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THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF MODERATISM IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

A THESIS
presented to the
SENATUS ACADEMICUS
of the
UNIVERSITY of GLASGOW.

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE FACULTY OF DIVINITY.

By
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JANUARY, 1962.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	<u>Page No.</u>
Preface.	
I. Who were the Moderates?	1
II. The Background.	15
III. William Hamilton : Teacher of the Moderates.	25
IV. "Neu-Lights and Preachers-Legall".	45
V. Robert Wallace as Ecclesiastical Statesman.	79
VI. The Wisharts : Popular Moderates.	100
VII. Cuming's Leadership of the Church.	127
VIII. Wallace as Spectator.	145
IX. The Old Moderates and the Schism Overture.	167
X. Moderate Piety.	178
XI. Moderate Views of the Ministry.	192
XII. The Moderates as Christian Apologists.	203
Conclusion.	213
Appendices.	219
Biographical Index.	225
Bibliography.	238

PREFACE.

It is required of a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy that he state in the preface to his thesis the sources from which his information is derived, the extent to which he has availed himself of the work of others, and the portions of the thesis which he claims as original.¹

The principal primary sources of this thesis are the writings, both published and unpublished, of Robert Wallace and the published works of his contemporaries who are discussed. The principal secondary sources are the works of William Law Mathieson and Ernest Campbell Mossner. To Dr. Mossner I am particularly indebted for the detailed references² which led me to the large body of unpublished material by Wallace in the Library of the University of Edinburgh. The greater part of the thesis is claimed to be original, inasmuch as the topic has not to my knowledge been fully discussed before, but the main contention, that the influence of William Hamilton is of crucial importance to an understanding of moderatism in its earlier stages, is hinted at by Mathieson in his second volume on the eighteenth century.³ It has however been independently worked out and a view rather different from Mathieson's is put forward.

This preface also affords me an opportunity for me to express my indebtedness to those who have helped me in various ways:

The /

¹Supplementary Regulation No.2.

²in *The Forgotten Hume*, New York 1943.

³*The Awakening of Scotland*, Glasgow 1910 p.196.

The Reverend Dr. Stewart Mechie, who has acted as my Supervisor.

The Reverend Mr. James Mackintosh, Librarian at Trinity College.

The Librarian and staff of the University Library.

The Librarian and staff of the Library of Edinburgh University and, in particular, Mr. C.P. Finlayson and Mr. D.E. Griffiths.

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The Reverend Presbytery of Brechin and Fordoun for grants towards the payment of fees from the Martin Bequest.

Mrs. Jean Simpson, for much patience and care in the typing of the manuscript.

I.

WHO WERE THE MODERATES?

The Starting Point. Conflicting uses of the term. Story's view.
Hetherington's views. Mathieson's view. Struthers' view. McCrie's
view. The popular view. Hutcheson contrasted with William Hamilton.
The scope of this thesis : Professor Hamilton and his students.

WHO WERE THE MODERATES?

"The history of Moderatism has not yet been written and the principle fares all the better in consequence of the omission. It enjoys the advantage of not being thoroughly known. But it has enjoyed it long enough; and whoever sets himself to exhibit the true complexion of its career may be assured that he will find his materials grow mightily upon him as he proceeds".¹

These words, written by Hugh Miller in the heat of the controversies which led to the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843, were the starting point of the investigations which form the basis of this thesis. They express an attitude to Moderatism which still prevails and prevails largely because no-one has so far "set himself to exhibit the true complexion of its career". Miller implies that a Moderate is not only a highly objectionable ecclesiastic but also a readily recognisable one, and with this view it would seem that most Church historians of his own day and since would readily concur. It may be assumed that none of them would see the necessity of asking or answering the question that forms the title of this chapter.

But that such a question needs to be asked is shown by mutually contradictory uses of the term "moderate" as late as the year 1753. John Maclaurin,² whose churchmanship would have been most congenial to Miller, uses /

¹Hugh Miller : The Two Parties in the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh 1841, p.4'

²Minister at the Ramshorn Church, Glasgow, and a leading Evangelical preacher The letter referred to is quoted in Gould's edition of Maclaurin's Works, Edinburgh 1860, p.lix.

uses the word "moderate" to describe those who like him favoured the restoration to the ministry of Thomas Gillespie, formerly minister at Carnock, who had been deposed the previous year by the General Assembly.³ He does so in a letter dated 28th April, 1753, barely a month before the publication of "Ecclesiastical Characteristics", the famous pamphlet in which those who had secured Gillespie's deposition are bitterly satirised under the title of "moderate men". To add to the confusion, there is a reference by a visiting American minister⁴ to this as "a burlesque upon the high flyers under the ironical name of moderate men".

The American diarist may have been perplexed by Scottish ecclesiastical politics and perhaps no great significance should be attached to Maclaurin's surprising use of the term "moderate". The transferred terminology need not detain us but its occurrence at all leads to the question of the origin of the Moderate party. Are we to infer from these differing uses that the Moderate party had not yet taken definite shape in 1753?

The answer given by most historians of the Scottish Church would be in the negative. R.H. Story⁵ indeed goes so far as to say that in 1708 the predominating control of the Moderate party had already been established under the leadership of William Carstares and, although the idea that Carstares was a moderate is ridiculed by C.G. McCrie,⁶ Story is supported by those who find the origins of Moderatism in the seventeenth century.

W.M. Hetherington /

³cf. Chapters VI, VII, VIII.

⁴Samuel Davies : Diary, June 1754, quoted in L.H. Butterfield : "John Witherspoon comes to America". Princeton, New Jersey, 1955, p.12.

⁵R.H. Story : William Carstares, London 1874, p.304.

⁶British and Foreign Evangelical Review. Vol. 33 (1884) p.274^f.

W.M. Hetherington, a contemporary of Miller and a most abusive opponent of the Moderates, traces "that ill-omened designation" to the Declaration of Indulgence issued in 1687 by James VII :

"In the first place we allow and tolerate the moderate Presbyterians to meet in their private houses and there to hear all such ministers as either have or are willing to accept of our Indulgence and none other".⁷

A more commonly held view is that the term finds its origin in King William's message to the Assembly of 1690 : "Moderation is what religion requires, neighbouring churches expect from you, and we recommend to you".⁸ It is unfortunate that no contemporary verdict on the origin of the term seems to be available.

Hetherington traces the origin of moderatism as a movement to the Assembly's admission as ministers of those who had conformed to the Episcopalian regime. He describes this as "the most fatal event" which ever occurred in the history of the Church of Scotland :

"It infused a baneful poison into her very heart, whence, ere long, flowed forth a lethal stream, corrupting and paralyzing her whole frame. It sowed the noxious seed which gradually sprang up and expanded into the deadly upas-tree⁹ of Moderatism"

⁷Hetherington : History of the Church of Scotland. Edinburgh 1841, p.518.

⁸cf. A.J. Campbell : Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland 1707-1909. Paisley 1930. p.34^f.

⁹"Antiaris toxicaria" is the botanical name of this poisonous tree found in Java.

¹⁰Hetherington : op.cit. p.556^f.

William Law Mathieson rejects¹¹ this view but in its place he puts forward a theory which is not dissimilar. He too finds the origins of Moderatism in the seventeenth century for he discerns¹² its early growth in the writings of Robert Leighton,¹³ Henry Scougal¹⁴ and Sir George Mackenzie¹⁵ and he draws a parallel between the moderatism of the eighteenth century and those "moderates" who were prepared to accept the episcopal regime imposed by James VI.¹⁶ Dean Stanley takes this theory still farther when he traces "the Moderation of the Church of Scotland" right back to George Buchanan.¹⁷ Stanley put forward his views at a public lecture in Edinburgh and provoked a sharp reply from Robert Rainy who dismissed his opinion as inaccurate and tendentious.¹⁸ Nevertheless the view that there is a connection between seventeenth "moderates" and the moderatism of the eighteenth century is not wholly without foundation.

John /

¹¹"Scotland and the Union" Glasgow 1905 p.250^f.

¹²"The Awakening of Scotland" Glasgow 1910 p.186^f.

¹³1611-84. Minister at Newbattle, Midlothian 1641-52, Principal of Edinburgh University 1653-60. Bishop of Dunblane 1661-70. Archbishop of Glasgow 1670-74.

¹⁴1650-78. Minister at Auchterless, Aberdeenshire 1673-4. Professor of Divinity, King's College, Aberdeen 1674-8.

¹⁵1636-91. "Bluidy Mackenzie" was Lord Advocate during the "Killing-time" and a writer on religious and other subjects.

¹⁶Scotland and the Union pp. 274-6.

¹⁷A.P. Stanley : The Church of Scotland. London 1872. p.98.

¹⁸R. Rainy : Three Lectures on the Church of Scotland. Edinburgh 1872. pp. 64-85.

John Erskine, one of the leaders of the Popular party in the latter half of the eighteenth century, made this comment on the origins of moderation

"Some sons of the clergy,¹⁹ unjust to their fathers, ascribe to Dr. George Wishart the honour of first introducing to our pulpits a rational accurate and useful strain of preaching. Surely they could not be ignorant how much the writings are still admired of Leighton, Scougal and Dunlop²⁰ who lived and died long before the amiable Doctor".²¹

In addition to Erskine's testimony, there is the interesting fact that George Wishart's brother, William, published not only an edition of Henry Scougal's "Life of God in the Soul of Man"²² but also one of "De Animi Tranquillitate"²³ by Florentius Volusenus, a sixteenth century Scottish Latinist in the Erasmian tradition.

The evidence of Erskine and Wishart is perhaps more interesting than significant. Despite the two publications mentioned, Wishart seems to have found inspiration in the writings of Hoadly,²⁴ Whichcote²⁵ and Shaftesbury²⁶ rather than in those of Scougal and Volusenus. It is noteworthy that Erskine also mentions²⁷ the influence of Shaftesbury on Wishart's /

¹⁹e.g. John Drysdale in Sermons, Edinburgh 1793. Vol.1 p.xi^f.

²⁰Probably William Dunlop the younger (1692-1720), Professor Divinity and Church History at Edinburgh. He was famous for his pulpit oratory.

²¹John Erskine. Discourses Vol.I. Edinburgh 1798, p.268.

²²Edinburgh 1740.

²³Edinburgh 1751.

²⁴Benjamin Hoadly (1676-1761) the leading figure in the "Bangorian Controversy" cf. Chapter VI.

²⁵Benjamin Whichcote (1609-83) forerunner of the Cambridge Platonists.

²⁶Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) cf. Chapter IV.

²⁷Discourses I p.269.

Wishart's contemporaries, and that he seems more anxious to minimize the influence of George Wishart than to emphasize the influence of Leighton, Scougal and Dunlop. Perhaps he was unwilling that a Moderate should be given all the credit for the improvements in the construction and delivery of sermons which were by that time accepted by both parties in the Church. He also asserts that the translation of the works of Fenelon²⁸ and Rollin²⁹ did much to inculcate just sentiments of eloquence.

Mathieson and the others who favour his views cannot therefore claim much support from John Erskine. Perhaps they are too ready to equate "moderation" with "Moderatism", an equation which few of the Moderates' opponents would regard as valid.³⁰ But if one accepts this equation one can, like Stanley, find a great many "Moderates" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Mathieson's opinions are worthy of greater consideration than Stanley's but he succeeds only in showing that there are roughly parallel movements in the ecclesiastical affairs of the seventeenth and eighteenth /

²⁸ Francois Fenelon (1651-1715) Archbishop of Cambrai and author of Dialogues on Eloquence.

²⁹ Charles Rollin (1661-1741) Professor of Eloquence in the College de France.

³⁰ Rainy took great exception to this (Three Lectures p.69) cf. also John Dunlop: "Indeed our modern moderate men were so fierce for moderation that they would not allow his friends a fair state of the vote... In such ways does this spirit of moderation discover itself that probably in a little time the word moderation like the word defend shall acquire an opposite meaning" p.27^f "The Law of Patronage in Scotland". Edinburgh 1784.

eighteenth centuries. He does not demonstrate convincingly that early eighteenth century moderatism has its origins in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Nevertheless it seems that Professor Notestein has overstated the case when he says: "The rise of the Moderates represented a change in outlook for the Scots almost as sudden and sweeping as the Reformation, if much less lasting".³¹ It is not unhistorical to draw a parallel between those who were prepared to accept episcopacy as a lesser evil than constant strife and those who were unwilling to jeopardize the Revolution Settlement by intemperate opposition to the grievance of Patronage. To some extent also it is possible to trace a parallel between Leighton's and Mackenzie's dislike of dogmatism and the antipathy of Wishart and others to "mere authority".³² But a causal connection must be held to be "not proven"

Gavin Struthers, the historian of the Relief Church, also finds the origins of Moderatism in the seventeenth century, but in the Netherlands:

"The Country had imported a Dutch King and they also imported Dutch theology. Arminianism was then spreading in Holland. Many of the best Scotch preachers had studied there during the persecution and had become tinged with the doctrines of this heresy so flattering to the proud heart of man.... These were by far the most learned and cultivated preachers. Elegance was thus unfortunately associated with defective views /

³¹Wallace Notestein: *The Scot in History*. New Haven, Conn. 1947. p.210.

³²cf. Chapter VI.

"views of salvation by grace. Error put on the appearance of an angel of light and under a chaste form of speech, which did not necessarily belong to it, corrupted the rising taste and genius which began to reappear in the pulpits of Scotland".³³

Struthers gives no authority for this theory of the origins of Moderatism but he is to some extent supported by the late Dr. L.W. Sharp.³⁴ It is unlikely to be tenable, for those who are best acquainted with the relationships between the Scottish Church and the Continent do not find any influence of Dutch theology in Moderatism. "The Moderates were sometimes called "Arminians", says the late Professor G.D. Henderson of Aberdeen, "but in fact they were not interested in taking sides in this controversy".³⁵ Dr. A.L. Drummond has pointed out that "an avowed Moderate", Gilbert Gerard, readily signed the ultra-Calvinist Canons of Dort in 1782 on his appointment as a minister in Rotterdam.³⁶

In striking contrast to Struthers' view, C.G. McCrie regarded the stoutly Calvinist James Hadow³⁷ as the forerunner of the Moderates:

"This legal preaching ... was the moderate preaching of the first half of the eighteenth century which paved the way for the larger development of moderatism which meets us at the /

³³G. Struthers : History of the Relief Church, Glasgow 1843. p.54.

³⁴L.W. Sharp (ed.) Early Letters of Robert Wodrow (S.H.S.) Edinburgh 1937 p.xliii.

³⁵G.D. Henderson "Dutch Influences in Scottish Theology" in Evangelical Quarterly. Vol.5. (1933) p.37¹.

³⁶A.L. Drummond : The Kirk and the Continent, Edinburgh 1956 p.123.

³⁷1670-1747 Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews. He opposed both the "antinomian" Marrow-men and the "Arian" Professor Simson.

"the turn of the century....For that preaching Principal Hadow and his following in the Church Courts were largely responsible. They exercised an influence upon the theological tendencies of the age far more powerful than that which in popular church histories is attributed to the prelatie curates admitted at the time of the Revolution Settlement but which there is no evidence to show they exercised or indeed were capable of exercising".³⁸

McCrie very skilfully argues that it was an easy transition from preaching thoroughgoing predestinarian theology to inculcating duty, the moralities, the honest, the true, the good, the beautiful; but he fails to show that this indeed happened as a result of Hadow's teaching. As early as 1725, the historian Robert Wodrow complains of the activities of a group of young ministers whom he described as "Neu-lights and Preachers-Legall" but none of these legal preachers was a student under Hadow and there is no reason to suppose that they were influenced by him.³⁹

A commonly held view⁴⁰ of Moderatism is that it originated in various heretical views of English Dissenters mediated by John Simson⁴¹ and in the writings /

³⁸British and Foreign Evangelical Review. Vol. 33 (1884) p.716^f.

³⁹McCrie's argument would of course carry much more weight if he had not hung it on Hadow. It is noteworthy that none of this group of Moderates or the later Moderates ever formally renounced Calvinism as set forth in the Westminster Confession. For a discussion of the "Neu-lights and Preachers-Legall" cf. Chapter IV.

⁴⁰cf. H.G. Graham : Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century, London 1901. pp. 32-4. J.H.S. Burleigh : A Church History of Scotland, London 1960. p.295.

⁴¹1668-1741. Minister at Troqueer, Dumfriesshire, then Professor of Divinity at Glasgow, he was accused of Arminianism in 1717, of Arianism 1726-9.

writings of the third Earl of Shaftesbury mediated by Francis Hutcheson.⁴² It does not seem to have been realised that, while both these men taught at Glasgow University, most of the leading Moderate divines received their university education at Edinburgh. There is, moreover, a wide difference between the teaching of Simson and that of Hutcheson. Wodrow heartily opposed the former and heartily approved the latter.⁴³ Simson lectured in Latin and his students were unable to give satisfactory accounts of his teaching when he was tried for heresy. Hutcheson was one of the first professors in Scotland to lecture in English and attracted huge audiences of students and outsiders. Undoubtedly he exercised a considerable influence over the rising generation of students and an oblique tribute to this is paid by the "Athenian Creed" in the "Ecclesiastical Characteristics":

"I believe in the divinity of L. S---, the saintship of Marcus Antoninus, the perspicuity and sublimity of A---e, and the perpetual duration of Mr. H---n's works".⁴⁴

Nevertheless it is clear that the writings of Shaftesbury were read and admired in Scotland long before Hutcheson settled there.⁴⁵ A fellow student of William Wishart had written "A little treatise on Virtue and Merit in the spirit /

⁴²1694-1746. Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow.

⁴³Robert Wodrow : Analecta 1701-31. Maitland Club 1842. For Wodrow on Simson see Vol.III passim ; on Hutcheson see Vol.IV. p.190.

⁴⁴The Works of John Witherspoon Vol. VI, Edinburgh 1805. p.185^f.

⁴⁵A native of Ireland, Hutcheson became Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow in 1729.

spirit of the Earl of Shaftesbury" at least ten years earlier.⁴⁶ This young man's name was Robert Wallace and his youthful excursion into moral philosophy is preserved among many other of his writings in the Laing manuscript collection at the University of Edinburgh. To Wallace and this remarkable collection of his unpublished works we shall constantly refer in these pages.

Hutcheson's influence is contrasted with that of Professor William Hamilton of Edinburgh by Mathieson who regards Hamilton as a representative of the moderatism of the seventeenth century⁴⁷ and Hutcheson as a typical eighteenth century Moderate. While it is not proposed to accept Mathieson's views in their entirety this implied division between earlier and later Moderatism finds good authority in a pamphlet published by one of Hamilton's pupils, James Oswald. Oswald is at pains to point the contrast between the kind of moderation he had learned from Professor Hamilton and what passed for moderation in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁴⁸

On presently available information it does not seem possible to establish what were the origins of Moderatism with any degree of certainty nor even to arrive at a wholly satisfactory definition of the term. But it is quite clear that a group of notable divines in the eighteenth century who were regarded by themselves /

⁴⁶Laing MSS. II 620¹⁹. Endorsement by Wallace : "It was written before the year 1720".

⁴⁷Hamilton lived from 1669 to 1732.

⁴⁸J. Oswald : Letters concerning the Present State of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh 1767, pp. 23, 27.
Mathieson : Awakening of Scotland, p.196.

themselves and by their contemporaries as "moderates" studied under, and were greatly influenced by, Professor William Hamilton of Edinburgh. This thesis is therefore not a history of Moderatism but an examination of the activities and writings of this "Hamilton" group of moderates. It is an attempt to do what Principal Tulloch found himself unable to do in his St. Giles' Lecture:

"What is known as Moderatism may be said to divide itself into two epochs, during the first of which, extending to 1751, Dr. Patrick Cuming, who was Professor of Church History in the University of Edinburgh, was 'the chief ostensible leader of the Church'. Had space sufficed, it would have been interesting to sketch not only Cuming, but the two Wisharts, along with Professor Leechman of Glasgow, who may be said to be representative of this earlier period".⁴⁹

To Tulloch's list of representative early Moderates we have ventured to add the names of Robert Wallace, their fellow-student, and William Hamilton, their teacher. Other of Hamilton's students, such as James Oswald,⁵⁰ will be mentioned from time to time but our main concern will be with William and George Wishart, Cuming, Wallace, and, to a lesser extent, Leechman.

⁴⁹John Tulloch in *The Scottish Church*, Edinburgh 1881 p.273.

⁵⁰James Oswald is the subject of a thesis submitted to Edinburgh University in 1948 : J. Cooper : "James Oswald and the Application of the Common Sense Philosophy to Religion".

It is hoped that this study of the early Moderates may contribute, along with a thesis on the later Moderates now being written⁵¹ in the University of Cambridge, to a more accurate use of the designation and a fairer and less prejudiced assessment of the movement.

⁵¹By Mr. Ian D.L. Clark, King's College, Cambridge.

II.

THE BACKGROUND.

The Revolution Settlement regarded with general satisfaction. Modifications provoke only verbal protest. Toleration Act: Church and State no longer co-extensive. Patronage Act: Church's meekness condemned by Seceders. Westminster Confession upheld but offenders leniently dealt with. Growth of unbelief: general alarm of ministers. Influence of English writers, especially Shaftesbury. Moderates' anxiety to write correct English. The Government's attitude to the Church. The Popular attitude.

THE BACKGROUND.

An appreciation of the high value placed upon the Revolution Settlement of 1690 by almost all the ministers¹ of the Church of Scotland is essential to an understanding of ecclesiastical developments in the eighteenth century and so it may be useful to note the main features of that Settlement as it affected the Church.

The Estates of Parliament had abolished Prelacy in 1689² and in the following year the Act was passed which ratified the Westminster Confession of Faith "as the publick and avowed Confession of this Church" and settled Presbyterian Church government and discipline as "the only Government of Christ's Church within this Kingdom".³ The question of patronage was dealt with in another act which deprived patrons of the right to present ministers to parishes and vested the Protestant heritors and elders of a parish with the right to propose a candidate to the congregation for their approval or disapproval. In the case of disapproval reasons were to be submitted to the Presbytery of the bounds and the matter terminated by its judgment.⁴

Satisfaction with this settlement was not universal but only a small group of Episcopalians and some extreme Covenanters refused to conform to the new ecclesiastical establishment. It would seem that, as the seventeenth century passed and the eighteenth advanced, the Settlement gradually /

¹This theme recurs with almost nauseating frequency in sermons of the period

²William and Mary 1st Parl. 1st session C.3.

³William and Mary 1st Parl. 2nd session C.5.

⁴William and Mary 1st Parl. 2nd session C.23.

gradually commended itself to the great majority of the nation. This meant that relations between Church and State in the eighteenth century were very much more cordial than in the previous century. This is shown most notably in the Church's reaction to the Toleration and Patronage Acts. In the seventeenth century these might well have caused bloodshed; in the eighteenth they were met with vigorous, but only verbal, protest.

The Toleration Act⁵ declared that it was lawful for Episcopalians in Scotland to meet for worship according to the liturgy of the Church of England.⁶ This was a radical departure in that the State now took cognizance of Church government and worship other than according to the forms of the Established Church. The Act also restricted the effectiveness of the discipline exercised by the Established Church by providing that no civil penalty should accompany excommunication and by depriving Church courts of the assistance of the civil magistrate in securing the attendance of those whom they summoned to appear before them.⁷ The significance of this act can hardly be over-stated for it marks the end of what had hitherto been the ideal of both Church and State : that the Church should be the nation at prayer. Thereafter Church and State are never, even in theory, co-extensive and religious dissent becomes a normal and permanent feature of Scottish life.

The Patronage Act⁸ restored to lay patrons the right of presenting ministers /

⁵10 Ann. C.7.

⁶Ibid. section 1.

⁷Ibid, section 10 but cf. R. Wallace: "The Necessity or Expediency of the Churches inquiring into the writing of David Hume Esquire..." (Laing MSS I. 97²) : "The censure of excommunication tho entirely of a spirituall nature is evidently connected with many temporall disadvantages" (1756).

⁸10 Ann. C.12.

ministers to parishes. This act was regarded as a great burden and hardship by the Church but it is significant that the General Assembly did not legislate on the question whether or not a minister might accept a presentation. According to Wodrow, the members of the Assembly of 1713 were "inclinable to wave all generall rules in case of presentations for fear of clashing with a law, and bringing more burdens upon the Church".⁹ This policy of leaving well alone was to receive considerable support throughout the century. It was felt to be unwise to endanger a basically satisfactory settlement by provoking the government over a lesser matter.

Even among those who conformed to the Revolution Settlement there were many who looked back nostalgically to the Covenanting times and even regretted the abandonment of the Covenants themselves. These were incensed at the Church's tame reaction to the imposition of the Toleration and Patronage Acts and some of them broke into open revolt over an act of Assembly¹⁰ which seemed to imply acceptance of the latter. By that time however they had advanced beyond even the civil act of 1690 and were demanding that ministers be chosen, not by heritors and elders or by the patron, but by the Christian people of the parish. The most vociferous members of this "popular" party seceded from the Church 1733-40 and were deposed in 1740. After the Secession, the popular party gradually abandoned¹¹ the people's "right" to elect their own pastors and instead asserted their right to call their ministers. Without this call by the people they considered that no presbytery should proceed to induct a minister. /

⁹R. Wodrow : Analecta (Maitland Club, Glasgow 1842) Vol.II p.194.

¹⁰Act of Assembly 1732 anent the planting of Vacant Churches. cf.Chapter II

¹¹N. Morren : Annals of the General Assembly 1752-66, Edinburgh 1840 p.339.

minister.

The Moderates also emphasized the necessity of a call to establish a pastoral relationship but during Cuming's leadership of the Church a call from a number of heritors and elders was often deemed sufficient.¹² During the leadership of his successor, William Robertson, the call became a mere formality and even Patronage ceased to be regarded as a grievance in any real sense.

No attempt was made by Parliament or General Assembly to modify that other integral part of the Revolution Settlement, the Westminster Confession of Faith. But it would be a mistake to imagine that the Confession was universally acceptable. Early in the century a group of young ministers gave open expression to their dislike of creeds and confessions and declared that assent to them should not be made a condition of ministerial office.¹³ Only one of them, however, protested when asked to sign the Formula prescribed for candidates for licence. At the other extreme the Assembly of 1717 condemned the Presbytery of Auchterarder for requiring candidates for licence to assent to the proposition: "I believe that it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ".¹⁴ But there were many like Principal Hadow who stoutly upheld the Confession and roundly condemned both the Antinomianism of the "Marrow-men"¹⁵ and the Arianism of Professor Simson. This is shown by the many acts /

¹²Sir Henry Moncrieff : Life of Erskine, Edinburgh 1818 pp. 456-8.

¹³cf. Chapter IV.

¹⁴This became known as "The Auchterarder Creed".

¹⁵i.e. those who protested at the condemnation of "The Marrow of Modern Divinity" as Antinomian by the Assembly of 1720. "The Marrow" was a 17th century English Puritan tract.

acts concerning purity of doctrine passed by the Assembly in the opening decades of the century.¹⁶

It is therefore remarkable that during the same period the Assembly shows an increasing tendency to deal leniently with individual offenders against orthodoxy. As early as 1717 Professor Simson is mildly rebuked when accused of Arminianism and even when he is virtually convicted of Arianism in 1728 he is suspended, not deposed. His pupil, Archibald Campbell, succeeds in convincing the Assembly of 1736 that his teaching is not inconsistent with the Confession.¹⁷ William Wishart and William Leechman are also acquitted of heresy. As the century advances, the Assembly becomes even less disposed to censure heresy and even infidelity in particular individuals. This is shown most notably in the case of David Hume and Lord Kames, in which the Assembly of 1755 contented itself with a general condemnation of infidel writings.¹⁸

The growth of unbelief in the doctrines of the Christian Faith is the subject of alarmed comment throughout the period with which we shall be concerned. When due allowance has been made for homiletic exaggeration it is remarkable that so many ministers, both Moderate and Evangelical should draw attention to the great progress of Deism and scepticism. As early /

¹⁶e.g. Act IX of 1710, Act VIII of 1715, Act X of 1717, Acts V, VIII of 1720, Act VII of 1722, Act X of 1727, Act VII of 1735, Act VII of 1736.

¹⁷Campbell was Professor of Ecclesiastical History at St. Andrews. He and Simson are often described as Moderates and cited in support of allegations of Moderate unorthodoxy but they have little in common with the Hamilton school.

¹⁸cf. Chapter VIII.

early as 1731, Robert Wallace felt compelled to acknowledge: "the debates of our time are about the Foundation of Christianity; and a question is made whether the Christian Church ought to have a Being".¹⁹ Thirty years later he wrote:

"In consequence of the public taste and indulgence, scepticism is on a very flourishing footing; perhaps it has not abounded so much in any age since the commencement of christianity, nor has it prevailed more in any country than in Britain."²⁰

In consequence of this, Wallace and his fellow Moderates felt keenly the urgent need to defend the Faith.²¹

This incidence of unorthodox opinions in Scotland may be attributed in large measure to the close relations between Scotland and England after the Union of the Parliaments in 1707. The works of Arians like Whiston and Clarke, of Deists like Woolston and Tindal, of sceptics like Shaftesbury and Mandeville were widely read in Scotland. It is misleading to regard Moderatism as the Scottish equivalent or parallel of any of these movements. Indeed Wallace ends one of his sermons with a prayer for preservation "from a deluge of Scepticism and Deism".²² But their influence can certainly be traced in the mild treatment of Simson and the refusal of the General Assembly /

¹⁹R. Wallace : The Regard due to Divine Revelation, Preface p.iii, London 1731

²⁰R. Wallace : Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence, London 1761 p.388 cf. J. Cairns : "This period marks in some sense the culmination of unbelief in the history of Christianity for it was then more widely diffused, and with less vigorous resistance than before or since". Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century p.1.

²¹cf. Chapter XII.

²²Wallace : The Regard due to Divine Revelation.

Assembly to deal with the writings of Hume and Kames. They considered that every man had a right and a duty to judge for himself in matters of religion. The other half of Wallace's prayer was for preservation from "implicit faith and blind obedience".²³

Of the English authors read in Scotland during the first half of the eighteenth century, the third Earl of Shaftesbury was undoubtedly the most influential. While his scepticism was deplored,²⁴ his theory of the moral sense, analogous to the senses of hearing, seeing and so on, was widely admired even before the arrival of Francis Hutcheson in Scotland. But it is clear that Shaftesbury's writings were admired quite as much for their form as their content.²⁵ Along with the "Tatlers" and "Spectators" they were a model for Scotsmen who wished to write in a more correct English style. It is probably significant that George Wishart was known as "the Addison of Scottish preachers".²⁶ How earnestly the early Moderates strove after a pure English diction can be seen in the fact that Leechman and Wallace both asked David Hume to point out Scotticisms and other offences against English usage in their writings.²⁷ Doubtless their diffidence in this respect had much to do with their apparent reluctance to publish their works. Wallace left an immense amount of material unpublished. Patrick Cuming /

²³Ibid.

²⁴Wallace : Various Prospects p.403.

²⁵John Erskine : Discourses I p.269.

²⁶J. Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century. Edinburgh 1881
I. pp. 6, 249.

²⁷R. Klibansky & E.G. Mossner : New Letters of David Hume, Oxford 1954. p.11
Laing MSS II 96² : Proof sheets of Wallace's Dissertation on the Numbers
of Mankind with corrections in language by Hume.

Cuming published only three sermons and William Hamilton only one. Neither of the Wisharts published very much, though George was greatly admired as a preacher and William enjoyed the advantage of having lived in London.²⁸ This shortage of published material is a very considerable obstacle in the way of any attempt to describe the early development of Moderatism.

Another difficulty lies in the paucity of references to Church affairs in official correspondence of the period. Very few letters in the huge Newcastle and Mitchell collections²⁹ in the British Museum deal even in passing with Church business, despite the fact that both Sir Andrew Mitchell and the Duke of Newcastle were by the nature of their offices³⁰ closely concerned with Scottish ecclesiastical matters. When a letter does deal with Church business the writer quite often implies that the matter is of no great importance.³¹ The crises over the Secession of 1733 and the Inverkeithing Case of 1752 receive only the briefest notice in the Newcastle papers. It is no exaggeration to say with Hume Brown that, although questions of Church polity continue to excite interest in the eighteenth century, /

²⁸He was for a time minister of a Scots Church in London.

²⁹These are included in the Additional MSS and will be cited by their numbers in that series.

³⁰Mitchell was Under-Secretary for Scotland and Newcastle was Secretary of State with general responsibility for Scottish affairs. He signed the Royal Letter to the General Assembly.

³¹cf. a letter from the Earl of Ilay to Newcastle, dated 8th September, 1733 : "We have had lately some disturbance in Church matters, it would be too tedious to state it at length". Additional MSS 32688 f.291. This refers to the Secession!

century, "they no longer determine public policy".³²

That popular interest was maintained is shown by the comparatively large amount of space devoted by "The Scots Magazine"³³ to Church affairs. The meetings of the General Assembly are always well reported and there are frequent reports of the meetings of other Church courts. Full accounts are given of all controversial matters and extended extracts are printed from ecclesiastical and theological pamphlets. But in the same magazine it is easy to see that a vast variety of other interests is holding the attention of its readers. Political, military, and international affairs, literary, artistic and scientific interests, agricultural and commercial prospects have all combined to displace theology and Church matters from the dominant position which they had held in the seventeenth century. Hume Brown has indeed gone so far as to describe this period as "The Age of Secular Interests"³⁴ and such a description is borne out by a survey of the contents of the Scots Magazine.

The background to the early development of Moderatism is thus a Scotland where many other interests are competing with Church affairs for the popular attention and a Church which regards the tendencies of the Age with some apprehension but is on the whole well satisfied with its position as established by law.

³²P. Hume Brown : History of Scotland, Vol.III Cambridge 1909. p.1.

³³Founded in 1739.

³⁴Hume Brown : op.cit. p.2.

III.

WILLIAM HAMILTON : TEACHER OF THE MODERATES.

Personifies the transition from 17th to 18th centuries.

Scarcity of source material. Hamilton as Professor : the views of his students, Ramsay and Wodrow. Sermons by his students give offence. Hamilton and the Covenanters. Suspected of heresy. Hamilton and the Glasites. Hamilton and Simson. Hamilton and Boston. His S.S.P.C.K. Sermon. Hamilton and the Patronage controversy. The Act anent Planting of Vacant Churches. Hamilton's correspondence. Hamilton as Churchmen and as Teacher.

WILLIAM HAMILTON : TEACHER OF THE MODERATES.

The remarkable change in the ecclesiastical and spiritual climate, which a comparison of the 17th and 18th centuries displays, is shown in an almost dramatic fashion in the life of William Hamilton, Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh for twenty three years during the period of change. By birth and upbringing he might have been expected to be a zealous upholder of the Covenants for his family was renowned for its Covenanting sympathies, his elder brother had fought at the battle of Bothwell Bridge, and he himself had been baptized at an impressionable age on the moors at a conventicle.¹ But this same man has been described as "a zealous moderate who contrived to train up a race of heterodox ministers by maintaining an ominous silence in reference to various doctrines of the Gospel".² It would seem, therefore, that in his own person Hamilton exemplifies the transition from the violent, warlike struggles of the seventeenth century to the calmer, wordy controversies of the eighteenth century. When we add to this the fact that Hamilton held several positions of trust and influence in the Church it is clear that it would be of some advantage to examine his character and career, his teaching and his influence in the councils of the Church.

¹John Warrick : Moderators of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh 1913, p.240^f

²J.S. Reid : Presbyterian Church in Ireland (2nd ed.) London 1853, Vol.III. p.405

The materials for such an examination are unfortunately meagre, and this may well account for Hamilton's being neglected by most historians of the Scottish Church. His literary remains consist of a manuscript history of the Reformation in Scotland and one published sermon. In order to piece together a picture of him we have to rely on the diaries and reminiscences of Robert Wodrow, John Ramsay, William Mitchell, Thomas Boston and tributes paid to him by his former students.

After a ministry of fifteen years at Cramond, Hamilton was appointed Professor of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh in 1709 and held the Chair until 1732. From 1730 he was also Principal of the University. Contrary to the usual practice hitherto he was not inducted to one of the churches in Edinburgh because it was considered impossible for the Professor to give adequate attention both to his congregation and his students³. It seems that a vast number of students sat under him and at one period during his tenure of office he had two hundred students under his care⁴. Thus he had considerable scope for exercising a powerful influence on the rising generation of ministers, and two of the most eminent of his students pay tribute to that influence. Principal William Leechman of Glasgow assured his friend and biographer, James Wodrow, "that he was under great obligations to Professor Hamilton"⁵, and James Oswald, Minister at Methven, Moderator of the General Assembly in 1765, and philosopher of the "Common-sense" school, claimed that many of the leaders of the Church had "been directed /

³Warrick : op.cit. p.242.

⁴Robert Wodrow : Correspondence III p.259.

⁵James Wodrow : Life of Leechman p.4 (Prefixed to Sermons, London 1789)

directed by the sentiments and spirit of Principal Hamilton, whose scholars many of us were"⁶.

A generous tribute to Hamilton's qualifications for the Chair of Divinity is paid by one who was not a student of his but was keenly interested in the affairs of Church and Universities. John Ramsay of Ochertyre writes: "If the report of the aged may be believed none was ever better qualified to discharge the important trust of a professor of divinity. There was a sincerity, a kindness, and a vein of liberality in all that he did and said that gained him the hearts of his students and made them enter with warmth into his views and sentiments. He certainly had the merit of breeding a number of very eminent and amiable ministers who kept equally clear of fanaticism and laxity"⁷.

Robert Wodrow, minister of Eastwood and a correspondent with Hamilton, does not share Ramsay's satisfaction with the Professor's students. Reports from Edinburgh made him wonder if they were keeping clear of laxity: "The complaints of the wildnesses of the students at Edinburgh continou: their haunting dancing-schools and publick dancing; their night revells; and the sermons of some of the younger preachers against the Spirit's work, under the notion of enthusiasme, and making their auditorys laugh by mocking seriouse religion in the pulpit and smiling themselves. These give a very ill impression of their master if he indulge such things in them"⁸.

⁶James Oswald : Letters concerning the Church of Scotland, p.23.
Edinburgh 1767.

⁷John Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century I, p.227^f
Edinburgh 1888.

⁸Robert Wodrow : Analecta IV, p.213. Maitland Club 1843.

Wodrow does hint that Hamilton may not have approved of such conduct. Oswald, his student, assures us that he did not: "His friends and favourites were - not the flimsy superficial gentlemen who having picked up somewhat of the English language, can read another's sermons with a becoming grace - but such as had drawn their knowledge from the sources of ancient learning and the Scriptures in their original languages and who by a gravity and decorum of behaviour did commend the religion they taught"⁹.

Wodrow took great exception to sermons preached at the Assembly of 1730 by former students of Professor Hamilton and especially deplored "a satyre of the former Presbyterian times and our best times" by Charles Telfer, minister at Hawick¹⁰. But wherever Telfer acquired his contempt for the Covenanting period, he did not get it from Professor Hamilton who was "in the use of recommending to his students at the conclusion of their course to maintain a tender and charitable respect towards their fathers in the Church who had not enjoyed the means of acquiring the literature and liberality of sentiment so amply provided in the more happy times in which their own lot had been cast"¹¹. This testimony by his son shows that Hamilton did not forget his Covenanting upbringing and would not have the Covenanters satirised or scorned.

Despite this generous treatment of the Covenanting fathers Hamilton was widely suspected of having adopted views which would not have commended him /

⁹Oswald, Letters p.23.

¹⁰Analecta IV p.125. Robert Wallace and Patrick Cuming also preached at this Assembly. Cuming's sermon was "unexceptionable" but Wallace's was fiercely attacked.

¹¹Told by Robert Hamilton to Thomas Somerville of Jedburgh.
Somerville : My Own Life and Times, Edinburgh 1861, p.64.

him to the divines of his youth. The question of his orthodoxy greatly exercised his contemporaries. Wodrow expresses their suspicions thus: "by severalls who know him well its thought he is departed from the Calvinisticall doctrine, and the ordinary doctrine taught in this Church, though he hath the wisdom to keep himself in the clouds"¹². The reticence of the Professor apparently made a great impression on one at least of his students, for the biographer of Leechman records that not only did Leechman learn much from his Professor on points on which Hamilton spoke his mind openly but that "young as he was, he learned something also in other points about which the Professor said nothing. The silence of such a man struck him it should seem and led him to investigate the causes of it"¹³. Wodrow reports an incident where the Professor's caution seemed rather sinister: "One of his scholars had occasion in a discourse to insist upon the absolute necessity of believing the doctrine of the Trinity and its being a foundation point. This subject he handled with some zeal. The Professor commended the discourse but cautioned against too much positiveness, in that matter since good and great men could not satisfy themselves in that matter as to its fundamentality"¹⁴.

Against this must be balanced two sermons delivered before the Assemblies of 1728 and 1731. Wodrow heard both these sermons and says that /

¹²R. Wodrow : Analecta IV, p.139^f

¹³J. Wodrow : Life of Leechman p.4.

¹⁴R. Wodrow : Analecta III p.302.

that in 1728 Hamilton asserted the doctrine of the Trinity "to be a fundamental of our faith and what ought with the greatest zeal and earnestness to be looked after"¹⁵. The sermon in 1731, he reports, "had severall open declarations as to Christ's Divinity"¹⁶. But what is perhaps more significant is that on both occasions the Professor declared his dislike of ecclesiastical persecution. He told the Assembly in 1728 that "God's service could not possibly be promoted by personal real injuries"¹⁷ and his sermon in 1731 contained "some hints against a spirit of persecution which wer variously applied"¹⁸. This aversion to persecution is clearly shown in his actual practice for he showed no enthusiasm for the prosecution of either the Glasites or of Professor Simson of Glasgow. This is in contrast to the conduct of James Smith, minister at Cramond and his rival for the leadership of the Church, who, according to Wodrow, was better liked "by falling in to some popular things, especially Mr. Simson's discharge from teaching, and Mr. Glass"¹⁹. Hamilton, it appears, was not prepared to buy popularity at such a cost.

The Glasite controversy was not one for which one might expect Hamilton to have much sympathy for it took its origins in John Glas' opposition to an extreme Covenanting faction in his parish of Tealing. Glas was disgusted at the almost obsessive concern for the Covenants to the detriment of any real /

¹⁵R. Wodrow : Correspondence. Vol.III p.338. Wodrow Society 1843.

¹⁶R. Wodrow : Analecta IV p.237.

¹⁷Wodrow : Correspondence III p.338.

¹⁸Wodrow : Analecta IV p.237.

¹⁹Ibid, IV p.213.

real spiritual life and this led him to an examination of the nature of Christ's Kingdom. His conclusions are embodied in "The Testimony of the King of Martyrs" in which he asserts that the Kingdom of Christ is essentially spiritual and is thus completely independent of State sanctions and control and support. Gradually he came to the view that the Church was composed of true believers who possessed a real experience of saving grace and had been moved to separate themselves from the world. A number of his own parishioners and some from neighbouring parishes who sympathised with him formed themselves into a society "in subjection to Mr. Glas as their overseer in the Lord" in 1725²⁰.

It is unlikely that Hamilton had any deep sympathy with Glas' peculiar views but he had no sympathy with those who sought to drive this devout and earnest man from the Church. He was however outvoted in his attempt to reverse the deposition of Glas by the Synod of Angus and Mearns when the matter was discussed in the Commission of Assembly due to the opposition of James Smith. Despite his failure in the case of Glas he continued his efforts to prevent the persecution of the new sect and was able to prevent the deposition from the ministry simpliciter of Glas' disciple, Francis Archibald of Guthrie²¹.

Wodrow considered that Hamilton supported Glas out of a desire to gratify the English Independents²² to whose principles Glas had gradually approximated for he asserted that "a congregation, or church of Jesus Christ..../"

²⁰Account of the Life and Character of Mr. John Glas, Edinburgh 1813, XI.

²¹Wodrow : Analecta IV pp.135, 188, 261^f.

²²Ibid IV p.187^f

Christ.... is in its discipline subject to no jurisdiction under heaven"²³. This being so, Wodrow is most anxious that it should be made clear that more than Independent principles are at stake for, as he says in a letter to a minister in Angus, "it will look very ill in the eyes of our brethren in England and New England to depose a person from the ministry only for this". He sees nothing wrong in Independent principles and goes so far as to say, "Nobody has a greater value for some of these principles than I and no doubt there have been brethren of that opinion whom all the Reformed Churches do and ought to esteem". But he is convinced "that Dr. Owen, the Mathers²⁴, and other pious Independents would never approve his practices". The Synod had deposed Glas rather "for his disorders in what they think a Scriptural, regular, and well constituted Presbyterian Church; his departure from her, his contumacy and divisive courses, and venting and spreading schism and innovations in a peaceable and united society, contrary to his solemn vow and subscription". Among "surprising novelties", introduced by Glas, Wodrow notes the holy kiss, saying Amen and the use of the Lord's Prayer. He concludes his letter with heavy sarcasm: "If he be upon the foot of innovations and setting up for the head of a sect and being noticed for his singularity... I wonder he produces not what there is abundance of evidence for, were we to follow the very early practice of some Christians, that is, the giving of Eucharist to infants. So far he is in the right (if he would be /

²³J. Glas : Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Controversy about the National Covenants, Edinburgh 1728 p.223.

²⁴A famous New England family of ministers. Wodrow corresponded with Cotton Mather D.D. (Glas) of Boston, Mass.

be singular) not to innovate in doctrine, since there are so many innovations there that it would scarce render him singular"²⁵.

Wodrow was writing in 1730 a year after the termination of the famous Simson case in which Hamilton also played a conspicuous part. If his efforts on behalf of the Glasites lost him popularity his conduct in the various Simson trials earned him a great deal of suspicion²⁶.

Simson was about the same age as Hamilton but spent only three years in the parish of Troqueer before being admitted as Professor ^{of} Divinity at Glasgow in 1708. Six years later, one of the ministers of Edinburgh called the attention of the Assembly to the reports in circulation that Professor Simson had given voice to Arminian views. The matter dragged on until 1717, despite Simson's avowal that he still adhered to the Confession of Faith. In that year the Assembly found that he had used some expressions capable of a heterodox meaning and prohibited him from using such expressions in the future²⁷. Nine years later rumours were abroad that Simson had adopted the Arian views of the English writer, Clarke, and several presbyteries overtured the Assembly of 1726 to inquire into the matter. This second case occupied the Assembly until 1729.

Wodrow tells us that Hamilton's part in this second series of trials gave rise to "fears as if Professor Hamilton was not sound and firm as to the doctrine /

²⁵Letter from Wodrow to the Rev. Hugh Maxwell, Forfar. Corr.III p.458-60.

²⁶Wodrow : Analecta III 485.

²⁷Acts of Assembly 1717

doctrine of the Trinity"²⁸. But an examination even of Wodrow's account of the Edinburgh Professor's conduct in the trial of his Glasgow colleague gives no ground for supposing that he necessarily shared the Arian views attributed to Professor Simson. His conduct rather suggests that he was concerned that Simson should have a scrupulously fair trial and not be victimized by the zealously orthodox.

Thus in 1727 we find him as Moderator of the Assembly modifying procedure in order to meet objections raised by Simson²⁹. When the allegation that Simson had said "that Necessary Existence and Independence were terms impertinent not to be used in the Trinity" was being debated in Assembly of 1728, Hamilton suggested that "they might be detached words and only part of a sentence, and unless we had the full conversation it was hard for him to satisfy himself so as to be found proven"³⁰. On two other occasions in the same Assembly he urged the inadequacy of the proof while admitting that the Professor was worthy of censure³¹.

He showed his dislike of persecution in consistently urging leniency when the Assembly was passing sentence on Simson. He pointed out that suspension would as effectively silence Simson as a sentence of deposition from the ministry. Interim suspension was imposed by the Assembly of 1728 and when the case was again before the Assembly in 1729 Hamilton made it clear that he would firmly oppose any attempt to secure Simson's deposition³².
In /

²⁸Analecta III 513.

²⁹Correspondence III 296.

³⁰Ibid III 348.

³¹Ibid III 370, 378

³²Ibid III 438^f.

In an attempt to preserve peace and harmony it was agreed that the sentence of suspension should be continued.

To this there was only one dissentient voice, that of Thomas Boston, minister of Ettrick, who thus records the incident in his Memoirs : "Finding I durst not acquiesce, I arose, and said 'I dissent, in my own name and in name of all that shall adhere to me'; and finding no body at all to declare their adherence, I added 'and for myself alone, if no body shall adhere'. Whereupon I was gravely accosted by the Moderator to bring me off from it". The Moderator addressed him in the most solemn manner and asked: "Will you tear out the bowels of your mother?" Boston was prevailed upon not to record his dissent and gives as his reason: "By Professor Hamilton's means I obtained that the not insisting on the marking of it for that time should not preclude my access thereto in a subsequent diet ³³ .

This incident arose out of the scholarly association which existed between Boston and Hamilton. Boston's first reference to his acquaintance with Hamilton is in 1726 when he records his calling on the Professor to ask him to look over an essay he had written on Hebrew accentuation. They had apparently clashed over the controversy attending the re-publication of the "Marrow of Modern Divinity" but Boston was civilly received and the Professor readily consented to his request ³⁴ . Boston desired Hamilton's opinion on whether there was anything contrary to Reformed doctrine in the essay and whether /

³³Thomas Boston : Memoirs. Edinburgh 1776 p.438^f.

³⁴Thomas Boston : A General Account of my Life (ed.Low) p.276. London 1908.

whether it was worthy of publication.³⁵ A letter from Hamilton assured him that there was nothing unorthodox in the essay and that it was not unworthy of the notice of the learned.³⁶ Boston indicates that the Professor rose in his estimation as a result of their correspondence, even before the Professor approved his essay!³⁷ Certainly it seems unlikely that he would consult anyone on such questions whom he did not consider to be orthodox.

Direct evidence as to what Hamilton's views were is disappointingly meagre for his sole published work is a fairly short sermon delivered a few months before his death on behalf of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. This can hardly be used as proof that he was orthodox or unorthodox. Certainly there is nothing in the sermon that appears to be in opposition to the Westminster Confession but the subject: "The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion" does not necessarily call for an incursion into the controversies of Arminianism and Arianism, and in fact the sermon gives no guidance as to how Hamilton stood in these matters.

The sermon is, however, not without interest in other ways. It is not a "haranguing" sermon, for it is carefully constructed under three main heads and within each there are several sub-divisions. This agrees with Wodrow's testimony that Hamilton did not himself use the haranguing method of preaching even though some of his students did.³⁸

³⁵Boston : Memoirs p.434.

³⁶Boston : Memoirs. Appendix 10.

³⁷Boston : Memoirs p.407.

³⁸Wodrow : Analecta III 513.

What is more significant than the form of the sermon is its content. It is apologetic rather than dogmatic in tone, and the first main section is given over entirely to an apology for the Christian religion. Hamilton asserts that the belief accorded to Christianity proves the truth of the historic facts on which it is based. If it is an excellent revelation it must needs be true, for it is ridiculous to suppose that the Evil One would use such excellent means. If the Bible is a forgery it is a very unpalatable one, and if it were it would have long ago been discovered. After illustrating the excellency of Christianity he goes on to insist that a reasonable faith is required in the heirs of so great a heritage. Implicit faith makes us Christians only by accident of birth, just as we might have been born Jews or Mohammedans. "Faith upon no other Foundation can never be a true Christian and saving faith. Let us therefore attend to the Evidence of the Truth of our Religion that presents it self to us and lay a good Foundation of Christian Knowledge whereupon to build a firm Belief of it that may be proof against the impious Cavils of the Infidels of the Age".³⁹ Thus Hamilton showed himself a true son of the Age of Reason for he firmly believed that the truth of Christianity could be shown in such a way that no reasonable, intelligent man could deny it. It was the Christians' duty to refute the impious cavils of the unbelievers.

Professor Hamilton was for many years one of the dominant figures in ecclesiastical affairs, after the death of Carstares, but, according to Wodrow, /

³⁹W. Hamilton : The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion p.25^f
Edinburgh 1732.

Wodrow, William Mitchell, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, "was the person whose sentiments in our Scots affairs wer depended upon very much by our great folk and people at Court".⁴⁰ It is perhaps significant that Mitchell enjoyed the sinecure office of Royal Chaplain while Hamilton was King's Almoner, "a post of no small labour and fatigue".⁴¹ He was deprived of this office in 1726 after the Duke of Argyll⁴² and his brother the Earl of Ilay⁴³ assumed control of Scottish affairs. Mitchell apparently changed sides to preserve his Chaplaincy.⁴⁴

Inevitably Hamilton took a leading role in the Patronage controversy. Five years after the restoration of lay patronage he and Mitchell were sent to London by the Commission of Assembly to obtain redress of this and other grievances. They came to London in February 1717 and had interviews with the King, the Duke of Roxburgh,⁴⁵ then Secretary of State for Scotland, and many other Scots noblemen and gentlemen, including Argyll and Ilay who were then out of favour at Court. According to Mitchell, it seemed that Roxburgh and his friends "could be easy in quitting their Patronages, but were apprehensive others would not go into it, being now a law, and that many would think it was a giving the Church too much power, which she had not well used in setting elders against their masters".⁴⁶ Hamilton formed a more hopeful impression of /

⁴⁰Analecta III p.447.

⁴¹Ibid III p.321.

⁴²John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll, Duke of Greenwich.

⁴³Archibald Campbell, Earl of Ilay, later 3rd Duke of Argyll.

⁴⁴Analecta III p.289.

⁴⁵John Ker, 5th Earl and 1st Duke of Roxburgh. He opposed Walpole over the Malt Tax and was dismissed 1725.

⁴⁶Diary of the Rev. William Mitchell p.228 in Miscellany of the Spalding Club, Vol.I Aberdeen 1841.

of this, or possibly some other interview, for he told Wodrow that "the English ministry wer most ready to ease us of this burden; and desired them to speak to A (rgyll) and Isla, and if they gained them, they might depend on their concurrence".⁴⁷ Both accounts agree that the Two Brothers would have none of it as they considered Patronages to be private property.⁴⁸

Argyll and Ilay were responsible for a great increase in resentment against Patronage in the late "seventeen-twenties". Hitherto, though regarded as a great grievance in principle, Patronage had not in fact borne hardly on the Church in practice. The main reason for this seems to have been the policy followed with regard to parishes in the gift of the Crown, a very considerable proportion.⁴⁹ The Court of Police, which dealt with Patronage, was ordered to present with concurrence of all concerned. This prevented any very serious hardship until Argyll and Ilay took over the management of Scottish affairs on the dismissal of Roxburgh. This instruction to secure the concurrence of interested parties was then left out and the number^{of} disputed settlements began to increase.⁵⁰

Hamilton's views on Patronage were made clear in a discussion in a Committee of the Assembly of 1731. He was clear that Patronages were a grievance but not so sure whether they were against the principles of the Church since it was evident that such eminent divines as Henderson and Gillespie were not in principle opposed to the acceptance of presentations.

He /

⁴⁷Wodrow : Analecta IV p.245^f

⁴⁸Mitchell : Diary p.229. Analecta III p.491.

⁴⁹Estimates vary from a third to a half.

⁵⁰Analecta IV. p.253.

He hesitated to suggest that the principles of the Church were in opposition to the practice of such men.⁵¹

The outcome of the discussion on this occasion was the "Act and Overture concerning the Method of Planting Vacant Churches" which owed a great deal to the guidance of Hamilton.⁵² The Synod of Glasgow had overtured the Assembly of 1731 to lay down a uniform rule to be followed by Presbyteries "tanquam jure devoluto".⁵³ By the Patronage Act the right of settling a minister in a vacant parish devolved on the Presbytery within whose jurisdiction it lay if the Patron of the living failed to present a duly qualified candidate within six months. Guidance in the exercise of the "jus devolutum" was now being sought. The Assembly enacted that in such cases the Presbytery should appoint one or more of their number "to meet with the Heritors, being Protestants, and the Elders who represent the People, that they may elect and call one to be their minister, whom they are to propose to the whole Congregation to be either approved or disapproved by them: And the Disapprovers to offer their Reasons to the Presbytery of the Bounds, at whose Judgment, and by whose Determination, the Calling and Entry of a Minister is to be ordered and concluded".⁵⁴ Hamilton firmly resisted all attempts to increase the part of the people in the electing and calling of their minister. In his view they were sufficiently represented by the elders and their proper role was to approve or disapprove on due cause, not to elect.⁵⁵ This act was converted into a standing law of the Church /

⁵¹Analecta IV p.246^f

⁵²Oswald : Letters p.24

⁵³Analecta IV p.249.

⁵⁴Acts of Assembly 1731 p.7

⁵⁵Analecta IV p.251.

Church by the Assembly of 1732. In November of that year Hamilton died and so was spared knowing that the Act which he had promoted in order to heal the divisions of the Church⁵⁶ was to prove a major cause of the first great secession.

Hamilton seems to have conducted an extensive correspondence⁵⁷ but few of his letters appear to have survived. Two are printed in full, and extracts from a third, in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor of August 1826.⁵⁸ Three letters written to him by Robert Wodrow are preserved in the Wodrow correspondence⁵⁹ and there are frequent references in Wodrow's letters to Professor Hamilton's correspondence with English and Irish ministers. But besides taking a keen interest in the doctrinal controversies of England and Ireland, Hamilton was very well informed as to what was happening in the Reformed Churches of Europe, from Holland to Hungary.⁶⁰ The wideness of his reading is evidenced by the many and various books on which he makes comments. It is indicative of the breadth of his sympathies that he praises a defence of the Christian Religion by a French Roman Catholic. Another book which he commends to his correspondent is "De l'excellence de la Religion Chretienne" by a French Reformed churchman, Professor Bernard of Leyden: "It is writ upon an excellent design to recommend practical religion, as conducing to happiness, and answer objections".⁶¹ The similarity in title and, apparently, in content /

⁵⁶Oswald : Letters p.24

⁵⁷Wodrow : Correspondence III p.171

⁵⁸Edinburgh Christian Instructor Vol.25 pp.525-30.

⁵⁹Wodrow : Correspondence III p.156, 171, 190

⁶⁰Christian Instructor Vol.25 p.530

⁶¹Christian Instructor Vol.25 p.526.

content between this and Hamilton's sole published work may not be entirely accidental.

It would seem that most historians of the Scottish Church are not disposed to attach any importance to the career and influence of William Hamilton, for they almost all ignore him. Cunningham mentions his contributions to the debate on Professor Simson⁶² but only Law Mathieson makes any assessment of Hamilton's influence on the Church⁶³. Is this neglect deserved?

Hamilton's importance is shown by the manner of his administration of Church affairs and by the manner of his teaching. Of both the characteristic feature is moderation.

An elegist on the death of Principal Smith briefly characterized Smith's predecessors as principal of the University of Edinburgh.⁶⁴ His description of William Hamilton as "mitis Hamiltonus" is borne out by James Wodrow, John Ramsay and James Oswald⁶⁵ who are all at pains to emphasize the mildness and good temper which he showed not only to his supporters but also to his opponents. This example, as we shall see, was not lost on his students for both Patrick Cuming and Robert Wallace modelled themselves on their old teacher. It is one of the ironies of Scottish Church history that Hamilton's great effort to promote concord in Church affairs, the Act of 1732, should have become such a fruitful source of controversy and discord.

Hamilton's /

⁶²John Cunningham : Church History of Scotland, Edinburgh 1859, II. 406.

⁶³W. Law Mathieson : The Awakening of Scotland, Glasgow 1910, p.196.

⁶⁴Quoted in Warrick : Moderators p.286.

⁶⁵J. Wodrow : Life of Leechman, p.4. J. Oswald : Letters p.24.
J. Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen Vol.I p.227.

Hamilton's teaching is important not because of its matter but because of its manner. It seems unlikely that his teaching was heretical in content though his silence on certain topics may have had more significance than a desire to set his students thinking. In our next chapter we shall see that he was very successful in this latter aim. The claim made by James Oswald that he taught his students "a liberal manner of thinking on all subjects"⁶⁶ is fully justified by the vigorous intellectual activities of the clubs set up by those who had sat under him. To a consideration of these and other activities of Hamilton's students we now turn.

⁶⁶Oswald : Letters p.23.

IV.

"NEU-LIGHTS AND PREACHERS-LEGALL".

Wodrow's survey of Scotland in 1726. "Mr. Wisheart and his Keepers".
Student Clubs in Edinburgh. Wallace on Confessions. Wallace's "perfect
man". Clubs in the Merse and in Glasgow. Communion sermons at the Tron
Kirk, Glasgow. Wishart and Professor Simson. Cuming's Synod Sermon.
Wallace's Synod Sermon. Wallace and Tindal. Reply to Wallace's Sermon and
his Defence of it. Wallace comes to Edinburgh. Wishart's London Sermons.
Wishart accused of heresy but acquitted. Wishart, Wallace and Shaftesbury.
The Neu-lights in Edinburgh.

"NEU-LIGHTS AND PREACHERS-LEGALL".

Towards the close of the year 1726, the minister of Eastwood cast a gloomy eye over his native country and described its circumstances as "very sad threatning and cloudy". The Church gave him particular cause for concern and he noted in his Analecta:

"We have the Marron people on the one hand who print and scatter papers and sermons very cheap through the country, and are popular, and spreading and gaining ground in some places. In the North we have Popery not born down, and very much encreasing. In the West we have Mr. Simson's unhappy affair. To say nothing of Mr. Glass and Archibald in Angus; and the Neu-lights and Preachers-legall shall I call them or Arminian? Too much has been given as an occasion, last year and formerly to nottice Mr. Wisheart and his Keepers".¹

Mr. Wishart and his friends had indeed been the subject of Wodrow's disapproving comments ever since Wishart's induction to the Tron Parish of Glasgow in September, 1724. Wishart was the son of Principal William Wishart of Edinburgh and bore the same Christian name. He and the other "Neu-lights" (who are listed² by Wodrow on several occasions) were all students during Professor Hamilton's tenure of the Chair of Divinity at Edinburgh.

¹Wodrow : Analecta III 360.

²Besides Wishart, the list includes Charles Telfer (Hawick), William Armstrong (Canonbie) and his brother, Patrick Cuming (Lochmaben), Robert Wallace (Moffat John Taylor (Alloa) and Archibald Gibson (Dunblane). Analecta III 360, IV 165, 240

At the March Communion season in 1725 Wodrow had noted that three of the helpers at the Tron Parish "were spoken of as members of a club at Edinburgh where creeds etc were not much defended".³ The early decades of the eighteenth century saw the establishment of many clubs in both Edinburgh and Glasgow⁴ but it is very probable that the club to which Wodrow here refers is the Rankenian Club⁵ which was founded in 1717 and included Wishart and others of the "Neu-lights" among its members. Another member, Robert Wallace, thus described the activities of this or some similar club:

"He⁶ and his companions att the University of Edinburgh studied all the controversies of that time & indeed all which were of real importance with great care during a course of 6 years before and after 1720 : in truth they had exhausted that & many other controversies & those Gentlemen and Divines who have been dealing in those affairs since that time the writers of Confessionals and their adversaries and other writers for and against the Christian Religion and most part of the English Divines seem to be but babblers & half-thinkers compared with a set of students att Edinburgh about the year 1720 : these English Divines had more learning and had read more books but were not near so acute as the /

³Wodrow : Correspondence III 190.

⁴For a very full discussion of these cf. D.D. McElroy: "The Literary Clubs and Societies of 18th Century Scotland". Ph.D. Thesis Edinburgh 1952.

⁵So called because it met at Ranken's tavern. A list of the members is given in Lord Woodhouselee: Life of Kames Vol.I app.viii Edinburgh 1807.

⁶i.e. Wallace himself.

the others and have been greatly fettered with bigotry and various prejudices".⁷

These words were written by Wallace when he was going through his papers in December, 1767 and form part of a comment on "A Little Treatise against imposing Creeds or Confessions of Faith on ministers or private Christians as a necessary term of Laick or Ministeriall Communion" which he describes as having been written before the year 1720. The treatise was never published but the manuscript is preserved, along with many other unpublished works by Wallace, in the Library of the University of Edinburgh. It is of interest as showing the lines along which Wallace and his friends were thinking and may appropriately be summarised here.

Like his master, Professor Hamilton, Wallace was not content with an implicit faith: "the Christian religion recommends yea enjoyns a full and impartial examination of the grounds of our faith and practice". A man in seeking what he is to believe should not regard what any Church or Pope or assembly or convocation has commanded but only what Christ and his Apostles have commanded. Although it has been the common practice of the Christian Churches to form articles of faith to which their clergy at least have been required to subscribe, this is unreasonable, for it makes a truly impartial study of the Scriptures impossible. However scrupulous the intending minister may be, he will have a strong temptation to find in the Scriptures what he wants to find - support for the standards he is obliged to subscribe.

Wallace /

⁷Laing MSS. (University of Edinburgh) II 620¹⁸

Wallace regards it as very reasonable that he should be obliged to own that the Scriptures are the Word of God but challenges the authority of any clergymen to require subscription of "a great many long articles which men have framed". He considers that the true way to test whether a man is a Christian is "to see whether he acknowledges that Jesus Christ was a divinely authorised instructor and if he believes all that contained in these writings his inspired missionaries have blessed us with to be true". Clearly Wodrow did not exaggerate when he asserted that creeds were not much defended by Wishart, Wallace and their friends, if this is a fair sample of their opinions.

In taking this attitude to confessions Wallace considered that he was true to the most primitive practice of the Church.⁸ Further, he felt that truth could not be other than triumphant if it were freed from the dubious support of man-made confessions of faith. The proper way to deal with error is to reason against it and to show that it is contrary to Scripture. It is quite wrong to oppose error by framing propositions in opposition to it which must be subscribed under a penalty, such as not being permitted to enter the ranks of the clergy.

Wallace's keen interest in philosophical and scientific inquiry⁹ is reflected in a further argument against creeds. He points out that progress in philosophy and science would be impossible if assent to particular propositions were made binding on their practitioners. He considers that theology /

⁸"I am confident there was no more required in the first ages of Christianity".
Laing II 620¹⁸

⁹cf. Memoir of Wallace by his son in Scots Magazine Vol.33 p.340^{ff}.

theology should have the same liberty. "I'm sure its a rational belief and conviction of the mind that is required here as well as in philosophy and that nothing else will be accepted by God".

Intellectual activity was almost the breath of life to Wallace. His son says that his father entered the ministry because he thought it would afford him sufficient leisure to indulge his speculative inclinations¹⁰ and certainly this disposition colours his portrait of "the most perfect man" which is to be found in another essay dating from this period:¹¹

"He may be said to be the most perfect man who has the most comprehensive knowledge of things and by this knowledge promotes most the happiness of mankind, who has a large mind, who understands most sciences & especially these of the greatest use in the world, who has a Generous concern for the good of the world; whose very happiness consists in doing all he can to make every being happy as far as he is able, who regards all rational beings according to their true worth, gives everyone his due both in his thoughts, discourses and actions; who indeed studies to fill his own life with the finest enjoyments, refuses himself no pleasure that has no ill consequences to himself or others; but places his main delight in doing good".

We have no similar early productions of any of the other "Neu-lights".

Despite /

¹⁰Scots Magazine Vol.33 p.341.

¹¹A Little Treatise on Virtue & merit in the spirit of the Earl of Shaftesbury. Wallace comments: "It was written before the year 1720. It was never finished or published. It is worthy of being read still".

Despite their dislike of creeds and confessions only one, Charles Telfer, seems to have made any difficulty about signing the Westminster Confession but, according to Wodrow, "he came off his difficultys when he saw there was none there would license him without subscribing".¹² Telfer was settled in Hawick; William Armstrong was inducted to Canonbie in succession to his father; Patrick Cuming went to Kirkmahoe in 1720 and thence to Lochmaben in 1725; Wallace was presented to Moffat in 1723. They were thus settled at no great distance from each other and they continued to meet as a club wherein, according to Wodrow, "pretty odd notions, pretty much favouring Arminianisme were vented".¹³

William Wishart's settlement at Glasgow meant that he was separated from his friends by a considerable distance but he was able to indulge his fondness for clubs there. There were several clubs in Glasgow which discussed theological questions and one of them, the Triumpharian Club, was re-named the "Sophocardian" in Wishart's honour.¹⁴ Wodrow regarded these clubs with great disfavour because, as he said, there was no "solid grave person to moderate" and the members gave a "loose to their fancy and enquiries without any stated rule of them or any solid principles".¹⁵

Despite the considerable distance which separated him from his old friends
Wishart /

¹²Analecta III 174.

¹³Ibid IV 165.

¹⁴Ibid III 183. "Sophocardian" being the adjective from the Latinized form of Wishart, first used by George Buchanan of the martyr, George Wishart.

¹⁵Ibid III 183.

Wishart seems to have kept in close touch with them. For the first year or two after his induction to the Tron Parish in Glasgow he asked one or more of them to assist him at the Communion seasons. For his first Communion in October, 1724 he invited both Telfer and Wallace to preach, apparently as an experiment to see how "notions of liberty and searching would go down".¹⁶ They can hardly have been disappointed if they merely wished to create interest.

Only Wallace was able to come in 1724 and his two discourses created a sensation. His first one was from the text "Faith without works is dead" and in it he asserted that evil works were worse than evil opinions and condemned those who prosecuted such as differed from them in opinion and overlooked those who were loose in practice. He also insisted at some length on the necessity of impartial inquiry in matters of religion. This sermon created such a sensation that the Professor of Medicine in the University, a notable "free-liver and free-thinker", according to Ramsay of Ochtertyre¹⁷, came to hear the second. His verdict, doubtless a facetious one, was that the man ought not to be tolerated as a minister in any Protestant Church.¹⁸

At the October Communion the following year Telfer made as great a sensation with a sermon on religious wisdom, in which he called upon his hearers to examine their knowledge and principles and exhorted them not to tie themselves down /

¹⁶Analecta III 175, 238.

¹⁷J. Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century, Edinburgh 1888. Vol.I 277. When Professor Johnston signed the Confession as all professors were then required to do, the Moderator of Presbytery said: "This contains the sum and substance of your faith". To which Johnston replied: "Yes, and a great deal more".

¹⁸Analecta III 167-9.

down to favourite systems and creeds. Wodrow contrasts Telfer's sermons with those preached by Wallace by suggesting that Wallace's were copied from Tillotson and other writers, whereas Telfer's were his own composition with quotations from Shaftesbury, the Tatler and the Spectator - "odd common-places for Ministers!"¹⁹

Telfer's sermons gave considerable offence and though Wishart tried to smooth things over he did not desert his friend. On subsequent Sundays he took as his ordinary²⁰ the text "Prove all things" in which he tried to commend what his helpers had been saying. One of the petitions he used at public worship was the following: "Lord rebuke or bear down a spirit of imposition and persecution not only in Papists, but in Christians of whatever denomination".²¹ But, despite his efforts, pulpit warfare broke out and the minister of the Wynd Church in Glasgow, John Gray, who had already, in the Synod Sermon of April 1725 condemned "the lightnes and frothynes of young men",²² began to preach on "Walking humbly with God". This gave him the occasion to point out that faith based merely on rational evidence was no better than the faith of devils, who believe and tremble, but Wishart stoutly denied that this was a legitimate inference from what he had been saying about proving all things.²³ It would seem that Wishart began to be concerned that so much controversy should accompany /

¹⁹Analecta III 240.

²⁰A text on which a series of sermons was preached in order to extract the full meaning of it.

²¹Analecta III 246^f.

²²Ibid III 190.

²³Analecta III 254.

accompany the Communion season for in October 1726 he was assisted, not by his old friends, but by the ministers usually invited by his predecessor.²⁴

From this time on Wishart could do nothing right in Wodrow's eyes and the younger minister's indiscretions²⁵ in parochial and civic affairs are carefully recorded in the *Analecta*. "Not many weeks nou passes", he writes "but neu things in Mr. Wisheart's conduct are breaking out which make ane unhappy noise".²⁶ He also contrives to put the worst possible construction on Wishart's conduct as a member of the Presbytery of Glasgow during that court's inquiries into the teaching of Professor Simson. He suggests²⁷ that Wishart deliberately absented himself from two meetings of the Presbytery in 1726 which discussed Queries to be put to Simson regarding his teaching. He detects²⁸ the malign influence of Wishart's friends, Telfer, Wallace and Cuming in his dissent, at the meeting in September 1726, both from the matter of the Queries and the manner of proceeding. On the other hand, when in 1728 Wishart gave it as his opinion in Presbytery that Professor Simson had been guilty of gross errors and had been overbearing in manner, Wodrow nastily suggests²⁹ that Wishart was expecting Simson to be deposed and was interested in securing the chair for himself. /

²⁴*Analecta* III 340.

²⁵These included asking his predecessor's widow to change her pew in the Tron Church, being over-friendly with the Chaplain and officers of an English regiment stationed at Glasgow, an attempt to start a course of lectures on Experimental Philosophy in Glasgow. This last gave some offence to the University. (*Analecta* III 178, 261, 255).

²⁶*Analecta* III 248.

²⁷*Ibid* III 322.

²⁸*Ibid* III 325^f.

²⁹*Analecta* IV 20.

himself. But perhaps Wodrow's own account³⁰ of a conversation between Wishart and Professor Anderson³¹ gives a fairer account of Wishart's attitude: "Mr. Wisheart did frankly own that the Professor was too far in as to Dr. Clerk's scheme; and as far as he could guess was not of different sentiments from him as to the Deity of the Son. But withall said that though he could not approve of going that lenth yet he could not consent to prosecute those who differed from him". In this Wishart shows himself a true disciple of William Hamilton.

Similar sentiments were expressed by another of Professor Hamilton's students, Patrick Cuming, in his sermon before the Synod of Dumfries in April 1726. His subject was "The Wisdom that is from above" (James³¹⁷) and, in discussing the Apostle's description of that wisdom as "gentle", Cuming has this to say:

"Gentleness and moderation then put the most favourable
Construction on Men's Actions they can possibly bear, and
makes all the Allowances that ought to be made to the
Weaknesses and Infirmities of human Nature....We should suffer
others to differ from us as freely as we would be allowed to
do from them, and never impute such Differences to Causes they
refuse or draw odious Consequences from them which they do not
own. We should be far from judging the Thoughts of Men, far
from dooming them to eternal Damnation upon small and
disputable /

³⁰Analecta III 354.

³¹Professor of Church History at Glasgow.

"disputable Points: There is no greater Reproach to Reason than Bigottry...But it is very possible to be fixed in our own principles, and yet be moderate to those that differ from us; 'tis possible to be truly good but it is impossible to be infallible. Our own Faults and Errors should surely suggest Gentleness and Moderation to others".³²

Cuming goes on to claim this excellent virtue of moderation for the Church of Scotland and compares her attitude with the uncharitable attitude of the Church of Rome and of some Protestants "who doom all others who are not under their particular Form of Government".³³ Far different is the Church of Scotland: "We require no Terms of Communion ... but a good life; we never meet together to damn those that differ from us".³⁴

In his application to the text, Cuming makes a forceful plea for the avoidance of bitterness and angry contention in our personal characters and in the proceedings of Church courts. In interest³⁵ as well as conscience ministers are obliged to abstain from the grosser sins but this should not be regarded as permission to indulge in evil-speaking, unjust reproaches or implacable malice. Strife and division had always been fatal to the Church and could accomplish from within what her foes wished to do from without. But nothing could more effectually preserve the Church than that men should observe /

³²Patrick Cuming : A Sermon Preach'd at the Opening of the Synod of Dumfries, April 12th, 1726. London 1727. pp.19-21.

³³Ibid p.37.

³⁴Ibid p.22.

³⁵cf. Hume's description of the clerical character in which he accuses them of all vices but the grosser fleshly ones. "Essay on national characters". This is later answered by Wallace.

observe piety and peace in its preaching, practice and judicatories.³⁶

Wallace was even more exercised about the foes of the Church than Cuming was and this influenced his choice of subject when, three and a half years later, he was called upon to deliver the Dumfries Synod Sermon. Whereas Cuming's sermon had been concerned to represent the moderation of the Church of Scotland and "to reason against the uncharitable Principle of those who exclude from Salvation all such as are not under Prelatical Government",³⁷ Wallace considered that the great controversy of the time was not about "Rites and Ceremonies, or the Constitution and Model of a Church". The debates of the time were about the foundation of Christianity and whether the Christian Church ought to have a being at all.³⁸ For this reason he chose as his subject "The Regard due to Divine Revelation" and seeks to prove that revelation is not unnecessary and irrelevant as the Deists held, taking as his text I Thessalonians 5^{20,21} : "Despise not propesyings. Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good." Wallace paraphrases the text as enjoining "Not to despise all pretences to divine Revelation without tryal but to examine the different pretences, embracing such as they found good, and rejecting the spurious and false".³⁹

He suggests that the main reason why all pretences to divine revelation are rejected by some men is that they consider that our reason alone can instruct us sufficiently in all that is necessary to be known about religion and /

³⁶Cuming : Ibid p.42-5.

³⁷Cuming : Preface to Synod Sermon.

³⁸R. Wallace : The Regard due to Divine Revelation. London 1731. Preface page ⁱⁱⁱ.

³⁹Wallace : Synod Sermon p.3^f

and a future state. Much might be said on this head but he will confine himself to one matter concerning which reason by itself is not able to instruct us sufficiently - "how God will deal with Sinners or such as in many cases have acted a vitious and unreasonable part". This is a question of the highest importance for all of us, but it is a question that reason cannot fully answer. It is true that even without revelation we may be sure that God is infinitely wise, good and just and that He will do nothing that is inconsistent with wisdom, goodness and justice, but what is wisdom and goodness in this case? Reason cannot help for, even though God is infinitely good, we also know that the best-natured being in the world may, in his capacity as judge or governor, find it necessary to punish transgressors on many occasions. A Deist may fancy that a Being of so much goodness as God will not be rigorous in punishing but will pardon on repentance and reformation but this can only be a matter of conjecture. The man who thinks he can determine by his reasoning how God will deal with him is "much like a Rebel who is for finding out by Reason how his Prince is to deal with him; and who thinking it a matter of no concern whether his Prince has proclaimed an Act of Indemnity or not, makes no enquiry into the Fact". A cautious and wise man, says Wallace, would not trust merely to reasonings and conjectures in a matter of such moment. The application is obvious: "it's certainly a good Rule not to reject all Pretences to Divine Revelation in the gross ... but on the contrary to give every thing that has any reasonable pretence to Divine Revelation a fair Hearing and to examine it with Equity and Candour".⁴⁰

But /

⁴⁰Wallace : Synod Sermon p.8-12

But in this sermon Wallace is arguing on two fronts. In his view it is as reprehensible to accept Revelation without trial as it is to reject it without trial. He has no use for those who are in the right merely by chance, who are Christians "for the same Reasons which would have made them Pagans or Mahometans in another country, because it's the fashion, and their Forefathers have been in the same Belief before them". No Protestant, says Wallace, will openly assert that men ought not to examine the grounds of our faith impartially, for that would be a betrayal of the Reformation, but the emphasis laid by many on the authority of Doctrinal Standards suggests that they disapprove of inquiring into matter of religion. The Church in forming these Confessions intended to help the body of the faithful and to prevent the admission to the ministry of any one whatever his sentiments and principles. But the Church never intended that the Confession should usurp the place of the Scriptures as the standard by which men's principles should be formed. All human compositions have value only insofar as they are agreeable to the infallible standard of Holy Scripture.⁴¹

In the application of the text Wallace counsels his hearers as to the action to be taken on both fronts.

Those who defend the cause of divine revelation should not condemn sober and free inquiry into the grounds of Religion. Men have a natural right to examine what they are being asked to believe and they should be encouraged to make any objections that occur to them. These objections should be met not with /

⁴¹Ibid pp.26-33

with references to authority but with reasoned defences of the Faith. Weak arguments should be discarded and difficulties should be frankly admitted. Actions too speak louder than words: "Let us not call on others to live as Pilgrims and Strangers on earth, to raise their thoughts above the World; whilst at the same time we appear perfectly devoted to the Interests of the present Life and pursue them with all the Cunning and Worldly Wisdom of our carnal Neighbours". He pleads also for peace among the ministers of the Church: "our united Forces are little enough to stop the Torrent of Infidelity". It heightens men's prejudices against religion to see religious men attacking each other.⁴²

On the other hand he counsels his brethren that they should also be concerned about those who take their Religion wholly on trust for their conduct is injurious to Religion. He commends "Free-thinking" and explains what he means by it : "The hearkening to the Voice of sound Reason, the examining impartially both sides of the Question, with a Disposition always to adhere to the strongest Side and to imbrace the Truth wherever it appears, in spite of all Prejudices, of all the Opposition and Authority of Men".⁴³ Ministers, then, ought not to deal with their people "merely by way of Authority" but "ought not only to instruct them to believe so and so but offer them Reasons as they are capable to understand them; and endeavour to find out the shortest and plainest Reasons for the lower Part of Mankind that they may not depend merely on Authority but be able to give a Reason of their Faith /

⁴²Ibid pp.33-39.

⁴³Ibid p.30.

Faith and Hope in God".⁴⁴

The sermon ends appropriately with a prayer for preservation from a deluge of scepticism and deism on the one hand and implicit faith and blind obedience on the other.

Between the time of the delivery of the sermon and its publication in 1731 there appeared in London a book entitled "Christianity as Old as the Creation, or The Gospel as a Republication of Nature". This did not bear the author's name but was the work of Matthew Tindal, a Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford. It marks the culmination of the Deistic movement. While he does not directly attack historical Christianity, Tindal's argument tends to show that the notion of revelation is superfluous. He argues that since Christianity has not obtained universally it cannot contain anything needful to be known by all men, but what their reason can discover without it : and therefore it is only a republication of the law of nature. This topic was so close to the subject of his Synod Sermon that when he published it Wallace prefaced it with some remarks on Tindal's arguments on the perfection of the Law of Nature.

Tindal had claimed such perfection for the Law of Nature that there was neither room nor necessity for any positive institution whatever. Wallace summarizes his arguments as follows: "It's founded on the Nature of Things and their immutable Relations and therefore can no more be altered or vary than these eternal Relations of Things; nothing can be added to it, nothing taken /

⁴⁴ Ibid p.41^f

taken from it and it's not only full and complete but very plain and evident, since the Circumstances in which every Man is placed, if duely considered, point out clearly what is his Duty in these Circumstances".⁴⁵

Wallace grants that all rules which are proper to be observed by rational creatures must result from the relations of things or the circumstances in which they are placed but points out that all rational creatures are not equally endowed with knowledge of the natures of things and their different relations so that the rules which concern them (however fixed or certain in themselves) are not equally clear to all. Since there are relations of things which are not perceived by many rational creatures there may be rules resulting from these relations which they ought to observe but which cannot be found out by them or perhaps by any finite understanding. He defines positive Institutions as "such Rules or Institutions as flow from certain Relations which cannot be found out by such rational Creatures as they concern".⁴⁶

As an instance of a positive Institution, Wallace discusses the observance of Sunday. Tindal had acknowledged that it was the Voice of Nature that God should be publicly worshipped but that the time and place and persons should be left to men's discretion.⁴⁷ But, says Wallace, if the Voice of Nature enjoins the worship of God, "may there not be a Foundation in Nature for a particular Day on which men are to convene for this purpose?" Only a Being of infinite knowledge and wisdom, however, can /

⁴⁵Preface to Synod Sermon p.iv^f.

⁴⁶Wallace : Preface to Synod Sermon p.vii.

⁴⁷M. Tindal : Christianity as Old as the Creation, London 1731 (2nd ed.) p.102.

can see that it is more convenient for this to be every seventh, rather than every fifth or tenth day. Thus there is room here for a positive Institution based on Revelation.⁴⁸

Wallace also deals with Tindal's assertion that Christianity had displayed greater bigotry than the pagan religions⁴⁹ and that what in most places passed for Christianity had transformed man, naturally a social and benign creature "into one fierce & cruel; and made him act with such rage & fury against those who never did or designed him the least injury, as cou'd not have enter'd into the hearts of Men to conceive".⁵⁰ Wallace admits that Christianity is not guiltless, though most accusations of this kind are exaggerated and it is impossible to prove that Christianity has caused more harm than good. To prove such an assertion it would be necessary to engage in an exhaustive comparison of ancient and modern times, Christian and pagan or Mahometan countries and the inward sentiments and outward conversation of individual Christians and pagans or Mahometans. Such a comparison is impossible but in any case it is perversions of Christianity and not true Christianity which has caused the harm. If it is to be urged that no good thing ought to be done which can be perverted to bad purposes no good thing would ever be done.⁵¹

Tindal had also asserted that the Scriptures were so obscure that, so far from being assisted by them in discovering the Will of God, we must interpret and even correct them by our natural notions of God and Religion if they are not to lead us into mistakes. Wallace readily admits that there are obscure /

⁴⁸Wallace : Preface p.vii^f.

⁴⁹Tindal : op.cit. p.86

⁵⁰Ibid p.372.

⁵¹Wallace : Preface to Synod Sermon pp.xxiii-xxv.

obscure passages in the Scriptures but points out that this is scarcely surprising when one considers their antiquity, the languages in which they are written, the allusions to ancient customs, and so on. Nevertheless the Scriptures are of assistance to us for they teach several doctrines, such as that of a sinner being accepted by God on his sincere repentance, the resurrection of the body and the solemnity of the future judgment, which otherwise we could not possibly know. "The whole Method of God's dealing with Creatures that are guilty must be a matter of pure Revelation, since we have not sufficient Data for explaining it, without a positive Declaration of the Will of God".⁵²

Wallace was by no means the only one to answer Tindal; it is estimated that there were over a hundred⁵³ replies to Tindal of which the best known is William Law's "The Case of Reason or Natural Religion Fairly and Fully Stated".⁵⁴ It is the more remarkable therefore that Wallace's reply attracted some attention. One reader⁵⁵ was so impressed that he presented a copy to Queen Caroline and another published a reply entitled "The Necessity of Some of the Positive Institutions of Christianity Consider'd in a Letter to the Minister of Moffat".⁵⁶ To this "Letter" Wallace published a reply⁵⁷ in 1732. /

⁵²Wallace : Preface to Sermon pp.xxvi^f

⁵³R.N. Stromberg : Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth Century England p.73
London 1954.

⁵⁴London 1731.

⁵⁵James Johnston of Twickenham, son of Johnston of Warriston and a great favourite with Queen Caroline. Scots Magazine Vol.33 p.341.

⁵⁶This was published anonymously at London in 1731. The author may have been William Dudgeon, a gentleman of Berwickshire.

⁵⁷"A Reply to a Letter directed to the Minister of Moffat concerning the Positive Institutions of Christianity". London 1732.

1732.

The writer of the "Letter to the Minister of Moffat" praises the discretion, candour and ingenuity of Wallace's Sermon and Preface which have induced him to take notice of his reply to Tindal rather than the others. He comes near to hinting however that Wallace has given up several things which his brethren strenuously insisted on⁵⁸ and this is strenuously denied by Wallace in his "Reply to the Letter". The Sermon was not intended to be a publication of all the truths which he believed.⁵⁹

Wallace's opponent then takes him to task for his treatment of the questions on which he had challenged Tindal. He suggests that what Wallace had said in answer to Tindal about the obscurity of the Scriptures would be a sufficient vindication of a purely human work but "a Piece which is divinely inspired may be expected to distinguish itself by its great Evidence and Perspicuity and the Excellent Manner of its Composure".⁶⁰ Personally, he finds these lacking in the Scriptures. In his "Reply", Wallace refuses to accept this assertion that divine inspiration necessarily implies clarity and in support of his rejection he quotes from the Westminster Confession!⁶¹ There is no reason to suppose that the inspired writings should be perfect according to the nicest rules of human eloquence and it would be most injudicious for any Christian to try to prove the Divine inspiration of Scripture /

⁵⁸"I will not say you give up several things which are strenuously insisted on by your Brethren". Letter p.3.

⁵⁹Wallace : Reply to Letter p.3.

⁶⁰Letter to Minister of Moffat p.4.

⁶¹Apparently, Confessions did have their uses at times. He cites Chap.I g. 7 "All things in scripture are not alike plain in themselves nor alike clear unto all"

Scripture from its supposed perspicuity.⁶²

The writer of the "Letter" is also dissatisfied with Wallace's treatment of the alleged harm which has resulted from Christianity. He maintains that it is possible to make a general estimate of the good or harm done by Christianity and he is disposed to assert "that the Zeal of Christians has produced more fatal effects than any other religious Belief, yea than any other Cause whatsoever." Wallace's defence that any harm has been done by perversions of Christianity is, he considers, an excuse which "cannot decently be pled in behalf of a Being who is supposed Omniscient". He cannot conceive how a religion intended by God to be beneficial to mankind could fail to be so.⁶³

Wallace grants that in many cases it is possible to make general judgments without detailed proofs but at best these are very precarious and not likely to convince an antagonist. He is not convinced that Christianity has done more harm than any other cause and suggests that tyranny and absolute government have been twice as harmful.⁶⁴ He adheres to his argument that the harm has flowed from perversions of Christianity and finds no "difficulty in conceiving that a divine Institution which God designs only for good may be the Wickedness of Mankind be abus'd to bad Purposes and be made the occasion of innumerable Mischiefs and Calamities". It is as easy to conceive this, he /

⁶²Wallace : Reply to Letter pp.7-11

⁶³Letter to Minister of Moffat p.7^f

⁶⁴Wallace : Reply pp.12, 16.

he claims, as to conceive that there should be any mischiefs or calamities at all.⁶⁵

The principal reason why Christianity had caused so much harm, according to Wallace's opponent, was the stress laid by it on mere belief and orthodoxy and the persecution which had resulted from this,⁶⁶ a feature absent from the pagan religions. Quoting Juvenal and Shaftesbury, Wallace vigorously denies that the pagan religions of ancient times were free from bigotry and points out that they also had their "credenda". Although it would be true to say that most Christians laid too much stress on orthodoxy, the New Testament declares in express terms that mere belief and orthodoxy are of no value (e.g. James 2¹⁴⁻²⁰). No religion can avoid asking its adherents to believe something. However much stress Christianity lays upon believing it is entirely contrary to its true character for anyone to enforce belief by any means other than reason, argument and good example.⁶⁷

The writer of the "Letter" devotes most of his space to a discussion of the necessity of the positive institutions peculiar to the Christian Revelation. He readily grants the possibility of their being founded in nature but questions their use in making a man better in a moral or religious sense. The institution of the Sabbath is dismissed peremptorily. True worship is internal and no precise measure of time can meet the necessities, attainments and other circumstances of all worshippers so that any particular portion of time /

⁶⁵Wallace : Reply p.19.

⁶⁶Letter p.7.

⁶⁷Wallace : Reply p.24^f.

time appointed for public worship can only serve a political purpose.⁶⁸
It is a principle of natural religion that there is a future state and so it is of no great importance to learn by Revelation of the resurrection of the body. Just retribution of rewards and punishments in this future state is likewise allowed to be a principle of natural religion. The form of the last judgment is not determinable except by Revelation but even those who are zealous for pomp and ceremony can hardly pretend that any particular forms are necessary. He challenges Wallace's assertion that, apart from Revelation, it is mere conjecture that God will pardon upon repentance and reformation. What Wallace calls a conjecture is really a demonstration for it flows naturally from belief in the goodness and wisdom of God that such as repent shall be pardoned. Revelation cannot confer upon it any great degree of certainty than it already has.⁶⁹

In his "Reply" Wallace says that the writer of the "Letter" has granted what he was chiefly contending for - the possibility of there being "a foundation for positive institutions in the nature of things", a possibility which Tindal had denied. He does, however, deal with the objections raised by his opponent. He acknowledges that the mere observance of positive institutions will not enable a rational mind to attain a sense of religion and virtue but such institutions do tend "to excite in us virtuous and devout Sentiments and awake in us such excellent Thoughts as in a natural and rational /

⁶⁸Letter p.12^f

⁶⁹Ibid p.14-18

rational manner tend to our moral Improvement".⁷⁰ Thus, although true worship is internal, it is assisted by the institution of a particular day for public worship.⁷¹ The doctrines of a future state and of a just retribution of rewards and punishments in that state are indeed principles of natural religion but the more particular the accounts we have of them the more lively will be the impression made on our minds. The additional information afforded by Revelation is therefore not as trifling as his opponent imagines.⁷²

But Wallace is content to rest the case for Revelation on the doctrine that by the light of nature we cannot discover in what manner God is to deal with the guilty and here he confesses to a slight obscurity in his Sermon. He ought to have distinguished, he says, "betwixt what God will do immediately upon our Repentance and what he may be supposed to do afterwards. For indeed it appears to me a very natural conclusion that if we truly repent and reform God will pardon at last". The uncertainty lies in the time for it might well be that transgressors should suffer long and intense punishment in another world before they were restored to happiness and bliss. Revelation is necessary to free us from anxiety in this. Only if his opponent can prove "that the Goodness of God obliges Him immediately to pardon a Sinner who is recovered from his Errors; and that God cannot, in consistency with his Goodness punish such a Sinner in another World for a great /

⁷⁰Wallace : Reply p.28^f

⁷¹Ibid p.33.

⁷²Ibid p.34-6

great Length of Time, and in a high Degree" will he acknowledge that he was wrong in insisting on the necessity of Revelation.⁷³

The Sermon earned Wallace high favour but his defence of it involved him in further controversy. Queen Caroline was, apparently, so impressed by the sermon that she recommended Wallace to the notice of the Earl of Ilay, then supreme in Scottish affairs. In consequence Wallace was called to be one of the ministers of Edinburgh⁷⁴ on the occasion of the vacancy caused by the death of his old teacher, Professor Hamilton.⁷⁵ The "Reply" however earned Wallace the censure of those who, according to Ramsay, "were very dexterous at spying heresy where none was meant".⁷⁶ One of them, in a pamphlet⁷⁷ addressed to Principal Smith,⁷⁸ who had succeeded Hamilton as leader of the Church, contrasted the treatment accorded to Wallace with that meted out to Ebenezer Erskine and his friends in the same year (1733):

"You were not only for depriving and turning out of the Church, but even for deposing from the Ministerial Office, Men blameless in their lives, useful in their Congregations, staunch in their Adherence to your publick Standards : while you cherefully received /

⁷³Wallace : Reply p.43-6

⁷⁴Scots Magazine Vol.33 p.341.

⁷⁵Hamilton had been admitted one of the ministers of Edinburgh on his resigning the Chair of Divinity.

⁷⁶Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen I p.242.

⁷⁷"Observations upon Church Affairs addressed to Principal Smith". Edinburgh 1733

⁷⁸James Smith, Minister of Cramond (1711-30), New North, Edinburgh (1730-32) Professor of Divinity, 1732-3 and Principal 1733-6 of the University of Edinburgh.

"received as your Fellow-presbyter and Fellow-labourer, one who had openly proclaimed to the World that we want not a Divine Revelation to tell us that God will pardon the Penitent for this, says he, is a very natural Conclusion; but only to fix the Time when the Pardon will be granted. And hence the necessity of Revelation is gloriously evinced".⁷⁹

Wallace was libelled for affirming that the light of nature gave hints of the divine placability, though no certainty, especially as to its conditions and extent, but was able to explain himself to the satisfaction of prosecutors and judges.⁸⁰

Four years later, Wallace's friend, William Wishart, called to minister in Edinburgh, was confronted with a charge of heresy by the Presbytery of Edinburgh. Wishart had left Glasgow in 1730 to become minister of the Scots Church in London and the charge of heresy was founded on two sermons which he preached and published in that city. The first of these was given for the benefit of the Charity School at Crutched-Friars in April 1731 and was entitled "Charity the End of the Commandment or Universal Love the Design of Christianity". The other was preached before the Societies for Reformation of Manners in July 1732 and was entitled, "The Certain and Unchangeable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil".

The Charity sermon was published in Edinburgh as well as in London and the /

⁷⁹Observations...addressed to Principal Smith, p.13^f

⁸⁰Ramsay : I. p.242. There is no record, however, of a formal libel in the Minutes of Edinburgh Presbytery.

the Reformation sermon was also readily available in Scotland, but no exception was taken to either until after Wishart's election as Principal of Edinburgh University in November 1736. It was customary for the Principal of the University to be called as one of the ministers of the City but in February 1737 the Presbytery of Edinburgh refused their concurrence on the grounds that Wishart's sermons contained opinions and assertions contrary to the established doctrines of the Church. The magistrates of Edinburgh and the others who had signed the Call appealed to the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, which after lengthy deliberation decided in their favour and acquitted Wishart in April 1738. Thereupon Wishart's opponents appealed to the Assembly of that year.⁸¹

The Case gave rise to the usual abundant crop of pamphlets on both sides. The writer of one pamphlet accused Wishart of being better acquainted with Lord Shaftesbury's "Characteristics"⁸² than with his Bible. This is doubtless the reason why Wishart does not employ his rhetoric "in denouncing the Judgments of God against Sinners and setting in Array the Terrors of the Lord before their Eyes".⁸³ This would in the writer's opinion have been the proper way to preach before Societies for the Reformation of Manners and would have been much more effective than Wishart's subtle and metaphysical reasoning. Liberty, Charity and Moderation are very fine things but they are deeply suspect when spoken of by a man like Wishart - "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes!"⁸⁴

⁸¹The Case of Dr. Wishart ... submitted to the Venerable Assembly of the Church of Scotland p.1^f.

⁸²London 1711.

⁸³Some Observations on these Two Sermons of Dr. Wishart's which have given offence to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Edinburgh 1737. p.2.

⁸⁴Ibid p.3^f

Liberty is too often a cloak for lack of esteem for the peculiar doctrines of Christianity and a desire to break down the bulwarks against error. That Wishart is one such who misuses the word "liberty" is shown, according to the writer, in the following passage from the Reformation Sermon:

"Tho' there are other Methods proper to be used for reclaiming our Neighbours from any Thing that is amiss in them, as Instruction Persuasion and the Influence of a good Example; yet the Method of punishing Offenders is to be confined to such Crimes of the vicious as are hurtful to others about them or disturb the Peace of human Society. And therefore you are carefully to beware that under Pretence of punishing Crimes you do not unjustly restrain Men from the free Exercise of their natural and unalienable Right of enquiring for themselves in Affairs of Religion; and acting agreeably to the Light of their own Minds; so far as it does not lead them to commit any Matter of wrong or wicked Leudness, by which their Neighbours are injured, or their natural or civil Rights invaded How absurd and inconsistent would it be, if the Members of Societies for Reformation of Manners should themselves, and pretending to act in that Character too, be guilty of the greatest Iniquity and Injustice? Should become Persecutors and injurious?"⁸⁵

The author would not have been surprised to learn that these words had been written by Collins, Tindal, Woolston or Mandeville but he is astonished that they should come from one who has subscribed the Westminster Confession. His astonishment was shared by others and two articles of the libel against Wishart are founded on this passage.

⁸⁵Reformation Societies Sermon p.29^f

Wishart was accused of restricting the power of the magistrate to the punishment of crimes of the second table of the Law and excluding blasphemies heresies and sabbath-breaking from temporal punishment. Similarly he was accused of extending the liberty of Christian subjects by permitting all men to act without fear of man's judgment in all religious affairs.⁸⁶ It is quite clear that Wishart was quite out of sympathy with the kind of persecuting spirit which had demanded a death penalty for blasphemy as late as 1696⁸⁷ and, if the statute law had permitted, would still have exacted temporal penalties for spiritual offences, but he was able to defend himself from his own sermon and to prove that he had not directly opposed the Confession on these points.⁸⁸

The third charge against Wishart was that he was for removing Confessions, the necessity of subscribing them and such other great bars to impartial enquiry.⁸⁹ Doubtless, Wishart's views were much the same as Wallace's on this point but he had not expressed this view in so many words in his Sermon. Instead he rejoiced that the principles of liberty, the rights of conscience and private judgment were better understood than than ever before and added, "We may hope that valuable Improvements, in all useful Knowledge shall take place; while the great Barrs against a free and impartial Enquiry, arising from a Regard to worldly Interest and the Fear of Man's Judgment are remov'd".⁹⁰

The /

⁸⁶The Case of Dr. Wishart p.3 The charges are given in the Minutes of Edinburgh Presbytery Vol.13 pp.364-6.

⁸⁷Thomas Aikenhead was executed in 1696 for alleging that that trinity in unity was a contradiction.

⁸⁸Answers for William Wishart, Edinburgh 1738. p.7-26, 27-32.

⁸⁹Case of Dr. Wishart p.10.

⁹⁰Reformation Sermon p.31.

The rules of grammar, says Wishart, make it clear that he is referring to bars that are already removed and therefore the Confession cannot be referred to here.⁹¹

In his Reformation Sermon, Wishart had made various criticisms of religious education of the young as then practised and two further charges were founded on these. What passed for religious education was in many cases merely an inculcation upon the young of the "shibboleth" of a party and of a regard for the peculiar doctrines and forms of their own sect.⁹² The Presbytery read "shibboleth" as "catechism" and accused Wishart of advocating a more free education of children than was consistent with the Directory of the Church.⁹³ In reply Wishart asks if there can be any doctrinal error in asserting that there are several different sects in religion with distinguishing forms and doctrines and that these forms and doctrines are sometimes so extravagantly stressed as to breed invidious distinctions, hatred and mischief.⁹⁴

Wishart had also said that no enough effort was made to guide the young to a rational sense of good and evil. Good practice was recommended by mere authority and enforced by the awe of future rewards and punishments. Without due explanation these contributed no more to promote piety and virtue than whips and sugar plums.⁹⁵ On these grounds he was accused of profanely diminishing the due weight and influence of arguments based on the awe of future rewards and punishments.⁹⁶ In reply Wishart suggests that it is those /

⁹¹Case of Dr. Wishart, p.10.

⁹²Reformation Sermon, p.33.

⁹³The Presbytery of Edinburgh's Reply... in the affair of Mr. William Wishart
Edinburgh 1737 p.62.

⁹⁴Case of Dr. Wishart p.11^f.

⁹⁵Reformation Sermon, p.34.

⁹⁶Case of Dr. Wishart p.12.

those who fail to explain the nature and justice of future rewards and punishments who diminish the influence of arguments based upon them, but that religion based only on these is servile and mercenary. Piety and virtue should flow from a supreme love of God and a love of piety and virtue for their own sake.⁹⁷

Two other charges were based on Wishart's previous sermon preached on behalf of a Charity-school, in which he had suggested that teaching in early years "while the natural Sense of Goodness is yet in a great Measure undebauched" might in some measure take the start of vicious habits and inclinations"⁹⁸. This gave rise to a charge that Wishart seemed to oppose the doctrine of the sinful and corrupt state of all men from their birth. He was also accused of being over-charitable to heathens and those who had rejected the Gospel because in the same sermon he had said he was not disposed to judge them rashly but was willing to leave them to the Searcher of Hearts whose mercies were great.⁹⁹ Both these charges were based on unfair constructions of Wishart's words and the first was actually withdrawn before the case reached the Assembly.

Despite a warning that it would be imprudent to furnish the Seceders with stronger reasons for their divisive courses by countenancing Wishart's settlement¹⁰⁰ the Assembly of 1738 dismissed the charges and ordered Wishart's admission as one of the ministers of Edinburgh.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷Ibid p.13^f. Wishart does however apologize for this frivolous analogy of "whips and sugar plums" and it is omitted in the Second Edition printed in 1753.

⁹⁸Charity Sermon p.32.

⁹⁹Ibid p.28.

¹⁰⁰Observations on these Two Sermons of Dr. Wishart's ... p.43.

¹⁰¹Acts of Assembly 1738.

Wishart's opponents were unfortunate in their choice of accusations for a conviction of heresy on these grounds would have been quite unjust. Perhaps it was impossible to find suitable specific charges against Wishart for it was really in his whole general approach that the novelty lay. The writer of the "Observations" probably came nearest to analysing the change when he compared how he would have expected the text to be employed in the Reformation Sermon with the manner in which Wishart actually used it. Wishart's approach to his hearers is one of persuasion and sweet reasonableness whereas the writer would have emphasised the word "Woe" in the text which is in the twentieth verse of Isaiah V - Woe unto them that call Evil Good and Good, Evil.¹⁰²

The same writer maintains that Wishart's sermons owe more to Lord Shaftesbury than to the Bible and the Presbytery of Edinburgh, in their "Reply", quote several passages from Wishart's sermons showing similarity in content and even in form to passages from the "Characteristics".¹⁰³ There is thus little doubt that Wishart, like his friend Wallace, was "an enthusiastic admirer of Lord Shaftesbury's manner and philanthropic sentiments".¹⁰⁴ But there is no indication that Wishart shared Shaftesbury's scepticism; rather is it likely that he would have subscribed these words written by his friend Wallace about 1730:¹⁰⁵

"Tho /

¹⁰²Observations on these Two Sermons of Dr. Wishart's....p.2.

¹⁰³Reply ... in the affair of Mr. William Wishart, p.83.

¹⁰⁴Ramsay I p.247.

¹⁰⁵A Letter to a Reverend Clergyman in Scotland p.8 Laing MSS II 620¹⁷

"Tho I differ from my Lord Shaftesbury in his views of Christianity I intirely agree with him in his notions of virtue and a moral character. I think his accurate & ingenious Interpreter who enquires so nicely into our Ideas of beauty & Virtue & Criticises so finely on the Passions has for ever silenced his Antagonists on this score. As bad as we are I do not believe we are half so bad as the Table of the Bees¹⁰⁶ represents us. I believe many bad things rather flow from mistake than any villanous Design".

Wishart was the last of the "Neu-lights" to be settled in Edinburgh. His friend, Wallace, as we have seen, had been settled there in 1733. Patrick Cuming had been admitted as one of the ministers of Edinburgh in 1732 and in 1737 had been appointed Professor of Church History in the University. Two others of the "Neu-lights" listed by Wodrow were called to minister in Edinburgh but died shortly after their translation¹⁰⁷ and by a strange coincidence the others also died young.¹⁰⁸

Thus in 1738 there were only three left of the "Neu-lights" - Wishart, Wallace and Cuming. Up to this point it has been possible to think of them as a group for, although Cuming seems to have been more cautious, their views and attitudes have been broadly similar. But from this point onwards, as they achieve positions of influence in the Church, there are important differences between them and it will be convenient to discuss their careers separately. Each will serve to illustrate a strand of the diversity of the Moderates.

¹⁰⁶Bernard Mandeville's "Fable of the Bees" (1714) presents a very cynical view of human nature. It was answered by Butler.

¹⁰⁷Archibald Gibson (Dunblane) trans. Edinburgh (Lady Yester's) 1732, died 1733.
John Taylor (Alloa) trans. Edinburgh (Tolbooth) 1735, died 1736.

¹⁰⁸Charles Telfer (Hawick) died 1731.
William Armstrong (Canonbie) died 1733.

V.

ROBERT WALLACE AS ECCLESIASTICAL STATESMAN.

Plentiful materials for study. Wallace and Hamilton : the case of John Glas. Wallace and Smith : The Secession. Wallace's attitude to Patronage. His opposition to Walpole : the Porteous Act. Fall of Walpole, Ilay and Cuming. Wallace appointed as ecclesiastical adviser. His policy. His quest for information. Settlements at Fern and Belhelvie. His success in conciliating interested parties. His attitude to repeal of Patronage Act. His efforts for the Widow's Fund. Prefers to work within framework of law. Defers both to law and to Church's sense of grievance. Contemporary commendation.

ROBERT WALLACE AS ECCLESIASTICAL STATESMAN.

Robert Wallace's career as an ecclesiastical statesman has been only briefly noticed, if at all, by historians of the Scottish Church.¹ But, although he was leader of the Church for only a short period in his long life, Wallace preserved a considerable amount of material relating to his administration of Church affairs, and these documents² indicate that his leadership was not without interest. From Wallace's papers it is possible to form a fairly clear picture of the principles governing his policy and of some of the details of its fulfilment. It is also possible to determine Wallace's attitude to the policies of two of his predecessors, William Hamilton and James Smith.

Wallace had studied under Professor Hamilton and it would seem that the pupil had every sympathy with the policy of the master, if the case of John Glas can be regarded as a fair example. Hamilton, as we have seen, had probably little sympathy with the Glasites but had even less with their prosecutors and strove to mitigate the harshness of the sentences against them. Wallace seems to have been not unsympathetic with much of what Glas had said but he considered that Glas had been imprudent and should have "let the Covenants sleep for some years longer".³ From a speech composed, but apparently not delivered, at the time of the Commission of Assembly meeting in /

¹c.f. W.L. Mathieson : Scotland and the Union, Glasgow 1905, p.273^f. and J. Cunningham : Church History of Scotland, Edinburgh 1859, Vol.II, p.467

²Now in the Laing Collection in the University of Edinburgh.

³"A letter to a Reverend Clergymen in Scotland Concerning Submission to the Church" p.46. Laing MSS. II 620¹⁷

in March 1730, it is clear that Wallace cordially approved of Hamilton's attempt to have the sentence of deposition imposed on Glas by the Synod of Angus and Mearns reversed by the Commission: "One of our Assemblies declared they would depose none merely for being epistopal in Judgement, and we allways used to think those of the Congregational way nearer to us". Wallace indeed would have gone further and would have restored Glas to the exercise of his ministry at Tealing. He thought the cause of difference between Glas and the Church was purely speculative and in practice was not a difference at all: "We think these (Church) courts have not only the sanction of the Law but also an authority from Jesus Christ whereas he thinks all their authority is derived from the laws of the land".⁴ The implication is that, provided the authority is recognised, its nature and justification is unimportant. It is highly unlikely that Glas would have accepted this as a just assessment of his position for he did not recognise the authority of the Presbytery or Synod even in practice and was deposed for his "contumacious" disobedience. But the attempt to have him restored to the ministry of the Catholic Church did not then succeed due to the opposition of James Smith.⁵

Towards the policy of Smith, who succeeded Hamilton as leader of the Church, Wallace was much less favourable. He was, for example, strongly critical of the way in which the case of Ebenezer Erkine had been handled and /

⁴"A Speech in behalf of Mr. Glass of Tealing designed to have been delivered before the Commission of the General Assembly, March 1730, but never delivered". Laing MSS II 620¹⁷.

⁵Wodrow : Analecta IV 261^f Glas was, however, restored in 1739.

and this is shown both by contemporary papers and by various drafts of speeches written about the time of the Schism Overture in 1765-66.

The Erskine Case really began with the passing of the Act of the Assembly of 1730 forbidding the recording of reasons of dissent in the minutes of Church courts. Instead they were to be kept "in retentis" for submission to the superior courts.⁶ Two years later the act was passed regulating the procedure to be followed by Presbyteries when the right of settling a minister in a vacant parish devolved on them.⁷ This Act anent the Planting of Vacant Churches was bitterly denounced by Ebenezer Erskine, minister at Stirling, in a sermon before the Synod of Perth and Stirling in October 1732. Erskine regarded the Act, which provided for the choosing of a minister by the heritors and elders of a parish, as a betrayal of the right of the Christian people to elect their pastors.⁸ He was censured by the Synod and appealed to the Assembly of 1733. The Assembly however upheld the Synod's proceedings, found that Erskine had used expressions which were offensive and tended to disturb the peace and good order of the Church, and appointed him to be rebuked and admonished by the moderator at the bar of the Assembly. To this sentence Erskine and three other ministers entered a Protest. This was declared to be irregular and they were desired to withdraw the Protest. On their refusal the Assembly ordered them to appear at the August meeting of the Commission of Assembly and to retract the protest then. In case of their disobedience the Commission was authorised to suspend the Protesters from the exercise of their ministry. /

⁶Printed Acts of Assembly 1730 p.16.

⁷Printed Acts of Assembly 1732 pp.22-4.

⁸The Whole Works of Ebenezer Erskine, Edinburgh 1871, Vol.I p.504.

ministry. Should this sentence be defied, the Commission was authorised to proceed to higher censures at their meeting in November.⁹ The Commission obeyed these instructions to the letter. Erskine and his friends were suspended from the exercise of their ministry in August and in November were loosed from their charges and declared to be "no longer ministers of this church". To this they entered a Protestation declaring that they were "obliged to make a secession" from the prevailing party in the Church. Shortly afterwards they published an account of their reasons for so doing.¹⁰

Wallace had no sympathy for most of the complaints of the Seceders. He considered the Act of 1732 anent Planting of Vacant Churches to be a good act¹¹ and had no quarrel with lenient treatment of those who deviated from the Westminster Standards. But he did sympathise with their complaints about the impossibility of making effective protests and dissents. He considered it was worth risking a diminution of the authority of Church courts in order to allow Dissents against their sentences and even those of the supreme court of the Church, if by this means tyranny might be prevented. The demands of the Seceders in this respect ought therefore to be acceded to:

"As some ministers have lately made a Secession from the
Judicatories of the church, & several things are done, &
perhaps very justly, with respect to the settlements of
paroches /

⁹Printed Acts of Assembly 1733 pp.18-20.

¹⁰"A Testimony to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Church of Scotland" 1733.

¹¹Notes of a speech given in Committee to consider Schism Overture in Laing MSS. II 620²⁶

"paroches & other particulars, and as far as I can guess, may still be done which are very grievous to several ministers and Elders, it seems not only just but a piece of wisdom to allow them to testify their Dissatisfaction with these things... They themselves declare they think this necessary for exonerating their consciences. They declare if anything will force them to make a secession its the refusing their Dissents, they declare they have no desire nor Design to make a secession, that they can bear with many things they reckon bad in the Church, provided they be allowed to testify against them in this manner, that nothing will cause secessions so much as refusing this : it seems therefore a part of good policy to allow of Dissents, to prevent secessions and Divisions, this enlarges the bottom of the society and makes it stand the surer".¹²

Many years later Wallace gave it as his opinion that the Church had been "too hasty & praecipitant"¹³ in censuring Erskine and those who adhered to him and doubtless he approved of the repeal of the Act anent Dissents and the Act anent the Planting of Vacant Churches by the Assembly of 1734.

Wallace, however, thought that the latter act, which, as we have seen, owed much to the influence and persuasiveness of Professor Hamilton, was "not /

¹²"Anent Dissents and the Recording of Dissents", Laing MSS. II 620³²

¹³A Speech drafted about the time of the Schism Overture. Laing II 620²⁶

"not only well intended but in all probability might have paved the way to the repeal of the law of Patronages". He described the opinion "that the people in the paroches of Scotland had a divine right to elect the pastors of the paroches" as "erroneous"¹⁴ but he had no love for the Patronage system, as is made clear by a pamphlet he wrote about this time.

In this pamphlet¹⁵ Wallace laid down as the chief thing to be considered in framing rules for the election and settlement of ministers was how best to provide the Church with "pious, prudent and able ministers who should nourish the people with sound doctrine and edify them by the piety & integrity of their example". But this did not mean that, provided a good man was elected, it did not matter who elected him. Generally speaking, elections of all kinds were safer in the hands of many than in the hands of a few or of one. This was particularly true in the case of presentations to parishes as more than half¹⁶ the patronages in Scotland were in the hands of the Crown. In practice this meant they were in the hands of a minister of state who was often not at leisure to consider the character of the candidates or the special needs of the parish and who might give presentations to oblige his friends or for other reasons than the edification of the congregation. This had given rise to bribery, simony and corruption in other countries and could easily do so in Scotland. It might even become a threat to civil liberty for a minister of state "by presenting ministers of a certain stamp and /

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵"Some good hints with respect to Patronages of Churches". Laing II 620^{29:1b}.

¹⁶This is an exaggeration. One third is a more accurate estimate.

and complexion who favoured too high a prerogative might even promote his own arbitrary measures among the people & allways have a man of influence among them to justify the worst of his actions & give plausible colours to them".¹⁷

There is considerable reason to suspect that this portrait of a minister of state was not imaginary but was intended as an illustration of what might happen under an administration like that of Sir Robert Walpole for, despite the favour which he had received from the Earl of Ilay, Walpole's minister for Scottish affairs, Wallace was a determined opponent of Walpole¹⁸ and in 1737 openly defied the government.

The occasion of his defiance was the passing of the "Act for the more effectual bringing to Justice any Persons concerned in the barbarous Murther of Captain John Porteous and punishing such as knowingly conceal any of the said Offenders".¹⁹ Porteous had been condemned to death for his action in ordering his men to fire on the crowd at the execution of a smuggler. This had caused the death of several people and had aroused deep resentment in Edinburgh. This resentment was changed to fury when Porteous was reprieved by Queen Caroline, then Guardian of the Kingdom. Determined that Porteous should die, a mob broke into the Tolbooth, dragged out Porteous and hanged him. This provoked the Government to pass an Act which required all who had been implicated in the murder to surrender themselves forthwith under penalty /

¹⁷"Some good hints...." p.3.

¹⁸Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen I p.239.

¹⁹10 Geo. II. c.35. Carlyle says that this Act was actually engineered by Ilay. (Autobiography, London 1910, p.45).

penalty of death. All who knowingly concealed any who had been concerned in Porteous' death were similarly threatened. The Act was appointed to be read in every church in Scotland on the first Sunday of every month for a year and prescribed heavy penalties for those ministers who refused to comply. Wallace however refused to be intimidated.¹⁹ He considered that such a sanguinary and threatening law was unfit to be read from the pulpit of a Christian church²⁰ and he and many others declined to read it. Many years later he wrote this account of the crisis:

"Mr. Wallace²¹ printed nothing on this occasion but it was left to him and he was advised both by severall of the Clergy and some respectable persons among the Laity particularly Lord Arniston²² and Mr. Colin Macklaurin,²³ Professor of Mathematics to draw up an apology not to be published in Scotland nor att London unless there seemed an inclination or Dissposition in the Government to prosecute the clergy who had Dissobeyed or att least some of them: But if no danger of this appeared not to publish anything: in consequence of this he drew up the within Apology²⁴ & read it in particular to Lord Arniston & Mr. Maclaurin who both approved of /

²⁰"An Apology for the Ministers of the Church of Scotland on account of their not reading an Act of Parliament for bringing to justice the Murtherers of Captain John Porteous". Laing II 620⁴ No.11.

²¹Wallace often refers to himself in the third person.

²²Robert Dundas of Arniston, the elder, Lord of Session, later Lord President. An opponent of Walpole and Ilay.

²³Brother of John Maclaurin, a leading Evangelical, Colin was the leading Scottish mathematician of his day, and was the friend and interpreter of Sir Isaac Newton.

²⁴c.f. note 20.

"of it: he likewise sent it to London to Dr. Every who was a Dissenting Clergyman to ly in his custody till it might be seen whether there was any danger of prosecutions or not... The above is written on Friday November 9th 1764".

One hardly knows which to admire more, Wallace's courage or his caution! No prosecutions were in fact undertaken but one or two anonymous pamphlets²⁵ were published against the reading of the Act - despite Wallace's claim that "it was left to him".

Doubtless it was because of his known opposition to Walpole that Wallace was passed over in favour of Patrick Cuming when the leadership of the Church became vacant on the death of Principal Smith. Cuming's leadership of the Church will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter; here it will be sufficient to note that he was in power until the change of government in 1742. Walpole's fall in February of that year meant that for a time the power of the Earl of Ilay in Scotland was eclipsed, and this in turn meant that Cuming lost his influence in ecclesiastical affairs.

The Marquis of Tweeddale²⁶ was appointed Secretary for Scotland in the new administration and he may well be the "noble lord in the ministry" to whom Wallace addressed a pamphlet in which he welcomed the fall of Walpole and urged the ministry to be "true patriots".²⁷ It is clear that Wallace regarded /

²⁵e.g. "A Letter Concerning the Reading and Not Reading the Act for bringing to Justice those concerned in the Murder of Captain Porteous" London 1738, in the Robertson Collection, Glasgow University Library.

²⁶John Hay, 4th Marquis of Tweeddale.

²⁷An address to a noble lord in the ministry which was formed on the conclusion of Sir Robert Walpole's administration to inspire to true patriotism. Laing II 620⁷

regarded the new ministry with great favour and had expected that he himself "might have more easy access to some of the managers for the crown than before" but he was apparently surprised to find that the new administration proposed to entrust him and another parish minister with the management of ecclesiastical affairs. This we learn from a draft of a letter written by Wallace to his intended colleague.²⁸ This colleague is nowhere named but was probably James Ramsay, minister at Kelso.²⁹ The letter is written in the most guarded terms but we can gather that Wallace and his correspondent were to be the confidential advisers of the Administration in the dispensing of the Crown patronage of benefices. Wallace had some hesitation in accepting but felt it his duty to do what he could to further authorities' good intentions. They apparently intended "to consult the good of the Church & the peace & happiness of particular paroches in all the settlements where the Crown is patron".

We have seen that Wallace was opposed to the presentation of ministers by a single patron but that he considered the notion of the divine right of the people to elect to be erroneous. Before going on to consider some of the details of his administration it may be well to ascertain Wallace's opinions more closely. These seem to have been broadly similar to the views of those who framed the act of 1732 anent the planting of vacant churches. Wallace thought that the Gentlemen of a parish were just as good judges of

a /

²⁸Draft letter in Laing II. 620²⁹

²⁹There is a reference in the letter to his having been Moderator of the General Assembly in the previous year (1741) cf. Warrick : The Moderators of the Church of Scotland 1690-1740, Edinburgh 1913, pp.335-49 for an account of Ramsay.

a minister's worth as was a patron and they had an interest in the parish itself. If they were residents they would be careful in their choice of a neighbour. The Elders very commonly had some regard to the inclinations of the people and although the people were not the best judges some regard ought to be had to their inclinations and even to their prejudices and mistakes. Certainly no good purpose would be achieved by a settlement entirely contrary to their wishes.³⁰ Such being Wallace's attitude to the settlement of parishes it is of some interest that he had the opportunity to put his principles into practice.

One of Wallace's greatest difficulties in advising the ministers of the Crown in the exercise of the royal patronage seems to have been a lack of information. There is every indication that even the list of benefices in the Crown's gift was far from complete or accurate. Certainly the basic information now to be found in a Church Year Book was not readily available. Wallace therefore set himself to establish a large and widespread network of correspondence so that the necessary information might be obtained.

He compiled a list of ministers to whom he could write for information, getting the names from friends, like George Wishart, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, and from those with whom he was already in correspondence. His aim was to have a correspondent for each presbytery, university and burgh in Scotland but in this he was not entirely successful. There are many blanks in his "List of Correspondents with Mr. R.W. according to the order of Synods and Presbyteries"³¹ but some hundred and thirty names are given and for some presbyteries /

³⁰"Some good hints with respect to Patronages". p.4.

³¹Laing II 620²⁹¹¹

presbyteries two or three correspondents are listed.

The information he asked from them can be found in what is obviously a draft circular letter.³² He asks for a list of the parishes in the bounds of a presbytery or group of presbyteries and in respect of each parish he wants to know the present minister's name, an estimate of the value of the benefice, the name of the patron, whether or not the patron's right is disputed, and the shire in which the parish lies. He suggests that where there is some doubt as to who is the Patron his correspondent should consult the Presbytery book to see who presented last to the parish.

The actual extent of Wallace's correspondence is suggested by the entries in a notebook entitled "E-----1 Correspondence".³³ There twenty-eight names are listed alphabetically with dates on which letters were written to them and on which letters were received from them. Three lists,³⁴ in the handwriting of correspondents and covering the Presbyteries of Duns, Chirnside, Dundee, Caithness, Sutherland and Tongue, have been preserved. The list for Duns and Chirnside is endorsed in Wallace's hand "By Mr. Landreth at Simprin" and from the alphabetical list we can see that Wallace received letters from Landreth on September 24 and October 8, 1742. The other two lists are similarly marked and all are copied into a notebook labelled "lists of Patrons".³⁵ This last notebook contains information about parishes, patrons, incumbents and stipends for twenty six presbyteries and also about the universities /

³²Laing II 620^{29⁶}

³³Laing MSS II 620^{29⁵}

³⁴Laing MSS II 620^{29⁸, 9, 10}

³⁵Laing MSS II 620^{29¹}

universities, other than Edinburgh. But the information about some presbyteries is scanty and in some cases is inaccurate.

Wallace was also concerned to find out all he could about vacancies in parishes where the Crown was patron and two drafts of letters which he wrote in this connection have been preserved.³⁶ In one of these Wallace states that one probable means of preventing animosities over settlements as the law then stood was for those who had access to the "managers for the Crown" to give the managers some account of the inclinations of "those whose interest is likely to have greatest weight in bringing about comfortable & peaceable settlements!" This would prevent any measure which might prove disagreeable or occasion a disturbance. He therefore asks his correspondent to inform him about the inclinations of the heritors elders and congregation and about anything which would promote or prevent a happy and peaceable settlement. He asks that he be informed as early as possible about all this for "sometimes we are late in knowing these things which is a loss to us & perhaps no advantage to the Church".

The information which he thus gathered is to be found in a notebook dealing with "Kirks now vacant where the Crown is patron".³⁷ The table of contents lists thirty-three parishes but there are notes on twelve only as several pages have been cut from the notebook.

In the case of Fern, in Angus, Wallace notes that it is vacant by the transportation of Mr. Wemyss to Errol and his admission to that parish on 30 October /

³⁶Laing MSS II 620²⁹⁷

³⁷Laing MSS II 620²⁹⁴

30th October 1744. This particular vacancy is mentioned also in two letters, preserved in the British Museum,³⁸ from the Marquis of Tweeddale to Sir Andrew Mitchell, under-Secretary for Scotland. Tweeddale tells Mitchell that Sir James Carnegie had suggested Mr. Tytler, minister at Premnay, for Royal presentation but he asks Mitchell to consult Mr. Wallace first. If the parish is agreeable to receiving Mr. Tytler, Tweeddale is content to have him presented. Wallace's notes take us no further but Tytler was actually presented later that year.³⁹

There is a very full account of the circumstances in the vacancy at Belhelvie in the Presbytery of Aberdeen. The parish was vacant by the deposition of Mr. David Brown on 18th October 1744. The York Buildings Company owned two-thirds of the parish and the heirs of the late Provost Fordyce of Aberdeen were the tacksman.⁴⁰ The other heritors are noted and these included Professor Gregory and Baillie Mitchell of Aberdeen, Mr. Likely, minister at Oldmeldrum, and the town of Aberdeen. Wallace comments: "The whole will depend chiefly on the town of Aberdeen". The town's choice was Mr. Ragg, minister at Dyce and a relation of Baillie Mitchell but others favoured Mr. Oram, minister at Cushnie. Mr. Ragg was under call to Fintry but since Belhelvie had a greater stipend his friends were anxious that he should be settled there and he was in fact presented to Belhelvie on 24th November 1744, doubtless on Wallace's advice.⁴¹

The /

³⁸Additional MSS 6857, ff 134, 136.

³⁹Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae Vol.5, p.397

⁴⁰Lessee of the right to uplift teinds.

⁴¹Fasti Vol.6, p.48.

The accounts of these two vacancies show that Wallace made every effort to secure the settlement of ministers acceptable to heritors, elders and people in parishes where the Crown was patron. He was, of course, not always successful in satisfying all the interested parties but only in the case of Kettins, where the mob prevented the Presbytery from meeting in the parish⁴² to ordain the royal presentee in January 1746, does any real animosity seem to have been aroused. George Wallace made this assessment of his father's administration: "During all the time he was employed in this department government was not embarrassed in a single instance either in obtaining judgment from the spiritual courts in favour of his Majesty's presentees, or in effecting the execution of settlements ordered to be made by the Church".⁴³ This is a slight over-statement, for doubtless the Kettins settlement caused some embarrassment, but there is no evidence to show that the inclinations of the people, elders and heritors were ever deliberately ignored or flouted during Wallace's leadership of the Church. Indeed Wallace is a singularly bad illustration of the kind of moderate described in Maxims VIII and IX of Witherspoon's "Ecclesiastical Characteristics".

"In church-settlements...the only thing to be regarded is, who the patron and the great and noble heritors are for; the inclinations of the common people are to be utterly despised. While a settlement is carrying on, the candidate against whom there is a strong opposition from the people, must be looked upon, and /

⁴²The presentee was ordained at Meigle. Fasti Vol.5 p.264.

⁴³Scots Magazine Vol.33, p.342.

and every where declared to be, a person of great worth, and remarkable abilities..."

In view of the very favourable attitude of the secular government towards Wallace and Wallace's dislike of the Patronage system, it is remarkable that he seems to have made no attempt to have the Act of 1712 restoring Patronages repealed or amended. For this two reasons can be brought forward.

The first is that during the greater part of his leadership Wallace was greatly occupied with trying to secure an Act of Parliament of rather a different kind⁴⁴ - the Act to establish the fund for the widows and children of ministers of the Church. It is significant that in the letters requesting information about parishes and vacancies Wallace also asks his correspondents for information in this connection: "I should be glad to know what you are doing or have done about the scheme for the Ministers widows & how ministers with you talk of it".⁴⁵ Wallace was a skilled mathematician⁴⁶ and so was asked to do most of the calculations concerning the duration and chance of lives, produce and value of annuities, the number and fertility of marriages and so forth, which were necessary for drawing up a detailed scheme. In 1743 the November Commission of Assembly appointed him and George Wishart to go to London to ask for an Act of Parliament to establish the scheme. In this they were successful and were thanked by the Assembly of 1744.⁴⁷

But /

⁴⁴The part played by Dr. Alexander Webster in this scheme was also of great importance and is much better known.

⁴⁵Laing MSS II 620²⁹⁷

⁴⁶He deputised for the Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh (James Gregory) while still a student.

⁴⁷Scots Magazine, Vol.33, p.342^f.

But his preoccupation with the Widows' scheme did not last throughout his tenure of power so some other reason must also be sought for Wallace's failure to attempt to gain a repeal of the Patronage Act. It seems to have been his opinion that it was better to work within the framework of the existing law than to risk failure or worse in an attempt to have it repealed.

The framework of the Law, according to Wallace, allowed to Church courts "greater powers than they seemed to know of or were willing to assume out of Modesty & a Deference to the civil powers".⁴⁸ Since the Law ordained that presentations should be given in to Presbyteries this clearly implied that the Presbytery could and must judge of the validity of a presentation. It was absurd to suppose that if only one presentation were made the Presbytery must proceed to a settlement, no matter who had made the presentation: "according to this opinion the presentation of a street ladie is perfectly good".⁴⁹ A Presbytery was obliged to settle only upon a valid presentation and so ample opportunity must be given to all interested parties to state any objections to the validity of the presentation.⁵⁰ This was the more important because, if the presentation were invalid and the six months allowed for presentation had expired, the right to present devolved on the Presbytery. Church courts should do no more in favour of patronage than the letter of the law required.

Yet it is clear that Wallace regarded it as disingenuous to strain the sense /

⁴⁸Some good hints with respect to Patronages, p.5

⁴⁹Ibid p.8.

⁵⁰Ibid p.7.

sense of the law. When the parish of Rayne fell vacant in January 1743 the Crown presented John Mair, minister at Forbes, but the Presbytery of Garioch "found that Mr. Mair was a settled minister and as no other person had been presented within the six months since the vacancy the 'jus devolutum' did take place by virtue of the Act 1719".⁵¹ This was a very liberal interpretation of Clause 8 of the "Act for making more effectual the Laws appointing the Oaths for Security of the Government to be taken by Ministers and Preachers in Churches and Meeting-houses in Scotland".⁵² The Clause really sought to prevent a presentation being given to a settled minister who could not or would not accept it and who by his refusal would extend the period in which the Patron could enjoy the fruits of the benefice and present a candidate: "such Presentation shall not be accounted any Interruption of the Course of Time allowed to the Patron for presenting".⁵³ The Act is, however, ambiguously worded and the Presbytery of Garioch were not alone in thinking that it was almost equivalent to an abolition of patronage.⁵⁴ The Crown appealed to the Synod who reversed the Presbytery's sentence and ordered Mr. Mair's settlement. This was affirmed without a vote by the Assembly of 1744.⁵⁵ Wallace's notes on the vacancy at Rayne do not mention /

⁵¹N. Morren: Annals 1739-52, p.359.

⁵²10 Geo. II c.29.

⁵³Statutes at Large Vol.5 p.239.

⁵⁴According to Sir Henry Moncrieff, Lord Kames and Lord Swinton considered that a presentation to a beneficed minister was void under this act. (Life of Erskine, Edinburgh 1818, p.437.) In a letter to the Scots Magazine in 1765 a "Wellwisher to the Church of Scotland" suggested that the Church should use the Act to cripple patronage by passing an Act of Assembly forbidding probationers and ministers to accept any presentation on pain of losing their status and that the Government, in passing the Act in 1719, was not averse to this. (Vol.27 p.622).

⁵⁵Morren op.cit. p.359.

mention this appeal against the Presbytery's finding but it is unlikely that it was made without his concurrence.

There is fortunately more direct evidence on Wallace's views on another possible method of straining the sense of the law. The Presbytery was obliged to settle a presentee only if he were found qualified in literary attainments and unexceptionable in life and doctrine. There was therefore a strong temptation to find an unpopular presentee not qualified, but Wallace denounces such a practice in a speech prepared for the Assembly of 1765:

"I will say that we ought to do equall justice to the candidate whether the paroch be for him or not: 'fiat justitia et pereat mundus' & therefore we should not fish for weaknesses. I think I may venture to say that the aversion of the people should not make us take notice of any defect that we would not have done if they had been for him".⁵⁶

Wallace was not prepared to countenance any unfair construction of the law but considered that the Church should exercise to the full her legal rights in order to mitigate the grievance of patronage. That was all that could be done. Doubtless Wallace recalled that in 1717 Professor Hamilton and Mr. William Mitchell had almost secured the government's agreement to the repeal of the Patronage Act but that effective measures had been prevented by /

⁵⁶Laing MSS II 620²⁶. There is no indication whether the speech was delivered.

by the opposition of Ilay and his elder brother.⁵⁷ During Wallace's leadership Ilay was again out of favour but by no means powerless and no readier to give up what he considered to be a civil right. Another attempt to secure the repeal of the Act would almost certainly fail but might also be regarded as turbulent and made the occasion for still harder laws.⁵⁸ In short, Wallace considered it best to leave well alone and to take the fullest advantage offered by the existing law and by a sympathetic civil government.

His leadership of the Church is thus remarkable for a scrupulous regard both to the civil law and to the feelings of grievance which were felt throughout the Church with respect to patronage. It seems, indeed, that Wallace thoroughly deserved the commendation of his contemporaries "for the mildness and prudence with which he conducted the affairs of the Church".⁵⁹

⁵⁷ cf. Chapter III.

⁵⁸ Laing MSS II 620²⁶

⁵⁹ J. Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen I p.240.

VI.

THE WISHARTS : POPULAR MODERATES.

Wodrow's attitude to William and George contrasted. George's settlement in Edinburgh. William's settlement in Edinburgh : conflict with Wallace. Second conflict with Wallace over Hume. Cuning's hostility to the Wisharts. Wisharts' opposition to Augmentation of Stipends. William's Reasons of Dissent in Torphichen Case. The Inverkeithing Case : William opposes the young Moderates. His defeat and death. Was he a Moderate or Evangelical? His list of publications an indication of his concerns. George's views. "Popular Moderates" not inconsistent.

THE WISHARTS : POPULAR MODERATES.

To describe a man as a "popular moderate" may seem a contradiction in terms, but it is not an altogether inappropriate designation for William and George Wishart.

William Wishart's stormy career at Glasgow has already been described.¹ Wodrow regarded him as the leading "New light" and considered his conduct and his opinions quite unsuited to his profession. He lets slip no opportunity for unfavourable comment on Wishart's activities both in Glasgow and in London. On one occasion, however, he does give Wishart the benefit of the doubt. It had been reported that Wishart had been estranged from his congregation in London because he had been attending the playhouse, but Wodrow considered it unlikely that Wishart would do anything so out of keeping with his clerical character. Wishart's difficulties with his congregation were more likely due to his keeping company with Arian divines.² Wodrow did not live to see the process of heresy against Wishart but doubtless it would have occasioned him no surprise.

There is a remarkable contrast between Wodrow's treatment of William and his almost kindly attitude to George. Although George, like his brother, was a member of the Rankenian Club³ of which Wodrow did not approve, he is not included among the "New-lights and preachers-legal." But that Wodrow regarded /

¹cf. Chapter IV.

²R. Wodrow : Analecta IV p.227.

³Lord Woodhouselee : Life of Kames, Edinburgh 1807. Vol.I. Appendix VIII.

regarded George as being of questionable orthodoxy is suggested by his obituary notice of the Wisharts' father, the old Principal: "He was very firm in the matter of the doctrine of the Trinity and zealous in his opposition to Mr. Simson's innovations notwithstanding the weight of his two sons".⁴ But nowhere does Wodrow explicitly condemn George; on the contrary he actually praises him for a sermon preached during the Assembly of 1731. He observes that "both in his prayers and sermon he has more of a gospell strain than most of the younger celebrated preachers. He hath a decent grave delivery, a neat and flourent stile and very good matter".⁵ The text on that occasion was "Judge not" which Wodrow considered a very proper subject but hardly suitable for the Assembly "whose proper work certainly it's to judge, and set matters right".

George was presented by the Earl of Wigtown to the parish of Cumbernauld in 1726. The people however were unwilling to receive him because of a rumour that his father wanted him to be his successor at the Tron in Edinburgh and thought that an ordained minister would be called more readily than a probationer.⁶ At all events nothing more came of this and George was settled at the West Parish,⁷ Edinburgh later that year. He succeeded his father at the Tron in 1730 and was joined by his brother as colleague in 1745.

William /

⁴Analecta IV p.61

⁵Ibid IV p.239.

⁶Ibid III p.256.

⁷St. Cuthbert's.

William had been acquitted of heresy by the Assembly of 1738 and had been ordered to be admitted as one of the ministers of Edinburgh. When the Presbytery of Edinburgh met it was pointed out that none of the churches in Edinburgh had asked for the Principal to be settled as their minister but it was agreed to proceed with his admission in compliance with the Assembly's orders. Wishart was duly admitted in July 1738 but was given no charge. There was at this time a vacancy in the first charge of the New North Church but the Session, instead of asking for the Principal as minister, petitioned the Presbytery that Robert Wallace should be translated from New Greyfriars to the vacant charge. The magistrates of Edinburgh, on being consulted, were quite agreeable provided that a place was found for Principal Wishart. Unfortunately, New Greyfriars refused to call the Principal because they had found when he had preached there that he could not be well heard in the church because of his "low voice". The magistrates thereupon asked the Presbytery that the Principal be settled in the New North Church, being the only vacant charge. But the New North Session claimed that Wishart could not be any better heard in their church and refused to receive him. Accordingly the Presbytery translated Wallace from New Greyfriars to the New North Parish.

This was obviously the last straw as far as the magistrates were concerned, and they now applied to the civil power for redress. They obtained from the Court of Session a sist of execution of Wallace's translation, pending the hearing of an application for a Bill of Suspension of the translation. They also took the very practical step of closing the New North Church - in order to re-arrange the seating! Wallace was thus effectively prevented from taking /

taking up duty in the Church but the Presbytery declared New Greyfriars vacant and made arrangements for supplying the pulpit.⁸

That this affair caused some ill-feeling against the clergy is evident from a short paper by Wallace entitled "An Apology for the Scots Clergy" where he speaks of a gentleman who "run down the Clergy at a strange rate, complained of a spirit of usurpation to be observed in the whole order, on account of which he wished much to see them humbled and gave it as his opinion that every favourable opportunity ought to be laid hold off for this purpose". Wallace considers that this request for a bill of suspension is a dangerous experiment and "can only serve to disturb the peace and disquiet the minds of the people of Scotland who are fond of the constitution of the church and indeed have good reason to be so". Such action as the magistrates have taken is justifiable only where the Church has obviously encroached upon the rights of the civil power and in Wallace's opinion "there is certainly a profound majority of all sorts and sizes of men who will acquit the Presbytery as having done nothing but what was Ecclesiastical and intrusted to the Ecclesiastic courts solly (i.e. solely) by the laws of Scotland". The bulk of the "Apology" is an attempt to show that the clergy are good friends to the liberties and interests of the nation.⁹

The Presbytery regarded the translation of a minister from one church to another /

⁸Minutes of the Presbytery of Edinburgh. Vol.13 pp.447-74.

⁹"An Apology for the Scots Clergy; or an Argument showing the Constitution and Clergy of the Church of Scotland to be friendly to the liberties and interests of the nation". Laing MSS II 620⁴.

another within the same parish, Edinburgh being regarded as a single parish, as a purely ecclesiastical matter, while the Magistrates maintained that in this case their right of patronage had been taken from them by the Presbytery. The Presbytery declined the jurisdiction of the Court of Session but the Magistrates considered that they had been deprived of a civil right and were entitled to redress from the civil power.¹⁰

Meanwhile the sist of execution was lifted and the New North Church was re-opened for worship and Wallace exercised his ministry in the New North Church from October 1738 onwards. The case had still not been decided in February of the next year when the New Greyfriars Session asked for Principal Wishart as their minister. The magistrates concurred and the Presbytery settled Wishart at New Greyfriars fully six months after his admission as a minister of the city. The magistrates then withdrew their petition before the Court of Session but did so without prejudice to their claims.¹¹

George Wishart dissociated himself entirely from the Presbytery in this matter and took instruments¹² while William formally protested against Wallace's translation as being a breach of the regulations agreed to between Presbytery and Magistrates in 1720.¹³ These regulations provided for the procedure to be followed in the settlement of ministers in particular charges after they had been called as ministers of the city. The session of a vacant church /

¹⁰Presbytery Minutes. Vol.13 pp.484-96.

¹¹Ibid Vol.13. pp.514^{ff}, 526.

¹²Ibid Vol.13. p.469.

¹³Minutes of Presbytery of Edinburgh. Vol.13. p.472^f

church was to call one of the ministers and ask for the magistrates' concurrence. The magistrates would then ask the Presbytery to "interpose" their authority.¹⁴ The refusal of the New Greyfriars session to call Wishart meant a breakdown in the procedure in which both Presbytery and Magistrates committed breaches of the agreed regulations. When New Greyfriars relented towards Wishart, the deadlock was resolved.

Thus, very early in his ministry at Edinburgh, William Wishart was brought into conflict with his old friend and fellow-student, Robert Wallace. Six years later they were again in opposition to each other over the appointment of David Hume as Professor of Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy in the University.

This was not a purely academic matter for the patrons of the Chair were the Town Council of Edinburgh, with the "avisamentum" or advice of the ministers of Edinburgh. It was at a meeting in May 1745, called so that the Town Council might have the ministers' avisamentum, that Wishart and Wallace clashed. Wishart opposed Hume's appointment. His grounds for so doing are not known precisely but seem to have been based on the "Treatise of Human Nature" which Hume had published anonymously in 1739. No official record of this meeting survives but Hume gave this account of it in a letter to Henry Home, later Lord Kames: "The Principal found himself reduc'd to this Dilemma; either to draw Heresies from my Principles by Inferences & Deductions, which he knew wou'd never do with the Ministers & Town Council. Or if he made use of my Words he must pervert them & misrepresent them in the grossest way in the World. This last Expedient he chose, with much Prudence but very little Honesty. /

¹⁴Ibid Vol.10 p.352.

Honesty. I think Mr. Wallace's Conduct has been very noble & generous; & I am much oblig'd to him".¹⁵ Wallace's part in the debate is described in a letter to the "London Chronicle" 5-7 November 1776 by one who had been present at the meeting:

"....it is true that most of the clergy objected to the electing of honest David, grounding their objection on "A Treatise on Human Nature", published in 1739, which had been ascribed to him. All the body, however did not concur in the measure. The late celebrated Dr. Wallace ... declared to the counsellors in strong terms, that he did not think himself entitled to give his opinion, on pretext too of a juvenile as well as anonymous performance, which had been little read and was less understood, against choosing that ingenuous gentleman..."¹⁶

Wishart however won the day and although the Town Council was not absolutely bound by the ministers' avisamentum Hume was not appointed to the Chair.

The role of inquisitor would not appear to be an appropriate one for a man who had himself been accused of heresy but it is remarkable that Hume's appointment was also opposed by even such liberal thinkers as Francis Hutcheson and William Leechman of Glasgow. They did not consider him a fit person to instruct immature students.¹⁷ But apparently Wallace did not regard this /

¹⁵R. Klibansky and E.C. Mossner : New Letters of David Hume, Oxford 1954 p.15.

¹⁶quoted Ibid p.15^f.

¹⁷J.Y.T. Greig : The Letters of David Hume, Oxford 1932, Vol.I, p.58. Hume's summary of the affair : "by the cabals of the Principal, the bigotry of the clergy, and the credulity of the mob, we lost it". Ibid I. p.62.

this as the proper way to oppose Hume and himself chose the method of argument.¹⁸

These controversies must have made it difficult for the Wisharts and Wallace to remain on intimate terms but all three retained membership of the Rankenian Club which continued to meet as before.¹⁹ This would suggest that personal relationships, though doubtless not so cordial, were not unduly strained, even if close co-operation in public affairs was not possible. The other surviving "Neu-light" was Patrick Cuming, a colleague of William in the University and fellow minister of both in the city of Edinburgh. But between him and the Wisharts there was not only no co-operation but also personal animosity. This was given such bitter expression by Cuming on one occasion that he quite alienated two young ministers who might otherwise have become his supporters. At that time (1749) Cuming was at the height of his power as leader of the Church but he could brook no opposition from former friends like the Wisharts. Alexander Carlyle, who relates the incident, says that Cuming went "too far in his animosity towards George Wishart" but adds "we gave up the Principal" since he "misled" his brother about ecclesiastical affairs.²⁰ The responsibility for the Wisharts' actions is thus laid squarely on William's shoulders.

Carlyle gives no particular reason for Cuming's animosity towards the Wisharts /

¹⁸ cf Chapter XI.

¹⁹ cf. Appendix VIII of Woodhouselee's Life of Kames Vol.I.

²⁰ Alexander Carlyle : Autobiography. London & Edinburgh 1910, p.238^f

Wisharts but suggests that, because of his sojourn in the South, William had adopted Dissenting principles.²¹ The Principal was hostile to the scheme for augmenting the stipends of ministers and to the censuring of Presbyteries which refused, on grounds of conscience, to settle presentees in parishes where they were unacceptable to the people, whereas these doughty supporters of the Establishment, Carlyle and Cuming, warmly supported both causes.

A proposal to apply for an augmentation of stipends had been made in the Assembly of 1748, of which George Wishart was moderator, but no action was taken. The following year, when Patrick Cuming was moderator, the Assembly resolved to appoint a committee to consider the matter and to report to the next Assembly. Fifty-seven ministers and twenty-seven ruling elders were appointed to serve on this committee, including the moderator, the clerk of Assembly (George Wishart) and the Earl of Leven, who was an elder as well as Lord High Commissioner.²² The feeling of the majority of the Committee may be judged by the following letter from Leven to the Duke of Newcastle:

"I have troubled you with this much of our wise proceedings
that you may see the same headstrong disposition continues
& that you may inform those in power that unless some
method is fallen upon to unite all parties in Scotland to
oppose this scheme & employ their influence with their
dependants, /

²¹Carlyle : Autobiography p.238.

²²N. Morren : Annals of the General Assembly 1739-52 Edinburgh 1838, p.130

dependants, the application to Parl^t will certainly carry by a vote nixt Assembly".²³

Enclosed for Newcastle's information, and still preserved in the Newcastle Papers in the British Museum, is a printed "Account of the proceedings of the committee of the late General Assembly for considering what relates to the augmentation of ministers stipends, at their stated meeting the 7th of November 1749, and some subsequent diets".²⁴ According to this "Account", the Committee had estimated the necessary annual expenditure of a minister living south of the Forth to be £83.12.8 sterling and that ten chalders of victual, oat-meal and bear, or the value of it in money, would be a reasonable minimum stipend. They were therefore of the opinion that an Act of Parliament should be sought by the next General Assembly in order to give effect to this.

The minimum stipend for ministers had been fixed in 1633 at the equivalent, in money or victual, of £45 sterling but in 1749 it was found that sixteen ministers received less than £35 and forty-one received no more than £40. A hundred and forty-seven ministers had only the legal minimum.²⁵ In view of the considerable rise in the cost of living, due to the increased prosperity of the country, the Committee's proposals do not seem to be unreasonable. But in almost every county from Orkney to Wigtown there were protest meetings of the landed gentry which passed extravagantly worded resolutions opposing the augmentation scheme. Aberdeenshire described the scheme /

²³British Museum. Additional MSS 32,719 : f.347

²⁴Reprinted in the "Scots Magazine" of October 1749 (Vol.XI p.496)

²⁵cf. Report of Committee to Assembly 1750 in Morren : Annals 1739-52 pp.158-64.

scheme as "very pernicious" and a breach of the Treaty of Union which had declared laws that concern private right unalterable.²⁶ Morayshire declared its "abhorrence" of the scheme, while Kincardineshire thought that "on the whole there is greater reason to petition for lowering than for heightening the Scottish stipends".²⁷ The gentlemen of Renfrewshire considered that the smallness of the Scottish livings, far from handicapping the ministers in the execution of their duty, actually promoted "their decent and sober manners", their regular lives, their diligence and assiduity in every branch of their duty".²⁸

The opposition of the landed gentry is very understandable but that the scheme should also be opposed by ministers requires some explanation. When the Committee of Assembly reported in 1750, George Wishart and three other ministers recorded their dissent from the opinion of the majority that immediate application be made to Parliament for an Act to secure augmentation.²⁹ The opposition of the Wisharts to the scheme was much resented as they themselves were very wealthy and William in particular said some injudicious things which, according to Carlyle, "betrayed contempt of the clergy",³⁰ But it was not just a case of the wealthy opposing, and the poor supporting, augmentation of stipends. It was feared by many that if the increase was granted patrons would insist much more sternly on their rights of presentation. Events proved that /

²⁶Scots Magazine Vol. XII p.50.

²⁷Ibid XII p.101.

²⁸Ibid XII p.397.

²⁹Morren : Annals 1739-52 p.164.

³⁰Carlyle : Autobiography p.238.

that this linking of augmentation with patronage was no idle fancy.

After long and acrimonious debates it was decided by the Assembly of 1750 to appoint three ministers and one elder to request an increase in the minimum stipend and various measures to facilitate the collection of stipends. The Commissioners thus appointed went up to London and were civilly received by the King, several ministers of state and many members of both Houses of Parliament. It was soon made clear to them that there was no hope of an act to raise the minimum stipend being obtained and accordingly a petition, requesting various procedural changes to facilitate applications for increases to the legal minimum and collections of payments in arrears, was presented to the House of Commons in March 1751. It lay on the table until a counter-petition was presented on behalf of the heritors of Scotland, when both petitions were referred to a committee. The report of this committee was ready at the end of May and on 3rd June it was moved in the House that the Report be considered on 5th June but this was defeated and the Report was committed to an impossible date. The whole scheme thus fell to the ground.³¹

If the original demands had been reasonable the modified petition would appear to be utterly unexceptionable by anyone but a pamphlet circulated on 2nd June sealed its fate. This document alleged that the Presbyteries of Scotland paid very little regard to the Act of 1712 restoring patronage and frequently refused to enter the patron's presentee, moderating instead the call /

³¹Morren : Annals 1739-52 pp.164-6, 191-4, 196. Patrick Cuming was one of the Commissioners.

call of another person named by the people, the heritors or the elders. It was therefore submitted that, as many of those applying for relief had obtained their stipends in violation of the law, their request should be granted only if it were made impossible for Presbyteries to elude the Act of 1712.³² The fears of those who thought that an augmentation in stipend might be accompanied by a reinforcement of the law of Patronage were clearly far from groundless.

William Wishart was defeated as Moderator of the Assembly³³ in 1751 because of his opposition to the augmentation scheme³⁴ but he was nevertheless to play a prominent part in that Assembly. He entered his dissent to the censure by the Assembly of the Presbytery of Linlithgow for its failure to settle James Watson at Torphichen.

The parish of Torphichen had been vacant since the death in 1747 of John Bonar, one of the twelve Marrow-men.³⁵ The patron, Lord Torphichen, submitted a list of five names to the parish and one of these, James Watson, received a call from twenty-four heritors and was therefore presented to the parish. But a majority of the heritors (who numbered sixty), all but one of the four elders and almost all the heads of families persisted in demanding one James Turnbull whose name, despite their petition, had not been added to the list.

No /

³²This pamphlet is quoted in Morren : Annals 1739-52. p.196^f.

³³He had been Moderator in 1745.

³⁴Morren : op.cit. p.190.

³⁵i.e. one of those who defended the "Marrow of Modern Divinity" before the Assembly of 1722.

No objection was made to the life or doctrine of the presentee and he was found duly qualified after the usual trials, but the Presbytery delayed his settlement in spite of the repeated injunctions of Synod and Assembly. In 1751 the Case was before the Assembly for the third time.

The Presbytery urged in their defence that there was strong opposition to Mr. Watson's settlement not only in Torphichen but also in their own parishes and that if they took part in the settlement they would be rendered "in a great measure useless as ministers of Christ" because their congregations would secede. This however need not prevent the execution of the sentence of the Assembly since persons who were not in such circumstances as they were could readily carry out the sentence. This was virtually a plea to be excused this unpleasant duty and to have it done for them by a special committee of Assembly, for which there were many precedents. The Assembly did appoint a committee to ordain Mr. Watson, if the Presbytery should once again fail to do so, but sentenced the Presbytery to be censured for their previous disobedience, and enjoined them to proceed to settle Mr. Watson.³⁶

To this censure Principal Wishart entered his dissent but was not allowed to read his paper. It is doubtless to this paper that he refers in the letter which he wrote shortly afterwards to his friend, Professor John Ward of Gresham College:

"The enclosed contains all y^e account I can give my friends at London of my occupations in last Assembly : y^e rest was about /

³⁶ Morren : Annals 1739-52 pp.156, 181, 198-209.

about private causes of Kirk settlements : y^e matter of
y^e enclosed may appear inconsiderable : yet I own it gave
no small joy to me to be able to lead 20 of y^e highest
presbiterians in our Kirk to so open a Declaration of these
glorious principles for which some years agoe I was prosecuted,
& by some of these very men to".³⁷

In his "Reasons for Dissent" Wishart gave it as his opinion that the
censures of the Church ought to be inflicted only upon open transgressors of
the law of Christ. He did not think that a man who merely disobeyed the
commands of an assembly of fallible men, due to a conscientious regard to the
will of Christ as he understood it, was such an open transgressor, for obedience
and submission to Church courts was obedience and submission "in the Lord".
Obedience should be given only in such cases where it was not disagreeable to
the Lord and of this every man had an "unalienable right to judge for himself".
The sentence against the Presbytery of Linlithgow was unnecessary to support
the constitution and authority of the Church since the sentences of the Assembly
could be executed in many different ways without bearing hard on the
consciences of those who could not agree with the majority.³⁸ Nineteen years
before, Wishart had said in his sermon to the Societies for Reformation of
Manners:

"The method of punishing Offenders is to be confined to such
Crimes /

³⁷British Museum : Additional MSS 6211 f.226. One of the other signatories of
the Reasons of Dissents was George Lindsay, North Leith, one of the leaders
in the process of heresy against Wishart.

³⁸Morren : op.cit. pp.209-11

"Crimes of the vicious as are hurtful to others about them or disturb the Peace of human society. And therefore you are carefully to beware that under Pretence of punishing Crimes you do not unjustly restrain Men from the free Exercise of their natural and unalienable Right of enquiring for themselves in Affairs of Religion; and acting agreeably to the Light of their own Minds".³⁹

The views, which in 1737 seemed to limit unjustifiably the power of the civil magistrate, in 1751 seemed to limit justifiably the power of the Assembly! One can readily sympathize with the triumphant note in Wishart's letter to Professor Ward.

His triumph, however, was to be short-lived for his tolerant principles were to be crushingly defeated in the Case of Inverkeithing. The case was similar to that of Torphichen. A man of blameless character and principles had been presented to the parish by the patron with the concurrence of some of the heritors. The people however insisted on calling an English dissenting minister and refused to accept the presentee. The Presbytery of Dunfermline delayed the settlement for much the same reasons as the Presbytery of Linlithgow and the case came before the Commission of Assembly for the second time in November 1751. After hearing parties, the Commission appointed the Presbytery to meet on the third Wednesday of January 1752 and to admit the presentee as minister /

³⁹ W. Wishart : Reformation Sermon, London 1732, p.29^f

minister of Inverkeithing, "with certification that the Commission will at their meeting in March next proceed against them to very high censure in case of their disobedience." Despite this warning all, except two, of the members of the Presbytery found that they were "straitened" to proceed with the settlement and so the case came before the Commission again in March.

It was proposed that the case be referred to the ensuing Assembly but this was defeated and the Commission resolved to consider the execution of the sentence and the conduct of the Presbytery. By a small majority it was carried that, considering the whole affair and particularly the defences offered for the Presbytery at the bar viva voce, the Presbytery should not be censured for failing to carry out the settlement. To this decision a group of younger ministers, headed by William Robertson of Gladsmuir and John Home of Athelstaneford, entered their dissent and craved leave to complain of it to the next General Assembly. The Commission then ordered the Synod of Fife to carry out the settlement at Inverkeithing. This the Synod refused to do and the matter came before the Assembly of 1752.⁴⁰

Robertson and his adherents published their Reasons for Dissent in the Scots Magazine of April 1752 and, to these, answers were prepared by Wishart and other members of a committee appointed by the Commission. The "Answers" appeared in the following month's issue of the same magazine. These papers have been described⁴¹ as the "manifestos" of the Moderate and Popular parties respectively, but they might more accurately be described as the manifestos of the new moderatism as exemplified in William Robertson and the old moderatism as represented by William Wishart.⁴²

⁴⁰Morren : op.cit. pp.222-30.

⁴¹by N. Morren : Annals 1739-52 pp.231, 242 where the papers are given in full.

⁴²but not as represented by Wallace and Cuming.

Robertson and his friends considered that the decision of the Commission not to censure the Presbytery of Dunfermline was subversive of society in general and absolutely inconsistent with the nature and preservation of ecclesiastical society. It was particularly inconsistent with Presbyterian church-government and with the uniform practice and procedure of the Presbyterian Church. It would not only encourage disobedience to the decisions, but would also justify contradictions to the doctrines of the Church so that the way was now open for the publication of the "most wild, erroneous and hurtful opinions".

"The Reasons of Dissent" is a rather pompous document, the work of young men who are determined to set the Church to rights. They quote with distaste, but also with a lack of accuracy, from Wishart's reasons of dissent in the Torphichen case: "It has indeed been asserted 'That the censures of the Church are never to be inflicted, but upon open transgressors of the laws of Christ himself; and that no man is to be constructed an open transgressor of the laws of Christ, for not obeying the commands of any assembly of fallible men, when he declares it was a conscientious regard to the will of Christ that led him to this disobedience'" and then they go on to say:

"This is called asserting liberty of conscience, and supporting the rights of private judgment: and upon such reasonings the Rev. Commission proceeded in coming to that decision of which we now complain. But we think ourselves called upon to say, and we say it with concern, that such principles as these, appear to us calculated to establish the most extravagant maxims of Independency, and to overthrow, from the very foundation, that happy ecclesiastical constitution which we glory in being members of, and which we are resolved to support"

In reply to this, Wishart and the Committee chide the Dissenters for misquoting from the Reasons of Dissent in the Torphichen Case. They had omitted the important word "merely". Wishart and his friends then assert that it may be admitted as a self-evident maxim that "no man is to be constructed an open transgressor of the laws of Christ merely for not obeying the commands of any assembly of fallible men". It will be so admitted by all "who allow a difference betwixt Christ and fallible men"! They are unaware of any connection between these principles and the peculiarities of Independent church-government. They then discuss the meaning of the expression "from the very foundation" as used by the Dissenters:

"If their 'ecclesiastical constitution' is a Christian Church, and they mean, that these principles are calculated to overthrow it, foundation and all, we shall only say, 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ'; and that we believe not the person, but the confession of the Apostle Peter to be the 'rock' on which Christ has built his Church, with the assurance that the 'gates of hell shall not prevail against it'. If they mean that these principles are calculated to overthrow all but the foundation; why, really, if the super-structure is so disagreeable to the foundation as to be overthrown by these principles there will be no great harm done".

Robertson and his friends were anxious not to seem utterly opposed to the right of private judgment : "We allow to the right of private judgment all the extent /

extent and obligation that reason or religion require; but we can never admit that any man's private judgment gives him a right to disturb with impunity all public order". In answer to this, Wishart and his associates claimed that they knew of no "priests beyond the sea" who would not say as much but who, like the Dissenters, would never see fit to say what that extent and obligation was. Private judgment indeed gave no man a right to disturb public order but it was equally unlikely to cause any disturbance unless as the result of insistence on absolute obedience to Church judicatures.

It must have alarmed Wishart to find the new moderates referring with approval to the measures taken by an Assembly in covenanting times against pretended "liberty of conscience" and objecting to latitude in matters of discipline on the grounds that a similar latitude might be claimed in matters of faith. Certainly we find that he ridicules their contention "that this sentence will justify any contradiction to the doctrines of the Church and warrant the espousing and publishing the most wild erroneous and hurtful opinions without any censure". Wishart remarks that even the Dissenters will find it too hard to prove "that the most wild erroneous and hurtful opinions may be espoused and published without openly transgressing any law of Jesus Christ".

When one compares the "Reasons of Dissent" with the "Answers" it is clear that the old moderate out-argued the young moderates but it was the young moderates who won the day in the Assembly of 1752. Their success was due, perhaps, to a feeling on the part of the members of that Assembly that, in view of the failure of the augmentation scheme, it must be made clear to Parliament that /

that the courts of the Church were not careless of law and order, as had been alleged. At all events the Presbytery was severely dealt with, one member⁴³ being deposed from the ministry and three others being suspended from their judicial functions. The Presbytery then submitted and proceeded to effect the presentee's settlement at Inverkeithing. Wishart did not live to fight in another Assembly for he died in March 1753.

William Wishart has been described both as a "representative" Moderate⁴⁴ and as a leader of the Popular party.⁴⁵ His younger contemporary, Alexander Carlyle, clearly did not regard him as a Moderate for he remarks that George Wishart "came back to the Moderate party after his brother's death".⁴⁶ With this view, Cuming, Hume and perhaps Wallace, would have concurred. On the other hand it is most unlikely that he was regarded as an Evangelical by ministers like John Willison⁴⁷ and John MacLaurin,⁴⁸ who warmly welcomed George Whitfield and enthusiastically supported the Cambuslang Revival of 1742. Like his brother,⁴⁹ William Wishart had little use for what he called "Fanciful and Enthusiastical Religion".⁵⁰

It is more than likely that William Wishart would not have cared to be regarded as a member of a party at all for when he deplores the "sad state and face /

⁴³ Thomas Gillespie, minister at Carnock.

⁴⁴ John Tulloch in *The Scottish Church*, Edinburgh 1881, p.273.

⁴⁵ E.C. Mossner : *The Life of David Hume*, Edinburgh 1954 p.159.

⁴⁶ Carlyle : *Autobiography* p.238.

⁴⁷ Minister successively at Brechin and Dundee.

⁴⁸ Minister successively at Luss and Ramshorn, Glasgow.

⁴⁹ George published in 1742 "A Letter from a Gentleman in Boston to Mr. George Wishart concerning the State of Religion in New England" in which Scotland was warned about Whitfield's activities.

⁵⁰ "Essay on the Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life to the Happiness of Heaven" in *Discourses*, London 1753 p.96.

face of Religion in our day" he singles out as a sign of this "flaming Zeal for their own particular Way or party". Such zeal, he says, is far from being a zeal of good works but is rather the kind that the Apostle speaks of as being the parent of confusion and every evil work.⁵¹

Perhaps the soundest way to ascertain where Wishart's real concern lay is to glance briefly at the list of his publications. The list is short but it is certainly some indication of Wishart's interests. It was probably for the benefit of his students that he published an edition of Ernesti's⁵² "Preface to Cicero" in 1743. His edition of Voluseus'⁵³ "De Animi Tranquillitate" in 1751 reflects not only an interest in Scottish Latin literature but also a congenial Christian humanism. The dedication of his edition of the collected sermons of Benjamin Whichcote⁵⁴ is to young ministers and students in divinity and doubtless implies a desire on Wishart's part that they should follow the example of that learned Latitudinarian divine and strive for a fuller recognition of the claims of private judgment.

The theme of private judgment and liberty of conscience runs through his three published sermons and is also the subject of an anonymous pamphlet attributed /

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Johann August Ernesti (1707-81), German theologian and philologist.

⁵³Florentino Voluseus (c.1504-47), a Scottish Latinist in the Erasmusian tradition.

⁵⁴1609-83. Forerunner of the Cambridge School of Platonists.

attributed to his authorship.⁵⁵ It is surely significant therefore that Wishart dedicated the collected edition of his works to Benjamin Hoadly⁵⁶ with a grateful acknowledgment of the help he had received from his writings. Hoadly advocated conformism but objected to the right of any authority to judge, censure or punish in matters relating purely to conscience or salvation. Wishart subscribed the Westminster Confession but ceaselessly contended for the inalienable right of enquiring for oneself in affairs of religion. The man who, as a young minister in Glasgow, urged his hearers to "prove all things",⁵⁷ had this to say when he preached at the opening of the Assembly in 1746:

"This is a special object of the Concern of every good Man.
That the light of the Gospel may widely spread : The minds
of all Men may be so disposed to receive it, and it may enter
them with such Force of Evidence, as to overcome all Opposition
stop the mouths of Gainsayers; and captivate the Hearts of
all Men to its Obedience: That for this end all fair and
candid Examination be freely allowed and encouraged; a Thing
which never disturbed the Peace of the glorious Head of the
Church, and should never disturb Her's : That there be no
Persecution /

⁵⁵"The Principles of Liberty of Conscience Stated and Defended in a Letter to a Friend" by "Gwitmarpscheldon" Edinburgh 1739.

⁵⁶1676-1761 Bishop successively of Bangor, Hereford, Salisbury and Winchester, his sermon on the "Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ" occasioned the "Bangorian" controversy.

⁵⁷Wodrow : Analecta III 246.

"Persecution of any on a Religious Account; no Invasion of the Rights of Conscience but all Peaceable Subjects to the Civil Government be permitted by it to worship God according to their Consciences For the Peace of the Church of Christ is a Manly and Reasonable Peace; built upon Charity, Love and Mutual Forbearance. As for any other Peace, founded upon a Submission of our Honesty as well as our Understandings to weak and fallible Men it is not the Peace of the Church of Christ but the Lethargy of it".⁵⁸

This sermon, entitled "Publick Virtue Recommended" was published shortly after its delivery but a second edition with significant additions was included by Wishart in his collected "Discourses" in 1753. The following passage, in which the portion added in 1753 is underlined, may serve to show the change in Wishart's attitude between 1746 and 1753 :

"Let us carefully cultivate the true Principles of Liberty, Civil and Religious; and teach them to our children : there may be great hope of doing Good with the rising Generation ; by seasoning their minds with good Principles before they are tainted with bad Ones. Again let all our Endeavours for the good of our Country be managed with a due Regard to the Laws; to /

⁵⁸"Publick Virtue Recommended" Edinburgh 1746, p.20^f.

"to which we owe our Protection, and the Security of our Properties ; to which our Church owes its Civil Establishment and its legal Emoluments and Provisions : at the same time let us not strain or stretch any Law we call a hard one ; so as to make it really harder than the Legislature has made it : on the contrary, wherever human laws seem to interfere with the Laws of God (a case which may sometimes happen even under the best Government upon earth) we must at all adventures obey God rather than Men. In fine, in all our Attempts for the Good of the Church let us act with an inviolable Regard to the sacred Rules of Truth and Integrity".⁵⁹

The underlined passage seems to be the only one in which Wishart condemns, even by implication, the Patronage Act, and there is no evidence to suggest that he supported the claim of the Christian people to choose their ministers. On the other hand it need not be assumed that Wishart at first supported patronage and then opposed it. It is more likely that his real and abiding concern was for the rights of liberty of conscience and that this led him to oppose the censuring of those who, for conscience' sake, could not settle an unacceptable presentee. It was the rights of conscience, not the "rights" of the Christian people that made William Wishart ally himself (and his brother) with the leaders of the popular cause, like George Lindsay, North Leith, who had been prominent in the process of heresy against him, and John Currie, Kinglassie, the author of numerous pamphlets asserting the people's right of electing /

⁵⁹ Discourses, London 1753, p.253.

electing their ministers.⁶⁰ With Lindsay and Currie he had little else in common, but his concern for the rights of conscience was so great that he put aside all other differences to make common cause with them.

The impression one has of George Wishart from Carlyle is of a man who, though personally amiable, was easily led by his more forceful brother. While this may not be entirely untrue there are indications that it may not be entirely fair to George. In a sermon published before his brother's return to Edinburgh, George declares that "no man is carried to Heaven blindfold" and distinguishes those who have a sincere desire to do the will of God from those who "yield a blind submission to human Authority".⁶¹ It is also worth noting that during the period between William's death and George's death there are no cases similar to those of Torphichen and Inverkeithing, in which rights of conscience were as much at stake as the "rights" of the Christian people. Thus there is not necessarily any inconsistency between George's conduct before and after his brother's death.

There is also no implication of inconsistency in describing either William or George as "popular moderates". Rather does the description imply that they consistently upheld the principle of private judgment in matters of religion as an inalienable right of every Christian man.

⁶⁰ e.g. "A Full Vindication of the People's Right to elect their own Pastors".
Edinburgh 1733.

⁶¹"An Honest Mind the best Security against Error, in matters of Religion".
London (1733).

VII.

CUMING'S LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

The basis of Cuming's leadership. The Earl of Ilay : his character and interventions in Church affairs. Church and State : Cuming's and Ilay's views compared. Cuming's early policy. "Riding" committees. The Torphichen and Inverkeithing Cases : Cuming and the young Moderates. Decline in Cuming's prestige. The Theatre Controversy : Cuming's role and motives. His replacement by Robertson. Comparison with Hamilton and Wallace.

CUMING'S LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

The most important of the "New-lights", from the point of view of their contemporaries, was undoubtedly Patrick Cuming, for, with only a brief interval, he reigned as leader of the Church from the death of Principal Smith to the appointment of Principal Robertson. As we have seen, the leadership of the Church passed to Robert Wallace during the period 1742-46 but, apart from this short interruption, Cuming was leader from 1736 to 1761.

The periods of his leadership and the period of its interruption are significant. It was no accident that Wallace's period of power in the Church coincided with an eclipse of the Earl of Ilay's power in the state and that 1761 was the year of that nobleman's death, for Cuming's influence in the Church was largely dependent on the support of Ilay.¹ When Ilay fell from power so did Cuming. After his patron's death, Cuming virtually ceased to struggle against the rapidly increasing power of William Robertson and the young Moderates. Since Ilay and Cuming were so closely linked in the management of Church affairs it may be useful to see what kind of a man Ilay was, before considering the period of Cuming's ascendancy.

A candid, unflattering but not unfair portrait of Ilay is given by one of Walpole's sons:

"Lord Isla was slovenly in his person, mysterious not to say with an air of guilt in his deportment, slow, steady where suppleness /

¹Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century. Vol.I p.252^f
Sir Henry Moncrieff : Life of John Erskine, Edinburgh 1818 p.457.

"suppleness did not answer his purpose, revengeful and if artful at least not ingratiating. He loved power too well to hazard it by ostentation and money so little that he neither spared it to gain friends or to serve them. He attained the sole authority in Scotland by making himself useful to Sir Robert Walpole and preserved it by being formidable to the Pelhams.... Lord Isla's power received a little shock by Lord Tweeddale's and Lord Stair's² return to court on that minister's retreat but like other of Lord Orford's³ chief associates Lord Isla soon recovered his share of the spoils of that Administration".⁴

It seems that as early as 1717 Ilay was a power to be reckoned with in Church affairs for, as we have seen, he and his brother were then able to prevent any effective action to repeal the Patronage Act even though they themselves were out of favour at court. They considered that Patronage was a civil right and a piece of property and they would not consent to give it up.⁵ When, on the disgrace of Roxburgh, Ilay became Walpole's deputy in Scotland, he changed the conciliatory policy which had hitherto been followed in the exercise of Crown patronage to a more arbitrary one in which little account was taken of the wishes of the parish.⁶ He even turned out of the Chapel Royal

²John Dalrymple, 2nd Earl of Stair. He was appointed Ambassador to The Hague in 1742.

³Sir Robert Walpole was created Earl of Orford on his resignation.

⁴Horace Walpole : Memoirs of the Reign of George II, London 1847. Vol.I, p.276.

⁵Wodrow : Analecta II 391 III 491. William Mitchell : Diary p.228.

⁶Analecta IV 253.

Royal and the Royal Almonry those ministers whom he considered to be unpliant.⁷

Two incidents may serve to illustrate Ilay's attitude towards the ministers of the Church. On one occasion when asked if it was true that James Smith, then minister at Cramond, had sent him an offer of his service, Ilay replied "that it was very true, and he had accepted of it and would serve himself of them all, and they wer all of the same kidney!"⁸ This incident is reported to have taken place in 1730 and it is significant that from then onwards Smith's power increased⁹ until, on the death of William Hamilton, he became undisputed leader of the Church.

The second incident is Ilay's report to the Duke of Newcastle on the main crisis of Smith's administration. The letter is dated 8th September 1733.

"We have had lately some disturbance in Church matters, it would be too tedious to state it at length; four ministers who behaved themselves very insolently in regard to the laws concerning the settling of ministers are suspended, it seemed plainly to me to be the fruit of that seed which was sowed in the Earl of Buchan's Assembly.¹⁰ I believe Your Grace has often /

⁷Ibid. III 225, 320^f. Professor Hamilton was deprived of his post as Almoner and James Ramsay, minister at Kelso, lost his chaplaincy.

⁸Analecta IV 148.

⁹He was settled as one of the ministers of Edinburgh in 1730, succeeded Hamilton as Professor of Divinity in 1732 and as Principal of the University in 1733. "Professor Hamiltoun nou sees that he cannot intirely maintain his significancy in the Church if Mr. Smith and he don't joyn more cordially than formerly". Analecta IV 138.

¹⁰1729. Ilay seems to have deplored Buchan's allowing the Assembly even to suspend Simson. cf. Analecta IV 51, 144.

"often heard me complain of the proceedings at that time."¹¹

These incidents reveal Hlay as an extreme Erastian. The ministers of the Church were either useful or insolent - useful if they served him,¹² insolent if they presumed to question the authority of the State in church affairs. His contribution to the debate in the Commission of Assembly on a disputed settlement in August 1729 was characteristic:

"Lord Isla answered pretty long and warm : that we sat here by an act of Parliament : patronages was now a law ; there was an act of Parliament for this presentation ; it ought not to be quarrelled, otherwise the meeting quarrelled their own pouer".¹³

Hlay was clearly no believer in the divine right of Presbytery but considered that the Presbyterial system owed its existence to legislation by the civil power. It was the duty of Church courts to obey their creator and his aim was to make sure that they did their duty.

In his sermon before the Synod of Dumfries in 1726 Patrick Cuming had given public expression to his views on the relationship between Church and State and it is interesting to compare them with those of Hlay who had then only recently come to power. Towards the close of his sermon Cuming said:

"As we have nothing to fear from the civil Government under which we enjoy our Rights and Liberties, and for the Preservation of which, we are bound in Interest and Gratitude, as well as Duty and Loyalty to put up our most earnest Prayers; so let us do nothing /

¹¹British Museum. Additional MSS 32,688 f.291.

¹²Analecta IV 191.

¹³Analecta IV, 73.

"nothing which may render us unworthy of its Countenance and Protection. Let us maintain Peace among ourselves and as we have Opportunity, instruct and persuade our People to a peaceable Behaviour and to a Cheerful Obedience, who ought not for some Hardships to be forgetful of greater Advantages, and like peevish Children, if any one thing is taken away from them, in a bad Humour cast away all the rest".¹⁴

Although slanted rather differently and less explicitly Erastian, Cuming's views were not incompatible with those of Ilay. Cuming was prepared to put up with some hardships in return for the protection of the civil power and its countenance of presbyterial church government. By "hardships" he unquestionably meant patronage and its attendant grievances. Ilay considered that presbyterial government was established on the same basis as patronage. If one was honoured so must the other be. In practice both upheld the rights of patrons and it was not surprising that on the death of Principal Smith Cuming should be "intrusted with the direction of the Assembly"¹⁵ by Ilay.

According to Ramsay of Ochtertyre, Cuming "ventured, from the commencement of his political career upon measures which Carstairs or Hamilton would have considered too strong, and likely to be attended with mischievous consequences"¹⁶. Thus it is probably significant that in the case of the disputed settlement at Denny the Assembly of 1736 (which met before Cuming's assumption of the leadership) merely enjoined the Presbytery of Stirling "to deal tenderly" with the parishioners /

¹⁴P. Cuming : Dumfries Synod Sermon, London 1727. p.45.

¹⁵Ramsay : op.cit. Vol.I p.253.

¹⁶Ibid Vol.II p.17.

parishioners in effecting a harmonious settlement¹⁷ whereas the Assembly of 1737 declared its dissatisfaction with the Presbytery's conduct in neglecting to proceed to the trials and settlement of the presentee and ordered it to effect the settlement. But provision was made for the Synod to act if the Presbytery again failed to do so and, if the Synod should also be unwilling to proceed, a special Commission was appointed to carry out the Assembly's sentence.¹⁸

This decision was typical of the periods 1736-42 and 1746-51 of Cuming's ascendancy in the Assembly and may justly be regarded as being in accord with his sentiments. Cuming was convinced that the Church must obey the provisions of the Patronage Act but he continued to regard it as a hard law¹⁹ and so "his language was temperate and conciliatory even when duty made him have recourse to harsh measures. In delivering the sentiments of the Moderate party, he took care not to exasperate his opponents or the Christian people, whom he treated with great professions of respect, at the very time when he found it expedient to cross their pretensions ... he generally carried his point without producing an irreconcilable breach".²⁰

Cuming was conciliatory both to the parishes and the presbyteries. As we have seen, it was alleged in a pamphlet circulated at Westminster in June 1751 that the Presbyteries of Scotland paid very little regard to the Patronage Act and instead moderated the call of the people, heritors and elders. This seems to /

¹⁷Printed Acts of Assembly 1736.

¹⁸Printed Acts of Assembly 1737.

¹⁹cf. his closing address as moderator to the Assembly in 1749 Morren : Annals 1739-52 p.323.

²⁰Ramsay : op.cit. I p.253^f.

to have been very often the case but the author is mistaken in thinking that the patron's candidate and the candidate called were necessarily different persons. What seems to have happened quite often is that the candidate was named and presented by the patron and then called by the heritors, elders and people. But when the case was considered by the Presbytery the presentation was ignored and only the call moderated. Ramsay goes so far as to say that even after the rebellion of 1745 nine out of ten vacancies were filled in this way.²¹ Apparently the patrons very seldom remonstrated against the practice since the presentee was, in fact, if not in form, settled in the parish.²²

Under Hlay's administration the Crown patronage was exercised without any consultation of the wishes of the parish and in course of time other patrons began to follow suit. The reaction of the people of the parish in many cases was to conceive an inveterate opposition to the presentee, however blameless in character or unexceptionable in doctrine. Cuming's policy in such cases was to smooth over the difficulties as far as possible. Thus, under his guidance, a call was always required in the settlement of a parish but the assent of some of the heritors and elders was always deemed to be sufficient even though the vast majority of the parishioners violently opposed the presentee.²³ Such a call was usually obtainable with the assistance of non-resident heritors and, with it, Cuming was in most cases²⁴ prepared to uphold /

²¹Ramsay : op.cit. II p.17.

²²Moncrieff : op.cit. p.456.

²³Ibid pp.456-8.

²⁴In one or two cases the presentee was set aside (e.g. in the Currie case 1740

uphold the presentation.

Quite frequently Presbyteries were not willing to settle presentees, even at the command of the Assembly. Instead of forcing the issue the Assembly repeated the procedure adopted in the Demy case: it expressed its "dissatisfaction" with the Presbytery's conduct and arranged for the settlement to be carried out by a "riding"²⁵ committee. This device of an "ad hoc" committee for the admission of a minister was not, of course, invented by Cuming²⁶ but he used it as an instrument of conciliation. It was a means of sparing local ministers the fierce resentment that would be directed against all who took part in the settlement of an unpopular presentee.²⁷

This kind of conciliation was only a palliative; it was no cure for the ills of the Church. Certainly it diminished the immediate difficulty of executing as gently as possible the unpopular sentences of the Assembly. But it was usually carried through in the face of fierce popular opposition and did nothing to remove the prejudices of the people. Further it must have had the effect of lessening the authority of the candidate thus irregularly admitted, at least during the first years of his ministry. It is significant that the riding committee was condemned not only by the younger Moderates but also by Evangelicals of a later generation like Sir Henry Moncrieff.²⁸

The /

²⁵Perhaps so-called because it "overrode" the decision of the Presbytery or because the members rode to carry out the sentence.

²⁶The first riding committee was appointed in 1717 in the Peebles case.

²⁷This often involved physical violence.

²⁸Moncrieff : op.cit. p.458.

The last occasion on which a riding committee was appointed was in the case of Torphichen, which has already been discussed. But this Case was remarkable in that the Assembly of 1751 not only declared their displeasure with the Presbytery of Linlithgow but also appointed them to be rebuked at the bar of the house.²⁹ The following year, as we have seen, the Assembly departed even more drastically from a policy of conciliation by censuring the Presbytery of Dunfermline to the extent of deposing one minister and suspending three others from their judicial functions.³⁰ To this change Cuming assented but the initiative was not his but that of a group of young ministers, including William Robertson of Gladsmuir and John Home of Athelstaneford.

But Cuming's role in all this was not entirely passive for, although he had been Moderator of the Assembly as recently as 1749, he was deliberately chosen again with a view to the struggle expected to arise in the case of Inverkeithing.³¹ It is clear too that he approved of the action that was taken for, in his closing address to the Assembly, he said:

"Something was necessary to be done to remedy a growing evil, to prevent anarchy, and strengthen that constitution which was settled in the fifteen hundred and ninety-two, and confirmed to us by the articles of the union. We are ministers of the Gospel of Christ, - we are also ministers of a Church established by law. If this is not preserved, we give up our /

²⁹Printed Acts of Assembly 1751.

³⁰Printed Acts of Assembly 1752, p.12^f.

³¹Morren : Annals 1739-52, p.260.

"our constitution, and the legal advantages of it - we, ourselves, abandon that right we have by the articles of the Union. Far am I from thinking that every difference destroys that subordination; but what signify acts if they are not executed, and how can there be any government, if there is no last resource, and what must follow, but a dissolution of this frame of government, which will make it necessary that another be established, for neither can we ourselves endure anarchy, nor will the civil government suffer it to continue long ... It was therefore necessary that something should be done to maintain the authority of the Church. I know it will be a prejudice against what the Assembly have done, that the argument was supported by several young members, but it was by young men in defence of our old constitution".³²

It is a remarkable spectacle this - the leader of the Assembly virtually apologising to the members because of the prominent part taken by young ministers in the debate on a vital issue. It seems almost incredible that a seasoned ecclesiastical politician like Cuming should have been "pressured" into such a radical change of policy by a group of comparatively young and inexperienced country ministers. But it is more than likely that other pressures were also being brought to bear on Cuming.

Cuming was probably afraid of a serious deterioration in the good relations /

³² Morren : op.cit. p.289^f.

relations between Church and State, on which he set so high a value, if the Assembly did not take a firmer line with recalcitrant presbyteries. His speech to the Assembly certainly suggests this. Perhaps it was this paragraph from the anonymous pamphlet circulated at Westminster that panicked him into more rigorous measures:

"It is therefore submitted, that as a great part of the persons who now apply to Parliament for relief, with respect to their stipends, became entitled to them in breach and opposition to a law made by the Parliament of Great Britain, that in case the wisdom of Parliament shall incline to indulge the clergy with any alteration of the law as to these matters they will at the same time make effectual provisions for enforcing a due obedience to the Act of the 10th of Queen Anne, in such manner, as that it shall not for the future be in the power of Presbyteries in Scotland to elude the same, in the manner they have hitherto done".³³

Cuning, as we have seen,³⁴ was an enthusiastic promoter of the scheme for the Augmentation of Stipends but like most other ministers of the Church he was anxious that patronage should not be imposed upon the Church in an even more unpalatable form. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suppose that Cuning considered it more important at this stage to conciliate the civil power than the rank and file of the Church, in the hope that later on it might /

³³Morren : op.cit. p.197 n.

³⁴cf. Chapter VI.

might be possible to secure an increase in stipends without having to accept at the same time a more rigorous enforcement of the Patronage Act.

But there were also other important considerations. By his intemperate language towards the Wisharts, Cuming had failed to enlist the support of John Home of Athelstaneford and Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk when he had tried to do so in 1749.³⁵ Home, Carlyle and Robertson, with some others, formed a group which refused to commit itself to any leader and consequently assumed a position of some importance as "floating voters".³⁶ This position they used with such great effectiveness in the Assembly of 1752 that it has been assumed that theirs was the decisive influence and, although, as we have suggested, this may not have been the case, even contemporary observers had the impression that the leader of the Church had been overborne by a group of young men.³⁷ Cuming's prestige never recovered from this blow.

The decline in his personal influence was made apparent in the very next Assembly when Cuming was decisively defeated in his attempt to prevent the appointment of James Edmonston as joint Agent for the Church and Sub-Clerk of the General Assembly.³⁸ Perhaps it is also significant that in 1755 and 1756 Cuming played little part in the debates on the "infidel" writings of David Hume and Henry Home, Lord Kames. The defence of the two Humes was undertaken by the younger Moderates.³⁹ But in the Edinburgh theatre controversy Cuming and /

³⁵Carlyle : Autobiography p.239.

³⁶Ibid p.240.

³⁷Ramsay's comment: "if he ever went too great lengths, it must be imputed more to his young confederates than to himself" op.cit.I p.254.

³⁸Morren : Annals of the Assembly 1752-66, Edinburgh 1840, pp.9-21, 42-8.

³⁹and also, privately, by Robert Wallace. cf. Chapter VIII.

and the young Moderates were ranged on opposite sides.

John Home had been associated with William Robertson and Alexander Carlyle in the attempts to restore the discipline of the Church in 1751 and 1752. In 1757 he and Carlyle were themselves accused before the courts of the Church. The occasion was the production of a tragic play called "Douglas", which Home had written, at the theatre in Edinburgh. Stage plays and players had been opposed and condemned by the Presbytery of Edinburgh with considerable zeal over the past thirty years and so it was hardly surprising that the presentation of a play written by a minister of the Church should cause a storm. But Carlyle alleges that the storm was artificially raised by Cuming in order to discredit the young Moderates.

Cuming's leadership was very dependent upon the support of the Earl of Ilay.⁴⁰ It now seemed that this support was threatened by the intimacy which had arisen between Carlyle and John Home and Lord Milton,⁴¹ Ilay's confidential agent. It was with Milton's encouragement, too, that Home decided to have the play presented in Edinburgh.⁴² Cuming's aim, according to Carlyle, was to "blow us up and destroy our popularity and consequently disgust Lord Milton with us".⁴³

"Douglas" had its first performance on 14th December 1756 and on 5th January 1757 the Presbytery of Edinburgh opened the campaign with an "Admonition and Exhortation" against the stage which was appointed to be read after /

⁴⁰Although by now Duke of Argyll it will be convenient to refer to him thus.

⁴¹Andrew Fletcher, Lord Milton (1692-1766). As a Lord of Justiciary, he presided at the trial of Porteous.

⁴²Carlyle : Autobiography p.325.

⁴³Ibid p.330.

after service in every church within its bounds. This was followed by the prosecution of Mr. White, minister at Liberton, for attending the play. White expressed his deep sorrow for what he had done and so was merely suspended for a month. Not content with disciplining its own member, the Presbytery also sent a letter to several other presbyteries whose members had similarly offended. The Presbytery of Haddington of which Home was a member were unable to take action because the author resigned his charge but Carlyle's presbytery, Dalkeith, proceeded against him by libel.

After some months the Presbytery of Dalkeith found that Carlyle's offence deserved a higher censure than a rebuke and expressed the opinion that the higher the court which inflicted the censure the more salutary would be the effect. Carlyle appealed to the Synod and the Presbytery instructed their moderator to appeal to the Assembly should that court attempt to finish the process. The Synod's sentence was that the Presbytery of Dalkeith ought not to have employed a public process like that of libel but ought to have tried to settle the matter privately by a privy censure or some such process. At the same time the court declared its "high displeasure with Mr. Carlyle for the step he had taken in going to the theatre; and strictly enjoined him to abstain therefrom in time coming". This sentence was affirmed by the Assembly of 1757.⁴⁴

In all these proceedings Cuming seems to have played an active part, officially and unofficially, and, according to Carlyle, he was one of the committee /

⁴⁴Morren, Annals 1752-66 pp.127-9

committee which drew up the libel against him.⁴⁵ Certainly the "Douglas" case earned Cuming a great deal of odium and he was nicknamed Dr. Turnstile.⁴⁶ But, although Carlyle's friends characterised Cuming's conduct as duplicity and hypocrisy, it may well be questioned whether this is a fair assessment of the older Moderate. It is not without significance that Cuming's teacher, Professor Hamilton was one of the authors of the Admonition and Exhortation against the Stage issued by the Presbytery of Edinburgh in 1727.⁴⁷ It is also of interest that Wodrow, who was not unwilling to believe any story to the discredit of William Wishart, refused to believe that Wishart attended the theatre during his ministry in London.⁴⁸ Although Carlyle acknowledges the help which he received from Wallace in the preparation of his defence, Wallace did not take any public part in the debate and Ramsay was under the impression that he disapproved of the conduct of those ministers who attended the theatre.⁴⁹ It is therefore by no means improbable that Cuming genuinely disapproved of Carlyle's conduct and, while not averse to discrediting the young Moderates, did not undertake to oppose them primarily for this purpose.

Whatever Cuming's real motives were, the result of the controversy was disastrous for him and from then on his power steadily declined. Robertson's translation to Edinburgh the following year strengthened the young Moderates still /

⁴⁵Autobiography p.335.

⁴⁶cf. a pamphlet quoted in W. Law Mathieson : The Awakening of Scotland, Glasgow 1910, p.164 n.

⁴⁷Morren : Annals 1752-66 p.116.

⁴⁸Analecta IV p.227.

⁴⁹Ramsay : op.cit. I p.240 n.

still further, and the double blow of Ilay's death and Robertson's appointment as Principal of the University in 1761 ended Cuming's leadership of the Church. Cuming's resignation from the chair of Church History, which he had held since 1737, the following year, may be regarded as an admission by him that he was defeated.

It is less easy to form a clear picture of Cuming's career than of the careers of his fellow "Neu-lights" for both his publications and his personal papers are much scantier.⁵⁰ But at least a tentative assessment must be made and for this purpose it may be instructive to compare Cuming with his teacher, William Hamilton and his fellow-student, Robert Wallace.

Cuming led the Church far longer than either Wallace or Hamilton but this was due not to his abilities, considerable though they were, but to the fact that his patron, Ilay, was so long supreme in Scotland. Hamilton led the Church in spite of Ilay; Wallace led the Church when Ilay was out of favour at Court; Cuming led the Church because of Ilay's confidence in him. But the only advantage Ilay conferred on Cuming was this continuance in power; in other respects his patronage was an embarrassment. Hamilton had no patron and Wallace had the good fortune to have a patron who deferred to his judgment in ecclesiastical affairs. It was therefore much easier for them than for Cuming to exert a moderating and conciliatory influence. Nevertheless Cuming did try hard to conciliate the parishes, by insisting on a call to the presentee, the presbyteries, by using the device of the riding committee, the civil power, by the disciplinary action taken in 1751 and 1752, and the conservative /

⁵⁰These consist of three published sermons and notes taken during his lectures.

conservative Churchfolk, by the prosecution of those ministers who attended the theatre. Perhaps his judgment was somewhat at fault in the last three but he was not really guilty of inconsistency, as has so frequently been alleged. Indeed perhaps he was too rigidly concerned with the necessity of conciliation and failed to realise that he could not conciliate everyone.

It may be that the main reason for his ultimate failure was that Cuming quite failed to capture the imagination of the younger generation as his own teacher, Hamilton had done. No suspicion of heresy ever attached to his teaching but it would appear that his no doubt orthodox lectures were poorly attended.⁵¹ Not only did he fail to inspire his students; he also contrived to alienate Carlyle, Home and Robertson and this undoubtedly contributed to his downfall.⁵²

Cuming's leadership must therefore be deemed a failure but the failure was not so complete or so deserved as has been assumed.

⁵¹Somerville : My own Life and Times p.18^f.

⁵²cf. Carlyle's verdict : "Dr. Patrick Cuming was at this time at the head of the Moderate interest; and had his temper been equal to his talents, might have kept it long". op.cit. p.269

VIII.

WALLACE AS SPECTATOR.

Wallace's private papers reveal him as interested spectator. His views on the Inverkeithing Case. His attitudes to Glas and Gillespie compared. His views compared with those of Cuming and Wishart. The affair of the Infidel Writers : Wallace on church discipline. The Theatre Controversy : Wallace's address to the Clergy. His attitude to theatre-going. His attitude to Home and the young Moderates. Wallace and the young Moderates compared.

WALLACE AS SPECTATOR.

Ramsay of Ochtertyre remarks that, during the period in which he attended the General Assembly (1753-60), Dr. Robert Wallace took little or no part in the debates and "was considered as a man who wished to keep aloof from ecclesiastical politics".¹ But a perusal of Wallace's private papers shows that if he remained on the sidelines he was none the less a keenly interested spectator. In this chapter we shall examine some of the unpublished pamphlets in which he gave expression to his views on the controversies of the day.

One of them, entitled "Irenicum or, an Essay to Promote Peace and Union in Ecclesiastical Affairs", was very nearly published and is preserved partly in printed sheets and partly in manuscript in the Laing Collection.² This piece is of interest because in it Wallace has given his views on the Inverkeithing Case. It would appear that in this controversy he stood midway between Cuming and William Wishart. Wishart, for example, would have cordially approved of this paragraph:

"Whatever subscriptions and engagements we enter into to give obedience to the civil authority all things are to be understood, as well as in the case of Ecclesiasticall authority, to be in the Lord or only in so far as their commands are not inconsistent with /

¹Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen I p.244^f.

²Laing MSS II 97³ Wallace's note: "This piece has long lyen by me : it was once begun to be printed. But I stopped it att that time. It contains many good sentiments and deserves to be published ... This is written Munday July 30 1764" The date of composition was 1755.

"with the will of God of which every man has an unalienable right to judge for himself as he will be answerable to God. This is a right which he cannot give up to any man or society because it is not meerly his privilege but his indispensable duty".³

Wallace summarizes the arguments brought forward by Wishart and the Popular party but, doubtless in reference to the latter, he adds: "Thus would some Gentlemen who have not been more remarkable than others in pleading the cause of reason⁴ introduce it where it cannot have a place & discard authority where it alone is proper". He then goes on to explain:

"It is true nothing is more essential in a Protestant church than the right of private judgement, than the exercise of reason, than the liberty of examining for ourselves & acting in consequence of our own judgment. It is true lenity & forbearance are excellent things & in a peculiar manner are aimiable & proper in matters of Religion in which bigotry and persecution have done infinite mischeifs.....Yet if a nationall church may lawfully be constituted and if there can be any civil establishment in matters of Religion, wherever a Church /

³Irenicum p.129.

⁴cf. William Wishart's letter to Professor Ward quoted in Chapter VI : "I own it gave no small joy to me, to be able to lead 20 of y^e highest presbiterians in our kirk to so open a Declaration of these glorious principles for which some years agoe I was prosecuted, & by some of these very men to".

"Church is established by law and has the benefit of civil emoluments sentences must often be past according to the plurality of votes in the same manner as in matters of civil jurisdiction. A church must see to the execution of her sentences by proper punishments as well as the state".⁵

Wallace refuses to draw any distinction between the basis and nature of the authority of the State and of the Church:

"Each of them must be considered as under the authority of God and as part of the Universall Kingdom of God in which he alone is Lord and King to whose Government alone all men whether considered as members of the state or the church are to be subject without reserve".⁶

Thus if the State may lawfully inflict penalties on its disobedient officers so also may the Church. But the punishment should not be greater than the crime deserves or necessity requires, and so, if it should be found necessary to deprive a minister merely for refusing to obey the supreme court of the Church, this sentence should not go further than deprivation of the benefice and the privileges of a minister of the Church of Scotland: "Methinks it were pity to use words which either really mean or are conceived to mean a higher punishment in taking away the office altogether".⁷ Although the chief "offender" in the Inverkeithing Case, Thomas Gillespie of Carnock, was deposed simpliciter, /

⁵Irenicum p.125^f.

⁶Ibid p.128.

⁷Ibid p.144.

simpliciter, Wallace remarks earlier in the pamphlet that, instead of being criticised for its severity, the Assembly ought to be applauded for its moderation "in making an example only of one when so many have been guilty during a course of twenty years".⁸

It is interesting to compare Wallace's attitude to the Gillespie case with his attitude to John Glas. Not only did he oppose the deposition of Glas; he was prepared to suggest that he should not even be deprived but restored to the exercise of his ministry at Tealing. It has indeed been said of Gillespie that he was "a very moderate presbyterian and wished church courts rather to be consultative meetings where a considerable latitude of opinion was allowed than legislative and authoritative judicatories"⁹ but his views were not nearly so extreme as those put forth by Glas. Why then should Wallace be so much more tolerant of Glas than of Gillespie?

Wallace regarded Glas' Independency to be purely speculative¹⁰ whereas Gillespie's alleged Independency¹¹ involved him in a direct conflict with the authority of the supreme court of the Church. Wallace considered that the Church could safely tolerate all kinds of divergences in theory and even transgressions of what he terms "generall laws" but that the authority of the Church /

⁸Irenicum p.123.

⁹Gavin Struthers : History of the Relief Church, Glasgow 1843 p.123.

¹⁰cf. Chapter V

¹¹Robertson and his fellow Dissenters from the sentence of the Commission of Assembly in March 1752 described Gillespie's and his fellow-presbyters' principles as "calculated to establish the most extravagant maxims of Independency" cf. Chapter VI.

Church or of any other society "is in a manner dissolved if particular parties shall not be put in possession of what they have a title by the laws of the society".¹² He considered it essential that this should be done by "the proper and ordinary officers". It was quite unconstitutional for the Church to indulge its ministers in their disobedience by arranging for others to carry out their duty. It was also unfair: "Tho a measure may be both just and wise the execution of it may be very troublesom and unpopular. It may therefore be a great hardship to oblige the more peaceable and obedient part of a society to execute it att their own risk".¹³

It appears therefore that, in contrast to Cuming and Wishart, Wallace disapproved of "riding" committees. On the other hand, he seems to have combined Wishart's concern for the inalienable rights of conscience with Cuming's concern for the maintenance of the authority of the Church in essential matters. Where there was a conflict between conscience and the necessary exercise of authority the mildest possible penalty should be imposed and due submission made. Wallace considered it necessary for the Church to insist on the admission of a presentee to the duties, privileges and emoluments to which he was by law entitled but he did not consider that discipline should always be exercised against all offenders. This is made clear by his pamphlet concerning the "Infidel Writers".

The "Infidel Writers" were Henry Home, Lord Kames, an elder of the Church, and David Hume, a baptized member. The campaign against them opened in 1753 with the publication, by a retired army chaplain, George Anderson, of "An Estimate /

¹²Irenicum p.133^f.

¹³Irenicum p.136^f.

Estimate of the Profit and Loss of Religion, personally and publicly stated" in which he attacked principally Lord Kames' "Essays on Morality and Natural Religion"¹⁴ but also "his assistant David Hume Esq." Two years later, during the Assembly of 1755, there appeared an anonymous pamphlet entitled "An Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments contained in the writings of Sopho¹⁵ and David Hume Esq.; addressed to the consideration of the Reverend and Honourable Members of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland," in which the writer¹⁶ urged the Assembly "to give warning of the poison contained in these volumes".¹⁷ The Assembly however contented itself with a general condemnation of the principles of infidelity and immorality avowed in lately published books.¹⁸

This, of course, did not satisfy Anderson and his like and so he published a further pamphlet, "Infidelity a proper object of Censure"¹⁹ immediately before the opening of the Assembly of 1756. In this he contended that the Church was obliged to censure avowed infidels who were baptized persons and to cast them out of the Church if they were irreclaimable. The matter was raised in the Committee of Overtures and an overture was proposed, calling for an enquiry into Hume's²⁰ /

¹⁴Edinburgh 1751.

¹⁵i.e. Lord Kames.

¹⁶probably John Bonar, minister at Cockpen.

¹⁷"Analysis ..." p.2.

¹⁸Printed Acts of Assembly 1755 p.8.

¹⁹Glasgow 1756.

²⁰Kames was omitted, partly because his offence was less than Hume's, being heterodoxy rather than infidelity, partly, it seems, because the decorum of trying a judge of the supreme civil court was questionable cf. E.C. Mossner : "Life of David Hume" Edinburgh 1954 p.346.

Hume's²⁰ writings. The debate in the Committee lasted for two days and an account of it was given in the Scots Magazine for June 1756.²¹ Wallace was present at the debate and considered that the account was inaccurate and misleading. Accordingly he wrote, and almost published, his own view of the proceedings.

The full title of this pamphlet indicates the reason for its composition and is almost a table of contents: "The Necessity or Expediency of the Churches Inquiring into the Writings of David Hume Esquire and Calling the Author to Answer before the Spiritual Courts. Considered with Some Reflections on Christians Being Occasionally in Company with Scepticall or Infidell Writers. In Which There Are Some Animadversions on the Account in the Scotch Magazine for June 1756 of the Debates in the Committee of Overtures of the Generall Assembly 1756 concerning These Subjects. Printed Edinburgh 1756". The last phrase indicates how near it came to being published and this is corroborated by a note in Wallace's hand dated 1764.²²

Wallace was himself one of the Christians who held "voluntary unnecessary communication" with Hume and was nettled by the suggestion that one advantage of Hume's being excommunicated would be the cessation of this intercourse.²³ He is therefore at pains to point out in his pamphlet that, although a majority of the members of the Committee opposed the Overture calling for an inquiry into /

²¹Scots Magazine Vol.18 pp.280-4.

²²Wallace's note: "This pamphlet was intended to have been published in the year 1756 but it was not done. There is no occasion for it now..." Laing MSS II 97²

²³This apparently was suggested in the debate.. Scots Magazine Vol.18, p.283^f. Wallace defended Hume's candidature for the Chair of Ethics at Edinburgh in 1745 cf. Chapter VI. He strongly criticised Hume's opinions on the clergy cf. Chapter XI but a common interest in demography began a literary and scholarly intercourse valued by both. cf. E.C. Mossner : The Forgotten Hume. New York 1943 pp.105-131.

into Hume's writings, "it was evident to all that were present that not one of the members of the committee justified any of Hume's errors, not one of them asserted the innocence of error or that errors as well as vices were not the proper object of Church Censure. The whole debate turned on the necessity or expediency of inquiring into the writings of Mr. Hume or calling the Author before the church Courts".²⁴

The supporters of the Overture considered the Inquiry to be both necessary and expedient. It was necessary because of the "plain and express commands of Christ to exercise Discipline against such as taught false & pernicious opinions". It was expedient because the "prosecution of such a notorious criminall would be attended with many considerable advantages".²⁵

To this, the opposers of the overture replied that discipline was to be exercised for edification and that where there could be no edification there ought to be no discipline. Thus the question was entirely one of expediency : whether or not any advantage was to be gained by an exercise of discipline against Hume.²⁶ One of the objects of Church censures was to keep the body of members free from error but such an inquiry was the most infallible method of spreading Hume's writings and the errors contained in them. Neglect was often the most effective way of dealing with erroneous and infidel writings; prosecution merely gave them publicity.²⁷ Furthermore, however obvious Hume's errors /

²⁴Inquiry ... into ... Hume, p.6.

²⁵Ibid p.8^f.

²⁶Ibid p.9.

²⁷Ibid pp.22-4.

errors might seem to be to the unhurried reader in his study, it would probably be very difficult to convict before a court such a subtle man as Mr. Hume who "having so much of the sceptic in him rarely admitts any thing on any one side of a Question but he finds out something to plead for the other".²⁸ Inasmuch as he had not formally renounced his Baptism, Hume was technically still a member of the Church but it could well be argued that by his writings and opinion he had practically excommunicated himself and that there was therefore no necessity for the Church to eject him.²⁹

Besides, Hume was by no means the only or the worst offender against Christian standards:

"Are there not many criminalls in higher & lower life, vitious, immoral, and abandoned in their lives, Drunkards, revellers, whore-mongers, adulterers, contemners of Christian worship, despisers of Christian piety, open supporters of impious, lewd and immoral Principles in company? Are there not many of this character so publickly known that they might easily be convicted by the due course of law? Why do not they call such Gentlemen before them? Tis true such Gentlemen do not write books ... but they openly promote impiety & vice both by their conversation & practise and their impious & flagitious lives do infinite harm.... How can the supporters of the overture contend for the absolute /

²⁸Ibid p.28.

²⁹Ibid p.29^f.

"absolute necessity of excommunicating Mr. Hume but see no necessity at all to excommunicate so many others who by their abominable lives do more harm to true Religion, I may not only say than Mr. Hume's writings, but all the Infidell writings since the beginning of the world".³⁰

As one reads the pamphlet it becomes clear that Wallace is not merely reporting the arguments of those who opposed the Overture, he is also making an eloquent plea against putting Hume on trial. Wallace agreed with Hume little more than he agreed with Glas and his attitude to both is that men of such blameless lives should be left to profess their peculiar beliefs unmolested. Speculative and theoretical differences do not call for the exercise of discipline as to immorality and contumacious disobedience.

In his "Irenicum" Wallace had observed that when a church was legally established it meant that sentences must be passed by a plurality of votes and must be executed under penalties. In the pamphlet concerning the Inquiry into Hume's works he points out that a decline in standards is inevitable in an established church:

"A small Christian society ... may form what rules of Discipline they think best & they may observe them Regularly ... It would be happy for mankind (for mankind) if such an excellent Discipline could be preserved. But it continued in the Christian Church for only a short time & whenever any society whatsoever which is happy /

³⁰Ibid pp.20^f, 31.

"happy in a pure Discipline shall be enlarged, if it shall be established by law, if certain privelleges & emoluments are conferred on its members or Presidents, tho it may not be absolutely necessary to be received into it yet if it is reckoned honourable or fashionable or advantageous in any respect to be admitted as members the whole world rich & poor good & bad indifferently will croud into it & corrupt it & after this ... it will be absolutely impossible to observe the strict and good rules that were easily observed att its first institution".³¹

Despite this inevitable decline in discipline Wallace does not think that the answer is to put an end to established churches. The ministers of the Church of Scotland have much greater opportunities of promoting true piety and doing good than they would have as ministers of sectarian bodies. On the other hand this does not mean the abandonment of all discipline, merely such discipline that will do more harm than good. How far Wallace had departed from the early Reformers' view of discipline as an essential mark of the Church is clearly seen in this passage:³²

"Let us allwayes remember that if the Doctrine & worship & essential parts of the Government of a Church are kept pure, Discipline may be greatly relaxed att the same time that the Church may continue a happy instrument in the hands of Providence of /

³¹ Ibid pp. 31-33.

³² cf. The Scots Confession 1560, Article 18.

"of comforting & confirming the pious, reclaiming the wicked and may serve as a mighty bulwark against vice, errors and impiety".³³

Wallace does not say why he did not publish his pamphlet but doubtless it was because the need for it was obviated by the decision of the Committee, by 50 votes to 17, not to transmit the Overture to the Assembly.³⁴ Accordingly no inquiry was made into Hume's works.

It was at the end of that same year (1756) that the storm broke over the presentation of the tragedy of "Douglas". We have seen that Carlyle acknowledged the help he received from Wallace in preparing his defence before the courts of the Church but that Ramsay of Ochtertyre was under the impression that Wallace disapproved of those clergymen who attended the play.³⁵ For further elucidation of Wallace's views it seems best to turn to another of his unpublished pamphlets, which was written about this controversy.³⁶

It must surely be a matter of regret that Wallace did not see fit to publish his "Address to the Reverend the Clergy of the Church of Scotland.... on occasion of composing, acting & publishing the Tragedy called Douglass", for it is both witty and entertaining. Rarely has the bubble of Presbyterial pomposity been so effectively pricked as it has been by Wallace in his answer to the "Admonition and Exhortation"³⁷ of the Presbytery of Edinburgh concerning the /

³³Inquiry ... into ... Hume p.46.

³⁴Morren : Annals 1752-66 p.92.

³⁵cf. Chapter VII.

³⁶Laing MSS II. 620².

³⁷cf. Scots Magazine Vol.19 p.18^f for full text.

the evils of the stage.

The opening paragraph of the "Admonition" is as follows:-

"The Presbytery taking into their serious consideration the declining state of religion, the open profanation of the Lord's Day, the contempt of public worship, the growing luxury and levity of the present age, - in which so many seem lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,- and being particularly affected with the unprecedented countenance given of late to the playhouse in this place, when the state of the nation, and the circumstances of the poor, make such hurtful entertainments still more pernicious, judged it their indispensable duty to express, in the most open and solemn manner, the deep concern they feel on this occasion".

Wallace protests that religion has been said to be declining as long as he can remember and that he is not a young man. But he adds, "If men would believe you in this they would almost wonder there is any Religion left at all & might be tempted to ask what you have been doing & whether you have any good purpose".³⁸ Similarly he asks the clergy if the contempt of public worship is not partly due to them: "Are you certain that you have taken due care to have all your publick administrations as decent, as usefull, as edifying as they ought to have been?"³⁹ Certainly it does no service to the cause of religion to keep on harping on this string that it is declining.⁴⁰

The /

³⁸Address ... on ... Douglas p.11^f.

³⁹Ibid p.16.

⁴⁰Ibid p.20.

The clergy would also be better employed in denouncing obvious vices such as gluttony, drunkenness and debauchery than in deploring a growing luxury which is not only a natural consequence of the growing wealth of the country but is "necessary for promoting an honest & laudable industry & the support of the poor".⁴¹

In support of their condemnation of the stage the Presbytery had referred to the opinion which the Christian Church had always entertained of stage plays and players, as prejudicial to the interests of religion and morality. Wallace denies that there has been this unanimity of opinion and points out that the Larger Catechism, in discussing the Seventh Commandment, says that by it all lascivious stage plays are forbidden. It may therefore be supposed that other sorts of plays are not forbidden. He then makes a most interesting quotation from Petrie's Church History according to which the General Assembly of 1574 enacted that "no comedies nor tragedies or such playes should be made on any history of Canonically Scripture nor on the Sabbath day : If any Minister be the writer of such a play he shall be deprived of his ministry : as for playes of another subject they also should be examined before they be propounded publickly."⁴² From this it can be inferred that the General Assembly then supposed that good plays might be written both by the clergy and the laity and might be performed in the theatre. But Wallace's conclusion of this section is /

⁴¹Ibid p.21^{ff}

⁴²Alexander Petrie (Minister of the Scots Congregation at Rotterdam) : "A Compendious History of the Catholick Church from the year 600 untill the year 1600". The Hague 1662. p.385.

is rather surprising:

"However I will frankly confess that if you could gain the whole world to give up the representation of playes on the theatre I would not be sorry & on the whole I imagine, like most of our publick Diversions, they do more ill than good".⁴³

But, having admitted this, Wallace returns to the attack. In their "Admonition" the Presbytery had spoken of the "fatal influence" which stage plays and players "commonly have on the far greater part of mankind, particularly the younger sort". Wallace admits that the stage was a bad influence in the reign of Charles II but asserts that under the influence of the Tatlers, Spectators and Guardians the stage has been greatly improved and reformed. In fact no one would now dare to produce a lewd or vicious play.⁴⁴

The Presbytery's zeal against the stage is wasted for it is capable of improvement. They ought rather to oppose practices which are not capable of improvement. His example involves another argument "ad homines"⁴⁵:

"Why do any of you drink healths & quaff of bumpers to shew your regard for particular Ladies & Gentlemen. Nothing is in itself more absurd or unnaturall than to Drink in any other view than for health or refreshment. How contrary to reason to establish it as a custom to pour in more wine to express your /

⁴³Address ... on ... Douglas pp.27-30.

⁴⁴Ibid p.32^f.

⁴⁵One of the bitterest opponents of the stage was Dr. Alexander Webster, minister at the Tolbooth, Edinburgh, who was nicknamed Dr. Bonum Magnum because of his prowess in drinking.

"your regard to any person whatsoever. Does this tend to preserve the rules of temperance? Alas how evident is the contrary. Has not this foolish & absurd Custom, which is now become so Constant & allmost universall, been the cause of vast intemperance, drunkenness and debauchery? How often has it caused deadly quarrels & murders. How often have modest & sober men, contrary to their inclinations, been allured nay forced to Drunkenness. I dare aver that this silly Custom has done more harm than all the plays that ever were composed or represented. Yet, pray Gentlemen, how many among you make no scruple to take your bumper? How many of you are known to press it on others. I do not absolutely blame you for this ... but, Gentlemen, be not so inconsistent with yourselves as to plead that you may lawfully go into such an idle & pernicious custom but that the stage which has been far less pernicious must be abolished because it has been abused".⁴⁶

The "Address" contains many other palpable hits at the Presbytery's "Admonition" and also some sarcastic comments on an equally pompous statement issued by the Presbytery of Glasgow.⁴⁷ Anyone reading this latter statement, who /

⁴⁶Address ... on ... Douglas pp.34-6.

⁴⁷This was printed in the Scots Magazine for January 1757 (Vol.19 p.47^f) "The presbytery having seen a printed paper intituled 'An Admonition and Exhortation of the Reverend presbytery of Edinburgh', which, among other evils prevailing, laments the extraordinary and unprecedented countenance given of late to the playhouse in that city; and having good reason to believe that this refers to the following melancholy, but notour facts. That one who is a minister of the Church of Scotland, did himself write and compose a stage-play, intituled 'The tragedy of Douglas' and got it to be acted on the theatre at Edinburgh... The presbytery, deeply affected with this new and strange appearance, do think it their duty to declare ... that they agree with the Reverend Presbytery of Edinburgh"

who did not know what the clergy were like, might conclude that it referred to some terrible calamity and would be surprised on reading further to discover

"that these dreadful events amounted to no more than, as their narrative acquaints us, that one 'who is a minister of the Church of Scotland (strange, a minister of the Church of Scotland, it had not been so great a wonder had he been a minister of the Church of England, but what did this minister of the Church of Scotland? He) did himself write and compose as stage play intituled the 'Tragedy of Douglas'. Strange, did he? Ay, he did, nay 'and got it to be acted on the theatre att Edinburgh & that he & severall other ministers of this Church were present & some of them oftner than once att the acting of the said play before a numerous audience'. Assure your selves Gentlemen, however much the Presbytery of Glasgow or any of you may be affected with this which is called 'a new and strange appearance', by such solemnity about a trifle they have exposed themselves to a world of Ridicule. We of the Laity⁴⁸ ... will think the nation very happy if no more dreadfull vice or calamity shall ever be heard of".⁴⁹

Since the tone of the "Address" is hostile to both Presbyteries, it seems surprising /

⁴⁸ The Address is supposedly "by a Layman of their Communion".

⁴⁹ Address ... on ... Douglas pp.68-70.

surprising that Wallace should declare that, in the main, he is on their side. He admits that the Edinburgh Theatre is illegal⁵⁰ and suggests that, in any case, the town is not large enough to support a theatre: "There is not a sufficient number of rich & Genteel company for this purpose. Either the stage must sink or the greatest part of the good company must go too often for their fortunes & spend too much of their time".⁵¹ Nevertheless he thinks that the Presbyteries' efforts are useless. They will not persuade "the richer, Genteeler & more learned part of mankind" to cease attending the theatre. They will only offend them and make them less disposed to profit by the clergy's instruction.

Wallace refers briefly to those ministers who had attended the play. He considers that they "have judged weakly and acted inadvertently upon this occasion" but says that the clergy will be over righteous if they do more than admonish their brethren.⁵² It was doubtless the Presbytery of Dalkeith's attempt to secure a severe sentence on Carlyle that led Wallace to help him in his defence.

It would seem, therefore, that Ramsay was right in thinking that Wallace disapproved of the conduct of those ministers who attended the playhouse. There is also evidence to suggest that Wallace had no very high opinion of the playwright. Certainly these verses from a satirical "ballad"⁵³ found among Wallace's /

⁵⁰The Act, 10 Geo.II c.28 section 5, forbids the licensing of a playhouse except in the City of Westminster and where the King is in residence. This was evaded in Edinburgh by the device of charging for admission to a concert preceding the performance of the play. The playhouse was therefore, legally, a "concert-hall".

⁵¹Address ... on ... Douglas pp.58-60.

⁵²Ibid p.67.

⁵³"A Ballad on the Times to the tune of Strange News att a Countrey Wake".
Laing MSS II 620³¹

Wallace's papers, and presumably written by him, show Home in no very attractive light:

"Of Knaves without cunning and plots without sense,
Of the Common Good wasted with needless expense,
Of a Provost and Council that made themselves tools
To Clericall Fops and Politicall Fools,
Of Michaelmas Patrons and such other trash,
I thought to have sung without sparing the lash.
But writing for Pastime and not for a fee,
I begin where I like best att May sixty three.
Helter skelter, Helter dum skelter.

The Reverend Tragicall Lord Conservator,⁵⁴
With bag on his shoulder and sword at his A--- ,
Preferring good claret to Harrowgate water,
Came down in post haste to help on the farce.
Like a cock on his dunghill he strutted and crow'd
Keen vengeance he threatned, protested, and vowed
That Jack of all trades, with the help of Lord B--- ,⁵⁵
Should quickly all faction pluck up by the root.

As /

⁵⁴After demitting his charge, Home was appointed to the sinecure office of Conservator of the privileges of Campvere.

⁵⁵John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute (1713-92) "Prime minister" under George III and patron of John Home.

"As ill luck would have it, while Jacky was vaunting
Of more than he could do, like some of his betters,
The tradesmen, provoked by his insolent flaunting,
On a sudden resolv'd to break loose from his fetters,
They met and agreed to request the Convention
To free them from leets which confined their election,
That the City by Rogues might no longer be scourged
Nor Deacons like asses be hackney and draged
Thro' Politicall Plish splash & puddle".

This Ballad has of course nothing to do with the Theatre controversy, having been written at least six years later. But it may be indicative of Wallace's attitude to the posturings of the younger Moderates. We have seen how William Wishart ridiculed them in the "Answers to the Reasons of Dissent" in March 1752 and it seems possible that Wallace regarded them in no very different light. Perhaps it was because he did not let them realise this that the young Moderates regarded Wallace with greater respect than Wishart or Cuming!

Perhaps the young Moderates did take themselves too seriously and were unduly conscious of their self-appointed role as champions of church authority and /

and liberal sentiments,⁵⁶ but at least their theory and practice were consistent. These unpublished pamphlets of Wallace's reveal an astonishing dichotomy for it seems that he was prepared to allow the fullest liberty of speculation while imposing limits on freedom of action. Thus while he sees nothing wrong, and even some value, in stage-plays he is content to dispense with them and considers that the ministers who attended the theatre "have judged weakly and acted inadvertently". He is at pains to dissociate himself from Hume's views but considers that no good purpose would be served by the Assembly's condemning them. He recognises the inalienable and indispensable right and duty of every man to judge for himself in matters of religion but he is prepared to defend the deposition of Gillespie. It is this curious dichotomy and the fact that he refrained from publishing these and many other interesting pamphlets⁵⁷ that have prevented Wallace from enjoying the fame to which his great ability entitled him.

⁵⁶ cf. Carlyle: "Of the many exertions I and my friends have made for the credit and interest of the clergy of the Church of Scotland, there was none more meritorious or of better effects than this". Autobiography p.339.

⁵⁷ These include some on political subjects of local, national and international interest.

IX.

THE OLD MODERATES AND THE SCHISM OVERTURE.

The debate on schism between old and young Moderates. Wallace's part in the Committee on schism. James Oswald's speech in Assembly. Robertson's allegations. Cuning and Rockingham. Oswald's answer. Differing attitudes to patronage and schism. Abandonment of popular elections. The old Moderates' successors.

THE OLD MODERATES AND THE SCHISM OVERTURE.

In the chapter on the Wisharts it was suggested that the conflict over the Torphichen and Inverkeithing Cases was as much a struggle between old and young Moderates as between Moderates and the Popular party. In this chapter it will be suggested that a similar interpretation may be put upon the debates concerning the Schism Overture.

The Schism Overture was in the following terms:

"As the progress of the schism¹ in this Church is so very remarkable and seems to be on the growing hand, as it is credibly informed that there are now one hundred and twenty meeting-houses erected, to which more than a hundred thousand persons resort², who were formerly from the Church of Scotland, and that the effects of this schism begin to appear and are likely to take root in the greatest and most populous towns; it is humbly overtured, that the Venerable Assembly would take under their mature consideration this alarming evil, which hath so threatening an aspect to this Church, to the interests of religion /

¹The Seceders did not regard themselves as being in schism but only in secession from the "prevailing party" in the Church. Similarly the Relief Church merely existed to give "relief" from the burden of Patronage.

²Adam Gib the leader of the Anti-burgher wing of the Secession, considered the number of persons to be exaggerated. (Morren, Annals 1753-66, p.306 n.) Struthers estimated the number of Seceder congregations at 172 but this is probably based on a list published in 1773. (History of the Relief Church p.224).

"religion and to the peace of the country; and that they would provide such remedies against this schism as in their great wisdom they shall judge most proper".³

The Overture was introduced by a kinsman and close friend of Patrick Cuming, who was widely suspected of being its real sponser.⁴ It was considered by the Committee of Overtures and was brought before the Assembly of 1765. A proposal that the Overture should be transmitted to the Presbyteries with instructions to inquire about the extent and causes of the schism within their own bounds was rejected and instead a committee was appointed to consider the Overture and to report thereon to the next Assembly.⁵

It would seem that Robert Wallace was a member of this committee for among his papers are several drafts of speeches⁶ to be made in the debates on the Overture. Wallace was obviously not an enthusiastic supporter of the Overture for he confesses that he "can foresee no Good can result either from anything we can report to the Assembly or anything the Nixt Assembly can do". Likewise he sees no purpose in requiring the Presbyteries to investigate the extent or causes of the Schism. The extent of the Schism is great and the causes of it are known. These are detailed by Wallace as follows:-

"There /

³Morren : Annals 1753-66, p.305^{ff}.

⁴Patrick Bannerman, minister at Saltoun, in the Presbytery of Haddington. Somerville : My own Life and Times p.85^f.

⁵Printed Acts of Assembly 1765.

⁶Laing MSS II 620²⁶

"There was no great schism till the year 1733.

Before this various Disagusts were taken by severall
of the people on various occasions.

1. On some ministers taking the Oath of Abjuration.

2. On some Acts & notice taken of the Marrow of Modern
Divinity & those who favoured it.

3. On the acquittall or too slight correction of some ministers
called to an account by the Church for errors in Doctrine

And both before & since

4 : for too incautious & careless a manner in Licensing
students of Divinity to preach the Gospell.

5 : on a reall or apprehended slackness in punishing or
correcting the errors of the clergy in their sermons or Doctrines.

6. Or in condemning erroneous books & prosecuting their authors

7 : or correcting the vices and irregularities of the clergy

8 Or of the laity

And since the 1733

9. on account of the new method of singing salms in the churches'

Wallace then observes that all these separations were small and were not so
much from the Church as from particular ministers. In his opinion they were
almost all forgotten, had abated or were abating and it was best to take no
further notice of them. He then continues :

"We /

"We ought to report further that the Grand Schism arose in the year 1733 on the act 1732⁷ a good act : that this arose from the errors of some ministers & the weaknesses of the people I may take notice that the standart of separation being once lifted up everything that has given Dissgust since has increased it and in particular what are called violent settlements : this may lead to consider Patronages & condemn them"

Wallace then goes on to state what we have seen to be his own policy with regard to patronage. Where there is a legal objection the Presbytery ought not to sustain the presentation but equally ought the Presbytery to sustain the presentation where there is no valid legal objection. He considered that the Assembly should make a deliverance on these lines. But apparently Wallace failed to convince the committee, for in its report it mentioned only "the abuse of the right of patronage" as "one chief occasion of the progress of Secession"⁸ and ignored the other causes. Besides urging the Assembly to consider remedies for "so great an evil", the committee also recommended that a full scale inquiry should be undertaken by the presbyteries and by a committee of the Assembly.⁹

The report was considered by the Assembly of 1766 and was the subject of a lengthy /

⁷Act anent planting Vacant churches.

⁸It is interesting to note that the term schism, objected to by the Seceders is not used in the report.

⁹Morren : Annals 1753-66 p.311.

lengthy debate. It was warmly supported by the moderator of the preceding Assembly, James Oswald, minister at Methven, who, as we have seen, was a pupil and fervent admirer of Professor William Hamilton.¹⁰ Oswald was at pains to emphasize the numbers of those who had separated from the Church, the unhappy consequences of this, and the duty laid upon the Assembly to attempt to find a remedy. He also spoke of the abuse of the right of patronage not only by patrons but by the courts of the Church. Reformation should begin at home in every possible legal and constitutional way.¹¹

The principal spokesman for the opponents of the report was William Robertson who not only gave a far from modest account of his own management of the affairs of the Church, but also attempted to smear his adversaries by suggesting that some of them were actuated by envy and resentment of himself and had seized the opportunity afforded by a change of government to attack him.¹² As it is clear from Somerville's account of the debate¹³ that the object of this attack was Patrick Cuming, it may be well to investigate the charge.

Cuming's influence has been shown to have depended on the support of the Earl of Ilay.¹⁴ The death of that nobleman in 1761 deprived Cuming of a patron and his waning power was ended. The rise to power of a liberal group of /

¹⁰cf. Chapter III

¹¹Scots Magazine Vol. 28, p.338.

¹²Ibid Vol. 28, p.338.

¹³Somerville : op.cit. p.85.

¹⁴cf. Chapter VII

of Whigs under the Marquess of Rockingham in 1765¹⁵ could well have seemed an opportunity for a man in Cuming's position to espouse a liberal policy in Church affairs and so gain the new government's support. The charge made by Robertson is plausible, but it does not fit the facts. The Schism Overture was first debated by the Assembly in May 1765 but the Rockingham government did not take office until July of that year.

It is more than likely that Cuming was an active supporter of the Schism Overture behind the scenes but the ostensible leader of this challenge to the "Robertson moderates" was James Oswald, who indignantly rejected Robertson's allegations. According to Oswald, the immediate cause of the opposition to the ruling party was the countenance and aid given by Robertson to an old minister¹⁶ who had been convicted of fornication by his own Presbytery and Synod. On the ground that the legal evidence was insufficient the Assembly of 1764 had reversed the sentence of deposition and had appointed the offender to be admonished at the bar of the court. The alarm felt by many at this proceeding had led to the opposition expressed by the Schism Overture.¹⁷

Robertson was quite wrong in dismissing the opposition as irresponsible, self-seeking and unreal. The debate on the Secession reveals a genuine cleavage between the old moderates trained up under Hamilton and the Robertson school of young moderates. This is illustrated by their respective attitudes to /

¹⁵Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham (1730-82). His government adopted a conciliatory attitude to the American Colonies and repealed the hated Stamp Act.

¹⁶Robert Carson, minister at Anwoth.

¹⁷Oswald : Letters concerning the Church of Scotland. p.36.

to patronage and to schism.

We have seen that Wallace, the Wisharts and Cuming differed on several matters of ecclesiastical policy and even in their attitudes to patronage but none of them would have denied that patronage was a grievance. In the course of the debate however "there were some who scrupled not to give it as their opinion, That patronage was the best way of settling churches". So wrote the correspondent of "The Scots Magazine"¹⁸ and the phraseology indicates the novelty of such a view being expressed in public. According to those holding this view, the nobility and gentry must be presumed the best judges of the qualifications of ministers and were entitled to that distinction by the eminence of their station. If the election were in the hands of the common people they would be carried away by men of superficial rather than of solid worth and one candidate would be set up against another, thus causing animosity and confusion. It was because of the exercise of patronage that the reputation of the clergy stood so high as it then did.¹⁹ But in asserting this Robertson did much less than justice to the influence of Professor William Hamilton to whom an eloquent tribute is paid in this respect by Oswald. As we have seen, Oswald considered that Hamilton's views had formed the guiding principles of his successors until Robertson became leader of the Church.²⁰ It was because of Hamilton's teaching, rather than the patronage of the nobility, that the clergy had learned "moderation and a liberal manner of thinking".²¹

The young moderates' support of patronage as an institution excellent in itself was no less distasteful to the old moderates than was the easy tolerance of /

¹⁸Vol.28 p.340.

¹⁹Scots Magazine, Vol.28, p.340.

²⁰cf. Chapter III

²¹Oswald : op.cit. p.23.

of schism by Robertson and his friends. They were prepared not only to tolerate schism but even to welcome it, since variety in religion was as beautiful as variety in nature.²² Thomas Somerville, minister at Jedburgh, details the benefits arising from secession and schism at some length in his autobiography. He considers that the presence of a Dissenting congregation in the parish keeps both the parish minister and the dissenting minister up to the mark. Diversity of religious opinions and sects has promoted charity, candour, meekness and forbearance. These virtues are dormant where there is external religious unanimity but are awakened where there is legal toleration of differences in religious sentiment and diversity of institutions.²³

Precisely the opposite view is put forward by Wallace in his unpublished pamphlet, "Irenicum":

"Such separating churches frequently stirr up strife, give occasion to dangerous factions, Disturb the peace of society, Divert men's attention from the greater and more weighty points of piety & morality to contend about ceremonies, modes & forms; & thus to defeat the principall design for which any church ought to be established : on which account a separation from a national church ought to be avoided as much as possible by all good & wise men".²⁴

Besides /

²²Scots Magazine, Vol. 28, p.339.

²³Somerville : op.cit. p.86^{ff}.

²⁴Irenicum p.21^f.

Besides praising the beneficial effects of the schism in the past Somerville looks forward to the great benefits which can be expected in the future "from the conscientious efforts of learned and enlightened members of dissenting congregations prompted and encouraged by the spirit of liberality".²⁵ Somerville was of course writing some considerable time²⁶ after the debate but during it the opponents of the Overture did not hesitate to accuse its promoters of persecution of the Seceders in desiring an inquiry to be made by Presbyteries into the causes of the Schism.²⁷ To this it was replied that the supporters of the Overture had consistently supported the rights of private judgment and had "opposed every attempt to bear hard upon the consciences of others in the exercise of church power". Far from wishing to persecute the Seceders they wished, if possible, to take away the cause of the Secession.²⁸

But in the course of the debate it emerged that even the popular party in the Church had moved a considerable distance from the Seceders' ecclesiastical position. The Robertson party pointed out that in the committee's report the cause of the schism was given as the abuse of patronage. But it was by no means certain that this was the only or even the chief cause. A much more important cause was the fact that the people had been imbued with the idea that they had a divine right to choose their own pastors. This imaginary right had made them quite intractable and unwilling to submit to their legally appointed ministers. /

²⁵Somerville : op.cit. p.90.

²⁶1813-14.

²⁷Scots Magazine Vol.28 p.339.

²⁸Ibid Vol.28 p.394^f.

ministers. In reply to this the supporters of the report pointed out that in its patronage was described as one great cause not the only cause, of the schism. But, what is more remarkable, they asserted that no minister then living could be accused of having taught that the people had a right to elect their own ministers.²⁹

It would seem therefore that the claim made by Professor Notestein that one of the lasting effects of the Moderates was upon the popular party³⁰ is correct, if not quite in the sense he meant. The popular party of the late eighteenth century would seem to stand not so much in the tradition of Ebenezer Erskine and John Currie³¹ as in that of William Hamilton, William Wishart and Robert Wallace. It will be recalled that in 1745³² Wallace was unable to prevent Hume's disqualification on grounds of heresy for the Chair of Ethics in the University of Edinburgh. Sixty years later a similar case arose,³³ but it was the popular party who carried the liberal cause to a successful conclusion.

²⁹Ibid Vol.28, p.395.

³⁰Wallace Notestein : "The Scot in History", New Haven, Conn. 1947, p.211.

³¹Currie zealously contended for the people's rights to elect their pastors but did not join the Secession.

³²cf. Chapter VI.

³³John Leslie's candidature for the Chair of Mathematics at Edinburgh was opposed by the Moderates on the ground that in his writings he had quoted with approval from Hume.

X.

MODERATE PIETY.

Witherspoon's view of Moderate piety. Materials for study.
Leechman answers objections to prayer and to his Sermon on Prayer.
Wallace detects mistakes concerning Christian piety. Criticises
praying societies. Wishart on the necessity of a holy and good
life. Practical nature of Moderate piety.

MODERATE PIETY.

"A moderate man must endeavour, as much as he handsomely can, to put off any appearances of devotion and avoid all unnecessary exercises of religious worship, whether public or private".

Thus runs Maxim VII of the "Ecclesiastical Characteristics" but if we are to take this as the rule of Moderate piety one very notable exception immediately springs to mind - William Leechman of whom it was said by a contemporary that "his appearance was that of an ascetic, reduced by fasting and prayer".¹ Was Leechman then the only pious Moderate? In this chapter we shall examine the writings of some moderate men and try to discover whether they set their ideals as low as Witherspoon implies.

The materials for such a study are more plentiful than the author of the "Ecclesiastical Characteristics" would lead us to expect. Besides Leechman's famous sermon on Prayer there survive devotional treatises by William Wishart and Robert Wallace. Wallace's treatise was never published but his manuscript² is in a very finished state and he apparently went the length of submitting it to two of his brother ministers in Edinburgh /

¹Carlyle : Autobiography, London 1910, p.75.

²Laing MSS II 97⁶ "Christian Piety Illustrated and Certain Mistakes concerning it detected in an address to the Religious and Well Disposed".

Edinburgh for their comments.³ Wishart not only published an "Essay on the Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life to the Happiness of Heaven"⁴ but also issued a new edition of Henry Scougal's classic of devotion, "The Life of God in the Soul of Man".⁵

William Leechman, although a student of Professor Hamilton,⁶ has so far figured hardly at all in these pages because he was not numbered among the "Neu-lights" nor did he take a prominent part in ecclesiastical politics.⁷ But in spite of this he became the centre of controversy when he was elected to the Chair of Divinity at Glasgow in 1743. This Chair had been occupied, under suspension, by John Simson until his death in 1740⁸ and in 1743 a determined attempt seems to have been made to secure the appointment of an unimpeachably orthodox professor in the person of John Maclaurin. This attempt was frustrated by the casting vote of the Lord Rector of the University in favour of Leechman.⁹ The Presbytery of Glasgow /

³Wallace notes: "These papers have been perused and approved by Messieurs Erskine & Kay, Ministers of Edinburgh".

⁴London 1753.

⁵Edinburgh 1740.

⁶It would seem that Leechman's family, like Hamilton's, stood in the Covenanting tradition. Leechman's father rescued part of the dismembered body of Baillie of Jerviswood from Lenark Tolbooth and gave it burial. In gratitude the Baillies helped with young Leechman's education.

⁷He was however Moderator of the General Assembly in 1757.

⁸Simson had been succeeded by the colourless figure of Michael Potter about whom little is known.

⁹Although Hutcheson campaigned eagerly for his appointment it was only through the withdrawal of a third candidate that Leechman received as many votes as Maclaurin. Caldwell Papers : Part II Vol.I. Maitland Club, Glasgow 1854, pp.53-5. J. Wodrow : Life of Leechman. Prefixed to Sermons London 1789 pp.18-20.

Glasgow however refused to induct Leechman on the grounds of heresy contained in a sermon he had published on "The Nature, Reasonableness and Advantages of Prayer".¹⁰

The occasion of the publication of the Sermon had been the appearance in Glasgow of a Quaker pamphlet which had asserted that prayer was an impious and blasphemous practice.¹¹ This circumstance explains the defensive tone of Leechman's sermon and the large amount of space given to the answering of objections against prayer.

The first of these is "that an omniscient God knows already what we want before we ask it; and to what purpose do we ask those things which he already knows we stand in need of?" Leechman's reply is that the design of prayer is not to inform God of things which he did not know before but to express the sense of our dependence upon him for the supply of all our needs. A lively realisation of this dependence is essential to right relationships with God and with our fellow-men. Prayer is likewise an expression /

¹⁰Glasgow 1743.

¹¹J. Wedrow : op.cit. p.24. It is interesting to compare this Quaker view with David Hume's comment on Leechman's sermon: "I have read Mr. Leechman's sermon with a great deal of pleasure & think it a very good one; tho' I am sorry to find the Author to be a rank Atheist. You know (or ought to know) that Plato says there are three kinds of Atheists. The first who deny a Deity, the second who deny his Providence, and the third who assert, that he is influenc'd by Prayers or Sacrifices. I find Mr. Leechman is an Atheist of the last kind".
R. Klibansky and E.C. Mossner : New Letters of David Hume. Oxford 1954. p.10^f.

expression of our desire to remain in these right relationships and to perform the duties implicit in them.¹²

What is the point in asking God to do things which he will certainly do anyway as it may be assumed that in his infinite goodness and wisdom God will bestow on his creatures what is needful for them? In answer to this objection Leechman denies that prayer is an attempt to make God change his mind:

"Prayer only works its effect upon us as it contributes to change the temper of our minds, to beget or improve right dispositions in them, to lay them open to the impressions of spiritual objects, and thus qualify us for receiving the favour and approbation of our Maker, and all those assistances he has promised to those who call upon him in sincerity and in truth. The efficacy of prayer does not lie in the mere asking; but in its being the means of producing that frame of mind which qualifies us to receive".¹³

Leechman then deals with the objection that prayer is useless since God appears to exercise no influence over the human mind, as no good disposition is awakened without appropriate considerations and motives acting upon it. He points out that the same motives may be presented to two persons /

¹²Leechman : Sermons 1789. Vol.I. pp.187-92.

¹³Ibid pp. 192-4.

persons with very different results and that there is no necessary connection between perceiving the excellence of a course of action and pursuing it:

"Our ideas are but pictures and images of the things themselves; and as the picture of a feast cannot satisfy our hunger nor the picture of a fire warm and enlighten us; so the finest ideas of virtue and religion cannot make us good and happy without those dispositions of heart which should be raised and kept alive by them".

Even heathen philosophers, like Marcus Antoninus, have recognised man's inability to make himself virtuous and happy without divine assistance. But, granting the force of the objection, it is God who has made man capable of perceiving motives and being influenced by them. Leechman repudiates the objection that some have no need to pray to God that he should enlighten them with knowledge of their duty. Even if this were so they would have great reason to offer prayers of thanksgiving instead. Only Jesus Christ could truly have pleaded that he had no need of prayer and yet he prayed frequently and commanded his disciples to do likewise. Prayers are the proper means of obtaining all spiritual blessings. Thus, although the pious may seem to be no better off than the impious, they are in fact endowed with treasures which are indestructible - wisdom, virtue, truth, integrity, temperance, meekness, contentment, peace, joy and hope of immortality.¹⁴

Leechman had to deal not only with objections to prayer but also with objections to his sermon on prayer. The Presbytery of Glasgow appointed a committee /

¹⁴Ibid pp.202-5, 207^f, 210-22, 228^f.

committee to prepare remarks¹⁵ on Leechman's sermon in order to support their accusation of heresy. These were based principally on the precarious ground of omissions. Thus Leechman was accused of omitting to state that prayer should always be offered in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ.¹⁶ He defended himself by suggesting it was not blameworthy to commend prayer itself to those prejudiced against it before going on to show that it must be offered in the name of Christ. The sermon was not a complete treatise on prayer but in it he had shown his awareness of the necessity of the mediation of Christ.¹⁷ Leechman had indeed no difficulty in convincing both the Synod and the General Assembly of 1744 that the charges against him were unfounded and accordingly the Presbytery was ordered to proceed to his induction.¹⁸

In his treatise on Christian piety Wallace employs a method not unlike Leechman's, for he is concerned to point out certain mistakes into which the religious and well-disposed are apt to fall.¹⁹ He warns his readers that there can be no sound piety in their hearts and affections unless they have right and worthy apprehensions of the being, perfections, providence and laws of God.²⁰ It is a dreadful thing to separate the moral perfections of God /

¹⁵"The Remarks of the Committee of the Presbytery of Glasgow upon Mr. Leechman's Sermon on Prayer with his replies thereunto, etc." Edinburgh 1744

¹⁶Remarks p.42.

¹⁷Remarks pp.58, 57.

¹⁸Printed Acts of Assembly 1744.

¹⁹cf. the full title of this treatise given in note 2.

²⁰"Christian Piety Illustrated..." p.7.

God from his natural perfections. The religious and well-disposed are apt to dwell too much on the greatness and absolute sovereignty of God and to think too little about his wisdom, justice, equity and goodness. The subjects of a human absolute sovereign are greatly to be pitied and if we think of God only in these terms "we run the greatest danger of being overwhelmed by the sense of his greatness".²¹ In meditating upon the moral perfections of God they must not think only of his purity and justice for then they "will lose those joyes to which they have so good a title in virtue of his mercy & the gracious promises he hath given the penitent of the forgiveness of all their iniquities".²²

Wallace has a great deal to say about conversion. He warns the well-disposed not to imagine that they have not been converted if they "have not felt something very sensible and surprising in the manner of it".²³ Great fear, great sorrow, floods of tears or great joy are not essential to conversion and when they occur are by no means always sure signs of it. There is nothing wrong in feeling these for, if it is proper to weep for the death of a friend or for the misfortune of our country, it is surely also proper to weep when we consider our own great guilt and the sufferings of our Saviour. But a much surer sign of conversion is a measure of success in attaining to a good and regular life. The sincerity of our piety is best judged /

²¹Ibid p.46.

²²Ibid .

²³Ibid

judged by the steadiness rather than the warmth of our affections.²⁴

It is a mistake to think that in public worship and private prayer, in the hearing of sermons and in the receiving of the Sacrament we have received no benefit unless we have been deeply moved. What is true of ourselves is true also of other people. Tears and raptures do not necessarily proceed from an extraordinary effusion of the Divine spirit. They may very possibly proceed from ostentation.²⁵

Wallace deals at some length with the difficulties of those who feel they ought not to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper unless they are assured of their conversion. He considers that "everyone ought to communicate who after a proper search conducted with all the impartiality of which he is capable does not find that he is not converted". Greater weight ought to be attached to the command of Christ "Do this in remembrance of me" than to the warning of the Apostle about eating and drinking unworthily:

"If he errs in communicating he errs with the best intention; he acts in the most generous manner & his error is on the safest & noblest side and he may be said to do the best he can. On the other hand if he declines to communicate he may be said to act in a more selfish manner; he is equally guilty of falsehood & refuses to do honour to his Saviour from apprehension of /

²⁴In this connection it is interesting to note that Wallace neither opposed nor encouraged Whitfield. cf. Laing MSS II 620²³ "Some thoughts... on Whitfield and irregular methods of converting and Reforming the World".

²⁵Christian Piety Illustrated ... pp.46-63.

"of danger to himself".²⁶

A remarkable feature of Wallace's treatise is its strong criticism of the "praying societies". These had flourished during the troubles of the seventeenth century when parishes were deprived of the ministrations of a regular pastor²⁷ but had continued into the eighteenth century as rather self-conscious pietistic groups from which ministers were sometimes rigorously excluded. Wallace does not seek to impugn the motives of those who erect or join these societies but he is doubtful "how far societies of this kind are usefull for promoting solid piety". Company and conversation can foster piety and virtuous living but it must be suitable company and conversation:

"The young, the weak, the inexperienced can scarce be thought capable to give one another sound instruction in matters of Religion. Such persons have not clear & distinct notions and even when they conceive better they cannot express distinctly what they conceive. Their hearts are much better than their heads... Instead of correcting one another's errors they confirm one another in their errors. Instead of improveing they mislead one another. Instead of solving Doubts and Difficulties they raise unnecessary doubts & perplex one another. In short, Instead of promoting solid piety such societies serve too often to propagate the weaknesses of Piety & expose it to the ridicule of its enemies".²⁸

²⁶Ibid p.70.

²⁷There are traces of similar groups immediately before the Reformation.

²⁸Christian Piety Illustrated pp.91-4.

In order to show that this estimate of the Societies is based on knowledge Wallace describes the activities of one with which he was personally acquainted. Although its members were as well educated as the members of any society could be expected to be, the result of their meetings was not an increase in knowledge but rather increasing confusion and perplexity. Eventually they decided to study the doctrines of the Westminster Confession:

"They did not examine to find fault or to spy out errors. They did not believe there were any in the book but they were willing to see the truth with their own eyes or rather how to learn how to defend it against the adversaries. Being of this disposition you may believe the examination was not very severe The Confession met with no injustice. Scarce so much can be said for the objections of the adversaries. Those who started them soon gave up & each of the members was forward to answer them. Poor answers were often given. However if any of the company did not immediately see the force of the answer it was well if this was imputed only to weakness. It was lucky for him if he was not suspected of being inclined to Episcopacy or a more dangerous heresy".²⁹

Doubtless Wallace compared this feeble-minded discussion with the vigorous debates in the Rankenian Club on such topics.³⁰

For /

²⁹Ibid p.96^f

³⁰cf. Chapter IV where an account is given of the activities of a student club at Edinburgh.

For Wallace, Christian piety means much more than prayer and meditation; it is rather the whole duty of a Christian. The following passage is characteristic of his attitude:

"Nor is it possible to lay down precise rules for fixing the time which ought to be allotted for meditation, recollection, self-examination, prayer or other religious exercises by which we cultivate and cherish the noble affections of piety. Regard must ever be had to mens different capacities station & bussiness in life. Only it may be said in generall these affections & exercises are all so just, reasonable, agreeable and improving that we ought to take great delight in them & cannot well employ too much time for this purpose. Provided allways that these devout exercises do not interfere with the performance of our other duties or hinder us from doing the work that is necessary or proper whether in improving our mind by cultivating those arts & sciences which are usefull or serve for the ornament of society, or in working with our hands att our lawful trades and occupations, Provided also too closs an attention to those pious meditations does not render us too stiff grave & formal, unfits us for the commerce of the world or for acting our part with that decency, chearfullness or gaity that becomes us".³¹

William Wishart's piety is of a kind with Wallace's. Like him he is deeply distrustful of what he calls "Fanciful and Enthusiastical Religion" and strongly criticises those whose "rapturous impressions and uncommon attainments, /

³¹ Christian Piety Illustrated ... p.36^f

attainments, however extraordinary in their nature, have not so much as an ordinary influence to mend their hearts and lives".³²

The object of his "Essay on the Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life to the Happiness of Heaven" is to show what a dangerous snare it is for sinners to "flatter themselves they may go on securely in sin in the hopes of setting all to rights at last by a late or death-bed repentance".³³ Wishart says that he has, after "long and deliberate consideration", come to the conclusion "that all hope of retrieving the misery of an ill-spent life and escaping the wages of sin in another world, by a late or death-bed repentance, is absolutely excluded by the nature and design of religion and by the strain of the plainest decisions of the Holy Scriptures, particularly of the New Testament".³⁴ The greater part of the Essay is devoted to proving this from Reason³⁵ and from Holy Scripture.³⁶ The second of these proofs is by far the more extensive and includes a most interesting discussion of the repentance of the thief on the cross. Wishart ingeniously argues that there is no evidence that the thief was a habitual sinner nor that this was his first repentance. He suggests that this was the thief's first opportunity of acknowledging Jesus as the true Messiah and attributes great spiritual perception to him in that he recognised Christ on the Cross, whereas the Disciples all fled and forsook their Master. The case of the Dying Thief therefore cannot be cited in support of the efficacy of death-bed repentances.³⁷ Wishart concludes the essay with earnest exhortations to those /

³²W. Wishart : Essay p.97.

³³Ibid p.1.

³⁴Ibid p.7.

³⁵Ibid pp.11-19.

³⁶Ibid pp.19-95.

³⁷Ibid pp.79-91.

those who have already repented to persevere in good works and to the heedless to turn to the way of the Lord without delay.

For Wishart Christian piety is essentially a matter of living in accordance with the commands of Christ; he has little or nothing to say about prayer and meditation. For Leechman and Wallace prayer is largely a help towards living a better Christian life. All three are suspicious of extraordinary manifestations of piety, particularly if there is no discernible improvement in the performance of everyday duties.

Nevertheless there is little reason to suppose that these three Moderates neglected to set an example of piety in the more restricted sense. In a series of notes drawn up for his own guidance Wallace gives this advice:

"Do not be cool in your Devotion or appear to undermine it, to please the Polite, for the most polite who have the most extensive views will despise you in their hearts and think you a fool and ignorant of men; and the vulgar will look upon you as a rogue".³⁸

How successfully Wallace followed this advice may be judged by this description of his pulpit devotions by Ramsay: "His prayers breathed a seraphic spirit without any tincture of weakness or fanaticism, his animation being the effect of the warmth and goodness of his heart and of the richness of his matter".³⁹

³⁸"Some thoughts ... on Whitfield ... etc." Laing II 620²³.

³⁹Ramsay : Scotland and Scotsmen I p.240^f Ramsay also records this incident: "At the election of peers in 1754, Dr. Wallace said prayers as one of the King's chaplains. After he was done, the late Earl of Huntingdon, who had accompanied Lord Stormont to Scotland, said to a nobleman 'The liturgy of the Church of Scotland seems to be very beautiful'". Ibid p.240 n.

XI.

MODERATE VIEWS OF THE MINISTRY.

James Oswald condemns views of ministry current in 1767. Contrasts them with Hamilton's views. The views of Hamilton's students: Cuning and Wallace on clerical conduct. Wallace replies to Hume's views of the ministry. Wallace on vocation to the ministry and on the minister as scholar. Leechman's Synod Sermon: the minister's conduct, equipment, devotions and doctrine. Estimates of Leechman and Wallace as ministers.

MODERATE VIEWS OF THE MINISTRY.

It would seem that not all Moderates held similar views of the ministry for in 1767 James Oswald wrote:

"I was truly ashamed to hear speakers in our General Assembly, from whom better things might be expected, confine the regard which lay-gentlemen may be supposed to have for their ministers to their being men of conversation and possessed of other superficial accomplishments which fit them for what is called good company".¹

Oswald was perhaps afraid that Maxim V of the Ecclesiastical Characteristics was proving only too accurate a description of his younger brethren:

"A minister must endeavour to acquire as great a degree of politeness, in his carriage and behaviour, and to catch as much of the air and manner of a fine gentleman, as possibly he can",²

He is therefore at pains to show that this was not what he and his own contemporaries had been taught by their master, Professor Hamilton. According to Oswald, Hamilton had no time for "flimsy superficial gentlemen" and favoured only "such as had drawn their knowledge from the sources of ancient learning and the Scriptures in the original languages and who by a gravity and decorum of behaviour did commend the religion they taught".³

It /

¹Oswald : Letters concerning the Present State of the Church of Scotland, p.27.

²Witherspoon : Works Vol.VI, p.177.

³Oswald : op.cit. p.23 cf. Chapter III.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that Professor Hamilton's students were socially unacceptable. Of Robert Wallace it was said that it was matter of regret that such a genteel young man should be a Presbyterian minister⁴ and Ramsay remarks that the circumstance of Cuming and the Wisharts being gentlemen by birth "did not make them worse ministers or spoil their manners and principles".⁵

In considering the sermons delivered by Cuming and Wallace before the Synod of Dumfries when they were comparatively young men, we noted that in the "application" each of them had something to say about the conduct of ministers.⁶ Cuming said that in interest as well as conscience ministers were obliged to abstain from the grosser sins but that this should not be regarded as permission to indulge in evil-speaking, unjust reproaches, or implacable malice.⁷ Wallace also had something to say about this:

"Let us not call on others to live as Pilgrims and Strangers on earth, to raise their thoughts above the world; whilst at the same time we appear perfectly devoted to the Interests of the present Life and pursue them with all the Cunning and Worldly Wisdom of our carnal Neighbours".⁸

Wallace /

⁴Ramsay : op.cit. II p.552. To this remark it was replied by one of those present: "That puts me in mind of what I heard a wife say t'other day to her neighbour, on her regretting that a handsome lad should be made a town-officer - 'Have a little patience; ere seven years he will be as ill-looking as the worst favoured of them'."

⁵Ibid I p.250^f.

⁶cf. Chapter IV.

⁷Cuming : Synod Sermon p.44.

⁸Wallace : Synod Sermon p.38.

Wallace was also concerned with the attitude of ministers towards those who were unwilling to accept revealed religion. He was anxious that they should not condemn sober and free enquiry into the grounds of Religion and should meet objections not with references to authority but with reasoned defences of the Faith⁹. To these themes Wallace returns some twenty years later in his "Letter from a moderate free thinker to David Hume Esquire concerning the profession of the Clergy..."¹⁰.

Wallace had supported Hume's candidature for the Chair of Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy at Edinburgh University in 1745¹¹ but he took great exception to Hume's comments on the character of clergymen in "Essays Moral and Political" published in 1748. After some time had passed without any reply being made to Hume, Wallace decided himself to defend the clergy in the guise of a "moderate freethinker".

Hume had asserted that by its very nature the profession of the clergy was dangerous to their virtue and tended to inflame nearly all vices except the grosser acts of intemperance. The greater part of the clergy were and must be hypocritical, cunning, disingenuous, proud, ambitious, disposed to over-rate their own devotion, furious when contradicted, and promoters of superstition, ignorance and fraud.¹² This is a formidable catalogue but Wallace admits that the accusation, at certain times and in certain circumstances, would have been not unfounded: "There have been times when the /

⁹Ibid pp.33^f, 41^f .

¹⁰Laing MSS II 97¹.

¹¹cf. Chapter VI.

¹²David Hume : Essays Moral and Political (3rd edition) London 1748
note pp.270-2.

the Clergy in Generall have been dangerous to the interests of Religion, Learning, virtue, society and mankind" but it is absurd to assert they have always been and must be so.¹³

In reply to Hume's contention that the clergy must be hypocrites, Wallace has some interesting things to say about vocation to the ministry:

"In entering into Orders it is not necessary to have more spirituall or morall intentions than other virtuous men who believe the common Principles of Religion. All mankind ought & all Virtuous men with the ordinary tincture of Religion will, have a higher regard to what is moral or spiritual than to the dignity or profits of their employments: for if they are intituled to the character of pious and virtuous men even in the lowest sense they must choose honest and lawfull employments in which they may be usefull to the world as good men & as good Citizens & in which they may act their part worthily in society. This must be their cheif view in entering upon any employment whatsoever after which & in subordination to it they may lawfully have an inferiour view to support themselves in life with Decency & even with Dignity. Now what higher aims can be required or expected in the Clergy? In entering into their Profession therefore they are in no greater danger of being hypocrites than the bulk of other wise & good men".¹⁴

Just as there is no need for ministers to be hypocritical in entering the ranks /

¹³Wallace : Letter to Hume p.5.

¹⁴Ibid p.6.

ranks of the clergy so there is no need for them to become hypocrites later. There is no reason why they should not "be chearfull, laugh heartily, go sometimes to taverns, Drink a chearfull glass, tell a merry tale like the rest of the world". When praying or preaching, ministers ought of course to be serious but there is no reason for them to feign the appearance of greater seriousness than they feel.¹⁵

Wallace repudiates the suggestion that the clergy are ambitious of enslaving mankind by promoting ignorance, superstition and pious frauds. This was true of a former time and is still true of the Church of Rome. But it is very far from true of the Protestant clergy who "take a great deal of trouble to promote knowledge and an impartial examination of all Doctrines & opinions even the most sacred and to banish implicit faith and pious frauds". Far from enslaving men's minds the clergy have almost had to force the "examining spirit" upon the people and have had continually to inculcate the necessity for enquiry by spoken and printed word. Indeed many of the laity have thought that "the Clergy have gone too far in cherishing an Inquisitive humour, that they have raised unnecessary doubts about things of Importance and rather Disturbed the world than done any great service".¹⁶

It was a matter of considerable pride to Wallace that the English clergy had played an important part in the study of natural philosophy in the late seventeenth century¹⁷ and he himself followed their example.

Along /

¹⁵Ibid pp.7-9.

¹⁶Ibid pp.13-15.

¹⁷Ibid p.13.

Along with Colin Maclaurin, Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh, and several other professors and physicians, he was one of the founders of the Philosophical Society which later became the Royal Society of Edinburgh.¹⁸ Wallace's particular interest was mathematics and the evidence of his private papers suggests that he considered his "Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind in Ancient and Modern Times"¹⁹ to be his own most important work.²⁰ Wallace considered that the ancient world was much more populous than the modern and this led him into a long and friendly controversial correspondence with Hume who maintained the opposite view.²¹ Far from regarding this kind of activity as improper for a minister, it seems that Wallace actually entered the ministry because he considered it to be a profession "suited to his speculative disposition".²²

Wallace's Letter to Hume was never published and so we must again turn²³ to Leechman for an extended account of moderate ideals of the ministry. When in 1741 he was appointed to preach before the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr he chose for his subject, "The Temper, Character and Duty of a Minister of the Gospel", and I Timothy 4¹⁶ for his text. In his Introduction²⁴ he suggests /

¹⁸Scots Magazine Vol.33 p.341.

¹⁹Edinburgh 1753.

²⁰e.g. Almost all the papers in the box Laing II 96 relate to the Dissertation.

²¹A full account of this is given in E.C. Mossner : The Forgotten Hume, New York 1943, pp.111-117.

²²Scots Magazine Vol.33 p.341.

²³Wallace's comment written in 1764: "I can read the pamphlet easily enough. It is a good pamphlet & in a manner is quite finished.... I do not think it needfull to publish it". In a sermon preached before the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale on I Timothy 4¹³, ¹⁵ Wallace speaks of the place of study in a minister's life (1745) Laing MSS II 97'.

²⁴Leechman : Sermons 1789 Vol.I p.104.

suggests that part of the blame for "the unsuccessfulness of the Gospel and the low state of religion" may justly be laid on the ministers of the Gospel and that they have every reason to obey the Apostle's injunction, "Take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine".

Like Cuning and Wallace, Leechman emphasizes the necessity of ministers being exemplary in their conduct but goes on to say that they must also take heed to what is said or done in their presence. They must never, by false modesty or vicious complaisance seem to approve what is base or unworthy even in the company of their undoubted superiors.²⁵ Clearly Leechman has no time for "moderate, modern well-bred ministers" in whose presence "the jovial part of mankind.... stand in no manner of awe, and will even swear with all imaginable liberty".²⁶

He lays considerable stress on the minister's intellectual equipment:

"Let us study to acquire those improvements of understanding, which are in a peculiar manner proper to our sacred office, and highly necessary to answer the ends of it. Here it must be our first and chief care to clear our minds from those mistakes and prejudices which darken them, and hinder us from perceiving the full worth and excellence of divine things, and from judging justly of the comparative value and importance of the doctrines of religion. This unbiassed state of mind is of great importance; it is this that fits us /

²⁵Ibid p.105^f.

²⁶Witherspoon : Ecclesiastical Characteristics : Works Vol.VI p.177.

"us for searching into the Scriptures with fairness and impartiality, that we may thence draw the great doctrines of faith pure and entire, without loading Christianity with what does not belong to it, or giving up any essential or important part of it: it is this too, which preserves us from an over-fondness for new opinions on the one hand, and from an over-great reverence for long-established ones on the other".²⁷

Highly though he values scholarship in a minister, Leechman places even greater value upon a minister's feeling genuine good-will towards his flock and attending assiduously to their needs:

"Is the arranging of words, the measuring of periods, the beautifying of language, or even storing our own minds with the divinest sentiments, an employment of equal dignity and importance in itself, or equally pleasant on reflection, with that of composing differences; extinguishing animosities; searching out modest indigent merit, and relieving it; comforting a melancholy heart; giving counsel to a perplexed mind; suspending pain by our sympathy and presence....?"²⁸

A minister should not grudge the time taken up by such "kind offices" even if his studies are seriously interrupted.²⁹

In /

²⁷Leechman : Sermons Vol.I p.109^f.

²⁸Ibid p.131.

²⁹Ibid p.130.

In view of Leechman's great personal reputation for piety it is surprising that there is little emphasis laid in this sermon on the place of prayer in a minister's life. It is not omitted but it is mentioned only in passing as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself:

"Let us endeavour then, by the proper help of retirement, meditation and prayer, to attain clearer views of the Deity and of divine things..."³⁰

It has been asserted that "moderate preachers avoided all reference to the great doctrines of the Church and to the Reformation doctrines of sin and grace and the Plan of Salvation"³¹ and so it is of interest to note that Leechman impresses on his hearers the necessity of declaring "the whole scheme of Christianity".³² Theory and practice are of course sometimes quite different but it would certainly be an exaggeration to say that the Wisharts, Wallace, Cuming and Leechman avoided all reference to the great doctrines of the Church and, in the words of the same historian, "confined themselves to inculcating the moral virtues with illustrations drawn from some secular literature even more than from Scripture".³³ Leechman does undoubtedly stress the moral teachings of Christianity and advises his hearers to furnish themselves with a large collection of striking examples of the several virtues from sacred and "common" history³⁴ but he and the others make very extensive use of quotations from Scripture and at least show in their preaching an awareness of the doctrines of sin and grace. But, distrusting mere theory as they do, the emphasis of their /

³⁰Ibid p.123 cf. Chapter X.

³¹J.H.S. Burleigh : "A Church History of Scotland" London 1960 p.303^f.

³²Leechman : Sermons I p.137.

³³Burleigh : op.cit. p.304.

³⁴Leechman : Sermons I p.113.

their preaching is certainly on the practical implications of the Christian faith. We shall see in our next chapter that they were also deeply aware of the need to defend the usefulness and relevance of Christianity in an age of scepticism.

It is not easy to assess how far Leechman and the others put their ideals of ministry into practice. But Leechman's biographer says that during the process of heresy against him "it was dangerous for any person to open his lips against him within the limits of his old parish" and speaks eloquently of the concern showed by Leechman for those under his care.³⁵ It may also be significant that in Wallace's notebook of "Kirks just now vacant where the Crown is patron" there appears this note:

"Pegie Ferier a diseased sickly girl & very poor
Margaret Dobie in foster's wynd".³⁶

Surely it is not altogether fanciful to presume from this that among all his activities as an ecclesiastical statesman Wallace retained a genuine pastoral concern for the needy members of his flock. Nevertheless Wallace would probably have valued most the tribute paid to him by Henry Mackenzie:

"Dr. Wallace, with the most perfect correctness of clerical character, was a man of the world in that better sense of the term, which implies a knowledge of whatever human science or learning has done to enlighten mankind".³⁷

³⁵J. Wodrow : Life of Leechman p.15.

³⁶Laing MSS II 620²⁹⁴.

³⁷Henry Mackenzie : Life of Home, Edinburgh 1822, p.17.

XII.

THE MODERATES AS CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS.

The Moderates and the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. Professor Hamilton's sermon recalled. George Wishart's reply to Tindal. Patrick Cuming's account of the benefits of Christianity. Robert Wallace's reply to Mandeville. Wallace's views on Brainerd's methods. His advice to Freethinkers. Appraisal of Moderate apologetics.

THE MODERATES AS CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS.

"Its a strange whim to think of going & preaching among the Indians yet if any man is so disposed he may sometimes do service".¹

This comment by Robert Wallace may be regarded as typical of the attitude of his generation of Moderates towards what is now termed Foreign Missions. While by no means warm supporters, they were not hostile to the attempts to evangelise the American Indians made by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge.² On several occasions they accepted invitations to deliver the Society's Anniversary Sermon and to commend the Society's work but it is clear that their interest was mainly in the Society's efforts to set up schools in the Highlands of Scotland. It is significant too that the sermons delivered by them are often apologies for the Christian Faith directed towards their fellow-countrymen. The Moderates were more concerned about infidelity in Scotland than paganism in North America.

Thus when Professor Hamilton was invited to deliver the Anniversary Sermon of the Society in 1732, he decided to "offer something with Relation to /

¹"Some thoughts on the conversion of the Indians On Whitfield and irregular methods of converting and reforming the world". Laing MSS II 620²³.

²This Society was incorporated by Royal Letters Patent in 1709 with the objects of "further promoting Christian Knowledge and increase of piety and virtue within Scotland especially in the Highlands Islands and remote corners thereof ... and for propagating the same in Popish and Infidel parts of the World" - State of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in 1748 p.29.

to the Truth of the Gospel and the rather because of the Infidelity that appears in our Day to the great Scandal of the Age".³ We have already seen how he urged upon his hearers a rational faith which should be "proof against the impious Cavils of the Infidels of the Age".⁴

A notable example of what Hamilton had in mind had appeared two years earlier with the publication of Matthew Tindal's "Christianity as Old as the Creation or The Gospel as a Republication of Nature". This provoked over a hundred replies including, as we have seen, one by Robert Wallace.⁵ It is indicative of the importance attached to Tindal's work that when in 1742 George Wishart delivered the Anniversary Sermon on behalf of the S.S.P.C.K. he considered that a public refutation was still necessary. Wishart's reply to Tindal is not nearly so able as Wallace's and is more limited in scope. He confines himself to answering the assertion that Christianity has caused more harm than good. Like Wallace he is very doubtful if valid comparisons between Christian and pagan countries can be made:

"It is far from appearing with any reasonable Evidence that the Mischiefs committed under the Christian name have been greater than any which have otherwise appeared in the World. The contrary may be asserted with at least as great Probability".⁶

³"The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion" Edinburgh 1732 p.7.

⁴Ibid p.26 cf. Chapter III.

⁵Preface to Synod Sermon, London 1731. cf. Chapter IV.

⁶G. Wishart: "The Case of Offences against Christianity considered".
Edinburgh 1742, p.46^f.

cf. Wallace : Preface pp.xxiii-xxv.

On the other hand Wishart is quite convinced of the harmful effects of infidelity to Christianity:

"As Infidelity hath made considerable Progress of late Years so it is too evident that Vice of all Sorts hath spread at the same time and is become more generally and openly practised".⁷

Wishart points to the remarkable changes for good at Corinth under the influence of Christianity in the first century, and suggests that the benefits conferred by it are to be seen in the present century:

"I hope I may indulge the Pleasure of saying with Truth that to this Day, even in those Times of great Degeneracy, some are reclaimed from their vicious Courses by the preaching of the Gospel, not merely changed from a Course of Debauchery, to Enthusiasm and Superstition but converted to Substantial Piety and Goodness, which they show in the uniform Course of a regular virtuous and useful Life".⁸

A much more eloquent defence of Christianity as the great benefactor of mankind is made by Patrick Cuming in the sermon which he preached before the S.S.P.C.K. in 1760:

"Is Christianity an enemy to learning? Where have the sciences flourished so much as in Christian countries, or been so much improved as by learned Christians. The reading of the Scriptures and the reformation of religion enlarged the minds of men and encouraged a Spirit of free enquiry.
Is /

⁷G. Wishart : op.cit. p.26.

⁸Ibid p.23.

"Is it a friend of slavery? On the contrary it delivers the mind from the tyranny of passion and from the fears of guilt; it calls upon us 'to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good' (I. Thess. 5²¹). The spirit of the Gospel is a spirit of liberty which abhors oppression of every kind, civilises our nature and teaches us humanity even to our enemies. It was Christianity, when fully established, that abolished slavery,⁹ the cruelty of masters to their servants, of parents to their children, the barbarous custom of exposing infants and the bloody shews of gladiators which were so common in Heathen Rome in its most civilised state".¹⁰

William Wishart and Robert Wallace also preached before the S.S.P.C.K.
but Wishart's sermon was not published and no hint as to its content has so far been found. Wallace's sermon is entitled "Ignorance and Superstition a Source of Violence and Cruelty and in particular the cause of the Present Rebellion".¹¹ It is not so much a defence of the Christian faith as a defence of the Society's work in establishing and maintaining schools in the Highlands. Wallace repudiates the argument put forward by Mandeville¹² that human society cannot be supported without ignorance and that the less the poorer sort know, the better for themselves and others. He /

⁹Was Cuming unaware that slavery survived in North America?

¹⁰P. Cuming : A Sermon on Matth. 11⁵. Edinburgh 1760 p.72.

¹¹It was delivered in 1743.

¹²It was delivered, as one might expect, in January 1746.

¹³Bernard Mandeville : An Essay on Charity and Charity-Schools. London 1725 p.369.

He points out that knowledge is necessary for the cultivation of the earth and the provision of necessities and that knowledge of God cannot indispose men for labour. It would be ridiculous to do away with Charity schools and thus abandon children to acquire habits of vice and idleness. The Society's schools accustom children to work. In Wallace's view it is entirely wrong to have no regard to the minds of one's fellow-men or to let them be destroyed by ignorance. He points to the great opportunities in the Highlands and warmly commends the Society's work there¹⁴.

Two years after the delivery of this sermon the Journal of David Brainerd was published in London¹⁵. Brainerd was one of the missionaries among the American Indians employed by the S.S.P.C.K. and had kept the Journal at the request of the Society. Wallace, as we have seen, was not hostile to evangelisation of the Indians, but among his papers are strongly critical remarks about Brainerd's methods. Brainerd had decried preaching morality and had asserted that a missionary "ought not to preach morals or such Doctrines concerning Religion & a future state as are founded in nature or to which men may be most easily led by the convictions of reason, but the pure Doctrines of the fall & our redemption". In reply to this, Wallace asks what reason a poor Indian has to take the missionary's word when he is told about the miraculous story of Christ. Wallace would prefer to begin where the Indian or other unbeliever is:

¹⁴ R. Wallace "Ignorance and Superstition ..." Edinburgh 1746. pp.20^{ff}

¹⁵ Brainerd was a New Englander employed by the Society from 1743 until his early death in 1747. An abridgement of his Journal was published, with a commendation by Doddridge, at London in 1748.

"As men have naturally some notions of superiour power and in future life & of virtue & vice is it not better to begin with the easiest things of which men have naturally some notion & give them just notions of morals, the Divine perfections a future life & its rewards & punishments & by degrees endeavour to gain upon men laying a natural & rational foundation of piety & goodness If it is said why should an Indian believe these fine rationally speculations about morals & a heaven & a hell I answer he has at least more reason & greater evidence for them than the miraculous story of Christ"¹⁶.

In his last work to be published Wallace recognises that there are some Freethinkers who discard even natural religion of this kind but says that this cannot be attributed to the arguments made use of "for in truth the arguments for religion and morality are not only unanswerable, but have been set in so clear a light, that it is scarce possible to advance any thing new, or to say any thing better than has been already said on this subject"¹⁷. Instead of embarking upon a formal refutation of the systems of the Freethinkers Wallace suggests some reasons why they would be well-advised to change their opinions.

First of all he deals with those who consider that notions of virtue, equity /

¹⁶R. Wallace : "Some Thoughts on the Conversion of the Indians . . ."

¹⁷"Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature and Providence". London 1761. p.393.

equity and a public spirit have arisen wholly from education and political contrivance without any foundation in nature. Wallace says that these ideas are so deeply imprinted in men's minds that nothing will ever be able to erase them and that virtue is not dependent on fashion or education but has as firm a foundation as the heavens or the earth. This has indeed been well illustrated by Shaftesbury in his "Characteristics". These notions of the Freethinkers are unjust, ungenerous and "tend to encourage mankind secretly to indulge themselves in all sorts of knavery". If the Freethinkers cannot be brought to renounce such principles they would be wise to conceal them.¹⁸

Secondly the Freethinkers should cease to attack the doctrine of a future state after death and of future rewards and punishments for surely there is no doctrine better calculated to give comfort to virtuous men and to alarm the vicious. It is unwise to discard "a belief which is not only consonant to men's natural notions of equity and justice but upon the whole so comfortable and useful".¹⁹

The Freethinkers would do well, in the third place to consider whether any good purpose is served by denying "the being or perfections of the Divinity". What comfort can mankind take in "imagining that they dwell amidst confusion, in a distracted universe, or a fatherless world?" Such a view of the universe is liable to make men careless and indifferent and lead them to despair.²⁰

Wallace /

¹⁸Ibid pp.394-9.

¹⁹Ibid p.399^f.

²⁰Ibid p.400^f.

Wallace denies that even the most able sceptics can demonstrate that there is no God, no wise providence, and no future life. It is unfortunate for themselves that they doubt these doctrines but why should they extend their misfortune to others?

"Are not the Freethinkers unkind to themselves, in choosing to appear in so bad a light; and unfriendly to the rest of the world, in endeavouring to rob them of so mighty a consolation, and so strong an incentive to virtue?"²¹

Professor Wallace Notestein has said of the Moderates that "they represented a kind of liberalism that met skepticism halfway".²² It would perhaps be unfair to assert this of Hamilton, Wishart, Cuming and Wallace but of the last three at any rate, it can justly be said that they did not urge the fullness of Christian doctrine upon their opponents. The strong tendency of the Christian religion "to reform Mankind and to advance true Goodness" is for Wishart "a good Argument of its divine Original".²³ A survey of the great benefits conferred by Christianity on mankind leads Cuming to "conclude that the great Teacher of it had full authority from God to publish it to the world".²⁴ Wallace is content to rest the whole case for revealed religion on the assurance that it gives that God will pardon a sinner immediately on his repentance.²⁵ He remarks that "the Deisticall /

²¹Ibid pp. 402^f.

²²W. Notestein : The Scot in History. p.209.

²³G. Wishart : The Case of Offences against Christianity ... p.51^f.

²⁴P. Cuming : A Sermon on Matth. 11⁵ p.38^f.

²⁵R. Wallace : Reply to a Letter directed to the Minister of Moffat pp.43-6. cf Chapter IV.

"Deisticall scheme to be sure is the most naturall",²⁶ and considers that it is a suitable point of departure in the preaching of Christian doctrine. His method with the Freethinkers who cannot accept even the Deist position is to avoid meeting their arguments at all. It is significant that neither Wallace nor his fellow-Moderates attempted to answer Hume²⁷ who was of course the real challenger of the Faith. Despite some superficial appearances to the contrary, these Moderates were pragmatic rather than intellectual Christian apologists.

²⁶ R. Wallace : Some Thoughts on the Conversion of the Indians ...

²⁷ except of course on the secondary matter of the character of the ministry.
cf. Chapter XI.

C O N C L U S I O N .

CONCLUSION.

The fact that no detailed study of the Moderate divines is at present available has not inhibited historians of the Scottish Church in their treatment of the eighteenth century. Generalisations and sweeping statements about "The Moderates" abound in historical works of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this study we have seen that general statements about "The Moderates" are impossible since fundamental differences existed between the earlier and the later Moderates.¹ When a statement is made about "The Moderates" we must always ask, "Which Moderates?" Accordingly these concluding remarks are concerned with the "Hamilton" or "Early" or "Old" Moderates.

The "Hamilton Moderates" would probably be the most satisfactory designation for this group for we have seen that most of their distinctive attitudes, policies and ideas can be traced to the influence of their master, William Hamilton. We conclude therefore that Hamilton rather than Hutcheson should be regarded as the Father of Scottish Moderatism.

Hamilton's tiny literary output has concealed his great effectiveness as a teacher. There is every indication that he taught his students "a liberal manner of thinking on all subjects" and that this gave rise to the vigorous intellectual activities of the Rankenian and other clubs in Edinburgh. His pupil, William Wishart, encouraged similar clubs in Glasgow. Hamilton's dislike of dogma inspired in his students a critical attitude to man-made creeds and confessions and a feeling that evil works were /

¹ Chapters VI, IX.

were a great deal worse than evil opinions.²

Hamilton's dislike of persecution is reflected in the considerable sympathy felt by his students for John Glas,³ John Simson⁴ and David Hume⁵. This sympathy did not amount to agreement with their views. It was simply compassion for the victims of persecution. Their sympathy is not consistent however for we find William Wishart opposing Hume⁶ and Cuming and Wallace opposed to the exercising of the right of private judgment by the Presbyteries of Linlithgow and Dunfermline.⁷

It was doubtless in reaction to the troubled times of his youth that Hamilton showed such a desire to heal divisions. This policy of conciliation was imitated by both Wallace and Cuming when they led the Church. Fortunate in the circumstances, and perhaps also in the length of his leadership Wallace was considerably more successful⁸ than Cuming whose eagerness to conciliate all parties in Church and State led to his replacement by the more resolute Robertson.⁹

Hamilton and all his students regarded Patronage as a grievance. Wallace wrote several anti-Patronage pamphlets, none of which he published¹⁰ but Cuming gave public expression to his dislike of Patronage.¹¹ Yet it is clear that none of them considered that Patronage was completely opposed to the principles of Presbyterian Church government. It is significant that Wallace /

²Chapter IV.

⁸Chapter V.

³Chapter V.

⁹Chapter VII.

⁴Chapter IV.

¹⁰Chapter V.

⁵Chapters VI, VIII.

¹¹Chapter VII.

⁶Chapter VI.

⁷Chapters VII, VIII.

Wallace was more concerned about the Widows' Fund than about attempting the abolition of Patronage and that he did not publish his attacks on the system. Cuming considered that Patronage was one of the hardships the Church had to bear in the enjoyment of its position as established by law.

The leadership exercised by Hamilton differs in one important respect from that of Cuming and Wallace. It was not dependent on the goodwill of a "patron". Cuming's power was based on Ilay's uncrowned kingship of Scotland and though Wallace had a more congenial patron in Tweeddale he was equally dependent on him.¹² It is to the credit of Robertson that he put an end to this particular kind of "patronage".

It is clear that in their ideal of a learned, decorous and diligent ministry Hamilton's students had their master's example in mind.¹³ Thus they joined freely in the activities of the many clubs in Edinburgh but considered that the theatre was no place for a minister to be seen.¹⁴ In their pulpit utterances they were often at pains to show "the evidence of the truth of our religion" and to combat "the impious cavils of the infidels of the Age" just as Hamilton had been,¹⁵ but we have seen that they seldom, if ever, went to the heart of the matter.¹⁶ We have also seen that they were probably diligent, if not devoted, in prayer¹⁷ and pastoral care.

We /

¹²Chapters III, V, VII.

¹³Chapter XI.

¹⁴Chapter VII.

¹⁵cf. Hamilton : The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion p.25^f.

¹⁶Chapter XII.

¹⁷Chapter X.

We have quoted some of the furious abuse that has been hurled at the Moderates during the last hundred years or so. They have been branded as intrusionists and heretics and the once honoured name of Moderate has become, like "Pharisee" and "Puritan", a term of reproach. Few ministers to-day would care to be described as a Moderate.¹⁸ Their opponents have done their work thoroughly.

We have seen that in the case of the Hamilton Moderates this invective is quite misplaced. Although they took too optimistic a view of human nature to be thoroughgoing Calvinists, none of them was convicted of heresy in his own day and all of them would now be regarded as orthodox. They were indeed reluctant to endanger what they regarded as a basically satisfactory ecclesiastical establishment by intemperate opposition to the grievance of Patronage but they cannot justly be described as intrusionists. On the contrary they strove by every legal means to secure the settlement in vacant parishes of ministers who were acceptable to the people. It is also quite unjust to regard them as devoted principally to secular interests.

But when all this has been said it is impossible to regard these Moderates without some disappointment. It is said that Bishop Berkeley was so impressed by the ingenuity of the members of the Rankenian Club that he invited them to assist him in his project of establishing a college in the Bermudas.¹⁹ One cannot help feeling that he would not have regarded them /

¹⁸ Nevertheless Dr. Nevile Davidson recalls that, when on one occasion he accused the late Professor G.D. Henderson of being a Moderate, the Professor smiled as though he had been paid a compliment.

¹⁹ Scots Magazine. Vol. 33. p.341.

them so highly in their years of maturity. The promise of their precocious youth does not seem to have been fulfilled.

It is remarkable that, for all their impatience with man-made creeds and confessions, none of them pressed for a revision of the Westminster Confession or of the Formula of subscription to it. On the contrary they all signed the Formula and did nothing to have it altered even when they achieved positions of influence. Doubtless they felt that the Confession too was part of the Revolution Settlement and were unwilling to imperil it in this way.

Although they show an awareness of the new situation in which Christian faith is no longer to be taken for granted they cannot be regarded as satisfactory apologists. They do not defend the Faith in its fullness and evade many of the real issues by regarding the intrinsic excellence of Christianity as sufficient proof of its truth. It did not occur to them that Christianity cannot strictly be proved at all.

But it is perhaps their prudence with which one is most impatient. They are unduly anxious to preserve peace and quiet, to avoid open controversy, to prevent any breach with the secular authority. In a word, the Hamilton Moderates are too moderate.

APPENDICES.

1. The Moderates and the Church of England.
2. Two Curious Works by Wallace.

1. THE MODERATES AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The sermon which Patrick Cuming delivered before the Synod of Dumfries in 1726 shows a rather hostile attitude to the Church of England or at least to those Episcopalians "who doom all others who are not under their particular Form of Government",¹ but William Leechman and Robert Wallace seem to have been well-disposed towards the English Church.

Leechman's biographer tells of an interview which he gave, while on his death-bed, to a young Oxford student designed for the ministry of the Church of England. Leechman told the young man: "You are of the Church of England. I am a Presbyterian. The difference between us is not great".²

Wallace was very closely interested in the Church of England for his son Matthew became Vicar of Tenterden in Kent. In the Laing Collection there is a bound volume of manuscript sermons by Wallace³ and on the reverse of some of them there are notes of the places and dates on which they were preached. According to these, Wallace preached forty-three times at Tenterden between 1761 and 1771 and it would appear that he also preached on several occasions elsewhere in England.

It is also of some interest that during 1766 he preached three times at Edinburgh English Chapel, on 12th and 19th January and on 16th February. The closeness of the dates suggests that Wallace was supplying the pulpit during the illness of the regular clergyman. Among Wallace's writings is "An /

¹P. Cuming : Synod Sermon London 1727 p.37.

²J. Wodrow : Life of Leechman p.92.

³Laing MSS II 97⁷

"An Address to such of the English Nation as reside in Scotland and to the more moderate among the Scotch Episcopalians Concerning Occasionall Conformity to a nationall worship".⁴ In this piece Wallace assumes the character of "an Englishman who hath long resided in Scotland" and gives it as his opinion that there is no necessity "for a layman to separate from the Church of Scotland or indeed from any of the Protestant Churches where the Management and forms of Religion may truly serve to promote solid piety tho they differ in several Respects from the Church of England". Those who consider that the Sacraments and Orders of the Presbyterians and other Protestants differing from the Church of England are null and void cannot be advised to worship or communicate with the Presbyterians but he presumes that this is not a general principle among the members of the Church of England living in Scotland and the more moderate of the Scottish Episcopalians.⁵ It would seem therefore that exchange of pulpits and intercommunion between the Church of Scotland and the Church of England was by no means unthinkable in the eighteenth century.

⁴Laing MSS II 97⁴.

⁵Ibid pp. vii-viii.

2. TWO CURIOUS WORKS BY WALLACE.

In the memoir of Wallace contributed to the "Scots Magazine" in July 1771, his son remarks that at the age of seventy-three Wallace "could unbend his mind from sublimer meditations and graver researches, even by reading Gallini, and by attempting an essay, on the principles and the art of Dancing".¹ There is however no trace of such an essay in Wallace's papers in the Laing Collection. It must therefore be presumed that in all probability Wallace destroyed the essay himself or left instructions for it to be destroyed. Such prudence would be completely in character.

Another curious writing which does survive but which Wallace had never any intention of publishing is an essay entitled "Of Venery, or of the commerce of the two sexes".² The pages of this essay are numbered 1224 to 1256 because, according to a note by Wallace, they were formerly part of another work. In it Wallace suggests "a great many rules concerning the conjunction of the 2 sexes in marriage or otherwise, some better others perhaps more disputable, without any regard to opinions or practises, which have prevailed or do prevail att present ..."³

He considers that the education of children in matters of sex should be delayed as long as possible "for being too early instructed in the Theory they /

¹Scots Magazine Vol.33 p.344. Gallini was a dancing master who wrote a treatise on dancing. cf.Scots Magazine Vol.24. pp.309-15.

²Laing MSS II 620¹²

³"Of Venery ..." p.1238.

they are tempted to begin the practise too soon". Boys and girls should be educated apart from one another and should be permitted to meet seldom and only at stated times and under certain regulations. In a home boys and girls ought never to be allowed to sleep in the same room or the same bed. "In truth every person ought to have a bed att least & if possible a room for him or herself: two persons sleeping together is neither agreeable nor wholsom & is quite contrary to that Delicacy which ought to be cherished among rationally creatures".⁴

Wallace describes the doctrines which elevate chastity, virginity and celebacy above normal sexual intercourse as "foolish silly unnaturall ridiculous absurd pernicious". Fornication should be discouraged but only gently punished. Wallace describes the appearance of two such offenders on the stool of repentance in such a way as to suggest that it was a thing of the past when the essay was written. He is emphatic that the parents' offence "should be no blot on the child who is intirely innocent".⁵

The oddest feature of this essay is Wallace's advocacy of dissoluble marriages: "Marriages during life are liable to many inconveniences & bad Consequences both to the parties themselves & to the publick". He then goes on to describe his proposed alternative:

"Let a young couple therefore marry, let them do it wisely and discreetly but let them not be bound for life. Let them be
att /

⁴Ibid pp. 1239^f.

⁵Ibid pp. 1241, 1231.

"att full liberty to seperate when they please particularly when the wife has born a child. Let them have power immediately to dissolve the marriage & cohabite no more. If they choose to separate at any other time Let this be publickly & solemnly ascertained & from that day let neither of them be capable of marrying during a full year after which either of them may contract another marriage with another person as if the former partner were dead. Att seperation let proper rules be laid down for the maintenance & education of the child or children ..."⁶

One is not surprised to find that Wallace has noted on the cover "It will be needless & by no means proper to publish them att least att present".

⁶Ibid pp. 1244^f.

BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX.

This Index contains particulars about the lives and careers of some of the principal subjects of the thesis. In the entries concerning less frequently mentioned persons reference is made to the appropriate chapters. The order is alphabetical by surname or peerage title.

BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX.

ARCHIBALD, Francis (d.1748) Minister at Guthrie, Angus 1716-29. Adherent of John Glas. Deposed by Synod of Angus and Mearns January 1729. The Commission of Assembly recalled the sentence but declared him to be no longer a minister of the Church of Scotland. (Chapter III).

ARGYLL, John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll, Duke of Greenwich (1680-1743). Supporter of the Treaty of Union and the House of Hanover. Commander-in-chief during the 1715 Rebellion. Opposed Government over the Porteous Riot legislation. Opposed Church over abolition of Patronage. (Chapter III).

ARGYLL, Archibald, 3rd Duke. See ILAY.

BRAINERD, David (1717-47). New Englander who served as a missionary to the Indians under the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. (Chapter XII).

CARLYLE, Alexander (1722-1802). Minister at Inveresk 1748-1802. One of the Robertson group of Moderates. Censured for attending the theatre 1757. Author of several pamphlets and Autobiography. (Chapters VI, VII, VIII).

CARSTARES /

CARSTARES, William (1649-1715). Studied at Edinburgh and Utrecht. Involved in Rye-house Plot 1682. Minister of English Church at Leyden 1685-8. Chaplain and confidant of William of Orange - "Cardinal Carstares" - 1693-1702 Principal of Edinburgh University 1703-15. Minister at Greyfriars Edinburgh 1704, St. Giles', Edinburgh, 1706. Moderator of Assembly 1705, 1708, 1711, 1715. Supported Treaty of Union. (Chapters I, III).

CUMING, Patrick (1695-1776). Minister at Kirkmahoe, Dumfries (1720), Lochmaben, Dumfries (1725), Old Kirk, Edinburgh, Collegiate charge (1732-76) Professor of Church History, Edinburgh University (1737-62), Moderator of Assembly 1749, 1752, 1756. D.D. Edinburgh 1752. Leader of the Church 1736-42, 1746-61. Publications - See Bibliography.

CURRIE, John (d. 1765). Minister at Kinglassie, Fife 1705-65. Friend and sympathiser of Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine but refused to join the Secession. Author of many pamphlets against Patronage and against Secession. (Chapter VI).

DUDGEON, William (fl. 1765). Philosophical writer resident in Berwickshire. May have been author of "The Necessity of some of the Positive Institutions of Christianity Consider'd in a letter to the Minister of Moffat" London 1731. It is ascribed to him in the Catalogue of the Library at New College, Edinburgh. (Chapter IV).

ERSKINE /

ERSKINE, Ebenezer (1680-1754). Minister at Portmoak 1703-31 and at North Church, Stirling 1731-3. "Marrow-man" 1722. Leader of the Secession of 1733. Finally deposed by the Assembly of 1740. (Chapters II, V).

ERSKINE, John (1721-1803). Minister successively at Kirkintilloch 1744, Culross 1753, New Greyfriars, Edinburgh 1758, Old Greyfriars 1767-1803 where he was colleague of William Robertson (q.v.) D.D. Glasgow 1766. Leader of the Evangelicals. Supported Cambuslang Revival. (Chapters I, VI).

GILLESPIE, Thomas (1708-74). Though Scots by birth, he was licensed and ordained in England. Minister at Carnock, Fife 1741-52. Deposed for contumacy in Inverkeithing Case 1752. (Chapters VI, VII, VIII).

GLAS, John (1695-1773). Minister at Tealing, Angus from 1719. Suspended April 1728 by Synod of Angus and Mearns for his opposition to the Covenants and Presbyterian church government. Deposed Oct. 1728. Sentence affirmed by Commission of Assembly March 1730. Founded Glasite Church. Reopened to ministry of the Catholic Church but not to that of Church of Scotland by Assembly of 1739. (Chapters III, V).

HADOW /

HADOW, James (1670-1747). Minister at Cupar 1692-9. Professor of Divinity, St. Andrews 1699-1707. Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews 1707-47. Opponent of Episcopalian toleration, Antinomianism (the "Marrow-men") and Arianism (Professor Simson) Stoutly orthodox Calvinist. (Chapters I, II).

HAMILTON, William (1669-1732). Minister at Cramond 1694-1709. Professor Divinity at University of Edinburgh 1709-32. Principal of the University 1730-32. On resigning Chair of Divinity he was admitted as Minister of New North Church, Edinburgh (Collegiate charge) but died soon afterwards. Moderator of the General Assembly 1712, 1716, 1720, 1727, 1730. Publication - See Bibliography. (Chapter III and passim).

HOME, Henry, Lord Kames (1696-1782). Advocate 1724. Lord of Session 1752. Lord of Justiciary 1763. Prolific writer. His "Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion" Edinburgh 1751 gave rise to an accusation of heresy against him. (Chapter VIII).

HOME, John (1722-1808). Minister at Athelstaneford, East Lothian 1747-57. Author of "Douglas" and other plays. Conservator of Privileges at Campvere 1764. (Chapters VI, VIII).

HUME /

HUME, David (1711-76). Philosopher and Historian. His sceptical views prevented his appointment to a Chair at Edinburgh University and were almost the subject of a process of heresy against him in the General Assembly. Friendly antagonist of Wallace. (Chapters VI, VIII, XI).

HUTCHESON, Francis (1694-1746). Native of Northern Ireland but studied at Glasgow University. Licensed to preach by Presbyterian Church of Ireland but started a private academy in Dublin. Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow 1729-46. Attacked theories of Hobbes and Mandeville (q.v.). Supported and developed Shaftesbury's (q.v.) theory of the "moral sense". (Chapter I).

ILAY, Archibald Campbell, Earl of Ilay and 3rd Duke of Argyll (1682-1761). Brother of the 2nd Duke. "Manager" of Scotland, including the Church, on behalf of Walpole and the Pelhams. "Patron" of James Smith and Patrick Cuming. (Chapters III, V, VII).

LEECHMAN, William (1706-85). Minister at Beith, Ayrshire 1736-44. Professor of Divinity at Glasgow University 1744-61. Principal of the University 1761-85. D.D. Glasgow 1754. Moderator of the General Assembly 1757. (Chapters X, XI).

LEVEN /

LEVEN, Alexander Leslie, 7th Earl of Leven, Earl of Melville (1699-1754). Advocate 1719. Lord of Session 1734. Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly 1741-53. (Chapter VI).

LINDSAY, George (d.1764). Minister at North Leith 1725-64. May have been author of "Some Observations on these Two Sermons of Doctor Wishart's which have given offence to the Presbytery of Edinburgh". Opponent of William Wishart's induction to Edinburgh but later supported him in his "Reasons of Dissent" in the Torphichen Case. (Chapters IV, VI).

MACLAURIN, Colin (1698-1746), brother of John Maclaurin (q.v.) Professor of Mathematics at Marischal College, Aberdeen 1717-25. Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh 1725-46. Friend of Sir Isaac Newton and founder of the Philosophical Society at Edinburgh. Author of notable mathematical treatises. Member of the Rankenian Club. (Chapters V, XI).

MACLAURIN, John (1693-1754), brother Colin Maclaurin (q.v.) Minister at Luss, Dunbartonshire 1719-23, at Ramshorn, Glasgow 1723-54. Leading Evangelical. Rival of Leechman for Chair of Divinity at Glasgow 1743. Sermons and essays published posthumously 1755, 1782, 1824, etc. (Chapters I, VI, X).

MANDEVILLE /

MANDEVILLE, Bernard (1670-1733) Dutch physician who settled in England. Said to have been hired by distillers to write in favour of spirituous liquors. Famous as a conversationalist. Wrote several pamphlets and the verse "Fable of the Bees" arguing that virtue originated in selfish and savage instincts and opposing Shaftesbury's (q.v.) theory of a "moral sense". (Chapters IV, XII).

MITCHELL, Sir Andrew (1708-71) son of William Mitchell (q.v.) Under-Secretary for Scotland 1742-46. Later Ambassador to Frederick the Great. Member of the Rankenian Club. (Chapter V).

MITCHELL, William (1670-1727). Minister successively at Canongate (1695), Old Kirk of Edinburgh (1708) and St. Giles', Edinburgh (1721). Moderator of the General Assembly 1710, 1714, 1717, 1722, 1726. Chaplain to George I. Leader of the Church from the death of Carstares. (Chapter III).

OSWALD, James (1703-93). Minister successively at Dunnet, Caithness 1723 and Methven, Perthshire 1750. D.D. Glasgow 1765. Moderator of the General Assembly 1765. Philosopher of the "Common Sense school". Author of "Appeal to Common Sense on behalf of Religion". 2 vols. Edinburgh 1766-72 and several published sermons. (Chapters III, IX, XI).

RAMSAY /

RAMSAY, James (1667-1749). Minister successively at Eyemouth (1693) and Kelso (1707), Moderator of the General Assembly 1738, 1741. Dean of the Chapel Royal 1716-26. Deprived of Deanship 1726. Author of several anti-Episcopalian pamphlets. Witherspoon's "Ecclesiastical Characteristics" is ironically dedicated to his ghost. Associated with Wallace in ecclesiastical administration 1742-46. (Chapter V).

RAMSAY, John, of Ochtertyre (1736-1814). Friend of Sir Walter Scott and patron of Robert Burns. His reminiscences were published posthumously in 1888.

ROBERTSON, William (1721-1793). Minister successively at Gladsmuir 1744, Lady Yester's, Edinburgh 1758, Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh 1761-93. D.D. Edinburgh 1758. Royal Chaplain 1761. Principal of the University of Edinburgh 1762-93. Moderator of the General Assembly 1763. Historiographer-Royal for Scotland 1763. Leader of the Church 1761-80. (Chapters VI, VII, IX).

ROXBURGH, John Ker, 5th Earl and 1st Duke of Roxburgh (d.1741). Supporter of the Treaty of Union and of the House of Hanover. Opposed Walpole over Malt-tax (1725). Sympathetic to abolition of Patronage (1717). (Chapter III).

SHAFTESBURY /

SHAFTESBURY, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713). His chief works are collected in "Characteristics of Men Manners Opinions and Times". The "Inquiry concerning Virtue" was greatly admired by Wallace and others in Scotland. (Chapters I, II, IV, XII).

SIMSON, John (1668-1740). Minister at Troqueer 1705-8. Professor of Divinity at Glasgow University 1708-40. He was accused of heresy in two notable and protracted trials and was suspended from teaching from 1728. (Chapters III, IV).

SMITH, James (1681-1736). Minister at Morham, East Lothian (1706), Cramond (1712), New North, Edinburgh (1730-32, 1733-36). Moderator of the General Assembly 1723. Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh 1732-3. Principal of the University 1733-36. Under patronage of Ilay was rival for leadership of Church with Hamilton and leader on Hamilton's death. (Chapters III, V).

TELFER, Charles (1693-1731). Minister at Hawick 1723-31. One of the "Neu-lights and Preachers Legall". Preached controversial sermon before Lord High Commissioner 1730 and also in Glasgow 1725. (Chapters III, IV).

TINDAL /

TINDAL, Matthew (1653?-1733). English Deist writer. Author of "Christianity as Old as the Creation", London 1730, to which Robert Wallace and George Wishart made replies. (Chapters IV, XII).

TWEEDDALE, John Hay, 4th Marquis of Tweeddale (1695-1762). Secretary of State for Scotland 1742-6. "Patron" of Robert Wallace. (Chapter V).

WALLACE, Robert (1697-1771). Minister at Moffat 1723-33, at New Greyfriars, Edinburgh 1733-38, at New North, Edinburgh 1738-71. Moderator of Assembly 1743. Dean of the Chapel Royal 1744-71. D.D. Edinburgh 1759. Leader of the Church 1742-46. Member of the Rankenian Club. Publications - See Bibliography.

WISHART, George (1703-85), son of William Wishart the Elder and brother of William Wishart the Younger. Minister at St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh (1726) and Tron, Edinburgh (1730). Moderator of Assembly 1748. Principal Clerk of Assembly 1746-85. D.D. Edinburgh University 1759. Dean of the Chapel Royal 1765-85. Member of the Rankenian Club. Publications - See Bibliography. (Chapters VI, XII).

WISHART /

WISHART, William, the Elder (1660-1729). Frequently confused with his son William. Minister at a meeting-house in Leith 1685-92, at South Leith 1692-1707 and at Tron, Edinburgh 1707-29. Moderator of the General Assembly 1706, 1713, 1718, 1724, 1729. Principal of the University of Edinburgh 1716-29. Publications: Many single sermons (Edinburgh 1701-1731). "A Discourse of Suppressing Vice" (Edinburgh 1702). "Theologia or Discourses of God" (Edinburgh 1716) "Sermons on the Lord's Supper" (Edinburgh 1721) "A Short and Impartial State of the Case of Mr. John Simson ..." (London 1729).

WISHART, William, the Younger (d.1753), son of William Wishart the Elder and brother of George Wishart. Preacher in Skinner's Close Chapel, Edinburgh for three years after licence. Minister at Tron, Glasgow 1724-30, at Scots Church, Founders' Hall, London 1730-37. Principal of Edinburgh University 1737-53. Minister at New Greyfriars, Edinburgh 1739-45, at Tron, Edinburgh Collegiate charge 1745-53. D.D. Glasgow 1730. Moderator of Assembly 1745. Member of the Rankenian Club. Publications - See Bibliography.

WITHERSPOON /

WITHERSPOON, John (1723-94). Succeeded Leechman as minister at Beith 1745. Translated to Paisley, Laigh Kirk, 1757. President of the College of New Jersey, Princeton, N.J. 1768-94. D.D. St. Andrews 1769. LL.D. Yale 1785. Prolific writer. Author of "Ecclesiastical Characteristics". Strong opponent of Moderatism. (Chapters I, V, X, XI).

WODROW, James (1750-1810). Son of Robert Wodrow (q.v.) Minister successively at Dunlop (1757) and Stevenston (1759) Author of Life of Leechman prefixed to Sermons 1789. (Chapters III, X, XI).

WODROW, Robert (1679-1734). Minister at Eastwood 1703-34. His Analecta and Correspondence were published posthumously 1842-3 by the Maitland and Wodrow Clubs respectively. His main work was "The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution" Edinburgh 1721-2.

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2. Printed works which may be regarded as primary sources.
3. Other printed works.

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Additional MSS.

- 6211 f.226 Letter from Principal William Wishart to Professor John Ward,
Gresham College 8.6.1751.
- 6857 ff.132,134 Letters from the Marquis of Tweeddale to Sir Andrew Mitchell
29.9.1744, 7.10.1744.
- 32688 f.291 Letter from the Earl of Ilay to the Duke of Newcastle 8.9.1733
- 32719 f.347 Letter from the Earl of Leven to the Duke of Newcastle
December 1749.

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II 96.

- 1a. Papers relating to the Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind by Wallace.
- 1b. Nine letters of David Hume to Wallace and a copy of a letter from Wallace
to Hume.
2. Proof sheets of Wallace's Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind with
corrections of the language by Hume.
3. Copy of the Dissertation as read to the Philosophical Society.
4. Wallace's notebook for the Dissertation.
5. Preparatory collections for the Dissertation.
6. A printed copy of "The Doctrine of Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance
Considered" Edinburgh 1754 and a MS of a proposed Second Edition and
Appendix.
7. Some printed sheets from Wallace's "Characteristics".

II 97.

1. A Letter from a moderate Freethinker to David Hume Esquire concerning the profession of the Clergy. In which it is shewed that their vices whatever they are are owing to their Disposition and not to the bad influence of their Profession.
2. The necessity or expediency of the churches inquiring into the writings of David Hume Esquire and calling the Auther before the spiritual courts
3. Irenicum or an Essay to promote peace and union in Ecclesiastical Affairs 1755 (Partly printed sheets, partly in manuscript).
4. An address to such of the English Nation as reside in Scotland and to the more moderate among the Scotch Episcopalians concerning occasional conformity to a national worship.
5. An address to the Jacobites in Scotland 1764.
6. Christian piety illustrated and certain mistakes concerning it detected in an address to the Religious and well Disposed.
7. Bound volume containing eleven complete and three incomplete sermons in manuscript.

II 620.

1. Personal and private papers of Wallace. (Burgess tickets, calls to parishes, etc.).
2. An address to the Reverend the Clergy of the Church of Scotland By a Layman of their Communion on occasion of composing acting and publishing the Tragedy called Douglass.
3. /

3. Three pages of an Essay on Taste.
Remarks on modern epics.
Remarks on Kames' Elements on Criticism (Photo-copy of MS fragments in Kirkcaldy Public Library).
4. Eleven treatises on the not reading the Porteous Act by Scottish Clergy.
An Apology for the Scots Clergy; or an Argument showing the constitution and Clergy of the Church of Scotland to be friendly to the liberties and interests of the nation in a letter to a Scots Gentleman.
5. Remarks by a Layman on letter from Alexander Lind Esquire, Sheriff Depute of Mid Lothian. (Discusses "the Duke of Cumberland's proclamation that ministers should give in lists of all concerned in the Rebellion in their respective paroches").
6. Copy of a scheme for a militia in Brittain 1756.
7. An address to a noble Lord in the ministry which was formed on the conclusion of Sir Robert Walpole's administration to inspire to true patriotism.
8. Part of a piece intended to make remarks on an account of Colonell Gardiner. (Comments on an obituary).
9. Some observations on the influence of freedom in a government to promote commerce and the arts and the bad influence of despotism in commerce and arts.
10. Thoughts on altering the sett of the city of Edinburgh.
11. Of the prices and dearth of provisions in Different numbers referring to one another.
12. Of Venery, or of the commerce of the two sexes.
13. /

13. An address to Monsieur J. Vernet Pastor and Professor of Theology att Geneve : upon his Reflections on manners religion and the worship of God printed att Geneve 1769.
14. Conjectures concerning the fall of Ecclesiasticall power splendour & dignity written in the year 1768. (Forecasts the diminution of Papal power and the end of Episcopal splendour in the Church of England).
15. The end of Ecclesiasticall Splendour in the Church and of Regal or Monarchicall Authority in the state in all the Christian Nations in Europe. (Bitterly attacks George III and forecasts the ends of monarchy).
16. Several little papers "containing observations on sacred scripture and subjects in Divinity written I believe more than fourty years ago" (1764 comment).
17. A Letter to a Reverend Clergyman in Scotland Concerning submission to the church. Published on occasion of the Processes commenced against Professor Simson and the Reverend Mr. Glass. (Not, in fact, published). A Speech in behalf of Mr. Glass of Tealing, designed to have been delivered before the Commission of the General Assembly March 1730 but never delivered.
18. A little treatise against imposing Creeds or Confessions of faith on ministers or private Christians as a necessary term of Laick or Ministeriall Communion. Written before the year 1720.
19. Abracadabra Vol.I A little Treatise on Virtue & merit in the spirit of the Earl of Shaftesbury. Written before the year 1720.
20. /

20. Observations on the account of the miracles of the Abbe Paris.
21. Papers relating to the Consecration of the Chappell of the West Kirk in the year 1764.
22. Sermon delivered before the magistrates in "Haddow's Hold" (New North Church) September 1740.
Three fragmentary sermons.
23. Some thoughts on the conversion of the Indians On Whitfield and irregular methods of converting and Reforming the world.
24. Some Reflections on the expulsion of the 6 students out of the University of Oxford in the year 1768.
25. An Essay showing that Death & vice are necessary.
26. Notes of Various Speeches in the General Assembly.
27. Thoughts upon the application by the Generall Assembly 1768 to the Gentlemen of the landest interest in Scotland about Patronages.
Begun but not finished as the Design was laid aside 1769.
28. Papers on Enthusiasm including Two Letters to Mr. Whitfield. 1748.
29. Papers relative to Patronage.

(1) Lists of Patrons.

Some good hints with respect to Patronages of Churches written soon after 1734.

(2) Some thoughts on the controversy about Patronage as the mode of naming Ministers of the Gospell to the paroches of Scotland written in the year 1770. (Fragmentary).

(3) Remarks on a pamphlet intituled An Essay on Patronage in three parts published in May 1769 (Mainly a list of errata).

Concerning /

Concerning the overture from the Presbytery of Dalkeith to the
Synod of Lothian May 1768.

- (4) Kirks just now vacant where the Crown is patron.
- (5) E -----1 Correspondence. (Lists of letters written to and received from, correspondents).
- (6) Draft of circular letter to correspondents asking for information regarding parishes.
- (7) Draft of a letter from a heritor welcoming an acceptable presentee to a parish.

Draft of a letter asking information about the Widows' Fund and vacant charges.

Draft of a letter to unnamed correspondent (James Ramsay ?).

Draft of a letter requesting news of vacancies.

Draft of a letter regarding settlements in cases where the Crown is patron.

- (8) Patrons in the Presbyteries of Dunse and Chirnside.
 - (9) List of parishes in Dundee Presbytery with patrons ministers and stipends.
 - (10) List of parishes in the far north with similar information.
 - (11) A List of Correspondents with Mr. R.W. according to the order of Synods & Presbyteries.
30. Pamphlets and letters concerning Mr. John Drysdale's settlement in Edinburgh.
 31. A Ballad for the Times 1763.
 32. Anent Dissents and the Recording reasons of Dissent. (Written circa 1736-8).
 33. /

33. Answers to Two Dissents 1733-42.
34. Testimonial from Presbytery of Edinburgh in favour of Christopher Alexander Wysokinski, a Pole.
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Principal Smith. Edinburgh 1734.

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murder of Captain Porteous. London 1738.

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about the National Covenants. Edinburgh 1728.
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