Scotland, but the Resolutioner-Protestor quarrel was rumbling on.⁷⁶

Leighton seems also to have wanted to escape periodically from Scotland altogether. Baillie noted in his Diary that Leighton made a 'yearly progress to London'.⁷⁷ According to Burnet, Leighton 'made excursions' during the College vacations, often to London 'where he observed all the eminent men in Cromwell's court, and in the several parties then about the city'.⁷⁸ However, according to Burnet, Leighton was unimpressed by these 'men of unquiet and meddling tempers' whose 'discourses and sermons were dry and unsavoury, fully of airy cant, or of bombast swellings'.⁷⁹

⁷³ In his 1683 manuscript, Burnet claimed that 'although the heads of the college were generally considered as members of the presbytery, yet [Leighton] never went to their meetings, and continued to live in great reservedness with all people' (1683, 12).

⁷⁴ *ERBE 1642-1655*, 318-319.

⁷⁵ Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 103. Otherwise the Kirk's courts were allowed to continue functioning (Smith, *Sackcloth*, 120-121).

⁷⁶ Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland*, 144-157; Little, *Broghill*, 95-121; Holfelder, 'Factionalism'.

⁷⁷ *Baillie*, III, 366. Also Dalzell, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 171.

⁷⁸ *HMOT*, I, 243-244.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 244; 1683, 13; Jerment, 'Life', xvii.

Burnet also related that Leighton ‘went over the Flanders, to see what he could find in the several orders of the church of Rome’.⁸⁰ There he encountered Jansenists who, recounted Burnet, ‘seemed to be men of extraordinary tempers, and who studied to bring things, if possible, to the purity and simplicity of the primitive ages; on which all his thoughts were much set’. Burnet explained that Leighton ‘thought controversies had been too much insisted on, and had been carried too far’.⁸¹ Just how often or for how long Leighton met with Jansenists is not known and it is a mighty and unnecessary leap to attribute his aversion to arid theological speculation and unnecessary ecclesiastical schism to such encounters, as Butler does.⁸² Whether Leighton would have looked for inspiration from the Church of Rome is even less likely given his sustained antipathy towards it. However, as he explained in later conversations, he did admire the faith of individual Catholics.⁸³

Yet, despite these hints of deliberate detachment from important parts of the life of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Leighton remained in communion with it until he accepted office as Bishop of Dunblane.⁸⁴ His commitment to his Presbyterian students was unquestionable and he also continued to administer the oath to uphold the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant to them at graduation.⁸⁵ He seems always to have done his best for the Town College. Yet, by mid-1661 he was determined to demit as Principal.

⁸⁰ *HMOT*, I, 244. In 1683, Burnet reported that Leighton went ‘once or twice over into Flanders’ (Burnet, 1683, 13). He appears to have been in Leyden in September 1653 (*Ancram-Lothian*, cxxxiv).

⁸¹ *HMOT*, I, 244.

⁸² Butler, *Life*, 78-111, 148, 153, 277-278. Cf. Aikman, ‘Life’, xiv-xv.

⁸³ Brodie, *Diary*, 215-221.

⁸⁴ Aikman, ‘Life’, vii-ix, xiii.

⁸⁵ Mitchel, ‘Copy of a Letter’, 252. James Mitchel or Mitchell (d.1678) was freelance Covenanting preacher and insurgent who had graduated from the Town College in 1656. He took part in the 1666 Pentland Rising, tried to assassinate Sharp in 1668 and was executed in 1678 (Coffey, ‘Mitchell’).

Leaving the Town College

Leighton's tenure as Principal ended in early 1662 by which time he had been consecrated Bishop of Dunblane. The surviving evidence seems to indicate that, by August 1661 at the latest, Leighton had decided that he wished to demit as Principal of the Town College. However, once again, he did not do so in a straightforward manner.

Written from London, Leighton's letter of 20 August 1661 to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh offers a fascinating insight into his state of mind. Having been sent to London to secure funding for the College and having explained his lack of success, he moved on to lament his poor health.⁸⁶ He had 'bin some weeks at the Bath and found little benefit yit'.⁸⁷ He explained that he was keen to return to Edinburgh, where he had found 'so much unmerited respect and kindnesse from all and particularly from [the Provost] and present Councill'. However, he doubted that he would be able to do so since:

the simple truth is, growing late so sensibly still more crazy and unhealthfull and having (I beleev and hope) so short a stage of remaining life to run, I know not if it shall be pertinent to take so long a journey to doe yow and that place so litle or no service, I had almost sayd so great an injury.⁸⁸

Leighton concluded by effectively granting permission to the Council to terminate his tenure as Principal. He invited the Provost, 'without art of feigning' to tell him whether he should save himself the trouble of journeying back to Edinburgh. If the answer was that he should stay where he was, Leighton would not hold that against the Provost, the city or the College.⁸⁹ This was not exactly a resignation but instead a casting of responsibility for the decision whether he should or should not remain in office upon the Council. It may be that Leighton really was unwell. In a letter dated 5 March 1661 written from Edinburgh to Ellis in London, he reminded his brother of his 'present and daily growing unhealthiness'. Rather plaintively, he explained that he longed for the 'evening' that was death with the hope for 'a bright sweet morning'. Although he 'had some thoughts of spending' what few hours remained to him 'nearer' to his brother, he had not yet made up his mind. In any

⁸⁶ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 435.

⁸⁷ *HMOT*, I, 239. Also *1683*, 9.

⁸⁸ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 435-436.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 436.

event, it was ‘no great matter’ and it would ‘be disposed of as is best’.⁹⁰ But if Leighton was in such a poor state of health he seems to have enjoyed a remarkable recovery once he knew that he would be appointed as Bishop of Dunblane. It seems more likely that his malaise was caused by internal conflict and anxiety.

How Leighton’s letter of 20 August 1661 was received in Edinburgh is not documented in the extant records, but it is clear that Leighton continued as Principal until after December 1661. On 6 December 1661, the Town Council recorded that it had been informed that Leighton was ‘to be advanced be his Majestie to some other place’. As a pre-emptive defence of ‘their awen liberties and priviledge over the Colledge as patrons of the samen’, the Council drew up a short leet for Leighton’s replacement which included William Colville.⁹¹ On 9 December, the Council delayed electing a new principal until they heard further from Leighton.⁹² Colville was finally elected on 20 March 1662 in place of Leighton who had, by that time, demitted his office by a letter of unknown date.⁹³ Leighton’s farewell address to his students offered no explanation for his demission although all would have known that the reason was his elevation to the See of Dunblane.⁹⁴ It would have been delivered after his arrival in Edinburgh from London on 8 April 1662.⁹⁵

That Leighton remained committed to the well-being of the College is clear from his post-demission actions. Grant was certainly correct when he remarked that Leighton ‘had conceived an affection for the College of Edinburgh’ since he retained his college chambers and lived in them as both bishop and archbishop.⁹⁶ In 1672, an English non-Conformist student at the University of Glasgow, Josiah Chorley, was sent to Edinburgh to invite Leighton, by then Archbishop of Glasgow, to a graduation ceremony and ‘found him at his chamber in the College, whereof he had been formerly Master’. Leighton was only prevailed upon to accept a gift of gloves after much persuasion from Chorley and did so

⁹⁰ Butler, *Life*, 290-291.

⁹¹ *ERBE 1655-1665*, 273.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 273.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁹⁴ *WW*, VI, 295-299.

⁹⁵ Lamont, *Diary*, 145; *Baillie*, III, 485.

⁹⁶ Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 252.

with 'humble gratitude, bowing to the very ground'.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the Town Council recorded, on 11 September 1663, that Leighton had endowed a bursary to the sum of over £1251 Scots.⁹⁸ He seems to have supplemented his bursary fund in 1677 and again just before he died in 1684.⁹⁹

By the time Leighton ceased to be Principal, the Interregnum had been over for almost two years. No evidence survives to disclose whether the English administration felt that it had got what it had sought from the Town College Principal. The fact that, in contrast to the English-appointed Principals of Glasgow and Aberdeen, Leighton had great difficulty securing funds for his college suggests that perhaps he had disappointed them. There is no indication that he promoted Independency or took any formal part in re-ordering the Church. Therefore, if Leighton did fulfill his promise, express or implied, it was through his preaching and his ability to steer the College on a steady course into calm waters and away from the ecclesiastical storms that continued to buffet the churches in Scotland.

⁹⁷ Innes, *Sketches*, 230-238. Also Grant, *University of Edinburgh*, II, 251.

⁹⁸ *ERBE* 1655-1665, 328.

⁹⁹ PRO PROB 11/37; Butler, *Life*, 592-594.

1661-1662: Interregnum Principal to Restoration Bishop

Leighton was consecrated Bishop of Dunblane in Westminster Abbey on 15 December 1661 ‘with great solemnity, in presence of many of the nobility and clergy of England, and many of the nobles of Scotland, being their for the time attending his Majesty’.¹⁰⁰ During the same service, James Sharp was consecrated Archbishop of St Andrews¹⁰¹, Andrew Fairfoul as Archbishop of Glasgow¹⁰² and James Hamilton as Bishop of Galloway.¹⁰³ Andrew Sydserff, the last surviving Caroline bishop, had been translated to the See of Orkney.¹⁰⁴ Sharp and Leighton had previously undergone re-ordination according to the rite of the Church of England. Scotland had bishops once again and Leighton had taken his final – and most public and definitive – step on his journey towards Episcopacy.

The reintroduction of prelacy into the Church of Scotland had not been straightforward; and neither was it complete with the consecrations of new bishops. Equally, Leighton’s decision to accept the see of Dunblane was not an easy one, and the style and substance of Episcopacy which he was willing to model was neither fully in keeping with the expectations of many other Episcopalians nor was it an outright abandonment of Presbyterianism.

This section examines this final stage of Leighton’s journey towards Episcopacy, focussing on why Leighton was offered preferment and how and why he decided to accept. So that Leighton’s voice might best be heard, this section considers his words and actions for a

¹⁰⁰ Nicoll, *Diary*, 354. Also *Baillie*, III, 485; Maidment, *Analecta*, 79-80.

¹⁰¹ Sharp (1618-1679) studied at King’s College, Aberdeen under Forbes of Corse, one of the Aberdeen Doctors, and had been regent at St Andrews (1642-1648), minister of Crail (1648-1661) and Professor of Divinity at St Andrews (1661) (Mullan, ‘Sharp’; Douglas, ‘Sharp’, 768; Buckroyd, *Sharp*).

¹⁰² Fairfoul (1606-1663) had been minister at North Leith and Duns. His complaint that none of the ministers who had entered charges since 1649 had ‘owned him as a bishop’ as they were required to do was said to have been the catalyst for the order of the Privy Council which result in deposition of about 270 ministers after November 1662. (*HMOT*, I, 238, 249; Wodrow, *History*, I, 236, 282-283; Douglas, ‘Fairfoul’, 314).

¹⁰³ Hamilton (1610-1674) had been minister at Cambusnethan. (*HMOT*, I, 238; Wodrow, *History*, I, 237; Spratt, ‘Hamilton’).

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Sydserff (1581-1663) had been a robust and unpopular Bishop of Galloway between 1635 and 1638 and had been physically attacked on a number of occasions in 1637 because of his identification with the Prayer Book (Adams, ‘Sydserff’).

year after his consecration up to the end of 1662. It concludes with a brief exploration of whether or not Leighton was the unique figure as which he has, for so long, been portrayed. First, however, the ways in which Leighton's decision to become a bishop in the Restoration Church of Scotland have been perceived are surveyed.

Reactions: The Secondary Literature

There are few contemporaneous records of how Leighton's decision was regarded. Later assessments ranged from the vociferously outraged to sad, head-shaking admiration for Leighton's principled naivety. This section surveys the most influential reactions within the secondary literature. However, it begins with a contemporaneous account of a dinner conversation.

In 1662, Leighton was entertained by Sir James Stewart, his old friend from his student days, and Stewart's two sons Thomas and James, all of whom were deeply anti-Episcopalian Covenanters.¹⁰⁵ Leighton was greeted by Sir James with the words:

Welcome, Robin! – you loved gauding abroad too much; – you have the fate of Dinah, Jacob's daughter, for now I may say the Schekamites have caught and defloured you.¹⁰⁶

This colourful chiding about Leighton's recent consecration was followed by a challenge from Thomas who reminded him that he had put his congregation to 'the obligation of the national covenant at sacrament times, when he was minister at Newbattle'. Leighton apparently answered:

“Mr Stewart, man is a mutable changing essence both in body and mind, and frequently is misinformed, yet acts according to his light at the time, and acts safe, but if years, and experience, and inquiry give further light, so he is still to

¹⁰⁵ Coltness, 52-99, 359-374. James Stewart (1635-1713) was later a politician and judge (Beisner, 'Stewart').

¹⁰⁶ Coltness, 23. Despite a complex process of transmission and the loss of original documents, on balance, this account is likely to be substantially accurate given the reliability of the authors and their diligence in using the best sources available to them. James Dennistoun (1803-1855) was a respected antiquarian and art collector who edited collections for both the Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs (Boase, 'Dennistoun').

act ane ingenious parte, as God, his word, and his confidence direct:” and the Bishop cited that text – “When I was a child, &c., but now I have put away childish things.”¹⁰⁷

However, James replied that as one who had publicly taught Presbyterian polity and supported the Covenants, Leighton should not ‘cast a stumbling-block before the weak of his former party’ even in matters he now considered ‘indifferent’. ‘Truly,’ James challenged Leighton, ‘you must be convinced that all the odds of dignity and titles, or a parity among brethern ministers, is not to be ballanced with the disturbance it will create, and the offence it gives many truly godly in the church of Scotland.’¹⁰⁸ Thomas Stewart condemned Leighton’s decision to accept re-ordination prior to consecration and reminded him ‘of his grievous complent, when at Newbattle, of the load of so numerous a charge of souls, but that now he thought a whole bishoprick an easy burthen’.¹⁰⁹ After Leighton left, Sir James, the father, apparently remarked that he was ‘a man of many oddities or singularities, and it does not surprise me what he has done, still I think him a good and pious man’.¹¹⁰ He noted in his diary that:

Robin Lighton much in Mr Forbes’ way, who was the first Bishop of Edinburgh, and was of the same whimsicall stamp, a pray to novelties. A stammering sanctity’s dangerous in a churchman.¹¹¹

The Stewarts’ bitter denunciations of Leighton’s decision were no doubt echoed throughout the Church among all who resented the imposition of Episcopalianism.

The Covenanting ‘resistance tract’, published in the Netherlands in 1667 and co-edited by James Stewart the younger contained what is probably the most vitriolic denunciation of Leighton still surviving:

It is true indeed, that Mr Lighton prelate of Dumblan, under a Jesuitial-like vizard of Pretended Holiness, humility, & crucifixion to the world, hath studied to seem to creep upon the ground, but alwayes up the hill, toward promotion & places of more ease, honor & Wealth; & as there is none of them all hath with a

¹⁰⁷ *Coltness*, 68.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

Kiss so betrayed the Cause, and smiten Religion under the fifth rib, and hath been such an offence to the godly, so there is none who by his way, practice and Expressions, giveth greater suspicion of a popish affection, inclination and design.¹¹²

Yet, *Naphtali* is unusual in not acknowledging, as most of his critics did, that Leighton's was a fundamentally sound Christian character.

This tension is evident in Wodrow's assessment of Leighton. Writing a generation later, Wodrow evinced cynicism about Leighton's reasons for choosing 'the small bishopric of Dunblane' by positing that he did so 'to evidence his abstractedness from the world'.¹¹³ He had led 'a very monkish life' as Principal of the Town College but 'after the restoration, turned so courtly, as to embrace the meanest of the bishoprics'.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, he conceded that:

His character was by far the best of any of the bishops now set up: and to give him his due, he was a man of very considerable learning, an excellent utterance, and of a grave and abstracted conversation. He was reckoned devout, and an enemy to persecution, and professed a great deal of meekness and humility.¹¹⁵

Wodrow noted, with apparent agreement, that Leighton was 'judged void of any doctrinal principle' by many. His alleged 'close correspondence with some of his relations at Doway in popish orders' led some to suspect his Christian beliefs. Wodrow claimed that he was 'much taken with some popish mystic writers' and 'a latitudinarian' and 'of an over extensive charity'.¹¹⁶ Without offering evidence, Wodrow alleged that, as Bishop of Dunblane, Leighton 'had as scandalous and ignorant a clergy as in Scotland' but did not have any of them removed.¹¹⁷ However, he admitted that Leighton's published 'writings' evidenced his abilities and 'that he was very much superior to his fellows'.¹¹⁸

¹¹² *Naphtali*, 301.

¹¹³ Wodrow, *History*, I, 238.

¹¹⁴ Wodrow, *History*, II, 176.

¹¹⁵ Wodrow, *History*, I, 238. Also Kirkton, *History*, 137.

¹¹⁶ Wodrow, *History*, I, 238.

¹¹⁷ Wodrow, *History*, II, 176.

¹¹⁸ Wodrow, *History*, I, 238.

Others, such as William Row, were not convinced by Leighton's professed adiaphorist attitude towards church polity. He noted that Leighton 'was by some cried up for peace and learning' and that he had 'preached about the time of the King's restoration, against the pomp, pride and idleness of bishops, and their persecuting of godly ministers'. However, although it was said by some who knew him well that 'he was never fixed in the point of Kirk government, counting it a thing indifferent, whether it was Independency, Presbytery, or Episcopacy', Row believed that Leighton 'was not only for Episcopacy, but for all the ceremonies'.¹¹⁹ He condemned Leighton as 'hypocritical and dissembling'.¹²⁰

Murray typifies those Presbyterians who were disappointed in Leighton but not condemnatory. Murray believed that the timing of Leighton's 'relinquishing the religion in which he had been educated' was 'particularly objectionable'. Yet he did not impute 'improper motives' to Leighton, preferring to see him as too easily swayed by royal wishes, and overly-optimistic in thinking that 'he could be of eminent utility in his new capacity'. He did not doubt that Leighton sought 'the peace of the Church, and the promotion of religion' or that he truly believed 'the various kinds of ecclesiastical polity as nearly indifferent'.¹²¹ The broadly sympathetic Aikman accepted that Leighton was 'unwillingly dragged forward to assist in carrying Episcopacy to Scotland'.¹²² He was prepared to forgive Leighton for having 'exchanged the Presbyterian form for the Episcopalian' particularly since he was 'in favour of a modified Episcopacy, unconnected with temporal power, or lordly state'. Aikman accepted that Leighton had long been sympathetic to Episcopacy and that he believed that church polity was 'a matter of comparatively little moment'. However, his decision 'to join hands' with Sharp and Middleton and the others had lent 'the sanction of his name to as foul a usurpation of the supreme Kingship of Christ in his Church, and as unblushing an invasion of the rights of

¹¹⁹ Row, *Life*, 398.

¹²⁰ Row, *Life*, 403. Also Hewison, *Covenanters*, II, 74, 82, 128, 139-142; Cowan, *Scottish Covenanters*, 47-48, 73-74.

¹²¹ Murray, 'Life', 209-210.

¹²² Aikman, *Annals*, 68.

Christian people, as was ever attempted'. Leighton's conduct was 'extremely difficult to account for'.¹²³

Burnet realised that Leighton's 'promotion may seem a blemish upon him' and so, writing over the following decades, Burnet began to weave an alternative narrative. As with other phases of Leighton's life, Burnet's account is seminal and proved useful not just for the Bishop's apologists. His narrative also provided a basic factual matrix for Leighton's critics as well. For this reason, it is considered at some length. Burnet introduced Leighton into both the manuscript and published versions of his *Own Times* in the context of accounts of the debates in London and Edinburgh about how Episcopacy would be received in Scotland if it were reintroduced.¹²⁴ The King having resolved on this course, 'it remained after this only to consider the proper methods of doing it, and the men who ought to be employed in it'. Having described in unflattering terms the other candidates for consecration, Sharp, Fairfoul and Hamilton, as well as Sydserrf, Burnet then introduced Leighton, who had returned to London from Bath 'where he had been for his health'.¹²⁵ By Burnet's estimation, at the time of his elevation to Dunblane, Leighton had had 'the highest reputation that any man in [Burnet's] time ever had' in Scotland.¹²⁶

Burnet offered a five-fold defence of Leighton. Firstly he claimed that Leighton had not actually wanted to become a bishop but had been manoeuvred into accepting by his ambitious and unscrupulous younger brother, Ellis.¹²⁷ Believing that he himself would benefit, Ellis had put great pressure on Leighton to accede to the King's wish that he become a bishop.¹²⁸

¹²³ Aikman, 'Life', xix.

¹²⁴ *HMOT*, I, 232-236. Also 1683, 7-8.

¹²⁵ *HMOT*, I, 236-239. Also 1683, 8-9.

¹²⁶ *HMOT*, I, 242. Also 1683, 13. In 1683, Burnet had made no secret of his admiration for Leighton whom he esteemed 'beyond all the churchmen I ever yet knew' (1683, 13).

¹²⁷ *HMOT*, I, 242. Also 1683, 13, 15.

¹²⁸ *HMOT*, 244; 1683, 14. Buckroyd believes that Leighton owed his bishopric to Ellis's intervention (Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 88).

Secondly, Burnet portrayed Leighton not only as the dupe of his brother but also of the pro-Catholic faction at Court.¹²⁹ Ellis, he claimed, was ‘a very immoral man, both lewd, false and ambitious’ who liked to ‘talk of the great sublimities in religion’ but had purported to convert to Catholicism only to ‘to raise himself at Court’.¹³⁰ According to Burnet, Ellis had promoted his brother to the King and the pro-Catholic faction as someone who would ‘prepare the nation for popery, if not directly to come over to them’.¹³¹ Citing Leighton’s piety, chastity and ‘monastic’ lifestyle Ellis told them that he believed that his brother was, ‘at root’, a Catholic.¹³² Burnet hinted that Leighton might himself have been cause of such a misunderstanding since he had spoken ‘of some points of popery with the freedom of an abstracted and speculative man’.¹³³ When he discovered the plot of which he was to be part, Leighton ‘expressed another sense of the matter’, although it is reasonable to assume that he must have made his opposition to Catholicism clear only after his appointment.¹³⁴ It would be easy to dismiss this as one of Burnet’s myths. However, Leighton’s conversations with Brodie in London on 23 and 30 September, 25 October, 27 November, 3 December 1661, suggest that it is quite possible that the notion that Leighton was willing to ‘indulge’ Catholics had wider currency.¹³⁵

Thirdly, Burnet took care to distinguish Leighton as honest and principled compared to the other three bishops. He depicted the naive and reluctant Leighton as so unambitious as to be willing to accept only the smallest and poorest diocese in Scotland, that of Dunblane.

¹²⁹ Also Jerment, ‘Life’, xxi.

¹³⁰ *HMOT*, I, 242-245. Also 1683, 13-14.

¹³¹ *HMOT*, I, 244. Burnet recounted that Leighton lamented the rejection of ‘monastic houses’ as ‘the great and fatal error of the Reformation’ (*HMOT*, I, 246-247). Burnet also described Leighton’s dietary abstemiousness ‘that was like a perpetual fast’ and his ‘contempt both of wealth and reputation’. Leighton lived a restrained, unemotional and austere life in which ‘he bore all sort of ill usage and reproach like a man that took pleasure in it’ such was his humility. Rarely did Burnet hear Leighton ‘speak an idle word’ preferring, instead, silence (*HMOT*, 239-240. Also 1683, 10-11; Pearson, ‘Life’, cxxii).

¹³² *HMOT*, I, 244. Also 1683, 14.

¹³³ *HMOT*, I, 246.

¹³⁴ *HMOT*, I, 246. Burnet expressed surprise at the vehemence of Leighton’s anti-Catholicism: ‘he seemed to have more zeal against [popery] than I thought was in his nature with relation to any points in controversy’ (*HMOT*, I, 246; II, 428-429). In his 1683 manuscript, Burnet offered a different picture of Leighton’s attitude towards Catholicism: Leighton ‘did not stick to declare himself freely against the humour of magnifying and widening controversies of all hands, not excepting those with the papists, and did often preach up a greater largeness of charity’ (1683, 13).

¹³⁵ Brodie, *Diary*, 215-216, 221, 229-230.

To Leighton, this position had the added attraction of carrying with it the Deanery of the Chapel Royal in which, according to Burnet, Leighton wanted to ‘set up the common prayer’.¹³⁶ Immediately after his consecration, by Burnet’s account, Leighton’s disillusionment with his new colleagues set in. He was ‘much struck with the feasting and jollity’ which followed, since ‘it had not such an appearance of seriousness or piety as become the new modelling of a church’. His attempts to interest Sharp in a scheme to reach out to recalcitrant Presbyterians were rebuffed.¹³⁷ In his 1683 manuscript, Burnet explained in more detail what Leighton was proposing: ‘that some reasonable terms might be offered to such of the presbyterians, who could not be induced to submit to [Episcopalianism], that so they might not be turned out but suffered to die out’.¹³⁸ Leighton thought that over the next twenty years natural wastage would allow them to be replaced with ‘worthy men’. This would render the change ‘insensible to the nation’ and avoid the ‘great fermentation, which perhaps would never be quite laid to sleep’ if removal of Presbyterians were done ‘more violently’.¹³⁹ Neither was Sharp interested in trying to ‘raise man to a truer and higher sense of piety’ or in introducing ‘a more regular way of worship’ into the Kirk in preference to its ‘extemporary methods’. Leighton believed forms of worship to be more important than forms of church government. Instead, Sharp preferred to wait until he and his colleagues had been ‘legally possessed of their bishoprics’ by the Scottish Parliament and then ‘each was to do the best he could once to get all to submit to their authority’. Only then might they ‘proceed to other things as should be found expedient’.¹⁴⁰ Fairfoul was similarly evasive.¹⁴¹ Leighton ‘quickly lost all heart and hope’ and he later confided to Burnet that, even although ‘he was satisfied in his own mind as to episcopacy itself’, he wondered whether God had given the Church ‘such cross characters’ because God himself was against its new Episcopal polity.¹⁴² The journey from London back to Scotland was a further discouragement to Leighton. According to Burnet, he abandoned his new colleagues en route to Edinburgh because he ‘hated all appearances

¹³⁶ *HMOT*, I, 245. Also 1683, 15.

¹³⁷ *HMOT*, I, 249.

¹³⁸ 1683, 16.

¹³⁹ 1683, 16.

¹⁴⁰ *HMOT*, I, 248-249. Also 1683, 16.

¹⁴¹ *HMOT*, I, 249.

¹⁴² *HMOT*, I, 249.

of vanity’ and did not want to be part of the ‘pomp’ with which they were to be received upon arrival in the capital. In any event, ‘he believed that they were weary of him, for he was very weary of them’.¹⁴³ To the chagrin of the other bishops, Leighton declined the trappings of his Episcopal office, refusing to be addressed as ‘lord’ by his friends or to sit in Parliament as his office entitled him to do, except when its business ‘related to religion or to the church’.¹⁴⁴ Yet, said Burnet, Leighton was admired in England:

The English clergy were well pleased with him, finding him more learned, and more thoroughly theirs in the other points of uniformity, than the rest of the Scottish clergy, whom they could not much value.¹⁴⁵

Although Leighton’s ‘strictness’ was less to their taste, he was regarded as the right man to reintroduce Episcopacy to Scotland.¹⁴⁶ James Sharp ‘did not know what to make’ of Leighton and was jealous of the high regard in which he was held in London. Realising that they would differ in style and substance as bishops in Scotland, Sharp ‘neither liked [Leighton’s] strictness of life nor his notions’.¹⁴⁷

Burnet’s fourth line of defence was to emphasise Leighton’s adiaphoristic attitude towards forms of church government. Burnet asserted that Leighton ‘thought the forms of government were not settled by such positive laws as were unalterable, but only by apostolical practice’. Of these, Leighton believed ‘episcopacy as the best form’. Yet he did not think Episcopacy necessary to the being of a church.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, in response to almost universal Scottish criticism of his willingness to accept Episcopal re-ordination prior to consecration, Burnet was anxious to explain that Leighton:

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 251. Burnet reported that the other bishops entered Edinburgh ‘in triumph’ without ‘the humility that became their function’ (*HMOT*, I, 252). Baillie wrote of their magnificent reception by the nobility and magistrates, Sharp arriving in a new coach with liveried ‘lackqueys’ running beside it (III, 485). Row recounted that Leighton had arrived privately in Newbattle a few days before the other bishops’ grand entrance into Edinburgh. When he did reach Edinburgh, he ‘desired that the chapel royal might be repaired, that therein he might officiate as dean of the chapel; for now, he being unmasked, declared himself to be for the English liturgy, and all the English Popish ceremonies’ (Row, *Life*, 404).

¹⁴⁴ *HMOT*, I, 251-253. Also Wodrow, *Analecta*, I, 327; Row, *Life*, 407; Butler, *Life*, 417, 559.

¹⁴⁵ *HMOT*, I, 24. Also 1683, 15.

¹⁴⁶ *HMOT*, I, 245. Also 1683, 15.

¹⁴⁷ *HMOT*, I, 245.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*.

thought that every church might make such rules in ordination as they pleased, and that they might reordain all that came to them from any other church; so that the reordaining a priest ordained in another church imported no more but that they received him into orders according to their rules, and did not infer the annulling the orders he had formerly received.¹⁴⁹

Even Sharp had, at first, resisted the Anglican insistence that he and Leighton be Episcopally ordained ‘first deacons and then priests’ since they alone among the newly appointed prelates had not been ordained as ministers of the Church of Scotland by a pre-Covenant bishop.¹⁵⁰ Leighton, on the other hand, ‘did not stand much upon it’ even though ‘he did not think orders given without bishops were null and void’.¹⁵¹

Finally, Burnet identified Leighton’s motives in accepting Episcopal office. As Leighton had explained to Sharp he wanted to keep the Church united and to find a way to accommodate recalcitrant Presbyterians. According to Burnet, Leighton was dismayed by the widespread opposition from Presbyterians who ‘began now to declare openly against episcopacy, and to prepare protestations, or other acts and instruments’.¹⁵² Burnet was generally critical of the way in which Sharp, Middleton and Lauderdale responded to Presbyterian opposition to the re-imposition of Episcopacy.¹⁵³ He recounted that Leighton and the other bishops did not approve of the oppressive terms of the 1662 legislation which formally restored Episcopacy.¹⁵⁴ On his first appearance in Parliament, Leighton unsuccessfully pressed the case for allowing reluctant Presbyterians to swear the Oath of Supremacy under explanation. Sharp was angered by Leighton’s stand and objected to his proposal because, among other reasons, it would extend a privilege which the Covenanters had refused when they ‘had forced all to take’ the National Covenant, Leighton responded

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 248. Brodie was deeply troubled (*Diary*, 228-229).

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 247-248.

¹⁵¹ *HMOT*, I, 248. Also Row, *Life*, 399; Wodrow, *Analecta*, I, 133; Pearson, ‘Life’, xlv; Mathieson, *Politics and Religion*, II, 228.

¹⁵² *HMOT*, I, 250.

¹⁵³ John Middleton, first Earl of Middleton (c.1608-1674) fought with distinction for the Covenant and against Montrose. Having supported for the Engagement and subsequently suffered humiliation at the hands of the Kirk Party, he grew to hate Presbyterians. He was appointed Lord High Commissioner to the 1661 Scottish Parliament. Largely due to his anti-Presbyterian policies Middleton fell from favour in March 1663 and was replaced by Lauderdale (Furgol, ‘Middleton’).

¹⁵⁴ *HMOT*, I, 255.

by pointing out the opportunity which it afforded to show the people ‘a difference between the mild proceedings of the government now’ and the severity of the Covenanters. He also pointed out that ‘it ill became the very same persons that had complained of [the Covenanters’] rigour now to practise it themselves’.¹⁵⁵

Pearson judged that Leighton, having been ordered by Charles to accept promotion unless ‘he thought in his conscience that the episcopal office was unlawful’, believed that, as a bishop, he could facilitate peace within the reconstituted Church.¹⁵⁶ Pearson felt that Leighton’s hope was rational even if his prospects of success were feeble.¹⁵⁷ He pointed out that, if nothing else, Leighton was able to implement his policies within his own diocese. Pearson surmised that during his first months as a bishop, Leighton ‘confined himself to private advice and expostulation’, hoping to lead by example of his own diocese.¹⁵⁸

Butler described the decision of Charles II to impose Episcopacy upon the Church of Scotland as having been ‘characterized by duplicity of the worst type’.¹⁵⁹ He regarded Leighton’s fellow bishops with a similar opprobrium.¹⁶⁰ In order to distinguish Leighton, he characterised him as ‘an idealist [...] guided by the heavenly vision as he saw it’. Butler believed that Leighton ‘had lived so long apart, and regarded contemplation as the chief object of life, that he had neither any idea of the hostility in the Scottish mind to Episcopacy, nor of its utter unfitness to become the Established Church polity for the great mass of the people’. Over this picture of detached naivety, Butler superimposed a further layer of gullibility: ‘his gentle, child-like nature rendered him open to the persuasions that were addressed to him to add the lustre of his name to what became an unholy cause’.¹⁶¹ Leighton ‘had no conception that the object of the Government in establishing episcopacy in Scotland was to make it subservient to despotism and persecution’. Rather, from his

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 255-256.

¹⁵⁶ Pearson, ‘*Life*’, xxxix, xliii

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, xli.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, xliii-xlv, lxi.

¹⁵⁹ Butler, *Life*, 327.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 330-331.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 330.

‘academic cloisters’, he saw an opportunity ‘to unite the Church upon a basis that did justice to the truth on all sides’.¹⁶² To him, ‘all questions of Church government were of secondary importance’. His errors of judgement ‘arose from guilelessness and simplicity of his spiritual nature’.¹⁶³ Knox, too, believed that Leighton erred in joining with the King, his advisors and the new bishops in such an exercise of ‘arbitrary power’.¹⁶⁴

This brief summary reveals that by accepting consecration, Leighton brought upon himself approbation, excoriation and the bemusement even of his friends. Having considered the views of others, it is important to consider Leighton’s own reasons. These are best understood when viewed against the sequence of events that led up to his consecration.

The Restoration Settlement

The unflinching Episcopalian Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh explained that Leighton:

was the most proper and fit person to serve the state in the church, according to the present platform of government now resolv’d upon; for he was in much esteem, for his piety and moderation, amongst the people, and as to which, the Presbyterians themselves could neither reproach or equal him; albeit they hated him most of all his fraternity, in respect he drew many into a kindness for Episcopacy, by his exemplary life, rather than debates.¹⁶⁵

There seems little doubt that the Restoration administration viewed Leighton and his fellow bishops as instruments to re-establish Episcopacy within the Church of Scotland and, therefore, to be servants of the state. As Mackenzie understood, the bishops had been ‘created not to serve the church, but to serve the state’.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 330.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 331-332.

¹⁶⁴ Knox, *Leighton*, 161-162.

¹⁶⁵ Mackenzie, *Memoirs*, 161. Mackenzie (1636/8-1691) was a lawyer, legal writer and royalist politician (Jackson, ‘Mackenzie’).

¹⁶⁶ Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 74. The ‘rents belonging to the severall bishopriks and deanries’ were to be restored and made usefull to the church’ (*RPC 1661-1664*, 28-32). Buckroyd concludes that the decision to grant the revenues of the pre-Covenant bishops to their Restoration successors

The transition from the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell to the Restoration of Charles II was closely followed by the nation and Church of Scotland.¹⁶⁷ Although still governed and occupied by the English until August 1660, it was clear that any change in government would have a material impact upon the country.¹⁶⁸ The leading ministers, both Resolutioner and Protestor, watched carefully and sought to influence events when they could but, despite the concerns of Sharp and Wodrow, there is little evidence that Leighton was directly involved in this in either Edinburgh or London.¹⁶⁹ When Charles II was proclaimed King in Edinburgh on 14 May 1660, it was far from certain what ecclesiastical settlement would be imposed.¹⁷⁰ However, the portents for continued Presbyterianism were not good, despite reports to the contrary reaching Scotland from, among others, James Sharp.¹⁷¹

Throughout the summer of 1660, the King had offered assurances that the polity of the Kirk would not be altered and that a General Assembly would be summoned.¹⁷² Yet the truth was that ‘in the long run ecclesiastical policy was to be decided on non-religious and pragmatic grounds by anti-presbyterian politicians’.¹⁷³ By December 1660, it was becoming evident that the Episcopalian party led by Middleton had succeeded in persuading the King against allowing Presbyterianism to remain the polity of the Church in Scotland. This was confirmed by the legislative programme of the Scottish Parliament which began sitting on New Year’s Day 1661. The 1661 Parliament ‘not only reasserted royal authority and the royal prerogative in an unprecedented manner, but also revoked the

was ‘no simple issue of church government’ but ‘the restoration of a class of royal servants who should dominate and impress by their secular splendour’ (Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 74). This was confirmed by the royal command that ‘special care’ was to be taken ‘that all due reverence and respect be given by all our subjects to the archbishops and bishops’ (*RPC 1661-1664*, 125-126).

¹⁶⁷ Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 44-58; Cowan, *Scottish Covenanters*, 35-43.

¹⁶⁸ Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 305.

¹⁶⁹ See p. 252.

¹⁷⁰ Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 305.

¹⁷¹ Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 48-61.

¹⁷² Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 61-62.

¹⁷³ Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 63. Also Jackson, *Restoration*, 105-106; Cowan, *Scottish Covenanters*, 44-45.

constitutional settlement of 1639-41'.¹⁷⁴ In a process carefully managed by royal appointees, Parliamentary political power was surrendered back to the committee known as the Lords of Articles.¹⁷⁵

On 28 March 1661, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation which effectively annulled all legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament since 1633.¹⁷⁶ Jackson characterises this as 'a legislative attempt to imagine away the entire Covenanting revolution'.¹⁷⁷ It did not pass unopposed but pass it did, thereby undermining the legal basis for a Presbyterian Church of Scotland and allowing its reconstruction as an Episcopal Church.¹⁷⁸ Also on 28 March, an 'Act concerning religion and church government' was passed. This endorsed the King's right to 'settle and secure' the 'government of the church' in such a form as was 'most agreeable to the word of God, most suitable to monarchical government and most complying with the public peace and quiet of the kingdom'. Until such time as he had decided what that form of government was to be, 'sessions, presbyteries and synods' could continue to administer the church provided that they kept 'within bounds' and behaved themselves.¹⁷⁹ Kirkton described this as 'a copestone' for the abolition of Presbyterianism, albeit that Episcopalians laid it in 'as dark and insensible a manner as they could'.¹⁸⁰ Baillie wrote to Lauderdale on 18 April 1661 bitterly criticising him for forsaking his 'covenant' and countenancing 'the Reintroduction of bishops & books' and asking:

Is it wisdome to bring bak upon us the Canterburian tymes, the sam desings, the same practices; will they not bring on at least the same horribill effects what ever fools doe ames?¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁴ Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 310.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 311-312.

¹⁷⁶ *APS*, VII, 86-87.

¹⁷⁷ Jackson, *Restoration*, 77.

¹⁷⁸ Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 315-316.

¹⁷⁹ *APS*, VII, 87-88. Also Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 314. On 16 January, all 'leagues, councils, conventions, assemblies or meetings' had been prohibited unless held with royal consent (*APS*, VII, 12). On 25 January, the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant was declared no longer to be binding and it was no longer lawful to require anyone to renew or swear it or 'any other covenants or public oaths concerning the government of the church or kingdom' (*APS*, VII, 18). On 9 Feb, the failed Engagement was approved (*APS*, VII, 30).

¹⁸⁰ Kirkton, *History*, 94. Also Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 316.

¹⁸¹ *Lauderdale Papers*, I, 95.

By the time the Scottish Parliament was adjourned by royal prerogative on 12 July 1661, it would have been clear to Leighton and his colleagues that the Restoration settlement of religion in Scotland was unlikely to be a tolerant one.¹⁸² On 16 January all Protestors had, by proclamation, been removed from Edinburgh during the sitting of Parliament.¹⁸³ Meetings of ‘quakers, anabaptists and fifth monarchy men’ were outlawed on 22 January.¹⁸⁴ The saying of the Mass was prohibited on 1 February and all ‘Jesuits, priests and trafficking papists’ expelled from Scotland.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, an ‘Act anent presentation of ministers’ had tasked patrons of charges to ‘be careful’ to present only ministers who had given ‘sufficient evidence of their piety, loyalty, literature and peaceable disposition’ and who had sworn the Oath of Allegiance.¹⁸⁶ The Oath of Allegiance, whose terms had been agreed on the opening day, stipulated that the sovereign was ‘supreme governor of this kingdom over all persons and in all causes’ and was subject to no power or person ‘civil or ecclesiastic’ in the exercise of that power and authority.¹⁸⁷

By letter dated 14 August and read to Scottish Privy Council on 5 September 1661, Charles II declared that having regard to ‘the good and interest of the Protestant religion’ and to ‘the order, unity, peace and stability of [the Church of Scotland], and its better harmony with the government of the churches of England and Ireland’ he had resolved to return the Church ‘to its right government by bishops, as it was by law before the late troubles’. Ministers were prohibited from meeting and opposition was to be monitored.¹⁸⁸ On 6 September 1661, the Privy Council gave effect to the letter and added a further provision granting warrant for the imprisonment of all of who failed to obey.¹⁸⁹ As Cowan remarked, ‘Coercion of the recalcitrant was already evident in a solution clearly imposed by royal fiat.’¹⁹⁰

¹⁸² *APS*, VII, 367. See MacIntosh, *Scottish Parliament*, 1-28.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 7. The Earl of Cassilis was removed from his judicial post and barred from public office for refusing to take the oath on the first day of the Parliament (*APS*, VII, 2).

¹⁸⁸ *RPCS* 1661-1664, 28-29.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 30-32.

¹⁹⁰ Cowan, *Scottish Covenanters*, 45.

Clear signs of this new reality were the imprisonment on 13 September 1661 and subsequent house arrest of John Hay, second Earl of Tweeddale (1626-1697) as a consequence of his representations on behalf of the condemned Protestant minister James Guthrie (c.1612-1661).¹⁹¹ Guthrie was executed on 1 June 1661, having survived Argyll by four days.¹⁹² Wariston was hunted down and hanged on 22 July 1663.¹⁹³ Having been stripped of his office as Secretary of State, on 9 September 1662, Lothian was exempted from the general pardon and indemnity and ordered to pay £6000 under pain of forfeiture.¹⁹⁴

It would be wrong to suppose that the reintroduction of Episcopacy and the strong-arm tactics which followed were underpinned by a conviction that it was *iure divino* the only true ecclesiastical polity. Rather, it was predicated on a ‘predominantly pragmatic, indifferentist and erastian’ basis which, according to Jackson, ‘ultimately undermined its own chances of survival.’¹⁹⁵ As recent history had revealed, Presbyterianism was believed to be ‘intrinsically incompatible with monarchical government’. In contrast, Episcopalianism was most conducive to well-ordered, peaceable royal administration.¹⁹⁶

This hard-headed approach interwove neatly with a strand of passive acceptance of the King’s will for the Church. The anonymous 1662 pamphlet, *A Letter Containing An Humble and Serious Advice* urged its readers ‘to look back’ for the causes of ‘that deplorable condition your poor Countrey have labour’d under for these many years past’. Many thousands had died because of ‘mis-guided zeal’ for the Covenants and the cause of Presbyterianism. Yet, by ‘the wonderful Work of the Almighty’, His Majesty had been restored ‘to his Crowns and Kingdoms’. Church government by bishops had been tried and tested in Scotland, England and elsewhere and found to be most conducive to peaceful

¹⁹¹ Young, ‘Hay’; Holfelder, ‘Guthrie’.

¹⁹² Macinnes, *British Confederate*, 294-303.

¹⁹³ Coffey, ‘Wariston’.

¹⁹⁴ *APS*, VII, 421; Stevenson, ‘Lothian’. Lothian was excluded from the Scottish Privy Council (*RPCS 1661-1664*, 2-4; MacIntosh, *Scottish Parliament*, 10-11, 22).

¹⁹⁵ Jackson, *Restoration*, 104, 110-111.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

‘Monarchical Government’. Since the King had now ordained its return, his people should accept it.¹⁹⁷ Similar sentiments were expressed by John Paterson in his sermon to Middleton on 17 February 1661. Scotland was a ‘Land defiled by bloody crimes’ which needed ‘Church-Government [...] Regulated by the King and Parliament’. Such church government should be in the form of ‘a chain of Regulation, as may lay a Restraint upon Ministers, from starting or venting Questions, Principles or Tenets, destructive to the Supreme Civil Authority’.¹⁹⁸ Similar sentiments were expressed by none other than James Sharp, the new Archbishop of St Andrews in his first sermon in the town in 1662.¹⁹⁹ Buckroyd, Sharp’s most recent biographer, has attempted to rehabilitate her subject’s conduct in 1661 to 1662 not least through his first sermon in St Andrews after consecration in which Sharp explained that he had accepted his office in obedience to God’s will and for the good of the Church, that it was for the King to decide the form of Church government and that, while Episcopacy was not divinely ordained, it was the best polity for the Scottish Church and for the peace of the nation.²⁰⁰ Paradoxically, the very theological barrenness of these arguments for Episcopacy played to Leighton’s sense that church polity was adiaphorous.

Buckroyd has discerned an ‘unnecessarily provocative tone’ in the manner in which Episcopalianism was imposed upon the Church. Not only was the second tranche of consecrations on 7 May ‘carried out in a way calculated to give offence’ but bishops were restored in a manner which was deliberately aggressive and bullying.²⁰¹ It was no coincidence that an Act of Indemnity, which would relieve former Covenanters of the threat of punishment, was delayed long after a similar provision had been enacted in England. That it was passed only after the religious settlement had been legally cemented in place by the 1662 Scottish Parliament, revealed the government’s tactics against

¹⁹⁷ *A Letter Containing An Humble and Serious Advice*, 1, 7.

¹⁹⁸ Paterson, *Tandem*, 15, 17, 20. Also Paterson’s anonymously-published 1661 pamphlet *A Brief Resolution*. Paterson (1604-1679) had been minister in Aberdeen since 1659 and was consecrated Bishop of Ross in May 1662. (Clarke, ‘Paterson’).

¹⁹⁹ NLS MS 597.f.75.

²⁰⁰ Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 75-76; Jackson, *Restoration*, 111.

²⁰¹ Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 78. Six bishops were consecrated in the Chapel Royal in an elaborate service at which the Service Book was used. The archbishops and bishops made a grand procession into the Scottish Parliament on 8 May and, having been formally welcomed on behalf of the King, attended a banquet (Nicoll, *Diary*, 365-367).

potential opponents of episcopacy: ‘the threat of exclusion from indemnity was kept hanging over their heads until after the religious alteration had been made’.²⁰² Suitably intimidated, no real opposition emerged to the orders made by the Privy Council in 1661-62 or the 1662 Parliament’s enactments, all of which were designed to embed bishops within the Church and ensure that what was left of the Presbyterianism functioned only with their approval and under their supervision.²⁰³

The first action of the 1662 Scottish Parliament was to endorse the King’s appointment of the new bishops and to restore them to their place in Parliament.²⁰⁴ Also on 8 May, it passed legislation which was targeted at all ministers who had entered charges after 1649 by announcing that, unless they could obtain presentation to their charge by ‘the lawful patron’ and ‘have collation from the bishop of the diocese’ by 20 September 1662, they would be deprived.²⁰⁵ Both the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant were declared to be unlawful, seditious and treasonous.²⁰⁶ The ‘Act for the restitution and reestablishment of the ancient government of the church by archbishops and bishops’ was enacted on 27 May. It opened with the declaration that ‘the ordering and disposal of the external government and policy of the church’ fell within the King’s ‘royal prerogative and supremacy in causes ecclesiastical’. Accordingly, the Parliament restored the bishops ‘to the exercise of their episcopal function, presidency in the church, power of ordination, inflicting of censures and all other acts of church discipline which they are to perform’.²⁰⁷

Accordingly, the King did not appoint Leighton to be anything other than an instrument of his thoroughly Erastian ecclesiastical policies. He would have expected Leighton to

²⁰² Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 274.

²⁰³ On 12 December 1661, the Privy Council prohibited ‘presentations to benefices’ other than by the diocesan bishops, thus voiding the rights of lay patrons and presbyteries (*RPC 1661-1664*, 119-120). On 28 December 1661, the King wrote to the effect that he was prohibiting further meetings of synods, presbyteries and kirk sessions unless and until they were authorised by the new bishops (*RPC 1661-1664*, 125-126). This was effected by proclamation of the Privy Council on 9 January 1662 (*RPC 1661-1664*, 130-131).

²⁰⁴ *APS*, VII, 370.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 376. These provisions were enthusiastically enforced by the Privy Council on 1 October 1662. About two hundred ministers were removed despite an extension until 1 February 1663 (*RPC 1661-1664*, 269-270, 312-314; Nicoll, *Diary*, 382; Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 78).

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 377-378.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 372-374. MacIntosh, *Scottish Parliament*, 36-48.

enforce these upon the ministers and people within his diocese using the powers available to him. Furthermore, Leighton would be required to act together with his fellow bishops to ensure that the Church nationally acceded or at least submitted to the royal will. Never again was the Church to foment revolution against the monarch.²⁰⁸ Finally, Leighton would be expected to play a national role since his office carried membership of the Scottish Parliament.²⁰⁹ All these expectations would have been evident to Leighton. If this was so, why did Leighton agree to be consecrated as a bishop of such a Church of Scotland?

1661: Leighton's decision

There is no reason to believe that Leighton was forced to accept consecration. Other ministers, leading Resolutioners, had been sounded out but refused.²¹⁰ Leighton must have agreed to consecration as Bishop of Dunblane sometime before 30 November 1661.²¹¹ Why did he do so? Was he as reluctant as he wished others to believe?

Leighton wanted it to be known that he had thought long and hard before realising that he had to accede to the King's wish that he become Bishop of Dunblane. In two letters written in the weeks after his consecration he claimed that, although he did not want to be a bishop, unless he was prepared to deny the legitimacy of Episcopacy in the Church of Scotland, which he could not do, he was left with no legitimate reason for refusing his monarch.²¹² However, records of contemporaneous conversations and their place on the timeline leading to his consecration cast doubt upon his protestations of unwillingness.

²⁰⁸ Buckroyd, 'Anti-Clericalism', 180-181.

²⁰⁹ Buckroyd has outlined the 'antipathy of the political nation to the episcopate', an 'anti-clericalism' which 'ensured that the bishops would be subordinated to the civil power and prevented from exercising even those powers explicitly granted by the king' (Buckroyd, 'Anti-Clericalism', 167, 171).

²¹⁰ Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 72-73.

²¹¹ On that date, a warrant for the consecration of Sharp, Fairfoul, Hamilton and Leighton was issued. A separate order nominating them to their respective sees was issued on 7 December 1661 (*CSPD 1661-1662*, 163, 171).

²¹² *Ancram-Lothian*, II, 455-456; Butler, *Life*, 337-338.

The evidence for Leighton's disinclination is contained in two letters which he wrote from London to close friends. On 23 December 1661, Leighton wrote a candid and affectionate letter to his former patron, Lothian.²¹³ Leighton opened with the assurance that he believed that he had had no option but to accept Episcopal preferment: 'the simple truth is, after much conflict with my self and others about the employment I am now design'd to, I found no way of escape'.²¹⁴ He could not pretend that he was opposed to Episcopacy. However, having been 'forct to capitulate', Leighton had been able to avoid being appointed to the 'heaviest' diocese and, instead, negotiated 'the indulgence of the lowest station' which carried 'the lightest burden'. The Diocese of Dunblane carried the least 'secular advantages', something that pleased him 'not a little'.²¹⁵

A second similar letter, undated but evidently written about the same time, was sent by Leighton to James Aird.²¹⁶ It is apparent that Leighton and Aird were friends and that Aird's opinion of his actions was important to the new bishop. Despite an emollient opening, Leighton had clearly been stung by criticism from Aird. So he offered 'the free and friendly advice, never to judge any man before you hear him, nor any business by one side of it'. He was confident that if Aird 'were here to see the other', his 'thoughts' and Leighton's 'would be the same'. He gently chastised his correspondent, reminding him that he had 'both too much knowledge of [Leighton], and too much charity' to think that he had been influenced by 'such little contemptible scraps of honour or riches' or that his decision had been the result of 'any human complacency'. Aird should not think that Leighton 'would sell [...] the very sensual pleasure of [his] retirement for a rattle, far less

²¹³ Leighton seems to have remained on good terms with Lothian after his demission from Newbattle (*Ancram-Lothian*, II, 380).

²¹⁴ *Ancram-Lothian*, II, 455.

²¹⁵ *Ancram-Lothian*, II, 455-456.

²¹⁶ The whereabouts of the original letter are unknown; it was first reproduced in full by Pearson (Pearson, 'Life', xli-xlii; Butler, *Life*, 254-265). Aird (c.1625-1701) was the son a former minister of Newbattle and himself Session Clerk there in 1647. Ordained in Northumberland, he was ejected in 1662 for non-conformity. Leighton assisted him in his search of a charge in Scotland and he became minister of Torryburn in 1688. He assisted in the 1672 Accommodation Scheme as one of Leighton's 'evangelists'. The two men were lifelong friends (Butler, *Life*, 254-265, 290, 395-397, 399, 437-8, 181). Sibbald described James Aird as 'a serious christian, a follower of Mr Lighton [...] a man of strong affections for piety and virtue, and of a single and chast lyfe, and to his power charitable to the poor in ane eminent way' (Sibbald, *Autobiography*, 20). He was also known as 'bishop Leighton's Ape' because it was said he could imitate Leighton's 'shrugge and grimache, but never more of him' (Kirkton, *History*, 294, Wodrow, *History*, II, 177). In 1689, he was deposed for his continued loyalty to the James VII and II (*RPC 1689*, 425-426; *FES*, V, 53).

deliberately do anything that [he judged would offend] God'. But, in the face of criticism of his decision and the difficulties which he realised were to come, he had 'one comfort': he had not chosen to become a bishop. In fact, he had 'the strongest aversion' to holding the office that he had ever had to anything. Yet, he could only have avoided accepting had he pretended that he was averse to Episcopacy, which he was not, or acted 'in rudest disobedience to authority that may be'. Leighton concluded, as in his letter to Lothian, by declaring that, despite his weariness and his deep reluctance, he was 'resigned' to what he trusted would lead him 'in the path of His own choosing' for, if he 'pleased God', he would be 'satisfied'.

However, Leighton's *ex post facto* protestations of unwillingness seem a little threadbare when compared with his actions. It is likely that Leighton had been in London since June 1661, apart from his trip to Bath for health reasons.²¹⁷ The ostensible reason for his trip was to raise funds for the Town College. Nevertheless, it appears that, while close to the royal court, Leighton either sought preferment within the Church of Scotland or, at least, did not rebuff approaches made to him for that purpose. Certainly, if the otherwise reliable Brodie is to be believed, by 30 September 1661 it was becoming known that Leighton was 'inclined to be a bishop'.²¹⁸ Leighton had distressed Brodie on 23 September 1661 by making an approving remark about 'the surplice' and deprecated 'that differenc betwix Psts. [Papists] and us'.²¹⁹ On 25 October 1661, the two men dined together and Brodie 'perceaved [Leighton] was not averss from taking on him to be a bishop'. He approved of 'the orgains, antheams, musick in [Episcopalian] worship'. What is more, during their dinner conversation, Leighton made it clear that he had already formulated a purpose if his appointment went ahead. He was not motivated by ambition but intended 'to doe good'.²²⁰

Brodie's diary entries strongly indicate that Leighton had in fact decided to accept a bishopric almost three months before he wrote to Lothian. This is made all the more likely

²¹⁷ See p. 252. Wodrow believed that Leighton had been in England during the 'summer and harvest' of 1661 (*History*, I, 238). Leighton called on Brodie in London on 31 August 1661 (Brodie, *Diary*, 210).

²¹⁸ Brodie, *Diary*, 216. Brodie had noted 'his loos principils [...] anent Surplic, Ceremonie, and Papists'.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 221.

by the timing and content of Leighton's letter of 20 August 1661 to the Lord Provost.²²¹ On the face of it, that letter was written by a man in conflict, perhaps preparing himself for a major life-changing choice about which he was unsure. It can reasonably be read as an invitation to the Town Council to release him from his post as Principal which, had they done so, might have made his decision to accept alternative employment easier. Furthermore, the letter of 20 August expressed the belief that his health was such that Leighton could do the College 'litle or no service'. Indeed, he feared that he might do it 'so great an injury'. Another intriguing statement in that letter is the statement that: 'For myself I am so far from projecting any thing here, that I can imagine nothing though most freely offer'd that would stay mee from returning to [the College]'. This appears immediately after Leighton's promise to try once more to find an unallocated source of funds into which the College might tap but it does seem as if Leighton had moved on from reporting about College affairs and was now writing about himself: he had an additional purpose to being in London; he was looking for preferment for himself.

Leighton's behaviour in 1661 has echoes of his conduct in 1652 and 1653. At a time when he wanted to be released from his parish ministry at Newbattle so that he could take up the Principalship, he had adopted similar tactics. On his final appearance before his Presbytery, he told them that his voice was not strong enough to reach half his congregation, something which had 'long pressed him very sore'. This raises the question of how he expected, as Principal, to preach to two hundred or more students and others.²²² Furthermore, it is apparent from Lothian's letter to his wife dated 9 December 1652 that Leighton had told her that he was demitting his charge to travel to England in order to escape the strains of life at Newbattle, whatever they may have been. Hence Lothian's assurance that, if Leighton were to live in the Earl's family home, it would be 'as quiett to him as a monastery or a wildernesse' and that he would not be asked 'to prayer, nor soe mutch as to say grace to us'.²²³ Finally, there is Leighton's transparent coyness when, with

²²¹ See p. 227. *ERBE 1655-1665*, 435-436.

²²² See pp. 164, 185, 186, 188. Leighton's protestations of lack of ability at Newbattle may have been viewed with scepticism at the time (Wodrow, *Analecta*, III, 297-298). Row described Leighton as 'the degenerating son of worthy Mr Leighton' who had by 'pretending insufficiency for the ministry, by people's not profiting by him, was then principal of the College of Edinburgh' (Row, *Life*, 398).

²²³ *Ancram-Lothian*, II, 373.

the English administration having forced his appointment on the Town Council and the Council being represented before the Presbytery of Dalkeith to request his release, he was asked whether he ‘wold embrace’ the post of Principal and replied that ‘he was not yet fully resolved’.²²⁴

Two letters between James Sharp and Robert Douglas offer a tantalising hint that, as early as 1660, Leighton may have been suspected of a desire to undermine Presbyterianism in Scotland. On 5 June 1660, Sharp wrote to Douglas apprising him of latest developments in London and included the information: ‘I hear that Mr Leighton is here in town in private.’²²⁵ Shortly thereafter, probably on 10 June, Sharp wrote again to Douglas, informing him that some Scottish noblemen were talking ‘of bringing in episcopacy into Scotland’ and, in the context of a discussion of the prospects of the reintroduction of Episcopacy in England and Scotland, remarking that: ‘Elisha Leighton is not so significant a person as that by his means his brother can do us hurt.’²²⁶ Wodrow suspected that Leighton, Sydserff and others, including Sharp himself, were in London in 1660 ‘concerting the overthrow of the church of Scotland’.²²⁷ Although, Buckroyd has produced an impressive defence of Sharp for this period, the fact that Leighton was suspected of pressing for the return of Episcopacy should be taken seriously as an indication of his perceived sympathies if not his actions.

On balance, therefore, it would seem that Leighton not only made his choice two months before his appointment was made public but that he must have done so with rather less foot-dragging than he was later prepared to admit.

²²⁴ NAS CH2/424/4/5-7.

²²⁵ Wodrow, *History*, I, 37.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

1661: Leighton's reasons

There is no reason to reject Burnet's assertions that Leighton did not assume the trappings of 'prelatic' Episcopacy. In fact, in his rejection of the material advantages, status and temporal power associated with the office of bishop in the Restoration Church of Scotland, Leighton adopted a stance which reflected many of his father's reasons for opposing Episcopacy. In *Sions Plea*, Alexander had railed against those very symbols and privileges of Episcopal authority, which he characterised as abuses of both church and state. Whether Alexander would have been entirely satisfied with bishops who functioned as his son did is doubtful. Nevertheless, it seems that the power of Alexander's arguments still resonated with his son.²²⁸

Since Leighton did not seek worldly wealth or position, it appears that he had simply come to prefer the version of Episcopalianism, which he later modelled as Bishop of Dunblane and Archbishop of Glasgow, to Presbyterianism. This is clear from his conversations with Brodie²²⁹ and his letters to Lothian and Aird. In both letters he explained that he had favoured Episcopacy for some time but had kept his views to himself so that not even his friends knew. He told Lothian that it had been 'uselesse and impertinent to tell them' that his 'opinions in many things' had differed from them 'for many years'.²³⁰ To Aird, he explained that 'for those with you, the great fallacy in this business is, that they have misreckoned themselves in taking my silence and their zeals to have been consent and participation'. As he told the Stewarts, he had moved past the National Covenant and Presbyterianism.²³¹

Indeed, Leighton seems to have come to have believed for some time that church polity was a matter 'indifferent'.²³² 'Rites and discipline' were 'litle questions' and not among the

²²⁸ See p. 50.

²²⁹ Leighton expressed his preference for the vestments, music and liturgy of the Church of England to Brodie on 30 September, 25 October, 3 December 1661 (Brodie, *Diary*, 216, 221, 231).

²³⁰ *Ancram-Lothian*, II, 456.

²³¹ Coltness, 68.

²³² Butler, *Life*, 337

‘the great things of religion’.²³³ Despite his preference for Episcopalianism, once that had developed probably after 1652, Leighton had been able to function as a Presbyterian. When the opportunity came for him to be part of an Episcopalian Church he took it. It is probably the case that he would never have pushed for a change of polity but, since it was coming anyway, he was happy to be part of it.²³⁴ Leighton expressed his adiaphorism most clearly in his willingness to accept re-ordination prior to consecration.²³⁵ It seems that Row was correct that Leighton did only ‘a little stick’ at the demand.²³⁶

Furthermore, it is clear that Leighton did not want to disobey his King’s wishes, even if he was not under compulsion to accept the bishopric offered to him. As Leighton had articulated at Newbattle, when God placed a ruler over a nation, He expected the people to obey the ruler, and through him, God Himself.²³⁷ This had a particular and complex resonance in Restoration Scotland.²³⁸ Taking Leighton’s own words at face value it seems that he regarded his primary civil allegiance as being owed to Charles II. Insofar as the monarch did not offend against the will of God for His church, Leighton owed a duty of obedience to Charles in religious matters as well, albeit as an expression of his trust in and obedience to the sovereign God.²³⁹ Since Leighton now believed that church government was a matter indifferent, the imposition of Episcopalianism by the King could not justify disobedience even if Leighton had preferred Presbyterianism.

Leighton had also to come to terms with the new political reality of the Restoration. Jackson suggests that Leighton was part of ‘a generation whose sense of the political was, above all, highly practical’: the causes and effects of the mid-century civil wars were not easily forgotten.²⁴⁰ The Restoration of Charles II as King of Scotland, England and Ireland

²³³ *Ancram-Lothian*, II, 456.

²³⁴ Buckroyd has commented: ‘There has been a recent tendency to see Leighton as the man who might have saved the Scottish church at the Restoration. In fact his total indifference to matters which had rent the church asunder made him unacceptable to either side.’ (*Sharp*, 90).

²³⁵ See pp. 227, 230, 239.

²³⁶ Row, *Life*, 399.

²³⁷ See pp. 199.

²³⁸ Jackson, *Restoration*, 53-59.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 6-7, 53.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 7. Also Nicoll, *Diary*, 293.

on 29 May 1660 had been greeted with celebrations from which few excluded themselves.²⁴¹ This rejoicing, at what was perceived as a providentially-provided portal out of violence, uncertainty and foreign occupation and into a time of peace, order and freedom, was expressed from pulpits as well as in lavish, public ceremonies.²⁴² So the King had considerable latitude in his dealings with the Church of Scotland and, perhaps remembering the Huguenots, Leighton was not so unworldly that he could ignore the authorities in whom power was now invested and how they deployed their authority over the church.²⁴³ Even more than during the Interregnum, the centre of authority had shifted south to London.²⁴⁴ Yet, there had been little objection from within Scotland. As soon as Charles returned to London in May 1660, impoverished Scottish nobles and gentry flocked south looking for preferment and with the invitation that the royal prerogative be restored in Scotland.²⁴⁵ This message was confirmed by the three Estates of the 1661 Scottish Parliament, the elections for which had been a reflection of royalist ascendancy. New elections for the 1662 Parliament were refused, lest that majority be lost.²⁴⁶ Indeed, some contemporary accounts reveal a limited appetite among the Parliament's members for its work, preferring instead government by royal prerogative.²⁴⁷ Charles' religious settlement had the support of the great majority of the Scottish nobility who were anxious to reassume their rightful positions as governors, under the King, of Scotland. There was almost no support among them for the more extreme expressions of Presbyterian hegemony as continued to be espoused from within the Protestant group. Neither was there any particular antipathy towards Episcopalianism as such. It had the advantage of keeping Presbyterian ministers, even moderate ones, in their place. So, as Jackson has stated:

By 1660, therefore, a large degree of consensus could be discerned amongst the majority of the Scottish political elite who were ready to yield their foremost

²⁴¹ Kirkton, *History*, 34; Nicoll, *Diary*, 293; Jackson, *Restoration*, 14, 18.

²⁴² Jackson, *Restoration*, 15, 45, 133.

²⁴³ See p. 103-104.

²⁴⁴ Young, *Scottish Parliament*, 320.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 305; Jackson, *Restoration*, 7.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 310, 319.

²⁴⁷ *Baillie*, III, 469.

allegiance to a constitutional monarch and were thus prepared to support whichever form of church government that monarch thought fit to institute.²⁴⁸ Leighton either had to cooperate with the King or be sidelined.

In fact, as Leighton would have also have recognised, outwith the nobility opposition to Episcopacy was by no means total and there was considerable support for its return in some parts of the country, notably Aberdeen. Whether they were enthusiastic or not, about two-thirds of ministers were prepared to continue under the new regime.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, the structure which was being put in place bore marked similarities to that which he had witnessed working well during his student years in Scotland.²⁵⁰

Leighton knew that his decision would not be popular. To Lothian, Leighton remarked wryly that he knew his reputation would suffer. Nonetheless, his affection for the ‘many good people’ who had held him in high regard but whose opinion of him would drop as a result of his elevation would not diminish.²⁵¹ To Aird, he wrote: ‘whatsoever you do or do not, you shall offend some good people on one side or other’. He lamented that ‘good people’ would take offence over something that, he believed, was ‘indifferent’.²⁵²

So Leighton had many good reasons to accept consecration; he did so knowing the cost. Yet, if Leighton is to be elevated from the categories of vacillating opportunist or just career churchman, it must be because he had a higher purpose.

1661-1662: Leighton’s ‘design’

Leighton’s letters to Lothian and Aird demonstrate that he was under no illusions about the personal cost to him and his reputation of accepting consecration. Furthermore, they reveal

²⁴⁸ Jackson, *Restoration*, 75. The 1661 Parliament also voted the King a lifetime annuity of £480,000 from excise duties (*APS*, VII, 88-94). Also Foster, *Bishop and Presbytery*, 2.

²⁴⁹ Wodrow, *History*, I, 16-17; Foster, *Bishop and Presbytery*, 3; Hynan, ‘Church Militant’, 49-59.

²⁵⁰ See pp. 64-68.

²⁵¹ *Ancram-Lothian*, 456.

²⁵² Butler, *Life*, 337.

that Leighton was well aware that the reintroduction of Episcopacy to Scotland would not be perceived as an adiaphoristic act by many others. He realised that there was likely to be active opposition which would be countered by measures to coerce non-conformist recalcitrants. It is highly unlikely that Leighton did not know the tenor, if not the detail, of the legal instruments which would be put in place to enforce the Episcopalianisation of the Church. Given his contacts at Court, not least through his brother, he must have realised that the King and his advisors would wish to give the new bishops real authority within the Church which could be backed up, if necessary, by secular compulsion.

It is against this background that Leighton's 'design' should be viewed. Leighton explained his 'design' in his letters to Lothian and to Aird written just after his consecration on 15 December 1661. In his letter to Lothian of 23 December 1661, Leighton explained that he had capitulated and agreed to become a bishop out of 'a design of greater charity [...] then ever' which was to:

use all the little skill and strength [he had] to recall their zeal from all the little questions about rites and discipline to the great things of religion, and of their souls, which in these debates are little or nothing concern'd'.²⁵³

In other words, he believed that it was an act of Christian love for him to attempt to refocus the Church on the really important things of the Christian faith. Debates about polity and liturgy were missing the point. They were a distraction from the real business of the body of Christ.²⁵⁴

This manifesto sounds remarkably similar to his opening lecture to his Edinburgh students in 1653. Expanding his 'parish' from the university community to the people of his diocese or even the whole country, Leighton wanted to reprioritise their concerns. He also explained that his style in office would be to 'use as little dominion and violence towards [his] brethern' and he hoped that the other bishops would do likewise. If he was able to achieve that, then he predicted that the switch to Episcopacy in the Church would not seem so significant: 'the difference will not be so considerable as it is imagin'd'.²⁵⁵ His 'purpose' was to 'indeavour and persuade' as many as he could to be 'of the same mind and practise' as him. Yet, Leighton knew that Church leaders were fallible and often

²⁵³ *Ancram-Lothian*, II, 456.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 456.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 456.

misguided and was clearly aware that his ‘purpose’ would not be easily achieved: he did not ‘flatter’ himself ‘with hopes of great satisfaction in any modell of human things under the sun’. Nevertheless, Leighton was confident in the wisdom and sovereignty of God and was content to place himself within God’s plan. He explained his motivation in these terms: ‘to will nothing but His will in all is to mee all religion’.²⁵⁶

In his letter to Aird, Leighton offered the same explanation of his ‘design’ but more briefly. It would have been ‘the greatest scandal of all’, he claimed, if he had ‘escaped further off’ rather than face up to the challenge of ‘reconciling the devout on different sides, and of enlarging those good souls [...] from their little fetters’. Again, Leighton made clear that he was under no illusions about the ease with which he might achieve his purpose.²⁵⁷

These letters flesh out the assurance Leighton gave to Brodie on 25 October 1661 that ‘his intention was to do good’ and that he was not acting out of ambition.²⁵⁸ They also clarify what he meant when he told Brodie on 27 November 1661 that he wished other Christians to have freedom of conscience and that the Anglican liturgy should not be ‘prest’ on those who did not want it.²⁵⁹

Butler opined that Leighton’s letter to Lothian was ‘sufficient to establish Leighton’s sincerity and unworldiness’. Leighton does indeed seem to have been sincere in his ‘design’. However, as both letters prove, he was far from being unworldly. He well understood the consequences for himself; hence, his wish for the smallest, least important diocese and his realisation that he would be heavily criticised. He also realised that the imposition of Episcopacy would be perceived as a fundamental shift in church polity and would not be universally received well. Furthermore, he foresaw the manner in which his new colleagues would administer their dioceses and the Church and the damage and resentment that would cause. It was to ameliorate the effects of heavy-handed Episcopal rule and to offer an alternative approach that he had accepted the diocese of Dunblane. He

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 456.

²⁵⁷ Butler, *Life*, 338.

²⁵⁸ Brodie, *Diary*, 221.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 229-230.

had no illusions about his chances of success. If his ‘design’ was to be achieved then it would be through the power of God, not of Robert Leighton. Leighton’s fundamental goal was to obey God and he believed that, by becoming Bishop of Dunblane, he was doing so. His spiritual clarification to the sceptical Aird is eloquent of this deep sense of call: ‘so may I please Him, I am satisfied.’²⁶⁰

Within the temporal limits of this thesis there is compelling evidence of how Leighton expressed this sense of call. Just as Leighton, the newly installed Principal, had used his first lecture to his students in 1653 to set out his manifesto, so Leighton expressed his hopes and goals to his ministers at the first meeting of his diocesan synod on 15 September 1662. It seems to have been a low-key and positive affair with the new bishop preaching and leading prayers. A roll-call of ministers was taken and it was found that ‘very few’ were absent and most of those who were had ‘sent their excuses either by word or writt’. Leighton propounded ‘some few particulars’ which were unanimously approved by the Synod.²⁶¹ These ‘particulars’ covered three areas: discipline of parishioners; conduct of worship; and the qualities to be expect of ministers of the gospel.²⁶² He urged that ‘preaching be plain and useful for all capacities, not entangled with useless questions and disputes, nor continued at wearisome length’. Ministers should focus on ‘the great and necessarie principalles of religione’. Rather than ‘insisting for ane whole sermon or more upon ane short verse or sentence’, ‘larger portions of Scripture’ should be explained and ‘suitable instructions and exhortations deduced’.²⁶³ The Lord’s Prayer, ‘the Doxologie and the Creed’, should be ‘restored to more frequent use’.²⁶⁴ He commended daily public prayer in churches, both morning and evening, and rigorous catechising for ‘the younger sort and the ignorant’.²⁶⁵ The record of the meeting indicates that Leighton did not intend to be moderator of either of the two presbyteries within the diocese.²⁶⁶ Leighton also reminded ‘himself’ and his ministers ‘to what eminent degrees of purity of heart and life

²⁶⁰ Butler, *Life*, 338.

²⁶¹ *Register Dunblane*, 1. Also *WW*, II, 435-437.

²⁶² *Register Dunblane*, 2-4.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

their holy calling' obliged them to. They were to have 'great contempt of this present world and enflamed affection towards heaven'. They were to truly believe what they preached and to be strengthened by 'daily meditation [...] and secret prayer'. When required to converse, they were to avoid the 'trivial' but instead to 'be exemplarlike holie, ministering grace'.²⁶⁷ Leighton exhorted them to live as 'ministers of the Gospel of peace' and to be 'meek and gentle, and lovers and exhorters of peace, private and public, among all ranks of men'. They were bound rather 'to quench than to encrease the useless debates and contentions that abound in the world; and be always more studious of pacific than of polemic divinitie'.²⁶⁸ Leighton remained true to his preaching and teaching at Newbattle and Edinburgh.²⁶⁹

Row, who was not an enthusiast for Leighton, wrote of his conduct at this first meeting of the Synod of Dunblane that the 'crafty' Leighton took the moderator's chair only after he had 'desired to know if they would elect a moderator, or if he should take the chair, and no man answering, he took their silence to an allowing of him to moderate'.²⁷⁰ After he had explained his 'few particulars,' Leighton told his ministers that 'he desired them to hold their Presbyteries and Sessions as before'. After the Synod's formal business was completed, Leighton dined with his ministers 'offering to sit at the foot of the table'. Leighton evidently won over some, but 'others thought he was but straking cream in their mouths at first'.²⁷¹

If this first synodal meeting is representative, Leighton lost no time in putting his 'design' into practice and met with some success among the ministers of his diocese. Even if he dissembled about his ambition to become a bishop, it seems that he meant what he said about his purpose in seeking the office.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

²⁶⁹ See pp. 188-203; 221-223.

²⁷⁰ Row, *Life*, 426.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 427. Jerment and Aikman approved of Leighton's conduct as diocesan bishop (Jerment, 'Life', xxii; Aikman, 'Life', xxvi-xxvii, xxx-xxxii).

Leighton in perspective

Much of the secondary literature portrays Leighton as singular in his irenicism and desire to compromise. This is palpably hyperbolic. Nevertheless, in short compass, it is helpful to put Leighton's churchmanship into a more nuanced perspective.

Almost seven hundred ministers remained in their parishes within the Episcopalian Church of Scotland.²⁷² No doubt some were glad to have bishops once again. Others were doubtless distressed; yet, they continued to function as ministers of the Gospel and, to do so, had to make compromises for the peace of the church. Given the geographical predominance of non-conformists in the West, throughout much of the country most of the Church simply got on with the job even when the new management was offensive to their deeply held beliefs. In a sense, Leighton was doing the same.

Neither was Leighton alone amongst his fellow bishops. Of the ten who were in post in 1662, only Leighton and Sharp have been studied in any detail. However, it seems that some of his colleagues may have had more in common than devotees of Leighton might wish to admit. Neither Leighton nor Sharp considered Episcopacy to be the only divinely ordained church polity. Furthermore, Buckroyd has made a powerful case for Sharp's partial rehabilitation at least insofar as his actions of 1661 to 1662 are concerned. She argues that it was only in late 1663 that Sharp ceased to be 'the man who became a bishop to create a moderate episcopate' and became 'the man who lent his voice to the establishment of prelacy'. Faced with sustained and active non-conformity, particularly in the South-West, Sharp had either to 'comply with forces which he could not resist or he could choose not to remain in office'. Sharp decided to keep his job and take the offensive against dissent and non-co-operation.²⁷³

In 1662, Sydserff's future successor as Bishop of Orkney, Andrew Honyman, published his *Seasonable Case*.²⁷⁴ This was a rebuke to those who were not prepared to live

²⁷² Donaldson, *Scotland*, 365; Jackson, *Restoration*, 109.

²⁷³ Buckroyd, *Sharp*, 75-77, 81.

²⁷⁴ Honyman (1619-1676), who had been a zealous Covenanter, was Archdeacon of St Andrews before being consecrated in 1664. He was hit by a bullet intended for Sharp in 1666 (Thomson, 'Honyman').

peacefully with the Episcopal government of the Church. He warned that rather than Episcopalianism dishonouring God, it was division which did so and weakened ‘the cause of the true protestant religion’ and destroyed ‘true charity and love amongst the people of God’.²⁷⁵ Polity was an ‘inferior and lower’ point over which Protestants should not divide. Neither was it an excuse to challenge the person or authority of the King.²⁷⁶

In some respects, Leighton’s most obvious Scottish precursors were the Aberdeen Doctors, a group of six Aberdeen ministers who had refused to sign the National Covenant in 1638. Led by John Forbes of Corse (1593-1648), they were all Doctors of Divinity and Episcopalian who had broadly welcomed the Five Articles of Perth and the Prayer Book.²⁷⁷ In his 1638 *A Peaceable Warning*, Forbes explained that, so long as it was not being exercised in a manner which was ‘repugnant to Divine Authoritie’, civil or ecclesiastical ‘publicke Humane Authoritie’ must be obeyed, since to do otherwise would be to reject the Divine Authority which had granted that human authority. In Scotland, the fount of the ‘Supreame Authoritie Civill’ was the King who also had authority in external ecclesiastical matters. In response to growing tension over matters of liturgy and polity, he implored the people:

Let us not judge hardlie, or uncharitablie, one of another, nor breake the Bond of Peace, and Christian Brotherhood, for the diversitie of Opinions among us, in the oeconomicall and rituall Controversies. But [...] let us walke by the same rule, let us mynd the same thing; with all lowlinesse and meeknesse, with longer-suffering; forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keepe the unitie of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace.²⁷⁸

July 1638 had seen a high-powered delegation of Covenanters travel to Aberdeen to try to persuade the minsters and towns-people to subscribe the National Covenant. In the course of a series of interchanges with the Covenanters, the Aberdeen Doctors offered their

²⁷⁵ Honyman, *Seasonable Case*, 4.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 42, 45.

²⁷⁷ Forbes was the son of Patrick, Bishop of Aberdeen (1564-1635) and Professor of Divinity at King’s College. Educated in Aberdeen and on the Continent, he was learned, pious and widely respected. Deposed by the Covenanters in 1641, he spent two years preaching and writing in Holland before returning home (Mullan, ‘Forbes’; Sefton, ‘Forbes’; MacMillan, *Aberdeen Doctors* 227-234).

²⁷⁸ Forbes, *Peaceable Warning*, 20. Also Thompson, ‘Martin Bucer’, 174-175, 178, 184.

reasons for refusing to do so.²⁷⁹ Amidst the theological sparring, it is possible to discern that they believed that the monarch had God-given authority to establish polity and liturgy as the externals of the Church since neither were immutably and comprehensively prescribed in Scripture. The liturgy of the Five Articles was consequently lawful and convenient and Episcopal government was both lawful and of ‘venerable Antiquitie’. If the Covenanters wished to extirpate bishops, they would need lawful authority to do so and the only lawful authority was King Charles I.²⁸⁰ The Doctors decried schism: despite the Covenanters’ arguments, they were not convinced that the Church was not ‘infected’ with any error as would justify ‘so fearfull a division: which it self is a sore disease’.²⁸¹ While Leighton almost certainly would not have agreed with Forbes of Corse and the Aberdeen Doctors in 1638, it seems that, by 1661, he had come to do so.

In February 1637, Forbes had been involved with a scheme for church union between Lutheran and Reformed Protestants which was being promoted by John Durie (1596-1680).²⁸² Durie, a Scot who travelled throughout Europe, was an indefatigable Protestant unionist and ‘obsessive irenicist’.²⁸³ Born in Edinburgh into a staunchly Presbyterian family, he was educated at Leiden and at the Huguenot Academy at Sedan. He served as a Westminster Divine among many other diverse roles. In essence, Durie’s strategy for Protestant unity was to posit Christianity ethically rather than doctrinally and to establish a list of ‘fundamental’ doctrines on which all sides agreed and which were clearly distinguished from ‘incidentals’ on which they might be content to differ.²⁸⁴ He believed that God bestowed authority on the civil magistrate to regulate the polity of a church. When God changed the ruler, so might the new ruler change the way the church was governed.²⁸⁵ To Durie, the polity of a church was a matter indifferent. Having been ordained a Presbyterian minister, he was prepared to undergo re-ordination in the

²⁷⁹ For an account of the exchange, see Ogilvie, *Aberdeen Doctors*.

²⁸⁰ Forbes, *Generall Demands*, 3, 15, 17, 20, 24, 32.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 77. Also Stewart, ‘Aberdeen Doctors’, 35-44.

²⁸² Mullan, ‘Forbes’; Mandelbrote, ‘John Dury’, 42-55; Milton, *Catholic*, 391-392.

²⁸³ Milton, ‘Peacemaker’, 95

²⁸⁴ Young, ‘Durie’. Also Juillet-Garzon, ‘Scottish-Style Universal Church?’, 16; Batten, ‘John Drury’.

²⁸⁵ Durie, *Discourse*, 48-49; Mandelbrote, ‘John Dury’, 4-49, 51, 55.

Episcopalian Church of England in 1634 before renouncing Episcopacy in 1642.²⁸⁶ The crux was ‘the establishment and encrease of godly and brotherly love’ among Protestants and ‘the common and publick acknowledgement, profession and practice of that truth and those duties which are necessary and sufficient for all souls to attain thereby unto salvation’.²⁸⁷

Drury was part of a wider international group of Calvinist scholars who communicated across confessional boundaries and which also included James Ussher.²⁸⁸ Burnet claimed that Leighton ‘offered Usher’s Reduction as the plan upon which [the Scottish bishops] ought to form their scheme’.²⁸⁹ Although printed only after his death in 1656, Ussher’s reduction had, in fact, been circulating since the 1640s. It proffered a ‘combination of ministerial synods with episcopal rule’ which ‘was seen as a basis for presbyterian-episcopal reconciliation’ during the 1650s and 1660s.²⁹⁰ Essentially a ‘power-sharing arrangement between bishop and presbyters,’ its brief and vague terms were open to divergent interpretations in which the balance of power differed.²⁹¹ Leighton could be said to have operated a version of Ussher’s limited episcopacy within his own diocese of Dunblane.

Closer to home was James Durham, a Church of Scotland minister who tried to mediate between the Protestors and Resolutioners in the 1650s.²⁹² His *A Dying Man’s Testament*, which was published posthumously in 1659, contained a passionate, deathbed plea for church unity. Durham made clear that differences over polity, which was not a matter of fundamental doctrine, were not sufficient to justify schism.²⁹³ There was ‘an absolute necessity of unity laid upon the Church’, to which schism was ‘really scandalous and

²⁸⁶ Mandelbrote, ‘John Dury’, 50; Milton, ‘Peacemaker’, 113-114; Juillet-Garzon, ‘Scottish-Style Universal Church?’, 20.

²⁸⁷ Durie, *Discourse*, 5-6.

²⁸⁸ Milton, *Catholic*, 398. James Ussher, (1581-1656) was a respected scholar, a Calvinist and a royalist Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh (1626-1656) (Ford, ‘Ussher’).

²⁸⁹ *HMOT*, 249. See Ussher, *Reduction*.

²⁹⁰ Abbott, ‘Ussher’, 237.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 244, 258.

²⁹² Durham (1622-1658) he was a leading churchman and theologian who was minister in Glasgow from 1651 to 1658 (Holfelder, ‘Durham’).

²⁹³ Durham, *Dying Man’s Testament*, 273.

hurtfull'.²⁹⁴ Durham offered a series of irenic principles which related closely to those followed by Leighton.²⁹⁵

It is apparent that, remarkable though he was, Leighton was not unique either within the Church of Scotland or beyond. In many ways, he personified the willingness of most ministers and the majority of the people of Scotland to put the Church and Kingdom of Christ before their own theological preferences. Moreover, the sentiments he expressed and the 'design' he believed that God wished him to implement, were not first expressed by him. Rather they represented a wider, albeit diverse and often fragmented, movement for Protestant unity across Europe.

²⁹⁴ Durham, *Dying Man's Testament*, 271, 312-315.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 395-408.

Conclusion

Leighton's decision to accede to the King's wish that he become Bishop of Dunblane divided commentators broadly into two camps. Those who disliked Episcopacy found it difficult to forgive him. Those who agreed with his decision generally regarded him as naive on two counts: firstly, by not realising the nature of the officials and bishops with whom he would have to work and the oppressive tactics they would employ; and, secondly, by thinking that he could make a difference in the face of Presbyterian obstinacy. They also believed that Leighton had been an unwilling victim of greater human forces.

The primary evidence indicates that Leighton appreciated with whom he was dealing and what he was getting himself into. He foresaw the manner in which Episcopacy would be imposed upon the Church and the adverse reaction from some die-hard Presbyterians. He knew that the cost to the Church would be significant. He also realised that he would pay a price personally. Friendships would suffer, his reputation would be damaged and he would be placed in role which would cause him stress and distress. Nevertheless, he was not reluctant to accept the See of Dunblane. In fact, he may actually have sought the post.

Whatever his own views, Leighton knew that bishops were going to be introduced into the Church regardless and that there was nothing that could be done to stop this.

Understanding that the polity of the Church was going to change, he was prepared to be part of the state machinery which would implement this. He took this step with the purpose of ameliorating the consequences. He would do so with patience, by listening and communication and by deploying his authority with a light touch. His actions in Dunblane would provide a model for other dioceses. As a bishop, Leighton would try influence his colleagues in the Church and the officials of the state towards the gentler, more loving way, that they might live together *in mitiorem partem*.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

‘One of the great oddballs of Scottish history’ – so runs a recent description of Robert Leighton.¹ Robert Leighton’s posthumous reputation has rested upon the assertion that he was a unique example of churchmanship in the Restoration Church of Scotland. Matched only by the egregious James Sharp, together they stand clear of the rest of the field of Restoration bishops. Leighton’s admirers viewed him as saintly, if naive. Even as his detractors condemned his betrayal of Presbyterianism and the Covenant, his abilities were grudgingly acknowledged. By setting him apart, successive writers have encouraged extreme and polarised opinions about Leighton. One benefit of this approach has been to maintain interest in his life and work. However, this is counterweighed by a historiography in which Leighton himself has been silenced by a cacophony of confessional commentaries. In this reassessment of Leighton’s life and work up to and including his decision to accept consecration as a bishop in 1661, the confessional element in the secondary literature has been stripped away as far as the primary evidence allows. Leighton has been allowed to speak in his words and through his own actions.

Reassessing the first five decades of Leighton’s life has revealed a more interesting early-modern Scottish churchman than the saintly, detached figure portrayed by his admirers or the duplicitous trimmer of his detractors. Unique in himself, Leighton was not singular among the clergy of the Church of Scotland. Among the manifold reasons for historians and theologians to maintain interest in Leighton is that, in important ways, he represents the majority of Scottish ministers who continued to live out their calling within the Kirk through national upheaval and changes of church polity and, no doubt for many, despite their own theological misgivings.

It is clear that, on his journey towards Episcopacy, the people who most influenced Leighton before 1661 were not shadowy Flanders Catholics or Jansenists. Alexander’s place as Leighton’s father has been reasserted through a re-evaluation of who he was and

¹ Paterson, *King Lauderdale*, 143, 172.

how he behaved and of the formative influence likely to have been exerted by a respected parent upon his eldest son. Confessional convenience has largely relegated Alexander to nothing more than a jarring footnote in Leighton's story. The evidence strongly suggests otherwise. To discount Alexander in the manner of much of the secondary literature is to ignore Leighton's actions for almost all of the first forty years of his life. Indeed, Leighton's model of limited Episcopacy meets many of the complaints about prelacy which Alexander articulated in *Sions Plea*. If Alexander has been side-lined, Lothian has been largely ignored. In fact, a better understanding of Lothian points not only to Leighton's physical location but also to his theological whereabouts from about 1638 until about 1652. Lothian himself is a fascinating character who is worthy of further investigation for his role as radical Covenanter.

Leighton's life can also be charted by the communities within which he lived and the transitions which he himself experienced. He moved from the Puritan London of his childhood to the Town College community in Edinburgh which appears to have been a microcosm of the Church of Scotland. Possibly he experienced first-hand the challenges facing the minority Huguenots of France before returning to Scotland to join the radicals among the Covenanting movement. From revolutionaries the Covenanters became ruthless rulers: Leighton seems to have supported the cause of the Covenant throughout. From 1650, Leighton lived and worked under, and to some extent collaborated with, an occupying foreign Republican power. In 1660 monarchy was reasserted and Scotland and its Church returned to something like their pre-1638 government. In the process, another minority confessional group was created. So Leighton experienced oppression in London and France; he was also a supporter and agent of oppressors in Scotland. The opponents of Leighton and Lothian's particular strand of Covenanting, who emerged periodically from outside and also from within the movement, underwent harassment and marginalisation as did those Protestants who, after 1660, were unwilling to be part of a church ruled by bishops of which Leighton was one. Leighton had thus seen the effects of religio-political conflict from both sides. This cannot but have impacted upon him as a man, as a theologian and as religious leader. Although further research is required to establish the development of his thinking, this is probably seen in his desire for greater tolerance of differences among Protestants and in the 'design' which he carried into his episcopate. Additionally, his theology of the interface between God's sovereignty and human power, ecclesiastical and secular, bears further investigation. Leighton was also part of an international

Protestant cross-current of theologians and clergy who advocated wider tolerance in the interests of greater unity. Further study of Leighton in a broader European context would not only clarify his own context but also offer a useful comparison for evaluation of efforts towards unity being made elsewhere.

On the face of it, Leighton appears simply to have been willing to work with whoever was in power: hence the lingering allegations of inconstancy and personal ambition. Yet closer examination of his career has revealed that at key moments the religious interests of those who held authority in Scotland coincided, in important aspects, with Leighton's own theological opinions. Thus Leighton, the Presbyterian, fitted into the Covenanting movement of the late 1630s to early 1650s. By the time that the English Independents marched into Scotland, their policy of limited tolerance meshed with Leighton's apparent preference for greater unity, or at least less disunity, among Protestants. In 1661, his preference for Episcopacy allowed him to support the limited Episcopalianisation of the Church of Scotland. However, it is clear that Leighton was also able to conceal his developing beliefs when to do otherwise would have jeopardised his position and his friendships. He admitted as much to Lothian and to Aird in late 1661. Further consideration indicates that Leighton's reticence was about matters which he considered to be adiaphoristic. He formed a clear view of what were the essentials of the Christian faith: church polity was not among them.

This study has only touched on Leighton's theology. While there is general agreement that he resides within the Calvinist family, just where he should be placed on such important issues as salvation, the relationship between faith and reason and the nature and function of the church has not yet been fully considered. A preliminary assessment of his theological writings suggests that he remained true to his Puritan roots in his views about the relationship between God and man, but this too would be a fruitful area for further inquiry. Leighton has often been described as a mystic. This is true only in sense that he had a profound sense of, and joy in, the unknowable mysteries of God – and consequently was relaxed about not knowing things he believed were not his to know. From this flowed a remarkable stream of Reformed spirituality which is not usually associated with seventeenth-century Scottish theology. Further exploration of Leighton's spiritual depths and the light that he shone upon the profundity of God's ways and His will could prove fruitful not just for historians but also for contemporary theologians and preachers.

The clearing away of confessionally grounded misconceptions about Leighton's first fifty years has opened the way for renewed study of the remaining twelve years of his career. As Bishop of Dunblane from 1661 until 1670 and Archbishop of Glasgow from 1670 until 1674, Leighton was immersed in the complex and often contradictory policies pursued by Middleton and Lauderdale in their dealings with the Church of Scotland and, in particular, Presbyterians unwilling to worship within an Episcopalian Church. Now that Leighton is no longer the rather mono-chromatic figure of the confessional literature, his Episcopal career can be re-assessed with the recognition that he was neither naive nor inconstant and that he accepted consecration because he had a particular 'design' for the Church of Scotland which he believed to be the will of God.

Finally, it is clear that Leighton was not a man out of time, but very much a man of his times. He was just one of hundreds of Scottish churchmen who journeyed from the Covenanting Presbyterian Kirk to the Restoration Episcopalian Church of Scotland, via the years of uneasy co-existence with Independency intruded under English occupation. While his understanding of ecclesiastical polity changed, he did not depart from his essentially Calvinist understanding of God and he remained deeply committed to personal obedience to Him and to saving the souls of others. In parish, College and diocese, his primary concern was the spiritual welfare of his people, a spiritual welfare which was defined by trust in the sovereignty of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this, he would not have been alone. Of course, some ministers, happy to have an income and a home for themselves and their families, would simply have acquiesced with whatever form of government was decreed for the Kirk. Others, perhaps the majority, remained in the Kirk despite personal reservations because they wanted to continue serving God in the role and in the places to which He had called them. They would have understood that refusal to obey kings and bishops or parliaments and church courts would threaten that calling and their role in advancing the kingdom of God. Because they did not rebel, their story has gone largely untold, but perhaps they would recognise the Leighton who has been described here. And maybe, in Leighton, they would recognise themselves, weary of unprofitable and unnecessary disputes and desiring unity above arid fractiousness. Leighton cannot have been the only minister who preferred the gentler, more charitable way. He was surely one among many who chose to live *in mitiorem partem*.

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