

**'New Light' Thinking and Non-Subscription amongst Protestant Dissenters in  
England and Ireland in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century and their relationship with  
Glasgow University and Scotland.**

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## **Abstract**

In the early eighteenth century Scottish Universities played a crucial role in the education of dissenters in both England and Ireland, particularly in the training of ministers. Glasgow University was predominant in this role throughout the first half of the century and was a central feature of the network of reformed churches across the British Isles. The largest bodies of religious dissent in England and Ireland were the Presbyterian churches and these both looked to Glasgow to meet their educational needs. Irish students had a longstanding link with Glasgow cemented through tradition and geography. In contrast, in the early years of the century Edinburgh and Glasgow competed to be the main place of study for English dissenters. Through the determination and ultimately the bequest of Daniel Williams Glasgow became the most popular University for English dissenters.

The centrality of Glasgow was boosted by the Act of Union of 1707 which was enthusiastically welcomed by English dissenters and helped to develop a greater sense of 'Britishness' not only amongst English dissenters but also in Ireland too, especially amongst those who were to incline towards New Light or non-subscribing views. The question of subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith or other creedal statements became the most contentious issue facing dissenters in this period. This had its roots in theological trends in reformed churches all across Europe and Glasgow and Scotland were also influenced by them. Many of the leadership of the non-subscribing groups in England and Ireland had been trained in Glasgow and when the divisions became open both sides looked to Glasgow for support. Scotland was not unaffected by the quarrels over subscription and a section of opinion within the Church of Scotland shared many of the attitudes of the non-subscribers at the time of the debates. However, the constitutional position of the Church of Scotland after the Union, which defined its Presbyterian identity in terms of the Westminster Confession, as well as the intellectual defence of the Confession put forward by William Dunlop, meant that no non-subscribing party was to develop in Scotland and even those who might have held that view, had they lived in Ireland or England, adopted a pragmatic attitude towards subscription when in Scotland.

In the second and third decades of the eighteenth century Glasgow University was troubled by two particular problems. The first was student unrest, based on the students' attempts to revive their ancient right to elect the rector, much of it led by students from England and Ireland. The second stemmed from accusations of heresy against the professor of divinity. Both of these processes were linked to the wider questions of non-subscription that animated so much dissenting thinking in both England and Ireland at the same time. They linked in too with a widespread fear of the transmission of Arian doctrine that some thought was being concealed by non-subscription.

This thesis examines the development of New Light or non-subscribing views amongst dissenters in England and Ireland as part of a movement across the British Isles that was underpinned by the central relationship that many church leaders had with the University. Glasgow avoided the taking of sides in the subscription debates but neither did it exclude the non-subscribers and, after the initial debates had cooled towards the end of the 1720s, affirmed the permissibility of their approach by some of its actions.



## Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	1
<b>Contents</b>	3
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	5
<b>Abbreviations &amp; Notes</b>	7
<b>Introduction</b>	8
<b>Chapter One</b>	
“a Sett of Men, by Preaching and Printing, pretend to give new Light, to the World”	
<i>The Origins of ‘New Light’ and non-subscribing ideas</i>	33
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
“the weight and lustre of silver boxes”	
<i>Glasgow and Edinburgh vie to attract English dissenting students</i>	61
<b>Chapter Three</b>	
“that the youth whom we send to you, May Be Managed In a Collegiate way”	
<i>Glasgow established as the University of choice for English dissent</i>	87
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
“Israel and Judah made one Kingdom”	
<i>The influence of the Union of 1707 and the idea of ‘Britishness’</i>	108
<b>Chapter Five</b>	
“searching impartially into all that could be said on both sides of a question, for finding the truth”	
<i>Teaching, student discipline and accusations of heresy in Glasgow and the development of non-subscription in England and Ireland</i>	135



## **Chapter Six**

“no great fondness for stirring in a Wasp’s nest”

*The connections between non-subscribers across the British Isles during the subscription controversies* 161

## **Chapter Seven**

“in defending the use our church makes of her Confession, we have to deal with friends as well as enemies”

*Scottish attitudes to subscription at the time of the controversies in England and Ireland* 186

## **Chapter Eight**

“Travel, Conversation and Residence in the learned Air of Glasgow”

*Student unrest in Glasgow, John Simson’s second trial, the widespread fear of Arianism, and Glasgow’s relationship to the ongoing debates about subscription* 215

## **Chapter Nine**

“the more moderate & charitable sentiments in religious matters”

*Glasgow University’s continuing engagement with non-subscribers in England and Ireland in the aftermath of the subscription controversies* 247

## **Conclusion**

“for every Christian has an equal Right of Conscience and private Judgment” 275

## **Appendix One**

National Origins of Students at Glasgow 1662-1800 288

## **Appendix Two**

English and Irish Divinity Students at Glasgow 1692-1727 297

**Bibliography** 301

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## Abbreviations

<i>BPHSI</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
DWL	Doctor Williams's Library
EUL	Edinburgh University Library Special Collections
GUA	Glasgow University Archives
GUL	Glasgow University Library Special Collections
HMCO	Harris Manchester College, Oxford
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JRUL	John Rylands University Library
NLS	National Library of Scotland
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
PFB	Presbyterian Fund Board
PHSI	Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland
PRONI	Public Record Office Northern Ireland
<i>RGSU</i>	<i>Records of the General Synod of Ulster</i>
<i>THSLC</i>	<i>Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire</i>
UU	University of Ulster

## Notes

All titles are given in full in the footnotes in their first use and then in abbreviated form in all subsequent citations.

In reproducing dates I take 1<sup>st</sup> January to be the start of each year.

*ODNB* - all references are to the on-line edition - <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>

## Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to study and account for the development of 'New Light' or 'Non-subscribing' views amongst Protestant Dissenters, principally Presbyterians, in England and Ireland particularly in relation to their co-religionists in Scotland and especially in terms of their relationship to Glasgow University.

It is the contention of this thesis that, in the early decades of the eighteenth century, both before and after the open disputes surrounding subscription, non-subscription was a powerful and sometimes dominant impulse amongst both Irish and English Presbyterians. It was the essential issue of dispute within dissent on both sides of the Irish Sea, and, although the doctrine of the Trinity came to the fore at times, the differences really concerned the nature of authority within the church and how the individual conscience should respond to them. Coupled with that was eventually a growing Arminianism that was seen as a significant threat to the Calvinist norms of Presbyterianism in the seventeenth century.

Prior to the Williamite revolution of 1688-9 Presbyterianism had enjoyed mixed fortunes in the three kingdoms. In Scotland Parliament abolished Episcopacy in 1689 and the following year established Presbyterianism as the system of church government on the model of the Act of Parliament of 1592 for the 'Ratification of the Liberty of the Trew Kirk' which had first defined the Presbyterian character of the Church of Scotland. This Act allowed for government of the Church by General Assembly, Synods, Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions and drew on the *Second Book of Discipline* of 1578.<sup>1</sup> This provided the basis for the generally accepted definition of Presbyterianism not only in Scotland and the British Isles but for the whole of the English-speaking world. Presbyterianism - which basically means the rule of the church through elders or presbyters - had emerged in Scotland during the reformation and although not finally established until 1690 had proved its durability

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<sup>1</sup> A.T. Innes, *The Law of Creeds in Scotland A Treatise on the legal relation of Churches in Scotland Established and Not Established, to their Doctrinal Confessions*, (Edinburgh and London 1867), 51-4.



through decades of struggle with the Crown against the imposition of bishops. Resistance to royal interference in ecclesiastical affairs resulted in the National Covenant of 1638, subscription to which was made compulsory by parliament in 1640. The outbreak of rebellion in Ireland in 1641 and civil war in England in 1642 gave the opportunity of spreading Presbyterianism to both kingdoms. The Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 was a military alliance that also provided for the extension of Presbyterianism to the national churches of England and Ireland and one of the first fruits of this was the Westminster Assembly of Divines which provided a Confession of Faith as well as doctrinal and liturgical standards for the Presbyterian system. Presbyterianism, in its most basic terms, is nothing more than a system of ecclesiastical government, but now in the midst of a world turned upside down, it became linked to an ordered theology that would set the limits of right belief and provide the spearhead for further possible advance.

In Ireland, particularly in the north east, the proximity to Scotland had made the interchange of people and ideas an established feature of life. The plantation of Ulster between 1609 and 1625 had also brought large numbers of Scots to Ireland significant numbers of whom already had a preference for Presbyterianism. Their preference was encouraged by the arrival of ministers from Scotland, who while obtaining Episcopal licences to preach in the established church, dispensed with most of the Prayer Book and the ceremonial of the Episcopal Church of Ireland. The rebellion of 1641 - initially an act of resistance by Gaelic Ulster to the plantation but soon supported by southern Catholic gentry alarmed by the spread of militant puritanism - was suppressed by a Scots army. This army was raised by the king and paid for by the English Parliament. One of the side effects of their arrival in Ireland was the establishment of Scottish Presbyterianism. On 10 June 1642 the first presbytery was convened in Carrickfergus by the Scots army and following this the Solemn League and Covenant was enthusiastically introduced in Ulster by Scottish ministers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Patrick Adair, *A true narrative of the rise and progress of the Presbyterian church in Ireland*, ed. W.D. Killen, (Belfast 1866), 127-141.



The execution of the King in 1649 brought forth a protest from the presbytery of Belfast, in line with Presbyterian opinion in Scotland, in *A Necessary Presentation of the present and eminent Danger to Religion, Lawes and Liberties*.<sup>3</sup> However, this principled stand in difficult times proved to be of limited use at the Restoration of 1660 when, as in Scotland, episcopacy was restored.

The vast majority of ministers in Ulster chose not to conform to the new State Church establishment and formed themselves into an organised dissenting church, claimed by Peter Brooke to be the "first unified Dissenting church in the British Isles to incorporate many different congregations".<sup>4</sup> He may be correct in this assertion since dissenters in England at the time held conflicting views on the question of church organisation and left no record of what, if any, form of connexionalism they employed. But certainly this was the time that Presbyterians in the north of Ireland began to organise themselves, establishing meetings and performing their own ordinations. They suffered a degree of persecution but their presence as a minority Protestant group in Ireland and their link to Scotland left them in a somewhat anomalous position, consequently in 1672, the year of the Second Declaration of Indulgence in Scotland which granted the freedom to preach to some Covenanting ministers, Irish Presbyterians were given a grant of money from the king - the first instalment of the *regium donum*.

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 – 1690 took a different form in Ireland than it did in Scotland and England but it was none the less enthusiastically welcomed by the Presbyterians there and was soon followed by the first meeting of the Synod of Ulster on 30 September 1691. With the re-establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland, Ulster's Presbyterians felt confident about their identity as a daughter

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<sup>3</sup> *A Necessary Examination of a Dangerous Design and Practice against the interest and sovereignty of the nation and Common-wealth of England, by the Presbytery at Belfast in the province of Ulster in Ireland; in their Scandalous, Malicious and Treasonable Libel, by them called A Necessary Presentation of the present and eminent Danger to Religion, Lawes and Liberties*, (London 1649).

<sup>4</sup> Peter Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism The Historical Perspective 1610-1970*, (Dublin 1987), 46, 49.

church of the established church of Scotland. It was this relationship that helped to tie them in so closely to Glasgow University. Meeting in April 1691 the General Synod of Ulster agreed "that none enter into the ministry without Laureation".<sup>5</sup> This was clarified further in 1702 when the Synod stipulated that "No Young Man be enter'd on Tryals for the Ministry, untill he have studyed Divinity four Years, after his Course of Philosophy".<sup>6</sup> Although there was some use of the Dutch universities particularly at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries for Irish Presbyterians this meant that the student would need "to go over to Scotland"<sup>7</sup> and this generally meant studying at Glasgow. Edinburgh and Glasgow were by far the most popular universities used by Irish Presbyterians in the eighteenth century - between 1720 and 1775 some 322 Irish Presbyterian ministers had been educated at the two institutions - but Glasgow outweighed Edinburgh by a factor of about 4 to 1.<sup>8</sup>

In the south of Ireland, Presbyterianism took on a different form to that in the north. The congregations that appeared there in the seventeenth century had their roots in the Cromwellian settlements of the interregnum. They were far more strongly influenced by English Presbyterianism than their northern counterparts and, partly because of the presence of small groups of Independents in the Dublin area and partly because of the different structures employed by English Presbyterians, formed themselves into a looser Southern Association. At the end of the seventeenth century the southern Presbyterians, at least in Dublin, contained some of the most able spokesmen for Irish dissent as well as congregations which, if they differed little in their Calvinism from their co-religionists in the north, nevertheless felt able to take such bold steps as moving from the singing of metrical Psalms to the singing of hymns in their worship.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the period under consideration the

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<sup>5</sup> *Records of the General Synod of Ulster from 1691 to 1820*, 3 vols, (Belfast, 1890-98), 1, 6.

<sup>6</sup> *RGSU*, 1, 57.

<sup>7</sup> *RGSU*, 1, 8.

<sup>8</sup> J.M. Barkley, 'Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746)', *Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland*, No.14, (March 1985), 10. J.M. Barkley, 'The Presbyterian Minister in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Challenge and Conflict Essays in Irish Presbyterian History and Doctrine*, J.L.M. Haire et al, (Antrim, 1981), 50.

<sup>9</sup> Phil Kilroy, *Protestant Dissent and Controversy in Ireland 1660-1714*, (Cork 1994), 215.



Presbyterians in the South of Ireland acted as one of the link points between Irish and English dissent.

In England Presbyterianism took a different shape than in Ireland or Scotland. The interregnum and the aftermath of the Solemn League and Covenant saw the reform of the Church of England along Presbyterian lines in 1645-6. On 7 July 1645 the Westminster Assembly presented to Parliament a completed draft entitled 'The humble advice concerning Church government.' This initial draft went through a process of revision and was returned to the Assembly which delayed the introduction of the Presbyterian system of government until the passing of the second Parliamentary ordinance for the erecting of Presbyterian government on 14 March 1646.<sup>10</sup> The ordinance established the Presbytery as the basic unit of Church government. However, unlike Scotland and Ireland, this did not refer to a tier of church government based on a group of ministers and elders in a district but rather what otherwise would be known as the Kirk Session. The equivalent of the Scottish Presbytery was the *Classis* and representatives from the *Classes* together made up a Provincial Assembly. The equivalent of the General Assembly was to be a National Assembly. In fact the National Assembly was never convened and only two Provincial Assemblies (in London and Lancashire) ever seem to have got off the ground. In addition although Parliamentary approval was given for more than one hundred *Classes* only a small number ever came into being. Opposition from Independents meant the system did not develop fully. By 1653 this was being replaced with voluntary associations of ministers which were more loosely structured and did not include lay elders. The Restoration brought this experiment in church order to a decisive close.

The 1660 Act for Confirming and Restoring of Ministers restored the sequestered clergy of the Commonwealth period to their parishes but this was followed two years later by the Act of Uniformity of Public Prayers. As well as

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<sup>10</sup> William A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth, 1640-1660*, 2 vols, (London 1900), 1, 196-204.



recognising only those with episcopal ordination as being in valid orders the Act required all clergy (including University fellows, school masters and private tutors) to make a declaration of loyalty to the King and give their 'unfeigned assent and consent' to the new Prayer Book before Bartholomew's Day 1662 or else be deprived of their livings and face imprisonment if they continued to preach.

In England and Wales approximately 1,000 ministers refused to comply with the Act of Uniformity in 1662 and resigned their livings together with a similar number in England and Wales who were forced out of their charges between 1660 and 1662.<sup>11</sup> In many cases they took members of their former congregations with them, meeting for worship in secret. Their activities were heavily circumscribed by an ever expanding raft of legislation which sought to suppress their existence. The Conventicle Act of 1664 prohibited any meeting for worship of dissenters numbering more than five. In the following year the Five Mile Act prevented ejected ministers from preaching, teaching or coming within five miles of a city or parish where they had previously officiated unless they took an oath of non-resistance.

These acts had an effect on dissenting laypeople as well as their ministers but the Test Act of 1673 coupled with the Corporation Act of 1661 had an even more direct impact on the civil liberties of the dissenting laity. Ironically neither were aimed at the Presbyterians or any dissenting groups, indeed the Corporation Act had been passed at a time when Presbyterians were still part of the established church. The Acts aimed to exclude Roman Catholics from public office, the Corporation Act restricting holders of office in local corporations to those who had taken communion in the Church of England, and the Test Act similarly requiring anyone elected to office under the Crown to take the sacrament in the established church. In this way Presbyterians in England actually suffered greater political disabilities than their Irish counterparts at the time since, as Patrick Adair noted, the legislation did not apply in Ireland.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> C.G. Bolam, Jeremy Goring, H.L. Short, Roger Thomas, *The English Presbyterians from Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism*, (London 1968), 83.

<sup>12</sup> Adair, *A true narrative*, 293.

The Toleration Act of 1689 - or 'An Act for Exempting Their Majesties Protestant Subjects, Dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of certain Laws'<sup>13</sup> - gave Presbyterians in England and Wales a measure of recognition by the state but their position was by no means secure. Dissenters were allowed to licence houses in which to hold their meetings and to conduct worship according to rites other than those laid down in the Book of Common Prayer. However, the period following 1662 had seen a number of false dawns when royal Indulgences had been granted before in 1672 and 1686 and then withdrawn. Although the times were certainly more propitious for dissent there was no guarantee that this period of toleration would be any more long lasting.

Presbyterians in Ireland and England at the end of the seventeenth century shared in a theology that was uncompromisingly Calvinist, although tempered in England by the Baxterian middle way. In a work published in 1715 but likely to have been written in the late seventeenth century Benjamin Hoadly, then chaplain to the King and a future latitudinarian bishop, could state that:

Amongst our Nonconformists...the same Logicks and the same Bodies of Theology, (as they are called) descend from Generation to Generation. The same Systems and Syllogisms, Definitions and Distinctions, pass on current for Divinity; and Calvin and the Gospel go Hand in Hand; as if there were not a Hair's Breadth to chuse between them.<sup>14</sup>

Thus Matthew Henry (1662-1714),<sup>15</sup> the Biblical commentator and one of the most representative dissenting divines in the period after the Act of Toleration, composed on his twentieth birthday in 1681, in the traditional puritan style, a

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<sup>13</sup> A facsimile of the full text is published in Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel and Nicholas Tyacke, *From Persecution to Toleration, The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England*, (Oxford 1991), 411-428.

<sup>14</sup> Urbano Cerri, *An account of the state of the Roman-Catholick Religion Throughout the World. Written for the use of Pope Innocent XI by Monsignor Cerri, Secretary of the Congregation de propaganda Fide. Now first translated from an Authentick Italian MS never publish'd. With a Large Dedication to the Present Pope; giving Him a very particular Account of the State of religion amongst Protestants; and of several other Matters of Importance relating to Great-Britain by Sir Richard Steele [Benjamin Hoadly]*, (London 1715), xlvi.



'Memorial of Mercies'. He would have spoken for many Presbyterians of his day when he observed, at number 22 in his list:

That I have good Hopes, through Grace, that being Chosen of God from Eternity, I was in the fullness of Time called, and that good Work begun in me, which I trust God will perform.<sup>16</sup>

Daniel Williams (c.1643-1716),<sup>17</sup> whose important ministries in Dublin and London gave him a prominence in both Kingdoms that was unmatched by any other individual, expressed his own Calvinism in his *Defence of Gospel Truth*:

Reader, I declare against this error [Socinianism], and have affirmed, (1) That Faith alone receives Christ and his Merits. (2) That it's the Righteousness of Christ alone, which is the material or meritorious Cause of Justification. (3) That our Faith, Repentance, or Works, are not a jot of the material or meritorious Righteousness, by or for which we are justified. They say, Christ died, that we might be saved if we believe. I say, Christ died that the Elect should believe, and believing have Life through His name. To any one that knows the Five Points, wherein the Arminian Controversy consists, I have said enough fully to acquit me. I am positive, for absolute certain Election, for Christ's not dying alike for all: For the elect He died to secure their actual Reconciliation; for others his Death is sufficient, and real Offers of Salvation are made to them on the terms of the Gospel, notwithstanding their being condemned by the Law. Again I say, Man is corrupt, and without the Grace of God he cannot believe: All the elect shall be (though without violence) brought by efficacious Grace to believe, and finally persevere.<sup>18</sup>

But the fact that Williams needed to reaffirm his uncompromising Calvinism in the face of an accusation of Socinianism and Arminianism shows the existence of various undercurrents of heterodox theology as well as their penetration into some areas of Presbyterian thought. In fact in the late seventeenth century in England the main area of contention within Presbyterianism was over the issue of

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<sup>15</sup> David L. Wykes, 'Henry, Matthew', *ODNB*, article/12975.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in H.D. Roberts, *Matthew Henry and His Chapel*, (Liverpool 1907), 48.

<sup>17</sup> See pp. 61-7.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel Williams, 'A Defence of Gospel Truth; in Reply to Mr Chauncy 1693', *Discourses on Several Important Subjects*, 5 vols, (London 1750), 3, 339-340.



antinomianism<sup>19</sup> and High Calvinism. The republication of the sermons of Tobias Crisp (1600-1643)<sup>20</sup> in 1689 brought this to the fore within Presbyterianism in England. These sermons, originally published in 1643-6, had been ordered to be burnt by the Westminster Assembly because of their alleged promotion of antinomianism. Richard Baxter opposed such ideas and became the main spokesman for 'modified' Calvinism which tried to synthesise the doctrine of free grace with the Calvinist doctrine of election. He was prepared to reduce to a bare minimum the number of fundamental doctrines that should be obligatory,<sup>21</sup> a view which he had originally expressed in his *Catholick Theologie*.<sup>22</sup> Williams joined with Baxter in presenting a Calvinism that was less strident and with him opposed the antinomianism and High Calvinism of others.

This division within dissent heralded the break up of the short lived alliance that had developed in London between ministers of the Congregational and Presbyterian traditions. The so-called 'Happy Union' was only reached towards the end of 1690 and approved by a general meeting of between 80 and 100 ministers in March 1691.<sup>23</sup> The Union was published under the title of the *Heads of Agreement* and largely based on an earlier abortive *Essay of Accommodation*. Allowing for a joint 'Merchants' Lecture' and establishing a 'Common Fund' to provide financial assistance for students for the ministry and congregations, the *Heads of Agreement* was founded on the belief that:

the principles of the Presbyterian and Congregational way rightly understood are not all that distance, but that they may meet very near together. At least the asserters of them may walk together as brethren in mutual communion.<sup>24</sup>

This was a feasible enough alliance amongst dissenters in England and

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<sup>19</sup> The view that by grace Christians are set free from the need to observe the moral law.

<sup>20</sup> Roger Pooley, 'Crisp, Tobias', *ODNB*, article/6708.

<sup>21</sup> See Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge A Study in a Tradition*, (London 1951), 5.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Baxter, *Catholick Theologie: Plain, pure, peaceable: for pacification of the Dogmatical Word-warriours*, (London 1675).

<sup>23</sup> Bolam et al, *English Presbyterians*, 102.

provided the basis for close co-operation in the English provinces, however, within the space of a few years the alliance had broken up in London following the disputes over antinomianism. In 1694 Daniel Williams and the other Presbyterians had withdrawn from the Merchants' Lecture following attacks on them at the Lecture by the Congregationalist Nathaniel Mather. Within a year the Congregationalists had also deserted the Common Fund and established their own separate Congregational Fund.<sup>25</sup>

The effect of this whole process was a sharpening of the theological distinction between Congregationalists and Presbyterians as well as a confirmation of the looser nature of the English Presbyterian system. Although the Happy Union broke up it was the basis for local unions between Congregationalists and Presbyterians in other parts of England that did not break down.<sup>26</sup> In Cheshire, where the most complete account of dissenting organisation after the Act of Toleration survives, the Happy Union was taken up and became the pattern for the Cheshire Classis. In March 1691 the first meeting of the Classis, comprising nine ministers from around the county, took place. By their third meeting the eleven ministers present gave their assent to the agreement:

the Agreement of the London Ministrs was delibertely read over Consider'd and Subscribed by all Nem: Contrad: in the following Form We whose names are Subscribed have perused and Considered the Heads of the Agreement Assented to by ye United Ministers in and about London and doe Blesse God for that Mercy and Give our unfeigned Assent to the same unanimously Resolving as the Lord shall inable to practise according to them.<sup>27</sup>

A most important function of the Classes was the acceptance of students for the ministry, their examination and trial and ultimately their ordination. All

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<sup>24</sup> "An Essay of Accommodation" being a scheme for uniting Presbyterians and Congregationals drawn up c.1680, Dr Williams's Library Occasional Paper No. 6, (London 1957), 12.

<sup>25</sup> Bolam et al, *English Presbyterians*, 119-121.

<sup>26</sup> "An Essay of Accommodation", 15-16, note 11.

<sup>27</sup> Alexander Gordon (ed.), *Cheshire Classis Minutes 1691-1745. Edited for the Provincial Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire*, (London 1919), 5.



candidates for the ministry were required to present a Latin thesis to the Classis followed by a syllogistic disputation in Latin with a minister appointed by the members of the Classis. In Cheshire these theses give a good indication of the theological development of the Presbyterians. Alexander Gordon's analysis of the theses concluded that they exhibited:

growth, spiritual rather than theological, from a Calvinism, ethical in its outlook, to a Biblicism enlightened by the perception of what Fleming finely calls "God's love of the world".<sup>28</sup>

What was happening in Cheshire was reflected all over England - Congregationalists became increasingly identified with a high Calvinism that could be close to antinomianism while Presbyterianism adopted a moderate form of Calvinism that was rapidly moving closer to Arminianism. There was little doctrinal difference between the two groups at the time of the restoration but by the early eighteenth century this was the general distinction. The London split over the sermons of Tobias Crisp was reflected in the provinces in local disputes at different times such as, in Cheshire, in 1721 when Samuel De la Rose was censured by the Classis for antinomianism and invited to withdraw.<sup>29</sup>

Non-subscription became a disputed issue in England and Ireland at almost exactly the same time. In England the main dispute took place at the Salters' Hall conference convened in London in February 1719. This followed a controversy that developed in Exeter when some of the students at the Exeter Academy appeared to be adopting an Arian position on the question of the Trinity.<sup>30</sup> One student, Hubert Stogdon, was given a letter of commendation by three Exeter ministers - James Peirce, Joseph Hallett and John Withers - who were aware of his deviation from orthodoxy but who felt that he had sufficient talent to be of service to dissent. With his letter of commendation he secured ordination to a charge in Somerset, beyond

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<sup>28</sup> *Cheshire Classis*, 132. Robert Fleming was a Scottish Presbyterian minister of liberal theological views who ministered in England and the Netherlands. See M. J. Mercer, 'Fleming, Robert (c.1660–1716)', *ODNB*, article/9711.

<sup>29</sup> *Cheshire Classis*, 62-3.

the bounds of the Exeter Assembly or 'The United Ministers of Devon and Cornwall', a ministers' association formed in 1691 along the pattern of the *Heads of Agreement*.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless the Exeter Assembly was immediately thrown into turmoil by the events in Somerset. Calls were made for some statement condemning Arianism and for the establishment of some method of ensuring orthodoxy. The decision was eventually taken to write to the London ministers to seek their guidance on the best way to deal with the situation. The London ministers suggested that they should consult with a group of respected local ministers who would possess more appropriate local knowledge to deal with the situation. In Exeter James Peirce was not happy with the choice of local ministers as advisers and so took the matter to the Committee of the Three Denominations in London, a permanent committee set up in the reign of Queen Anne to oversee issues that affected the interests of the whole dissenting community, including Baptists as well as Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Peirce's contact on the Committee was John Shute Barrington. A liberal voice within the dissenting community, he was also closely involved in the struggle to remove the legislation which restricted the rights of dissenters.

Barrington drew up a series of 'Advices' which suggested that all accusations should be backed up by properly formulated witness statements and not just rumour and that any test of orthodoxy should be based on scripture as the sole rule of faith. These 'Advices' were approved by the Committee but with the added proviso that they should be laid before the full body of London ministers.<sup>32</sup>

The General Body met on 19 February 1719 and after much heated debate rejected the proposal that a statement affirming belief in the Trinity should be inserted on the basis that the only test of orthodoxy should be adherence to scripture. Hence the claim, made originally by William Whiston that "the Bible carried it by

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<sup>30</sup> Bolam et al, *English Presbyterians*, 155-6.

<sup>31</sup> Roger Thomas, 'The Non-Subscription Controversy amongst Dissenters in 1719: the Salters' Hall Debate', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, IV (2), (1953), 163.

<sup>32</sup> Bolam et al, *English Presbyterians*, 159.



four".<sup>33</sup> In fact the vote was 57 in favour of the 'Advices' with 54 against. Denominational identities were further underlined by the breakdown of the votes. A large majority of Presbyterians supported the 'Advices' while a similarly large majority of Congregationalists opposed them. Baptists were also divided with the overwhelming majority of General Baptists being for the 'Advices' and the Particular Baptists being overwhelmingly against.<sup>34</sup>

In Ireland a very similar controversy erupted. Again it had its roots in the bogey of Arianism. In this case the published works of Thomas Emlyn, minister at Wood Street, Dublin from 1691 to 1702, had encouraged the General Synod of Ulster to introduce the requirement for subscription in 1705.

Subscription to the Westminster Confession became the norm in Ireland amongst Presbyterians. However, in the same year in which the Synod agreed to this there was founded in Belfast a society which was to provide both the personnel and the arguments to oppose subscription. By 1719 some members of the Belfast Society had imbibed many of the same ideas that were spreading across the reformed churches - the principle of reducing fundamentals to a minimum and the principle, rooted in the writings of John Locke, of avoiding controversy by accepting the scriptural belief in Jesus as the Messiah as being the same minimum belief as satisfied the apostles. From December 1719 onwards and led by John Abernethy, the members of the Belfast Society were at the forefront of the campaign against subscription which led to a sustained controversy within the Synod of Ulster. This was not resolved until 1725 when all the non-subscribers were separated from the rest of the Synod into the Presbytery of Antrim which, in the following year, was excluded from communion with the Synod.

In this way two related groups of Presbyterians were created in England and

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<sup>33</sup> William Whiston, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr William Whiston*, 2 vols, (London 1749-50), 1, 220.

<sup>34</sup> T.S. James, *History of the Litigation and Legislation respecting Presbyterian Chapels and Charities in England and Ireland between 1816 and 1849*, (London 1867), 705-9.

Ireland which were non-subscribing in outlook. One of the points of linkage between them was Glasgow University and the importance of that institution has attracted the attention of historians at different times.

In his book on the Cheshire Classis, Alexander Gordon set out an important view of the relationship between the Presbyterians in England and Ireland and Glasgow while discussing the educational backgrounds of the ministers:

A larger number of the Cheshire Ministers than has usually been recognised, are found to have been graduates, chiefly of Scottish Universities...The fact that a good many of these Ministers studied Divinity at Glasgow, is also new, and important. The influence of John Simson, who for twenty years held the Divinity chair in that University, has long been regarded, and rightly, as a cardinal factor in the liberalising of the Presbyterian clergy in the West of Scotland and the North of Ireland. It must now be taken into account as an agency which had effective results on this side of the border. Simson did not consciously teach heresy; on the contrary he set himself to controvert it. Having adopted the maxim that reason is "fundamentum theologiae," his aim was to make orthodoxy intelligible. Thus he trained his Students in habits of inquiry, rather than in those of unquestioning acceptance. It would be too much to suppose that they left him with their orthodoxy undermined, but their outlook was broadened, and they were ready for new statements of positions still deemed essential.<sup>35</sup>

Although this is a fairly judicious account of the importance of John Simson, implicit in it also is Gordon's approval of Simson's methods and achievements, while he does not mention the two charges for heresy which he faced and which resulted in his ultimate removal from teaching.

Historians of dissent in the British Isles have often noted the importance of Glasgow in the formation of ministers. For a long period of the eighteenth century Glasgow was identified as the source of either heterodox theology or a broadening of thought. H.M.B. Reid, the early twentieth century historian of the Glasgow divinity professors, observed that Francis Hutcheson, the professor of moral philosophy, was a pupil of Simson and William Leechman (Simson's ultimate

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<sup>35</sup> *Cheshire Classis*, 137-8.



successor) a student and friend of Hutcheson, "the spiritual succession is not difficult to perceive" he noted.<sup>36</sup> This same phrase was quoted approvingly by H. McLachlan whose account of English Nonconformist academies in the eighteenth century remains a standard work. Although he deals only tangentially with the influence of Glasgow and the Scottish Universities McLachlan points out that Reid's "spiritual succession....may be given a wider reference and applied to the pupils of Hutcheson and Leechman who taught in the academies, and to the students who imbibed their teaching".<sup>37</sup>

Contemporary opinion of Simson, Hutcheson and Leechman could be mixed. Robert Wodrow observed that "The new notions that Mr J. Simson has vented those years bygone in teaching and the lamentable instances of the corruption of the youth" had sunk the spirits of John Stirling, the Principal of the College who was married to Simson's niece.<sup>38</sup> John Witherspoon, one of the leading evangelical opponents of the moderate party, satirized Hutcheson and his influence on the Moderate party.<sup>39</sup> David Hume (1711-1776), the leading Scots philosopher of the eighteenth century, could describe Leechman's *Sermon on Prayer* as the work of "a rank atheist", a caricature of the evangelical denunciations of the professor as an 'Arminian' or 'Socinian'.<sup>40</sup>

Historians of Glasgow University did not always approve of the contributions of Simson, Hutcheson and Leechman. In his *History of the University of Glasgow* James Coutts questioned Simson's integrity during his trials for heresy:

Simson seems to have regarded himself as too great a man to be understood and criticised by country ministers. Whether his views on the rather abstruse

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<sup>36</sup> H.M.B. Reid, *The Divinity Professors in the University of Glasgow 1640-1903*, (Glasgow 1923), 207.

<sup>37</sup> H. McLachlan, *English Education under the Test Acts Being the History of the Non-conformist Academies 1662-1820*, (Manchester 1931), 32.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Wodrow, *Analecta, or, Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences mostly relating to Ministers and Christians*, 4 vols (Edinburgh 1842-3), 3, 445.

<sup>39</sup> J. S. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, comprising the Civil History of the Province of Ulster, from the accession of James the First*, 3 vols, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (London 1853), 3, 332.

<sup>40</sup> Reid, *Divinity Professors*, 252.

questions which afterwards brought him into trouble be regarded as dangerous or not, if he had adopted them conscientiously and held them with earnest conviction, caring more for them than for his status and emoluments, his course of thought might have been respected. But when his status and emoluments came to be in danger, he sheltered himself behind the most orthodox declarations.<sup>41</sup>

In addition it was Simson "the heretic" who had most impression on Hutcheson,<sup>42</sup> an assessment that followed Henry Henderson's *Religious Controversies of Scotland* which described Simson as the "first notable heretic" within the Scottish Church.<sup>43</sup> More recently, D.F. Wright has described Simson as being "a Glasgow professor of dubious orthodoxy" in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.<sup>44</sup>

H.M.B. Reid's assessment of the legacy of William Leechman was a pessimistic one:

Leechman's contribution to Scottish Theology cannot therefore be described as a very important one. In the first place, it was largely evasive; he gave no "infallible judgment," and thus escaped Simson's fate. In the second place, it has no adequate recognition of man's tremendous spiritual and moral needs. In the third place, it lacks recognition of the serious problems already raised by the philosophy of Hume, which hung like a thundercloud over the latter half of his life. The problem of agnosticism was already acute, but it received little alleviation from the discussion of external or even internal evidence. It has been the reproach of our Scots Divinity teaching that it has not openly met that problem, and that thoughtful students have had ground to complain that they were left without positive pronouncements on some of the haunting questions of their time.<sup>45</sup>

By contrast nineteenth century Unitarians identified the importance of Glasgow to their own denominational development. James Martineau (1805-1900), the most prominent nineteenth-century Unitarian theologian and educator, wrote that

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<sup>41</sup> James Coutts, *A History of the University of Glasgow From its Foundation in 1451 to 1909*, (Glasgow 1909), 189.

<sup>42</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 218.

<sup>43</sup> Henry F. Henderson, *The Religious Controversies of Scotland*, (Edinburgh 1905), 4.

<sup>44</sup> D. F. Wright, 'Simson, Patrick', *ODNB*, article/67858.

<sup>45</sup> Reid, *Divinity Professors*, 257.



"The broad theology and the ethics of Hutcheson had relaxed the severe Calvinism of Glasgow, and had given a liberal tone to a large minority both within and without the University".<sup>46</sup> The Irish Presbyterian historian, W.D. Killen, who had completed the final volume of the three volume *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* begun by J.S. Reid, agreed with this assessment but not its benefits suggesting of Hutcheson that "Candidates for the ministerial office could hardly have been exposed to the influence of a more insinuating and at the same time, a more dangerous teacher. He condemned doctrinal preaching, encouraged his pupils to prophesy 'smooth things', and by many cautious hints, signified his disapproval of the Westminster formularies".<sup>47</sup>

#### According to Killen

Had the colleagues of Dr Hutcheson, who occupied the strictly theological chairs, been able and zealous advocates of evangelical truth, they might, to a considerable extent, have counteracted the influence of his philosophical prelections. But unhappily they were men of kindred principles...Dr William Leechman, who was appointed to the situation in 1743, was arraigned soon afterwards for heresy by the Presbytery of Glasgow, and had not moderatism at the time been rampant in the Church, he would have found it difficult to escape from the accusation. There is strong reason to suspect that this professor was at heart a Unitarian, for the most heterodox of the English Nonconformists....were his favourite correspondents, and the men whom he most delighted to honour.<sup>48</sup>

The progress of Glasgow's influence on dissent elsewhere in Britain and Ireland has been understood in different ways. As we have seen, McLachlan saw Glasgow as having a direct impact on English Presbyterianism through English students studying there, and indirectly, through the academies established in England by former Glasgow students. Killen thought that John Simson "had inoculated his students with those principles which led to the separation of the Presbytery of

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<sup>46</sup> James Martineau, *Essays, Reviews and Addresses*, 4 vols, (London 1890-1), 1, 400-1.

<sup>47</sup> Reid (Killen), *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 331-2. The final part of volume 3 of this work was written by W.D. Killen, commencing at page 272.

<sup>48</sup> Reid (Killen), *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 333.

Antrim"<sup>49</sup> and that

The theological training to which Irish students were subjected in the University of Glasgow accounts, to a great extent, for the steady progress and ultimate ascendancy of New-Light principles in the Synod of Ulster.<sup>50</sup>

Writing in 1953, in what is still the standard published account of the Salters' Hall controversy, Roger Thomas saw the disputes over non-subscription in a different light. For him they began in London, spread to Ulster before travelling to Scotland and finding their conclusion with the suspension of Simson in 1727.<sup>51</sup> More recently A.T.Q. Stewart has observed that many of the younger members of the Belfast Society had studied under Simson "and reflected his opinions, sharing his desire to find a rational basis for the teachings of the Church".<sup>52</sup> However, Peter Brooke has pointed out:

Simson became Professor of Divinity in 1708, three years after the Belfast Society was formed, and although he came into conflict with the 'Marrow Men'...in 1714, it was not until after 1722, by which time the Ulster controversy was well established, that he was suspected of heterodoxy on the question of the Trinity. Any influence he might have had was probably through his pupils on a later generation of Ulster ministers.<sup>53</sup>

More recently still M.A. Stewart has argued that it was the subscription controversy in Ireland, and the ideas that went with it, that spilt over into Glasgow "the movement of ideas is as much a movement from Ireland to Scotland, and its roots lie in the civil disabilities of the Irish Dissenters".<sup>54</sup>

There was clearly a complex network of relationships between New Light, non-subscribing dissent in England and Ireland and Glasgow University which merits investigation.

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<sup>49</sup> Reid (Killen), *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 327.

<sup>50</sup> Reid (Killen), *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 334.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas, 'The Non-Subscription Controversy,' 179-80.

<sup>52</sup> A.T.Q. Stewart, *A Deeper Silence The Hidden Origins of the United Irishmen*, (London 1993), 75.

<sup>53</sup> Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism*, 46, 93.



The manner of the teaching of theology in Glasgow remains important to historians. As W.I.P. Hazlett has observed "Simson constitutes one of the triumvirate who were midwives to the new theology in Glasgow and Scotland - the other two being Hutcheson and William Leechman".<sup>55</sup> Elsewhere he has suggested that the difficulties faced by Simson, Hutcheson and Leechman highlighted the "dangers facing theologians when they ventured beyond the bounds of ecclesiastical and statutory theology".<sup>56</sup> For J.M. Barkley the relationship between Francis Hutcheson and the presbytery of Glasgow was such "that it was a war to the death between the old and new spirit".<sup>57</sup>

Hutcheson himself expressed the hope that the appointment of Leechman would "put a new face on theology in Scotland."<sup>58</sup> But until recently the theological teaching of the two Professors of Divinity has received little attention. One modern Unitarian historian can still claim that Simson, Hutcheson, and Leechman were all Church of Scotland moderates "with distinct Unitarian tendencies".<sup>59</sup> But this is to impose late eighteenth or early nineteenth century theological opinions on thinkers who were of a different era.

The most important recent work on John Simson, and the first detailed analysis of his career and thought since his own time, is Anne Skoczylas' excellent *Professor John Simson and the Growth of Enlightenment in the Church of Scotland* which places him in the context of the competing political factions within Scotland at the time as well as evaluating the impact of that situation on doctrinal controversy.

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<sup>54</sup> M.A. Stewart, 'Rational Dissent in early eighteenth-century Ireland', *Enlightenment and Religion. Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Knud Haakonssen (ed.), (Cambridge 1996), 46.

<sup>55</sup> W.I.P. Hazlett, 'Religious Subversive or Model Christian?', 'Francis Hutcheson', Damien Smyth (ed.) supplement to *Fortnight* 308 [Belfast 1992], 19.

<sup>56</sup> William Ian P. Hazlett (ed.), *Traditions of Theology in Glasgow 1450-1990*, (Edinburgh 1993), 16.

<sup>57</sup> Barkley, 'Francis Hutcheson,' 9.

<sup>58</sup> Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow to Thomas Drennan, undated [November 1743]. GUL MS Gen 1018/15. See also W.R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson His Life, Teaching and Position in the History of Philosophy*, (Cambridge 1900), 89.

<sup>59</sup> Andrew Hill, 'Unitarians', *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, Nigel M. de S. Cameron (ed.), (Edinburgh 1993), 837.

Skoczylas attempts to reconstruct the cases brought against Simson and discover what was really of issue both doctrinally and politically and suggests that "The ideas and methods which existed in mid eighteenth century Scotland and which we call the Scottish Enlightenment can be related to Simson's teaching".<sup>60</sup>

William Leechman's relation to the Glasgow Enlightenment has been analysed by Thomas D. Kennedy who finds his influence in his "godly and pious character" which was geared to the "opening and enlarging of minds". In his sermons Kennedy finds "the grand themes of Enlightenment religion in mid eighteenth century Glasgow".<sup>61</sup>

M.A. Stewart has examined the efforts by Glasgow students, many of them Irish, to revive the right to elect their own rector under the Principalship of John Stirling after 1716 and how this militancy was utilised by the disaffected sections of the academic staff over subsequent decades. In the context of this process he shows how the first British articulation of the idea of academic began to evolve.<sup>62</sup>

Such recent works illustrate the complexity of the theological influences at work in Glasgow at the time and illuminate the relationship between Glasgow and New Light Presbyterians outside of Scotland. This thesis will try to unravel the links between non-subscribers in Ireland and England and Glasgow in the context of academic life, the Union of 1707, the European wide theological currents that influenced Britain and Ireland as well as the political disabilities of dissenters.

Some conclusions here must be somewhat tentative. We cannot know, for instance, the direct impact of Simson's teaching on each individual student and

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<sup>60</sup> Anne Skoczylas, 'Professor John Simson and the Growth of Enlightenment in the Church of Scotland', PhD Thesis, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, July 1996, 14. Thesis published as Anne Skoczylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case. Divinity, Politics, and Due Process in Early 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Scotland*, (Montreal 2001).

<sup>61</sup> Thomas D. Kennedy, 'William Leechman, Pulpit Eloquence and the Glasgow Enlightenment', *The Glasgow Enlightenment*, Andrew Hook and Richard B. Sher (eds.), (East Lothian 1995), 60-1, 67.



while pointing out the connection of many non-subscribers to Glasgow through their education we should also note that the vast majority of ministers educated in Glasgow under Simson entered the ministry in Scotland without controversy, without any disagreement over the Westminster Confession and without any questions being raised as to their theological orthodoxy. This thesis does not attempt to examine them or their contribution, indeed this would be a fruitful area of research for others to follow. It is also the case that the richness of the resources preserved by Glasgow compared to other Scottish Universities means that there is more opportunity to investigate this line of enquiry here rather than in Edinburgh, for instance. It may be the case nevertheless that others might want to examine Edinburgh in the same light. However, although Edinburgh does attract students from outside of Scotland there can be no doubt in Glasgow's pre-eminent place as the University of choice for many Presbyterians in England and Ireland.

The first chapter examines the origins of the term New Light as used by John Malcome and its possible connection with the 17<sup>th</sup> century Independency. It looks also at the affinity of what the term attempted to describe with the culture and spirit of the age, especially amongst dissenters, and evaluates the importance of Benjamin Hoadly in the development of non-subscription. It discusses also the developments within continental theological scholarship that had a bearing, and in some cases a direct influence, upon non-subscription in England and Ireland as well as John Simson's relationship to Continental thought. The chapter goes on to discuss the questions of subscription asked from within the reformed church throughout its history and particularly in relation to the Westminster Confession and its legal status in the three kingdoms.

Chapter Two looks at the relationship between dissent, particularly English dissent and Glasgow University. At the centre of this relationship was Daniel Williams whose experience and contacts marked him out as a figure of great

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<sup>62</sup> M. A. Stewart, 'Academic Freedom: Origins of an Idea', in Gabriël Moens (ed.), *Academic Freedom Today* (Sydney: Australian Society of Legal Philosophy, 1992), 1-31. M.A. Stewart, 'John Smith and the Molesworth Circle', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 2 (1987), 89-102.

influence in both England and Ireland. Because of his determination to base the education of dissenters, and particularly the training of dissenting ministers, on Scottish University education, Glasgow and Edinburgh became more closely involved with English dissent and competed with each other to attract students to their University. The chapter illustrates the contacts that John Stirling and William Carstares (the Principals of Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities) had with English dissent and explains the rivalry between the two Universities which culminated in the award of the first honorary doctorates to English dissenting ministers.

Chapter Three deals with the detailed and far-reaching proposals for the education of English dissenting youth which were first of all offered to Edinburgh University. It explores the divisions amongst the dissenters and the problems that they faced in bringing such an ambitious scheme to fruition and how these, coupled with the determination and ultimately the benevolence of Daniel Williams, eventually resulted in the consolidation of Glasgow as the preferred institution of English dissenters.

The fourth chapter is an exploration of the importance of the Union of 1707 to dissenters and the Church of Scotland. Using sermons and other contemporary literature the chapter explores the responses to the Union amongst the various churches in the British Isles. Dissenters were the most enthusiastic supporters of the Union and both English and Irish dissenters at this time began to articulate a strong idea of 'Britishness' that was based on the Revolution Settlement of 1688-9 and the Act of Union. English dissenters found the way open to co-operate with the Church of Scotland in missionary enterprises because of the Union. The chapter shows that in Scotland and England, of all the different religious groups and factions, it was Presbyterians of more moderate sentiments who were best able to benefit from the Union. Presbyterians of similar sentiments in Ireland also held a similar view with these groups.

Chapter Five looks at the education received by Irish and English dissenting



students at Glasgow and the way that influenced their approach to theology, particularly with regard to the creation of the Belfast Society, which became the engine of non-subscription within Irish Presbyterianism. The chapter considers the affinities in approach to theological questions shared by John Simson and the non-subscribers and how this related to the Westminster Confession. It also discusses the role of John Stirling as Principal in terms of both the modernisation of the Faculty which, in part, was another step towards attracting students from Ireland and England, and of the student unrest that he dealt with so harshly which was, in turn, largely fomented by Irish and English students. At the same time the University was rocked by the allegations of heresy directed at John Simson. These are considered particularly from the point of view of their impact on his students from outside Scotland.

In Chapter Six the role of Irish minister Samuel Haliday is discussed as a Glasgow graduate who particularly illustrates the cross-fertilisation of personnel and ideas across the British Isles at the time of the subscription controversy. The Irish and English subscription controversies are explained in the context of their relationship to each other and to Glasgow. On the other side of the Irish sea Henry Winder, an English minister, is also illustrative of the connections around the British Isles and particularly with Presbyterians in the south of Ireland who were another source of strong support for the principles of non-subscription. Although being occasioned by different causes in each nation and having different resolutions in each place the controversy over subscription was essentially a British controversy, it was certainly one that transcended the borders of the different parts of the British Isles.

Chapter Seven is concerned with the, often hidden, network of connections within Scottish church and academic life which shared many attitudes with non-subscribers in England and Ireland. On one level there was a great deal of official hostility towards non-subscribers but in some quarters there was rather more sympathy. The nature and identity of this group is discussed and the significance and

argument of Robert Wallace's unpublished paper *A little treatise against imposing Creeds or Confessions of faith* is evaluated in the context of the wider non-subscribing arguments. Of central importance in establishing a method of approaching subscription which all shades of theological opinion in the Church of Scotland could follow was William Dunlop's *Preface to an Edition of the Westminster Confession, &c Being a full and particular Account of all the Ends and uses of Creeds and Confessions of Faith* of 1720. The contents, aims and purpose of this key work are discussed in this chapter.

The eighth chapter examines the experience of English and Irish students in Glasgow after the opening of the subscription controversies in 1719. This was a period in which the students' campaign to retain the right to elect the Rector, under the leadership of Irish, English and Welsh students, gained increased impetus. The unexpected outcome from this for the University authorities was a royal commission that brought about administrative reform. This coincided with the second trial of John Simson for heresy and this is examined, from a British Isles perspective, in the context of the widespread fear of Arianism amongst many Presbyterians, and the continuing arguments over subscription in which strenuous efforts were made to encourage Glasgow and the Kirk to become involved in the Irish controversy.

Chapter Nine looks at the relationship between Glasgow University and the non-subscribing groupings in England and Ireland in the years after the non-subscription controversies, when non-subscribing Presbyterians from both England and Ireland continued to attend the University in large numbers. Glasgow continued to interact quite closely with non-subscribers in England and Ireland and even awarded the degree of DD to the most prominent non-subscriber in Belfast. This chapter examines this era, in the light of the appointment of Francis Hutcheson and William Leechman to professorships.

The Conclusion looks briefly at some of the longer term effects of the non-subscribing controversies in England and Ireland, and how, in conjunction with



Glasgow University, dissent in England and Ireland experienced the 'Reign of New Light.'

## Chapter One

“a Sett of Men, by Preaching and Printing, pretend to give new Light, to the World”

### *The Origins of ‘New Light’ and non-subscribing ideas*

When the subscription controversy broke in Ireland following the publication of John Abernethy’s sermon on *Religious Obedience*<sup>1</sup> in 1720 the first person to enter the fray on the part of subscription was the Rev John Malcome, “one aged man”<sup>2</sup> the minister of Dunmurry. Malcome, who was then in his mid-sixties, was himself a graduate of Glasgow University.<sup>3</sup> He published *Personal Persuasion No Foundation for Religious Obedience* in 1720 an answer to Abernethy’s sermon and based the main part of his argument on how the non-subscribers were undermining the authority of the Presbyterian church courts.

Many later commentators, particularly those committed to subscription, have lamented how unsuited Malcome was to engage in this kind of polemic<sup>4</sup> but he was the first to use the term ‘New Light’ to describe the non-subscribers. Admitting that he had never previously considered going into print in such a situation he lamented that “a Sett of Men, by Preaching and Printing, pretend to give new Light, to the World, by putting *Personal Perswasion* in the room of Church Government & Discipline”. This was all a dangerous novelty:

By Christ’s own Appointment, recorded in his Word, the Government of his Church was committed to church Guides & Rulers, and since that time has continued for near 1700 years even among all different parties that go under the Name of Christian, every one in their own way. Now since some Men have sett up for new Light (whence they have it I cannot tell.) that has never appear’d in the Church of Christ before, I

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<sup>1</sup> John Abernethy, *Religious Obedience founded on Personal Persuasion A Sermon Preach’d at Belfast The 9th of December, 1719*, (Belfast 1720). M. A. Stewart, ‘Abernethy, John (1680–1740)’, *ODNB*, article/48.

<sup>2</sup> John Malcome, *The Good Old Way Examined Being an Answer to the Belfast Society* (Belfast 1720), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Gordon, ‘Malcome, John’, rev. A. D. G. Steers, *ODNB*, article/17869. *Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis Records of the University of Glasgow from its Foundation till 1727*, 3 vols (Glasgow 1854), 3, 125.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Witherow, *Historical and Literary Memorials of Presbyterianism in Ireland, 1623–1731*, (London and Belfast, 1879), 217–8. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 163.



look't upon it as my Duty, by this short Answer to the sermon preach't at Belfast, December 9, 1719.<sup>5</sup>

The epithet 'New Light' became the term widely used to describe those opposed to the non-subscribers. The term did not originate with Malcome but was first used by Milton in his *Areopagitica* of 1644. However, Malcome revived it, firstly in *Personal Perswasion* but then with much more force some six years later in *The Dangerous Principles of the Sectaries of the Last Age, Revived Again by our Modern New-Lights*. Here he traced the origin of the term to those Independent Divines at the Westminster Assembly who “were great Opposers of Presbyterian Government, which the Assembly were then about, together with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, which have been so much esteemed, by the Reformed Churches, both at Home and Abroad,” and named Thomas Goodwin, Jeremy Burroughs, William Greenhill, William Bridge, Philip Nye, Sidrack Simpson and William Carter as examples of this tendency at the Assembly.<sup>6</sup> By this time Presbyterians in Ireland had experienced years of bitter wrangling and Malcome was in no mood to mince his words. According to Malcome the Independents had refused to declare their principles and as a consequence were part of a motley faction who were

Malecontents....who, though they were of different Principles, all agree'd in this to oppose the Assembly; the Seekers, Antinomians, Arminians, Socinians, Anabaptists, Arians, Independents, &c, were all against any settled Government in the Church, but principally against Presbyterian Government, which they reckoned downright tyranny.

It was Malcome's assertion that “in many things, our Neighbours now agree with them.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed he went on to accuse the non-subscribers of all manner of heresy and deviation from orthodox truth. At root was a rejection of true authority in the same way as the Independents of the 1640s:

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<sup>5</sup> John Malcome, *Personal Perswasion no Foundation for Religious Obedience; Or Some Friendly Reflections on A Sermon Preach'd at Belfast Dec. 9 1719*, (Belfast 1720), 4.

<sup>6</sup> John Malcome, *The Dangerous Principles of the Sectarians of the last Age, Revived again by our Modern New-Lights. In a Letter to all Lovers of Peace and Truth*, (Belfast 1726), 3. See T. M. Lawrence, 'Goodwin, Thomas', *ODNB*, article/10997; Tom Webster, 'Burroughs, Jeremiah', *ODNB*, article/4106; Richard L. Greaves, 'Greenhill, William', *ODNB*, article/11429; Richard L. Greaves, 'Bridge, William', *ODNB*, article/3389; Barbara Donagan, 'Nye, Philip', *ODNB*, article/20417; Tai Liu, 'Simpson, Sidrach', *ODNB*, article/25592; P. S. Seaver, 'Carter, William', *ODNB*, article/66137.

<sup>7</sup> Malcome, *Dangerous Principles*, 4.



These Old Sectarians were all for Liberty of Conscience, both in Principles and practice; whatever Course they took, they still pretended Conscience. The same thing our Neighbours now plead for; they not only pretend Conscience for their own private Thoughts and Conversation, but to be above any Tribunal on Earth, when their voices differ, and Synods have no Authority where Conscience is concern'd.

....These Old Scepticks could never be prevail'd with to discover their Principles, they still had a Reserve. Our Neighbours now are just the same, they will not Subscribe the Westminster-Confession, nor any Humane Composure, though never so Agreeable to the good Word of God.<sup>8</sup>

For Malcome this put the non-subscribers in the same bracket as the various sects of the mid-seventeenth century. Crafty and subtle they worked at winning converts, particularly among the youth. Ignoring the authority of Synods they introduced anarchy and confusion. Relying on reason they followed the Socinians and had reached a position of scepticism on the doctrine of the Trinity. They were even having dreams of the imminence of the millennium.<sup>9</sup>

But although Malcome was employing considerable rhetorical force in his argument there were historical parallels between the Irish New Lights and some of the seventeenth century Independents. Philip Nye had been influenced quite directly by Arminianism, at least in terms of its approach to ecclesiastical government, if not its doctrinal approach. Nye had spent some years prior to 1640 in the Netherlands and took Arminius' line over the question of church authority. Arminius and his followers had argued that the resolution of no synod could have authority over the individual conscience. In matters where man's salvation was not at stake there should be freedom of opinion.<sup>10</sup> All of those mentioned along with Nye by Malcome were supporters of Independency and many of them had also spent time in the Netherlands. Indeed Nye, Thomas Goodwin, William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughes, and Sidrach Simpson had all been exiles there and together published the *Apologeticall Narration* in 1643, an appeal for the congregational way in the church that also shows a dislike of any

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<sup>8</sup> Malcome, *Dangerous Principles*, 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> Malcome, *Dangerous Principles*, 4-10.

<sup>10</sup> G.J. Hoenderdaal, 'The debate about Arminius outside the Netherlands', *Leiden University in the Seventeenth Century An Exchange of Learning*, Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (eds.), (Leiden 1975), 146, 155-6.



coercion of conscience. As dissenters who had been put out of the Church and sent into exile they placed great stress on the rights of their own individual consciences, guided by the Scriptures, where they could search out

what were the first Apostolique directions, pattern and examples of those Primitive Churches recorded in the New Testament....And in this enquirie, we lookt upon the word of Christ as impartially, and unprejudicedly, as men made of flesh and blood are like to doe in any juncture of time that may fall out; the places we went to, the condition we were in, the company we went forth with, affording no temptation to byas in any way, but leaving us as freely to be guided by that light and touch Gods Spirit should by the Word vouchsafe our consciences, as the Needle toucht with the Load-stone is in the Compasse; And we had (of all men) the greatest reason to be true to our own consciences in what we should embrace, seeing it was for our consciences that we were deprived at once of what ever was dear to us.<sup>11</sup>

In their exile in the Netherlands the Independents “received and were entertained” with respect and “both mutually gave and received the right hand of fellowship”. There is certainly something of the approach of Jacobus Arminius present in their writings particularly with the tone of their emphasis on scripture:

The supream rule without us, was the Primitive patterne and example of the churches erected by the Apostles. Our consciences were possessed with that reverence and adoration of the fulnesse of the Scriptures, that there is therein a compleat sufficiency, as to make the man of God perfect, so also to make the Churches of God perfect....if the directions and examples therein delivered were fully known and followed.<sup>12</sup>

With this they also agreed “Not to make our present judgement and practice a binding law unto our selves for the future, which we in like manner made continuall profession of upon all occasions”.<sup>13</sup>

But although Malcome had identified a common Arminian source of influence for both Nye and his supporters and Abernethy and his, there was no direct influence by the English Independents on the Irish non-subscribers. John

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes, William Bridge, *An Apologeticall Narration, humbly submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament*, (London 1643), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Goodwin et al, *Apologeticall Narration*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Goodwin et al, *Apologeticall Narration*, 10.

Abernethy took great exception to John Malcome's pamphlet and published quite an angry reply pointing out all his shortcomings. He was dismissive of many of his assertions and suggested:

That in your great Eagerness to give the Vulgar an ill Impression of the Non-subscribers, you amuse them with imaginary faults, and Dangers from us, which you even acknowledge to be beyond the Reach of your own Understanding.<sup>14</sup>

It is clear from his reply that Abernethy disliked and disapproved of the term 'New Light', although in answering Malcome's book he had to use it a lot, always with a qualifying term such as "those you call" or "as you're pleased to call them." He acknowledged Malcome's responsibility for putting the term 'New Light' into general use – "a Term of Reproach which you may claim the Honor of inventing, if it be an Honor"<sup>15</sup> – but it seems to have very quickly become a widely used term in Ireland.

By the time of the controversies of the 1720s the term 'New Light' was itself not much used in England although subscription emerged as a major issue at exactly the same time in London as it did in Ulster. For many contemporaries on both sides of the argument the issue was the same. Malcome noted that the Irish non-subscribers'

companions in and about London, some years ago, refused to Subscribe the Answers to the First and Sixth Questions of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and to the First Article of the Church of England; and our Neighbours here followed the same Method, they would not subscribe the plainest truth, so that we have Reason to suspect they are not Sound in the Faith.<sup>16</sup>

In Scotland the term 'New Light' was much used at the end of the eighteenth century but then to describe a different stream of thought - referring to those within the Secession churches who opposed the state's right to interfere

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<sup>14</sup> John Abernethy, *A Letter To the Reverend Mr John Malcome; Occasion'd by his late Pamphlet, Entituled, The Dangerous Principles of the Sectarians of the last Age revived again by our modern New-Lights, &c*, (Belfast 1727), 17.

<sup>15</sup> Abernethy, *Letter To... Malcome*, 4, 5, 9.

<sup>16</sup> John Malcome, *Dangerous Principles*, 8.



with church life. Yet in the early eighteenth century the question of subscription attracted just as much attention in Scotland. As in Ireland those who opposed the abandonment of subscription were both suspicious of and alarmed by the motivation of those who would not subscribe. Robert Wodrow observed that there could be no "plausible reason for non-subscribing, but some real dislike of the doctrine declared in the confession or articles to be subscribed."<sup>17</sup> On at least one occasion Wodrow himself did attach the term 'New Light' to Scottish ministers who held non-subscribing views, bracketing them as one of the troublesome elements within the church:

We have the Marrou people on the one hand who print and scatter papers and sermons very cheap throughout 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?<sup>18</sup>

In England, Ireland and Scotland New Light or non-subscribing ideas were attacked by those who held to traditional Calvinist views and all manner of heresies were ascribed to them. But although these were controversial views for some, and troublesome enough to split the church in a number of places, they also represented something of the spirit of the age.

In his novel of 1719, written at the height of the subscription controversy in London, the dissenter Daniel Defoe, who had himself originally been intended for the ministry, has Robinson Crusoe encounter Friday after many solitary years on the island. He quickly discovers that even savages have a religion which can be as deluded and false as any form of priestcraft. He begins to instruct his new companion in the essentials of religion, explaining the need for a First Cause, a directing Providence that requires worship from his creatures. But although the evidences of nature would direct all reasonable creatures to a knowledge of God and a realisation of the fitness of worship, true knowledge of salvation could only come through divine revelation, in the person of Jesus Christ. Consequently

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas McCrie (ed.), *The Correspondence of Robert Wodrow: edited from MSS in the library of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh*, 3 vols (Edinburgh 1842-3), 3, 57.

<sup>18</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 360.

the Word of God was absolutely essential to bring Friday to the fullest knowledge of God and of his redemption through the one Mediator between humankind and God.<sup>19</sup>

In the voice of Crusoe Defoe goes on to describe the spiritual value of reading the Bible which contained everything needed for the fullest knowledge of religious truth and could be read and understood by anyone without the need of any additional level of authority:

I continued in this thankful frame all the remainder of my time; and the conversation which employed the hours between Friday and me was such as made the three years which we lived there together perfectly and completely happy, if any such thing as complete happiness can be formed in a sublunary state. This savage was now a good Christian, a much better than I; though I have reason to hope, and bless God for it, that we were equally penitent, and comforted, restored penitents. We had here the Word of God to read, and no farther off from His Spirit to instruct than if we had been in England. I always applied myself, in reading the Scripture, to let him know, as well as I could, the meaning of what I read; and he again, by his serious inquiries and questionings, made me, as I said before, a much better scholar in the Scripture knowledge than I should ever have been by my own mere private reading. Another thing I cannot refrain from observing here also, from experience in this retired part of my life, viz. how infinite and inexpressible a blessing it is that the knowledge of God, and of the doctrine of salvation by Christ Jesus, is so plainly laid down in the Word of God, so easy to be received and understood, that, as the bare reading the Scripture made me capable of understanding enough of my duty to carry me directly on to the great work of sincere repentance for my sins, and laying hold of a Saviour for life and salvation, to a stated reformation in practice, and obedience to all God's commands, and this without any teacher or instructor, I mean human; so the same plain instruction sufficiently served to the enlightening this savage creature, and bringing him to be such a Christian as I have known few equal to him in my life.

Not only does his encounter with the savage illustrate this fundamental truth about the nature of the scriptures but it also shows to him the futility of so much that passes for authoritative in the field of religion:

As to all the disputes, wrangling, strife, and contention which have

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (London 1890), 237.



happened in the world about religion, whether niceties in doctrines or schemes of church government, they were all perfectly useless to us, and, for aught I can yet see, they have been so to the rest of the world. We had the sure guide to heaven, viz. the Word of God; and we had, blessed be God, comfortable views of the Spirit of God teaching and instructing by His word, leading us into all truth, and making us both willing and obedient to the instruction of His word. And I cannot see the least use that the greatest knowledge of the disputed points of religion, which have made such confusion in the world, would have been to us, if we could have obtained it.<sup>20</sup>

This is a popular expression of non-subscription, of the sufficiency of scripture alongside divine revelation. First published in 1719 the book went into five editions by the end of the year and was translated into numerous languages.<sup>21</sup> The book clearly demonstrates the power of the New Light or non-subscribing view within the dissenting community.

But such views were not confined to dissenters, indeed if anything they had initially been more firmly grounded within the Church of England. In no one man was this more pronounced than in the person of Benjamin Hoadly. The son of a clergyman, he came from a clerical family with strong puritan roots, his paternal grandfather having emigrated to New England before becoming chaplain of Edinburgh Castle in the 1650s, and his maternal grandfather had been a member of the Westminster Assembly. He was ordained priest in 1700 and appointed rector of the parish of St Peter-le-Poer in 1704, a living he held for sixteen years, the last four of which he was also bishop of the distant north Wales diocese of Bangor. Following five years as bishop of Bangor he was successively bishop of Hereford, Salisbury and Winchester.<sup>22</sup>

For the post-Revolution church one of the most pressing practical problems was how to deal with the existence of organised dissent. As the most prominent clergyman of whig and low-church opinions Hoadly soon established himself as an able controversialist defending conformity to the Church of

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<sup>20</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 237-8.

<sup>21</sup> Paula R. Backscheider, 'Defoe, Daniel', *ODNB*, article/7421.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Taylor, 'Hoadly, Benjamin', *ODNB*, article/13375. Norman Sykes, 'Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor', *The Social and Political Ideas of Some English Thinkers of the Augustan Age*, F.J.C. Hearnshaw (ed.), (New York 1923), 112-156.

England but holding out the possibility of comprehension for moderate dissenters. As such he engaged in an extended pamphlet exchange with Edmund Calamy (1671-1732) one of the leading London dissenting ministers, but also defended the practice of occasional conformity by some dissenters used as a method of preserving their participation in local government. He was prepared to countenance some reform of the Church of England in order to encompass some of the dissenters and early in the controversies was willing to argue for broader interpretations of the terms of subscription. In 1703, for instance, he argued that the declaration of assent and consent required of the Prayer Book only applied to the book's use, not everything contained within it:

The Declaration of Assent and Consent cannot possibly be extended to anything but the Use of this Book: and that the subscription concerns this Book, only as it is a Book directing the Minister what Prayers and what Ceremonies to use; and has no reference to anything in it that does not concern the Minister who is to use it. And from hence it follows, that whoever thinks this Book fit to be used in the Service of God, may fairly make this Declaration and Subscription without putting a Stretch either upon the Words or upon his own Conscience.<sup>23</sup>

But following his appointment to a royal chaplaincy and his consecration as bishop of Bangor in 1716 he gave full vent to his latitudinarian views in a most astonishing way. In a sermon preached before the king in the Royal Chapel at St James's on Sunday, 31 March 1717 he developed ideas of ecclesiastical authority that were to have far reaching repercussions. Taking John chapter 18 verse 36 as his text ("Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this World") he made an appeal to get back to "the Originals of Things". This included an approach to religion that laid most stress on right action:

Religion, in St James's Days, was Virtue and Integrity, as to our selves, and Charity and Beneficence to others; before God, even the Father. Jn. I. 27. By Degrees, it is come to signify, in most of the Countries throughout the whole World, the Performance of every thing almost, except Virtue and Charity; and particularly, a punctual Exactness in a Regard to particular Times, Places, Forms, and Modes, diversified according to the

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<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Hoadly, 'The Reasonableness of Conformity,' *The works of Benjamin Hoadly, D.D. successively Bishop of Bangor, Hereford, Salisbury, and Winchester. Published by his son John Hoadly*, 3 vols, (London 1773), 1, 199.



various Humours of Men.<sup>24</sup>

With the setting aside of such *adiaphora* he urged a return to the Scriptures, to “the Worship of the Father in Spirit and Truth” and to “the Love of God” which is “the keeping of his Commandments, or doing his Will.”<sup>25</sup> In returning to the original words of Jesus it was possible to get a picture of the true church with the exclusion of everything he did not sanction, leaving only his pure and uncorrupted intentions. This had great consequences for the question of authority:

As the Church of Christ is the Kingdom of Christ, He himself is King: and in this it is implied, that He is himself the Sole law-giver to his Subjects, and himself the Sole judge of their Behaviour, in the Affairs of Conscience and Eternal Salvation. And in this Sense therefore, His Kingdom is not of this World; that He hath, in these Points, left behind Him, no visible, humane Authority; no Vicegerents, who can be said properly to supply his Place; no Interpreters, upon whom his Subjects are absolutely to depend; no Judges over the Consciences or Religion of his People.<sup>26</sup>

It followed on from this that no-one could add anything to the laws of the church as promulgated by Christ and that each person, whatever their station, stood equally before the law:

If therefore, the Church of Christ be the Kingdom of Christ; it is essential to it, That Christ himself be the Sole Law-giver, and Sole Judge of his Subjects, in all points relating to the favour or displeasure of Almighty God; and that All His Subjects, in what Station soever They may be, are equally Subjects to Him; and that No One of them, any more than Another, hath Authority, either to make New Laws for Christ’s Subjects; or to impose a sense upon the Old Ones, which is the same thing; or to Judge, Censure, or Punish, the Servants of Another Master, in matters relating purely to Conscience, or Salvation.<sup>27</sup>

This had implications for the right of individual judgement, for the complete separation of religious matters from those of the state and for toleration

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<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom, or Church, of Christ. A Sermon Preach’d before the King, at the Royal Chapel at St James’s. On Sunday March 31, 1717*, (London 1717), 4-5.

<sup>25</sup> Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, 6,8.

<sup>26</sup> Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, 15-16.

of religious differences. The rewards and punishments of Christ's Kingdom did not belong to this world, they could have no connection with the range of penalties which the state could impose if it wished on those who were deemed not to adhere to the state's view of religious truth, indeed any form of compulsion was unnecessary and inappropriate:

For, if the very Essence of God's worship be Spirit and Truth; If Religion be Virtue and Charity, under the Belief of a Supreme Governor and Judge; if true Real Faith cannot be the effect of Force; and, if, there can be no Reward where there is no Willing Choice: then, in all, or any of these Cases to apply Force or Flattery, Worldly pleasure or pain; is to act contrary to the Interests of True Religion, as it is plainly opposite to the Maxims upon which Christ founded his Kingdom; who chose the Motives which are not of this world, to support a Kingdom which is not of this world.<sup>28</sup>

The Kingdom of Christ was simply all those people who sincerely and willingly made themselves subject to him as law giver and judge in all matters of conscience and salvation. But it was a very personal relationship, one entirely unbound by any secular authority or threat of compulsion:

And therefore, when You see Our Lord, in his methods, so far removed from those of Many of his Disciples; when You read Nothing, in his Doctrine about his own Kingdom, of taking in the Concerns of this World, and mixing them with those of Eternity; no Commands that the Frowns and Discouragements of this present state should in any case attend upon Conscience and religion; No Rules against the Enquiry of All His Subjects into his Original Message from Heaven; no Orders for the kind and charitable force of Penalties, or Capital Punishments, to make Men think and chuse aright; no Calling upon the secular Arm, whenever the Magistrate should become Christian, to inforce his Doctrines, or to back his Spiritual Authority, but, on the contrary, as plain a Declaration as a few Words can make, that his Kingdom is not of this World: I say, when You see this, from the whole Tenor of the Gospel, so vastly opposite to Many who take his Name into their Mouths, the Question with you ought to be, Whether He did not know the Nature of this own Kingdom, or Church, better than Any since his Time?<sup>29</sup>

In the end the individual personal conscience held a primacy in the realm of the spiritual:

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<sup>28</sup> Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, 20.

<sup>29</sup> Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, 25, 22-3.



The Peace of Christ's Kingdom is a manly and Reasonable Peace; built upon Charity, and Love, and mutual forbearance, and receiving one another, as God receives us. As for any other peace, founded upon a Submission of our Honesty, as well as our Understandings; it is falsely so called. It is not the Peace of the Kingdom of Christ; but the lethargy of it: and a Sleep unto Death, when his Subjects shall throw off their relation to Him; fix their subjection to others.<sup>30</sup>

In many ways it was a startling sermon to address to the King in a royal chapel. Not surprisingly it immediately provoked a vigorous controversy within the established church resulting in a *Report of the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation* which condemned the sermon as tending "To subvert all Government and Discipline in the Church of Christ, and to reduce his Kingdom to a state of Anarchy and Confusion."<sup>31</sup> Partly as a result of the controversy Convocation was prorogued and did not meet again until the 1850s. On the other hand the sermon was warmly welcomed by most dissenters. It was published by "His Majesty's Special Command"<sup>32</sup> and followed debate in parliament over the repeal of the Test Act. For dissenters it offered the hope of a more comprehensive toleration of their existence that was less trammelled by Anglican authority. It indicated a willingness to allow different churches to exist equally under the law. This was a situation desired by prominent dissenters such as John Bennet (c. 1674–1726) minister at Newcastle who had expressed such a wish in 1715:

I have (I think) shewn you, that the Apostle doth not force an uniformity in these indifferent things, but presseth mutual Charity, notwithstanding our different Apprehensions and Practices in these indifferent things...we should not judg nor condemn each other for our different Apprehensions nor impose on each other's Judgments and Consciences.<sup>33</sup>

But for some dissenters Hoadly's message had further application and it

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<sup>30</sup> Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, 29.

<sup>31</sup> *Report of the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation appointed to draw up a representation to be laid before the Arch-bishop and bishops of the province of Canterbury; concerning several dangerous positions and doctrines, contained in the Bishop of Bangor's Preservative, and his sermon preach'd March 31, 1717*, (Dublin 1717), 2.

<sup>32</sup> Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, cover page.

<sup>33</sup> [Benjamin Bennet], *An Essay for Allaying the Animosities Amongst British Protestants*, (London 1715), 28.

gave immediate impetus to the extension of non-subscribing principles within dissent itself in both England and Ireland.<sup>34</sup> The most famous response to Hoadly's sermon is that usually ascribed to Francis Hutcheson, then a divinity student just returned to Ireland from Glasgow. Thomas McCrie presents it as follows:

I find by the conversation I have had with some ministers and comrades, that there is a perfect Hoadly mania among our younger ministers in the north; and what is really ridiculous, it does not serve them to be of his principles, but the pulpits are ringing with them, as if their hearers were all absolute princes going to impose tests and confessions in their several territories, and not a set of people entirely excluded from the smallest hand in the government any where, and utterly incapable of bearing any other part in persecution but as sufferers. I have reason, however, to apprehend that the antipathy to confessions is upon some other grounds than a new spirit of charity. Dr Clark's book I'm sufficiently informed has made several unfixed in their old principles, if not entirely altered them.<sup>35</sup>

This would be a curious comment by one who was soon to count the non-subscribers amongst his closest friends in Ireland and who was himself to come under suspicion for holding unorthodox theological opinions when he returned to Glasgow as professor. Moreover, Hutcheson was part of a circle surrounding Robert, first Viscount Molesworth (1656-1752)<sup>36</sup> with which Hoadly shared many whiggish affinities. In fact the letter quoted was from William Wright to Robert Wodrow and contained a quotation from Hutcheson. However, the original contains no punctuation to show where Hutcheson's comments end and the last two sentences given above most probably are the opinion of Wright.<sup>37</sup> But the admission of "Hoadly mania" by Hutcheson to his correspondent is an indication of just how great the impact of Hoadly's sermon was, it was a key event in developing the momentum of active opposition to the imposition of creeds.

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<sup>34</sup> For consideration of the impact of Hoadly's sermon upon dissenters in England see Thomas, 'The Non-Subscription Controversy', *JEH*, 181 and Bolam et al, *English Presbyterians*, 154-5. For the impact in Ireland see Stewart, 'Rational Dissent in early eighteenth-century Ireland', 51-4 and Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism*, 81-2.

<sup>35</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 389.

<sup>36</sup> D. W. Hayton, 'Molesworth, Robert, first Viscount Molesworth', *ODNB*, article/18901.

<sup>37</sup> William Wright to Robert Wodrow, 27 September 1718. Wodrow Letters Quarto, vol. 20 no. 132, NLS. I am grateful to Professor M.A. Stewart for this reference.



Another major spur towards the subscription crises that developed towards the end of the second decade of the eighteenth century came from cross-fertilisation with other protestant churches across Europe. By the early eighteenth century no source was more fruitful for the dissemination of non-subscribing ideas than Geneva itself. From 1679 onwards all entrants for the Genevan ministry had been obliged to subscribe to the *Formula Consensus Ecclesiarum Helveticarum* (Helvetic Consensus), the reformed statement agreed by the Swiss reformed cantons in 1675 and issued to counteract the growth of the doctrines taught at the French academy at Saumur. In 1706, under the influence of Jean-Alphonse Turretini the requirement for subscription to the *Formula Consensus* was dropped.<sup>38</sup>

In itself this move was testimony to the persistence of liberalising tendencies within the reformed churches across Europe that tended to reduce the harshness of the doctrines of Calvinism. Jean-Alphonse Turretini (1671-1737) was the third generation of reformed professors of theology at Geneva. His family had emigrated from Lucca in Tuscany in the sixteenth century and had subsequently prospered in Geneva. Although his father, François Turretini (1623-1687), had been one of the principal architects of the *Formula Consensus*, Jean-Alphonse led the move away from the use of creedal tests and brought about the abrogation of the *Formula Consensus* in Geneva as well as pressed for its abandonment throughout Switzerland. Jean-Alphonse Turretini began his theological training at the Academy of Geneva in 1685 shortly before the death of his father. As a consequence he was more heavily influenced by other theologians in his training, most notably Louis Tronchin (1629-1705), one of the proponents of the theology of the Saumur academy and from 1661 professor of theology at the Geneva academy, and Jean-Robert Chouet (1642-1731), professor of philosophy from 1669 who began the teaching of Cartesian

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<sup>38</sup> For accounts of this change in Geneva see Linda Kirk, 'Eighteenth-century Geneva and a changing Calvinism,' *Religion and National Identity*, Stuart Mews (ed.), (Oxford 1982), 367 – 379; Marie-Cristina Pitassi, *De L'Orthodoxie aux Lumières Genève 1670-1737*. Histoire et Société No.24 (Geneva 1992) and Martin I. Klauber, *Between Reformed Scholasticism and Pan-Protestantism. Jean-Alphonse Turretin (1671-1737) and Enlightened Orthodoxy at the Academy of Geneva* (Selinsgrove 1994).

philosophy within the academy.<sup>39</sup>

Previous students of both Tronchin and Chouet had included Pierre Bayle (1647-1706)<sup>40</sup> and Jean Le Clerc (1657-1736)<sup>41</sup> both of whom were to become known to Turretini during his travels around Europe at the end of his theological training.<sup>42</sup> Bayle was the author of the famous *Dictionnaire historique et critique* and a champion of universal toleration who became professor of history and philosophy in Rotterdam in 1681, while the Geneva born Le Clerc had been educated at Saumur and embraced Arminian doctrine, in 1684 becoming professor of philosophy, and later of church history, at the Remonstrant College in Amsterdam. With this link back to the Dutch Remonstrants the chain of relationships had turned a full circle since it was to counteract ideas that originated in the Netherlands, particularly amongst the Remonstrants that documents such as the *Formula Consensus* had originally been written. In April 1619 the Synod of Dort of the Dutch Reformed Church had set forth its articles which intended to repudiate Arminianism. These included an assertion of predestination; a limited atonement; man's corruption; the irresistibility of grace and the perseverance of the saints.<sup>43</sup>

Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) had set forth views challenging predestination and many traditional Calvinist doctrines. Arminius was educated at Utrecht and Marburg, later studying at Leiden, Geneva and Basle. From his appointment as professor at Leiden in 1603 he began to put forward the view that Divine sovereignty was compatible with a real free-will in humanity; that Jesus died for all people and not just the elect; and repudiated the doctrine of predestination. He and his followers laid great stress on reason and the idea that scriptural truths should be conformable to external evidences rather than just the

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<sup>39</sup> Pitassi, *De L'Orthodoxie*, 22-32; Klauber, *Reformed Scholasticism*, 38-58.

<sup>40</sup> Alexander Gordon, *Addresses Biographical and Historical*, (London 1922), 155-182. Elisabeth Labrousse, *Bayle*, (Oxford 1983).

<sup>41</sup> *An account of the life and writings of Mr John Le Clerc, (Philosophy and Hebrew professor in the College of the Arminians at Amsterdam) to this present year M DCC XI. To which is added, a Collection of Letters, from J.G. Graevius, and Baron Spanheim, to Mr Le Clerc with A Particular Account of Dr Bentley, and his Two Associates Gronovius and Burman*, (London 1712).

<sup>42</sup> Klauber, *Reformed Scholasticism*, 58-61.

<sup>43</sup> *The Judgement of the Synode Holden at Dort, Concerning the Five Articles: As also their sentence touching Conradus Vorstius*, (London 1619) [facsimile edition Amsterdam 1974].



confirmation of the Holy Spirit. They met vigorous opposition within the reformed world, many of whose leaders feared that they were but a half way house to Socinianism. However, their ideas met with some agreement in the person of Moïse Amyraut (1594-1664)<sup>44</sup> professor of theology at the French academy of Saumur from 1633. He advanced a view of “hypothetical universalism” that sought to modify the doctrine of limited atonement, as promulgated by the Synod of Dort. According to his view God’s redemptive plan included all individuals, but only those who had faith could be saved. This required the intervention of the Holy Spirit, whose working could be known only to God. In addition heathens who could only have a limited knowledge of Christ were only responsible in terms of the amount of light they had received. Amyraut’s followers at Saumur further modified the Calvinist doctrine of the imputed guilt of Adam to all humanity with the concept of the ‘mediate imputation’ of Adam’s sin. In other words the sin was the result of individual depravity rather than the direct imputation of Adam’s guilt. In addition they began to develop concepts of textual criticism that were novel in their use of rational arguments about the formation of scripture.<sup>45</sup>

This attempt to modify traditional Calvinist ideas met with strong opposition and the *Formula Consensus* was developed as a means of preventing the spread of the ideas of Amyraut/Saumur into the Swiss cantons. Despite its adoption in Geneva in 1679 there had always been those in the city who had followed the Saumur line and because of that there developed an opposition to the imposition of such documents. Jean-Alphonse Turretini was educated in that tradition and the contacts he made as he travelled Europe from 1691 to 1693 confirmed that attitude. These included not only Bayle and Remonstrants such as Le Clerc but prominent latitudinarian figures in England including the Scot Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), who had been professor of divinity at Glasgow from 1669 to 1674 and who became bishop of Salisbury in 1689,<sup>46</sup> and William Wake (1657-1753),<sup>47</sup> with whom he struck up a life-long friendship and who became

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<sup>44</sup> Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy. Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth-Century France*, (Madison 1969), 71-119.

<sup>45</sup> Klauber, *Reformed Scholasticism*, 26-7.

<sup>46</sup> Martin Greig, ‘Burnet, Gilbert’, *ODNB*, article/4061.

<sup>47</sup> Stephen Taylor, ‘Wake, William’, *ODNB*, article/28409.

archbishop of Canterbury in 1716. From these and other contacts Turretini developed a spirit of toleration as well as a desire to seek unity amongst Protestants. He was keen to emphasise common ground between the Reformed, Lutheran and Anglican churches, differences of church polity were of no real significance. *Nubes Testium*, his eirenic work of 1720 was translated into English in the same year. This intended to distinguish the essence of religion from those things that were not essential and called for

A pious and Christian Moderatism, towards those who differ from us in things which are not necessary; and not venture to condemn them, to exclude them our Communion or, as is usual with many to send them to the very Pit of Destruction.<sup>48</sup>

Taking his argument from the Scriptures, the Church Fathers and reformed divines he drew a distinction between what was fundamental and primary for the faith and what was not. Confessions were not necessarily representative of what was fundamental:

Hence also Creeds and Confessions of Faith, and then Catechisms took their Rise; which contained the first Principles of Religion, such as it was thought proper for Catechumens, or Beginners to profess their Belief of. And in the first Ages these things were short and plain; but afterwards, through the Dissensions that arose in the Church, they were exceedingly multiplied and enlarged; insomuch that *Hilary* complained that 'Confessions were fram'd at every one's pleasure'.<sup>49</sup>

But Turretini, as a young man, used his time wisely in England, the Netherlands and France and, as Martin Klauber observes of him:

By the time of the completion of his journeys abroad, Turretin had accumulated a notable array of contacts throughout the Republic of Letters. He had also gained invaluable experience in his interaction with such a broad spectrum of theologians and philosophers. Undoubtedly, this experience confirmed his predisposition toward the formulation of a more broad-minded theological system, which would be palatable to a far wider range of thinkers than had been the scholasticism of his father.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Jean Alphonse Turretini, *A Discourse Concerning Fundamental Articles in Religion. In which a Method is laid down for the more effectual Uniting of Protestants, And promoting a more General Toleration amongst them*, (London 1720), 1.

<sup>49</sup> Turretini, *Discourse Concerning Fundamental Articles*, 13.

<sup>50</sup> Klauber, *Reformed Scholasticism*, 61.



One of the most prominent figures in the non-subscribing controversy that developed in the north of Ireland after 1719 underwent a similar experience following a period of travel around Europe. Samuel Haliday (1685-1739)<sup>51</sup> was born in Ireland, probably at Omagh, co. Tyrone where his father was Presbyterian minister. Haliday matriculated at Glasgow University in 1701 and remained there for three or four years. Following his time there he matriculated at Leiden University to study theology in November 1705. Leiden was another institution popular with Presbyterians in Britain and Ireland and an estimated 2,000 students from England, Scotland and Ireland studied there between 1650 and 1750.<sup>52</sup> Here he defended a thesis before Hermann Witsius (1636-1708), professor of theology from 1698, which was subsequently published in the Netherlands.<sup>53</sup> On the successful completion of his studies in Leiden he embarked on a tour around Europe. Like Turretini he used this time to full advantage, as James Duchal, his contemporary and biographer noted:

by some favourable events in Providence [Haliday] was placed in a station in which he had opportunity of seeing the most remarkable places in Europe, and staying a considerable time in such of them as promised him most improvement. In this stage of life, he contracted a very large acquaintance with men of the higher rank; but especially with those that were eminently learned, with many of whom he had a familiar intimacy. He at the same time conversed much with books, and laid in a very considerable stock of valuable learning.<sup>54</sup>

In Leiden English speaking students were taught in an orthodox Calvinist environment but they were also exposed to other more radical ideas and were

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<sup>51</sup> A. D. G. Steers, 'Haliday, Samuel', *ODNB*, article/11930. David Steers, 'Samuel Haliday 1685-1739,' *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 22:3 (2001), 275-289. James Duchal, 'The Appendix containing Some brief Memoirs of the Lives and Characters of the late Revd Messieurs Thomas Shaw, William Taylor, Michael Bruce and Samuel Haliday, Protestant-dissenting Ministers in the Counties of Down and Antrim', *A Sermon on Occasion of the Much Lamented Death of the late Rev Mr John Abernethy*, (Dublin 1741), 30-33.

<sup>52</sup> A.W.G. Brown, 'Irish Presbyterian Theology in the Early Eighteenth Century', PhD Thesis (Queen's University, Belfast 1977), 420.

<sup>53</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 171. Samuel Halideus, *Hibernus*, matriculated at Leiden, 19 November 1705, see Edward Peacock, *Index to English Speaking Students who have graduated at Leyden University*, (London 1883), 45. Samuel Haliday, *Disputatio philologico-theologica de facto hominis maledici et lege ea occasione lata, ad Lu. XXIV 11 - 16*, (Lugduni Batavorum 1706).

<sup>54</sup> Duchal, 'Appendix', *Sermon on... the... death of...Abernethy*, 43.



part of the cross-fertilisation of ideas that came there from across Europe.<sup>55</sup> In the same year as his graduation from Leiden Haliday was licensed for the ministry in Rotterdam, subscribing to the Westminster Confession as he did so.<sup>56</sup> He then went on to Switzerland to continue his studies there and may have studied at the University of Basel.<sup>57</sup>

He spent a couple years in an amazingly productive tour around the major theological centres of Europe and returned to Ireland with an album containing the autographs and complimentary remarks of nearly one hundred of Europe's leading Protestant theologians. This document is now lost but William Bruce, one of Haliday's successors in his Belfast church, had sight of it when it was in the possession of Haliday's grandson. He left a description of it:

It is a curious document, containing 96 complimentary attestations from some of the most learned men of that day, Professors and Divines, men of rank and title, and fellow students from various countries and different religions. Among these are the autographs of Professors and Pastors in Leyden, Utrecht, Neufchatel, Geneva, Zurich, Berne, Heidelberg, Basil, Lausanne, Rotterdam; in particular of Adrian Reland, John Alphonso Turretine, Witsius, Jac. Perizonius, John Frederick Ostervald, Benedict Pictet, J.J. Hottinger, Joh: Buxtorfius, trium Buxterfiorum Successor, Jacobus Hermannus, J.R. Ostervald, a nobleman from Alsace, and two of the family of De Salis. One is from a reformed Jesuit, a Minister in Zurich. To each is prefixed a motto in Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin, Italian, or French. Many of these insertions are in the usual style, extravagant and bombastic; but those by the most distinguished men indicate personal knowledge and esteem for his learning and abilities. Reland's motto is in Arabic: 'He who lives long, finds within himself what he would not wish to his worst enemy.' J.A. Turretine's in Greek, 'Follow Peace.' F. Fabricius' in Greek, 'Speak the truth in love.' Jac. Perizonius, 'Quaesita discamus, nondum inventa quaeramus.' J.F. Ostervald, Paul's exhortation to be of the same mind, &c. Pictet, 'Sorte contentus meliora opta.'<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> J.J. Woltjer, 'Introduction', *Leiden University*, Scheurleer and Meyjes (eds.), 1-19.

<sup>56</sup> Samuel Haliday, *Reasons Against the Imposition of Subscription To the Westminster Confession of Faith*, (Belfast 1724), vi.

<sup>57</sup> *RGSU*, 2, 9. Haliday's references were taken up by the General Synod of Ulster meeting on 20 June 1721 and included "testimonials from the Preby of Convoy, from Leiden, Rotterdam, Basil, and Geneva".

<sup>58</sup> W. Bruce, 'The Progress of Non-Subscription to Creeds', *Christian Moderator*, 8 (1826), 274. The *album amicorum* was a popular method used particularly by protestant theological students in the early eighteenth century to assemble the signatures and quotations of those they came into contact with in their travels around European centres of learning.



This album is testimony to both Haliday's abilities and, no doubt, his charm, skills which were to be used to good effect later in his career in both Scotland and London. However, they also indicate the theological change that this particular Glasgow graduate underwent. His time in the Swiss cantons certainly contributed to a broadening of his theological sentiments and by 1708 he decided to accept ordination whilst in Geneva precisely "because the Terms of Church-Communion there, are not narrowed by any human Impositions".<sup>59</sup> Indeed this time in Geneva seems to have been key in altering his own theological attitudes. Just over a century later William Bruce – who had access to all the now lost Haliday family papers - recorded this sea-change in his opinions: "Mr Haliday was a rigid Calvinist, when licensed at Rotterdam; but Mr. Miller, the Professor, under whom he studied there, was surprised to find him entirely changed on his return from Geneva."<sup>60</sup>

It is significant that it was his time in Geneva in the company of theologians there that changed his attitude to subscription. Of the theologians noticed by William Bruce from amongst the names in Haliday's album a number were based in Switzerland. Particularly worthy of note at this point are Jean-Frédéric Ostervald (1663-1747) and Bénédict Pictet (1655-1724). Ostervald was a close friend of Turretini who had studied at Geneva and was a senior pastor in Neuchâtel as well as a lecturer at the academy there. Like Turretini he was a vigorous opponent of the *Formula Consensus* although also a strong opponent of the spread of Socinian views in Geneva. An enthusiast for liturgical reform Ostervald also produced a catechism that became the standard in Geneva and very popular amongst Protestants in France, as well as the author of a French translation of the Bible which enjoyed wide popularity.<sup>61</sup> Pictet, professor of divinity at Geneva from 1686 until his death, is sometimes seen as a more conservative figure as he was an opponent of the removal of subscription to the *Formula Consensus*. However, Pictet, although older than him, was the cousin of Turretini and had been particularly close to his father, his own uncle. This may

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<sup>59</sup> Haliday, *Reasons Against... Subscription*, iv.

<sup>60</sup> Bruce, 'The Progress of Non-Subscription to Creeds', 273.

<sup>61</sup> Klauber, *Reformed Scholasticism*, 64-5, 148, 150-3. J.F. Ostervald, *La Sainte Bible, qui le vieux et le nouveau testament, c'est à dire l'ancienne et la nouvelle alliance*, (Amsterdam & Rotterdam 1724).

explain his loyalty to the *Formula Consensus*, for on other issues such as liturgical revision and the use of the Biblical critical methods of the Saumur academy Pictet was a supporter of what might be called Turretini's agenda of enlightened orthodoxy.<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, together with Turretini and Ostervald, Pictet was viewed with equal suspicion by the most prominent English dissenter in the early eighteenth century. Daniel Williams was crucial to the development and very existence of dissent in England and Ireland in the first decade of the eighteenth century as well as its relationship to Glasgow University. Williams followed in the 'middle way' of Richard Baxter<sup>63</sup> but he was still concerned about the influence of all three of these Swiss theologians. Williams was aware of the need for international co-operation between the reformed churches and of the necessity for establishing theological norms to preserve orthodox standards. He saw the Church of Scotland, as the established church of part of Britain, as absolutely central in providing this and, at a point when he was considering devoting his resources towards making Glasgow the hub of Presbyterian ministerial training in the British Isles, wrote to John Stirling, Principal of Glasgow University and a leading figure within the General Assembly in these terms:

I should be glad your venerable Assembly would fix some correspondence with the reformed churches abroad, for that might be as measures to prevent that Apostacy, which in the Cantons and Geneva is threatened by some late writing of Mr Pictet, Turretin and Osterwald.<sup>64</sup>

The "late writing" of this particular triumvirate probably included Pictet's *Théologie Chrétienne*,<sup>65</sup> first published in 1702, which drew on the work of Pierre Bayle to counteract the arguments of Spinoza,<sup>66</sup> and Ostervald's *Traité des sources de la corruption qui régné aujourd'hui parmi les chrétiens*, a work of 1700 which went into many subsequent editions in French, English and other

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<sup>62</sup> Klauber, *Reformed Scholasticism*, 140, 146-151.

<sup>63</sup> Bolam et al, *English Presbyterians*, 117-9

<sup>64</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 10 March 1709. GUL MS Gen 206/73.

<sup>65</sup> Bénédict Pictet, *La Théologie Chrétienne*, at *La Science du Salut, ou L'Exposition des veritez que Dieu a révélées aux Hommes dans la Sainte Ecriture*, new edition with corrections, 2 vols, (Geneva 1708).

<sup>66</sup> Klauber, *Reformed Scholasticism*, 67.



languages and argued for an approach to Christianity on a less doctrinal basis.<sup>67</sup> Williams was probably also only too well aware of Turretini's work in abrogating the *Formula Consensus*.

But there was no little irony in Williams's plea to Stirling to guard Glasgow and the Kirk against these three theologians as the influence of all three, and others like them, soon permeated Scotland and Glasgow University. Indeed Professor John Simson placed Pictet in an important place in his curriculum. It seems very likely that Simson had undertaken part of his theological education at Leiden, he certainly appears to have studied under Johannes à Marck (1656-1731)<sup>68</sup> and the condensed version of his *Compendium theologiae Christianae didactico-elenctium* was the main text used by Simson with his students,<sup>69</sup> Pictet was his secondary text.<sup>70</sup> He commended Pictet for being free of scholastic terms and valued his use of reason in theological discourse.<sup>71</sup> Indeed Pictet was a fixed part of his teaching throughout his career as divinity professor, as he told the presbytery when he came under scrutiny for alleged heresy:

Since I had the Honour to teach Divinity here, I have yearly explained Professor Mark's little Compend called his *Medulla*; and also some Chapters of Professor Pictet's little Compend, and among others that of the Doctrine of the Trinity; together with these, I yearly read over and explain our Confession of Faith, and compare the several Articles of it, with what is taught in the Latin System; some Mistakes in which I find reason to correct, by what is more clearly and exactly taught in our Confession.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> J.F. Ostervald, *Traité des sources de la corruption qui règne aujourd'hui parmi les chrétiens*, 2 volumes, (Amsterdam 1709).

<sup>68</sup> Skockylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 34. Simson's name does not appear in the matriculation list of Leiden students

<sup>69</sup> Johannes à Marck, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae Didactico Elenctium. Inmixitis Problematibus plurimis, et Questionibus Recentioribus adauctum*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Amsterdam 1690). The title of the condensed version was *Christianae Theologiae Medulla Didactico-Elenctica. Ex majore Opere, secundum ejus Capita et Paragraphos, expressa in usos primos Academiae Juventutis*, (Amsterdam 1696).

<sup>70</sup> Bénédicte Pictet, *Theologia Christianae* 2 vols (Geneva 1696). Skockylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 343.

<sup>71</sup> James Bromley (ed.), 'Correspondence of the Rev Peter Walkden. Letters from a Lancashire Student at Glasgow University During the Rebellion of 1715', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, (1884), 36, Liverpool 1887, 24. Skockylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 112.

<sup>72</sup> John Dundas (ed.), *State of the Processes depending against Mr John Simson Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow*, (Edinburgh 1728), 15-16.



Pictet remained on the curriculum not just in Simson's time but also throughout the time of William Leechman, his successor.<sup>73</sup> There is no doubt that Simson had imbibed the rationality and critical approach of Continental theologians during his time in Leiden and later in Utrecht. We do not know precisely who he may have come into contact with when in the Netherlands but it seems reasonable to suggest that they will have included those who were acquaintances of Turretini, such as Elie Saurin (1639-1703), pastor of French congregations at Delft and Utrecht, and an opponent of the traditional Calvinism of Pierre Jurieu (1637-1713) and Herman Röell (1653-1718), professor of theology successively at Franeker and Utrecht (from 1704) who laid particular stress on the use of reason alongside revelation.<sup>74</sup> If he didn't meet Röell he certainly would have been aware of his publications. Simson would have also been aware of the works of writers such as Turretini and Ostervald and incorporated much from the method of Continental theologians into his teaching.

But even if threads of Arminian and latitudinarian influence were making their way back to Glasgow and to dissenters in England and Ireland from within the Church of England and continental theologians, there were questions about the nature of subscription which had been asked from the inception of the reformed faith. Calvin himself held that the Confession could never rank with the Word of God. Calvin's Genevan Confession of Faith of 1536 had as its opening clause:

First we affirm that we desire to follow Scripture alone as rule of faith and religion, without mixing with it any other thing which might be devised by the opinion of men apart from the Word of God, and without wishing to accept for our spiritual government any other doctrine than what is conveyed to us by the same Word without addition or diminution, according to the command of our Lord.<sup>75</sup>

The creation of dissent in England and Ireland, particularly in its Presbyterian form, was something based on a rejection of governmental or

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<sup>73</sup> See *Lectures by William Leechman on Pictet's System of Theology, 1747*. Written by William Campbell, MS Gen 111 and *Lectures on Pictet's System of Theology, given in the University of Glasgow, by William Leechman, 1748*. Taken down by John McCaull, MS Gen 61.

<sup>74</sup> Klauber, *Reformed Scholasticism*, 59-60. Skoczylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 90-1.

<sup>75</sup> J. K. S. Reid (ed.), 'Calvin Theological Treatises', *The Library of Christian Classics*, vol. 22, (London 1954), 26-33.



hierarchical imposition on the rights of conscience. Such a basis always made it likely that questions would be asked about the fittingness of subscription. But the validity of the very notion of subscription to confessions of faith beyond the Bible itself was an explicit issue in the first non-Episcopal confession produced from within the reformed churches in the British Isles. The 18<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Scots Confession of 1560 expresses the view that the written Word of God expresses all things necessary to be believed for salvation and goes on:

The interpretation of Scripture, we confess, does not belong to any private or public person, nor yet to any Kirk for pre-eminence or precedence, personal or local, which it has above others, but pertains to the Spirit of God by whom the Scriptures were written. When controversy arises about the right understanding of any passage or sentence of Scripture, or for the reformation of any abuse within the Kirk of God, we ought not so much ask what men have said or done before us, as what the Holy Ghost uniformly speaks within the body of the Scriptures and what Christ Jesus Himself did and commanded. For it is agreed by all that the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of unity, cannot contradict Himself.<sup>76</sup>

But from almost this date onwards the Church of Scotland gradually moved towards a situation in which subscription was to be required. In 1567 a Church of Scotland *Petition to the Scottish Parliament* required a form of subscription to the heads of the Confession when necessary and between then and the mid-seventeenth century the issue of subscription emerged from time to time alongside the vicissitudes of the reformation and its aftermath. The National Covenant of 1638 brought with it the first formula of subscription in Scotland, in this case to the Scots Confession but in 1647 the General Assembly gave its approval to the Westminster Confession.<sup>77</sup> There continued to be some latitude in the matter of subscription until the Revolution when not only were the Covenants dropped but the Presbyterian reformed faith in Scotland came to be secured and defended by the Westminster Confession.

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<sup>76</sup> *The Scots Confession of 1560*, a modern translation by James Bulloch, (Edinburgh 1960), 16-17.

<sup>77</sup> James Cooper, *Confessions of Faith and Formulas of Subscription in the Reformed Churches of Great Britain and Ireland especially in the Church of Scotland*, (Glasgow 1907), 24-37.

From the time of the Revolution onwards the Westminster Confession became a central plank of the Presbyterian settlement. The approval given to the Westminster Confession by the General Assembly in 1647 became the basis for the legal enactment of the Confession as the theological standard of the nation. The Act of 1690 both ratified the Confession of Faith and established Presbyterian church government, it moved the position of the Confession from a purely church matter to one where it was legally established:

Likas they by these presents, ratify and establish the Confession of Faith now read in their presence, and voted and approven by them, as the public and avowed Confession of this Church, containing the sum and substance of the doctrine of the reformed Churches; which Confession of faith is subjoined to this present Act.<sup>78</sup>

In 1693 the *Act for Settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church* introduced the formal requirement of subscription in the form that:

No person be admitted, or continued for hereafter, to be a minister or preacher within this Church, unless that he, having first taken and subscribed the oath of allegiance, and subscribed the assurance in manner appointed by another Act of this present session of Parliament made thereanent, do also subscribe the Confession of faith, ratified in the foresaid fifth Act of the second session of this Parliament, declaring the same to be the confession of his faith, and that he owns the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine which he will constantly adhere to; as likewise, that he owns and acknowledges Presbyterian Church government as settled.<sup>79</sup>

This remained the legal basis for subscription to the Westminster Confession in Scotland from that time forward. In 1694 subscription was used as a method of receiving into communion those ministers who had formerly conformed to the Episcopal settlement. Further Acts of Parliament were even more unequivocal until the 1705 Act which extended the requirement for subscription to licentiates.<sup>80</sup> By the time of the Act of Union of 1707 the requirement for subscription was extended and guaranteed by the Act of

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<sup>78</sup> 'Act Ratifying the Confession of Faith and Settling Presbyterian Church Government, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1690'. *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland; AD MCXXIV-MDCCVII*, 12 vols, ([Edinburgh] 1814-75), 9,133-4.

<sup>79</sup> 'Act for Settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church, 12<sup>th</sup> June 1693', *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, 9, 303.

<sup>80</sup> Cooper, *Confessions of Faith*, 54-58. Innes, *The Law of Creeds in Scotland*, 80-81.



Security. This Act underlined the 1690 Act ratifying the Confession of Faith, and made it necessary for “Professors, Principals, Regents, Masters or others bearing office in any University, College, or school” to “acknowledge and profess, and....subscribe to the foresaid Confession of Faith, as the confession of their faith.” In addition no other “Oath, Test , or Subscription” should ever be required within Scotland, the whole Act being an irrevocable condition of the Union between the two kingdoms.<sup>81</sup>

The return of the Tories to power in England in 1710 brought increased pressure on the Church of Scotland as legislation was enacted that protected Episcopalians in Scotland, restored the rights of patrons and clamped down on the practice of occasional conformity by English dissenters. One response by the Kirk was the 1711 Act of the General Assembly *Concerning Probationers and settling Ministers, with Questions to be proposed to and Engagements to be taken of them* which produced the strictest formula of subscription yet devised in the second question to be put to candidates for licensing:

Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine of the Confession of faith, approven by the General Assemblies of this National Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, and frequently confirmed by divers Acts of Parliament since that time, to be the truths of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament? And do you own the whole doctrine therein contained as the confession of your faith? <sup>82</sup>

A similar question was put to ministers on ordination and this formula became the essential form of clerical subscription required in Scotland throughout the eighteenth century.

In neither Ireland nor England could subscription be required by law to the Westminster Confession. In both places legal subscription was based on Anglican articles. In England the refusal of non-conformists to subscribe the Anglican articles had created the whole community of dissent. The Toleration Act of 1689 had granted English dissenters a legal existence although this

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<sup>81</sup> ‘Act for Securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government, January 16, 1707. 1707 cap 6.’ *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, 11, 402-3.

<sup>82</sup> Cooper, *Confessions of Faith*, 61-63. Innes, *The Law of Creeds in Scotland*, 84-5, 103-105.

assumed their acceptance of thirty-six of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England.<sup>83</sup> By contrast there was no Toleration Act in Ireland until 1719, and this contained no mention of subscription in any form (the reference to this having been struck out, it was said, by George I himself).<sup>84</sup> In England the attitude of dissenters towards subscription at the end of the eighteenth century is amply summed up by the slightly contradictory article VIII of the 'Heads of Agreement' of the United Ministers of 1691. The article 'Of a Confession of Faith' read:

As to what appertains to soundness of judgment in matters of faith, we esteem it sufficient, that a church acknowledge the Scriptures to be the Word of God, the perfect and only rule of faith and practice; and own either the doctrinal part of those commonly called the Articles of the Church of England, or the Confession, or catechisms, Shorter or Larger, compiled by the Assembly at Westminster, or the Confession agreed on at the Savoy, to be agreeable to the said rule.<sup>85</sup>

So it was enough to acknowledge the primacy of Scripture whilst also owning that one of the three named confessions also asserted this.

In Ireland the Westminster Confession gradually assumed a more central position amongst Presbyterians. As has already been noted this followed the controversy surrounding Thomas Emlyn but from 1705 all students were required to own the Confession of Faith as the confession of their faith at licensing:

That such as are to be licens'd to preach the Gospel subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith to be the Confession of their Faith, & promise to adhere to the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government [sic] of this Church; as also those who are licens'd & have not subscrib'd, be oblig'd to subscribe before their being ordain'd among us: which was voted & unanimously approv'd.<sup>86</sup>

The close sense of fellowship with the Church of Scotland made Irish

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<sup>83</sup> Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters. From the Reformation to the French Revolution*, (Oxford 1978), 259.

<sup>84</sup> See Alexander Gordon, 'The Legal Status of Non-Subscription in Ireland', *The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian*, 77, November 1913, 3-6.

<sup>85</sup> 'Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers in and about London: formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational [1691]' in "*An Essay of Accommodation*", 11.

<sup>86</sup> *RGSU*, 1, 100.



Presbyterians strongly inclined to place greater emphasis on subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith and from this point onwards the question of subscription to the Confession became a central feature of the argument in Ireland.

## Chapter Two

“the weight and lustre of silver boxes”

*Glasgow and Edinburgh vie to attract English dissenting students*

On 26<sup>th</sup> June 1707 Isaac Bates wrote from “Madam Frenches in Hackney nere London” to James Wodrow Professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow “in the north of Great Britain”.<sup>1</sup> Bates, a graduate of Glasgow who had also studied theology at the university,<sup>2</sup> was writing on behalf of an unnamed friend who wanted to know more about Glasgow University and the possibility of educating students for the Protestant dissenting ministry at the University. Bates had a long list of quite detailed requests to make of the professor but the letter also held out a beguiling prospect for the University. His friend “would know a few things relating to your Colledge”:

First, He would have some account of its Foundation. Secondly, He would know whether conveniency could be made, that those comming from our parts of Great Britain might have their Diet within the Colledge. Thirdly, He would know whether you would be willing to builde some additional building to the Colledge, that those comming from our parts might all of em be together and have Chambers together. And if a great number from hence should come to you for Education, he desir'd to know this further, Whether they might not have a Minister from us to preach to them: this he thought might be a means to keep em from altering their Pronunciation.

If these requests could be met then Bates' unnamed friend was prepared to contribute the large sum of £500 to the University immediately, with more to follow on his death. The would-be benefactor had, Professor Wodrow was told,

a much better oppinion of Glasgow then of Edenburrow; it being a place where there is less danger of debauchery, stricter Discipline kept up, &c. And, sir: being somewhat acquainted with your Discipline, is one advantage which my Friend wisheth those that come from hence, may have.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isaac Bates to James Wodrow, 26 June 1707, GUL MS Gen 206/34.

<sup>2</sup> Isaac Bates *Anglus* matriculated at Glasgow on 16 February 1694 and commenced his theological studies on 27 November of the same year. *Munimenta*, 3, 154, 243. There is no record of his graduation although records are incomplete for this period and he later styled himself MA.

<sup>3</sup> Isaac Bates to James Wodrow, 26 June 1707, GUL MS Gen 206/34.



The mention of Edinburgh was not merely for the sake of comparison. Edinburgh was widely viewed, particularly within some Protestant dissenting circles, as a large capital city where all manner of vices flourished which could be a danger particularly to young students leaving home for the first time. But despite this the University certainly had a good reputation and was an equally likely destination for English dissenting students as Glasgow. What was more, Edinburgh was aware that there was likely to be an increased supply of students from England and had already sent William Scott, one of the regents,<sup>4</sup> to London to set up discussions with leading dissenters about the education of their students. Furthermore no less a person than William Carstares was also in town at the very same moment and likely to be canvassing support for his University.<sup>5</sup>

In fact the two institutions were about to engage in an almost unseemly competition for the open support of the English Presbyterian community. At this early stage Edinburgh was somewhat ahead of Glasgow, having sent both a regent and their principal down to London. Bates was anxious to get Glasgow involved on behalf of his unnamed benefactor but although he asked for “as little noise of this matter as can be” he did have the view that Glasgow “will stand the fairer for Interest”.<sup>6</sup> But still there was an urgent need for Principal Stirling to come to London to talk about the matter.

Bates was then in about the seventh year of his ministry to an afternoon congregation in Hackney and was to become one of the first trustees of the fund eventually set up by the anonymous would-be benefactor.<sup>7</sup> If Wodrow didn't already know who the potential benefactor was he could easily have guessed from the concluding paragraph that invited the Principal, when he came to

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<sup>4</sup> William Scott was a regent in Edinburgh from 1695 to 1707 and published a commentary on Grotius in 1707. He was subsequently professor of Greek from 1708 to 1729 and professor of moral philosophy from 1729 to 1734. See A. Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh during its First Three Hundred Years*, 2 vols, (London 1884), vol. 1, 233, 260; vol. 2, 322-3, 336. See also William Scott, London to William Carstares, 27 May 1707, EUL Dk. 1.1<sup>2</sup>/60-1.

<sup>5</sup> Isaac Bates to James Wodrow, 26 June 1707, GUL MS Gen 206/34.

<sup>6</sup> Isaac Bates to James Wodrow, 26 June 1707, GUL MS Gen 206/34.

<sup>7</sup> Walter D. Jeremy, *The Presbyterian Fund and Dr Daniel Williams's Trust: With Biographical Notes of the trustees, and Some Account of their Academies, Scholarships and Schools* (London & Edinburgh 1885), 115.

London, to talk to Daniel Williams, “M[iniste]r of the Gospel living at Hogsden”.

Williams was one of the leaders of the dissenting community in London. He had been born at or near Wrexham in 1643 at the start of the civil war, his family being strong supporters of Parliament and the Presbyterians. It was no surprise then that at the age of about 20 he decided to enter the Presbyterian ministry. He couldn't have done so at a more difficult time with the return of Charles II and the ensuing Act of Uniformity creating a community of religious dissent.

Williams began his ministerial career in Ireland as domestic chaplain to the Countess of Meath and preached for a time in Drogheda to a congregation that was a survival of one established by Cromwell's garrison. In 1667 he commenced a 20 year ministry at Wood Street, Dublin – one of the main nonconformist congregations in the Irish capital, marrying, in 1675, Elizabeth Juxon, the widowed sister of the Countess of Meath. A move to London came in 1687 when he became co-pastor of the Presbyterian congregation at Haberdashers Hall, two years later becoming minister of the congregation meeting in Hand Alley, Bishopsgate. In 1687 he opposed the indulgence offered by James II telling his ministerial colleagues:

That as it was past Doubt, that the Severities of the former reign upon Protestant Dissenters, were rather as they stood in the Way of arbitrary Power, than for their Religious Dissent; so it were better for them to be reduc'd to their former Hardships, than declare for measures destructive of the Liberties of their Country.<sup>8</sup>

This immediately brought him to a position of leadership amongst the London dissenters and after the accession of William and Mary he became a trusted advisor to the King and the acknowledged leader of the nonconformists in the English capital. According to a posthumous memoir generally attributed to Daniel Defoe, at this time his house was

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<sup>8</sup> John Evans, *A Funeral Sermon Occasion'd by the much Lamented Death of the late Reverend Daniel Williams, DD who deceas'd January the 26<sup>th</sup> 1715/1716*, (London 1716), 43.



a meer Court of requests, and he was the general Agent for the Cause of God with the Sons of Men. Nothing of Great Concern could be acted without him, every thing that no body could do, was brought to him...he was...the only Man of Weight, with whom the Publick maintain'd any Correspondence in the Cause of the Dissenters.<sup>9</sup>

Williams had hoped for a more comprehensive religious settlement than that which eventually emerged. Nevertheless he was a valued adviser to the King, particularly on Irish affairs. The King was said to have had

his Character better than some who thought they knew him more intimately, and his Majesty took care not to want the Advantage of his Judgment in the Irish Affairs, and especially his extraordinary knowledge of Persons, the strength of Interests, Places and Parties in Ireland.<sup>10</sup>

His first wife died in 1698 and three years later he married another widow, Jane Barkstead, the daughter of George Guill, a Huguenot refugee merchant. As neither union produced any children this meant that he had, by the time of his death, a considerable estate which he desired to dispose of wisely for the good of his dissenting brethren in both England and Ireland. Or, as his funeral oration put it, "He was posses'd by the Bounty of Providence of a considerable Share of worldly Substance: Which with his large Acquaintance and diffusive Influence, gave him Advantages for Usefulness beyond many of his Brethren."<sup>11</sup>

John Evans, a fellow Welshman and his assistant at Hand Alley from 1704, praised him in his funeral sermon for his encouragement to those intending to enter the ministry in both England and Ireland:

The same Love to his Master's Interest, which spirited him to so much Zeal in his own Ministerial Work, induced him to encourage the Prophets, and the younger Generation of Ministers. No man was a more

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<sup>9</sup> [Daniel Defoe], *Memoirs of the Life and Eminent Conduct of that Learned and Reverend Divine, Daniel Williams, DD with some account of his scheme for the vigorous Propagation of Religion, as well in England as in Scotland and several other Parts of the World. Address'd to Mr Peirce* (London 1718), 14.

<sup>10</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of...Daniel Williams*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> Evans, *Funeral Sermon*, 34-5.

candid Hearer of their Publick Performances, or more glad of an Opportunity to help 'em forward into usefulness.<sup>12</sup>

This was no eulogistic exaggeration. Williams was deeply involved in training for the ministry and actively supportive of individuals preparing for training both by direct giving and by his development of schemes and funds to help students for the ministry.

Williams seems to have had no formal education himself but was largely self-taught, blessed by nature with

an unusual Genius. He had a copious Invention, a penetrating Judgment, a faithful memory, and vigorous Affections. These were cultivated by much Thought and diligent reading. His Mind was capable of the closest Application; and could easily dive into Points of no small Difficulty.<sup>13</sup>

Inevitably the difficulties of the restoration period put paid to any opportunities for formal ministerial education that Williams and his generation might have had. However, his colleagues in the ministry were very largely ejected ministers who had previously been educated in the university system. The awareness of this loss of formal academic training to his generation of dissenting ministers was one of the motivations that led him to expend so much energy in establishing a regular system for educating candidates for the ministry. He was never entirely satisfied with what was offered by way of education by the English dissenting academies.<sup>14</sup>

As one of the links between dissenters in England and Ireland Williams was particularly useful to those who had to flee from Ireland to England.<sup>15</sup> But Williams was also a main link between the dissenters and Glasgow University. After the initial correspondence between Bates and Wodrow a regular correspondence ensued between Principal Stirling and Daniel Williams which amounted to no fewer than 26 still extant letters.<sup>16</sup> Stirling was clearly someone

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<sup>12</sup> Evans, *Funeral Sermon*, 40-1.

<sup>13</sup> Evans, *Funeral Sermon*, 34.

<sup>14</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of...Daniel Williams*, 77.

<sup>15</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of...Daniel Williams*, 5-10.

<sup>16</sup> Stirling Letters, GUL Special Collections MS Gen 206, MS Gen 207.



that Williams trusted and was willing to confide in, undoubtedly too he felt that there was a tremendous advantage for English dissenters to maintain a close connection with someone who was not only principal of the University but a leading opinion former in the Church of Scotland. Bates' letter was received with evident pleasure by the Faculty in Glasgow who recorded that "the motion deserves to be entertain'd and encouraged" and recommended that the Principal arrange meetings with both Bates and Williams next time he was in London and initiate a regular correspondence with the London ministers.<sup>17</sup>

Williams's career had reached its peak before the fissures between subscribers and non-subscribers had appeared yet his role really foreshadows some of those divisions. He was a moderate Calvinist in his theological views, establishing a close friendship with Richard Baxter before his death in 1691. In Dublin he had ministered at the leading dissenting church in the city and had at the very end of his ministry Joseph Boyse as assistant, who, while remaining unimpeachably orthodox, was to lead the Presbyterians in the south of Ireland into a non-subscribing position. One of the architects of the short-lived 'Happy Union' between Presbyterians and Independents in England in 1690 Williams saw that accommodation quickly dissolve and then himself became the target of attacks from Calvinist minded Independents. This was because of his opposition to the re-publication of Tobias Crisp's sermons, *Christ Alone Exalted*, which were viewed by Williams and others as being antinomian. Williams stated his position in *Gospel Truth Stated* and *A Defence of 'Gospel Truth'*<sup>18</sup> but found himself at the centre of a series of controversies, being accused first of immorality and then of Socinianism. On both of these charges he was eventually exonerated but this kind of division – between those of 'moderate' views concerned about the effects of an aggressive Calvinism developing into an ungovernable antinomianism on the one hand, and the staunch upholders of Calvinism on the other – presaged in some ways the later divisions between non-subscribers and subscribers as the eighteenth century progressed. The argument was essentially the same as that which was to develop around the preaching of Samuel de la Rose in Cheshire in 1718 and the contemporary disagreements in

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<sup>17</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol. 20) 3 July 1707, 46, GUA 26632.

<sup>18</sup> First published in 1692 and 1693 respectively.

Scotland over the 'Marrow Men' when Thomas Boston and his supporters reprinted the seventeenth century *Marrow of Modern Divinity*.<sup>19</sup>

Whilst in Dublin Williams also had Gilbert Rule as his assistant from 1682 to 1687. Rule had had a varied career up to the time of his appointment in Dublin. He had been a regent in the University of Glasgow before being appointed sub-Principal in King's College, Aberdeen in 1651. A later move to the dissenting ministry in Alnwick, Northumberland sometime in the late 1650s was followed by ejection in 1662. A period of illegal preaching in Edinburgh resulted in his arrest and imprisonment from which he was released on condition that he left Scotland. Rule then travelled in France and the Netherlands, studied medicine at Leiden, and subsequently practised medicine in Berwick upon Tweed before receiving his call to Dublin. At the time of the revolution he came back to Edinburgh, to Old Greyfriars Church, in 1689, and was appointed principal of Edinburgh University in the following year.<sup>20</sup> From Rule Williams acquired his great respect for the Presbyterianism of the Church of Scotland as well as, it would seem, his admiration for the Scottish Universities, particularly Glasgow. Williams wrote to John Stirling in March 1709 expressing the opinion that "the discipline of your church is that which Christ did institute, and best subserves the purposes of his kingdom," and, two months later, he observed "I'm persuaded the Ch[urch] of Scotland most answers the gospel Constitution; so I apprehend, your Society is best circumstantiated for the Education of Persons, design'd for the Ministry."<sup>21</sup> In his preference for Glasgow University and his desire to see some special relationship develop between English dissenters and that University Williams never wavered.

John Stirling was Principal at Glasgow for twenty-seven years from 1701. His period in office was marked by an often high-handed if not draconian response to staff or student unrest but also by many areas of institutional progress. He had been minister first at Inchinnan and then at Greenock before

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<sup>19</sup> *Cheshire Classis*, 66, 167. Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology from John Knox to John McLeod Campbell*, (Edinburgh 1996), 204-222.

<sup>20</sup> A. Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh during its first three hundred years*, 2 vols, (London 1884), 2, 256-8.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 10 March 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/73. Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 21 May 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/76.



being presented by the King on 8 May 1701 on the recommendation of Sir John Maxwell, the rector.<sup>22</sup> A close friend of Robert Wodrow, he regularly travelled to Edinburgh to church commissions and the general assembly with him as well as frequently assisting at communion in Eastwood. Nevertheless Wodrow's estimation of the man in terms of his contribution to the life of the Kirk is probably accurate in so far as it points out his undoubtedly high profile:

He was weel seen in the discipline of our Church, and once Moderator of the Assembly; and when he was Moderator our form of process was passed by the Assembly, in which he had a good share. He was a person of great weight in our Synods, Commissions, and Assemblies.<sup>23</sup>

It was this background, as well as his principalship, that made him so important to dissenters outside of Scotland, especially to Daniel Williams. For his part Stirling was well disposed towards dissenters in other parts of the British Isles. In the case of Ireland there was a very close relationship between the Irish Presbyterians and the Church of Scotland. The Presbyterian Church there was a daughter church of the Kirk and had many close ties of kinship and personnel as well as a close institutional affinity. A cousin of Stirling was minister of Ballykelly in county Tyrone from 1699 until his death in 1752. This John Stirling was a student at Glasgow who had subsequently studied divinity there, he became moderator of the general synod of Ulster in 1725 (the year the subscription crisis reached its peak). Another cousin, Thomas, was minister at Dervock, county Antrim until his death in 1718. He had succeeded their father, Robert, principal Stirling's uncle, who was minister in both Dervock and Stevenston, Ayrshire.<sup>24</sup> Such close family relationships were not uncommon between Ireland and Scotland. James Kirkpatrick of Templepatrick and later Belfast described the source of the Irish dissenters' difficulties with the established church as being because they were "under a Generall Suspicion of being in a Scotch interest, for which I know no reason, but that we are Scotsmen

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<sup>22</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 185. J.D. Mackie, *The University of Glasgow 1451 – 1951. A Short History* (Glasgow 1954), 153.

<sup>23</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 445.

<sup>24</sup> John Stirling, Ballykelly to John Stirling, 3 January 1725. Stirling Letters, GUL Special Collections MS Gen 207/127. *Munimenta*, 3, 152, 244. James McConnell (ed.), *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church 1613-1840*, (Belfast 1951), 50, 122. 'Theological Education in the Old Days', *Irish Presbyterian*, 15, No.11, n.s., (November 1909), 172.

and Presbyterians too, two great evils in the eyes of our enemies especially when centred in the same persons.”<sup>25</sup> In England this relationship between the Kirk and dissent might have been less close. As the largest dissenting group in England Presbyterians had developed an institutional form that was quite distinct from that of Scotland or Ireland and their position as a dissenting minority within the English nation might have made it politically inexpedient for the Church of Scotland to cultivate too close a relationship. Yet these differences did not reduce the sense of fellow feeling for English Presbyterians by Scottish churchmen and academics such as Stirling, who had been made moderator of the general assembly just shortly before Williams had first made contact with him. When he travelled south he regularly stayed with dissenters, sometimes preaching in their meeting-houses, other times attending their worship. So, for instance, we know that Stirling stayed with dissenters at Ellenthorp Hall in Yorkshire in 1708 and attended dissenting worship at Thirsk on the same visit.<sup>26</sup> On the way to London in the spring or early summer of 1714 Stirling called on Charles Owen in Warrington, a Glasgow graduate and the founder of the first dissenting academy in that town.<sup>27</sup> In the following year Stirling stayed amongst the dissenting community in Coventry on the way to London.<sup>28</sup> All the evidence suggests that on his visits to London to attend court Stirling accepted the hospitality of English Presbyterians, listening to their concerns and joining in their worship. The importance of English dissent to the Church of Scotland at this time can further be seen in the extensive correspondence that took place between Stirling and John Shute Barrington. After Daniel Williams Barrington was Stirling’s most regular English correspondent.<sup>29</sup> Barrington, later Viscount Barrington, was one of the leading dissenting laymen in London, in time becoming one of the lay members of the Committee of the Three Denominations, and an activist and author for dissenting rights.<sup>30</sup> In 1705 he had been appointed by the government as an agent to win support for the scheme of the union of the two kingdoms and

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<sup>25</sup> James Kirkpatrick, Templepatrick to John Stirling, 19 November 1704, GUL MS Gen 207/118.

<sup>26</sup> James Taylor, Ellenthorp Hall near Borrowbridge to John Stirling, 1 October 1717, GUL MS Gen 207/83.

<sup>27</sup> Charles Owen, Warrington to John Stirling, 29 July 1714, GUL MS Gen 207/8.

<sup>28</sup> E. Latham, Caldwell near Burton upon Trent to John Stirling, 19 October 1715, GUL MS Gen 207/59.

<sup>29</sup> There are nineteen letters in the Stirling Letters.

<sup>30</sup> Bolam et al, *English Presbyterians*, 158-9. Arthur H. Grant, ‘Barrington, John Shute, first Viscount Barrington,’ rev. Philip Carter, *ODNB*, article/1531.



in November 1706 had told Stirling how English dissenting support for the union had earned the pleasure of the Queen who told a London dissenter: "That she had heard that some Dissenters who were or had been in Scotland had shew'd a great deal of zeal for the Union which she took very kindly; as she was well pleas'd to hear that all the Protestant Dissenters earnestly desird it."<sup>31</sup>

This was one way in which dissenters were attempting to secure their position in Queen Anne's reign. Mainstream leaders of the Church of Scotland, such as Stirling, who were prepared to work with them offered an opportunity for this. Especially for Daniel Williams, Glasgow University was an institution that could be of immense value to his denomination.

However, before anything concrete could be developed between the dissenters in England and Glasgow University there was a lot that had to be agreed, not least amongst the dissenters themselves. Prior to having made contact with Daniel Williams Stirling appears to have written to William Tong. Tong was a Lancashire born Presbyterian minister who had commenced his ministry preaching in Cheshire, Shropshire and North Wales. Here he had struck up a close friendship with Matthew Henry and established a reputation for organisational skill. In 1690 he had taken over the conduct of the academy in Coventry until he was elected minister of the Salters' Hall congregation, probably the wealthiest and most prominent congregation in London, in April 1702. He was to become one of the original trustees of Dr Williams's trust and was made a member of the board of the Presbyterian Fund within a year of coming to London.<sup>32</sup> He must already have been known to Stirling prior to the summer of 1707 because on 14 July he wrote in reply to a letter from the Glasgow principal, filling him in on the background to Isaac Bates' letter and revealing the extent of the divisions within the London dissenting community:

I find our Bretheren to whom I have communicated the Contents of yours are very Unanimous in their general Designe of sending our Youth to be educated in some of your Learned Universities, but there are some

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<sup>31</sup> J. Shute, Tofts, Essex to John Stirling, 18 November 1706, GUL MS Gen 206/20.

<sup>32</sup> Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 33. David L. Wykes, 'Tong William (1662-1727)', *ODNB*, article/27534.

difficulties that at present embarrass us, and will not permitt us to come to a speedy resolution. One is a particular (not to say a partial) affection that some amongst us have for some one University above the rest. We all agree to apply our maine Interest to one Place, that so we may [be] able to make that place the more inviteing both to Tutors & Students, to divide our Force will be to enervate and render it ineffectual to our designe. Edinborough & Glasgow are I think the onely Competitors tho' some of our Friends have spoken much in praise of the good Literature at St Andrews; those things have occasioned some debates, and how they will issue I am not able to conjecture, but we are very thankfull for the kind intimations you have given us of your ready Concurrence with us in this affair.<sup>33</sup>

The inability to agree on one University was one problem for the dissenters in England but they were also concerned at the apparent reluctance of their Scottish co-religionists to share in their enthusiasm for the Union of the two countries. As Tong told Stirling:

But there is another thing that gives us much greater discouragement, and yet we hope a little time will help us over it, I mean that Strange Dissatisfaction that remaines amongst You about the Union of the two Kingdomes; a thing which We here have expresst a great Fondness for.<sup>34</sup>

The expressions of reluctance about the Union from some quarters of the Kirk were deeply troubling to many English Presbyterians. "It is very Surprizeing" wrote Tong "to hear that our Bretheren in your part of the Country should think their Religious Interests weakned & exposed by your Union with England." The Union was something they should share in celebrating: "We promise our Selves that by that time....the Parliament of great Britaine has mett, all your Jealousies will vanish & wear off, & you will rejoice with us, that God has made us one Nation in the mountaines of Israel."

But even if concerns about the Union in Scotland could be overcome amongst the dissenters in England there still remained the problem of the serious divisions amongst the London ministers as to which University to support, which was compounded by the great variety of attitudes and approaches to education held by Presbyterians across the country. Ministers who eked out a precarious

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<sup>33</sup> William Tong, London to John Stirling, 14 July 1707, GUL MS Gen 206/35.

<sup>34</sup> William Tong, London to John Stirling, 14 July 1707, GUL MS Gen 206/35.



existence by running a small academy in their home for candidates for the ministry would not necessarily see a complete shift of emphasis towards Glasgow as a welcome step. Local communities that had struggled to maintain some degree of educational training against all the odds might not feel ready to surrender all this to a university in Scotland, especially when there seemed to be a strong degree of equivocation in the Scottish Church towards the Union. Before the end of 1707 Stirling had travelled to London. On his return he reported

That he had conversed with Mr Williams, and severall others, and that he found the said Mr Williams very well inclined to contribute Liberally both now and at his death for encourageing the said design, but that he understood from him and others, that they were willing to see the Effects of this Session of parliament, and how the two Nations Coalesce before they proceed any further.<sup>35</sup>

Daniel Williams was completely fixed upon Glasgow, telling Stirling in March 1709 that Glasgow now had the interest from £500, although Williams had lost nearly £400 which he had earmarked for Glasgow and put on deposit with a London goldsmith. But although he was determined that Glasgow should benefit financially whatever his own difficulties he was more frustrated by the activities of his brethren:

I must also add that my project as to your University, has with others been much hindred by so many proposalls thence comeing together, as the books, that also of propagateing Christian knowledge. Some being for one thing, some for another, and more peopl are ready to make the number of the demands an excuse to do nothing; than glad of an oportunity to do more good by contributeing to each of these good occasions.<sup>36</sup>

In fact the pro-Edinburgh lobby amongst the London dissenters had been first off the mark in this project by some way and to some extent it was Williams himself who was adding to the confusion by trying to divert the interest to Glasgow. As early as 5 March 1706 Christopher Taylor, a former Edinburgh student and London minister, had written to William Carstares in the heady

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<sup>35</sup> Minutes of Faculty (Vol 20) 25 December 1707, 46, GUA 26632.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 10 March 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/73.

period after the approval of the Act of Union by parliament and made some startling claims.

We are Contriving how to make your University at Edinburgh the mother of all our Party, by Putting down all our Private Accademyes In England, And to send all to you. To which we are Induced by your Being the Principall of It, And so very Good and Ingeniouse a man as Mr William Law, Having so great an Hand In the management of It.<sup>37</sup>

Although he was a significant figure within London dissent and someone “who was generally consulted in their affairs, and was never wanting in their interests,”<sup>38</sup> the suggestion that, even if all the ministers in London had been united in their determination to send all students for the ministry to Edinburgh, then they could induce all the private academies in England to close, was no more than wishful thinking on Taylor’s part. Between 1690 and 1740 no fewer than fifty-eight academies of various shapes and sizes had been founded in England. Many of these trained only a handful of students and a large proportion of them lasted only a few years but in 1706 there were at least ten in operation up and down the country.<sup>39</sup> But there was no authority within dissent that could close any single one of them apart from the individual who had founded each of them.

But Carstares’ presence as principal was, as Taylor indicated, a major attraction to the English dissenters. William Law, who was a regent at Edinburgh from 1690 and professor of moral philosophy from 1708 to 1729,<sup>40</sup> also had a high reputation as a scholar, and may also have been a personal friend of Taylor’s. William Carstares (1649-1715), however, was one of the leaders of the Church of Scotland, had been a close confidant and adviser to the King and was a particularly appealing figure to the dissenters. A son of the manse (his father had been forced to flee to Ireland in 1664) he was educated at Edinburgh and Utrecht. In the Netherlands he was probably ordained but also was introduced to William of Orange for whom he became an agent in London and as a consequence was

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<sup>37</sup> Christopher Taylor, London to William Carstares, 5 March 1706, EUL Dk. 1.1<sup>2</sup>/50.

<sup>38</sup> Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses, in London, Westminster, and Southwark*, 4 vols, (London 1808-14), 4, 395.

<sup>39</sup> Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 12-13.

<sup>40</sup> Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh*, 2, 335-6.



arrested in September 1674. After five years he was released and visited Ireland before becoming pastor to a Presbyterian congregation at Theobalds in Hertfordshire. Carstares continued to be involved in conspiracies on behalf of William and was again arrested and this time tortured. On his return from imprisonment at the end of 1684 he again returned to the Netherlands and took up a position as chaplain to Prince William in Leiden and minister of the Scots Kirk there, sailing with him to Torbay in November 1688 when the expedition that led to William's taking the throne set off. Once in London he became a chief adviser to the King, particularly on Scottish affairs, and a loyal and trusted ally. Throughout William's reign Carstares had acted in his service and to safeguard the position of the Kirk. On William's death he returned to Scotland to succeed Gilbert Rule as principal of Edinburgh University in May 1703. Back in Scotland he was at the very centre of University reform and church life becoming moderator of the General Assembly on no less than four occasions. At the centre of an extended network of family members and relatives by marriage he was related to both John Stirling and William Dunlop, Stirling's predecessor as principal of Glasgow, as well as many of the professors at both Universities. He inaugurated an era of University reform in Scotland, doing away with the regenting system in Edinburgh and introducing some new professorships. A great enthusiast for the Union Carstares was the pre-eminent Scottish churchman of his day with a knowledge and appreciation of the situation of the English dissenters as well as a desire to see them brought into the orbit of his University.<sup>41</sup>

Sharing the same appreciation of the Revolution settlement and of the Union Carstares saw the acceptance of large numbers of English students into Edinburgh University as part of his programme of reform. They would help cement relationships, bring in a useful source of income and act as a counterbalance to Jacobitism. He must have been personally known to Daniel Williams and certainly they had corresponded on political matters before Williams commenced his correspondence with Stirling. Nevertheless Williams does not appear to have been well-disposed towards Edinburgh.

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<sup>41</sup> A.I. Dunlop, *William Carstares and the Kirk by Law Established*, (Edinburgh 1967). Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh*, 1, 259-64. Tristram Clarke, 'Carstares, William', *ODNB*, article/4777.

Christopher Taylor, however, was more than eager to promote the claims of Edinburgh. In his initial letter to Carstares he had admitted that some had proposed Glasgow but claimed that “truly the Carriage of that people of Late, took off all that design Immediately.”<sup>42</sup> This is probably a reference to the very public dispute between two of the regents and John Stirling in 1704.<sup>43</sup> However, he went on not only to propose the closing of all the academies in England but had identified the exact space in Edinburgh where an English College could be built:

We propose To Build all that part Betwixt your House and the Gate that goes Backward, Fronting the Library Into fine Appartmts, If we may have due Incouragemt. This Is But In the Embrio, as yet, and therefore I would have none know It but Mr Law, till I communicate to you further proposalls.<sup>44</sup>

Alexander Bower, the early nineteenth century historian of Edinburgh University was of the opinion that this proposal had come from Carstares himself,<sup>45</sup> but clearly the initial idea had come from Taylor and had developed from discussions that had been held amongst ministers in London in late 1705 or early 1706.

Taylor had further suggestions to make:

One of our Proposals to you I find will be This, that there be a tutor allowed In your university to keepe the English language Pure, and to Regulate the Pronunciation of those English that we shall send, to Be Bred up for the ministry; we propose also for Gentlethens sons, masters in some of the manly Exercises, such as Riding fencing &c. And if you and we can Form a scheme, as Large as we at present project, we Hope to see Edinburgh University one of the finest in Europe, Except Oxford and Cambridge, which yet will sensibly decline in numbers, tho: their Revenues should Continue.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Christopher Taylor, London to William Carstares, 5 March 1706, EUL Dk. 1.1<sup>2</sup>/50.

<sup>43</sup> See Answers for the Facultie of the Colledge of Glasgow to two Protestations made and Given in by Mr Carmichael and Mr Lowdown. Jany 27<sup>th</sup> 1704. At a Facultie-meeting that day, EUL Dk. 1.1<sup>2</sup>/35-6 and p. 152 of this thesis.

<sup>44</sup> Christopher Taylor, London to William Carstares, 5 March 1706, EUL Dk. 1.1<sup>2</sup>/50.

<sup>45</sup> Alexander Bower, *The History of the University of Edinburgh*, 3 vols (Edinburgh 1817-30), 2, 47-8.

<sup>46</sup> Christopher Taylor, London to William Carstares, 5 March 1706, EUL Dk. 1.1<sup>2</sup>/50.



This was a remarkably visionary plan and it is fascinating to speculate on how religious life in Britain would have developed if they had managed to establish an English dissenters' college in Edinburgh or Glasgow at this point. But by the time the representative of Edinburgh University had gone to London to explore the matter further, at the same time the Union was about to come into operation, they discovered that such grandiose plans were rather further from reality than they might have seemed and even if they had a mind to facilitate the plan, because of the attitude of Daniel Williams and Glasgow graduates such as Isaac Bates, they were now in competition with Glasgow. In May 1707 William Scott had at least two meetings with Williams and told Carstares that he "seems to be better inclined towards us than at first and I do believe a letter from you would make him entirely ours." This was overly optimistic but his assessment of the general situation was more realistic:

I have also been with some others of the brethren who seem all very fond of this new project. I have again and again desired them to make a scheme of their design and adventured to promise them a ready concil[*paper torn*]e upon our p[art? *paper torn*]. But I find them divided into so many [*paper torn*] parties that I [*paper torn ?fear*]e it will not be easie to make them come to any resolution in this matter and I think I may venture to say it without you undertake the management of it your self it will turn to like account. I design to wait upon some of the most leading men amongst them before I part from this & leave the best impressions with them I can.<sup>47</sup>

Carstares took this suggestion from his regent and soon to be appointed professor of Greek seriously enough to travel to London within a month to set up meetings with the leading figures of London dissent.<sup>48</sup> No doubt his presence helped to promote activity on the part of the ministers, although it did not produce agreement amongst them. Stirling was also in London shortly after Carstares and stayed for some months, from July to December.<sup>49</sup> The new political realities as well as the continuing need to lobby the monarch made prolonged visits to London essential, and Stirling also spent six months in

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<sup>47</sup> William Scott, London to William Carstares, 27 May 1707, EUL Dk. 1.1<sup>2</sup>/60-1.

<sup>48</sup> Isaac Bates to James Wodrow, 26 June 1707, GUL MS Gen 206/34.

<sup>49</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20) 18 February 1709, 54, GUA 26632.

London during 1708. In February 1708 Daniel Williams was still telling John Stirling:

My purpose remaineth to do what I declared to encourage your University, upon its concurrence in whats preparatory to my successful attempt with others; and hope you remember what I mentiond and are disposing things accordingly, tho' I am forced to stand still dureing the Session.<sup>50</sup>

By the end of 1708 Glasgow University had agreed to a plan with Daniel Williams that would establish a linkage between the University and English dissent. This was for a "Tutor to the English youth at this university, who under the care of the masters might take inspection of their proficiency and morals, and from time to time inform the masters thereof." The tutor was to receive £10 sterling per annum, paid by Williams, with an assurance that more money could be found for additional tutors if the numbers of students increased. As a result they appointed William Dalgleish, a student in divinity, to be the tutor to the English students of philosophy and philology, working under the direction of the masters of the University.<sup>51</sup> Dalgleish had been admitted to the University in March 1706, into the second class under the tuition of Gershom Carmichael, of his six fellow students four were Irish. He graduated on 27 June 1707 and had been admitted as a divinity student in the following January, along with nine other students including two from England and Robert McBride, the son of a Belfast minister who was to return to ministry in the north of Ireland.<sup>52</sup> Precisely how many English students there were at Glasgow at the time cannot be known but between 1704 and 1708 a total of eleven English students had been matriculated at the university and a further four matriculated in 1709.<sup>53</sup>

Glasgow, through the determination of Daniel Williams, had managed to get ahead of Edinburgh in the race to attract students from south of the border. But the prize in both universities was perceived to be much greater and both now became even more pro-active in their attempts to cement a closer relationship

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<sup>50</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 24 February 1708, GUL MS Gen 206/51.

<sup>51</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20) 22 December 1708, 52, GUA 26632.

<sup>52</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 174, 185, 43, 250.

<sup>53</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 180-94.



with English nonconformists. The month of May 1709 saw a sudden rash of awards of the degree of Doctor of Divinity to English ministers. In Glasgow the Faculty met on 10 May and determined to write to Daniel Williams to thank him for what he had done for the university.

The Faculty appoints a Letter of Thanks subscrib'd by all the members to be sent to him as soon as can be, withal shewing him, that we had not wanted some hope of seeing him here, when we would have more fully testified our respects by conferring on him the Doctorat in Divinity, but if he gave us no ground to hope for a visit, we would without delay send him a Diploma for that Degree.<sup>54</sup>

This letter was sent immediately but less than a week had passed before the Faculty met again to consider the same matter and to take more action.

This day the Faculty considering that tho they had ordered the Letter mention'd sederunt May 10<sup>th</sup> to be sent to Mr Williams, and that the same was accordingly Dispatch'd, yet it might be convenient not to wait for his return, Doe therefore order a Diploma constituting him (the said Mr Williams) Doctor in Divinity to be drawn, And do hereby promot him to the Doctorat in Divinity.<sup>55</sup>

The reason for this hasty change of plan was undoubtedly the news that Edinburgh had awarded the same degree to him. In fact as soon as Williams had received the first letter sent on 10 May 1709 he had written back declining the offer, although this had arrived after they had already dispatched the diploma to him.<sup>56</sup> But not only was Williams being honoured in this way, so too was another principal figure in London dissent, Edmund Calamy. Just the day after awarding the DD to Daniel Williams the Glasgow faculty met again and noted that Edmund Calamy had been given the same degree, this time by the King's College, Aberdeen. "Considering that he is a person of great merit" the faculty duly appointed "a Diploma ad Eundem to be given him," at the same time as a doctorate in Law be given to John Cuming, professor of ecclesiastical history at

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<sup>54</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20), 10 May 1709, 56, GUA 26632.

<sup>55</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20), 16 May 1709, 56, GUA 26632.

<sup>56</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 21 May 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/76. Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares, 18 June 1709, EUL La. II 407/7.

Edinburgh, who had been honoured by Aberdeen with this award at the same time as Calamy.<sup>57</sup>

In fact, as they were meeting on 17 May, Calamy was continuing on a tour of Scotland during which he received the degree of DD from Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Curiously nowhere in the Faculty minutes do they mention the award of a degree by Edinburgh. This overlooking by Glasgow of the award by Edinburgh – whether deliberate or accidental - was to be a source of friction between the two universities before long.

Edmund Calamy (1671-1732) was born in London, the son and grandson of ejected ministers and was a celebrated historian of nonconformity. Prepared for the ministry from an early age he studied at the University of Utrecht from 1688 to 1691. Prior to their concentration on the Scottish Universities the Dutch Universities had been popular destinations for English and also Irish students.<sup>58</sup> At the time Carstares was in Utrecht there were many students from both England and Scotland and here he first met and established a friendship with William Carstares who had come back to the University to seek new professors for Edinburgh, on a number of occasions inviting Calamy to take up a post there.<sup>59</sup> In 1694 he was ordained a Presbyterian minister as the assistant at the Blackfriars congregation, moving to be Daniel Williams's assistant at Hand Alley the following year. Here he remained until 1703 when he accepted an invitation to be minister at Tothill Street, Westminster.<sup>60</sup> He came to prominence amongst the London dissenters taking a leading part in their affairs and becoming a member of the board of the Presbyterian Fund in 1703 and a trustee of the fund set up by Dr Williams on his death.<sup>61</sup> Like Daniel Williams he maintained important links with Ireland and Scotland, co-operating closely with Joseph Boyse in Dublin and travelling to Scotland in 1709 at the invitation of Carstares.

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<sup>57</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20), 17 May 1709, 57, GUA 26632.

<sup>58</sup> K.H.D. Haley, *The British and the Dutch. Political and Cultural Relations through the Ages*, (London 1988), 170-96.

<sup>59</sup> J.T. Rutt, ed., Edmund Calamy, *An Historical Account of My Own Life, with some reflections on the Times I have lived in (1671-1731)*, 2 vols (London 1829), 1, 171-3.

<sup>60</sup> David L. Wykes, 'Calamy, Edmund,' *ODNB*, article/4357.

<sup>61</sup> Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 1, 104-5.



His journey around Scotland began with a visit to the General Assembly in April<sup>62</sup> when he was “placed upon a bench at the foot of the throne, at the right hand of the Moderator.” An unfortunate joke about the assembly’s method of proceeding against a minister resembling the Inquisition caused much mirth, according to his own account, although it may also have caused some offence.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless he was treated with great cordiality by the assembly and took the opportunity to meet many of the leading figures of the Church of Scotland, not least John Stirling with whom he dined and who invited him to Glasgow.<sup>64</sup> Whilst in Edinburgh he preached in the New Church and at Liberton and was made, first of all, an MA of the University and then, on 6 May, a DD.<sup>65</sup> On leaving he travelled to Aberdeen where he was awarded a DD by King’s College on 9 May before going on to Glasgow who similarly honoured him on 16 June, presenting the diploma in a silver box, the same way in which Williams had been given his degree.<sup>66</sup>

Calamy had initially resisted the award of the degree by Edinburgh, and Daniel Williams had attempted to decline them both but the granting of these awards caused a storm of controversy. In their meeting on the last day of May the Faculty recorded that they had received a letter of thanks from Daniel Williams in which he “modestly acquiesces in their pleasure as to his Doctorat in Divinity.”<sup>67</sup> In fact Williams had sent a short letter back to Glasgow on 21 May in which he sent his thanks but pointed out that he had never sought such an honour and had originally declined the offer. Moreover he was sorry that Edmund Calamy had accepted his and only accepted himself because a refusal could be interpreted as being disrespectful to the University.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 1, 5-6.

<sup>63</sup> Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 152, 155-6, 199-200.

<sup>64</sup> Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 160-2.

<sup>65</sup> Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 177, 179, 186-8, 540-1. Another leading London dissenting minister, Joshua Oldfield, was also awarded an honorary DD by Edinburgh at the same time as Calamy, although he was not present to receive it in person. See Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares, 18 June 1709, EUL La. II. 407/7. It is interesting to note also that on receiving his DD from Edinburgh Calamy subscribed the Westminster Confession. See Bower, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 2, 96.

<sup>66</sup> Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 202-3, 541-2, 212, 542-3.

<sup>67</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20) 30 May 1709, 58, GUA 26632.

<sup>68</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 21 May 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/76.

William Carstares had also written to John Stirling. A dispute was already underway between the Universities over the treatment of some students but now there was more reason for Edinburgh to take offence:

I am sorrie that your College should doe anything that tends so plainlie to break all measures betwixt us seeing that it is a thing that cannot be retrieved nor doe we intend to give you the least trouble that it may be so for we indeed treat it more with scorn than resentment as we are apt to think many others of sense will doe here and elsewhere too. Mr Cummin hath been with me and acquainted me with the bounteous liberalitie of your Societie even when not desired, and when he was a Professor amongst us, this says so much of itselfe that I need say nothing. I heard this day from the Rev: Mr Osburn who much laments the circumstances of that country, but I have had no letter from your very Rev. and much esteemed friend Dr Middletoun nor doe I think will he load you with complements for your degrees ad eundem....but I apprehend we shall have no great prejudice by all this manangement even though supported by the weight and lustre of silver boxes which will only oblige you to be at the expence of gold ones when any person of qualitie gets a degree which is no rare thing in England.<sup>69</sup>

A main point of dispute for Edinburgh was that the Glasgow award to Edmund Calamy had mentioned the degree awarded a few weeks earlier by Aberdeen but neglected to mention the degree issued by Edinburgh just shortly before that. The official explanation in Glasgow was that there was only room to add the most recent degree awarded prior to them and they did not wish to “croud their Patent”, as Carstares’ nephew William Dunlop, a student at Glasgow at the time, subsequently wrote to tell him.<sup>70</sup>

There was clearly an open competition to attract the custom of the English students between Glasgow and Edinburgh but the escalating generosity culminating in the silver caskets given by Glasgow only seemed to serve to increase the divisions in London. George Smyth had been sent by Glasgow University to London to deliver the degree to Daniel Williams and left Glasgow with Calamy. He had been a student in Glasgow for some time, alongside

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<sup>69</sup> William Carstares, Edinburgh to John Stirling, 28 May 1709. GUL MS Gen 204/102. “Mr Cummin” refers to John Cumming, professor of church history at Edinburgh who had received the degree of LLD in Aberdeen alongside Calamy. “Mr Osburn” is the professor of divinity at Aberdeen and “Dr Middletoun” the Principal of King’s College, Aberdeen.

<sup>70</sup> William Dunlop, Glasgow to William Carstares, 18 October 1710, EUL Dk.1.1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>.



William Dalgleish who had been appointed tutor to the English students in December 1708. Smyth, *Anglo-Britannus*, graduated on 30 March 1708, having been admitted to study divinity in the same group as Dalgleish in the previous January.<sup>71</sup> By June 1709 he had completed his studies and left Glasgow with Calamy and his companions.<sup>72</sup> Once in London he had taken the degree directly to Williams and had then waited for more than a week for a chance to have a detailed conversation with him.<sup>73</sup> Calamy was very suspicious of George Smyth, writing darkly to Carstares, “Mr Smith, that came to Town with us from Glasgow, dos ill offices. He magnifys Glasgow to the skies, & runs down Edenburgh. I believe he may have some Instructions.”<sup>74</sup>

If anything the award of the degrees by the three Universities had only increased the already heated sense of competition between the London ministers. The venerated position of Williams put Calamy in a difficult position with regard to pressing the case for Edinburgh:

Some among us have a great fondness for Glasgow; & Dr Williams is at the head of them. And those of us that are for Edenb. Are not willing to make or even venture a rupture upon the occasion, & therefore are rather for suspending the Debate. We should be under a great disadvantage to enter upon it, til the Divinity Professor is fix'd.<sup>75</sup>

A few days after Calamy had arrived back in London he had written to Carstares to thank him for the award and inform him of events in the city. He found that “some approve'd & commended, others disapprov'd & slighted,” Dr Williams in particular being “much disturb'd.” The whole situation was, he thought, increased “by the ill management of the Gentlemen of Glasgow.” George Smyth had taken the Glasgow degree to Williams the very next morning<sup>76</sup> after arriving, where it was accepted “with resentment.” Calamy had hoped to find a letter from Carstares to Williams awaiting his return to

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<sup>71</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 43, 250.

<sup>72</sup> Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 212. Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares, 18 June 1709, EUL La. II. 407/7.

<sup>73</sup> George Smyth, London to John Stirling, 25 June 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/79.

<sup>74</sup> Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares, 11 July 1709, EUL Dk.1.1<sup>2</sup>/119.

<sup>75</sup> Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares, 11 July 1709, EUL Dk.1.1<sup>2</sup>/119.

<sup>76</sup> However, Smyth told Stirling he had delivered it on the very night of his return “according to your commands.” George Smyth, London to John Stirling, 25 June 1709. GUL MS Gen 206/79.

accompany the Edinburgh degree, but this had not arrived. In order not to be too far behind Glasgow he sent the Edinburgh diploma – “which had a Prior Date, tho’ a meaner Box” – to Williams that evening with an explanatory note. He couldn’t deliver it himself because of preparations for the celebration of the sacrament. The following Monday he arranged a meeting with Williams and some of the other ministers and after persuasion “Dr Williams agreed to submit to it as his burden, tho’ it would not have been his Choice.”<sup>77</sup>

But the award of the degrees created even greater problems for the dissenters from outside their own community. Calamy told Carstares that he had heard that in Scotland, “your Ld Advocate should say that Edenburgh has no more right to give a Doctors Degree than St Pauls School has with us.”<sup>78</sup> This had a serious effect on debate on this matter amongst dissenters but even more detrimental was the response from within the established church. When he finally got to see Daniel Williams George Smyth wrote back to Stirling sending £10 for William Dalgleish but warning the Glasgow faculty that Williams was delaying writing to them until he had seen the full effect of the Scottish awards in London. In the meantime Smyth informed Stirling:

The high-church party are mightily enrag’d, especially with Dr Calamy for aspiring to that Dignity, and even his own Friends think it had better been omitted at a time wherein the Interest of the Dissenters is so low, and its foundation so precarious.<sup>79</sup>

Williams first spelt out the difficulties involved with the degrees in a letter to Carstares on 8 July, it was not until 4 September that he wrote to Stirling on this matter. Although Williams had held back from writing to Stirling until he had had time to see what the general reaction was to the awards<sup>80</sup> the letter he eventually sent was identical to that which he sent to Carstares apart from a few minor changes in phrasing. Williams had two, what he called, “general” objections. These were that such changes in past practice should only be made if there was the possibility of considerable advantage developing from them, and

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<sup>77</sup> Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares, 18 June 1709, EUL La. II. 407/7.

<sup>78</sup> Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares, 11 July 1709, EUL Dk.1.1<sup>2</sup>/119.

<sup>79</sup> George Smyth, London to John Stirling, 25 June 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/79.

<sup>80</sup> George Smyth, London to John Stirling, 25 June 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/79.



that the prospect of a visible greater good should be clear before any such course was embarked upon. In addition he listed seven particular objections which mostly revolved around issues of ambition and vanity. So the award of honorary degrees “hazards an Imparity among Ministers, at least in mens own conceits”. It has too “a tendency to Praelacie,” in terms of delivering titles and a sense of grandeur. Williams suggested that this was “not altogether impertinent to North Britain” where they were the established church and ministers had greater opportunity to properly earn the degree, but in England “it Proclaimes a vanity disagreeable with our present condition & Circumstances” which was a dangerous thing when “our meere liberty is uncertain, and disgusted by too many of our national Church.” The award of such degrees could even have an effect on ministers’ livelihoods. Williams pointed out that for the most part these were “scanty,” granting the award to ministers in such a position exposed the title to contempt and might help reduce his income “for the peopl will gladly plead the pride of the minister for a Pretence to save their money.” Furthermore the awards tend to discourage the aged, who are least likely to receive them “tho safest in them alone, and too apt a means to excite ambition in younger men.” This would have the effect of damaging the good order of the English Presbyterians “who are too litl acquainted with or desirous of any degree of Church Government.” In addition it would both irritate the enemies of the dissenters and heighten their rancour, and, “be a great occasion of envy amongst ourselves.”

Williams went on to acquaint Stirling and Carstares with some of the events that had followed the award of the degrees. Members of the Church of England apparently expressed great resentment and the minister of the parish around Calamy’s meeting house “branded the Dissenters with pride and vanity &c for taking the Degree of D.D.” In addition “most malicious verses agt D[octor]: C[alamy]” were being dispersed.<sup>81</sup> Williams, at the very start of this process, also had expressed regret to Glasgow that Calamy had accepted the offer<sup>82</sup> and to some extent some of the difficulties were rooted in tension between the two men. John Fox, who because of his evident distaste for the dissenting

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<sup>81</sup> Daniel Williams to William Carstares, 8 July 1709, EUL La. II. 407/8. Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 4 September 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/81.

<sup>82</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 21 May 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/76.

ministry from the moment he began preparing for it, is not an altogether reliable witness, nevertheless had managed to antagonise both men when he began making enquiries about entering trials for the ministry about three years later. Having been sent for an interview with Williams his friendship with Calamy was permanently impaired leading him to record in his memoirs "I did not know till then that they were rivals."<sup>83</sup>

Part of the anxiety surrounding the awards of these degrees may be explained by the tension between the two leaders of London Presbyterianism. Both Calamy and Williams held divergent views on the Scottish awards. Calamy told Carstares that many of those in London who were critical had said "it had been much better, if you had begun with some among your selves." His own suggestion was that the spread of awards of honorary doctorates should be extended to include recipients such as William Hamilton (1669-1732), professor of divinity at Edinburgh from August 1709, and Robert Fleming (1660-1716), the minister at Founders' Hall, the Scots' Church in London<sup>84</sup>:

Now you are once in, I beleive you'll upon Consideration find a Necessity of going on, in order to the strengthening past Proceedings. What if you should conferr a like Degree, on Mr Hamilton who I hope will be Your Divinity Professor, & Mr Semple that is to be Your Historian, & Mr Bayly, & some others among your selves, with Publick Solemnity, after theses & Disputations in Your schools, & then send a diploma to Mr Flemming? Tis the sense of some that you account Prudent Persons here, both Your Countreymen & ours, that this would have a Good Tendency; & I am much of that mind my self.<sup>85</sup>

On the other hand Williams had a long list of concerns. He could find no more than three dissenters who were not sorry that Glasgow and Edinburgh had created any nonconformist doctors and, indeed, "several applied to me with importunity to return any Diplomas." Williams was opposed to returning the degrees ("tho I heard of none dissatisfied as to me in particular") because he did not want to be disrespectful to the two Universities, he did not want to give

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<sup>83</sup> 'Memoirs of Himself, by Mr John Fox, of Plymouth: with Biographical Sketches of some of his contemporaries; and some unpublished letters from Archbishop Secker and Dr Samuel Chandler', *The Monthly Repository*, 16, No.184, (April 1821), 195.

<sup>84</sup> Wilson, *History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches*, 2, 468-87.

<sup>85</sup> Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares, 18 June 1709, EUL La. II. 407/7.



ammunition to their High Church opponents and the English Universities, and he did not want to add to the difficulties of himself and Calamy. According to Williams the critics of the awards all agreed with this line of argument and accepted that if the end was to testify to the good accord between Scotland and the English Presbyterians then this had been accomplished and would be sufficient for some years to come. This was the opinion, too, of those who might be next in line to be honoured.

While giving his thanks to the Universities once again Williams also made the direct point that:

Upon the whole admit me to suggest, whether it would not be for the interest of your Academies, and more incline persons to study there if it were known that for the future, you would rarely if ever confer at least this Doctorate on any, who had not for a considerable time studied there, and would perform the proper excercises at their Commencement.<sup>86</sup>

There is no record of the immediate response in either Glasgow or Edinburgh to Williams's detailed criticisms of their actions. However, Williams held back from writing to Stirling from July to September in order to take notice of the full range of responses and then sent exactly the same letter as he had sent in the summer. This suggests that the matter had blown over by then. The dissenters certainly felt vulnerable to anything that could destabilise their position and something like this could generate a lot of antagonism from the High Church party. But it does not appear to have had a lasting impact on their position, and even if the faculties in Scotland were a little puzzled to receive such an underwhelming response to their generosity it did not prevent them from continuing to award honorary degrees to dissenters in both England and Ireland. Indeed, especially in Glasgow, it seems to have become a deliberate policy in the years after the union and one that continued to both sides of the dissenters after divisions appeared over the question of subscription.

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<sup>86</sup> Daniel Williams to William Carstares, 8 July 1709, EUL La. II. 407/8. Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 4 September 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/81.

### Chapter Three

“that the youth whom we send to you, May Be Managed In a Collegiate way”

*Glasgow established as the University of choice for English dissent*

Daniel Williams’s concerns about the award of honorary degrees to dissenters do not seem to have been given particularly great weight in either Glasgow or Edinburgh, Calamy’s attitude seems to have been closer to the opinion of both Universities. Perhaps even more surprisingly, given the enormous rift that had opened up between the leaders of dissent in England, the whole process was followed by a great step forward in terms of linking English dissenters to Scottish University education.

The impetus for this seems to have come directly from Carstares. The result of his consultation with Calamy and other figures was to act decisively on the plan that had been suggested to him by Christopher Taylor. An Edinburgh graduate, James McEuen, was given charge of bringing the whole thing to fruition at his own risk.

Some time over the spring, after consultation with the London dissenters, McEuen drew up ‘Considerations and proposealls for Encourageing of parents in sending their sones to the universitie of Edinburgh.’ This was an ambitious scheme, although for some of the dissenters it would prove to be not ambitious enough. Nevertheless, McEuen’s plan would have been a major step forward in terms of establishing a permanent connection between Edinburgh University and English dissent. The preamble of the ‘Considerations and proposealls’ made much of the expense of sending young men away to University as well as the various hazards that could await the unsuspecting student. Such difficulties had encouraged the establishment of private academies which while understandable could only be a second best compared to a university education and as a result “universities have fallen into decay”. If these problems could be overcome then Edinburgh University

would be more frequented by students: Not only from all parts of Scotland, But also from England & Ireland, where a great part of her



ma[jes]ties Loyall and protestant subjects, are excluded all publick universities by means of Tests and oaths Imposed on youth.

The proposals noted the intention of the dissenters to send their young men to a University in Scotland and the offer of “several persons of Good note” to mortify either Edinburgh or Glasgow with “considerable sowmes of money” and made an appeal to the town council for their backing.

These proposals contained four basic points. The first was that a number of students from outside of Scotland should be found lodgings together under the superintendence of a General Tutor and his assistants who would have the responsibility of looking after the accommodation, providing moral oversight, helping the students with their studies and acting as a link with their parents. There must have been space in a building within the University that had been earmarked for this purpose but it appears not to have been quite large enough. This was acknowledged in the second point which expected the General Tutor to find four or five “sober families” in the town who could provide additional accommodation for students. The necessity for this was explained as providing an alternative form of lodging that would come at “ane easier rate”. However, all students, wherever they lodged, would be expected to assemble in the public boarding house each evening between the hours of four and eight when the General Tutor and his assistants would go over all their work. In this way all the work covered in their classes would be completely revised over each six month period. The final point extended this attention to revision. Because of distance and the cost of travel it was frequently the practice of English students to remain at the University over vacations. This was often an unproductive time for them and so during the vacations, henceforth, all the students in town would have to gather at the boarding house once or twice a week to revise their work and have their private study directed.

By which methods, youth may have all possible advantages, for Improveing in their studies, And parents all possible Encouragement, In sending their sons to the university of Edr. Which as it may be of some consequence to the three Nations in General, so it must contribute to the honour & advantage of the university & Good Toun, in particular, By drawing of strangers to the place, And Laying a strong obligation on

parents to wish it weell for their Childrens sakes. And on Youth to doe it all the service afterwards they can, For their Educations sake.<sup>1</sup>

The plan won the support of the magistrates and ministers of the town, as well as the professors. As patrons of the University the town council gave full backing to the scheme and voted McEuen twenty-five pounds sterling to assist him in his labours on 4 May 1709 and a further fifteen pounds in November of the same year.<sup>2</sup> It was a far-reaching scheme that was entirely novel in terms of the Scottish Universities. At some point over the summer Daniel Williams was given sight of the proposals and he immediately saw the merit in it. He wrote to John Stirling hoping that McEuen would find sufficient encouragement but still was not entirely won over to the entire design adding “I think you might do the same at cheaper rates”.<sup>3</sup>

However, the original proponent of the plan was not entirely comfortable with it as it was being developed by McEuen. Christopher Taylor wrote to Cárstares after a meeting with McEuen in September 1709. He was happy to support the proposals but didn't see them as entirely fulfilling his intentions:

I Received your kind Letter by Mr MacEuen, and Have Indeavour'd to serve his Design Heartily: It is our Earnest Desire that the youth whom we send to you, May Be Managed In a Collegiate way, According to the Oeconomy of the Colledges In our own Universityes, I mean that they Lodg in the Colledge, that they eat and drink togeather, that there be a Manciple or Housekeeper to oversee their Bedd, Diet, Exercises, Behaviour &c.

Taylor's idea was for an English College to be established in Edinburgh as a formal part of the University but with its own identity and structure. He had a very clear idea of the sort of institution they required and it was much more elaborate and costly than a boarding house with a tutor:

We like Mr Maceuens Project, But How it will speedily Give Place to the other, wherein Mr Maceuen will Be very usefull, as the first Manciple,

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<sup>1</sup> Considerations and proposealls for encourageing of parents in sending theirr sones to the universitie of Edinburgh. EUL La. II. 407/6.

<sup>2</sup> Bower, *The History of the University of Edinburgh*, 2, 94-5.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, no date, GUL MS Gen 206/106.



your self and the Professours Governing and Regulating the whole management, so that there will be need of a Brewer Baker Butcher &c for the Colledge, and a Cook. It will be easy I Hope, to Make the stated Commons, cheap, after the manner of oxford, and yet Let every one Have a good meal, over a day. And for Extraordinary [...] Let them Pay for them, to the Manciple; Every week. And Because this method is Established, In the Universitys, at Eaton Colledge, Winchester School &c. It will be the more Justifyable and Plausible to all Parents here, And I Am pretty Possitive that you will Have many noblemens & Gentlemens sons, from Hence, In a Little time. And Perhaps your University wil Gain the Best Reputation not only In Brittain but in Europe.

Herein lay the essence of the problem. In order to attract sufficient support from the English dissenters in terms both of finance and of getting them to close their academies and provide a sufficient supply of students it needed to be a very ambitious scheme indeed. However, it would be more than imprudent of the university to invest vast sums of money in such a speculative venture when there was no guarantee of any reliable outcome and when the dissenters themselves were clearly far from agreed.

For his part Taylor was still optimistic. The project would be to the “Honor and Advantage of the University and City of Edinburgh, and all Brittain also”. Baptists were also coming in to the scheme and were likely to provide good financial support for this project as well as the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. In addition he knew of more students intending to come to Edinburgh, numbers which he felt would be bound to increase “upon the prospect of your Successe of the Project for a Collegiate life.”<sup>4</sup>

But the prospect of success was also limited by other factors. Taylor had envisaged the sons of noblemen and gentlemen making their way to Edinburgh but they would not necessarily be reading divinity and the first draft of the proposals made no mention of those intended for the ministry. Daniel Williams was particularly concerned by this. Like Taylor he could see the advantage of the Edinburgh plan from a unionist point of view but he had no doubt that Glasgow

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<sup>4</sup> Christopher Taylor, London, to William Carstares 19 September 1709, EUL La. II. 407/9.

had more in its favour when it came to those preparing for the ministry, telling Stirling:

The proposal of Mr Maceuin is I confess well suited to the Gentry; and as such I recommend and encourage it (for I mightily desire the allurements of the sons of our whiggish gentry to North Britain by what accommodates an English gust) but I declare to all, that Glasgo is the fittest place to educate ministers.

The war of words between the pro-Glasgow and pro-Edinburgh factions was still continuing since Williams also reported in the same letter that an unnamed person was busy disparaging Glasgow and had managed to reduce to three a group of eight students who had all been intended for Glasgow.<sup>5</sup>

McEuen was only too well aware of these stresses and strains as he travelled around England attempting to win support for the project. He was prepared to adapt the proposals to take account of the various criticisms and was also shrewd enough to send a copy of the revised plan to John Stirling towards the end of November 1709. By this time the proposals had been fleshed out to become a plan "For the farther Improvement of education and better accommodation of Youth in the university of Edinburgh," but they still contained the same basic points. The students were to be placed together in a lodging house where they would eat together and receive instruction. In addition students lodging in private houses would join them from time to time, as appropriate, and in the vacation they would all come together for a course of systematic revision. But now, after being "adjusted and approv'd by the Ministers of London," there were changes of emphasis and sometimes of substance. So, the General Tutor and his assistants, had become "persons of Learning, Prudence & Religion." The students were to appoint from amongst themselves "Monitors" who "by their owne Good behaviour & prudent Insinuations Exemplifie And recommend all that is praise worthy And by all proper methods draw them off from whatever is otherwise." The fees collected from the students were also to be used to purchase globes, maps, chronologies and histories for the general use of the students and each student was to be given all the books that they would need during their

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 4 September 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/82.



residency as well as have access to a common library paid for from a “small allowance” collected on entry. In accordance with the greater emphasis on moral instruction and good behaviour guidelines were also set for the Sabbath:

Every Lords day some time shall be spent by the private Tutors in acquainting the youth with the principles of Naturall and revealed Religion The Better to guard them against Atheisme Deisme Infidelity Popery & Immorality.<sup>6</sup>

On top of all this the continuing English concern that impressionable young students going to live in Scotland might learn bad habits of speech, pronunciation and grammar was again evident. To counteract this tendency there should be lessons in spoken and written English and the servants who would have most conversation with the students should be brought there from England. Furthermore, “amongst the private Tutors, there shall be at Least one who is more than an ordinary master of the English tongue.”

The project was becoming more detailed but the differences were largely ones of emphasis and presentation, it was far short of the collegiate life envisaged by Christopher Taylor complete with a manciple, a brewer, a butcher, a baker, and a cook. As the entrepreneur given the task of setting up the project McEuen was too careful to allow the scheme to get out of hand. The only changes that involved additional expenditure related to the small library and the geographical and historical aids that needed to be bought. Even the purchase of all the books necessary for study was not new since the students would be required to do this anyway but now would be expected to do so through those in charge of the boarding house. However, another interpolation in the proposals illustrates what was to become a major concern for dissenters. The students were to attend lectures and public exercises by the professors but these were to be managed “without any oaths or imposition whatsoever upon the Students.” This is an early indication of the concern that would be shown by many dissenters about subscription. At this point it probably reflects the fragile relationship between the different branches of dissent but it was clearly important enough for them to emphasise the point to McEuen. He had done enough to win the backing

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<sup>6</sup> James McEuen to John Stirling, 21 November 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/85.

of all the leaders of dissent in London and forty nine of the London ministers (including Daniel Williams) attached their names to his proposals to recommend it. They were “of the opinion that this scheme is well adapted to the purposes of virtuous and liberal Education” but did so because they had been “assured that the students in that University shall be free of all Oaths Tests or any other Impositions, By which one Protestant may be distinguished from another.” It is interesting to see at this point this principle of non-subscription apparently conceded by the Scottish Universities (or at least by James McEuen on their behalf) in order to accommodate the differences of church organisation amongst English dissenters.<sup>7</sup>

McEuen added a covering note to the proposals when he sent them to John Stirling making clear that his involvement, while seeking to be of use to education, was primarily as an agent in which capacity he might equally be of service to Glasgow:

The great thing I have in my view in prosecuting of the present design is neither a private nor a party Interest; but the promoting of a Liberal and vertuous Education; And therefor as it would be no uneasiness to me if another Man should have the Management of this affair at Edinburgh after I have brought it this length So I should be heartily glade to see some such Design established in all our Universities in Scotland. I always thought that the first step in order to bring down the English youth hither, was to make them give up with their private Accademies; which is a thing they seem to be resolv'd upon: and if this were once done, I doubt not that there may be students both for Glasgow and Edinburgh, So that there might not only be no ground to fear the Clashing of Interests between the two Universities; But no ground to doubt that they might be mutually helpful to each other and what has been done at present with respect to Edinburgh might in the End turn to the Advantage of both.<sup>8</sup>

Both on his way to London in the spring of 1709 and on his way back again McEuen had called on Benjamin Bennet (c.1674-1726), one of the most influential dissenting ministers in the north of England. From 1700 onwards Bennet was minister of the Close Gate meeting in Newcastle upon Tyne, a congregation numbering 700 hearers.<sup>9</sup> He became best known for his publication

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<sup>7</sup> James McEuen to John Stirling, 21 November 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/85.

<sup>8</sup> James McEuen to John Stirling, 21 November 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/85.

<sup>9</sup> David L. Wykes, 'Bennet, Benjamin', *ODNB*, article/2100.



of *The Christian Oratory* in 1725, a devotional manual for private prayer, but he was also to publish an important work protecting the right of private judgement following the divisions that eventually hit dissenters about a decade later. Bennet was pleased to support the plan as McEuen had outlined it to him, writing to Carstares in February 1710 how it would serve the interests of both the dissenters and the Scottish church as well as “that of the whole British nation”. Bennet had advised him to set up a subscription list, although he was disappointed by the initial response he received from colleagues in London when he wrote to them about making financial contributions. Nevertheless, he was still an enthusiastic supporter of the plan, while still envisaging it in terms that were grander than those on the table and with greater initial financial input from the University to encourage support in England:

Who knows but God may open the hearts of some that are able to assist in soe good a work & then their purses will open in course – If the Magistrates of your City & the gentry in any other part of the Kingdom wou’d provide an house convenient for the entertainment of the students & offer something towards founding a library by way of supplemt to that you have & that may lye open to every student at all times I doubt not, there wou’d be found among us such as wou’d cheerfully put to their helping hand and suppose one Thousand li p[er] annum cou’d be raisd for the necessary occasions of such a subornite college [paper torn] it might prove a mighty advantage both to you & us & to speak freely I have such apprehensions of the necessity of something of this kind in order to the maintaining the credit & population of our interest in both parts of Britain, that I am willing to hazard the Imputation of being over forward & impertinent in solliciting [sic] for it, if thereby I might contribute anything towards the promoting so great & good a work.<sup>10</sup>

About three weeks after writing to Carstares Bennet set off to London and was able to report back to Carstares on his return to Newcastle in May. Whilst there was clearly support the task of collecting donations was proving less straightforward:

The chief objection that I heard made to the proposal was want of money – the earnest desire I had to see this work go forward made me resolvd to attempt the removing of that objection, & it may be more readily hoped for success – accordingly I Try’d my friends at home first, several of ’em

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<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Bennet, Newcastle upon Tyne, to William Carstares, 21 February 1710, EUL La. II 407/10.

subscribed pretty liberally, & more of 'em promised to do it – if the design Took – Upon this I determin'd to lay the matter before the Min[ister]s at London (having made w[ha]t interest I cou'd in my way to it) & in generall I find many of 'em heartily ingaged in it & willing to do w[ha]t they can to promote it.<sup>11</sup>

Clearly people were reluctant to commit funds to the project until they had a definite sign that it had taken firm root. But Bennet also alluded to other problems. Committing so much in terms of both money and finance to a scheme in Scotland was a risky venture and so “the Min[ister]s at London will desire that this house may have a legal establishmt so that donations my be receiv'd & secured from the reach of any Law either in England or Scotland”. Perhaps even more ominously Bennet revealed his concern that he was “a little afraid of those two mischievous things pride & faction”.<sup>12</sup>

Yet there is no doubt that many English dissenters, both in London and in the provinces, were encouraged by the plans to see their students for the ministry managed in Edinburgh ‘in a Collegiate way’. The scheme fitted in with their desire for a University education and with their growing sense of a British identity. Despite the construction of an agreed plan between McEuen and the London ministers an alternative more ambitious and more detailed plan was drawn up. The London dissenters appear to have costed this project very thoroughly. What they envisaged was nothing less than an English college in Edinburgh. The building, which had been Christopher Taylor’s original wish, was to be something like an Oxford or Cambridge College. As Taylor had suggested it was to be built within the walls of the University and be capable of extension, should that be necessary. Every chamber should have “two closets that two students may if thought convenient be lodged together.” Furthermore

That to the building there be also Conveniencies for all the proper Officers usual in the Colleges in England, such as a Māster, Six Fellows, or Tutors, Twelve Graduates, who may take Pupils also under them, a Steward, a Cook, and Servants in proportion, with Officers necessary, and a large Hall for the whole House, as well Masters as Students to eat

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<sup>11</sup> Benjamin Bennet, Newcastle upon Tyne, to William Carstares, 30 May 1710, EUL DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/127.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin Bennet, Newcastle upon Tyne, to William Carstares, 30 May 1710, EUL Special Collections, DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/127.



in, a Chapel for Morning and Evening Prayer, a Bell to give notice according to the Orders of the House.

The cost of construction was to be £6,000, to be paid for by subscribers in England.<sup>13</sup> On top of this, detailed rules for the new foundation - said to have been contained within a Book of Statutes - were drawn up which regulated the academic relationship between it and the University, directed the income and expenditure of the college as well as laid down the rules of student residence. The total annual salaries for all the staff needed to manage and maintain the college were computed at £1,792 and the college was to house no less than 200 students. All this was to be paid for by a quarterly subscription amongst the dissenters throughout England as well as an encouragement that all legacies destined for charitable purposes should be directed towards this end.<sup>14</sup>

Whether this particular plan circulated alongside McEuen's plan backed by the London ministers is not now known. However, the fact that such a detailed scheme including careful costings existed on paper at some point clearly illustrates the preferred option of many within the dissenting community. This made the rather more modest proposal for students to share a lodging house in Edinburgh seem rather less attractive even though it was a far more realistic proposition than building a new college in the city and employing a total of forty staff ranging from the master and treasurer at £100 per year each to a porter on £20 per year.<sup>15</sup>

The financial outlay was well beyond the means of the dissenting churches in England and even the more modest proposals of McEuen could not be realised. Of the more ambitious proposals Daniel Defoe wrote that "the first Heat of this noble Design cool'd upon the Hands of those that were most concerned to put it forward; and it being too heavy an Undertaking to be the Work of private Men, it dropt of it self"<sup>16</sup>, but this was true equally of McEuen's proposals.

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<sup>13</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of... Daniel Williams*, 39.

<sup>14</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of... Daniel Williams*, 39-43.

<sup>15</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of... Daniel Williams*, 42.

<sup>16</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of... Daniel Williams*, 43.

Defoe recorded that McEuen, or at least “a Scots Minister,” had taken a house in Edinburgh “in order to set up the like Oeconomy as this of a College, only in a smaller Magnitude.”<sup>17</sup> In fact McEuen rented for a year the lodging in Niddry’s Wynd from Whitsunday 1711 to Whitsunday 1712<sup>18</sup>, but there is no evidence for any English involvement in this property. McEuen’s plan had run into trouble by the summer of 1710. The continuing lobbying for the building of a new college had damaged the proposal, it was said that Dr Williams did not like the idea of using money to build and thought that the money raised should be used instead to supplement the incomes of the students.<sup>19</sup> This news was communicated to John Stirling by George Ridpath (d.1726), a Scots journalist of Whig sympathies then living in London and editing *The Flying Post* who supplied the Scottish University Principals with information in the period after the union.<sup>20</sup> Ridpath had a meeting with Williams, Oldfield and McEuen in June 1710 and did not think that much would come of all the plans to set up any sort of dissenting institution in Edinburgh. He outlined the problems to Stirling:

I find Mr McEwen is not like to do much....Dr W[illia]ms is for having those who study divinity come to you. I find the Independants are not fond of a Collegiate Life for fear it may occasion differences among those of Contrary Opinions, but the presbyterians are for it & We argued that the discretion of the tutor might prevent any disputes about those things at their Commons which we suppos’d would be a greater security than when they boarded at large.

Some small amounts had been donated to pay for the project (including £100 towards the cost of the housekeeper) but not enough and Ridpath reported that Williams and Oldfield thought McEuen “a little too selfish”.<sup>21</sup>

Without the whole-hearted backing of Daniel Williams and without any significant financial support from other quarters the Edinburgh project faded

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<sup>17</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of... Daniel Williams*, 43-4.

<sup>18</sup> Bower, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 2, 95-6.

<sup>19</sup> George Ridpath to John Stirling, 1 July 1710, GUL MS Gen 206/102.

<sup>20</sup> George Ridpath, Wardrobe Court near Doctors Commons, London, to William Carstares, 16 October 1708, EUL D.K.1.1<sup>2</sup>/104. G. A. Aitkin, ‘Ridpath, George’, rev. John R. Young, *ODNB*, article/23635.

<sup>21</sup> George Ridpath to John Stirling, 1 July 1710, GUL MS Gen 206/102.



away. By 1718 McEuen was the publisher of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, gaining permission from the Council to publish the journal three times a week,<sup>22</sup> but by then the 'Considerations and proposealls' had long since faded from public view.

With the failure of the Edinburgh project Glasgow was given a clearer run to consolidate their position in attracting English students. Since December 1708 Williams had been paying William Dalglish to work as tutor to the English students in Glasgow, a position he continued in until the summer of 1709, receiving his last payment in June of that year.<sup>23</sup> Thereafter Joseph Stedman was appointed to this role and the opportunity was taken to upgrade the status of the English students as a group. Stedman wrote to Stirling to tell him that Williams

was very well satisfied to hear that the faculty had agreed to establish a table within the Colledg for the conveniency of the Students, as also that they should be conveniently provided for lodgings, and I have likewise acquainted divers of my acquaintance with it, for I am perswaded that it is a considerable priveliege and that which many other places want, and will be look'd upon as such by those who design to follow their Studies with advantage, and be frugall while they are at them.<sup>24</sup>

Stedman had matriculated at Glasgow at the same time as Dalglish in March 1706, although in the third class of John Loudon. He had graduated on 14 January 1709 and was admitted to study divinity on 11 February, alongside thirty other students, including at least one English and five Irish students.<sup>25</sup> He went back to Glasgow in the September of 1709 with a further two new students to

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<sup>22</sup> Bower, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, 2, 96. That the same James McEuen was both the printer-publisher and the entrepreneur who negotiated with the English Dissenters on behalf of the Scottish Universities is confirmed by comparing handwriting and signatures preserved in GUL, EUL and NLS. See also pp. 210-11 and 220 for accounts of other publications by McEuen. McEuen was also a Burgess of the town of Edinburgh and had been licensed for the ministry by the Presbytery of Jedburgh in 1711. He returned to the ministry in 1732, supplying Lochmaben for six months during a vacancy, before being ordained at Johnstone in Annandale in 1733. He became minister at Moffat in 1734 where he remained until 1741 when he was deposed following a confession of adultery. He later went to Ireland where he died c.1745. See Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, 2, 208, 216.

<sup>23</sup> George Smyth, London to John Stirling, 25 June 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/79.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Stedman to John Stirling, no date, GUL MS GEN 206/91. Stedman's mention of the name of a student due to come to Glasgow in September would indicate a date of July or August 1709 for this letter rather than the year 1710 suggested on a note on the letter.

<sup>25</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 185, 44, 250-1.

preside as tutor amongst the English group. While most public debate had revolved around Edinburgh Daniel Williams had quietly advanced the role of Glasgow which had always attracted English students and continued to do so as they were given a more formal structure in the University. In the following year there were three new students intended for the ministry sent to Glasgow at the start of term, two more joined them just over a week later and a further three arrived in October and at the start of November.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time the Glasgow Faculty of Divinity continued to use their power to award honorary doctorates of divinity as a way of cementing their relationship with reformed churches outside of Scotland. Following the awards to Williams and Calamy in 1709 the next award was made to Cotton Mather, the leading New England Independent, on 26 May 1710.<sup>27</sup> In September 1710 Joshua Oldfield (1656-1729)<sup>28</sup>, the minister at Southwark and a senior figure in London dissent travelled to Glasgow with a letter of introduction from Daniel Williams to John Stirling.<sup>29</sup> He had been awarded the degree of DD by Edinburgh *in absentia* alongside Calamy the previous year. Now the Faculty at Glasgow took the opportunity to similarly honour him *ad eundem* with Edinburgh.<sup>30</sup> A member of the Presbyterian Fund from its inception Oldfield was one of the original trustees of Dr Williams's Trust and also kept an academy in Coventry when he was minister there from 1694 to 1699 which he brought with him to London when he became minister at Southwark in 1699. Two of the three new students that commenced their studies in Glasgow in September 1710 had already studied at Oldfield's academy for "a considerable time."<sup>31</sup>

The young William Dunlop wrote to his uncle, William Carstares, to inform him of Glasgow's actions in granting Oldfield a degree and also observed

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<sup>26</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 7 September 1710, GUL MS Gen 206/105. William Tong, London to John Stirling, 16 September 1710, GUL MS Gen 206/109. Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 16 September 1710, GUL MS Gen 206/110. William Tong, London to John Stirling, 3 October 1710, GUL MS Gen 206/112. Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 4 November 1710, GUL MS Gen 206/114.

<sup>27</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20). 26 May 1710, 63. GUA 26632.

<sup>28</sup> Alan Ruston, 'Oldfield, Joshua', *ODNB*, article/20681.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 7 September 1710, GUL MS Gen 206/104.

<sup>30</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20). 10 October 1710, 67, GUA 26632.

<sup>31</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 7 September 1710, GUL MS Gen 206/105.



that people were generally better pleased with him compared to Calamy “thinking him lesse given to ostentation & vanity”. He also remarked that “there are a considerable number of English students here & our Cook has obliged himself to give them as much as they can eat of two good dishes of meal a day & a pint of ale at least.”<sup>32</sup>

Whilst it had seemed that Edinburgh would establish a close relationship with English dissent it was in fact Glasgow which had most effectively sealed a linkage which had already been developing over some years. Some of the minor aspects of the ‘Considerations and proposealls’ for Edinburgh were easily applied to Glasgow. Daniel Williams together with George Ridpath and a Richard Mount started collecting money for globes for the University. By the second month of 1711 they had collected over £21, although the correct type of globe required by the University could not be obtained in England.<sup>33</sup> Daniel Williams sent regular additional payments firstly to Dalglish and then to Stedman. Unfortunately Stedman’s promising career was blighted by a tendency to drink. This had come to the attention of Daniel Williams by the start of the new session in September 1711 when he intimated to John Stirling that he would not employ him beyond the end of the month.<sup>34</sup> For some months after Williams continued to be concerned about a suitable successor for Stedman as well as hoping for signs of reformation in Stedman’s character, although he also feared that his continued presence in Glasgow would make the job of a successor even more difficult.<sup>35</sup> In the end Stedman brought matters to an abrupt end by his own actions in April 1712. With Stedman having already been the source of complaints of drunkenness on more than one occasion, witnesses were found to testify against him about one incident before the Faculty at a meeting convened on 15 April. This was his most serious lapse and a number of witnesses reported that he had been drunk late on the previous Saturday night, when it was “very nigh the Lords day,” and “he had threatend if he got not the drink he was seeking he would burn the College, and...he had spoken most opprobiously of the

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<sup>32</sup> William Dunlop, Glasgow to William Carstares, 18 October 1710, EUL DK.1.1<sup>1</sup>/8.

<sup>33</sup> S. Rosewall, London to John Stirling, 20 March 1711, GUL MS Gen 206/119.

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 5 September 1711, GUL MS Gen 206/123.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 6 October 1711, GUL MS Gen 206/126. Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 23 February 1712, GUL MS Gen 206/139.

masters and particularly of the principal.” The fact that he was a student of divinity and a tutor to others made his offence all the more serious. In an institution that was already characterised by a strict disciplinarian code he had perhaps already been shown an unusual degree of leniency. But following this offence he could expect little sympathy and accordingly he was degraded of his Master of Arts and extruded from the University. Furthermore if he didn’t return his diploma within two months his crime and the subsequent sentence would be published throughout Great Britain.<sup>36</sup>

But Stedman’s fall from grace did not damage the growing relationship between English dissent and the university, indeed the importance of his position in this regard may have protected him, at least until his offences became too widely observed. Stedman was actually readmitted to the University in February 1713, the Faculty feeling that he had been punished enough, having “been reduced to considerable straits.”<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless Stedman’s problems did not end there. Five years later, while a member of the Presbyterian church in Lewes, Stedman was accused of perjury by some of the London ministers. Glasgow again became involved as someone in the University supplied his accusers with details of his misdemeanours whilst in Glasgow. Although he was found guilty he was not without his supporters, including Benjamin Chandler, a minister in Sussex who wrote to John Stirling inviting the University to contribute their side of the argument to a proposed defence of Stedman written by himself and Stedman. Chandler was highly critical of Glasgow

That you should bring a man to publick repentance of his sins, and then forgive him, and promise to bury all in oblivion, and yet after this by Letters to some in London repeat all this again, who to serve a turn thereby made a publication of all matters of fact, without mentioning one word of Mr Stedman’s profess’d repentance to so great an assembly.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Munimenta*, 2, 404.

<sup>37</sup> *Munimenta*, 2, 409.

<sup>38</sup> Benjamin Chandler, Worth near East Grinstead, Sussex to John Stirling, 6 November 1718, GUL MS Gen 207/89. Stedman eventually published his account complaining bitterly of his treatment at the hands of the London ministers in Joseph Stedman, *Presbyterian Priest-Craft: Being a Full and True Account of the Proceedings of Dr Calamy the Moderator, Dr Oldfield, Mr Tong, Mr Robinson, Mr Sheffield, Mr Galloway, and Mr Reynolds, with about Fifty others of the Brethren, in Salters-Hall, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 1717*, London 1720.



What is significant about this is that Chandler's son, Joseph, was already a student at Glasgow. Even the acrimony over the unfortunate Joseph Stedman does not appear to have damaged the relationship between the dissenters and the University. By 1718 it was well enough integrated into the educational life of the English dissenters that even those who had sent their family members there could still raise questions critical of a particular issue without intending or fearing a more damaging impact on the relationship as a whole.

Following Stedman's dismissal Williams had given much thought towards the appointment of a replacement but struggled to find someone with sufficient experience to preside at the table with the English students.<sup>39</sup> Despite the absence of a tutor "the College commons" for the English students continued. Williams would have liked to appoint one student, Clerk Oldsworth, but felt he was too young. He was happy for Stirling to nominate someone else but insisted that it should be an Englishman.<sup>40</sup> A nomination was left until September 1712 when Williams finally selected Oldsworth, at the same time predicting to Stirling that the next session would see the putting down of the private academies.<sup>41</sup> Oldsworth had been a student of Joshua Oldfield before transferring to Glasgow in January 1711.<sup>42</sup> He must have been well taught at the Southwark academy because after matriculating at Glasgow on 3 March 1711 'Clericus Oldisworth, *Anglo-Britannus*', graduated on 4 May of the same year and formally commenced the study of divinity on 18 February 1712.<sup>43</sup> Throughout his time at Glasgow Oldsworth was supported by the Presbyterian Fund, receiving £8 per annum from them, as did Stedman before him. The appointment as tutor was one agreed directly with Daniel Williams and so generally is not mentioned in the minutes of the Presbyterian Fund. However, when his time in Glasgow came to an end in Michaelmas 1714, and his grant came to an end, it was noted in the minutes that he had been 'overlooker' of the English students and that Samuel Jay would take his place with the same slightly larger grant from the Fund.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 6 October 1711, GUL MS Gen 206/126.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 23 February 1712, GUL MS Gen 206/139.

<sup>41</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 6 September 1712, GUL MS Gen 206/154.

<sup>42</sup> Presbyterian Fund Board [hereafter PFB] Minutes, vol. 2, 8 January 1711, 204. Dr Williams's Library [DWL], OD68.

<sup>43</sup> *Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis* vol. 3 (Glasgow, 1854), 196, 46, 252.

<sup>44</sup> PFB Minutes, vol. 2, 17 January 1715, 268. DWL OD68.

Clerk Oldsworth himself returned to London and was one of those ministers who put their names to the non-subscribing *Advices for Peace* in 1719.<sup>45</sup> Jay's university career had followed a similar pattern to all his predecessors in that post. He had matriculated in March 1711 in the third class of Gerschom Carmichael at the same time as Oldsworth. He graduated on 23 June 1713 and commenced the study of divinity on 19 February 1714.<sup>46</sup> Unlike Oldsworth he received no grant from the Presbyterian Fund until his appointment as tutor. He left Glasgow at some point in 1715.<sup>47</sup>

Jay is the last tutor to the English students whose name is known. However, it is clear that the English students continued to be a distinct and organised group in Glasgow throughout the century and, what is more important, the terms of Daniel Williams's will ensured that English dissenters were linked to the university in a much more permanent way.

Daniel Williams died on 26 January, 1716 but had suffered periods of ill health from 1711 onwards. On 26 June 1711 he had first drawn up his will to which he added two codicils before his death. It was an elaborate and complicated document which made bequests to individuals and congregations in England, Wales and Ireland as well as ministers and their widows, French Protestant refugees, English teachers in north Wales and Irish speaking preachers in Ireland. Institutions receiving bequests included Harvard University, St Thomas's Hospital, the Scottish Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England. A main concern of his will, however, was to maintain an opportunity for study in Scotland, particularly in Glasgow, for English dissenting students. For Williams – and for the dissenters in general – a major fear was that their academies might be forcibly closed by the government. Indeed this concern may have lain behind Williams's suggestion to Stirling in September 1711 that they would close their academies in a year's time. At a time when the government was putting increased pressure on the dissenters, the voluntary closure of the academies and wholesale

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<sup>45</sup> *An Authentick Account of Several Things*, 11

<sup>46</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 197, 48, 253.

<sup>47</sup> PFB minutes, vol. 2, Account of the Allowances for 1715, 296. DWL OD68.



transfer of their educational resources to Scotland would have seemed like a viable option. The Occasional Conformity Act of 1712 had ended the possibility of dissenters holding public office and this was followed by the Schism Act of 1714 which would have sounded the death knell for the dissenting ministry. Under the Schism Act anyone who attended a dissenting meeting was forbidden from teaching on pain of three months in prison. Clearly this would have severely limited the continuation of an educated ministry, the only alternative would have been to become entirely dependent on educational provision in Scotland. In the event dissenters were spared the full impact of this legislation with the death of Queen Anne on the very day it was due to come into force. But the awareness that such legislation could be enacted must have increased the willingness of the dissenters to rely on Scotland and Glasgow.<sup>48</sup>

The Union provided additional options for people like Williams in times that were troubled by political instability for the dissenters. So he was able to turn to Scotland to help maintain an educated ministry when this might be essentially outlawed in England. At the same time he was aware that the Presbyterian establishment itself in Scotland might suddenly prove vulnerable. If the constitution of the Church of Scotland should be subverted then his bequests to Glasgow would revert to his trustees in London.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand if the trustees in England failed for any reason then the estates would pass into the hands of the town councils of Edinburgh and Glasgow to establish alms houses in both places for people from “North and South Britain.”<sup>50</sup>

But his benefaction to Glasgow was a generous one:

Item, I give to the College of Glascow, while the present Constitution of the Church of Scotland continueth, my House and Land in Barnett, in the County of Hertford, let now at Forty Five Pounds per Annum, and the Reversion of my Lands in Totham in Essex, after my Wife’s Death; as also one Hundred Pounds in Money at present.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of... Daniel Williams*, 77-8.

<sup>49</sup> *A True Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the late Reverend Daniel Williams, DD* (London 1717), 15-16.

<sup>50</sup> *Last Will and Testament of... Daniel Williams*, 37-8.

<sup>51</sup> *Last Will and Testament of... Daniel Williams*, 13.

Although this benefaction was explicitly to help dissenting students to study there:

Always provided, that my Trustees and their Assigns shall appoint and nominate from time to time, Four South Britons to be Students at Glasgow, who shall receive Six Pounds per Annum from the said College, and also Three South Britons, who after they are commenced Master of Arts in the said College, shall receive Ten Pounds a piece per Ann for Three Years; or otherwise two, at Fifteen pounds a piece, as my Trustees shall direct, and both Sorts to be removed at their Discretion, and Successors appointed by them to supply their Place.<sup>52</sup>

The three students continuing their studies after receiving their MA would be amongst those undertaking the study of divinity in preparation for the ministry. Williams also stipulated that these selected divinity students “shall be obliged to supervise and assist such South Britain Youths as are Students in the said College,”<sup>53</sup> these were to be the tutors or ‘overlookers’ of the English students.

Williams’s will of 1711 contains a number of named individuals in different categories. The tutors for the English students were named in the will and both Oldsworth and Jay were listed as being students at Glasgow who together with another student named Hocker<sup>54</sup> would be the first to receive the allowance once they had been admitted to the degree of MA. Williams also went on to list a number of names of sons of ministers whom he expected to benefit from his legacy. These were all the sons of Presbyterian ministers, indeed he stipulated that “in the filling up of the Vacancies, my Trustees shall prefer the Sons of poor Presbyterian Ministers, equally qualify’d, before others.” The only exception in his will was the “Son of Mr Stennett,” in other words Joseph Stennett, the Seventh-Day Baptist minister who was married to Williams’s sister in law.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Last Will and Testament of...Daniel Williams*, 13.

<sup>53</sup> *Last Will and Testament of...Daniel Williams*, 14.

<sup>54</sup> William Hocker matriculated at Glasgow on 3 March 1711 and graduated on 23 June 1713, in both cases alongside Samuel Jay and George Wightwick, another English ministerial student. All three commenced their study of divinity on 19 February 1714 when they entered their names with the self-description of *Anglo-Britannus*. *Munimenta*, 3, 197, 48, 253.

<sup>55</sup> *Last Will and Testament of...Daniel Williams*, 14.



Daniel Williams's will attracted some criticism to its Scottish bequests for not being of any material advantage to Glasgow University or to Scotland in general. Certainly those who were to benefit most directly were to be students travelling north but there is no doubt that the University welcomed the bequest and shared in their benefactor's vision of pan-British Presbyterian co-operation. As Daniel Defoe observed

So much of the Trust, as to the future Application of his Charity, rests upon the Masters and Heads of the Colleges of Scotland, that it is evident his View was the mutual Advantage on both sides; particularly it is clear that he thought the Integrity and Capacity of those Masters, &c such as it was fit to trust the Care of the Education of the English Dissenters Ministers to them, a Trust of infinitely more concern than that of the Money.<sup>56</sup>

In any case there was likely to be a financial advantage for the University based on the terms of the will, in time at least. The reversion of the land at Totham on the death of Daniel Williams's wife would bring considerable extra income to the University, although Jane Williams was to survive until 1740. By 1759 the two estates were bringing in to the University over three hundred pounds sterling per year.<sup>57</sup> The interest on the one hundred pounds appears to have been given to the University to use at their discretion, although in 1718 the Faculty felt that they had to write to the trustees to clarify this<sup>58</sup> and in 1723 the Faculty sent £10 from the interest to the Reverend James Wood of Chowbent to pay for his new chapel. This followed a representation by the minister

of the considerable hardships he and his congregation had suffered from some of their disaffected neighbours for the s[ai]d Mr Wood and his people their zealous appearances for the present Government whereby they had been ejected out of their meeting-house of which they had long possessed and obliged to purchase ground to build one upon.<sup>59</sup>

This grant was given on the recommendation of the Principal and seems to be indicative of fellow feeling between the University and an English

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<sup>56</sup> [Defoe], *Memoirs of... Daniel Williams*, 78.

<sup>57</sup> Minutes of Faculty (1749-1759), 3 May 1759, 288, GUA 26640.

<sup>58</sup> Register of the Proceedings of the University of Glasgow, their Meetings (vol 21), 2 March 1718, 23 April 1718, 8, GUA 26633.

<sup>59</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 22) 17 June, 1723, 100, GUA 26634.

dissenting congregation that had suffered at the hands of the Jacobites and the Church of England. At the time of the rebellion Wood had raised a militia that had fought at the battle of Preston.<sup>60</sup> In 1715 Glasgow University had maintained a company of fifty armed men against the Pretender.<sup>61</sup> But this is a unique example of a payment from the University from Dr Williams's money to a recipient in England.

But even if the interest accruing from the main portion of Dr Williams's benefaction had to be used to pay for English students to come to Glasgow it was still financially advantageous to the University since it brought more students there who would be making additional payments once at college. Most of all it sealed Glasgow's place as the University of choice for Presbyterian students in England. This tendency had been increasing from the start of the century, it had been encouraged consistently by Daniel Williams but was now confirmed by the terms of his will. With large numbers of English students travelling to Glasgow, alongside even larger numbers of Irish students the University found itself at the centre of a network of reformed Protestants spread across the British Isles.

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<sup>60</sup> Beyond the surname of the minister the congregation is not identified in the minutes, however, it can only be a reference to Chowbent. In 1721 the congregation were ejected from the chapel of ease at Atherton which they had held since the ejections of 1662. They subsequently built their own large chapel at Chowbent. See J.J Wright, *The Story of the Chowbent Chapel, 1645-1721-1921* (London 1921); A. Gordon, *Ancient Days at Atherton* (London 1921).

<sup>61</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20), 3 August 1715, 140, GUA 26632.



## Chapter Four

“Israel and Judah made one Kingdom”

*The influence of the Union of 1707 and the idea of ‘Britishness’*

No single event did more to push English dissenters towards Glasgow University than the Act of Union. Presbyterians south of the border were the most enthusiastic group in favour of the new constitutional arrangements. Not only that they became ardent enthusiasts for the idea of ‘Britishness’ and this was particularly the case for those who held to non-subscribing views, an attitude which they shared with those of a similar outlook in Ireland.

The Union of 1707 brought a new challenge to the notion of nationhood in the early eighteenth century. Up until then the idea of a single nation without a single religious establishment was entirely unknown in Western Europe. A unitary civil government assumed a single religious establishment. While there were developing, although by no means universally agreed, notions of religious toleration for minorities, there was no concept of a plurality of church establishments. On 1 May 1707 a *Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving* was issued by royal command to mark “the Wonderful and Happy Conclusion of the Treaty for the Union of Her Majesties Two Kingdoms of England and Scotland”. The *Form of Prayer* also had the purpose of imploring blessings upon the armed forces of the United Kingdom and her allies and of disappointing “the boundless ambition of France”.<sup>1</sup> But the very nature of this brief act of worship indicated the religious problems that the Union produced. The *Form of Prayer* was intended for use in England, Wales and Berwick upon Tweed, moreover it was a purely Anglican document based on the Book of Common Prayer which would not be countenanced by the Church of Scotland.

From a religious perspective the Union raised questions on both sides of the border. In Scotland, Presbyterians felt that they had a lot to fear. They were being incorporated into a Union with a Parliament dominated by an Episcopalian establishment where bishops sat in the House of Lords. With a disaffected and

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<sup>1</sup> *A Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving*, (London 1707), 1.

dispossessed Episcopalian minority in Scotland they were vulnerable to Anglican ambitions to re-establish the Episcopal system. For those who adhered to the covenanting tradition the Union presented more than simply a threat but included a wholesale abandonment of their religious principles and a collaboration that was unacceptable. For leading opponents of the Union within the Kirk, such as the Rev James Webster (1658/9-1720),<sup>2</sup> an ex-Covenanter and hard-line proponent of what he saw as orthodoxy, the proposed new arrangements were a breach of the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 by which Scots had sworn to reform the Church of England since the proposed Union laid an “eternal embargo upon all such Endeavours”. Not only that but having abjured prelacy, with the advent of the Union “we establish it upon the surest humane Foundations Men can devise” and the promise of religious toleration meant nothing more than authorising schism.<sup>3</sup> The Church of England was contrasted with the national church of Scotland and found wanting. As the Scots journalist and economic writer, James Hodges, put it:

There the face of their Church is Overspread with Arminianism, Socinianism, Popish Ceremonies, and a Cold, Lazie, and Lifeless Form of Worship, Having neither any thing like Discipline, nor either Publick or Private Catechising.<sup>4</sup>

On one level the Church of England had far less to fear from the Union, their position was far more secure and well entrenched in parliament and the Court. Yet for all the welcome given to the Union by Anglican preachers on the grounds of trade, commerce, and military alliance there was frequently an uneasiness about the acceptance of a Presbyterian establishment in part of the United Kingdom. By contrast the enthusiastic welcome given to the Union by dissenters, particularly Presbyterians, in England only helped to add to the unease of the Anglican establishment.

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<sup>2</sup> Mary Margaret Stewart, ‘Webster, Alexander (1707–1784)’, *ODNB*, article/28939.

<sup>3</sup> James Webster, *Lawful Prejudices against an Incorporating Union with England; or, some modest Considerations on the sinfulness of this Union, and the Danger following from it to the Church of Scotland*, (Edinburgh 1707), 5.

<sup>4</sup> [James Hodges], *The Rights and Interests of the Two British Monarchies, With a Special Respect to An United or Separate State .Treatise III*, (London 1706), 49.



The Act of Union produced a vast number of sermons to mark the occasion, many of them preached on 1 May, all of them acclaiming it but also indicating different degrees of comfort with the religious terms of the Union. William Talbot (1659-1730),<sup>5</sup> the Bishop of Oxford, was given the task of preaching before the Queen in St Paul's Cathedral on the day the act came into force. Taking Psalm 133 as his text his address was remarkably free of too much detail except for a sudden passage comparing interest rates in England with those in France. For the bishop the unity spoken of by the Psalmist implied unity in four things: judgement and opinion; hearts and affections; interests; and endeavours to promote the common good. For him Union was valuable as bringing an end to the dissensions and feuds of previous centuries and offering opportunities in trade although not, he pointed out, in equal measure.<sup>6</sup> Clearly very guarded in all that he said his remarks in dealing with the idea of union of opinions perhaps suggests an assumption that a united church order would come in time:

If where there are Differences, those that are on the side of Authority, would treat those that differ from them with Gentleness and Tenderness, in Meekness instructing them that oppose, using all kind and Christian Methods to convince and restore them, and waiting with Patience 'till God shall give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.<sup>7</sup>

But if the bishop was vague and generally not too specific other Anglican preachers were rather more direct in their expectations of British Church union. Dr Thomas Manningham (d.1722)<sup>8</sup>, a high church Tory, chaplain to the Queen, and future bishop of Chichester devoted a large proportion of his thanksgiving sermon to religious unity and told the parishioners of St Andrew's Holborn that:

This is as yet, but a Union of Parliaments and Trade, and Temporal Interest, but not of Divine Worship, and Ecclesiastical Government; however, by following Things which make for Peace, and wherewith one may edifie another, we may by God's Blessing, come in time, to all that is desireable in such a Union too: And it will become us to live in such a

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<sup>5</sup> 'Talbot, William', *ODNB*, article/26945.

<sup>6</sup> William Talbot, *A Sermon Preach'd before the Queen at the Cathedral-Church of St Paul, On May the First 1707*, (London 1707), 10, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Talbot, *Sermon Preach'd before the Queen*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Donald Gray, 'Manningham, Thomas', *ODNB*, article/17983.

Preparation of Minds and Hearts, that we may be ready to receive the Proposals of a Religious Agreement, when any fair Occasion shall be given, or any prudent Steps made towards it.<sup>9</sup>

The promotion of the Gospel in humility, meekness and love would eventually win over hearts and minds. As he predicted, with perhaps rather more optimism than the circumstances actually allowed:

The Government of the Church by Bishops will not long continue to be such a frightful Thing to the common People of Scotland, when they shall be better acquainted with the Piety and Humility, as well as Learning, of those who are placed amongst us in that higher Order; and when they shall have Patience to observe, what able and constant Enemies they are to the Corruption and Tyranny of the Church of Rome... The Liturgy, which was once unseasonably forced upon them, will have quite another Appearance, when they shall see the Regularity of our Worship, and how comely we serve God in full congregations, and into what a solid, peaceable and lasting Piety it builds up those who frequently attend the publick service.

When any of Them shall please to come into our orderly Assemblies, they will be better convinc'd of its excellent Use and Advantage, than Arguments and Writings can persuade 'em; when they perceive us glorifying of God, with one Heart and Mouth, in wholesome Forms of Praise and Prayer, and in the humble Posture of an Adoring People; They too will fall down on their knees, and worship God, and report, that God is in us of a Truth.<sup>10</sup>

In Oxford the Rev Charles Bean, fellow of Merton College and chaplain to the Earl of Peterborough, was accused, after preaching the University sermon, of displaying insufficient zeal for the Established Church.<sup>11</sup> Yet his sermon included the hope that a religious union would follow eventually:

But a rigid Justice, and a bare Observation of the Laws, will not produce all that Happiness which we hope for from this Union, we must add to these, convincing Testimonies of our Brotherly Love, and Affection; we must shew kindness to the Branches newly grafted upon us, as well as to those of the antient Stock. How do we know, but that it may please God, so far to bless such a Christian Temper, as that it may in his due time, consummate our Reconciliation, by disposing of their Hearts to receive

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Manningham, *A Sermon upon the Union of the Two Kingdoms, Preached in the Parish Church of St. Andrew Holborn, May the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1707*, (London 1707), 10.

<sup>10</sup> Manningham, *Sermon upon the Union*, 13-14.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Bean, *A Sermon Preach'd before the University of Oxford, On the First of May, 1707*, (London 1707), i.



our Primitive Discipline, and to partake of our Excellent Communion; and to unite themselves with us, in a Spiritual, as well as a Temporal Interest? When by a prudent, and charitable Conduct, we have prevailed upon them to lay aside all Prejudices to our Persons, they will with Attention, impartially consider the Force of our Reasons: They will be inclined to be of the Same Mind with those, who they are satisfied, aim at nothing, but their Peace, and Welfare.<sup>12</sup>

Many Anglican preachers saw the Union as the culmination of a long process of the uniting of the various divisions that characterised English history from Saxon times, through the Wars of the Roses and wars between England and Scotland.<sup>13</sup> For many preachers the military and political advantages conferred by the Union more than outweighed the difficulties of tolerating the existence of the Kirk. As the Rev Charles Williams told his congregation in Middlesex, "It were much to be desir'd indeed, that this Nation could be more firmly united, not only in its Secular, but in its Religious Interests: but such a comprehension as this (I'm afraid) is much above the reach of Human Wisdom to bring about."<sup>14</sup> The Union – which was seen in providential terms<sup>15</sup> - helped to secure the Protestant succession and provided an extra line for the country's defence. Some Anglicans were prepared to begin to think in terms of a mutual toleration of the different establishments. Deuel Pead, minister of St James Clerkenwell and chaplain to the Duke of Newcastle, asked:

Why should any be frightened, and conclude, that because the kingdoms are united, therefore the Kirk of Scotland must over-run the Church of England? Is our Doctrine less orthodox, or our Discipline less consonant to the Primitive Constitution now than heretofore? Or are the Minds of People become so fickle, as of a sudden to leave the good old way? .... He deserveth not the Name of Prudent who, in Company and Conversation, can comport with nothing but what is agreeable and pleasing. The sincerity of his Religion also is questionable, who accounts

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<sup>12</sup> Bean, *A Sermon Preach'd before the University*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Deuel Pead, *The Honour, Happiness, Safety of Union or, a Sermon upon the Uniting England and Scotland. Preach'd at the Parish Church of St. James Clerkenwell, May 1 1707*, (London 1707), 5-6. Giles Dent, *A Thanksgiving Sermon Preach'd on the First Day of May, 1707 on Occasion of the Happy Union between England and Scotland*, (London 1707), 25. A similar view was expressed by the Baptist, Joseph Stennett, *A Sermon Preach'd on the First of May, 1707 Being the Day Appointed for a Publick Thanksgiving for the Happy Union of England and Scotland*, (London 1707), 27.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Williams, *The Blessedness of Union in a Sermon Preach'd upon the First Day of May, 1707. At the Parish-Church of Thistleworth in Middlesex, Being a Day of Thanksgiving for the Happy Union between England and Scotland*, (London 1707), 15.

<sup>15</sup> Dent, *A Thanksgiving Sermon*, 22.



all that differ from him in Opinion, no better than Publicans and Sinners.<sup>16</sup>

Such a view was usually visible in the latitudinarian wing of the Anglican Church but an acceptance of the Kirk, although more as a fully fledged partner in a Protestant front against Romanism, could be detected amongst Anglican evangelicals too.

For his part the maverick High Calvinist Anglican John Edwards (1637-1716)<sup>17</sup> saw the religious possibilities of the Union as being of far greater importance than anything else. With the Church of Scotland the Church of England was united against an impressive array of enemies including Judaism, Paganism, Islam, Deism, Popery, Pelagianism and Arminianism. They were united against these errors in the origin of their reformed faith:

Any Impartial Man may discern the sense of the Church of England in these Points, by looking into her Articles and Homilies, and into the Writings of the Old Conformists and Episcopal Clergy, who perfectly agreed with the Puritans in these Doctrines. They esteem'd these as Christian Verities belonging to the very Foundation. They held them to be the great Ramparts and Bulwarks of Christianity. And herein they were back'd by the Church of Scotland, which unanimously Professed these Doctrines, and held them to be the Test and Barriers of the Protestant Religion. Thus the Church (I had almost call'd it the Kirk) of England, and that of our Neighbours were One.<sup>18</sup>

In fact Edwards's greatest objection was towards Arminianism within the Church of England and he hoped

That by the Concurrence of our Brethren in Scotland, who are now one with us, the number and strength of those that profess the Sound Doctrine of our Church will be augmented.<sup>19</sup>

And ultimately

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<sup>16</sup> Peard, *The Honour, Happiness, Safety of Union*, 12-13.

<sup>17</sup> C. J. Robinson, 'Edwards, John', *ODNB*, article/8545.

<sup>18</sup> John Edwards, *One Nation, and One King A Discourse on Ezek. XXXVII. 22 Occasion'd by the Happy Union of England and Scotland which Commenc'd on May the 1<sup>st</sup> 1707*, (London 1707), 9.

<sup>19</sup> Edwards, *One Nation, and One King*, 11.



By our Union with Scotland, we shall learn strictness of Discipline, the want of which, our Church and Church-men have complain'd of a long time.<sup>20</sup>

Curiously all the benefits which Edwards cited as likely to flow from a closer Union with the Church of Scotland were listed by James Webster and James Hodges as reasons why the Kirk should keep its distance from the Church of England. As Webster observed:

The Church of England signes the 39 Articles, (as the B. of Sarum acknowledgeth) as *Symbolum fidei* and not merely *vinculum pacis*, and yet Preach, Write, argue, against those Articles: do they not advance Heresies and Blasphemies without any check or control from within or without?<sup>21</sup>

But John Edwards was not representative of a large body of opinion within his own communion, although it was found in elements of the dissenting tradition. For instance the Baptist minister and brother in law of Daniel Williams, Joseph Stennett (1663-1713),<sup>22</sup> was hopeful of a prelude to wider Protestant unity. He observed that:

Her Majesty and the Parliament of both Nations, by concurring in this Act of Union, have sufficiently signify'd to the World, that the different Sentiments of Protestants in Matters of Religion, are very consistent with their living peaceably together under the same Government, and being mutually serviceable to the Publick, according to their several Capacitys and Stations.

It followed on from this that:

What Advantages this Union gives us against both our intestine and foreign Enemys, 'tis easy to discern; and we hope a little time will further explain how much it will strengthen the Hands, as well as clear the Hearts of the Reform'd in other parts of Europe; And who knows how much it may make way for the Re-establishment of the Reformation in those Countrys, from whence it has been extirpated by all the Methods of Treachery and Violence?<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Edwards, *One Nation, and One King*, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Webster, *Lawful Prejudices*, 5, 11, 12.

<sup>22</sup> S. L. Copson, 'Stennett, Joseph', *ODNB*, article/26360.

<sup>23</sup> Stennett, *A Sermon Preach'd on the First of May*, 27-28.

There were few Anglicans who had such an expectation of the Union and, in fact, those in the Kirk who held to a similar theology as Edwards or Stennett, such as James Webster, were least supportive of the Union. In addition it tended to be those who held to a broader theology on both sides of the border who were to find common ground for co-operation.

One major characteristic of Anglican preachers and writers on the Union was a tendency to view the development from a purely English point of view. So it was the culmination of English history, a defensive barrier for England against potential enemies and a means of augmenting English commerce. The Kirk was looked upon largely as a body in need of being brought into conformity with the Episcopal system, although there was also some expression of the need for a mutual toleration. There was, here, a pronounced difference between the views of many Anglicans and those of English dissenters. Amongst the dissenters there was widespread enthusiasm for the Union and the possibility of being united with a part of the Kingdom where Presbyterianism was established was a source of unbridled joy. As Daniel Williams commented on the effects of the Union on “the church by law established....since the union this may refer to North Britain which is as truly the British Church as that of South Britain formerly called England.”<sup>24</sup> Undoubtedly because of this dissenters in England were early and positive articulators of a sense of Britishness.

In his sermon on 1 May 1707 Joshua Oldfield took Ezekiel chapter 37 verse 22 as his text, ‘Israel and Judah made one Kingdom.’ He kept fairly close to an exegesis of the text and avoided any confrontational statements, yet its year of publication was given as *Unionis Britannicae* 1 and Oldfield refers frequently to the northern and southern parts of Great Britain interpreting events from a British rather than English perspective:

It may be said of Great Britain, that we have been happily separated long since from the World about us, and....Not only divided by a Fence of Water, which also serves to supply us richly from abroad, but also

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 20 May 1708. GUL MS Gen 206/66.



encircled with in the Arms of Special Providence, and enclos'd within a peculiar Covenant.<sup>25</sup>

The nature of the Union between Israel and Judah was

more than Barely Federal, it was to be an Incorporating Union: They were to become one Nation, to have one Common Nature, together with a Common Interest, Civil Priviledges in Common, Councils joining together, and forming united Counsels for the Common Good.<sup>26</sup>

And it was a spiritual union in practice if not in name:

They were to have more of God's presence in his Church, being so united....Such a presence God will afford, and to such blessed Purposes and Effects, to his united People, who are happily agreed in substance, tho' there may remain some shadows of Difference; which are indeed but shadows whilst the Common Head Christ Jesus is truly held; and that they stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind striving together for the Faith of the Gospel....For if the Civil Incorporation shall be advanc'd into that Spiritual Union, which is between Christ and Believers, they shall then be built up together as an Habitation of God, thro' the Spirit; till they happily find that Mercy is indeed built up for ever, and the Faithfulness of God established with them in the Heavenly Happiness and Glory.<sup>27</sup>

Oldfield avoided making any explicit claims for the impact of the Union on the position of dissenters in his sermon but Christopher Taylor was prepared to be more outspoken. For him the Union had a religious as well as a civil purpose.

This would be a great Day indeed, if this Union of the Two Kingdoms would terminate in such an hearty Love and Charity: Then shall we walk together as those that are agreed, in the great Points relating to Religious and Civil Affairs, and resolve to bear with, and indulge one another in lesser Matters: May God, who hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hands, create in us all such a Christian Temper as this.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Joshua Oldfield, *Israel and Judah made one Kingdom: A Sermon Preach'd May the First, 1707 Being the Day appointed for Publick Thanksgiving upon the Union of England and Scotland, Commencing on that Day*, (London 1707), 6.

<sup>26</sup> Oldfield, *Israel and Judah made one Kingdom*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Oldfield, *Israel and Judah made one Kingdom*, 11-12.

<sup>28</sup> Christopher Taylor, *A Thanksgiving-Sermon, Preach'd on the First Day of May, 1707. On Occasion of the Happy Union between England and Scotland*, (London 1707), 8.

But perhaps even more important for Taylor were the possible civil benefits that would accrue, especially for the dissenters, in terms of equality before the law. The whole state had suffered by the persecution of religious dissent, a new opportunity now arose:

And when we thus reflect upon our past Follies, 'tis to be hop'd, we may be inclin'd to lay aside those narrow, peevish Principles, by which Religion hath been confined to a Party, to the Exclusion of all that are not of that Party, from the Church of Christ, from the Communion of Saints, from Gospel-Privileges and Sacraments, and from all Claim to the Acceptance of God, or the Service of their Country. As if such as differ'd in a few trivial Points, were to be cut off, not only from the common salvation of Christ, but from the common Benefits of Civility and Humility among Men.<sup>29</sup>

No state, he argued, could be great or powerful, just or happy if some loyal subjects were treated unfairly:

For how can a State be great, that cannot encourage and protect all its Subjects that are faithful and serviceable to it? How can it be Just, if those who administer it, must cherish a Party, and oppress and destroy the rest, merely for some supposed Error in opinion, when they are as observant of the Laws and Constitution, as any of their Fellow-Subjects can be? How can it be Happy, when the Right-hand shall be continually lifted up to beat and wound the Left. Then the whole Body Politick must be in Pain, and will naturally sympathize with the afflicted Part. In fine, How can it be Powerful, when by such Methods, great Numbers of faithful and useful subjects shall be render'd indifferent in supporting it whenever a Crisis comes?<sup>30</sup>

For Taylor the new constitutional arrangements offered new opportunities that were tied up with notions of Britishness and a united Protestantism:

What a glorious Prospect have we this Day before us! Both Parliaments are united into One: Both zealous, and well qualified to be Healers of their Breaches, and Restorers of Paths to dwell in: For which the Generations to come shall call them blessed....Liberty! That sacred Plant (which flourishes no where as in our British Soil) is now fenc'd and hedg'd about with the most inviolable Laws and Constitutions; it is now cultivated by a greater Number of wise, faithful, watchful, valiant Patriots than ever....Wherefore if the People of Britain shall now heartily unite in

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<sup>29</sup> Taylor, *A Thanksgiving-Sermon*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Taylor, *A Thanksgiving-Sermon*, 10.



the true Protestant Interest and Worship; and unanimously agree to serve their God, according to the real Dictates of their Consciences; if they shall reform their Manners, and cleanse themselves from those Evils which God hath had so long a Controversy with them for. If they shall unite in their Affections, and cordially seek the Good of one another, banishing all dividing Principles, Lusts and Practices. If they shall be stedfastly loyal to the Queen; and resolve to support the Protestant Religion, and the Civil Government; If they shall faithfully adhere to the Protestant succession; Then may we all say, Great shall be the Day of Britain.<sup>31</sup>

For Daniel Williams the Union was a great mercy to both England and Scotland and a means of glorifying God. For him continuing divisions based on religious differences was to fall prey to selfishness and bigotry:

But what pretension can any make to prudence or Christianity, who dare indulge either of these evils, to the reproach of what they call union, and to the danger of what should be cultivated as such? I would call that envious selfishness only foolish, if it were not more than devilish; for you grudge the weal of a fellow-member, and fret at the advantage of your own country, seeing the wealth and honour of every single person, contributes to make Britain more rich and honourable; and every good-natur'd subject will find his account in the common good, while the envious, to his own damage, quarrels with God's beneficence, and his brother's right. As for bigotry, I have already called it horrid, because of its unreasonable grounds, and destructive effects. But if this can alienate the minds of our united nation, it must be an irreligious heat for what none but knaves or ideots will call religion. We are the same in the essentials of Christianity, and of the protestant religion too. Men shall find that these contain all that can make them religious in God's account: When both the established national churches contain the grounds of all true Christian love, other regards or dislikes must proceed from carnal interest, or base inclinations. If God will form mens spirits to answer the present providence, this incorporating union will put an end to prejudices, dispose to mutual forbearance, and inspire all with such generous and wise sentiments, as to regard the interests of others, as what the common weal is concerned in. We shall manage our selves worthy of this union, if we treat one another as members of the same body, fellow citizens of the same commonwealth and country.<sup>32</sup>

The theme of Britishness was developed by many dissenting ministers in their publications in subsequent years. For instance Edmund Calamy published *God's Concern for his Glory in the British Isles; and the Security of Christ's*

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<sup>31</sup> Taylor, *A Thanksgiving-Sermon*, 15, 17-18.

<sup>32</sup> Daniel Williams, *A Thanksgiving-Sermon Occasioned by the Union of England and Scotland. Preached May 1, 1707 in Practical Discourses*, vol 2, (London 1738), 270-1.



*Church from the Gates of Hell* in 1715, a detailed account of Christianity and its development in Britain as a whole. As dissenters began to be divided by arguments over the necessity or otherwise to the Westminster and other confessions it was those who took the 'New Light' or non-subscribing view who were particularly keen to emphasise their Britishness. This was equally true of Ireland as well as England where James Kirkpatrick (c.1676–1743),<sup>33</sup> one of the most prominent non-subscribing Presbyterian ministers, could note that the subduing of the Jacobite armies in Ireland was an example of the work of providence in the three kingdoms:

How God kept a godly Remnant in the midst of these broils at home, and had appointed Brittain for a Refuge to a great many more, ought not to be so soon forgotten. The Lord to shew his Presence with this Instrument, made him the Life of the Confederacy, and under himself the sole Preserver of all the ground he had gained in the late great Revolution.<sup>34</sup>

This was from a sermon written at the time of the death of William III. The growing sense of Britishness was frequently based on the events of the Revolution of 1688-9.

But by the time of the Union it was becoming increasingly disquieting for dissenters that their enthusiasm was not always shared by the Kirk. As we have seen William Tong wrote to John Stirling expressing concern over the "strange dissatisfaction that remains amongst you about the Union of the two Kingdoms; a thing which we here have expressed a great fondness for."<sup>35</sup>

An anonymously written dissenting pamphlet entitled *A Voice from the South or An Address from Some Protestant Dissenters in England to the Kirk of Scotland* expressed the overflowing enthusiasm of English dissenters for the Union and queried the reluctance of some in the Kirk to share in this enthusiasm. They would expect "Papists, Jacobites, men of dividing Principles or Jarring Interests" to oppose the Union but not "good Men, Men of Religion, of sobriety,

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<sup>33</sup> A. D. G. Steers, 'Kirkpatrick, James', *ODNB*, article/15674.

<sup>34</sup> [James Kirkpatrick], *A Sermon Occasion'd by the King's Death, and Her Present Majesty's Accession to the Crown*, [Belfast? 1702?], 15.

<sup>35</sup> William Tong to John Stirling, 14 July 1707. GUL MS Gen 206/35.



Men that had suffered such severe things under the Tyranny of former Reigns."<sup>36</sup>

The writer continued:

The Dissenters in *England* look upon themselves to have but one Interest with you: And, as they have earnestly pray'd to God Almighty, to bring this Joyful Day to Light, so they, with their utmost Chearfulness, are day by day giving Thanks for the Blessing, as it is your Safety equally with their own; They rejoice, That Heaven has heard their Prayers, and have no sorrow before them, save that which arrises from the Mortification they have, to see some among you not so free to join with them, and whose Eyes are not open to the great Blessing of this Union equally with theirs.<sup>37</sup>

There were Scots voices raised in favour of the Union but the arguments they advanced were based more on the economic benefits rather than religious affiliation.<sup>38</sup> But dissenters did have contacts with leading members of the Church of Scotland who they could try and persuade to promote a shared vision of Union that was grounded on a shared notion of religion. Perhaps the most prominent amongst these was William Carstares who was well acquainted with London dissenters and was more than willing to collaborate with them, indeed he was denounced by Robert Wodrow as one of the "modern Presbyterians....of the court [who] have got new light."<sup>39</sup> But Stirling was almost equally as important at the time of the Union. Stirling succeeded William Wishart as moderator of the general assembly in 1707 and John Shute was in regular contact with him in the approach to the Union. By November 1706 Shute was able to tell Stirling

that the Torys dare shew less zeal ag[ains]t it, & the Whigs & more particularly the Dissenters greater zeal for it now they take it to be nearer being effected than when it was at a greater distance...so I think I have this reason to think the Union more necessary that I find it desir'd by the Queen her Ministry & all good people every day more impatiently.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *A Voice from the South or An Address from Some Protestant Dissenters in England to the Kirk of Scotland*, (n.p. n.d.), 2.

<sup>37</sup> *A Voice from the South*, 4.

<sup>38</sup> See [John Arbuthnot], *A Sermon Preach'd to the People, at the Mercat-Cross of Edinburgh; On the Subject of the Union*, (London 1707).

<sup>39</sup> Wodrow to Ridpath, 21 June 1706, *Abbotsford Miscellany*, 397 quoted in Colin Kidd 'Religious realignment between the Restoration and Union', in John Robertson (ed.), *A Union for Empire Political Thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge 1995), 165.

<sup>40</sup> John Shute, Tofts in Essex, to John Stirling, 18 November 1706, GUL MS Gen 206/20.

Even the opposition that was becoming visible in Scotland did not dampen the dissenters' eagerness to see it brought into being. As Shute told Stirling:

the Tumults & divisions that there are among the Revolutionists in Scotland make all honest men here more impatient of the Union instead of making them more Indifferent ab[ou]t it... That will let you into Trade at the same time that it secures your Church & plucks up Persecution & Tyranny in both Kingdoms by the Roots.<sup>41</sup>

But there was widespread resistance to the idea of Union. In Glasgow there were riots in 1706 and James Brown (d.1714),<sup>42</sup> minister at the Cathedral and for ten years dean of the Faculty, told Stirling "I wish our Parl[iamen]t would desist from meddling any more about an union for in all appearance our land is like to be a field of blood."<sup>43</sup>

Aware of this kind of resistance Shute constantly lobbied Stirling in the approach to the general assembly of 1707, urging him to get the Church of Scotland to declare in favour of the Union.<sup>44</sup> He tried to outline the attractions of the Union for the Kirk but for English dissenters the main motivation was the very strong hope that the Union would bring about an easing of their political circumstances. The prospect of the Union was not welcomed by the High Church party:

The High Church have lost very much of their Esteem with all good & wise men by opposing the Union. Tis plain to People here that this opposition proceeds from nothing but Biggotry Self Interest & faction. They are afraid by this Union they shall lose their power to persecute peaceable Dissenters: That their party will be weakened.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time Daniel Williams was lobbying Carstares to promote the Union within the Church of Scotland:

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<sup>41</sup> John Shute, London, to John Stirling, 17 December 1706. GUL MS Gen 206/21.

<sup>42</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 199.

<sup>43</sup> James Brown, Glasgow to John Stirling 15 November 1706. GUL MS Gen 204/84.

<sup>44</sup> John Shute, Lincoln's Inn, to John Stirling, 1 January 1707. GUL MS Gen 206/22. John Shute, London, to John Stirling, 13 February 1707. GUL MS Gen 206/23.

<sup>45</sup> John Shute, London, to John Stirling, 13 March 1707. GUL MS Gen 206/24.



No man is more convinc'd that the Lord Jesus has an interest depending in Scotland, than I am: and therefore ha[ve] concerned my self in your affairs; among other things (as circumstances stood) to persuade the Min[iste]rs to declair themselves as like as might be, till the affair of the union was decided, because they run a danger both at home and here. But now that the union is almost completed; I think some steps of the Commission of the Assembly with your presbyteries haveing givn an ventage of dissatisfaction here, and also a handle to our enemies, I think it were advisabl[e], that the Commission at the period of the affair w[oul]d consult the common interest, if they agreed in an approbation of it.

But Williams and the English dissenters were also aware of the need for the Kirk to show some degree of generosity towards Scottish Episcopalian dissenters, this would have ramifications not just for England but also for Ireland:

And yet I must be so faithfull, as to wish some way or other your Par[liamen]t would insert the removall of the Sacramental Test from Scots law in all places, for I doubt not a compliance in our Parl[iamen]t. And whatever some suggest, it will be more difficult to be obtained after the union (when so great a suspected body are to receive the advantage) than to free us from it after your exemption leads us, and your votes assist therein. We are endeavoring to Assist Ireland in that matter, but you can most effectually reach their desire, which is of importance to the general security. The good Lord direct you, and may posterity reap the good effects of this union, which as matters stood between the two nations, was absolutely necessary: and yet at first I c[oul]d not propose any thing to incline thereto, without a regard to this test; for its obvious, how dangerous it will prove to ha[ve] all your military officers at least detest you: tho I'm perswaded that while men of the Revolution principl ha[ve] the ascendant, your ch[urch] is safe; and it's the better served, in that we shall never admit an addition of Prelates in our Parl[iamen]t.<sup>46</sup>

It was important to Presbyterians in England that their co-religionists in Scotland were prepared to advocate an equivalent toleration of Episcopalians in the north as had been granted to them in 1689. Some years later Jonathan Swift brought attention to Presbyterian inconsistency when it came to toleration:

As to the *Presbyterians* allowing Liberty of Conscience to those of Episcopal Principles, when their own *Kirk* shall be predominant; their Writers are so universally agreed in the Negative.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Daniel Williams, Hoxton to William Carstares, 14 January 1706, EUL DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/45-46.

<sup>47</sup> Jonathan Swift, *The Advantages Proposed by Repealing the Sacramental Test, Impartially Considered*, Dublin 1732, in Herbert David (ed.), *Irish Tracts 1728-1733*, (Oxford 1955), 247-8.

When the suggestion was first made in 1703 that toleration should be extended to Scotland opposition had been stated in the strongest possible terms. James Webster thought such a step would be “the never-failing source of all Errors, and contrary to the Glory of God, the Purity of His Church, and Salvation of Souls.” He spoke for many within the Kirk when he suggested that tolerating Episcopalianism in Scotland would be to tolerate

A set of Men, who from Humor, Resentment and Interest, not from Conscience are fond of, and actually already Exercise a Government which the Fundamental Constitution of this Nation, in our Claim of Right, Declares to be an Unsupportable Grievance; and maliciously oppose Presbytery.<sup>48</sup>

English dissenters were troubled with this perception of Presbyterianism and sought to get the Church of Scotland to develop a system of toleration. Consequently, despite the often vigorous opposition within Scotland, the gradual development in Britain of legal religious toleration was produced as a response to the changed political and constitutional circumstances of the Union. But, even so, not all dissenters supported the idea of an act of toleration for Scotland. In 1707 Daniel Defoe produced a pamphlet discussing religious toleration in Scotland whilst at the same time denying there was any truth in the belief, widely held even amongst English dissenters, that the Kirk did “crush, oppress, persecute, and use hardly the Ministers of the Episcopal Party.” After surveying the treatment of Episcopal ministers since 1690 Defoe thought in fact that

The Dissenters in England, even under all the Advantages of Tolleration, are as much persecuted as the Episcopal Clergy in Scotland; since not one of their Ministers can Preach, (the Quakers excepted) without taking the same Oaths: And not only so, but signing the Confession of Faith of the Establish'd Church, a few small Proviso's for their particular Principles only excepted.

Following Webster's argument he argued that the Episcopal church's existence was a result of their Jacobitism and for this reason toleration was a misnomer. If they wanted to be given toleration, he told them, they needed to

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<sup>48</sup> James Webster, *An Essay upon Toleration. By a Sincere Lover of the Church and State*, ([Edinburgh] 1703), 6, 18-19.



“regulate your Conduct so as Dissenters, and act so like Christians and Ministers, that your Friends in the Church of England may not be asham’d of you.”

Although in the end, he observed, “Persecution for conscience is inconsistent with, and contrary to the Principles of the Christian Religion.”<sup>49</sup>

Three years later, perhaps more out of a desire not to offend rather than any other motivation, Calamy assured Carstares that the English Presbyterians shared his aversion to granting toleration to Episcopalians in Scotland. Were it possible to grant it without “strengthening the interest of the Enemy of the Government, & weakening & Dividing the friends of it” he thought many would wish to see it, but at the present time it couldn’t be supported. But having said all that he still felt compelled to add a tentative rider suggesting that toleration might be unavoidable:

And yet I may freely tell you that we labour under some Difficulty in conversing with any Members of Parlaiment [sic], that are Friends of Liberty, to know what to say to them. When we are asked by Gentlemen of the Church of England, that are afraid it would hearten the fact[ion]s, & Divide the Kerk, to have a Toleration, what Persons of their Latitude can be suppos’d to say against it in a Publick Assembly, tis difficult to know what to Answer. For my Part I have been hard put to it in that case more than once: & it has been the same with others. Tis hard to give such evidence, as shall strike a Majority of a British House of Commons, were the matter to come into a Close Debate.<sup>50</sup>

The argument in the new situation of the Union for an equal measure of toleration throughout the United Kingdom was overwhelming.

Whether faced with the direct requests of Daniel Williams or the more subtle suggestions of Calamy, and although well disposed towards the English dissenters, Carstares and the like-minded leaders of the Kirk remained not keen on the idea of formal religious toleration in Scotland. Nevertheless, a church settlement began to form in Scotland that was able also to tolerate the continuance of Episcopal worship. In 1712 the Act of Toleration was passed for Scotland which allowed for Episcopal ministers to conduct worship according to

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<sup>49</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Presbyterian persecution examined. With an essay on the nature and necessity of toleration in Scotland*, (Edinburgh 1707), 7, 19, 31, 40.

<sup>50</sup> Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares 18 February 1710, EUL MS DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/124.

the liturgy of the Church of England. There was no enthusiasm for this within the Church of Scotland. At the time of its passing Carstares was in London together with Thomas Blackwell (c.1660-1728),<sup>51</sup> professor of divinity at Marischal College, Aberdeen, and Robert Baillie, minister at Inverness, to watch the progress of the toleration bill and oppose it or at least ameliorate its effects. They submitted a petition against the bill, but this had no effect. They wrote back to William Mitchell in Edinburgh, after the second reading of the bill in the House of Commons:

We are heartily sorry for the Bill, and so much the more that we conceive, not only the discipline of our church is much stricken at by it, but also that it is like to open a door to great corruption both in doctrine and worship...we are at a great losse in a matter of such consequence to know proper measures, it being a most intricate and perplexing juncture as possibly men could be trusted with.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the opposition of the Church of Scotland, toleration for Episcopal dissenters became the law in Scotland. It was a result of the Union that did not please the Kirk, although it had the overwhelming support of most dissenters in the southern Kingdom. But other developments from the Union were far more readily accepted by the Church of Scotland. In one case the Union instigated a period of close and mutually advantageous co-operation between the Church of Scotland and English dissent.

From the end of the seventeenth century onwards there was a growing awareness of the need for some kind of missionary strategy to the wider world within most branches of Protestantism. In England the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge was founded in 1699 with the original intention of encouraging charity schools and providing libraries. Two years later they extended their brief to carry out missionary work in North America. However, as an Anglican society closely linked to the bishops and clergy of the establishment it did not look with favour upon dissenters. There was no opportunity for dissenters to participate in this work in any way. But with the

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<sup>51</sup> Paul Wood, 'Blackwell, Thomas', *ODNB*, article/2543.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Baillie, William Carstares, Thomas Blackwell, London to William Mitchell, 17 January 1712, EUL La. II 407/11.



creation of the Union and the development of a similar Scottish society an opportunity arose for English dissenters to play a more confident role in public religious life through the support for certain Scottish religious institutions.

'The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands' was inspired by the foundation of the English society but grew out of the Society for the Reformation of Manners in Edinburgh.<sup>53</sup> Societies for the Reformation of Manners had grown up all over the British Isles from the 1690s and had proved successful at giving a religious and moral impetus to the state suppression of all manner of vice. Although the most prominent London society had been founded by London bishops they are an early example of successful co-operation between dissenters and churchmen at this time, and of religious zeal overcoming national and denominational boundaries. As the *Occasional Papers* recorded:

A Flood of open Immoralities, by the Countenance of Superiors, and Neglect of Laws, had overwhelmed the Land. All Places of public Resort abounded with Oaths and Lewdness. Houses of criminal Concourse and Entertainment were Numberless. Multitudes of every Rank and Order were Corrupt and Degenerate, setting the Example, and giving Encouragement to every Vice...In these Circumstances a considerable Number of wise and pious Men, of distinguished Zeal, several of Character and Condition among the different Parties of Protestants, began these Societies very quickly upon the Revolution.<sup>54</sup>

They were endorsed by leading dissenters and dissenting ministers preached to them in London and Dublin. When Daniel Williams preached to the societies of London and Westminster in 1698 he pointed out that "Ireland, as if blushing at engaging so late, when their distress and deliverance had been so astonishing – do even exceed your fervour, and Protestants of every communion in Dublin, account reformation their greatest business."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Edwin Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World: Dr Daniel Williams & the Scottish SPCK*, (London, 1996), 5. D.E. Meek, 'Scottish SPCK', *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, (Edinburgh 1993), 761-2.

<sup>54</sup> 'Of Societies for Reformation of Manners', *A collection of the Occasional Papers for the Year 1717. Vol. II No.9*, 11.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Williams, 'A Sermon Preached to the Societies for Reformation of Manners, May 16 1698', *Practical Discourses on Several Important Subjects*, 2 vols, (London 1738), 1, 390.

In Edinburgh the local Society for the Reformation of Manners agreed to establish a voluntary society to provide schools in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Although a school was set up and endorsement was received from the General Assembly the project was only partially successful.<sup>56</sup> It was only after the Act of Union and an awareness of the extensive interest in the project amongst English dissenters that the new society began to grow.

Soon after the Union Daniel Williams was canvassed for his support for the new Scottish Society by Stirling. It is clear from the oldest surviving letter from Williams to Stirling that he had clearly been asked for advice about finding support amongst London dissenters. He told Stirling:

I would be glad to know what progress you can make in that good design of propagating the Gospel; and hope w[ha]t I suggested for preventing excuses here will be minded in the framing of the Patent. Remove jealousys, and I doubt not assistance.<sup>57</sup>

Whatever Williams must have proposed for the patent seems to have been accepted by the framing body since on receiving a copy of the patent at the start of March 1709 he was able to tell Stirling that instead of giving £20 a year he would give £100 right away to the Scottish Society.<sup>58</sup> The Queen gave royal approval to the society in August 1708 and at the general assembly of 1709 the Kirk formerly established the society “for propagating the Knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ in the North, the Highlands and Islands, and Forreign parts of the World.”<sup>59</sup> The first meeting of the committee of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge was held in Edinburgh on 3

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<sup>56</sup> ‘Act anent Erecting School, in the Highlands’, *The principal acts of the General Assembly, of the Church of Scotland; conveened at Edinburgh, March 16th. 1704*, (Edinburgh 1704), 15-16. ‘Act anent Schools in every Parish, and a Contribution thereanent’, *The principal acts of the General Assembly, of the Church of Scotland; conveened at Edinburgh the 8th of April 1707*, (Edinburgh 1707), 9-11.

<sup>57</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 24 February 1708, GUL MS Gen 206/51.

<sup>58</sup> Daniel Williams to John Stirling, 10 March 1709, GUL MS Gen 206/73. He seems to have written to Carstares on the same terms, a note exists of a letter making this point - see Packet of Notes in the handwriting of Charles Mackie, being extracts from Principal Carstares’ Papers, EUL La. II 685/22.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Act and Recommendation for furthering the Design of propagating Christian Knowledge’, *The principal acts of the General Assembly, of the Church of Scotland; conveened at Edinburgh, the 14th day of April, 1709*, (Edinburgh 1709), 8-10.



November 1709.<sup>60</sup> The Act of the Assembly noted the increase in subscriptions and that “the Zeal and forwardness of others, both in England and the United Provinces in carrying on such a Work, hath been blessed of GOD, with wonderful and Comfortable Success.”<sup>61</sup> In fact English dissenters quickly became an important aspect of the work of the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. The correspondence between Stirling and Carstares, on the one hand, and figures such as Williams and Calamy on the other in the immediate aftermath of the Union helped to boost the profile of the Society and attract financial support across the spectrum of dissent – from subscribers and non-subscribers, and from Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists. Christopher Taylor seems to have been particularly successful in winning Baptist support, not just for his projected dissenting college in Edinburgh, but also for the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge and had assembled a list of people “who will Be very Industriouse to procure Large Subscriptions to that Charity.”<sup>62</sup> It seems to have been part of Carstares’ design to encourage English dissenters into supporting this venture, although some in Scotland clearly felt a line should be drawn to limit just who was participating. Calamy wrote back to Carstares in February 1710:

We have had several Meetings about what you propos’d to us, relating to the society for propagating Christian Knowledge, & are likely to send you an Ample return of names by Mr Dundass: But won’t Mr Webster be frighted to find a number of Anabaptists among them?<sup>63</sup>

Carstares was also keen to establish a good relationship with the Anglican SPCK. He corresponded with Henry Newman (1670-1743),<sup>64</sup> the Massachusetts born Harvard graduate who became the secretary of the Anglican Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and established a co-operative alliance with him. Newman helped supply books for the Scottish Society and asked Carstares to supply a “Copie of the Act of the General Assembly in N. Britain in favour of

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<sup>60</sup> Hew Dalrymple, North Berwick, to William Carstares, 26 September 1709, EUL DK 1.1<sup>2</sup>/94-5.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Act and Recommendation for furthering the Design of propagating Christian Knowledge’, *The principal acts of the General Assembly, of the Church of Scotland; conveened at Edinburgh, the 14th day of April, 1709*, (Edinburgh 1709), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Christopher Taylor, London, to William Carstares, 19 September 1709, EUL MS La. II 407/9.

<sup>63</sup> Edmund Calamy, Westminster to William Carstares 18 February 1710, EUL MS DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/124.

<sup>64</sup> Leonard W. Cowie, ‘Newman, Henry’, *ODNB*, article/39693.

Charity Schools, hoping to find therein some hints that may be of use for their Government in these parts.”<sup>65</sup> Newman also sent Carstares details of his Society’s method of running charity schools and supplied him with information on the price of Bibles from his suppliers.<sup>66</sup> Newman reported to Carstares on a debate in the House of Lords in 1713 in which it was voted to make inviolable “the Sacred Union of the 2 kingdoms”<sup>67</sup> and he very willingly became a correspondent of the Scottish Society.

In fact the London correspondents became a very important aspect of the Scottish Society’s work. Many of them were, inevitably, expatriate Scots but the Society was also well supported by all branches of dissent, including many ministers. Although there were Baptists and Congregationalists on the list Presbyterians were the largest group and many of the trustees of the Presbyterian Fund and Dr Williams’s Trust - both subscribers and non-subscribers after 1719 - were among them. Significant too are the large numbers of dissenting laymen who became subscribers to the Society.<sup>68</sup>

No doubt the key to this prolonged success, that lasted throughout the eighteenth century, was the early support of Daniel Williams. He was so impressed with the potential of the society, particularly in terms of overseas missionary work and the opportunities for dissenters to support that, that he gave a substantial endowment to it. As early as 1710 a meeting of sixty men of different denominations had met in London to offer support for the new Scottish venture and Daniel Williams was put in charge of collecting a list of supporters.<sup>69</sup> But as with Glasgow University it was a generous endowment from Williams that made the most fundamental difference. In his will he left £100 at 6% interest but also added a more substantial bequest:

I do also give to the said Society at the End of one Year after they have sent Three qualify’d Ministers to abide in Foreign Infidel Countries, all

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<sup>65</sup> Henry Newman, London to William Carstares, 18 June 1709, EUL DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/117.

<sup>66</sup> Henry Newman, London to William Carstares, 7 October 1710, EUL DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/129. Henry Newman, London to William Carstares, 2 June 1713. EUL DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/162.

<sup>67</sup> Henry Newman, London to William Carstares, 2 June 1713. EUL DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/162.

<sup>68</sup> ‘London Correspondent Members 1711-1792’, Edwin Welch, *Popish and Infidel*, 18-29.

<sup>69</sup> Edwin Welch, *Popish and Infidel*, 7.



my Lands and Tenements in and about Catworth in Huntingdonshire, being let at about Sixty Eight Pounds *per Ann.* To have and to hold as long as the said Society continues to carry on the said Attempt, for the Conversion of Infidel Countries, and that the members of the said Society are permitted to be freely elected.<sup>70</sup>

As with the bequest to Glasgow it took some time for this endowment to be put to use. The cause of the delay was not simply the long process in sorting out the complications of the will but also the fact that Williams was offering the Scottish SPCK a generous inducement to begin missionary work. Although this had been within their remit from the start they had successfully concentrated on founding schools and were in no hurry to embark on this new direction. In 1728 the Society decided that if there was to be a Presbyterian mission to North America then it should be supported by a sizeable body of correspondent members in London. This appeal produced a strong response. By November 1728 28 corresponding members had been found in London, by the next meeting in January 1729 this figure had risen to 73. Although it took a full twenty-two years from Daniel Williams's death for his bequest to be finally transferred to the Society, three missionaries to the Indians, who also doubled as chaplains to military bases, were in post by 1733 and a succession of missionary ventures followed on from this.<sup>71</sup> Through the co-operation of English dissenters and the Church of Scotland in the new situation of the Union an active missionary organisation had been established and set on foot, the Kirk had an overseas missionary arm and English dissenters were able to give a missionary expression to their faith.

English dissenters travelling to Glasgow University no longer felt they were studying in a foreign country. The traditional appellation of English students in Glasgow in the matriculation albums had always been *Anglus*, following the Union they now styled themselves *Anglo-Britannus*. In 1708 three English students matriculated at the University. Samuel Hallows entered the fourth class of Alexander Dunlop and Edward Braithwaite the third class of Gershom Carmichael. Both described themselves in the traditional terms of being

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<sup>70</sup> *Last Will and Testament...Daniel Williams*, 16-19.

<sup>71</sup> Edwin Welch, *Popish and Infidel*, 11-14.

*Anglus*. However, John Walker, who joined Braithwaite in Carmichael's class, described himself as *Anglo-Britannus*.<sup>72</sup> He set a trend for those following and the four English students in the next year and nine English students in the year after all identified themselves as being *Anglo-Britannus*. In 1712 the five new English students all described themselves as *Anglo-Britannus* and a solitary Scottish student described himself as *Scoto-Britannus*. However this designation seems never to have caught on amongst the Scottish students, only one other student used it, in 1715. The couple of Welsh students in this period (in 1715 and 1716) both preferred the appellation of *Cambro-Britannus*. But although there were five new *Anglo-Britanni* students in 1713 the enthusiasm for this method of designation soon began to wane. The new student in 1714 didn't use it and only two of the fourteen students in 1715 used it. *Anglus* again became the preferred term and the two out of twelve English arts students in 1718 who emphasised their Britishness in this way were the last to do so.<sup>73</sup>

Amongst the divinity students the situation was slightly different. Dissenting ministers - like Williams and Calamy - were always amongst those most eager to refer to England as South Britain and ministry students seem to have kept up this practice much longer. There was a tendency of some English students, particularly in the divinity classes, to give no national designation but between 1708 and 1721 English students overwhelming preferred to call themselves *Anglo-Britannus* and the one Welsh student *Cambro-Britannus*. None of the Irish students changed the form of their designation at this time with the almost unique exception of Francis Hutcheson. When he began his divinity studies in 1713 he described himself as *Britanno-Hibernus*.<sup>74</sup>

The use of such terms is evidence for the strong enthusiasm for the Union amongst English and Welsh dissenting students at Glasgow at this time. That they ceased to be used probably does not indicate a drop in support for the idea of Union but merely a waning of the initial desire to signal support for the constitutional arrangement after it ceased to be novel.

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<sup>72</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 190.

<sup>73</sup> See Appendix One.

<sup>74</sup> See Appendix Two. William Smith did the same in 1717.



But despite the difference of opinion over the question of toleration, those of a moderate or latitudinarian outlook on both sides of the border were prepared to develop a view that valued the Union as a means of religious co-operation. This was a view not shared by all factions of the Church of Scotland. James Webster did not trust the English dissenters whom he accused of declaring for moderate Episcopacy and Baxterian doctrine. He thought that “We have not many firm friends in England, we can rely on, and that we may come to be in great danger by the British Constitution.”<sup>75</sup> An element within the Kirk thought they had been failed by their leadership. As an anonymous pamphleteer had it: “if the Ministers of Edinburgh had been Faithful, and had the Lord with them, this would have caused all the Pulpits of Edinburgh to ring.”<sup>76</sup>

But, although, as Webster had warned,<sup>77</sup> the Union also inevitably meant toleration for Episcopalians, under the leadership of Carstares a strategy was devised which safeguarded the security of the Church of Scotland within the Union as a wholly novel situation of ecclesiastical pluralism developed in Britain. It was a step, produced through the interaction of moderate or New Light churchmen, which delivered to the new British state separate and distinct religious establishments in the different countries with a measure of toleration and a pragmatic recognition of the human limitations of different forms of church government. In part though this was based in Scotland on the centrality of the Confession of Faith. The ‘Act for Securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church-Government,’ one of the last acts of the Scottish Parliament, essentially defined the Kirk in terms of the Westminster Confession. This would be a major difference between the Church of Scotland and many Presbyterians in both Ireland and Scotland in the years to come.

But all Presbyterians, throughout the British Isles, shared an appreciation of the revolution settlement. Many of them, particularly the New Light or

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<sup>75</sup> Webster, *Lawful Prejudices*, 8-9.

<sup>76</sup> *A Speech In Season against the Union or a Smoaking Furnace and a Burning Lamp, and for the Lands Rights with an advice in end to turn to the Lord and recover his Rights that hath been rendered up; and Scotland's cause of Lamentation* [Edinburgh? 1706?], 7.

<sup>77</sup> Webster, *Lawful Prejudices*, 11.

latitudinarian element, saw the Union as a welcome fulfilment of the revolution of 1688-9. They also understood it as being part of a new political situation that had an impact on their civil rights and identity, consequently it was one of the features that led to the development of non-subscription. This was also true in Ireland even though it was not part of the Union. There was some small number of calls for an extension of the Union towards Ireland,<sup>78</sup> but these were not particularly significant. But in Ireland, those who were to become non-subscribers were amongst the first to enthusiastically promote a notion of Britishness. As Ian McBride phrases it:

Presbyterian propagandists moved away from sectarian modes of thought and reformulated their case against establishment Anglicanism with the aid of new political languages borrowed from England – mixed constitutionalism, Whiggish contract theory and a variety of the latitudinarian theology associated with Benjamin Hoadly.<sup>79</sup>

Outside of Scotland, rather than being an act against the state, non-subscription was a theological standpoint that accorded with the political settlement. James Kirkpatrick, a future non-subscriber, was already articulating these kinds of views in his substantial work of 1713, *An Historical Essay upon the Loyalty of Presbyterians in Great-Britain and Ireland from the Reformation to this present year 1713*. As the full title suggests the whole thrust of Kirkpatrick's writing was to prove the loyalty of Presbyterians throughout their history, in Britain and Ireland, and was an argument essentially for the rights of Presbyterians to pursue their own religion without interference by the state:

Another Notion of Loyalty as false as any of the former [infallibility of the pope or a ruler] is, That a Subject must be of his Prince's Religion, or the religion of the State. God is the Lord of Conscience, and therefore it does not belong to Caesar. Religion is of a Divine Original founded upon the Laws of God, and can't receive an higher Affront than to make it such an unstable and mutable Piece of Vanity, so precarious and uncertain as to be turn'd into all the shapes of human Policy, and modell'd by the

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<sup>78</sup> See David Hayton, 'Ideas of Union in Anglo-Irish Political Discourse, 1692-1720: Meaning and Use', *Political Discourse in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Ireland*, D. George Boyce, Robert Eccleshall and Vincent Geoghegan, (eds.), (Basingstoke 2001), 142-63.

<sup>79</sup> Ian McBride, 'Ulster Presbyterians and the Confessional State, c.1688-1733', *Political Discourse*, Boyce et al, 171.



variable Civil Constitutions in the World.<sup>80</sup>

Like the English dissenters Kirkpatrick was heartened by the Union as it brought a branch of Presbyterianism closer to the heart of power, and, in the new constitutional circumstances of two kinds of church establishments, gave an extra line of defence against hostile Episcopalians. After a long discussion of the relationship between Presbyterians and the magistrate refuting William Tisdall's claims he declared:

Thus I have vindicated the Principles of Presbyterians, from the Reproaches of this Author, and prov'd them to be natively PRODUCTIVE OF LOYALTY; and if they had not been truly such, it had been (at best) an Intolerable Weakness in Her Majesty & the British Parliament to have Establish'd them as a Fundamental of the Union. Her Majesty hath often declar'd, That she looks upon the Union of Great-Britain to be one of the Greatest Glories in her Reign; but if it be built upon such a Foundation as makes all Crown'd Heads Vassals to the Presbyterian Kirk, and consequently their Crowns but Petite Fifes of the Kirk's Grand Ecclesiastical Empire; 'twou'd be rather the Reproach than the Glory of her Reign.<sup>81</sup>

Ultimately Kirkpatrick's notion of loyalty rested upon a settlement across Britain that granted religious freedom:

The Dissenters have no Political Principles but what are founded upon and Agreeable to the Happy Civil Constitution and Limited Monarchy of Great-Britain and Ireland; which they look upon to be one of the best in the World; and therefore 'tis an Abuse put upon 'em, to call them Political Dissenters: For tho' they are Religious Dissenters, they are Political Conformists; And all such Conformists as agree not with them in Principles of Civil Policy, are Political non-Conformists.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> James Kirkpatrick, *An Historical Essay upon the Loyalty of Presbyterians in Great-Britain and Ireland from the Reformation to this Present Year 1713*, (Belfast 1713), 20.

<sup>81</sup> James Kirkpatrick, *An Historical Essay*, 68.

<sup>82</sup> James Kirkpatrick, *An Historical Essay*, 451.

## Chapter Five

“searching impartially into all that could be said on both sides of a question, for finding the truth”

*Teaching, student discipline and accusations of heresy in Glasgow and the development of non-subscription in England and Ireland*

Some years after the act of Union Daniel Defoe visited Glasgow. He thought it “a very fine city,” a “city of business” and “the face of trade” for both imports and exports, the only city in Scotland increasing in both, being well served by the Union. He was struck by the quality of the buildings in the city and thought it “the cleanest and beautifullest, and best built city in Britain, London excepted.”

His positive impression extended to the University:

The building is the best of any in Scotland of the kind; it was founded by Bishop Turnbull, Ann. 1454. but has been much enlarg'd since, and the fabrick almost all new built. It is a very spacious building, contains two large squares, or courts, and the lodgings for the scholars, and for the professors, are very handsome; the whole building is of freestone, very high and very august. Here is a principal, with regents and professors in every science, as there is at Edinburgh, and the scholars wear gowns, which they do not at Edinburgh. Their gowns here are red, but the Masters of Arts, and professors, wear black gowns, with a large cape of velvet to distinguish them.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the early decades of the eighteenth century Glasgow attracted large numbers of students from both Ireland and England. For students from Ireland, especially from Ulster, it was a direct and accessible route. In 1695 an Act of Parliament made arrangements for a weekly mail crossing between Donaghadee and Portpatrick, in 1711 this was increased to a daily service.<sup>2</sup> This gave plenty of opportunity for travel to Glasgow across the shortest sea route between Ireland and Britain. Once at the University not all students had to matriculate, this was only necessary if a student intended to graduate or if they

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, with Introductions by G.D.H. Cole and D.C. Browning, 2 vols, (London 1962), 2, 334-5.

<sup>2</sup> Fraser G. MacHaffie, *Portpatrick to Donaghadee. The Original Short Sea Route*, (Stranraer 2001), 10.



wished to vote in an election for the Rector. Students could, in fact, enter the university at any stage of the degree course, which accounts for the very short elapse of time for some students between matriculation and graduation.<sup>3</sup> In Glasgow all new students were placed in one of four classes (five after 1706 when a fifth class was added for those who needed instruction in Latin). Those who had spent some time studying in another academic institution might be permitted to go straight into the third, second or even first class according to their attainment. However, the matriculation albums of the University give a good indication of the proportion of students from England and Ireland who travelled to Glasgow to study. A regulation of 1659 required that matriculating students pay a fee of two, five or six shillings according to their relative wealth<sup>4</sup>. At matriculation all students signed their names in the albums and often gave some indication of their origins. Up to 1727 students added self-descriptions such as *Anglus*, *Scoto-Hibernus*, *Hibernus* or other variations of their country of origin or nationality, including, at times, the name of the city from which they originated. After 1728 more details were inserted by the professor of his particular class at matriculation but their national origins were still indicated at first. Only a very small proportion of students designated themselves as *Scotus* but clearly the majority of students must usually (although not inevitably) have been Scottish. Nevertheless not all English or Irish students always identify themselves as such and some of those with no given designation can be identified as coming from either England or Ireland. It is possible therefore that there may be others – no longer identifiable - who did not describe themselves as English or Irish but who should really be counted in those groups.

An analysis of the information published in the Matriculation Albums gives an indication of the consistent presence of English and Irish students in Glasgow stretching back to the time of the Act of Uniformity. In 1688 there was only one English student and one Irish student amongst the 75 who matriculated that year which is not surprising given the upheavals of the time. In 1690 there were only 17 matriculations and none of these were from outside Scotland but

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<sup>3</sup> W. Innes Addison, *The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow From 1728-1858*, (Glasgow 1913), xi.

<sup>4</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 138.

after that there was not another year in which there were no Irish matriculations and very few when no new students appear on the role from England. There are no new English students in 1698 but apart from 1711 there are no other years in the first half of the eighteenth century when no English students matriculate. Indeed only the years 1758, 1759, 1761 and 1769 are similarly devoid of English matriculations throughout the whole of the rest of the eighteenth century. Even more striking is the fact that from 1691 to 1800 there is not a single year without the matriculation of Irish students at Glasgow. Not all of these students would have been dissenters, a proportion of both the English students and those Irish students who were *Hibernus* or *Anglo-Hibernus* as opposed to *Scoto-Hibernus* would have belonged to the Established church in both countries, but there is no doubt that a majority would have been dissenters and a majority of them would have been Presbyterians.<sup>5</sup>

Glasgow University in the early eighteenth century must have provided a remarkable mix of students from all over the British Isles. Many of the students shared in a common reformed Presbyterian heritage but brought with them different legal and cultural backgrounds and theological reflections on their identities. M.A. Stewart has pointed out that it was not simply a question of Irish students crossing to Glasgow and picking up dangerous new liberal ideas: “at least some came to Glasgow because they knew and wanted what Glasgow could offer. In fact, the movement of ideas is as much a movement from Ireland to Scotland, and its roots lie in the civil disabilities of the Irish Dissenters.”<sup>6</sup>

But having said that, even before the appointment of John Simson in 1708, Glasgow was providing a framework for approaching theological enquiry that encouraged a questioning of traditional Calvinist doctrine.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix One.

<sup>6</sup> M.A. Stewart, 'Rational Dissent in early eighteenth-century Ireland', *Enlightenment and Religion*, 46.



During the Professorship of James Wodrow (1637-1707)<sup>7</sup> students were encouraged to meet together for informal discussion and consideration of the Scriptures. His son recorded:

The Saturday he left for meetings among the students themselves, for prayer, conference, and answering cases on practical subjects, in different societies into which the students classed themselves. Those private Christian meetings I may term them, were, for some years after I entered the divinity lessons, the pleasantest and most useful (for our souls) that we had. The members prayed by turns, three or four at a meeting, and more upon private fast days, before sacraments, and other extraordinary occasions. In the intervals of prayer, practical cases, which had been proposed to the members of the meeting to have their thoughts on, were answered, one or two at first, for the present satisfaction of real soul distress, without writing any thing on it, unless the party concerned saw fit to take notes of the answers, or the meeting to record them; and a third case, the answers to which were recorded by the clerk of the meeting, and by the preses and him, drawn up in mundo, and afterwards read, and, after correction, insert in a register the sentiments of all the meeting upon the subject proposed, taken as they sat. Ten, twelve, or fourteen were ordinarily present, and generally very great satisfaction was given in the head under consideration for three or four years after I came to be a member of these meetings, there was much Christian freedom used; nothing was ever carried out of our meetings; we were all like brethren, and deeply concerned to give satisfaction to one another's difficulties....And monthly, we had a general society of the three, four, or five private societies, where the cases or answers to practical questions in divinity, drawn up by the particular meetings, were read, and, when approven, were inserted in a book in an alphabetical order...it was one of the most solid and judicious systems of cases and practical divinity that hath been gathered; what is now become of them I know not.<sup>8</sup>

There can be little doubt that this provided the template for the Belfast Society, the group which did most to propagate non-subscription in Ireland. Certainly nothing could have been further from Professor Wodrow's intention but the result of certain of his students – particularly James Kirkpatrick – having imbibed this method of meeting for discussion and prayer was to recreate something similar amongst Presbyterian ministers in the North of Ireland. It was

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<sup>7</sup> L. A. Yeoman, 'Wodrow, James', *ODNB*, article/65447.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Wodrow, *Life of James Wodrow, AM Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, from MDCXCII to MDCCVII*, (Edinburgh 1828), 127-9. In fact Robert Wodrow seems later to have assembled the cases together and had them bound with an index – *Cases Answered by the Societys of the Students of Divinity under Mr Ja: Wodrow*, GUL MS Gen 343.



an adjunct to teaching that was continued under Wodrow's successor, John Simson.<sup>9</sup>

The Belfast Society began in 1705 and had Abernethy and Kirkpatrick amongst its leading members from the start. The Belfast Society attracted much hostile criticism after the storm broke over the question of subscription, criticism which was often repeated and increased by later historians. However, its origins were not marked by controversy. While certainly a novel procedure for Irish Presbyterian ministers there was nothing inherently disruptive in their activities. It was a gathering not only of ministers but also of students for the ministry and some laypeople who met to study the Bible and discuss issues of theology and church practice together. At each meeting two members were appointed to study a certain passage of the Old and New Testaments and give a paper on their understanding of the passage. They could also raise any doubts or problems that they had and someone could be appointed to answer these at the next meeting. In addition they made an attempt to pool resources so that all could keep abreast of the latest scholarship. A member would buy the latest book or treatise and prepare a paper on its contents for the next meeting. Care was taken so that the same book was not bought by another member and so together they experienced the widest number of new works.

Abernethy matriculated at Glasgow University on 16 February 1694. Kirkpatrick arrived in Glasgow slightly before him matriculating on 10 February 1691.<sup>10</sup> Both appear to have graduated although records of graduation are lost for that period. Abernethy left Glasgow to study theology at Edinburgh probably in 1696 although Kirkpatrick stayed in Glasgow to undertake his theological training, signing the register on 5 February 1694.<sup>11</sup> Their time in Glasgow must have overlapped by about two years. When 'Jacobus Kilpatrick, *Scoto-Hibernus*' matriculated he was one of 41 students in the third class of John Boyd which included ten *Scoto-Hiberni* students, one *Hibernus* and three *Angli* students. By contrast Abernethy was one of 56 students in the third class of regent John Tran,

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<sup>9</sup> "On Saturday, we meet without the professor, to answer cases of conscience and doubts in Scripture." Bromley (ed.), 'Correspondence', *THSLC*, 19.

<sup>10</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 155; 149

<sup>11</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 242



a class which included three *Scoto-Hiberni* students, three *Hiberni*, one *Anglo-Hybernus*, two *Angli* and one *Scoto-Anglus*. However, amongst the other students commencing their arts course were Isaac Bates, *Anglus*, who matriculated on the same day as Abernethy into the first class of John Law and who subsequently worked closely with Daniel Williams to try and make Glasgow the centre of English dissenting education. Bates commenced his theological studies in Glasgow in the same year as Kirkpatrick.<sup>12</sup> However, Kirkpatrick also commenced his theological studies in the same class as John Simson, the future Professor of Divinity. Much is sometimes made of the connection between Abernethy and Kirkpatrick, on the one hand, and Simson on the other, and some contemporaries certainly suspected collusion between them after the controversy broke, but there is no evidence for this. Although it is intriguing to note that they must have been fairly well acquainted from their student days it would be quite wrong to assume a shared agenda from this point. In the first place subscription was not an issue at this time, certainly not in Ireland. Secondly, Simson graduated from Edinburgh in 1692 at the late age of 25. It appears likely that some form of illness during adolescence had held him back in his studies and it was only comparatively late in life that he was able to catch up. Furthermore he appears to have arrived in Glasgow in 1693 and was appointed 'Bibliothecary and Quaestor'. The post of bibliothecary was granted to a promising theology student as a form of bursary but the quaestor had responsibility for a number of minor financial duties, including the collection of students' library fees.<sup>13</sup> This was clearly a position of some responsibility that would have marked him out as being at a slightly higher level to the other students, particularly to Irish students still in their middle teenaged years.

The arts syllabus at Glasgow at this time was characterised by a heavily traditional approach to learning that placed new students in the class of a regent who took each student through each year of their course. Some modern commentators question the value of this education. Of John Abernethy M.A. Stewart has observed that "attempts to trace his later independence of mind to

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<sup>12</sup> *Munimenta*. 3, 243. 27 November 1694.

<sup>13</sup> Skoczylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 32-33.

anything positive in his Scottish education are baseless.”<sup>14</sup> Teaching would have been by means of slow lecturing, with the regents dictating their notes for the students to transcribe, although there would also have been disputations, and times of criticism and explanation as well as examinations.<sup>15</sup> All teaching would have been in Latin which would have created an additional burden on students. Nevertheless, although some teachers may have occasionally deviated from this practice, the use of Latin was rigorously enforced by the University authorities, even outside the classroom. Just a few years later in 1703 the Faculty of Divinity observed that “It being complained of by the principal, That the Students doe almost all speak English, Ordered that every Regent appoint a Clandestin Censor to observe the Students, that all without exception may be censured who are found faulty.”<sup>16</sup>

Yet one aspect of their studies at Glasgow which had a positive impact on them and which Kirkpatrick certainly encountered (and possibly also Abernethy who did not study divinity at Glasgow but who must have had many friends amongst the Scots-Irish students in the divinity school) was this method of gathering students together in small groups to consider the Scriptures and theological questions. The foundation of the Belfast Society in 1705 was a continuation of this kind of meeting.<sup>17</sup>

In 1720, after the beginning of the arguments over subscription, the members of the Belfast Society sent a letter to each of the presbyteries within the Synod of Ulster answering charges that were brought against them and offering a way towards peaceable understanding. However, they also gave an account of the origin and intention of the Belfast Society which was a “voluntary Society, for Prayer and Conference” intended to overcome the difficulties they faced in continuing their education given their limited access to any worthwhile libraries. They included not only the Scriptures and “profitable” subjects of divinity in their deliberations but “endeavour’d to assist one another in improving our Gifts

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<sup>14</sup> M. A. Stewart, ‘Abernethy, John (1680–1740)’, *ODNB*, article/48.

<sup>15</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 173.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 20) 5 November 1703, 22. GUA 26632.

<sup>17</sup> The name of the Belfast Society came from the central location that the members chose for meeting. See James Kirkpatrick, ‘The Conclusion by the Publisher’, in James Duchal, *A Sermon on Occasion of the Much Lamented Death of the late Rev Mr John Abernethy*, (Dublin 1741), 36.



for the Holy Ministry, by Conferring upon the most profitable Method of Preaching, Visiting the Sick, & discharging the other Duties of the pastoral Office.” They also attempted for a time to divide the society up into smaller groups and have a sub-group attached to each Presbytery. However, they found that the pressure of Presbytery business as well as the distance involved in travelling made this impractical and so reverted to the original plan of a single society. They did not feel there was any particular challenge to the established order of things in what they did:

We had just Reason to expect that a design so truly Christian, and a Conduct so Inoffensive, and so well Adapted to its proper Ends, wou’d have procur’d the universal Approbation of all the true Friends of Religion and Learning; especially of all hearty well-wishers to the Cause of Non-conformity. And we are confident, that if our friends had not taken things by a wrong handle and misapprehended our meaning, they wou’d not have allow’d themselves to take Offence, and be so much displeas’d as some of them seem to be.<sup>18</sup>

In his account of the life of John Abernethy (his friend and predecessor as minister in Antrim) James Duchal, whilst observing that “no man contributed more to the true ends” of the Belfast Society, also noted that James Kirkpatrick had been “greatly useful” to the Society.<sup>19</sup> It seems very likely that to a large degree Kirkpatrick simply replicated the practices he had learned as a student in Glasgow amongst his brethren in Ireland. Nevertheless writing some years after the controversies Duchal could say of the members of the Belfast Society that “their design was, improvement in useful knowledge; and, in order to that, to bring things to the test of reason and scripture, without a servile regard to any human authority.”<sup>20</sup> But although this may well have become their design as time went on it seems unlikely that it was so from the very start. Indeed Duchal himself admits that several ministers withdrew from the Society when the debates over ecclesiastical authority became “warm.”<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless under the leadership of Abernethy and Kirkpatrick it does seem to have been gripped with

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<sup>18</sup> ‘The Circular Letter of the Belfast-Society in 1720’ in [Samuel Haliday and Michael Bruce, eds.] *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Seven General Synods by the Ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim in the North of Ireland*, (Belfast 1727), 18-21.

<sup>19</sup> [James Duchal] ‘Preface’ to John Abernethy, *Sermons on Various Subjects by John Abernethy MA. With a Large Preface Containing the Life of the Author*, 4 vols, (London 1748), 1, xlvi, xlix.

<sup>20</sup> [Duchal] ‘Preface’, *Sermons on Various Subjects*, 1, xlvi.

<sup>21</sup> [Duchal] ‘Preface’, *Sermons on Various Subjects*, 1, xlvi.



a desire to explore questions of authority. Looking back in 1741 Kirkpatrick listed some of the topics that were covered in sermons preached before the Society and these included:

the nature and scriptural terms, of the unity of the Christian Church; the nature, and mischief, of Schism; the Rights of conscience, and of private judgment; the sole dominion of Christ in his own kingdom; the nature, power, and effects of excommunication; and other subjects of that kind.<sup>22</sup>

All this reads something like a non-subscribing manifesto, although it is not clear whether these topics came to the fore before or after Abernethy's key sermon of December 1719. Most likely they increasingly exercised the Society after Hoadly's sermon of March 1717. Abernethy and Kirkpatrick remained members of the Belfast Society from its inception and for the rest of their lives but they were joined in it by a number of other ministers the most prominent of which were all Glasgow trained. James Duchal lists eleven ministers who remained diligent in their support for the Belfast Society alongside Abernethy. The eleven included former Glasgow students Kirkpatrick and Haliday and also Thomas Nevin (placed in 1703 in the first class of Gershom Carmichael, a class of 24, of which 21 were designated as *Scoto-Hibernus* and one as *Hiberno-Scotus*),<sup>23</sup> John Mears (in 1714 a divinity student alongside the English student Jonathan Woodworth),<sup>24</sup> William Taylor,<sup>25</sup> Josias Clugston,<sup>26</sup> and Thomas Wilson.<sup>27</sup> Of those listed by Duchal only Michael Bruce, Samuel Harpur,<sup>28</sup> John Henderson,<sup>29</sup> and Thomas Shaw<sup>30</sup> had no connection with Glasgow. Duchal himself was Glasgow trained having matriculated in 1710, in the same class as Josias Clugston under the regent Gershom Carmichael.<sup>31</sup> So of the thirteen most

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<sup>22</sup> Kirkpatrick, 'Conclusion', in Duchal, *A Sermon on... the...Death of Abernethy*, 36.

<sup>23</sup> Minister at Downpatrick. Matriculated at Glasgow. *Munimenta*, 3, 177.

<sup>24</sup> Minister at Newtownards. Glasgow graduate and theology student. *Munimenta*, 3, 48, 201, 253. R. Maxwell King, 'Rev John Mears, AM, 1695-1767', *The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian*, (June 1915), 4-6.

<sup>25</sup> Minister at Cairncastle. Glasgow graduate. *Munimenta*, 3, 43, 183. Duchal, 'Appendix', *Sermon on... the...Death of...Abernethy*, 23-25.

<sup>26</sup> Minister at Larne. Glasgow graduate. *Munimenta*, 3, 45, 194.

<sup>27</sup> Minister at Ballyclare. Theology student at Glasgow. *Munimenta*, 3, 180, 251.

<sup>28</sup> Minister at Moira. Described as "Mr Harper" in [Duchal] 'Preface', *Sermons on Various Subjects*, 1, xlvii.

<sup>29</sup> Minister at Duneane. Trained at the Killyleagh Academy. See Alexander McCreery, *The Presbyterian Ministers of Killileagh*, (Belfast 1875), 112.

<sup>30</sup> Minister at Ahoghill. Duchal, 'Appendix', *Sermon on... the...Death of...Abernethy*, 20-23.

<sup>31</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 194.



active members of the Belfast Society (including both Abernethy and Duchal) nine received their University education either in whole or in part at Glasgow and with the exception of Michael Bruce (1686-1735), minister at Holywood,<sup>32</sup> all of the most prominent non-subscribers (namely Abernethy, Kirkpatrick, Haliday, Nevin, Mears and Duchal) were Glasgow trained. Thomas Nevin (1686-1745), the minister at Downpatrick, was a controversial figure who at one point was charged with blasphemy,<sup>33</sup> while John Mears (1695-1767) was minister at Newtownards as well as clerk of the Down presbytery and was charged with Arianism by his opponents.<sup>34</sup>

But each of these men became members of the Belfast Society either upon their ordination or at the commencement of their studies.<sup>35</sup> In their approach to theology displayed in the Belfast Society they presented something of the method of John Simson. Kirkpatrick described what was clearly a very forensic approach to Scripture:

At every meeting, two were appointed to read and seriously consider three or four chapters of the Bible, or more, according to the nature of the subjects contained in them, and to present to the next meeting the doubts that should occur to them, or that they should find in commentators, about the true meaning of difficult passages, with the best solutions of them; the one, beginning at the old Testament, and the other at the New. These doubts and solutions were canvassed by the meeting to whom they were presented. If the solution proved universally satisfactory, and yet had something uncommon; or, in case nothing satisfactory was offered in the society; in either of these cases, a paper was ordered to be prepared, and laid before the next society, where the subject was resumed. In this manner we proposed to go through the whole Scriptures.<sup>36</sup>

In their letter to the Presbyteries the members of the Belfast Society made a similar point:

They had in their view the same Ends propos'd by many worthy private Christians, whose meeting in stated Societies for Prayer and Religious

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<sup>32</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Bruce, Michael (1686–1735)', rev. S. J. Skedd, *ODNB*, article/3744. Duchal, 'Appendix', *Sermon on... the...Death of...Abernethy*, 25-30.

<sup>33</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Nevin, Thomas (1686–1745)', rev. S. J. Skedd, *ODNB*, article/19969.

<sup>34</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Mears, John (1695–1767)', rev. S. J. Skedd, *ODNB*, article/18489.

<sup>35</sup> Kirkpatrick, 'Conclusion', in Duchal, *A Sermon on... the...Death of Abernethy*, 36.

<sup>36</sup> Kirkpatrick, 'Conclusion', in Duchal, *A Sermon on... the...Death of Abernethy*, 37.

Converses has been justly encourag'd by pious and learned Divines: Our usual Method has been, to Confer upon the meaning of the most difficult Places of the Holy Scriptures, to Compare one Place with another, propose the Sentiments of the best Interpreters, and debate them: we have endeavour'd to chuse such Subjects of Divinity as we judg'd most profitable; and which seem'd to have the greatest Influence upon practical religion: For we consider the Gospel, as a Doctrine according to Godliness; carefully avoid over-curious and unscriptural Speculations; endeavour to learn the Truth as it is in Jesus, and to distinguish it from Questions & strifes about Words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings of men of Corrupt Minds.<sup>37</sup>

In their deliberations they were almost Beroean in their approach but anxious to listen to opposing and different points of view:

When the discourses were delivered, the conferences were resumed; and, frequently long debates arose, which were managed with great temper and strength of reason; no man disputing for victory, but searching impartially into all that could be said on both sides of a question, for finding the truth.<sup>38</sup>

This desire to hear all sides of a question may have been rooted in the approach many of them learned from John Simson. In his answers given to the case brought against him by James Webster in 1715 Simson indicated that in order to prove the truths of the Westminster Confession he was prepared to depart from traditional methods and consider the objections brought by those who occupied a different theological position:

In Performing this Hardest part of my Work wherein I am Obliged to do my best, to Convince Gainsayers, and Stop the Mouths of Unholy and Vain Talkers, and Deceivers; I find my self sometimes obliged, to use some other Arguments for the Truth, and other Answers to objections, than are used by Professor Marckius, and some other Divines, justly esteemed among us: so that in handling Controversie, I lay but little weight on some Hypothese that severals (sic) make us of, either for the Proof, or Defence of the Truth. And for the Answering of Objections, and Cavills of Adversaries, I make use of some Propositions, that are purely Speculative, or only Probable, and have no necessary Connexion with our Faith or Practice, and are no other Use in Divinity, that I know, much less

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<sup>37</sup> 'The Circular Letter' in *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Seven General Synods*, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Kirkpatrick, 'Conclusion', in Duchal, *A Sermon on... the...Death of Abernethy*, 38.



in the Pulpit, but to answer the Cavills of Adversaries; for which they are sometimes very necessary.<sup>39</sup>

In noting the insufficiency of some hypotheses based on Calvinism (such as, for instance, the probability that the number of the elect is greater than that of the damned) in relation to the Arminian controversy, he endeavoured to show

That the Truths, for the Defence of which, they are advanced, do not necessarily depend upon them, but may be proved and defended another way; And leave the Students to choose the one or the other, as they find most convincing.

2ly, I propose some other Arguments and Answers than are found in later Systems; because, some may perceive more evidence and Force in one, and others in another. In following which Method, I have only used that Liberty which the best Divines of Esteem among us have used, and that with good reason.<sup>40</sup>

Allowing students to make up their own minds based on a perusal of the evidence seems to have been an important element in Simson's teaching method and it seems to have been precisely this spirit that animated the meetings of the Belfast Society. But although this open minded search for truth from the evidence dovetailed very neatly with their later criticism of the requirement of subscription they were not characterised by an attack on the place of the Westminster Confession from the start. Simson frequently repeated that he had signed the Confession twice and adhered to it as "the Confession of My Faith. And being Convinced, from Experience, of the Necessity and Usefulness of this Excellent Compend of Christian Doctrine to Students of Divinity".<sup>41</sup> Before the lines of battle had been drawn up over the Westminster Confession of Faith the future non-subscribers in Ireland showed every respect to the Confession. Some of them – such as Samuel Haliday – had signed the Westminster Confession at various times. James Kirkpatrick, however, being ordained in Ireland in 1699, had not been obliged to subscribe the Confession. Yet as late as 1713 in his long and detailed rebuttal of the pamphlet attacks on Presbyterians by William Tisdall

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<sup>39</sup> John Simson, *The case of Mr John Simson Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. Consisting of the original papers of the process carried on against Him by Mr James Webster, One of the Ministers of the Gospel at Edinburgh, Containing Mr Webster's Libel, and Mr Simsons' Answers*, (Glasgow 1715), 60-61.

<sup>40</sup> Simson, *The case of Mr John Simson*, 62.

<sup>41</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 23) 29 April 1729, 102, GUA 26635. Simson, *The case of Mr John Simson*, 60.

(1669-1735), Vicar of Belfast, Kirkpatrick could speak approvingly of a meaningful form of subscription to the Confession. He regarded the form of subscription existing in Scotland before the 1693 Act for Settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church as being an insufficient test of the orthodoxy of Episcopal ministers:

Now, any Man might Subscribe the Confession of Faith, according to that Formula, and yet deny all the Articles of Faith contain'd in it; for he is not oblig'd by it to Subscribe the Confession of Faith, as the Confession of his Faith, but only as containing the Doctrine of the Protestant Religion profess'd in this Kingdom; and in the like Sense, a Man may Subscribe the Alcoran, as containing the Doctrine of the Mahometan religion profess'd in Turkey.<sup>42</sup>

The issue of subscription arrived relatively late on the scene, Kirkpatrick does not question the fitness of Irish Presbyterians subscribing the Westminster Confession “as the Confession of their Faith” in his *Historical Essay* of 1713<sup>43</sup> but within a few years it was to become the predominant issue.

One student who preceded Kirkpatrick by just a few years at Glasgow was the controversial freethinker and author of *Christianity not Mysterious*, John Toland. Donegal born into an Irish speaking Catholic family Toland converted to Presbyterianism and received financial support to study at Glasgow, matriculating in 1688 before moving on to Edinburgh where he graduated in 1690. He subsequently received support from Daniel Williams to study in Leiden and Utrecht, coming into contact with Remonstrant theologians such as Jean le Clerc and Philipp van Limborch.<sup>44</sup> Later still he moved in the circle of Robert, Viscount Molesworth, the leading Whig politician and writer who was himself to become involved in the politics of Glasgow University.

The years between the appointment of John Stirling as Principal in 1701 and the opening of the subscription controversies in England and Ireland in 1719

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<sup>42</sup> Kirkpatrick, *An Historical Essay*, 402.

<sup>43</sup> Kirkpatrick, *An Historical Essay*, 23-24.

<sup>44</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 147. Stephen H. Daniel, ‘Toland, John (1670–1722)’, *ODNB*, article/27497. F.H. Heinemann, ‘John Toland, France, Holland, and Dr Williams’, *Review of English Studies*, 25, No.97 (1949), 346-9.



brought tensions for both staff and students at Glasgow University. John Stirling was active in trying to modernise the curriculum and expand the University. The number of students had grown at a fast pace. Before the Revolution numbers had been no more than 150, by the year 1702, the year after Stirling's appointment, there were 400, including 80 divinity students.<sup>45</sup>

Stirling was formally admitted as Principal on 18 September, 1701.<sup>46</sup> He had ties of kinship to seven of the professors at Glasgow as well as with his predecessor as Principal and many within the wider academic community in Scotland.<sup>47</sup> His close friend, Robert Wodrow, had a high regard for Stirling and thought him "an excellent Gospell preacher," frequently inviting him to celebrate communion with him in his own parish of Eastwood. As Principal he observed that he "did very much for that Colledge [ie Glasgow], and brought in a great number of neu Masters and Professions of Law, Physick, &c," but at the time of his death Wodrow was of the opinion that all this expansion had been counter-productive and, along with the controversy surrounding John Simson, had contributed to his eventual demise:

And the multitude of Masters, and opulencie of their sellaries, occasioned them to turn in factions; and nou, for twenty years, ther has been little but faction, and one side drauing contrary to the other, in partys, and constant wrestlings; and lately the party that opposed him got in my Lord Isla, and that party in Court, to knock him down and the Chancelour, the Duke of Montrose, with a Royall Visitation...And the poor and mean change of sides, and ungrateful treatment from him [*Simson*], have been very grieving to him; and, indeed, I think have shortened his dayes<sup>48</sup>

But whatever the cost in terms of increased factionalism and academic politicking there was a genuine programme of expansion underway. From the start of the eighteenth century the system of 'regenting' became less dominant in Glasgow than it was in some other Scottish Universities. A chair in Greek was set up in 1704. In 1695 the University Commission had proposed that a professor of Greek should be a fixed feature of the staff separate from the regents, but it

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<sup>45</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 163, 173.

<sup>46</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 20), 18 September 1701, title page, GUA 26632.

<sup>47</sup> Roger L. Emerson, 'Politics and the Glasgow Professors, 1690-1800', *The Glasgow Enlightenment*, Hook and Sher (eds.), 28.

<sup>48</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 445.



was not until 1704, upon the death of John Tran, that an appointment was made in the person of Alexander Dunlop, the son of the former principal.<sup>49</sup> For a short time a second professor of divinity was appointed, James Wodrow offering to give 600 marks of his salary towards this appointment.<sup>50</sup> This was to enable his son, Alexander Wodrow (1674-1706), minister of the Tron Church in Glasgow since November 1701 to succeed him.<sup>51</sup> However, Alexander Wodrow died suddenly on 6 March 1706, leaving his father as the sole professor until his death in 1707, following which John Simson was appointed. In 1706 the faculty revived the professorship of Humanity (Latin) and appointed Andrew Rosse, who is often cited as one of the first teachers to make use of English in his teaching.<sup>52</sup> Further expansion was made possible by royal grants secured by Stirling following the Act of Union. Stirling was in London from July to December 1707 and from June to November 1708 partly to negotiate with Daniel Williams but also to attend at Court. Here he was successful in securing the renewal of the royal bounty for the University as well as an additional annual sum of £210 from the Queen to pay the salaries of the new staff.<sup>53</sup> A professor of Oriental languages was appointed in 1709, the successful candidate being Charles Morthland who presented his credentials but was generously given extra time to improve his proficiency in Hebrew. Morthland explaining to Stirling that

Its very true that I have not studied the Hebrew as I might have done, yet after advice of some friends here and persons very well seen in that Language I am resolved to fitt my self for that profession and they tell me that in 6 or 7 months at most I may be very capable to teach the Hebrew; I am now very closely applying myself to it and have read several psalms already and gainst next winter I doubt not but by the blessing of God be capable to teach it and I hope you'll not doubt but that I'll soon improve after I have begun to teach it.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 186-7. *Munimenta*, 2, 513.

<sup>50</sup> James Wodrow to John Stirling, 18 October 1705, MS Gen 204/69.

<sup>51</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 20), 26 October 1704, 32; 18 October 1705, 38, GUA 26632.

Biography included in L. A. Yeoman, 'Wodrow, Robert', *ODNB*, article/29819.

<sup>52</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 187-188. Although Wodrow also used English, Wodrow, *Life of James Wodrow*, 127.

<sup>53</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 20), 3 July 1707, 46; 18 February, 1709, 54, GUA 26632.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Morthland to John Stirling, 10 April 1708, GUL MS Gen 206, 64. See also Charles Morthland to John Stirling, 22 January 1709, GUL MS Gen 206, 7. John Maxwell to John Stirling, 17 December 1708, GUL MS Gen 204, 99. William Carstares to John Stirling, 6 January 1709, GUL MS Gen 204, 100.



This appointment supplemented the work of the professor of divinity as did the chair in church history which was established in 1716 with an additional royal grant, although no actual appointment was made until August 1721 when William Anderson was admitted as professor, following an abortive attempt to appoint Robert Dick.<sup>55</sup> A chair of medicine was established in 1713, followed by a lectureship in anatomy which became a chair by 1720. In law a chair was founded in 1714, with William Forbes being appointed professor of Civil Law.<sup>56</sup>

Many such changes were inspired, at least in part, by the thought of making the University more attractive to English students, and, as we have seen, Glasgow became the main recipient of English dissenting students in Scotland. The discussions over the future of the regenting system can also be seen in this light. As early as 1695 the Parliamentary Commission on the Universities had recommended a radical change in the system of regenting,<sup>57</sup> but there was little real change until the start of the eighteenth century. As Universities expanded the number of separate professors so the position of the regents became increasingly pressurised. Under the regenting system new students entered a class appropriate for their attainment, many of the students from England and Ireland arrived in Glasgow having spent some time being schooled in a dissenting academy. In England there were a large number of these, in Ireland a number of students were educated by James McAlpin at the Killyleagh Academy between 1697 and 1714.<sup>58</sup> Clearly a number of years spent transcribing the dictation of a regent over all the subjects on the curriculum was not necessarily the most rigorous education a student could have, indeed there is evidence that the selling on of lecture notes by students was not unknown.<sup>59</sup> At St Andrews it was sometimes the case that students would delay entry to the University by a year in order to avoid a particular regent or secure a place with another.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 192-3.

<sup>56</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 193-4.

<sup>57</sup> *Munimenta*, 2, 513-529.

<sup>58</sup> Kirkpatrick, *An Historical Essay*, 504-6.

<sup>59</sup> Christine Shepherd, 'University Life in the Seventeenth Century', *Four Centuries Edinburgh University Life 1583-1983*, Gordon Donaldson (ed.), (Edinburgh 1983), 12.

<sup>60</sup> W. Croft Dickinson, *Two Students at St Andrews 1711-1716*, (Edinburgh and London 1952), xxvi.

Despite the gradual movement towards reform in Glasgow it was actually Edinburgh where the regent system was first abolished. William Carstares was keen to introduce reforms along the lines of those he had experienced in the Dutch Universities and so Edinburgh abolished regenting in 1708, some years ahead of Glasgow, where the regent system continued until 1727.<sup>61</sup> However, although the abolition of regents in Edinburgh was undoubtedly a step towards modernisation, the maintenance of some form of regenting in Glasgow may have helped the University in the competition to attract English dissenting students. In Edinburgh after 1708 the teaching of moral philosophy became an optional element in the new system, at Glasgow it remained at the centre of the Arts curriculum for all students. This was another way in which Glasgow was able to pull ahead of Edinburgh in the race to encourage English students north.

In 1711 Stirling entered into an agreement with Alexander Eagle, the College cook, to provide all English students who desired it with food “three tymes a day with meat and drink” at a charge of £3 sterling for each three months, Eagle to get use of the College “kitchen brewhouse and ovens and whole outincills [utensils] therein.” Although there was some dispute with Stirling and Eagle over whether the Principal was responsible for those who defaulted in their payment it does not appear to be the case that the project broke down and it seems reasonable to assume that English students continued to enjoy the opportunity to dine together in such an arrangement.<sup>62</sup>

But whilst Stirling was overseeing expansion and reform he also presided over an increasingly troubled faculty, as Robert Wodrow indicated. In most of the seventeenth century regents had tended to be young men, often recent graduates, who stayed in post only long enough to secure a patron for a parish. Indeed the 1695 University Commission ruled that no one should be admitted as regent below the age of twenty-one and all regents should submit their proposed lectures to the principal or dean of faculty before the start of session.<sup>63</sup> In Glasgow, however, this period saw the appointment of a number of regents who

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<sup>61</sup> D.B. Horn, *A Short History of the University of Edinburgh 1556-1889*, (Edinburgh 1967), 40-1.

<sup>62</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 550-1.

<sup>63</sup> *Munimenta*, 2, 524, 526. Coutts, *History of the University*, 179. Shepherd, ‘University Life in the Seventeenth Century’, *Four Centuries Edinburgh University Life*, 5-6, 10.



stayed in post for a very long time and were at the centre of the conflict within the University.

The most prominent among these was Gershom Carmichael (1672-1729).<sup>64</sup> A graduate of Edinburgh and Glasgow he was appointed a regent at St Andrews for a short time before taking up the appointment of regent at Glasgow on 22 November, 1694.<sup>65</sup> He remained as regent until the post was abolished in 1727 when he became the first professor of moral philosophy in the University and enjoyed a high academic reputation principally as the editor of Samuel Pufendorf. A follower in some respects of Grotius and Locke he was a believer in the natural rights of mankind. It may well have been this aspect of his philosophy that led him into conflict with the Principal.

The first major confrontation between Stirling and his staff emerged in 1704 and centred on Carmichael and John Loudon, another of the regents. Loudon had been appointed in 1699 and like Carmichael continued as regent until the end of the system, when he was appointed professor of Logic. Early in 1704 the two regents had questioned the accuracy of some of the minutes of the faculty, suggesting that these had been written and signed privately by the principal. They did not get far in their protest and as a result were suspended as regents and forced to retract their protestations before being readmitted.<sup>66</sup> This took place against a backdrop of student disorder, two students being expelled in March 1704.<sup>67</sup> Within a few years student disorder and the disaffection of some members of the staff were to coalesce in opposition to the heavy handed management style of John Stirling.

The students of Glasgow traditionally had the right to elect their own Rector. However, the College Principals (both Dunlop and Stirling) and their supporters had gradually eased this right away from them. Since 1692 Sir John Maxwell had held the post of Rector. His first election had been in the traditional

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<sup>64</sup> James Moore and Michael Silverthorne, 'Carmichael, Gershom', *ODNB*, article/46757.

<sup>65</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 170.

<sup>66</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol.20), 8 March 1704, 27; 23 May 1704, 28, GUA 26632. Minutes of Faculty (1702-1720) 'Gershom Carmichaell's protest', 17, GUA 26631.

<sup>67</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol.20), 15 March 1704, 27, GUA 26632.

manner but in subsequent years the student body had been invited to confirm the choice of the authorities until eventually, from 1709 onwards, the Faculty itself made the decision without submitting even to this formality.<sup>68</sup>

A growing impatience with Stirling among some members of staff who objected to his authorisation of payments without proper consultation and conduct of business in a secretive manner led to a move to reassert the students' rights to bring in a new rector who might add a different balance to the Faculty. Accordingly, on 1 March 1717, Carmichael and his supporters nominated their own candidate to be presented to the student body in the traditional manner and, under protest from Stirling, arranged to hold the election the next day.<sup>69</sup>

Carmichael was said by one of his students, John Smith, to have delivered "a noble Harrangue" to the students "in one of the public Halls in Praise of Liberty."<sup>70</sup> Smith was a *Scoto-Hibernus* student, who had matriculated in the third class of Gershom Carmichael on 11 January 1717, a class which included 43 students, ten of them *Angli*, three *Anglo-Hiberni* and two *Scoto-Hiberni*.<sup>71</sup>

William Forbes, the professor of law, was firmly in Carmichael's camp. He wrote to Sir John Maxwell explaining why he voted against him, not out of any disregard for his person but

To vindicate the priviledges of the university, which are all struck at by the principal's attempting to ingross to himself the sole management and disposal of all our affairs by the advice of one privy counsellor, prompter, or what you please to call him [*ie. John Simson*], as if the rest of the masters were cyphers, I hope you will have the charity to believe; seeing the person chose Rector is your friend; by all the ties of relation and affection, and we found ourselves under an indispensable necessity to cross a groundless despotick power intollerable to any free agent, who hath the least sense of liberty and property. I inclined at first only to let the world know by a vote restoring the regular and solemn method of election by the voice of nations [*in other words, the principal, professors and the students*], that the plurality of the members of the Faculty were not of that slavish disposition to be drag'd into things against their private

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<sup>68</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 197-8.

<sup>69</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol.20), 26 February 1717, 157, GUA 26632.

<sup>70</sup> [John Smith], *A Short Account of the Late Treatment of the Students of the University of G—w*, Dublin 1722, 10.

<sup>71</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 210.



judgement. And the rest of my Colleagues overruled me in this, alledging for a reason that so long as they had a Rector, with whom they are not equally acquainted, as the principal is, it would be hard to reduce our business to a right Channel.<sup>72</sup>

Stirling and the authorities responded by taking a complaint to the Chancellor, the Duke of Montrose, who procured a Royal Commission sympathetic to their standpoint which dutifully declared that “in all time coming no student within the said University shall have any vote in the election of the Rector of the said University, and discharges all meetings of the students in the classes or otherwise, on the day of the said election.” It went on to set down the proceedings for future elections in which each year on 28 October the Chancellor, Rector, Principal, and Dean of Faculty should meet to draw up a short list of three to present to the professors and faculty for selection at the start of November.<sup>73</sup>

When an election was finally held in 1717 the students were excluded and half of the faculty protested as Sir John Maxwell was re-elected. As a result the students commenced legal action. A committee of nine students, including six divinity students, drew up a petition and two divinity students spent the winter in Edinburgh – with financial support from staff and students – to see the litigation through.<sup>74</sup> It is significant that the leaders of this student protest included a number of students from England and Ireland. One of the six divinity students involved in the protest was Francis Hutcheson, the future professor of moral philosophy, who had matriculated at the University in March 1711 into the first (ie final year) class of John Loudon. In this class he was one of eighteen students, eleven of which were *Scoto-Hiberni*, including the future non-subscribing minister James Clugston, two *Anglo-Hiberni* and Clerk Oldsworth, the future tutor to the English students at Glasgow (although given no national designation at this point) and eventually a London non-subscribing minister himself. Hutcheson graduated in November of the following year, and commenced his

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<sup>72</sup> William Forbes to Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, 4 March, 1717, 17, GUL MS Gen 205.

<sup>73</sup> Register of the Proceedings of the University of Glasgow (vol. 21), 5 November, 1717, 1-2, GUA 26633.

<sup>74</sup> Bill of Suspension, GUA 30159.

theological studies in February 1713.<sup>75</sup> The two students who went over to Edinburgh were Peter Butler and John Edmonston. Peter Butler was an *Anglo-Hibernus*, who had matriculated in the third class of Gershom Carmichael in 1708 and commenced the study of divinity in January 1717 alongside Thomas Drennan a *Scoto-Hibernus* non-subscriber and close friend of Francis Hutcheson. Butler was himself later the minister of the Cooke Street congregation in Dublin.<sup>76</sup> John Edmonston was a Scottish student, who matriculated in the fourth class of Alexander Dunlop in March 1707.<sup>77</sup> The other divinity students named on the 'Bill of Suspension' were Patrick Simson, John Leitch and Thomas Colthurst. John Leech/Leitch and Thomas Colthurst were both *Anglo-Britanni* students who had matriculated in Gershom Carmichael's class of 1715, alongside Thomas Drennan of Belfast and a number of other students, mostly English. The date they commenced the study of divinity is not recorded. Patrick Simson was the only other Scottish student in this group, having matriculated in Andrew Rosse's fourth class of 1708, graduated in March 1714 and commenced the study of divinity in December of that year.<sup>78</sup> The other three (undergraduate) students included two Scots - Charles Ross and John Napier who had both matriculated in the fourth class of Andrew Rosse in 1714<sup>79</sup> - and Thomas Whitaker, *Anglus*, who was the most recent arrival in Glasgow. Whitaker had matriculated in Carmichael's third class of 1717, he went on to graduate in 1719 and commenced the study of divinity in 1721.<sup>80</sup>

The involvement of English and Irish students in this protest indicates their radicalisation by their own domestic experiences, something which made them more ready to take up such a struggle with the University authorities. It did not endear them to the Professor of Divinity, John Simson, who sided with the Principal on such matters and immediately dismissed Butler and Edmonston on

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<sup>75</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 47, 196, 253.

<sup>76</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 190, 254. James Armstrong, *Appendix Containing a Summary History of the Presbyterian churches in the City of Dublin, with Ordination Service. Sermon; Discourse on Presbyterian Ordination; Address of the Young Minister; Prayer on Ordaining; and Charge: delivered by the ministers of Dublin at the Ordination of the Rev James Martineau*, (London 1829), 89.

<sup>77</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 52, 188.

<sup>78</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 206, 48, 191, 253, 298.

<sup>79</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 204, 205.

<sup>80</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 52, 210, 254.



their return to Glasgow from Edinburgh, although they were later restored by the Court of Session.<sup>81</sup>

The students were not successful in their attempts to elect the rector in 1717, nor were they successful in the following year when Mungo Graham of Gorthie was elected rector. He had been elected vice-rector in 1717 but following continuing discussions over the validity of Maxwell's election was himself elected on 18 December, 1718.<sup>82</sup> He still represented the interests of the Principal and his faction. Another University Commission reiterated the method of electing a rector without student involvement:

Therefore the Commission hereby enact and ordain in the mean time that the said election of a Rector for the ensuing year be made in an university meeting of the plurality of the voices of the members thereof who are hereby declared to be such as usually have a vote in an University or Faculty meeting.<sup>83</sup>

Nevertheless the issue of the student election of the rector was to return to the fore a few years later, after the commencement of the subscription controversies.

Throughout this period Simson gave his strong backing to the Principal. As with so many of the staff he was tied to him by means of kinship, Simson having married his niece in 1710.<sup>84</sup> He was, however, embroiled in his own difficulties which were another source of disturbance within the University. In 1714 Simson was subject to a vigorous attack by James Webster. As early as 1710 Webster had accused Simson of unorthodoxy and accusations had simmered on for a number of years.<sup>85</sup> On 1 June 1714, however, the Faculty of Divinity in Glasgow received a memorial from John Simson in answer to accusations given against him by Webster to the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale. The immediate response was for the Faculty to close ranks around

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<sup>81</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 200-1.

<sup>82</sup> Register of the Proceedings of the University of Glasgow (vol. 21), 19 December, 1718, 13, GUA 26633.

<sup>83</sup> Register of the Proceedings of the University of Glasgow (vol. 21), 'Act of the Commission', 15, GUA 26633.

<sup>84</sup> Skoczylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 47.

<sup>85</sup> Skoczylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 103-127.

their professor of Divinity and “Out of Zeal for the purity of Doctrine and regard to the Reputation and Credit of the University” called on Webster to produce his evidence or face prosecution.<sup>86</sup> On 27 September 1714 Webster produced a ‘Libel’ against Simson which accused him of a wide range of heresies.<sup>87</sup>

There is not space to discuss the detailed charges here but they are not untypical of the often strained relations between theological colleges within Protestant churches and those of a conservative disposition in the pastoral ministry. Even two hundred years after the incident the official historian of Glasgow University could take the view that Simson was someone who “regarded himself as too great a man to be understood and criticised by country ministers.”<sup>88</sup> In fact Webster was somewhat intemperate, a non-juror, an opponent of both the Union and the Erastianism of prominent figures like Simson, he represented a side of the Church of Scotland which caused dismay amongst English dissenters. In fact Webster denounced Edinburgh ministers William Hamilton and William Wishart to their presbytery for travelling on a Sunday, their destination being an English town where they hoped to hear a sermon by a dissenting minister.<sup>89</sup> Edmund Calamy came across Webster in his tour of Scotland in 1709 and thought him “over-orthodox, as great a bigot as any in the country,” although when invited to dinner by John Stirling and asked to suggest dinner companions Webster was one of the people he named.<sup>90</sup>

Webster’s accusation of Socinianism against Simson was based on Simson’s emphasis on the value of human reason. Although this was a characteristic of Socinianism it was not necessarily confined to followers of Socinus. It is indicative of Webster’s fear of innovation, of a perceived departure from the Calvinist interpretation of humanity and from the Calvinist understanding of the relationship between God and Adam. Simson was bringing

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<sup>86</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol.20), 1 June 1714, 120-1; 10 August 1714, 125, GUA 26632.

<sup>87</sup> John Simson, *The case of Mr. John Simson Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. Consisting of the original papers of the process carried on against him by Mr. James Webster*, 1-16.

<sup>88</sup> Coutts, *History of the University*, 189.

<sup>89</sup> Skoczylas, *Mr Simson’s Knotty Case*, 80.

<sup>90</sup> Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 161. The dinner went ahead although Webster was unable to attend.



to bear the effects of the evolution of European reformed theology and laying greater stress on the benevolence of God than had previously been the case.

The University was concerned to defend their professor and it is significant that many of his own students, especially the English students, threw their weight behind him. This is most clearly seen in the letters of one of his English students, Jonathan Woodworth who is listed amongst twenty students who commenced the study of divinity on 20 December, 1714 (a group which included six *Anglo-Britanni*, two *Scoto-Hiberni* and one *Anglo-Hibernus* students). Woodworth is listed as a graduate on 18 November 1715, although he did not formally matriculate.<sup>91</sup> It seems to have been acceptable at this time for some students coming from England to enter their names upon the divinity lists and then proceed towards their degree alongside their theological studies. Alongside his studies with the divinity professors Woodworth studied in the private class of Gershom Carmichael and also attended the mathematics class. In 1715 Carmichael's private class must have been an additional class provided for divinity students. Woodworth recorded that in the private class he was "reading Pneumatics, and Ethicks...In logick he reads *Ars cogitandi* his own Thesis, and a small compend He has printed. He follows Mr Lock much in that part, as indeed in all the parts of humane Learning."<sup>92</sup> This curriculum tallies very closely with that recorded by Carmichael as the curriculum for the second or Bachelor class which he followed at that time.<sup>93</sup> Like many of his compatriots Woodworth had undergone training in an academy prior to coming to Glasgow, in his case he had been a student of Charles Owen (d.1746)<sup>94</sup>, the founder of the first dissenting academy in Warrington which operated from around 1697 to 1746.<sup>95</sup> The number of students which Owen taught was not large, indeed as a tutor he did not receive a grant from the Presbyterian Fund, but he had a good reputation as a teacher. He was also a friend and correspondent of John Stirling

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<sup>91</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 49, 253.

<sup>92</sup> Bromley (ed.), 'Correspondence of the Rev Peter Walkden', 19, 25, 30.

<sup>93</sup> 'Gershom Carmichael's Account of His Teaching Method,' James Moore and Michael Silverthorne, *Natural Rights on the Threshold of the Scottish Enlightenment: The Writings of Gershom Carmichael*, (Indianapolis 2002), 379-387.

<sup>94</sup> David L. Wykes, 'Owen, Charles (d. 1746)', *ODNB*, article/20987.

<sup>95</sup> McLachlan, *English Education*, 15.



who called with him on his journeys to London.<sup>96</sup> Owen's own nephew Benjamin was a student at Glasgow just prior to Woodworth. Benjamin Owen was Welsh, describing himself as *Cambro-Britannus*. Like Woodworth, Owen does not appear in the matriculation register, although he was also a graduate of Glasgow, graduating alongside Francis Hutcheson on 14 November 1712. He commenced the study of divinity on 10 February 1713, again alongside Francis Hutcheson.<sup>97</sup>

It is clear from Woodworth's correspondence with his uncle, the Rev Peter Walkden, minister of Chipping in Lancashire, that the divinity students, which would have included Owen and Hutcheson at this time, were active in their support for Simson and fifteen of them gave their time to copy out his reply to Webster's allegation for members of the Presbytery in March 1715. Webster's allegations ran to seven pages and Woodworth expected Simson's response to be "double if not treble the number of sheets," so it was no light task they were undertaking. Woodworth speaks of Simson's great respect towards the authors of the Westminster Confession and how he ended his lectures "with serious exhortations to practical Godliness, and sincere Religion, and a conversation suited to the study of Divinity."<sup>98</sup> At the start of May 1715 Woodworth travelled to Edinburgh to attend the general assembly and to hear the proceedings brought by Webster against Simson.<sup>99</sup> He left Glasgow after studying there for two sessions in May 1716 and was subsequently examined by the Cheshire Classis alongside Glasgow graduate William Vawdrey<sup>100</sup> "in the Languages, Philosophy & Divinity, & being approved were allowed to preach as Candidates" on 7 August 1716.<sup>101</sup> In the same year he was called as minister of Kingsley in Cheshire, although his sudden death in early 1718 brought his promising career to a close.<sup>102</sup> But Woodworth is perhaps typical of the type of student produced

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<sup>96</sup> Charles Owen to John Stirling, 29 July 1714, MS Gen 207/8.

<sup>97</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 47, 252-3.

<sup>98</sup> Bromley (ed.), 'Correspondence of the Rev Peter Walkden', 22, 24, 25.

<sup>99</sup> Bromley (ed.), 'Correspondence of the Rev Peter Walkden', 22-3.

<sup>100</sup> Vawdrey matriculated on 7 January 1715 in the same class of Gershom Carmichael as the Irish Non-subscriber Thomas Drennan and graduated on 15 June 1716. See *Munimenta*, 50, 206. Whilst at Glasgow Vawdrey received financial from the Presbyterian Fund. PFB minutes, vol. 2, 5 March 1715/1716, 284, DWL OD68.

<sup>101</sup> *Cheshire Classis*, 53. Bromley (ed.), 'Correspondence of the Rev Peter Walkden', 30.

<sup>102</sup> *Cheshire Classis*, 216. Bromley (ed.), 'Correspondence of the Rev Peter Walkden', 31-2.



by Glasgow at the time who studied under Simson in a student body comprising Presbyterians from all over the British Isles and who returned to their home presbytery (in this case the Cheshire Classis) to be received into the ministry with great acceptability.

James Webster, Simson's opponent, represented a point of view that opposed any utilisation of new continental thought in philosophy or theology in Scotland. As Anne Skoczylas says:

The rear-guard action which the ultra-orthodox undertook against Simson between 1714 and 1717 represented a desperate attempt to stem the flow of religious change into Scotland. Benevolence, utilitarianism, and a minor degree of universalism were features of enlightened theology; Simson offered them all to his students.<sup>103</sup>

Crucially both the Faculty and his students rallied round him at this point. The issue was further complicated by factionalism within the church, although, the squadrone faction had greater political strength at this time and helped to protect Simson.<sup>104</sup> The matter was brought to a close by the General Assembly of 1717 which issued no more than a mild rebuke to Simson.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Skoczylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 174.

<sup>104</sup> Skoczylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 220-1.

<sup>105</sup> *The principal acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; convened at Edinburgh, the 2d day of May 1717*, (Edinburgh 1717), 16-18.

## Chapter Six

“no great fondness for stirring in a Wasp’s nest”

### *The connections between non-subscribers across the British Isles during the subscription controversies*

Glasgow was a meeting point for ministerial students from all over the British Isles so it was no surprise that when disagreements emerged in both London and Belfast it was links that had been formed in Glasgow that helped to connect them both. The controversies of the 1720s were the result of general theological trends that were sweeping across Europe, including Glasgow University, but they were also localised responses to specific instances. However, the Glasgow connection of many students meant that the ramifications of local disagreements travelled wider and to some extent became linked in a single issue.

In the north of Ireland, although John Abernethy was the acknowledged leader of the non-subscribers whose writings provided the intellectual impetus for the controversy, and although James Kirkpatrick was equally central to the process as the foremost Presbyterian minister in Belfast, it was around the head of Samuel Haliday that the storm broke.

As we have seen Haliday was a Glasgow graduate with a remarkable knowledge of the reformed churches in Europe and an extensive experience as an army chaplain. But there was little prior to 1719 that marked him out as someone who would be at the heart of a divisive theological quarrel, indeed he had been well integrated into Scottish church life and his academic qualifications and contacts had marked him out for a high profile role in the church.<sup>1</sup>

As a *Scoto-Hibernus* Haliday was someone with close family links to Scotland. His father, also called Samuel Haliday (1637-1724) was born in

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<sup>1</sup> However, in September 1718 William Wright, minister at Kilmarnock, told Robert Wodrow that he had “smelt somewhat of the same sort [as Samuel Clarke’s views on the Trinity] from Mr Hallieday An[d] one Mr Pearse [ie James Peirce of Exeter] and several others of the English dissenters In may Last.” William Wright to Robert Wodrow, 27 September 1718. Wodrow Letters Quarto, vol. 20 no. 132, NLS. I am grateful to Professor M.A. Stewart for this reference.



Scotland and Glasgow educated but was a minister in counties Tyrone and Donegal before returning to Scotland in 1688 to minister in Dunscore, Dryfesdale and the New North Church, Edinburgh for short periods before returning to a pastorate in Ardstraw, county Tyrone in 1692.<sup>2</sup> This background was not untypical of the *Scoto-Hiberni* students at Glasgow, a great many of those intended for the ministry were themselves sons of the manse and their family ties with Scotland were very close. It is not surprising then that the younger Samuel Haliday, following his return from the continent, could immediately be accepted into responsible positions within the Church of Scotland. Haliday was appointed chaplain of Colonel George Preston's Cameronian regiment in 1708 and went off to serve in Marlborough's campaigns with them over the next four years.<sup>3</sup> The choice of regiment in itself was quite astonishing given its covenanting origins but there is no indication that Haliday served with anything other than complete satisfaction to the regiment. It may be that he was given the appointment on the recommendation of no less a person than Willaim Carstares. A letter is extant from Major John Blackadder (1664-1729)<sup>4</sup>, dated 13 January 1708 asking Carstares to nominate a chaplain for them, promising that "a faithful minister will have [an] Abundance of matter to work upon among us."<sup>5</sup> The son of a Presbyterian minister who had been arrested for his refusal to conform in the Episcopal period, Blackadder had been a student at Edinburgh and was the possessor of an unshakeable Calvinist theology.<sup>6</sup> As well as being centrally involved throughout the military campaigns in the Low Countries Blackadder was himself a member of the Scottish Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge and an elder of the College Church, Edinburgh.<sup>7</sup> There is no record of Carstares' reply but it is the case that Haliday

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<sup>2</sup> J. McConnell, ed., *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church 1613-1840*, (Belfast 1951), 64. *Munimenta*, 3, 1854, 31. T.H. Mullin, *The Kirk and Lands of Convoys Since the Scottish Settlement*, Belfast 1960, 103-109. Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, 1, 143; 7, 530.

<sup>3</sup> Duchal, 'Appendix', *Sermon on...the...Death of...Abernethy*, 44.

<sup>4</sup> F. Henderson, 'Blackadder, John', rev. Jonathan Spain, *ODNB*, article/2503.

<sup>5</sup> John Blackadder, Rotterdam to William Carstares, 13 January 1708, EUL DK 1.1<sup>2</sup>/77-78.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Crichton, *Memoirs of Rev John Blackader: Compiled Chiefly from Unpublished Manuscripts, and Memoirs of his life and ministry written by himself while prisoner on the bass, and containing illustrations of the Episcopal persecution from the restoration to the death of Charles II*, (Edinburgh 1823).

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Crichton, *The Life and Diary of Lieut. Col. J. Blackader of the Cameronian Regiment, and Deputy Governor of Stirling Castle who served with distinguished honour in the wars under King William and the Duke of Marlborough and afterwards in the Rebellion of 1715 in Scotland*, (Edinburgh 1824), 443.



was given the appointment and it is inconceivable that this would have happened if there had been the slightest suspicion of his theological orthodoxy. In May 1711 it seems that Carstares had become aware that Haliday was considering leaving the regiment to return to Ireland and had written to Blackadder to inform him. Blackadder did not think this likely but assured Carstares that he would seek his advice about a replacement should it be necessary, making it plain that the regiment required a chaplain absolutely loyal to the settlement. He told Carstares that both he and Colonel Preston “will always take care to have us so supplied as wee think a Scots Regiment ought to be who are not ashamed of the established Constitution of their Countrey.”<sup>8</sup> In the event Haliday seems to have left active military service in 1712 when he was accepted as a minister without charge by the Synod of Ulster. But although he received and declined a call from the Plunket Street congregation in Dublin in the following year, a call which was subsequently renewed, he did not return to Ireland at that time.<sup>9</sup>

Haliday was put to work in London, primarily on behalf of the Church of Scotland. He was highly regarded by the leaders of the Whig party and tried to prevent the Schism Act from being applied to Ireland in 1714 and secured an increase in the *regium donum* for Irish ministers, in recognition of which achievement the Synod of Ulster voted him a payment of thirty pounds.<sup>10</sup> However, his main purpose seems to have been to lobby for the Church of Scotland at Court. On 12 April 1715 Haliday wrote to Carstares from Snailwell Hall near Newmarket in Cambridgeshire asking for his expenses of £100 sterling to be approved by the General Assembly for the previous eighteen months he had spent at Court, on top of the half of his salary that he was still owed.<sup>11</sup> For a number of years Haliday seems to have played a crucial role as a sort of liaison figure between the Kirk, English dissenters and Irish Presbyterians. In April 1718 Edmund Calamy was trying to get John Stirling to support English dissenters’ efforts to remove the Test Act as well as the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts. They were expecting a deputation from Ireland to come and support them

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<sup>8</sup> John Blackadder, Courtray to William Carstares, 16 May 1711, EUL DK 1.1<sup>2</sup>/144-5.

<sup>9</sup> RGSU, 1, 266-7, 306, 333, 334, 341, 368.

<sup>10</sup> Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 134-5. RGSU, 1, 341, 475-8.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Haliday, Snailwell to William Carstares. EUL DK 1.1<sup>2</sup>/178. At the time Snailwell Hall was the hall of Sir Samuel Clarke Bt. See A.F. Wareham and A.P.M. Wright (eds.), *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: vol 10*, (London 2002), 479-482.



in the next session of Parliament. He proposed to use Haliday to send a communication to Stirling and other leading figures in Scotland. Haliday was planning to visit his regiment in the Highlands and his centrality in the ongoing negotiations was illustrated by his suggestion to Stirling that “If you have an Opportunity of conversing with that Gentleman while he is in Your Parts, he can give you good intelligence as to these matters.”<sup>12</sup>

He seems to have remained in England until 1719 when he received a call from the First congregation in Belfast. This was the most important Presbyterian appointment in the north of Ireland and Haliday was certainly well qualified to take it up. However, even before he took up the appointment he placed himself at the centre of the growing controversy over subscription. Haliday attended the debates about subscription in London at Salters’ Hall. His presence there is an illustration of the cross-fertilisation of the debates in England and Ireland. This is equally true of the presence at the debates of Samuel Dunlop, Presbyterian minister of Athlone. The subscription controversy broke first in London but the presence of these two Irish ministers there produced the first straws in the wind that the same arguments would be played out in Ireland. Dunlop had matriculated at Glasgow in March 1699, in the third class of John Boyd, the same class as James Kirkpatrick and ten other Irish students.<sup>13</sup> He had been ordained in the newly established congregation of Athlone in April 1708. Thomas Witherow described him as “a man of orthodox sentiments, but his rashness and impetuosity occasionally exposed him to trouble.”<sup>14</sup> Rather unwisely he took exception to some remarks made by Samuel Haliday, then a minister without charge in the Synod of Ulster. Dunlop wrote to Thomas Parker, a member of John Malcome’s Dunmurry congregation, informing him that Haliday had identified himself as an Arian at Salters’ Hall. This was clearly timed to coincide with Haliday’s call to the First congregation of Belfast and Parker had written to the session just a few days after they had drawn up the call. As a result Dunlop was brought to the Synod to account for his allegations.

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<sup>12</sup> Edmund Calamy to John Stirling, 15 April 1718, MS Gen 207/85.

<sup>13</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 167.

<sup>14</sup> Witherow, *Historical and Literary Memorials*, 226-9.

In a letter to the Synod Haliday rejected these allegations "wherein he vindicates himself from the charges of Arianism, and from being an Enemy to all Church Government, and represents his conduct at Salter's Hall, affirming that he joyn'd with neither of the parties as being a stranger in the place and setting forth at the same time his full declaration of his Orthodoxy against Arianism". In fact Dunlop's assertion was no more than a suggestion of guilt by association since he told the Synod that

Mr Haliday joyn'd the Arian Party, and explains himself that he means the Non-Subscribers in London, whom he alleages to be generally suspected of Arianism, and affirms that Mr Haliday's conduct was resented by many pious and orthodox Minister in London.<sup>15</sup>

For some members of the Synod it was enough merely to be seen in the company of London non-subscribers which was why Haliday was careful to distance himself from all the parties. Nevertheless in answer to Dunlop's suggestion that he had offended the "pious and orthodox" London ministers Haliday produced a letter signed by eight leading ministers in the metropolis, namely "Revd Dr Calamy, Mr Raynolds, Mr Robison, Mr Evans, Mr Smith, Mr Tong, Mr Hunt, Mr Wright." This group was certainly amongst the most eminent of the London ministers. All of them were at the time of the letter, or were about to become, Dr Williams's trustees. Seven of them were already members of the Board of the Presbyterian Fund.<sup>16</sup> The only one who was not a member of the Presbyterian Fund being Jeremiah Hunt (1678–1744) who was an Independent, yet curiously, one of the few Independents to vote with the non-subscribers at Salter's Hall and a man who was later himself to be charged with Arianism and Socinianism.<sup>17</sup> Calamy, although he was a consistent proponent of the Baxterian 'middle way' held aloof from the divisions over subscription<sup>18</sup> but the other seven signatories included four non-subscribers and three subscribers, which again illustrates Haliday's remarkable ability to win friends in almost any milieu. Thomas

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<sup>15</sup> *RGSU*, 1, 535-6.

<sup>16</sup> John Evans, Edmund Calamy, William Tong, Samuel Wright, Thomas Reynolds, George Smith, Benjamin Robinson were all on the committee. See PFB minutes, vol. 2, 7 December 1719, 357. DWL OD68.

<sup>17</sup> Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 131-2. M. J. Mercer, 'Hunt, Jeremiah', *ODNB*, article/14196.

<sup>18</sup> Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 413-414.



Reynolds (c.1667–1727),<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Robinson (1666-1724)<sup>20</sup> and William Tong<sup>21</sup> were all subscribers while John Evans (1679/80–1730),<sup>22</sup> George Smyth (c.1689-1746),<sup>23</sup> Jeremiah Hunt, and Samuel Wright (1683–1746)<sup>24</sup> were non-subscribers. Tong, Reynolds and Robinson were among the acknowledged leaders of the subscribing party and went into print to defend their position during the divisions at Salters' Hall.<sup>25</sup> John Evans was an historian of dissent and compiled an invaluable list of dissenting congregations and their strength throughout England at this time. George Smyth had been a member of Daniel Williams's congregation and himself became minister of the Gravel Pit chapel in Hackney. It was he who had brought Daniel Williams's Glasgow DD diploma back from Scotland when it was awarded in absentia at the end of his own studies and had subsequently corresponded with John Stirling.<sup>26</sup> Samuel Wright was one of the contributors to the *Occasional Papers*. All eight signatories must have become well known to Haliday during his time in London, indeed in his autobiography Calamy described Haliday as "well known among us." They all were prepared to acquit him of Arianism and express to the Synod "their high esteem of him, as a person from whose happy settlement among us, by the Blessing of God, we might expect great comfort."<sup>27</sup>

The Synod found that Haliday had "sufficiently clear'd his Innocency and fully vindicated himself from the aspersions of Arianism" and Dunlop "was rebukt for his rash and imprudent behaviour".<sup>28</sup> On the face of it, it appeared that the Synod of Ulster had providentially avoided the divisions of the London

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<sup>19</sup> Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 114-5. David L. Wykes, 'Reynolds, Thomas', *ODNB*, article/23440.

<sup>20</sup> Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 109. Alexander Gordon, 'Robinson, Benjamin', rev. S. J. Skedd, *ODNB*, article/23830.

<sup>21</sup> See pp. 70-1.

<sup>22</sup> Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 110-113. Alsager Vian, 'Evans, John', rev. S. J. Skedd, *ODNB*, article/8962.

<sup>23</sup> Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 121. Inevitably there are a number of potential "Smiths" who could be being mentioned here, however, not least because of his membership of the Presbyterian Fund and Dr Williams's Trust, George Smith seems the most likely identification.

<sup>24</sup> Jeremy, *Presbyterian Fund*, 125-7. Alexander Gordon, 'Wright, Samuel', rev. S. J. Skedd, *ODNB*, article/30057.

<sup>25</sup> [William Tong, Benjamin Robinson, Jeremiah Smith, Thomas Reynolds], *The Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity Stated & Defended By Some London Ministers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (London 1719).

<sup>26</sup> See pp. 81-3.

<sup>27</sup> *RGSU*, 1, 536. Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 437.

<sup>28</sup> *RGSU*, 1, 537.

dissenters, to whom they wrote a letter lamenting their divisions.<sup>29</sup> However, an objection voiced by Haliday about his possible acceptance of a call to First Belfast perhaps signalled a concern on his part that matters were likely to become more, rather than less, contentious. Haliday held out the offer

that tho he had been honourably and fully acquitted by this Synod of what had been laid to his Charge, yet he did not know but this Synod might have some other objection against his settlement in the said Congregation, and beg'd they might now acquaint him with it, if they had any, and assur'd them he would not settle there if it were disagreeable to them.<sup>30</sup>

At the Synod of June 1720 the Pacific Act was agreed which expressed their commitment to the Westminster Confession while allowing individual ministers to subscribe in their own words, expressing any scruples they might have which were to be considered by presbyteries. That such a degree of liberality in interpretation should be agreed by the Synod at this stage indicates just how far the non-subscribers were already expressing their views. Had the Pacific Act held it would have been a remarkable settlement compared to the strictness of subscription in Scotland and the eventual decision of the Synod of Ulster.

In fact the Pacific Act was put to the test in just a month's time with the installation of Haliday at Belfast First Church. On 28 July 1720 the presbytery of Belfast assembled at the meeting house of the first congregation for the service of installation. However, Haliday refused to subscribe the Westminster Confession in any form, claiming that a clause had been inserted into the Act with the intention of forcing him to subscribe. Instead he substituted his own declaration, although this included the statement that: "I find all the essential Articles of the Christian Doctrine to be contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith; which articles I receive upon the sole Authority of the Holy Scriptures".<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> RGSU, 1, 538-540.

<sup>30</sup> RGSU, 1, 540.

<sup>31</sup> Haliday, *Reasons Against the Imposition of Subscription*, v.



The installation went ahead under the direction of the Moderator, James Kirkpatrick, although four members of the Presbytery protested and refused to take part. At the Synod of 1721 Haliday was again asked to assent to the Confession but replied that:

My refusal to declare my adherence to the assent I gave to the Westminster Confession of faith when I was licensed does not proceed from my disbelief of the important truths contained in it, the contrary of which I have oft by word and writing declared, as this venerable assembly can bear me Witness; But my Scruples are against the Submitting to Human tests of Divine truths, Especially in a great number of Extra essential points without the knowledge & belief of which men may be entitled to the favour of God & the hopes of Eternal life, and according to the Laws of the gossell to Christian & ministerial communion in the Church, when Imposed as a necessary term of such Communion.<sup>32</sup>

Most of Haliday's published works were responses to the situation over subscription but they show his adherence to the principal of the sufficiency of scripture and the value of reason in maintaining this which were also characteristic of the teaching of Simson. Those viewpoints, when put under the pressure of the civil disabilities experienced by Presbyterians outside of Scotland, together with additional influence coming directly from Europe resulted in an uncompromising non-subscribing position. Haliday argued:

Let it be acknowledged that subscription to the Westminster-Confession of Faith, as a Term of Communion, cannot be good Work, since God hath not commanded it in his holy Word, and since it has without the Warrant of Scripture, been devised by men upon a Pretence of good Intention. Let it be acknowledged, that God the only Lord of Conscience hath left my Conscience free from those Commands of Men, they being beside his Word: And that I cannot obey those Laws, out of Conscience without betraying true Liberty of Conscience and that to require of me an absolute blind Obedience to such Commandments is to defy Liberty of Conscience, and Reason also.<sup>33</sup>

These sentiments were similar to those expressed by John Abernethy in his sermon of 1719 on *Religious Obedience*:

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<sup>32</sup> RGSU, 2,10. Haliday, *Reasons Against the Imposition of Subscription*, vi-vii.

<sup>33</sup> Haliday, *Reasons Against the Imposition of Subscription*, 28.

Religion, according to our most obvious notions of it, is a reasonable service performed to the supreme intelligent Being, who observes the most secret thoughts of his creatures in order to recompense them....For certainly what God requires is the obedience of men, that is, of intelligent creatures; to do anything under the notion of service to him without the approbation of our understandings is not to serve him at all, but indeed to affront him, and to debase ourselves beneath the dignity of our nature by neglecting to improve our Reason which is our greatest excellency, to the most valuable purposes for which it was given us, the glory of our Creator and our own happiness.<sup>34</sup>

and each individual had both the right and the responsibility of searching the scriptures for themselves. As Abernethy went on:

Conscience is nothing else but the Judgement of a man Concerning himself and his own Actions compared with the law of God, and as subject to his Authority. Now how is it possible that one man should determine for another how far this judgement shall extend, and to what Instances? To limit and prescribe it, is, in Effect to deny it altogether.<sup>35</sup>

Parallels to such views are not difficult to find amongst English dissenters. Writing in London in 1730 Strickland Gough (d.1752)<sup>36</sup> was critical of dissenters who failed to appreciate the importance of their standpoint in relation to the Church of England:

The fundamental principle of the dissenters is, as I apprehend, a *liberty* for every man to form his own sentiments, and to pursue them by all lawful and regular methods; to disclaim the *impositions* of men, and to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. It supposes that God has given to all men capacities of understanding their obligations to him; and therefore as every man is accountable to God for his actions, he is under the strictest obligations to act according to *his own* knowledge, and whenever he does not, he is guilty of a voluntary violation of truth.<sup>37</sup>

Dissent from the requirements of the establishment was easily transferred

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<sup>34</sup> John Abernethy, *Religious Obedience founded on Personal Persuasion A Sermon Preach'd at Belfast The 9th of December, 1719*, (Belfast 1720), 22.

<sup>35</sup> Abernethy, *Religious Obedience*, 30.

<sup>36</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Gough, Strickland', rev. Marilyn L. Brooks, *ODNB*, article/11142. There is no little irony in the fact that such a determined proponent of nonconformist principles himself conformed to the Church of England within a couple of years of this publication.

<sup>37</sup> Strickland Gough, *An enquiry into the Causes of the Decay of the Dissenting Interest in a Letter to a Dissenting Minister*, (London 1730), 6.



to the right to be free from internally imposed strictures. The 'Advices for Peace' sent by the English non-subscribers from Salters' Hall included the point that:

We further advise that Catechisms and other Summaries of Christianity, and Expositions of Scripture by wise and learned, tho' fallible Men, should be regarded as great Helps to understand the Mind of God in the Scriptures: And that all be allowed by common Consent, to support their own Sense of Scripture upon proper Occasions, with such Reasons as appear to them convincing, provided it be with Sobriety and Charity to those who differ from them. We also desire to secure the Evidence arising from Scripture Consequences; tho' no Man should be charged with holding those Consequences of his Opinion, which he expressly disclaims.<sup>38</sup>

At Salters' Hall a majority of those present declined to declare their subscription to the doctrine of the Trinity in the form of the first article of the Church of England and the fifth and sixth answers in the Assembly's Catechism.<sup>39</sup> The majority took the view that not only was the form of subscription being offered more far-reaching than that required by the state but was also contrary to the spirit of the Confession of Faith, it infringed their Christian liberty and made the "Words of Men determine the Sense of Scripture, instead of making the Scriptures to determine how far the Words of Men are to be regarded." In addition they made their stand on the sufficiency of Scripture and not only the rights of private judgement but also the difficulties inherent in human interpretation of creeds:

We saw no Reason to think, That a Declaration in other Words than those of Scripture, would serve the Cause of Peace and truth; but rather be the Occasion of greater Confusions and Disorders: We have found it always so in History; And in Reason, the Words of Men appear to us more liable to different Interpretations, than the Words of Scripture: Since all may fairly think themselves more at Liberty, to put their own Sense upon Humane Forms, than upon the Words of the Holy Ghost. And in this case, what Assurance could we have that all who subscribed meant precisely the same Sense, any more than if they had made a Declaration in express Words of Scripture?<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *An Authentick Account of Several Things Done and agreed upon by the Dissenting Ministers lately assembled at Salters-Hall*, (London 1719), 9.

<sup>39</sup> *An Authentick Account*, 19. (Incorrectly paginated as page 16 in the original).

<sup>40</sup> *An Authentick Account*, 25-7.



As in Ireland many of the younger generation of the leaders of the non-subscribing cause in England had also been trained in Glasgow. Those who added their names to the 'Advices for Peace' included many senior ministers who had been ordained some years previously and some of them had been amongst that generation who had gone to the Netherlands for their education. However, the list also included two ministers who had or would be awarded the degree of DD by Glasgow (Joshua Oldfield and Samuel Clarke),<sup>41</sup> and a further seven ministers who had been students at Glasgow in Simson's time. These included Clerk Oldsworth (the former tutor to English students in Glasgow), George Smyth, William Hocker, Joseph Baker, Thomas Newman, John Sherman and James Richardson.<sup>42</sup> This shared experience, not only of a theological education but also to some extent of being part of a pan-British Presbyterian community helped to transmit ideas around the British Isles. Just as Haliday was an Irish non-subscriber present at Salters' Hall so there was a leading English dissenting minister present in Ireland at the succession of Synods which thrashed out the disputes over subscription.

Henry Winder (1693-1752)<sup>43</sup> was born on 15 May 1693 in Graystock, Cumberland. He was a member of a well established local dissenting family who had been involved in controversies with local Quakers. He was educated in Penruddock grammar school before going to the academy at Whitehaven run by Thomas Dixon (1679/80-1729).<sup>44</sup> The Whitehaven academy was a small but important institution particularly for dissenters in the north west of England. Like Glasgow University it was also a point of contact between English and Irish dissenters, although the numbers involved were significantly fewer. The dissenting congregation in the town had been founded by Presbyterians from the north of Ireland and the sea connection with Ireland, particularly for the shipping of coal, was the most important aspect of its economic life, Daniel Defoe

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<sup>41</sup> Register of Diplomas, GUA 21320.

<sup>42</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 46, 196, 252 (Oldsworth), 43, 250, (Smyth), 48, 197, 253 (Hocker), 44 (Baker), 195 (Newman) 50, 203 (Sherman), 48, 201, 253 (Richardson).

<sup>43</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Winder, Henry', rev. Jonathan H. Westaway, *ODNB*, article/29717.

<sup>44</sup> George Benson, 'Memoirs of the Life of Dr Henry Winder', Henry Winder, *A Critical and Chronological History of the Rise, Progress, Declension, and Revival of Knowledge, Chiefly Religious*, 2 vols, (London 1745), 11-12. Alexander Gordon, 'Dixon, Thomas', rev. Aidan C. J. Jones and B. Anne M. Dick, *ODNB*, article/7706.



observing that “they wholly supply the city of Dublin, and all the towns of Ireland on that coast,” with frequently as many as two hundred ships under sail from the port, just to supply the Irish coal trade.<sup>45</sup> There is evidence that some Irish students were educated there,<sup>46</sup> the Rev Joseph Boyse, the leading Dublin Presbyterian minister at the time, was a patron of the academy, and Samuel Haliday may also have had some direct connection with the academy possibly as a trustee or governor.<sup>47</sup> It is also the case that at times of crisis in Ireland Whitehaven had been used as a safe haven by Irish Presbyterians.<sup>48</sup> The academy’s founder, Thomas Dixon, had been educated in the Manchester academy run by John Chorlton and James Cunningham and established his own academy in Whitehaven in 1708. He had established a close friendship with Edmund Calamy whom he had contacted after an initial hesitation as to whether he should conform to the Church of England.<sup>49</sup> Dixon accompanied Calamy on his tour of Scotland in 1709 and was awarded an MA by Edinburgh University alongside Calamy when Calamy received the MA from the same University as a prelude to his DD. Dixon was also awarded the degree of MD by King’s College Aberdeen in 1718.<sup>50</sup> However, he was sufficiently well known in Glasgow to have interceded with Stirling on behalf of a clergyman in the Church of England who was anxious to try and gain the degree of MA from Glasgow, and on

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<sup>45</sup> Anne Holt, *Walking Together. A Study in Liverpool Nonconformity 1688-1938*, (London 1938), 101. Defoe, *Tour Through the Whole Island*, 2, 273.

<sup>46</sup> *RGSU*, 1, 209-210.

<sup>47</sup> In the flyleaf of his astronomical notes Henry Winder lists five patrons: “Mr Boyse. Mr Dixon. Mr Owen. Mr Barclay. Mr Dixon. Mr Audland.” “Mr Owen” may be Charles Owen of Warrington. “Mr Audland” is likely to be Samuel Audland minister of Penruddock. Beneath the list of patrons he also gives another list of twelve names who must have had some other connection with the academy. These include a number of prominent figures in Whitehaven, at least three dissenting ministers in the north west (“Mr Valentine, Mr Mather, Mr Risley Junior”) as well as “Mr Barclay” (probably John Barclay who taught mathematics until 1712 and who was also, presumably, a patron), “Mr Sawrey” (probably Jeremiah Sawrey, a student who accompanied Thomas Dixon and Edmund Calamy on their tour of Scotland in 1709 or a member of his family) and the name “Mr Haliday” recorded twice. This suggests that Samuel Haliday (and possibly also his father) may have had a direct association with the Whitehaven academy. This list is preceded by the title “Vi” but the names are suggestive of a group with an advisory or oversight function, perhaps trustees or a board of governors. *Astronomia Wthaven AD 1712*, MS Winder 1/1 (iii) Harris Manchester College, Oxford. Alexander Gordon also notes that Boyse was “one of the *patroni*,” see Alexander Gordon, ‘Boyse Joseph’, *DNB*, vol 6, (1885), 133-5.

<sup>48</sup> MS Typescript. Diary of the Rev John Cook born in Dublin Oct. 14 1677 died at Waterford Jany. 10 1732/3, 2. Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland.

<sup>49</sup> McLachlan, *English Education*, 115-7, 125-6.

<sup>50</sup> *A Catalogue of the Graduates in the Faculties of Arts, Divinity, and Law of the University of Edinburgh, since its foundation*, (Edinburgh 1858), 185. McLachlan, *English Education*, 125. Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 220. Alexander Gordon, ‘Dixon, Thomas (1679/80–1729)’, rev. Aidan C. J. Jones and B. Anne M. Dick, *ODNB*, article/7706.



another occasion had to formally warn Stirling of someone who had achieved ordination in the Church of Scotland on the basis of forged credentials after he had been dismissed from his studies in Whitehaven.<sup>51</sup>

The full four year course at Whitehaven probably covered all the curriculum that would be included in an Arts course at a Scottish University. Some of Winder's notes survive from his time at the Whitehaven academy, dating from 1710 to 1712, including his notes on mathematics and his notes on astronomy.<sup>52</sup> Another notebook includes a series of notes on various works including Gilbert Burnet's *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*, Samuel Pufendorf's *De officio hominis et civis*, William Chillingworth's *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, Philipp van Limborch's *Theologia Christiana*, John Owen's *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, a number of works by John Locke including his *Letter on Toleration* and *A Discourse of Miracles*, as well as notes on other writers and various other historical and scientific notes.<sup>53</sup>

The Whitehaven academy was never large and moved with Dixon to Bolton when he became minister of Bank Street Chapel in 1723, just six years before his death. However, it included amongst its students four of the most prominent English non-subscribing ministers in the first half of the eighteenth century. As well as Winder they included Caleb Rotheram (1694-1752), John Taylor (1694-1761) and George Benson (1699-1762).<sup>54</sup> All four were born within a few years of each other and all were born either in Cumberland (two of them in the village of Great Salkeld) or nearby in north Lancashire. Only one of this quartet actually studied at Glasgow although all four were to receive doctorates from Scottish Universities, two of them from Glasgow. George Benson spent only a year at Whitehaven before becoming a student at Glasgow,

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<sup>51</sup> Thomas Dixon, Kendal to John Stirling, 19 February, 1713, MS Gen 206/160. Thomas Dixon, Whitehaven to John Stirling, 30 May 1718, MS Gen 207/88.

<sup>52</sup> Henry Winder's Book Anno Domini 1710/11, MS Winder 1/1 (ii) HMCO; *Astronomia Wthaven AD 1712*, MS Winder 1/1 (iii) HMCO.

<sup>53</sup> Henry Winder's Book, MS Winder 1/1 (i), 104-7, 170, 32, 84-8, 98, 102, 112-3, 70-1, 78, 24-5, 44-5, 134-142, HMCO.

<sup>54</sup> M. A. Stewart, 'Rotheram, Caleb', *ODNB*, article/24150. Alan P. F. Sell, 'Taylor, John', *ODNB*, article/27046. R. K. Webb, 'Benson, George', *ODNB*, article/2140.



matriculating on 10 March 1718 into Gershom Carmichael's second class containing eleven new students, all of them English or Welsh.<sup>55</sup> He actually arrived in Glasgow at Christmas 1717 and received a grant of £6 from the Presbyterian Fund. Benson himself recorded that he spent four years studying at Glasgow,<sup>56</sup> indeed the records of the Presbyterian Fund show that he was in receipt of an annual grant for four years, which increased from £6 to £8 after his second year.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless he did not graduate, this despite the fact that following the receipt of a letter from Principal Stirling in October 1719 the Presbyterian Fund

Ordered that a List of the several students upon the Fund be sent to the Professor of the University where they go, that they submit to Examinations, & take their Degree at the Charges of the Fund, & be Enrol'd According to Custom.<sup>58</sup>

Benson left Glasgow in May 1721 and soon after came to London where he achieved the assistance and recommendation of Edmund Calamy, receiving a call to the dissenting congregation of Abingdon as a result. Later he moved first to Southwark and then to Crutched Friars in London.<sup>59</sup>

Neither Rotheram nor Taylor went to Glasgow to study and it seems likely that they spent longer at Whitehaven than Benson. Both were to make highly significant contributions to the scholarly and educational attainments of English dissent – Rotheram as the founder of the Kendal academy which became the successor to Dixon's academy as the principal academy in the north of England, and Taylor as the first Divinity Tutor at the Warrington academy and the author of two particularly notable books. Rotheram was to be awarded the degree of DD by Edinburgh University upon the submission of a Latin treatise *De religionis Christianae evidentia* in 1743.<sup>60</sup> Taylor was awarded the DD by

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<sup>55</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 212.

<sup>56</sup> George Benson, 'Henry Winder', 12-13.

<sup>57</sup> PFB minutes, vol 2, Annual Allowances, October 1717-October 1721, 333, 352, 373, 397, DWL OD68.

<sup>58</sup> PFB minutes, vol 2, 5 October 1719, 354, DWL OD68.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Amory, 'Memoirs of the Life, Character, and Writings of the Author,' in George Benson, *The History of the life of Jesus Christ, taken from the New Testament*, (London 1764), iv-v.

<sup>60</sup> *Graduates of... Edinburgh*, 241.

Glasgow in 1756 in recognition of his work *The Hebrew Concordance Adapted to the English Bible*.<sup>61</sup> Benson was a fairly prolific author, and his published works included a number of paraphrases of the epistles in which he attempted to continue in a pattern of Biblical criticism begun by John Locke. A suggestion by Leechman and Hutcheson that Glasgow might award him a DD was dropped because he was suspected of Socinianism by members of the Faculty, however, Marischal College Aberdeen did not have such concerns and awarded him a DD in 1744.<sup>62</sup>

Henry Winder was made DD by Glasgow in 1740, in recognition of his *A Critical and Chronological History of the Rise, Progress, Declension, and Revival of Knowledge, Chiefly Religious*, although this book was not finally published until five years after his award of the degree.<sup>63</sup> By modern standards this is a dry and somewhat colourless work that was described by one historian as “unreadable,”<sup>64</sup> but it represents the same attitudes to Biblical truth and reason as found in the Glasgow Faculty of Divinity at the time of John Simson. For Winder, as with Simson, reason confirmed the truth of the Biblical record and reason could be used through a method of historical analysis of the Biblical text to expound and explain its basis in fact. Religious truth, as contained in the Bible, was demonstrable and Winder’s detailed history of chronologies and genealogies was one way of grounding the Biblical narrative in historical reality. It was certainly something that was appreciated in Glasgow, the list of subscribers included not only Francis Hutcheson but the Principal, the Rector, the Librarian, the Professor of Divinity, five other professors of the University, Robert Foulis the future publisher but then a Glasgow student, as well as numerous clergy, including at least a dozen ministers of the Church of England, and other notable figures from all over the British Isles.<sup>65</sup> *The Critical and*

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<sup>61</sup> Minutes of Faculty (1749-1759), 29 April 1756, 179, GUA 26640.

<sup>62</sup> David Fordyce to George Benson, 25 February 1744/5; David Fordyce to George Benson, 20 August 1746, both in William T. Steven, ‘The Life and Work of David Fordyce (1711-1751)’ PhD Thesis (University of Glasgow 1978), 401-5. E. Radcliff, *The Character and Reward of the Good and Faithful Servant. A sermon Preached at Crouched Friars, London, April the 18<sup>th</sup> 1762 On Occasion of the death of George Benson DD*, (London 1762), 26.

<sup>63</sup> Register of Diplomas GUA 21320. 28 May 1740, 37.

<sup>64</sup> Holt, *Walking Together*, 113.

<sup>65</sup> Henry Winder, *A Critical and Chronological History of the Rise, Progress, Declension, and Revival of Knowledge, Chiefly Religious*. 2 vols (London 1745-6), 2, xiii-xviii.



*Chronological History* had begun as a teaching aid to his stepson, William Shaw and in time William was sent to Glasgow to continue his studies.<sup>66</sup>

But all this relates to later in his career. At the time of the subscription crises Winder provided a personal connection between the Irish and English discussions, just as Haliday had done from the Irish side. This connection began at the conclusion of his education. Following his course at Whitehaven Winder then spent two years in Dublin being tutored by Joseph Boyse (1660-1728).<sup>67</sup> Benson recorded that

the reverend and learned Mr Boyse, and the other ministers of that presbytery....at that time, gave, each of them, in their turns, regular lectures, on the system of theology and sacred criticism, to a numerous body of ingenious and hopeful candidates for the ministry.<sup>68</sup>

It is not known how many students were tutored by Boyse and the other Dublin ministers at this time, Benson mentions John Leland (1691-1766)<sup>69</sup> as one other distinguished minister who had followed this course of training. The practice of the Dublin ministers training students went back to at least the 1690s.<sup>70</sup> But it is clear that there was demand for educational provision for dissenting students in Dublin. A few years later, on his graduation from Glasgow, Francis Hutcheson was brought to Dublin to establish an academy there, apparently by Boyse as a response to the closure of the Whitehaven academy. Very few records survive of this academy just as very little is known of the type of work undertaken by Boyse and his colleagues prior to this, it may be that Hutcheson was brought over to formalise and set on a more permanent footing work that had already begun: it may have been a definite continuation of Boyse's work (Boyse may even have been teaching divinity in the new

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<sup>66</sup> *Matriculation Albums*, 14.

<sup>67</sup> Richard Choppin, *A Funeral Sermon Occasion'd by the much lamented death of the Reverend Mr Joseph Boyse preach'd to the congregation of Wood Street 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1728*, ([London] 1729). A.W. Godfrey Brown, *'The Great Mr. Boyse' A Study of the Reverend Joseph Boyse Minister of Wood Street Church, Dublin 1683-1728*, (Belfast 1988).

<sup>68</sup> George Benson, 'Henry Winder', 14.

<sup>69</sup> Victor Nuovo and M. A. Stewart, 'Leland, John', *ODNB*, article/16417. Leland was English born but as minister of the New Row (subsequently Eustace Street) congregation in Dublin became one of the foremost theological writers amongst Irish dissenters. He was created MA by Glasgow University in 1734 and awarded a DD by King's College, Aberdeen in 1739.

<sup>70</sup> MS Diary of the Rev John Cook, 3, PHSI.

academy), although the new establishment was a far more ambitious institution and was primarily intended to provide an education in Arts.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, as M A Stewart has pointed out, what evidence there is suggests that Hutcheson's venture was intended from the start as a New Light institution.<sup>72</sup>

Boyse (who was born in Yorkshire) was the minister of the Wood Street congregation in Dublin and commenced his ministry of forty-five years there as co-pastor with Daniel Williams before his removal to London. He and his Dublin Presbyterian colleagues provided a major conduit through which English dissenters and dissenters in the north of Ireland interacted. He was well known and respected throughout the British Isles and even encouraged the settlement of English ministers in Ulster.<sup>73</sup>

Undoubtedly it was Winder's time in Dublin that opened up the possibility of closer contact with the northern non-subscribing ministers. Benson noted that

I have heard him mention, with pleasure, his acquaintance with those great and good men, the reverend Messieurs Haliday, and Michael Bruce; and the well-known, and incomparable, Mr John Abernethy. Men, whose great abilities, and distinguished zeale for liberty Dr Duchal has, so justly, and in so agreeable a manner, celebrated.

In the academy, at Dublin, there were disputations and the other usual academical exercises.<sup>74</sup>

Winder returned to England in 1714 and at the age of twenty-one became minister of the rural congregation of Tunley in Lancashire. He remained here for just four years before receiving a call from the Castle Hey congregation in Liverpool, one of two large dissenting congregations in the town. Some minor controversy surrounded his acceptance of the pulpit. He was admitted as a member of the Warrington *Classis* only "upon his making an acknowledgment of his breaking in upon the rules of it, in the way and manner of his coming to

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<sup>71</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Boyse Joseph', *DNB*, vol 6, 133-5.

<sup>72</sup> Stewart, 'Rational Dissent in early eighteenth-century Ireland', 45.

<sup>73</sup> A. W. Godfrey Brown, *Thomas Jackson: Minister of Downpatrick 1700-1708*, ([Belfast] 1986).

<sup>74</sup> George Benson, 'Henry Winder', 14.



Liverpoole,"<sup>75</sup> which may reflect his taking up the appointment without prior recourse to the *Classis*. Benson's Memoir of his life gives a valuable account of a provincial English minister adopting non-subscribing ideas at the start of the controversy and successfully presenting them to his congregation:

Soon after Dr Winder's settlement, in the congregation, at Liverpool, the controversy arose, concerning liberty, charity, and the rights of conscience. It became a very warm debate; and extended, far and wide, both in the established church, and among the dissenters. The Doctor's people were then (generally speaking) of very narrow sentiments, and seemed pretty much attached to certain human forms, and systems of divinity: which they were apt to look upon, as standards of the Christian faith, and tests of orthodoxy. Dr Winder took a good deal of pains to enlarge their minds; and to diffuse, among them, the Christian spirit of candor, moderation, and extensive charity. He showed them the injustice of all impositions on the consciences of men; and that human authority, in matters of religion, is ridiculous and absurd. Our Lord Jesus Christ is sole lawgiver and king in his church. In the new testament, are contained the doctrines which he has revealed; and the laws, which he has enjoined. And no one man, nor any body of men, have any right to add thereto, or diminish therefrom; neither have they a right, authoritatively, to expound the doctrines, or precepts, of Christ; and say, that ministers, or people, are obliged to interpret or understand, them, in this or that sense, and in no other sense whatever. Upon these principles, Dr Winder earnestly exhorted his people to stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ had made them free; and no more to be intangled with any yoke of bondage whatever. He did not desire to be lord of their faith; but the helper of their joy.<sup>76</sup>

While writing about Winder Benson encapsulated the essence of non-subscription as it was understood by English dissenters:

As men, or rational creatures, our understandings were given us, that we might think for ourselves; and form the best judgment that we can. As Christians, our moderation ought to be manufactured unto all men. And Christianity could never have made its way into the world, but upon the principles of the liberty of private judgment, and freedom of inquiry. The reformation from popery cannot be defended upon any other principles. And dissenters cannot justify their dissent from the faith, or separation from the worship, established by the civil magistrate; but upon the generous and rational principle, of the unalienable right of conscience, and the liberty of private judgment.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> MS Minutes of the Warrington Classis, 288 ULL 8/1/1 Liverpool Record Office.

<sup>76</sup> George Benson, 'Henry Winder', 15.

<sup>77</sup> George Benson, 'Henry Winder', 16.



This was a view clearly shared by Winder and underpinned by a theology that was broad and eirenic, and may be influenced by the philosophy of Francis Hutcheson. In the last sermon preached in the Castle Hey meeting house before moving to a new chapel in Benn's Gardens in 1727, Winder took 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 8<sup>78</sup> as his text:

One essential part of this Charity is a tender Benevolence and good will towards all men especially the Household of faith. Christianity is a glorious Improvement of Humanity and it's necessary for Christ's followers that they get their hearts raised to a General Benevolence and fervent Desire of the Happiness of all. This grace dictates the heart and extends our Concern and Tenderness above all the narrow Limitations of self-love. Christianity must make a man feel that he's a member of Human nature and a member of the Christian Covenant and as such is concerned for the....well being of the whole Body. Those who care for none but themselves or their own near Relations and families, want that enlargement of heart and extended Humanity which charity consists in.<sup>79</sup>

But this came a few years after the subscription debates. When these began in Ireland Winder was well placed both by the location of his ministry and the connections he had already developed with Irish ministers to take a close interest in the events in Ireland. In 1723 Henry Winder was present at the Synod of Ulster meeting in Dungannon in June of that year. He may have been present at the sub-Synod of Belfast that had been held earlier in the year and at which an elder, the arch-orthodox Colonel Clotworthy Upton (1665-1725),<sup>80</sup> had accused James Kirkpatrick, Michael Bruce, Thomas Nevin and Samuel Haliday of "holding principles which opened a door to let all error and heresy into the church."<sup>81</sup> These complaints were brought to the General Synod and heard in some detail in Dungannon. Winder's sympathies were entirely with the non-subscribers, as might be expected, indeed he saw it as a struggle between "the friends of moderation" and "the bigots", but every vote was lost despite the emergence of a middle group of subscribers who nevertheless opposed the

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<sup>78</sup> 'And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves'.

<sup>79</sup> Henry Winder, 'My last sermon preached in the old chapel on Wednesday June 28 1727'. Copy of manuscript transcribed and the passages in shorthand deciphered by R. Travers Herford, 2-3. MS Winder 1/2. HMCO.

<sup>80</sup> D. W. Hayton, 'Upton, Clotworthy', *ODNB*, article/63670.

<sup>81</sup> 'Letter from Dr Winder to Dr Wright,' *Christian Moderator*, No.17 (September 1827), 274.



attempts to censure the non-subscribers because “the elders were a dead weight upon them.”<sup>82</sup> This would appear to be a crucial difference between the debates over subscription in England and Ireland. In Ireland the presbyteries and synods always included lay elders, in England most of the crucial debates were attended by ministers only.

Although he does not mention it in his surviving letter from Dungannon Winder was present at the Synod as an official representative of the Presbytery of Dublin. This is further confirmation of what must have been his regular and constant connection with his Dublin colleagues, a connection which continued even on this formal level despite Winder’s membership of the Warrington classis. Some of the Dublin congregations were linked to the Synod of Ulster others were part of a Southern Association and had close links with English Presbyterians. All the congregations in Dublin at this point co-operated in a loose form of Presbytery and largely sided, particularly under the guidance of Joseph Boyse, with the non-subscribers. Presumably none of the Dublin ministers were able to make the journey north to Belfast (none are listed amongst those present) and Winder was deputed by the Dublin congregations to bring a message to the Synod. Accordingly at the end of the eleventh session of the Synod Winder

Produced a Comicon [Communication] from the reverend preby in Dublin to present a letter from said preby, and some Gent. in Dublin to this Synod, the said letter was read. It was subscribed by the preby in Dublin and by Mr Alexr. Cairns, Dr Cuming, and several other Gentlemen: they therein earnestly recommend peace, charity, and mutual forberance to all the members of this Synod.<sup>83</sup>

But beyond the minuting of the letter there was no discussion or further action taken in the Synod over the message from their southern brethren.

The Dublin churches played another key role on behalf of the non-subscribers and in co-operation with the London ministers just a few years later. In December 1719 the Rev Alexander Colville, minister at Dromore, county

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<sup>82</sup> ‘Letter from Dr Winder to Dr Wright,’ *Christian Moderator*, No.17 (September 1827), 280, 283.

<sup>83</sup> *RGSU*, 2, 57.

Down, died. He had been a very early member of the Belfast Society and was a firm supporter of New Light thinking. His son, also called Alexander, was then a student of medicine at Glasgow, having graduated MA from Edinburgh in 1715.<sup>84</sup> The Dromore congregation was content to wait until the younger Alexander Colvill (as he styled himself) had finished his training and intended to issue a call to him. Colvill undertook his theological training in Edinburgh and was subsequently licensed by the Cupar-Fife Presbytery in June 1722, when he must have subscribed the Westminster Confession. However, on being called to Dromore in 1724 he refused to renew his subscription and the Presbytery consequently refused to ordain him. Colvill and his supporters appealed to the Synod, as did a minority who opposed him and had seceded from his church and been placed in a separate congregation.<sup>85</sup> However, before the Synod had met to consider his application for ordination Colvill had embarked upon a different course. Apparently on the suggestion of his Kirk Session<sup>86</sup> he had instead approached the London ministers for ordination who gladly complied with his request. For all his previous reluctance to openly side with the non-subscribers amongst the London ministers Calamy was now immediately ready to ordain an Irish non-subscribing minister without the agreement of his presbytery.<sup>87</sup> In December 1724 Colvill was ordained by ten ministers at a ceremony in Calamy's vestry conducted by Joshua Oldfield.<sup>88</sup> John Evans was also amongst those taking part.<sup>89</sup> Robert Wodrow was particularly alarmed by this action and feared that it might be the harbinger of a regular practice.<sup>90</sup>

As far as the presbytery of Armagh was concerned Colvill was exercising an unlawful ministry in what they considered to be a vacant congregation. His ordination was "obtained in an irregular manner" and "contrary to the rules of our Church." They therefore voted to suspend Colvill as a minister and with him

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<sup>84</sup> James Bryson, 'Sermon IV, The Immortality of the Soul' in *Sermons on Several Important Subjects*, (Belfast 1778), 89-157. Alexander Gordon, 'Colvill, Alexander', rev. S. J. Skedd, *ODNB*, article/6005.

<sup>85</sup> *RGSU*, 2, 88-9.

<sup>86</sup> See Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, 20 January 1725. MSS/46/13/186-7, Magee College, University of Ulster.

<sup>87</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 173-4.

<sup>88</sup> Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 231-2.

<sup>89</sup> Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, 20 January 1725. MSS/46/13/186-7, Magee College, UU.

<sup>90</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 169-170.



all those who would hold communion with him, although this was done in the face of the opposition of the non-subscribers present.<sup>91</sup> In a Presbyterian system this put Colvill in a difficult situation, although ordained this was not recognised by his own presbytery and since they would not install him he could not technically be the minister. A way out of the situation was provided by the Presbytery of Dublin. According to his funeral sermon Boyse was

particularly affected with the unhappy differences among the Northern Dissenters, and mourn'd in secret over those bitter contentions, which, thro' the intemperate, indiscreet zeal of some warm (however well-meaning) people, were kept up, and carried to so unreasonable an height, to the reproach of our common Christianity, and the apparent prejudice of the cause of Non-conformity.<sup>92</sup>

However, he was also firmly a non-subscriber in his opinions. W.D. Killen claimed that both Boyse and Calamy had threatened the General Synod with an end to the provision of the *regium donum* for their ministers.<sup>93</sup> In fact although Boyse spoke to the Lord Chancellor about the arrears of the *regium donum* he did not deliberately try to remove the grant from the General Synod. Having been asked by the Lord Chancellor about the situation in Comber, where a New Light minister was in dispute with the congregation, he gave him an explanation:

I accordingly gave him a short Abstract of matters of fact from the year 1721 to 1725 – He appear'd somewhat surpriz'd, censur'd their Dissensions as unreasonable & impolitick, s[ai]d, They were overthrowing the grounds of their N:conformity, wou'd render themselves contemptible by refusing to exercise mutuall forbearance when the Governm[en]t had granted 'em an Act of Toleration, & talked wholly on the New-Light side, in which you may be sure he met with no contradiction from me. He inlarg'd on these topics with a good strain of clear Reasoning, & is no friend to exorbitant claims of Ch[urch] Power in any Eccles[iastical] Synods whatsoever.<sup>94</sup>

However, the Presbytery of Dublin did intervene directly in the situation and agreed to take Colvill into its care. James Strong (1698-1767),<sup>95</sup> the minister of

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<sup>91</sup> RGSU, 2, 92-4.

<sup>92</sup> Choppin, *Funeral Sermon*, 50.

<sup>93</sup> Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 232. Cf Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 173-4.

<sup>94</sup> Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, [1725]. MSS/46/18/154-5, Magee College, UU.

<sup>95</sup> James Armstrong, *Ordination Service*, 88-9.

the Cook Street congregation in Dublin at the time, wrote to his predecessor, Thomas Steward (1668/9-1753),<sup>96</sup> by then minister at Bury St Edmunds, to explain the situation in July 1725:

Mr Colvil....was by the Synod suspended though not present when they did it....The Commissioner of the Congregation gave in a declirator (so they call it) signed by 300 families in which they signified that they would no longer own any relation to the Synod or any of its Judicatores. But they could not obtain a dismiss tho much sollicited. This desire was denied in order to lay them under censure. We expect a supplication from them, how we shall act I cannot yet tell. The NS protested against the Synods Act in this last mentioned affair. Their appearing tho but modestly in it gave great offence to the other side.<sup>97</sup>

In a letter to Steward, Boyse revealed that he was cautious of offending the Synod of Ulster but felt they could not refuse the request for help from the Dromore congregation, citing Romans chapter 7 verse 2 as their authority for intervening.<sup>98</sup> Towards the end of 1725 he wrote to Steward again explaining the action of the Presbytery of Dublin. They had sent commissioners to the sub-Synod of Armagh to persuade them to come to an accommodation with the congregation but found that they insisted that he be deposed.

On this strange Treatment, our Com[missione]rs (ie Messrs Choppin, Magachy & Woods) having a discretionary Power lodg'd in 'em, went to Dromore, installed Mr Colvill, & rec[eive]d him and the Congreg[ation] into our Association. And this our angry Br[ethren] interpret as a Breach of the amicable Correspondence between them [and] us.<sup>99</sup>

It is interesting too that in the same letter and others Boyse can also speak, in a phrase almost identical to that used by Winder, of “the dead Weight of the Ruling Elders,” carrying the vote against a majority of ministers. He also reported that James Kirkpatrick had informed him that the moderate subscribers were meeting to try and head off a formal rupture between the Synod and the

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<sup>96</sup> Alexander Gordon, ‘Steward, Thomas’, rev. Michael P. Brown, *ODNB*, article/26449.

<sup>97</sup> James Strong to Thomas Steward, 1 July 1725. MSS/46/15/144-5, Magee College, UU.

<sup>98</sup> Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, 13 May [1725]. MSS/46/17/148-9, Magee College, UU. The text is “Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband.”

<sup>99</sup> Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, [1725]. MSS/46/18/154-5, Magee College, UU.



non-subscribers.<sup>100</sup>

Colvill and his congregation were received into the Presbytery of Dublin. A few years later the Presbytery minuted their understanding of their action:

This admission was only a provisional expedient agreed to by them in pursuance of the discretionary instructions given 'em by this Presbytery in order to preserve the peace of that congrega[tio]n & prevent an immediate breach between the Gen[era]l Synod & the Presby[tery] of Antrim which they foresaw would inevitably follow upon that Presby[tery]'s receiving Mr Colvil to be a member with them w[hi]ch the commissioners were told they would think themselves oblig'd to do in case he & his congrega[tio]n desired it.<sup>101</sup>

Despite the long distance from Dromore to most of the churches in the south of Ireland Boyse and his colleagues endeavoured to support Colvill and his congregation as best they could, Richard Choppin and the minister of the Limerick church travelling north to assist Colvill at his spring communion in 1726.<sup>102</sup>

In fact, although the geographical area covered was much larger once Dromore had joined the southern association, Irish Presbyterians in the north temporarily abandoned geographical proximity as a basis for constituting presbyteries. In 1725 all the non-subscribers, wherever they were based, were placed in the Presbytery of Antrim. At the same time all the moderate subscribers were placed in the Presbytery of Killyleagh. In the following year the Presbytery of Antrim was excluded from judicial communion with the Synod of Ulster. At the same time the Synod of Ulster established a separate presbytery in Dublin for

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<sup>100</sup> Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, [1725]. MSS/46/18/154-5. Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, 7 May 1726. MSS/46/19/156-7. Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, [1726]. MSS/46/20/152-3. Magee College, UU. The 'moderate subscribers' were those ministers who were prepared to subscribe but were opposed to the exclusion from the Synod of the non-subscribers.

<sup>101</sup> The General Presbytery Book, [Dublin Presbytery MS Minutes 1730-1739], 24 September 1730, 35-6. First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church, Dunmurry. By 1730 Colvil was no longer attending the Presbytery of Dublin meetings and was causing anxiety to the Dublin ministers since he was receiving a portion of the southern *regium domum*. He was urged by the Presbytery of Dublin to transfer to the Presbytery of Antrim as soon as possible by the Dublin Presbytery in September 1730 - The General Presbytery Book, [Dublin Presbytery MS Minutes 1730-1739], 29 September 1730, 37-40.

<sup>102</sup> Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, [1726]. MSS/46/20/152-3, Magee College, UU.

the subscribing minority, although for the time being all the Dublin churches maintained communion with each other and the northern Synod, and Boyse and his colleagues maintained communion with the Presbytery of Antrim.<sup>103</sup>

The Non-Subs have almost finish'd their Narrative of the Genl Synod's Proceedings from 1720 to 1726 with Observations thereon. And this will probably rather irritate than convince those concern'd in their Exclusion from Synodical Communion. The Min[ister]s in Dublin & the South have declar'd their Resolutions to maintain Communion with 'em. Mr Haliday has just newly publish'd his Answer to Mr Iredell's L[ette]r, & as I hear very justly expos'd the weakness of it. Mr Nevin is also preparing an Answer to that part of Mr Macbride's Pamphlet that particularly concerns himself. I have been much solicited to answer Mr Masterton's Reply to our Postscript to Mr Abern[ethy]'s defence of his Seasonable Advice. But I have no great fondness for stirring in a Wasp's nest.<sup>104</sup>

The results of the subscription controversies in Ireland and England were not the same. In England the non-subscribers won the vote but given the loose connection between the different branches of dissent and the fact that, in the end, this was a vote simply of London ministers, this was far less binding than the vote in Ireland which was won by the subscribers. However, in Ireland the vote of the Synod produced not only a separate non-subscribing presbytery but strained relations between Presbyterians in the north and the south and strained relations between Irish and English Presbyterians.

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<sup>103</sup> Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, 1 November 1726. MSS/46/21/150-1, Magee College, UU. James Armstrong, *Ordination Service*, 58-9. RGSU, 96, 108-9, 111.

<sup>104</sup> Joseph Boyse to Thomas Steward, 1 November 1726. MSS/46/21/150-1, Magee College, UU.



## Chapter Seven

“in defending the use our church makes of her Confession, we have to deal with friends as well as enemies”

*Scottish attitudes to subscription at the time of the controversies in England and Ireland*

On the face of it Glasgow and Scotland in general were unpropitious territory to provide common cause or support for those in Ireland and England who adhered to New Light or non-subscribing principles. Certainly as the controversy broke in Belfast the non-subscribers looked with some disdain at the support that was given to the subscribing, and in their view schismatic, congregation in the town.<sup>1</sup> In September 1722 Samuel Smith, a prominent Belfast merchant as well as an elder and former member of the first congregation,<sup>2</sup> had gone over to Scotland to solicit financial support for the subscribing congregation. Non-subscribers had been swift to try and oppose this mission. A printed advertisement was circulated in Glasgow at the time of Smith's visit. This stated:

That there are no Dissenters in the North of Ireland, but what are entirely of Presbyterian Principles, and have given all due Evidences of their orthodoxy, and Soundness in the Faith. Those Ministers in particular, whom these Gentlemen are separating from, have given such an Account of themselves, and their PRINCIPLES, as was found satisfactory to the General Synod of Ulster in June 1722 who at that Time emitted a Declaration clearing all their Brethren, from all Imputations of Unsoundness, either in Principles or Morals, owning them to be of their Communion....Experience has shown the Dissenters in Belfast to be both able, and willing to provide Places of Worship for themselves, when there was Occasion, without imploring the Assistance of others. It is therefore expected of all Persons, that are inclinable to shew their Charity on this Occasion, that they will shew it, not only by their Bounty, (which no Body desires they should withhold) but also by the no less Christian Act,

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<sup>1</sup> *A Letter from a Gentleman of Ireland to a Minister of the Church of Scotland, Concerning a Charitable Contribution, Which is desired, for building a New Meeting-House in Belfast* (Edinburgh February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1722-3), 8. The use of the term 'schismatic' to describe the founders of the third congregation was a cause of some annoyance to Samuel Smith and his colleagues who presented a supplication to the Synod of Ulster of 1723 complaining of this term – *RGSU*, 2, 45.

<sup>2</sup> Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 199-202.



of refusing to listen to any dishonourable and uncharitable Reflections, that may be made use of to promote it.<sup>3</sup>

According to the author of the anonymous *Letter from a Gentleman of Ireland to a Minister of the Church of Scotland, Concerning a Charitable Contribution, Which is desired, for building a New Meeting-House in Belfast* published in Edinburgh while Smith was back in Scotland in February 1723 he had caused ill-feeling in Glasgow during this first visit. The non-subscribers saw Smith's actions as detrimental to the cause of unity in the church, for both the Church of Scotland itself and between it and the dissenters in England and Ireland. As the author of the anonymous pamphlet put it:

Mr Samuel Smith of Belfast, having again thought fit, to take a Tour into your country, to solícite the Charity of the Members of the Church of Scotland, in Favours of the New Erection in Belfast: The Concern I have for the common Interest of your Church, and of the Dissenters in England, and Ireland, will not suffer me to be silent in an Affair, which in my humble Opinion, has a direct Tendency to create great Divisions, and Animosities among us; and in Consequence thereof, may occasion some Heats and Disturbances, even in your Country.<sup>4</sup>

Smith's first visit raised £120 for the new church in Belfast. The author of the *Letter* found it shocking that they could give approval to those who had separated from their "worthy pastors on the mere Account of Non-Subscription." It was an abuse of charity to give money for a "sumptuous and stately Fabrick, the Expence whereof, if it be seated, finished, and adorned suitable to the Shell and Contrivance of it, will be at least a Thousand Pounds." It was especially risky when Irish Presbyterians at any time could have their liberty to worship revoked and the town council had already used the building of a third Presbyterian church as a pretext for taxing the citizens towards the erection of a new Episcopal church.<sup>5</sup> Small, struggling, poverty stricken congregations in such towns as Drogheda, Dundalk and Galway were far more worthy of support as

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<sup>3</sup> *Advertisement* dated Glasgow, 24 September, 1722, printed as Appendix 2 in *Letter from the Reverend, Mrs Kilpatrick and Halliday, Ministers in Belfast. To a Friend at Glasgow, With Relation to the New Meeting-House in Belfast* (Edinburgh 1723), 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> *A Letter from a Gentleman of Ireland to a Minister of the Church of Scotland, Concerning a Charitable Contribution, Which is desired, for building a New Meeting-House in Belfast* (Edinburgh 1722/3), 3. Robert Wodrow, in a letter to Samuel Smith, suggested that Kirkpatrick and Haliday were the authors of the pamphlet, Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> *Letter from a Gentleman*, 4-5.



they strove to maintain Presbyterian witness in isolated places surrounded by “violent” and “inveterate Papists”.<sup>6</sup>

The *Letter* also made the point that the Synod of Belfast at its meeting had not seen fit to give any recommendation to the appeal for the third congregation. This was a point developed by James Kirkpatrick and Samuel Haliday in a published *Letter from the Reverend, Mrs Kilpatrick and Halliday, Ministers in Belfast. To a Friend at Glasgow* which also appeared in 1723:

Our Congregations made it appear before the Presbytery of Belfast, That our two Meeting-Houses, were sufficient to accommodate them all, by this undeniable Argument, that there were diverse vacant seats possessed by none.

In addition, despite subscribers being a majority in the meeting the Presbytery:

Did unanimously enter a Declaration in their Records, that they would not give the least countenance, to any Violation of the Synod’s charitable Declaration, and that they were sorry, that the Petitioners founded their Erection upon a Violation of it, and offered to reason with them, for their Conviction, in order to their laying aside their Design.<sup>7</sup>

Robert Wodrow wrote to Samuel Smith to tell him that he found that these two pamphlets gave him “a more melancholy view of your affairs at Belfast than anything I have yet seen”<sup>8</sup> and the worst fears of the non-subscribers were realised when they saw the popular response to the appeal from Samuel Smith for the new third congregation. On 22 September 1722 Samuel Smith had been allowed to bring his case to the magistrates and town council of Glasgow who had granted permission for a collection to be taken the following week. This was followed by the agreement of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr meeting on 3 October for a collection to be taken within their bounds for the new congregation. Together these collections had raised the £120 gathered for the third congregation. Smith’s second visit, accompanied by the Rev William

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<sup>6</sup> *Letter from a Gentleman*, 5-6

<sup>7</sup> *Letter from...Kilpatrick and Halliday*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 17.

Livingston, minister of Templepatrick, in February 1723 saw collections taken in Edinburgh, St Andrews, Dundee and Perth. J.S. Reid observed that “The deputation returned to Ireland in the first week of April, well satisfied with the result of their mission.”<sup>9</sup>

A further problem for non-subscribers came from the fact that subscription had been required of ministers by law since 1693, had been underlined at the time of the Act of Union and had been tightened up further in 1711. But despite the difficulties of the legal background and the general hostility of much popular thinking to non-subscription there were others who shared many attitudes with the non-subscribers. These came to be described as moderates.

As H.R. Sefton points out in his thesis on the early development of moderatism in the Church of Scotland, a commonly held view of moderatism is that “it originated in various heretical views of English Dissenters mediated by John Simson and in the writings of the third Earl of Shaftesbury mediated by Francis Hutcheson.”<sup>10</sup> This is, of course, an oversimplification of the relationship between the New Light dissenters in Ireland and England and the moderates in the Church of Scotland. However, there was between these groups a sense of a common cause and what is more there was a shared sense of concern about subscription although this was far less visible in Scotland.

Sefton has identified William Hamilton, Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh from 1709 to 1732, as the ‘father’ of Scottish moderatism and has located the home of moderatism in Edinburgh where the “Hamilton Moderates” of William Wishart, Patrick Cuming and Robert Wallace resided. William Wishart was appointed Principal of the University of Edinburgh in 1736, Patrick Cuming was made minister of the Old Kirk in 1732 and became Professor of Church History at Edinburgh University in 1736, and Robert Wallace was minister in Edinburgh successively at New Greyfriars from 1733 and at New

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<sup>9</sup> Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 199-200, 202.

<sup>10</sup> H.R. Sefton, ‘The Early Development of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland’, PhD Thesis (University of Glasgow 1962), 11. J.H.S. Burleigh *A Church History of Scotland*, (London 1960), 295.



North Church from 1738.<sup>11</sup> However, in the early part of their ministries, when the subscription crisis was at its highest, Wishart, at least, gave them all a much closer association with Glasgow. What is more, particularly in the early stages of their careers, there is evidence of their being at the heart of a vigorous debate about subscription, although certainly this became less pronounced as an indication of ‘moderatism’ as the century progressed and as the Church of Scotland established a *modus vivendi* with regard to subscription which removed the factors that had made this question so divisive in England and Ireland.

It would be unlikely that the Church of Scotland would be unaffected by a movement which had divided most of the reformed churches in Europe from Geneva to Leiden and which had been particularly prominent in the neighbouring parts of the British Isles. Robert Wodrow was certainly aware of the development of anti-subscription views in his church. Writing in September 1718 to the Rev William Wright, minister at Kilmarnock, he expressed his sadness at news from Ireland:

It’s a long time since I had melancholy apprehensions of matters there. There is a general spite against creeds and confessions spreading at this day through the Reformed Churches, and we are not free altogether in this Church. There is a cunning occasional paper printed lately upon orthodoxy, which I fear do much hurt on this subject.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, a full year before the controversy broke in Ireland and six months before the Salters’ Hall debates in England Wodrow could detect similar tendencies within his own church. The catalyst for this development was, in fact, Bishop Hoadly and Wodrow’s melancholy remarks were prompted by William Wright’s quotation of Francis Hutcheson’s well-known observation of the situation in Ireland when he found “a perfect Hoadly mania among our younger ministers in the north.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Laurence A. B. Whitley, ‘Hamilton, William’, *ODNB*, article/64386. M. A. Stewart, ‘Wishart, William’, *ODNB*, article/40217. Laurence A. B. Whitley, ‘Cuming, Patrick, of Relugas’, *ODNB*, article/64368. B. Barnett Cochran, ‘Wallace, Robert’, *ODNB*, article/28539.

<sup>12</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 389-390.

<sup>13</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 389.

The “cunning occasional paper” is a reference to the series of more or less monthly *Occasional Papers* produced in London by a club of mostly Presbyterian non-subscribing ministers between 1716 and 1719. These gave a particularly warm welcome to the writings of Hoadly from their inception onwards and described themselves as having a “general View....[of] Liberty, within the Bounds of Reason and Religion”.<sup>14</sup>

But Wodrow’s reference to being “not free altogether in this Church” is probably a reference to the activity of various young ministers and students revolving mainly around the persons of William Wishart and Robert Wallace. These future prominent moderates, according to one recent assessment, “admired the writings of Shaftesbury, Molesworth, and Hoadly” had “abandoned the austerity of traditional Calvinism” and “saw charity rather than retribution as the heart of the Christian message and stressed the potential good rather than depravity in human nature.”<sup>15</sup> In addition, at this stage of their careers and for a few years after, they were prepared to question the necessity of subscription to the Westminster Confession. This questioning was hardly as open as that taking place in Ireland and England but it must have been open enough to come to Wodrow’s notice as early as the autumn of 1718. By 1724, when Wishart was called by the magistrates of the city to the Tron church in Glasgow, Wodrow was even more fervent in his complaints about those undermining the Confession in the Kirk. When communion was to be celebrated in Glasgow in April 1725 Wodrow observed that:

Mr Wallace of Moffat, Mr Telfair of Hawick, Mr A. Anderson, Mr Taylor of Tillicoultry, they say are to be helpers in the Laigh Church. Three of them are spoken of as members of a club at Edinburgh, where creeds, &c., were not much defended.<sup>16</sup>

Wallace and Wishart appear to have been at the heart of a section of opinion that was opposing subscription and the Edinburgh club had an exact

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<sup>14</sup> Bolam et al, *The English Presbyterians*, London 1968, 152, 155. Roger Thomas, ‘The Non-Subscription Controversy amongst Dissenters’, *JEH*, 169. *A Collection of the Occasional Papers for the Year 1718* vol 3, (London 1719), iii.

<sup>15</sup> M. A. Stewart, ‘Wishart, William’, *ODNB*, article/40217.

<sup>16</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 190. Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 175.



counterpart in Glasgow. Although not all of his suspicions may have been based on hard evidence, in January 1725 Wodrow observed that:

At Glasgou the debates among the Students continou, and make no litle noise. There seems to be a humor getting in among them of opposing Confessions, and exalting reason, under pretence of search after truth. The Triamphorian Club, they say, is renewed with neu vigor there, and they talk Mr Harvey is writing in defence of Mr Wallace's Sermon upon Reason. They say Mr Wishart meets with that Club; which, if true, is a strange step, and he is ill-advised. The Non-subscribers in Ireland give it out that he is the Minister of Scotland they have their eye most upon, and one of the brightest men in it.<sup>17</sup>

Wodrow rendered the name of the Glasgow club in two different ways, calling it the Trinamphorian Club in the following month when he noted that it had been renamed the Sophocardian Club in honour of Wishart.<sup>18</sup> The club was described by John Smith as a "not only harmless but a profitable Society" which included "several Gentlemen of good Characters in the City of Glasgow...And even some Ministers of the Church," but which fell foul of Stirling and Simson. According to Smith the University authorities conducted a whispering campaign against it and tried to ban students from attending on the grounds that the members

who were at first chiefly English and Irish Men, were a set of Latitudinarians, Free-thinkers, Non-Subscribers, and Bangorians, and in a Word, Enemies to the Jurisdictions, Powers, and Divine Authority of the Clergy.<sup>19</sup>

Alongside this club Wodrow also noted amongst the Glasgow students the Eleutherian Club and the Anticapadocian Club (so called because the Capadocians were willing to tamely surrender their liberties to the Romans), all of which

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<sup>17</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 178. The *Analecta* incorrectly renders the name of the club as the Triamphorian or Trinampherian Club.

<sup>18</sup> The Triamphorian/Trinamphorian Club was probably named after a tavern or drinking club – the club of the three *amphorae* or wine-jugs. Sophocardian comes from the Latin for 'Wise Heart'.

<sup>19</sup> [Smith], *A Short Account of the late treatment of the University of G---w*, 20-21.

are like to have very ill influence on Religion. People meet in them without any solid grave person to moderat, and give a loose to their fancy and enquirys, with[out] any stated rule of them or any solid principles.<sup>20</sup>

Wishart's friends, whom he frequently invited to preach in his Glasgow church, appear to have maintained a club of their own at which Wodrow thought "pretty odd notions, pretty much favouring Arminianisme wer vented".<sup>21</sup> In November 1726 Wodrow lamented the state of religion in Britain and listed those he described as 'Neu-lights and Preachers-legall':

Our circumstances in Brittain at this time, and particularly Scotland, seem to be very sad, threathing and cloudy; and that both as to Church and State. In the Church, we have the Marrou people on the one hand, who print and scatter papers and sermons very cheap throu 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 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. Of this kind are reconed Mr Telfair; the two Armstrongs, in the Merse; Mr P. Cumming, Lochmaben; Mr Wallace, Moffet, and Mr Taylor and Gybson, in Dumblain and Alloway, wer once numbered among them. It's observed of some such Ministers, whither justly I cannot say, that Christ and faith scarce ever enter their discourses, or even their prayers. They generally preach upon the improvement of reason, or moral virtues, or generall vague heads; but faith, and beliving in Christ, regeneration, strength from Christ, the corruption of human nature, the work of the Spirit on the soul, these are things [which] do not enter into their discourses; and the gentlmen and persons of knowledge, as well as the meaner sort, are perfectly disgusted at their dry and abstract sermons and discourses of morality. Our sins are hainous in the house of God, and our judgment is like to begin there!<sup>22</sup>

Charles Telfer was presented to the living at Hawick in November 1722 and ordained in January 1723. He caused more controversy in 1730 with a sermon preached before the Lord High Commissioner. He died in the following year. Of the two Armstrongs one was William Armstong, who was ordained at Canonbie in August 1719. A sermon given by him at the opening of his Synod in 1730 caused local controversy, although he too died just a few years later in

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<sup>20</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 183.

<sup>21</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 4, 165.

<sup>22</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 360.



1733. The other Armstrong was probably James Armestrong minister at Ruthwell from 1720 until his death in 1759. Patrick Cuming certainly had the most successful career of those mentioned by Wodrow as being in the circle of Wallace and Wishart in the mid 1720s. He was ordained at Kirkmahoe in 1720 and translated to Lochmaben in 1725, before moving on to St Giles, Edinburgh and becoming the chief lieutenant of the Argyll interest in church affairs. He was appointed professor of ecclesiastical history at Edinburgh in 1737 and served three times as moderator of the general assembly. John Taylour came to Tillicoultry in 1714 and was translated to Alloa in 1726 before moving on to Edinburgh's Tolbooth church in 1735. Like the others mentioned by Wodrow in this context he held New Light views at this time but appears to have been slightly older than the others, having graduated from Edinburgh in 1703 and having already served in the ministry for a decade. Gybson is Archibald Gibson who was minister at Dunblane from 1719 before moving to St Ninians, Egglis in 1728 and to Lady Yester's Church, Edinburgh in 1732. He died in 1733. The person named by Wodrow as 'A. Anderson' as assisting at communion in Glasgow alongside Wallace, Telfer and Taylour in April 1725 was Alexander Anderson who had been ordained in the parish of Sorbie in April of 1724. He had served as librarian in the University of Glasgow prior to his settlement there and died in 1738. Wallace was presented to Moffat in 1723.<sup>23</sup> The majority of these ministers were educated at Edinburgh but circumstances had brought them all to settlements in the West of Scotland by the mid-1720s and close enough to Glasgow to move in the circle of Wishart and Wallace and to be identified as a group holding New Light opinions and hostile to subscription.

Charles Telfer appears to have considered not signing the Westminster Confession. According to Wodrow he was one of "the young Ministers here" thought by the London non-subscribers to be "favourers of their scheme." When he was due to be licensed by the presbytery he expressed some opposition to subscribing but "came off his difficultys when he sau there was none there would

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<sup>23</sup> Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* – Charles Telfer, part 2, 498; William Armstrong, part 2, 631; James Armestrong, part 2, 626; Patrick Cuming, part 1, 15-16, part 2, 588-9, 642, (also Laurence A. B. Whitley, 'Cuming, Patrick, of Relugas', *ODNB*, article/64368); John Taylour, part 1, 51, vol 2, part 2, 740; Archibald Gibson, part 1, 62; vol 2, part 2, 711, 717; Alexander Anderson, part 2, 745; Robert Wallace, part 1, 66-7, 70, 395; part 2, 656-7, (also B. Barnett Cochran, 'Wallace, Robert', *ODNB*, article/28539.).



license him without subscribing.”<sup>24</sup> At his first communion in Glasgow in October 1724 Wishart had invited Telfer and Wallace to preach. In the event only Wallace was able to come but his discourse created a storm. Preaching on the text “Faith without works is dead” his sermon was taken by some to be favourable to the non-subscribers and contained a “fling at Confessions, as ‘imposed forms of orthodoxy,’ or words to that purpose”.<sup>25</sup> Wishart continued to make use of “such as give occasion for neu melancholy outcryes, in point of doctrine” and in October of the following year Telfer was invited to preach and caused controversy by preaching that

the chief end of Religion is to promote holynes; and, when holynes was explained, it was restricted to the dutys of righteousness betwixt man and man... Good works wer described as what proceed from right motives, and a right rule and end; but no word of Christ and his name and stren[g]th, or the Spirit.<sup>26</sup>

Because of his willingness to encourage such questioning of the creedal basis of the Kirk’s faith Wishart’s ministry in Glasgow is important. However, his relatively brief period at the Tron parish also coincided with the campaign to remove John Simson as Professor of Divinity and Wishart became closely involved in that. He was an active supporter of Simson, indeed Simson was an occasional attender at Wishart’s church,<sup>27</sup> and in 1728 Wishart was elected Dean of the Faculty, a post that was reserved for a minister in the town.<sup>28</sup> This was just in time for him to take part in the keenly contested election of Francis Hutcheson as Professor of Moral Philosophy in 1729. Wishart was a lone voice in defence of Simson in the Presbytery of Glasgow and Ayr and published anonymously *A Short and Impartial State of the Case of Mr John Simson* in 1729.<sup>29</sup> In 1730 Wishart was called to be minister of the Scots congregation meeting at Founders Hall in London. He had preached in London before, immediately after being Licensed in 1717 and prior to going to Leiden to study there in October 1718

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<sup>24</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 174.

<sup>25</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 167-8.

<sup>26</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 238-9.

<sup>27</sup> M.A. Stewart, ‘Principal Wishart (1692-1753) and the Controversies of his Day’, *RSCHS*, vol 30, (2000), 73.

<sup>28</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 23) 26 June 1728, 52. GUA 26635. Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, part 1, 59-60, 70; vol 2, part 1, 11-12.

<sup>29</sup> This was wrongly attributed to his father but for evidence of his authorship see Stewart, ‘Principal Wishart (1692-1753)’, *RSCHS*, 64.



where he also preached to the Scots congregations in the Netherlands. In London he moved in the circles of those close to Benjamin Hoadly, to whom he later dedicated a volume of sermons, and his closest friends were amongst the non-subscribing dissenting clergy in the city. These included Benjamin Avery, Nathaniel Lardner and George Benson – two of whom were Glasgow educated (Avery and Benson), and the first two of them being amongst the authors of the *Occasional Papers*, Benson being one of the foremost non-subscribing ministers of his generation. Wishart's published works while in London – *Charity the End of the Commandment* (1731) and *The Certain and Unchangeable Difference Betwixt Moral Good and Evil* (1732) – bear witness to his associations in London and received a hostile reception in Scotland, indeed on his appointment as Principal at Edinburgh in November 1736 he was charged with heresy because of them, a charge eventually dismissed at the General Assembly of 1738.<sup>30</sup>

But if the early decades of Wishart's career illustrate the continuing affinity between a leading moderate and those holding non-subscribing views outside of Scotland it is his friend Wallace who gave the most tangible support to non-subscribing views at the very start of the controversy. Wallace's unpublished *Little treatise against imposing creeds* has received only limited attention from historians. The fact that it was never published certainly shows that there were only limited opportunities to promote such views, but the date of this production is very significant and shows the close participation of Wishart and Wallace's circle in the questions of subscription at the very start of the controversy which provide the basis for the controversial preaching that was based around the Tron parish in the mid 1720s as the initial controversies raged in Ireland and England.

The treatise was written for a club based in Edinburgh, almost certainly the one identified by Wodrow in April 1725 as one where creeds “were not much defended.”<sup>31</sup> It seems very likely that this was the Rankenian Club, so called because it took its name from the landlord of the tavern in which they met. The

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<sup>30</sup> Sefton, 'The Early Development of Moderatism', PhD Thesis, 76.

<sup>31</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 190.

club now “has a legendary aura about it”<sup>32</sup> because of the literary accomplishments of its members and their correspondence with Bishop Berkeley<sup>33</sup> but in its origins it was a student society that had theological matters as its main focus. According to the anonymous obituary of Robert Wallace it had as its aim “mutual improvement by liberal conversation and rational enquiry” and was “instrumental in disseminating through Scotland, freedom of thought, boldness of disquisition, liberality of sentiment, accuracy of reasoning, correctness of taste, and attention to composition” but there is no doubt that in its earliest days it was keenly interested in discussing the most pressing issues in religion. The club kept, or at least left behind, no minutes but was founded in 1717 (or possibly a few years earlier) and lasted until 1771, shortly after the death of Wallace.<sup>34</sup>

*A little treatise against imposing Creeds or Confessions of faith on ministers or private Christians as a necessary term of Laick or Ministeriall Communion* was written, according to the recollection of the author some forty five years later, “before the year 1720”. Writing in 1765 Wallace observed that “there are many just observations in this little treatise: which discover both an early genius & an aversion to be fettered by Creeds and modern Confessions.”<sup>35</sup>

A few years later he added some more detailed comments on his treatise:

The writer of this little piece shows plainly how well he understood the controversy about subscription 50 years ago: in truth he and his companions at 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 these affairs since that time the writers of a Confessional and their adversaries & other writers for and against the Christian Religion and most part of the English Divines seem to be but

<sup>32</sup> David D. McElroy, *Scotland's Age of Improvement. A Survey of Eighteenth-Century Literary Clubs and Societies*, (Washington, 1969), 22-23.

<sup>33</sup> For this and a detailed assessment of the membership and impact of the Rankenian Club see M.A. Stewart, ‘Berkeley and the Rankenian Club’, in David Berman, (ed), *George Berkeley Essays and Replies*, (Dublin 1986), 25-45.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Memoirs of Dr Wallace of Edinburgh’, *Scots Magazine*, 33 (July 1771), 340-1.

<sup>35</sup> R. Wallace, MS ‘A little treatise against imposing Creeds or Confessions of faith on ministers or private Christians as a necessary term of Laick or Ministeriall Communion’, EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>. Remarks added to the title page and dated Monday, September 24 1765.



babblers & half thinkers compared with a set of students at Edinburgh about the year 1720.<sup>36</sup>

Although this document is noted by some historians its contents or significance are never really discussed in any detail. But surely it is remarkable as evidence of a meeting of clergy and students in Scotland, not entirely dissimilar to the Belfast Society in the north of Ireland, drawing conclusions about the inappropriateness of subscription to creeds and confessions in a way at least as passionate as their counterparts in Ireland. A close examination of the 'Little treatise' reveals other parallels with the non-subscribers in Ireland. Clearly Wallace is influenced by the same source for this line of thinking that begins with Hoadly's sermon on *The Nature of the Kingdom, or Church of Christ* preached before the King in March 1717 and which is continued amongst English dissenters by the *Occasional Papers*. But whereas Hoadly's sermon emphasises the centrality of the teaching of Christ as making all other expressions of faith subordinate and Abernethy stresses the role of reason and personal decision in matters of faith Wallace is much more explicitly opposed to written confessions. In part this may reflect the fact that the 'Little treatise' was not intended for publication, indeed it exists simply as a quite roughly written paper to be read at the meeting of the Club, there are numerous crossings out and in places it is not entirely legible. Yet it is quite unequivocal in its language at a time when the controversy had not become so publicly heated, at least in Ireland, if not in England. Wallace dated it to "before 1720" which makes it difficult to fit exactly into the sequence of events as they unfolded across the British Isles. But there can be no doubt that this writer and future leader of his Church was prepared to question the very principle of subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

For Wallace the drawing up of articles of faith and the use of them as documents to be signed by the clergy as a sign of their orthodoxy was "unreasonable," since "the Christian religion recommends yea enjoyns a full and

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<sup>36</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>. Written on the back page and dated Wednesday, December 30 1767. The last part of this paragraph is an allusion to the Feathers Tavern Petition of 1767. See B. W. Young, 'Blackburne, Francis (1705–1787)', *ODNB*, article/2513.

impartial examination of the grounds of our faith and practice: Prove all things says St Paul hold fast that which is good: where its plain he orders every one to search cheerfully (or dutifully) after the truth and receive that only which he finds to be so.”<sup>37</sup>

The faithful person, convinced that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, finds there the doctrines they should believe and the duties they should practise. The requirements for a Christian life are given in the teachings of Jesus and his disciples:

For its not what any church or Pope hath said, any assembly or convocation, any general council, but what Christ and his apostles have commanded, that we are to regard: and if it be the duty of every Christian certainly its so in a peculiar manner if everyone who is to be helpful to others in letting them see the true meaning of the scriptures, and enforcing their duties upon them every minister to be sure ought to prove all things that he may only hold fast that which is good.<sup>38</sup>

It should be enough for a minister to acknowledge the one true God and the divine mission of Jesus Christ as revealed in the scriptures, if he should find either the thirty-nine articles or the Westminster Confession not to be agreeable to the scriptures then it only adds to the corruption of humanity to enforce them. The variety of different creedal systems created by different churches in different countries proves the impossibility of trying to establish a uniform system of orthodoxy. Jesus and the Apostles recommended love and charity and forbearance for those with whom we differ.

What authority in the world have any clergymen, to oblige me not only to own my belief that the Scriptures are the word of God, which is indeed highly reasonable I should, but also subscribe a great many long articles which men have framed: I speak this with a sorrowful heart when I see the bleeding state of Christianity: how came it ever at first into a man’s head: I am sure the true way to know whether a man be a Christian is to see it be acknowledged that Jesus Christ was a divinely authorised instructor, and if he believes all thats contained in these writings his inspired missionaries have blessed us with to be true; I am confident there was no more required in the first ages of Christianity: whatever different

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<sup>37</sup> R. Wallace, ‘A little treatise’, EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 1.

<sup>38</sup> R. Wallace, ‘A little treatise’, EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 2.



opinions men might have if they agreed in this, they were to be accounted Christians and were mutually to forbear one another.<sup>39</sup>

Curiously Wallace also makes use of the same text from Romans ch.14 v.5 - "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" - which Abernethy used in his sermon on *Religious Observance*. This is far from being an entirely obvious choice since, as Abernethy admits in his sermon, the text "has an immediate reference to the division between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, about the observance of the Mosaical rites."<sup>40</sup> So this may suggest either that Wallace had read Abernethy's sermon or – alternatively since he dated as being written before 1720 - that he moved in circles where there was a lot of discussion of the topic of non-subscription and proof texts such as this were being shared.

For Wallace it was wrong that articles should be framed by a church in opposition to possible wrong opinions, articles which then had to be affirmed by church members. He had great faith in the power of reasoning and argument to counter and explain any theological error that might arise, without the necessity of compulsion, of "racks and gibbets to bring men to the acknowledgment of the truth."<sup>41</sup> There is perhaps an echo of Hoadly here who asserted that:

The peace of Christ's Kingdom is a manly and Reasonable Peace; built upon Charity and Love, and mutual forbearance, and receiving one another, as God receives us. As for any other Peace: founded upon a Submission of our Honesty, as well as Understandings; it is falsely so called.<sup>42</sup>

For Hoadly the sanctions of Christ's law were rewards and punishments, but these were not of this world, "He took his Motives from that place, where his Kingdom first began, and where it was at last to end; from those Rewards and Punishments in a future state."<sup>43</sup> For Wallace imposition on Christians was wrong:

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<sup>39</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 3-4.

<sup>40</sup> Abernethy, *Religious Obedience*, 4.

<sup>41</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, 29.

<sup>43</sup> Hoadly, *The Nature of the Kingdom*, 18-19.

I own there is a difference between inflicting actual punishment on a man if he do not come up to the established standard; and making several advantages depend on his doing it; the one is indeed a good many degrees worse than the other but neither in my opinion can be justified.<sup>44</sup>

St Paul was a suitable model for this who, despite his zeal, didn't oppose error by framing confessions or articles but instead implored Timothy to teach in patience and meekness. Christian leaders "must not with vigour and severity, with fury and rage, convert men to truth, but meekly and calmly instruct them, leaving the event to God alone if perhaps he may bring them to the acknowledgement of the truth"<sup>45</sup>

For Wallace the primitive church presented a remarkable degree of unity preserved by the works and example of the apostles. Through their labours they bequeathed the church

a strict regard to God and inculcated all these duties of justice and charity to men that are agreeable to the law of nature and the eternal rules of righteousness: love and goodwill towards all men, Christians and Pagans and Jews, friends and enemies without any distinction.<sup>46</sup>

Converts, whether of "heathens" or "backslider Christians," should only be won over by gentle and calm methods and by exemplary lives without recourse to violence or force. In the case of disputes arising within the Christian community over those who are perceived as having departed from the dictates of the apostles then reason and argument should be used to convince them, not enforced subscription. Threatening those who err with punishment reflects "odiously on truth" and suggests that truth is not strong enough, in itself, to overcome error. For Wallace truth should be trusted to maintain its own station in the world.<sup>47</sup>

In addition written standards of faith can become corrupted. Heretics are able to propagate their errors with more zeal than the orthodox and should they

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<sup>44</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 5.

<sup>45</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 6.

<sup>46</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 9-10.

<sup>47</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 10-12.



ever manage to become the majority in a particular church there is nothing to stop them re-writing the terms of subscription to reflect their beliefs.<sup>48</sup> Above all subscription itself is not a proper safeguard against error:

for its nothing but a rational conviction of the will that's desirable: and if the Hereticks upon this account only forsake their errors when they are not fully persuaded in their minds it will not avail them anything in the sight of God, yea must necessarily displease him more than their continuance in error. For its truth in the inward part that He requires: the true way to convince the Hereticks themselves is no doubt reason and argument and any other way to cause a man to believe any proposition is ridiculous.<sup>49</sup>

Subscription, in fact, stifles the truth. Instead of beating down error it actually hinders the "impartial search of truth" by preventing active participation in the church by all except those who "chance to agree" with a scheme of principles that they are told are exactly agreeable to the Word of God. Protestant insistence on subscription is no better than the methods employed in Roman Catholic countries:

False opinions ought not be allowed to overspread the earth: but that all wayes and means should be fallen on for this purpose, racks, gibbets, stakes, or the more gentle ones of subscription, seems as Nonsensical as its injurious to rational creatures.<sup>50</sup>

Clear teaching based on the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the standard of faith is the best prevention against the spreading of error. The scriptures can be relied upon as the source of all doctrine when entered into without any human bias or prior prejudice. So, Wallace argues, "Let every man reason for what he believes as strongly as he can and let error prevail if it be able". In answer to those who claim that this policy would produce confusion, division and disorder he asserts that in a spirit of "full love and charity....there would be no divisions or schisms among Christians if none presumed to impose their judgements on the rest."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 12-13;

<sup>49</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 14.

<sup>50</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 15.

<sup>51</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 16.

Wallace concludes his treatise with a description of a model national church based on active ministers in every parish devoting themselves to teaching the scriptures and exhorting their flocks to Christian duty by word, sacraments and example. But the clergy would not have the responsibility of imposing uniformity of belief and people should not separate from ministers with whom they disagreed:

I would have no separation from them, for this does not all argue that I agree with them in all points that I join with them on worshipping God, and I may easily declare my own opinions to the world if any need be; and as long as I am allowed to think and act according to what I judge reasonable it can never be my fault that another man differs from me.<sup>52</sup>

Of course, Wallace's treatise was produced for a small group of like-minded clergy and was never published. He was part of a small group within the Church of Scotland who were opposed to subscription. Yet as Wodrow's reaction shows there was considerable fear in some circles that those who propagated anti-subscriptionist views were gaining ground and could bring to Scotland divisions and controversies similar to those that had already happened in England and Ireland.

However, the question of subscription did not become an open issue within the Church of Scotland at this time. In part this was due to the copper fastened place of the Westminster Confession within the ecclesiastical and political settlement. For the emerging Moderate party in Scotland support for the discipline of the Kirk remained paramount which meant that the Confession could be accepted as part of the church's heritage yet not require the same interpretation that was placed on it in the 1640s. Whatever the perceived demerits of the Confession there were few who were willing to upturn the whole church on this issue. It was this perceived attack on the discipline of the Church that brought such an uncompromising response to the Marrow Men from the Kirk when they were rebuked and admonished by the general assembly of 1722.<sup>53</sup> In addition, early in the controversy, one of the most gifted young

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<sup>52</sup> R. Wallace, 'A little treatise', EUL La. II. 620<sup>18</sup>, 17.

<sup>53</sup> Burleigh, *Church History*, 288-90.



Scottish theologians of his day produced a work which, at least to the satisfaction of those who might have had scruples about subscription, reduced the difficulties of maintaining the Westminster Confession.

William Dunlop's *Preface to an Edition of the Westminster Confession, &c Being a full and particular Account of all the Ends and uses of Creeds and Confessions of Faith* was published in 1720 (the first edition of his *Collection* was published the year before in 1719).<sup>54</sup> Dunlop was the son of William Dunlop, principal of Glasgow University from 1690 to 1700, and the nephew of William Carstares, the principal of Edinburgh University. He graduated MA from Glasgow at some point early in the eighteenth century<sup>55</sup> and subsequently studied theology in Edinburgh before studying civil law at Utrecht. In 1714 he was licensed by the presbytery of Edinburgh and just six months later was appointed professor of divinity and church history at Edinburgh at the age of just twenty two.<sup>56</sup> While his impressive family connections certainly cannot have been a hindrance to his early promotion there is also no doubt that he was well qualified for the position and is said to have "proved himself worthy of it".<sup>57</sup> The fact that Dunlop published the Westminster Confession alongside a number of other continental confessions is an indication of the approach that he takes. Rather than arguing from the position of the theological truth of the Confession, Dunlop bases his argument on the rights and necessity of churches to establish their own standards. This relativist approach did not appeal to all his readers and it provoked a couple of works in disagreement,<sup>58</sup> although nothing like the pamphlet wars that emerged outside Scotland on this issue.

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<sup>54</sup> William Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition of the Westminster Confession, &c Being a full and particular Account of all the Ends and uses of Creeds and Confessions of Faith* (London & Edinburgh, 1720). William Dunlop, *A collection of Confessions of Faith, catechisms, directories, books of discipline, etc. of public authority in the Church of Scotland, together with all the Acts of Assembly, which are standing rules concerning the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Church of Scotland*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1719-22).

<sup>55</sup> The date of his graduation is unknown. There are no surviving graduation records for the period 1695 to 1706.

<sup>56</sup> W. G. Blaikie, 'Dunlop, William', rev. Campbell F. Lloyd, *ODNB*, article/8279.

<sup>57</sup> A. Grant, *The story of the University of Edinburgh during its first three hundred years*, 2 vols, (London 1884), 2, 307.

<sup>58</sup> See [James Kid], *Plain Reasons against the adding of Mr Dunlop's Preface unto the Westminster Confession of faith, 1719. In a letter to a minister, a member of the committee for purity of doctrine; now presented to publick view* (n.p., 1722) and *A Letter to the Reverend Mr Alan Logan, minister of the Gospel at Culross. Containing some remarks on an anonymous Preface annex'd to the late edition of the Westminster Confession of Faith* (n.p., 1722). In Ireland



Dunlop's *A Preface to an Edition* was the single most important Scottish publication on the question of subscription in this period and it seems to have had the effect of preventing any widespread public disagreement on this issue. Yet in an important recent article Colin Kidd has argued that Dunlop's work is "far from unequivocal" as well as "slippery" and "laodicean" in character.<sup>59</sup> But such a view is hard to maintain if Dunlop's work is read in the context of the arguments of its time that resonated across the British Isles. A simple appeal to the doctrinal purity of the Confession was unlikely to win over too many of those many who were wavering in the face of the non-subscribers' appeals to the primacy of scripture and the rights of personal judgement. Dunlop's work is, in fact, a subtle and careful response to the arguments of those who would remove subscription to the Westminster Confession, he shows a great awareness of the different arguments advanced against creeds and confessions. He responds particularly to the works of continental writers such as Episcopius and Le Clerc, as well as the English *Occasional Papers* and is concerned to deal fairly with the criticisms raised by those opposed to subscription.

Dunlop acknowledges that there are a variety of opponents to the use of confessions of faith but asserts that if it was just Socinians, Arminians and libertines who were the enemies of creeds "there would not be so great cause to fear the issue of the contest". For Dunlop the casual tarring of all opponents with the same brush that suggested heresy or impiety would not do:

But it were extremely unjust to affirm that all the opposition which we find Confessions meet with, flows from the impure springs of a secret infidelity, or at least a cold unconcernedness about the doctrines of Christianity; and it must be acknowledged that persons of quite different complection, and who are moved by reasons not so inconsistent with a love to truth and a sincere value for religion, have conspired in the design of abolishing all creeds and humane tests of orthodoxy.

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Masterton's [Charles Mastertown], *Apology for the Northern Presbyterians in Ireland* (Glasgow 1723) took some notice of Dunlop's *Preface* see Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 10-12.

<sup>59</sup> Colin Kidd, 'Scotland's invisible Enlightenment: subscription and heterodoxy in the eighteenth-century Kirk', *RSCHS*, 30, (2000), 37, 39.



On the contrary, Dunlop was prepared to recognise that particularly amongst English dissenters in the aftermath of the Salters' Hall debates there were people whose attitude to creeds, while wrong, should not simply be condemned out of hand:

Many of whom in charity we are bound to believe endowed with real goodness, by a mistaken fondness of the truly noble protestant principles of liberty and private judgment, and by a misled zeal for the honour of divine revelation, and the peculiar authority of the holy scriptures, and by other reasons of like nature, have been insensibly determined to entertain very unfavourable sentiments of Creeds; which they thought were scarcely reconcilable with the sacred prerogatives of the bible, and the privileges of a Christian, and were afraid could not miss to be attended with very unhappy consequences.<sup>60</sup>

Along with allowance being made for those who had been turned into Protestant dissenters by force of circumstance Dunlop also acknowledged that there were also opponents of Confessions within the Established church in England "Who are the most zealous advocates for liberty, and claim a just share of our esteem for their unwearied labours in defence of so glorious a cause, and their heroick opposition to civil or ecclesiastical tyranny" and Swiss theologians such as the younger Turretini, Ostervald and Werenfels could be placed in the same bracket.<sup>61</sup>

And indeed this is what affects us in the most sensible manner, that in defending the use our church makes of her Confession, we have to deal with friends as well as enemies; and are obliged to enter the lists with those, with whom we agree almost in every thing else, and yet disagree so unfortunately about the necessary methods of maintaining the purity of that faith, for which we all pretend an equal regard.<sup>62</sup>

It was this willingness to accept the good faith of some of the opponents of creeds as well as his decision to evaluate the Westminster Confession as one confession among many while giving "a short account of the end and design of composures of this nature, and of the chief passages which the Christian

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<sup>60</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 50.

<sup>61</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 51.

<sup>62</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 52.

churches intended to promote, in training and publishing their several confessions”<sup>63</sup> that raised the ire of some others in the Church of Scotland.

For Dunlop the use of confessions had many “advantageous consequences” and was founded on reason. From the time of the early church it had been important to set out an authentic account of their beliefs to present to the world in answer to the attacks of their enemies and to prevent people being led astray by those who, like the Gnostics, would distort the truth. Confessions were therefore rooted in the apologetic tradition of the Church Fathers.<sup>64</sup> The reformation had been a time of upheaval and division but while Protestants had overthrown the authority of the papacy this was not out of any hatred of discipline or love of sedition, but because of concern for the truth and confessions helped to preserve order and draw a line against the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, “in a word that it might become evident that the corruptions of popery were grown to such an exorbitant height, and had so universally polluted the doctrine and worship of that church, that the ground of their separation from that communion were of the utmost importance, and laid them under an absolute necessity openly to renounce it.” Similarly confessions also helped define the reformed faith against the excesses of Anabaptists and other troublesome sects, they were needed to clear “their principles....from calumnies and mistakes”.<sup>65</sup>

To be fair to Dunlop his support for the confession is far from laodicean:

Our church therefore, upon all occasions gloried in the doctrines contained in her confessions, and cheerfully fell in with this end which moved the churches to compose and publish such systems of doctrine: every time her confessions are published, she proclaims her adherence to the divine truths contained in them; she boasts of them as her greatest honour, and acknowledges her obligations to the infinite goodness of our merciful God.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 4 -9.

<sup>65</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 11, 17.

<sup>66</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 28.



Certainly Robert Wodrow felt that Dunlop's book played an important role in answering the "fuse and ill-natured writer" of the *Occasional Papers* and that it was an important weapon in the war against non-subscription.<sup>67</sup>

For Dunlop the various confessions of faith adhered to by the churches of Europe and published by him were a source of Protestant unity. They helped to "contribute to the mutual comfort and edification of one another, maintain a good correspondence, and encrease brotherly love, by showing how far, and in how momentous things they agreed together."<sup>68</sup> They ensured that communion between them remained unbroken, whether they were flourishing churches that enjoyed state support or protection or whether they were persecuted minorities. The confessions linked Protestants together:

The church of Scotland therefore, by this her Confession, embraces with the sincerest love and friendship, and joins in the most extensive fellowship with all those through the world that receive the same common faith, and declares her inviolable affection and unity, with all such as believe the important truths of the glorious gospel, entertain the hope of the great salvation, and the necessary means to attain it.<sup>69</sup>

But Dunlop also acknowledged each individual church's right to frame its own confession or creed. This was both reasonable and in accordance with natural rights:

As freedom is the birth-right of mankind, any number of persons may voluntarily unite themselves, to such purposes and under such regulations as appear useful and convenient to them, provided they be agreeable to the rights of others, and the rules of justice: Nor could any foreigner pretend to intrude himself into a society which is founded upon consent, or usurp the management of its concerns.<sup>70</sup>

On this basis the authority of any confession seems to be relative to the place where it was framed and also was extended from the rights of the individual. Just as every person had a right (as the non-subscribers asserted) to judge for themselves what form of religion they would embrace

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<sup>67</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 674-8. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 186-7.

<sup>68</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 38.

<sup>69</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 40.

<sup>70</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 69.

and to join himself to the society of Christians, which in his judgment enjoys the greatest purity and conformity to the constitutions of the gospel, and where he may best promote his eternal happiness: nor can any man without he show a plain commission from heaven, which he will never be able to produce, pretend to judge in matters of religion for another, and oblige him to a compliance with his dictates.

So groups of people joined together in a religious society:

hath a natural privilege of worshipping in that way which, according to their most impartial views of things, seems most agreeable to divine revelation; of ordering all matters of joint concern to the whole body, and of acting in every case as they believe themselves directed by the supreme rule of faith and manners: Nor can any man thrust himself into the society without their consent, or force them to entertain communion with him contrary to their own consciences; since this were a plain usurpation upon the liberties of a body entirely independent of him. If it appear to them, that according to the constitutions of the gospel, there ought to be some peculiarly devoted to the service of religion; the business of whose life it should be to explain and confirm the doctrines of Christianity to the people, to raise their esteem and veneration of them, and animate them in the study and practice of sincere religion; to whom should be committed the government of the church, and the administrations of the word and sacraments; they have a title founded upon the natural rights of mankind to appoint such ecclesiastical officers amongst them, and to assist and submit to them in the exercise of the powers, which they believe their great Master hath entrusted them with for these ends.<sup>71</sup>

On this basis it was quite reasonable to require subscription from every minister of the church. Just as every private individual had the complete right to decide for themselves in matters of religion, any number of individuals united into a body had the same rights “to judge for themselves what faith they would have preached to them, and what doctrines they desire to have placed in a clearer light.”<sup>72</sup> Dunlop’s defence of the rights of a church to employ a confession was therefore based on an acceptance of the individual’s right of private judgement.

Dunlop goes to great lengths to outline the grounds of opposition to confessions and details the concerns of those who had written against

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<sup>71</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 70-1.

<sup>72</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 72.



subscription in a very fair summary. When he quotes or summarises views that Protestants who impose creeds are worse than Roman Catholics, that confessions are “engines of force and power....[that] naturally beget in their admirers, a mean, narrow and confined turn of thought” and “a sown uncharitable persecuting disposition,”<sup>73</sup> or that tests of orthodoxy are prejudicial to the interests of goodness and holiness which impede practical religion,<sup>74</sup> or, again, that hasty or contradictory decisions made by church councils that carry with them anathema are no substitute for the simple truths of the scriptures, he is speaking directly to those members of his own church who have read and sympathised with such views. “It must be acknowledged that these reasonings are extremely plausible, and they may in some measure excuse the opposition made to Creeds, tho’ they cannot justify it”<sup>75</sup> he concedes.

Such patience is intended to win the attention of contemporaries such as Wallace and Wishart and their circle, clergy who had already imbibed many of these non-subscribing views and, as Wallace’s ‘Little treatise’ and Wodrow’s frequently voiced concerns show, were just beginning to propagate them as the intensity of conflict increased in Ireland and England.<sup>76</sup> As a refutation of the concerns with subscription that were becoming manifest at this level Dunlop’s *Preface* is perfectly pitched. A simple appeal to orthodoxy or a tub-thumping attack on Arianism or Socinianism or any other heresy would have been to miss the point of non-subscription and the arguments that were gaining ground against the imposition of the Westminster Confession. His pragmatic, relativist argument based more on natural rights than scriptural proofs was a more appropriate response.

Dunlop’s *Preface* was published with his *Collection of Confessions of Faith* in 1719 but was also issued separately in the following year and went into a number of editions. The first edition of the *Preface* alone was published in London and Edinburgh in 1720 by Thomas Cox and James McEuen, the same

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<sup>73</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 55.

<sup>74</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 57.

<sup>75</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 59.

<sup>76</sup> Since Dunlop’s *Preface* was originally published in 1719 it is also possible that Wallace’s ‘Little treatise’ was actually a direct response to Dunlop.

Edinburgh publisher who was to publish John Smith's account of the tribulations of the Glasgow students in 1722 and who had tried to set up a college for English students in 1709. This is the version of Dunlop's work referred to in this work although it was initially published with the title *A Preface to an Addition of the Westminster Confession, &c Being a full and particular Account of all the Ends and uses of Creeds and Confessions of Faith*. In 1720 McEuen brought out what he described as a second edition but which really consisted in no more than a list of corrigenda and a new title page which gave the title of the book as *A Preface to an Edition of the Westminster Confession*.<sup>77</sup> However, a second edition was published by Cox in London in 1724, presumably to cater for demand amongst English dissenters.<sup>78</sup> The continuing importance of Dunlop's *Preface* is testified to by its republication whenever a crisis regarding subscription came to the fore. Hence a third edition was published in Edinburgh in 1775 with the title *A Full Account of the Several Ends and Uses of Confessions of Faith*.<sup>79</sup> This followed the vigorous debate about subscription which had begun within the Church of England following the failure of the Feathers Tavern petition which aimed to remove obligatory subscription to the Thirty Nine Articles. In 1857 the *Preface* was published again this time in London and Edinburgh with the title *The Uses of Creeds and Confessions of Faith* and an introduction by James Buchanan, professor of divinity at New College, Edinburgh.<sup>80</sup> He used Dunlop's book to refute the anti-creedal arguments of Joseph Blanco White and Charles Christian Hennell as well as similar views that were then being voiced in Scotland in the *North British Review*. Buchanan makes the case for Dunlop's *Preface* as a "masterly treatise"

which discusses, on its general merits, the whole question as to the several Ends and Uses of Creeds and Confessions;- a treatise, old but not obsolete, and which, although written early in the last century, still retains a standard value, as the ablest and most comprehensive defence which has ever appeared of the Symbolical Books of the Church.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> William Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition of the Westminster Confession*, 'second edition', (London and Edinburgh 1720).

<sup>78</sup> William Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition of the Westminster Confession*, second edition, (London 1724).

<sup>79</sup> William Dunlop, *A Full Account of the Several Ends and Uses of Confessions of Faith*, third edition, (Edinburgh 1775).

<sup>80</sup> Michael Jenkins, 'Buchanan, James (1804–1870)', *ODNB*, article/3840.

<sup>81</sup> William Dunlop, *The Uses of Creeds and Confessions of Faith*, James Buchanan, (ed.) (London and Edinburgh 1857), xv.



Hence Dunlop's work had an influence not only in helping to quieten debate in Scotland at the time of its publication but also later in the century and again in the mid-nineteenth century.

The fact that no major anti-subscriptionist party developed in Scotland at this point – despite the evident debate bubbling away in some quarters just below the surface – is due, at least in part, to the influence of William Dunlop. But what gave Dunlop's arguments a considerable extra force in Scotland was the established nature of the church. There might be reasons to question the use of confessions but in Scotland they could be set to one side:

For we hope it will appear that the practice, of our church at least, is perfectly consistent with the honour of the scriptures, and the liberties of mankind; that it hath none of the alleged pernicious consequences, but is in many respects necessary and advantageous; and that the objections we have mentioned strike only against those who abuse Confessions, or flow from an unacquaintedness with the just foundations upon which any church may require an assent to such forms of doctrine; so that the adversaries to Creeds strive to abolish what they should only reform, and instead of rectifying abuses, destroy these forms, and unhinge all order and government.<sup>82</sup>

In the end the danger of opposing the Confession came down to this simple fact, that in doing so there was a threat that could “unhinge all order and government”. Dunlop reproduces in his preface more than eight pages of extracts from acts of parliament and the general assembly, namely acts of the assembly for 1690 and 1700 (‘For Retaining Soundness and Unity of Doctrine’ and ‘Anent Subscribing the Confession of Faith’ as well as the formula for subscription<sup>83</sup>) and Acts of Parliament of 1690 ‘Ratifying the Confession of Faith, and Settling Presbyterian Church-Government’, ‘For Settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church’, and ‘For Visitation of Universities, Colleges and Schools’ as well as the act of the first year of Queen Anne's reign ‘For Securing the Protestant Religion, and Presbyterian Church-Government.’<sup>84</sup> He quotes too the oath taken by King George I on 22 September 1714 in his first general council:

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<sup>82</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 59.

<sup>83</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 66-8.

<sup>84</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 60-5.

I George King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. do faithfully promise and swear that I shall inviolably maintain and preserve the settlement of the true protestant religion, with the government, worship, discipline, right and privileges of the church of Scotland, as established by the Laws made there, in prosecution of the claim of right....<sup>85</sup>

In the final analysis the vulnerability of the Presbyterian settlement made any concerted attack on the place of the Confession a risky venture. There is no little irony too that the Act of Union, which was the cause of such rejoicing amongst dissenters in England, particularly amongst those who would soon be non-subscribers, increased the sense of danger to the establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland. While English dissenters were free to criticise any imposition of creeds and confessions, Presbyterians in Scotland were forced into a deeper reliance on the Westminster Confession to uphold the position of the Kirk. In this atmosphere a pragmatic attitude towards the Westminster Confession became the norm, even for those who had their doubts about its appropriateness. Dunlop is answering criticisms from England and the rest of Europe in his work but his argument for the use of the Confession relates primarily to Scotland, indeed he makes little direct reference to the situation in any other country. There is just one reference to Ireland where he claims that “the Westminster Confession at this time is applied to the same purposes by the dissenters of Ireland, for which it is legally established in the church of Scotland.” He makes this claim because he sees the church as “a Christian society entered into for spiritual purposes” from which “any authority and support she may acquire from the state” can be abstracted so the society “may subsist and flourish where her external condition is entirely different.”<sup>86</sup> But this really is to claim too much. The mere fact that Presbyterians in Ireland were dissenters helped to alter the perception of many of them to the Confession, and, in reality, few Presbyterians in Scotland were prepared to countenance any notion of separation from the state which meant that the Confession remained as an essential safeguard.

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<sup>85</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 65.

<sup>86</sup> Dunlop, *A Preface to an Edition*, 77.



So, although there were those who had sympathy with a non-subscribing view in Scotland the practical, pragmatic arguments of William Dunlop held sway and prevented a vigorous debate or controversy from developing within Scotland itself. Many of those younger ministers who had been most prominent in giving expression to new light opinion in the mid-1720s had, by a strange quirk of fate, died within just a few years. Others such as Wishart, Wallace and Cuming who rose to prominence in the Kirk, while perhaps never repudiating their previous non-subscribing views (in the case of Wallace at least), became involved in other issues and were increasingly motivated by a desire for maintaining the unity and good order of the national church. This approach effectively took the heat out of non-subscription as a dominant issue in Scotland.

## Chapter Eight

“Travel, Conversation and Residence in the learned Air of Glasgow”

*Student unrest in Glasgow, John Simson's second trial, the widespread fear of Arianism, and Glasgow's relationship to the ongoing debates about subscription*

In September 1724 the Rev Chewing Blackmore (1663–1737),<sup>1</sup> Independent minister at Worcester, sent both his sons to complete their education at Glasgow. They had been trained for three years at the academy of Ebenezer Latham and were being sent to the University to study divinity and take their degree:

They have passed 3 years or more under Dr Lathams Instructions. Have gone thro' a Course of Philosophy with Him. I send them to Receive your Worthy Professors Instruction in Divinity this Session and so to finish. They Bring Letters from their Tutor to your Self, Professor Simpson, Mr Carmichael &c  
In the Meantime you will Favour and Encourage the Strangers, that they may proceed to take their Degree and proceed in their Studys with Cheerfulness. They are Bashfull and Slow of Speech, But I hope Travel, Conversation and Residence in the learned Air of Glasgow will brighten, Imbolden and Inlarge. They are and have been some Time in Church Fellowship.<sup>2</sup>

Although himself the minister of an Independent congregation for nearly fifty years Blackmore was the son of an ejected minister who became a Presbyterian minister and both of his sons were to enter the Presbyterian ministry in England. He had been a student for the ministry at John Woodhouses's Sheriffhales academy in Shropshire at the same time as William Tong who was to achieve prominence in the ministry in London.<sup>3</sup> His sons had been trained in the Findern academy maintained by Ebenezer Latham (c.1688-1754)<sup>4</sup> who was himself a former Glasgow student, having matriculated in 1704 and studied both arts and medicine, being awarded the degree of MD in 1710.<sup>5</sup> Latham himself was a correspondent of John Stirling and was on friendly terms with John Simson, Gershom Carmichael and William Jameson who was born

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<sup>1</sup> E. C. Vernon, 'Blackmore, William', *ODNB*, article/2531.

<sup>2</sup> Ch[ewing] Blackmore to John Stirling 21 September 1724, GUL MS Gen 207/104.

<sup>3</sup> McLachlan, *English Education*, 45-9.

<sup>4</sup> David L. Wykes, 'Latham, Ebenezer', *ODNB*, article/74346.

<sup>5</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 180, 305.



blind yet held an appointment as lecturer in history (although not a formal professor) for twenty-five years from 1691.<sup>6</sup> The Findern academy was one of the major nonconformist academies in England in the first half of the eighteenth century and may have educated as many as 400 students. Although Latham was accused of promoting heterodox opinions it seems to have been the case that his willingness to present different sides of theological arguments was essentially no different from the practice of Simson. Nevertheless Latham had a good reputation for scholarship and as a teacher, and Blackmore's sons' three years at Findern were sufficient for them to proceed straight to a degree at Glasgow. At this point Stirling appears to have operated a very easy attitude towards English students travelling north to study divinity and allowed them to graduate without first of all matriculating. It may be that signing up for the study of divinity was sometimes taken as the equivalent of matriculation for English students by the authorities. However, Francis and Edward Blackmore do not appear in the list of divinity students although the absence of any names for the year 1725 may simply mean that the records for that year were lost. Nevertheless, less than a month after arriving in Glasgow the two brothers had graduated<sup>7</sup> and their father wrote to thank Stirling for "promoting their Laure[at]ion so Expeditiously" in the following January.<sup>8</sup>

Neither the widespread concern over subscription nor the arguments surrounding John Simson's alleged heterodoxy seem to have had any adverse effect on student numbers at Glasgow. Although there was some degree of fluctuation in the number of students from year to year there are no discernible trends of numbers falling off at any point, except around the times of extreme disturbance such as the year after the rebellion of 1715. In 1725 Wodrow observed that Glasgow "is very thin this session," and blamed the Masters whose "divisions and breaches" had lessened the reputation of the University, sending many to Edinburgh instead. However, although there is a slight drop in numbers for that year there is a massive increase in the following year before

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<sup>6</sup> E. Latham, Caldwell to John Stirling 19 October, 1715, GUL MS Gen 207/59. E. Latham to John Stirling, [1726], GUL MS Gen 207/111.

<sup>7</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 57.

<sup>8</sup> Ch[ewning] Blackmore to John Stirling 27 January 1725 GUL MS Gen 207/105. Francis became a Presbyterian minister, successively, at Evesham (1728–30), Coventry (1730–42), and Worcester (1743–61), whilst Edward became a Presbyterian minister at Stoke, near Malvern.

total numbers settle down at lower mean level than they had been in the previous decade.<sup>9</sup> The numbers of English students are generally consistent. As we have seen there was a tradition of English students travelling to Glasgow going back to the mid seventeenth century. In the very early years of the eighteenth century the numbers of English students drop to usually no more than one or two per year. After the Union the average number increases (with the exception of 1711 when there were no students and a couple of years - 1714, 1716 - when there were only one or two). Generally there were about six or eight new English students matriculating each year, although in some years (1715, 1717, 1718, 1726) the numbers rose to 12, 13 or 14. The number of Irish students was usually much larger with the Scots-Irish regularly providing by far the largest section of this community. Indeed in the first decade of the eighteenth century the *Scoto-Hibernus* number was as high as 24 in 1701, 27 in 1702 and 35 in 1703. The numbers of students from the north of Ireland remained high generally at the level of about a dozen a year (although with some notably higher exceptions and a few much lower) until 1722 when the numbers generally drop to less than ten, except for the three years 1727 – 1729 when there are total of only three *Scoto-Hiberni* students altogether. In the same time period the numbers of *Hiberni* and *Anglo-Hiberni* students was generally much lower. Added together the number of *Hiberni* and *Anglo-Hiberni* students in the first third of the century tended to outnumber the numbers of English students before the Act of Union but were usually significantly less from a few years after 1707 and throughout the period of Stirling's principalship.<sup>10</sup>

The period after 1719 brought all theological controversy into much sharper relief. In part this was due to the heat generated by the subscription controversies which not only called into question the status and purpose of confessions of faith but also opened a prolonged period of agonising about heresy, particularly Arianism. Glasgow was at the heart of the relationships between different figures in England and Ireland who were most closely involved in the various controversies. It is perhaps a tribute to the even handedness of the University that many of those involved in the controversy on

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<sup>9</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 240.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix One.



both sides in England and Ireland had been educated in Glasgow. Despite intense lobbying from outside, however, Glasgow declined to take sides in the controversies.

It was the case, however, that Glasgow in the 1720s continued to be troubled by student unrest. In 1721 the University clamped down on the “acting of plays by students.” In March of that year the Faculty declared that the participation of students in plays

if not restrained is Like further to tend to the great diversion of the students therein employd from more serious and usefull studies to the engadging in companies and ways of spending their time and Mony neither suitable nor profitable for them nor agreeable to the good order and Laws of this Society.

As a consequence all students were forbidden to participate in any public plays.<sup>11</sup>

This issue, together with unrest amongst medical students over the reluctance of the Professor of Anatomy to give lectures which resulted in a petition being handed to the Faculty, all helped to increase the sense of grievance held by the students and to raise the temperature in the University.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly the old issue of the student election of the rector was revived. It is clear from John Smith’s pamphlet of 1722 that the students involved – who were mostly Irish, English or Welsh<sup>13</sup> - understood their struggle as a microcosm of the general political struggle for dissenters and their political allies at the time. Smith wrote:

Arbitrary Power in any Society is not a thing to be suddenly erected.  
Slavery has too ugly an Aspect to be offered to a Man’s Embraces, till by

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<sup>11</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 22), 10 January, 1721, 14. 3 March, 1721, 21, GUA 26634.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 22), 24 November, 1721, 31, GUA 26634. Robert Dundas to John Stirling. 28 November 1721, GUL MS Gen 205/95.

<sup>13</sup> Prominent in the leadership with Smith at this point were the Belfast-born poet and essayist James Arbuckle and Thomas Griffith, a Welsh student, although he described himself as *Anglo-Britannus* in the register. Griffith had matriculated in Carmichael’s class of 1717. Arbuckle graduated in 1720 and subsequently studied divinity. *Munimenta*, 3, 53, 212, 254, 305. M. A. Stewart, ‘Arbuckle, James’, *ODNB*, article/604. See also M.A. Stewart, ‘John Smith and the Molesworth Circle’, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 2 (1987), 89-102.

varnishing over her Deformities, he has been drawn in so far that he can find no Means of retiring, without coming to an open Rupture.<sup>14</sup>

The students continued to press for the election of the Rector and in the autumn of 1721 appear to have conceived a plan to petition Parliament for the restoration of this right. Both the Principal and the Chancellor, the Duke of Montrose, were eager to find out the details of this, particularly to know the names of the signatories.<sup>15</sup> The politician chosen to spearhead this new challenge was the Whig intellectual and friend of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Viscount Molesworth. In the charged atmosphere of spring 1722 a false rumour spread that Molesworth had been re-elected to Parliament in the election of that year and a group of students joined with some of the townspeople in celebrating the election by building a bonfire outside the college gates. This would have been provocation enough but some of those present became unruly and Gershom Carmichael decided to bring the demonstration to an end. By this time Carmichael had been won over to the Principal's camp thanks to some favour given to his son by Stirling,<sup>16</sup> and Carmichael "thought it his duty in the principals Absence to go to the gate and to order the servants of the College to extinguish it." But matters soon degenerated:

Whereupon John Smith tho' he att the same time own'd himself a student had not only violently oppos'd the said servants but Insulted Mr Carmichael himself – Refusing in a most Insolent manner either to retire or to suffer the bonfire to be putt out. And that Thomas Cuthbert<sup>17</sup> Likewise a student stood by and own'd his concern in the bonfire and continued to stand by as an abetter of what the s[ai]d John Smith did. It was further represented that the said Mr Smith & Mr Cuthbert with Mr William Stewart<sup>18</sup> student in the Greek Class – and Mr Wm Hamilton Master of the grammar school had afterwards conveend att the said Bonfire and drunk some healths, and that after that there had been a tumultous gathering of severals of the people at the town, and several burning coals had been thrown about, and that some of the windows in the principals house & professors houses had been broken.

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<sup>14</sup> [John Smith], *A Short Account*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Duke of Montrose to John Stirling. 21 November 1721, GUL MS Gen 205/93.

<sup>16</sup> [John Smith], *A Short Account*, 13.

<sup>17</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 212. Thomas Cuthbert, *Hibernus*, matriculated in the first class of Robert Dick, 10 March 1718.

<sup>18</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 221. *Gulielmus Stuart filius Jacobi Comitiss de Galloway* matriculated in the fourth class of Andrew Rosse, 13 February 1721.



To make matters worse Smith was said to have obstructed the Beadle and physically threatened both him and Carmichael.<sup>19</sup> The Faculty heard, in great detail, the evidence of the various people involved in the bonfire incident and eventually agreed to “extrude” Smith from the University, although five members of the Faculty dissented.<sup>20</sup> Smith went to Court over the matter before going back to Dublin and publishing his pamphlet *A Short Account of the Late Treatment of the Students of the University of G---w*. Inevitably this gave the students’ side of the conflict but seems to have provoked a vigorous opposition from the University authorities. By some means a letter written from Dublin by John Smith to Robert Taylor “at Mr James McEwens Shop in Glasgow” revealing that he had asked him to sell 600 copies of his pamphlet fell into the hands of John Stirling.<sup>21</sup> Robert Taylor was an English graduate of Glasgow who matriculated in March 1718 in the second class of Gershom Carmichael, alongside George Benson, one of a class of eleven students, all of them English. He graduated in April 1719<sup>22</sup> and he clearly was known to the same James McEuen who had been involved in trying to set up a college for English dissenters in Edinburgh and had subsequently gone into publishing. The University used all the powers at its disposal to suppress the pamphlet and it seems likely that the 600 copies sent by Smith to Taylor were destroyed by the magistrates. In a letter to John Evans in London Wodrow writes of a

virulent pamphlet...full of bitter and injurious reflections upon the Principal, Professor of Divinity, and Mr Carmichael, Where all the late differences are raked up, and set in a very unfair light....The magistrates seized the impression.<sup>23</sup>

The seizure of this pamphlet would account for its rarity, although Smith told Taylor that he had prepared a second edition for the London booksellers and “other places”.<sup>24</sup> Smith experienced some success in his legal battle with the University but suffered as they dragged the case out over the summer recess and

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<sup>19</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 22), 25 April, 1722, 41, GUA 26634. Smith, of course, gives a different account of this incident - [John Smith], *A Short Account*, 28.

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 22), 26 April, 1722, 1 May 1722, 42-45, GUA 26634.

<sup>21</sup> John Smith, Dublin to Robert Taylor, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1722, GUL MS Gen 205/101.

<sup>22</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 51, 212.

<sup>23</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 677.

<sup>24</sup> John Smith, Dublin to Robert Taylor, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1722, GUL MS Gen 205/101.

did not return to court after that.<sup>25</sup> In the winter of 1722 the students appear to have envisaged addressing Parliament again causing much concern in the Faculty, although nothing seems to have come of this.<sup>26</sup>

With the shifting balance of power within the Faculty in favour of the Principal the students certainly found less sympathy amongst the masters. Yet they continued their campaigns to maintain their rights. In March 1725 the students again registered their protest against the method of electing the rector, this time by invading the home of the Rector, Sir Hugh Montgomerie of Hartfield. The Principal reported that

several of the students had riotously insulted the Laird of Hartfield present Rector of the University his house and had likewise against all order presumed to ring the great bell of the College to convey the scholars, and that he [ie the Principal] had upon this Information caused cite several students as guilty of the the s[ai]d riotous disorders.<sup>27</sup>

The Chancellor, the Duke of Montrose was of the opinion that such displays pointed to “no less than the overthrowing of all discipline and order” and called for heavy penalties for the miscreants.<sup>28</sup> In fact the offence of the students seems to have been two fold. In the first place they had not simply gone to the Rector’s home to protest but had, apparently, “entered Hartfield’s house in a tumultuous manner.” However, as John Stirling told a correspondent, the offence was made more serious by the fact that their protest had been distributed outside Scotland:

had it been a simple protest for that which they fancy to be their privilege, and had they not published and dispersed it and sent it to England and Ireland as they confess and had they not tumultuously enter’d Hartfield house to make the s[ai]d protest it had been wholly overlook’d but it contains such injurious reflections on the Rector & prin[icpa]l & Masters (who did all concur in admitting the present Rector) as you’ll see by the inclosed copy, that the Faculty were unanimously of opinion it could not be pass’d without a censure.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> M.A. Stewart, ‘John Smith and the Molesworth Circle’, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 2 (1987), 97-99.

<sup>26</sup> Duke of Montrose, London to John Stirling. 7 October 1722, GUL MS Gen 205/102. Duke of Montrose, London to John Stirling. 22 December 1722, GUL MS Gen 205/103.

<sup>27</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 22) 2 March 1725, 142, GUA 26634.

<sup>28</sup> Duke of Montrose, London to John Stirling. 18 March 1725, GUL MS Gen 205/125.

<sup>29</sup> John Stirling to John Campbell of Mamore, 15 March 1725. GUL MS Gen 205/126.



The fact that their protest was sent to England and Ireland is possibly an indication of the background of some of the students involved as well as a sense of their grievances having at least some root in Presbyterian experience across the United Kingdom and a desire to extend knowledge of their predicament outside Scotland. In this instance Stirling's correspondent was John Campbell of Mamore, the second son of the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll and the purpose of his letter was to explain both the necessity for and the nature of the punishment imposed on four of the protesting students, one of whom was John Campbell's son William.<sup>30</sup> Clearly the Principal was treading a fine line between meting out a suitable punishment and not offending one of the most prominent families in the country. Having explained that it was something that could not be ignored Stirling nevertheless continued:

I'm sensible your son was imposed on by bad counsel & unwarily led into it & because of his age & from the honour I have for the family he's come off. I was of opinion he should not be involved in the same censure with the rest but the other members of faculty tho't that he haveing made the protest no such distinction cou'd be made betwixt him and 3 others who entered Hartfield's house in a tumultuous manner, without manifest partiality, and therefore having extruded one of the 3 whose fault we tho't most aggravated in regard he was a Student of divinity. It was resolved that your son and the other 2 should make an acknowledgement in the terms of the inclosed to prevent their extrusion.<sup>31</sup>

The faculty seems to have operated a two tier system of justice. One student – the Dublin born William Robertson (1705-1783) - was extruded while the other three were forced to sign an apology, no doubt this was because they counted William Campbell amongst their number. Robert Dundas, the former Rector, took Stirling to task for the leniency shown to most of the ringleaders:

In my opinion you did so far right in extruding one of the students, and I think you ought to have extruded more, but I do not with Submission approve of the ordering of some of them to signe the acknowledgement. I think you had better have overlooked one on account of his age, and gone smartly to work with the rest, those acknowledgements do no good and I suppose will not be submitted to and you'll pardon me to say they are something like the stool of repentance....I do think you should at first

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<sup>30</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 229.

<sup>31</sup> John Stirling to John Campbell of Mamore, 15 March 1725. GUL MS Gen 205/126.

have gone smartly to work with so many of those Gentlemen as you thought proper, but now that the matter is a little cold I am afraid the less you do the better.<sup>32</sup>

The Duke of Montrose also did not approve of the method of punishment meted out.<sup>33</sup>

With the exception of the extrusion of William Robertson the punishment was very mild for most of the offenders. Robertson had matriculated in the first class of John Loudon on 4 March 1723, having previously spent some time in the academy run by Francis Hutcheson in Dublin and graduated at Glasgow on 29 April 1724.<sup>34</sup> He is described in the matriculation album as *Scoto-Hibernus Dublinensis*, reflecting his Scottish parentage and Dublin birth, and embarked on the study of divinity after his graduation. The Faculty used his relative seniority to the other students and the fact that he was a divinity student as a motive for making an example of him. However, his determination and the involvement of the family of the duke of Argyll were to have far reaching consequences for the University.

Robertson appealed to the Duke of Argyll whose brother, the earl of Islay, brought about a royal commission into the University. Unlike previous commissions this was not packed with associates of the Principal and his supporters and the commission brought about extensive reform for Glasgow University. The Commission was appointed on 31 August 1726 and contained the earl of Findlater; the earl of Ilay; the master of Ross; Charles Arskine, the King's solicitor; Patrick Grant, an advocate; John Campbell, former provost of Edinburgh; William Wishart, principal of Edinburgh University; William Miller, a minister in Edinburgh and James Alston, minister at Dirleton. One of the first results of the Commission's meeting was the rescinding, by the Faculty, of the expulsions of both William Robertson and John Smith in 1722<sup>35</sup>, although neither ever returned to the University. In a curious twist of fate, however, Robertson was eventually awarded the degree of DD by Glasgow in 1768 by

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Dundas, Edinburgh to John Stirling, 31 March 1725, GUL MS Gen 205/127.

<sup>33</sup> Duke of Montrose, London to John Stirling, 12 April 1725, GUL MS Gen 205/128.

<sup>34</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 56, 224.

<sup>35</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol 22), 4 October 1726, 185-6, GUA 26634.



which time he was a leading latitudinarian figure within the established church.<sup>36</sup>

The Commission produced its report on 19 September 1727 and in doing so provided a body of statutes which remained the basis for the regulation of the University until the passing of the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1858.<sup>37</sup> These regulations provided for the annual election of the rector each November by “all and every the matriculate members, moderators, or masters and students”; they established regular meetings of the Faculty, its quorum, and that the regents, in order of seniority, could conduct meetings in the absence of the Principal; that the clerk should keep regular accounts of meetings and provide them for the masters whenever requested. Other decisions concerning proper financial accounting, the management of the University’s estate and property as well as teaching and degree regulations were also made. It appears that the University’s accounts had been in a state of disorder since the death of Principal Dunlop and no idea of the University’s true financial state could be determined without bringing in an outside agent to go through the accounts.<sup>38</sup>

But just as the high handed management of the University by Stirling was being curtailed by the royal commission so another storm broke over the head of the Professor of Divinity. John Smith’s assessment of the Professor of Divinity illustrates the difficult position the Professor was in, being at the same time the target of attacks from the ultra-orthodox, and also regarded as one of the suppressors of student democracy alongside John Stirling. Smith thought Simson

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<sup>36</sup> Robertson is a particularly interesting figure since, although intended for the dissenting ministry, he subsequently entered the ministry of the Church of Ireland. He nevertheless remained a staunch proponent of non-subscription although within the Episcopal churches and stands as an unusual link between New Light dissenters in the early part of the century and latitudinarian Anglicanism towards the end. He was one of the leaders of the Feathers Tavern petition in the 1770s. Just prior to this he was awarded the degree of DD by Glasgow for his work *Attempt to explain the words reason, substance, person, creeds, orthodoxy, Catholic-church, subscription, and Index expurgatorius*, (London 1766). M. A. Stewart, ‘Robertson, William’, *ODNB*, article/23816. For the Feathers Tavern petition and latitudinarianism see John Walsh, Colin Haydon, Stephen Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.11689-c.1833 From Toleration to Tractarianism*, (Cambridge 1993), 209-246.

<sup>37</sup> Coutts, *A History of the University*, 204.

<sup>38</sup> *Munimenta*, 2, 569-581.



a Man of such a triffling Genius, as has exposed him to the Fury of Bigots on the one Hand, and the just Ridicule of Men of Sense on the other. His empty metaphysical Speculations in Divinity are a Proof of the first; as his annual Experiment, which he exhibits to his Scholars with a great deal of Solemnity, of kindling a Turf Clod at Christmass through a Piece of cold Ice, to the great Terror of his Majesties peaceable Subjects, is an Evidence of his being studiously serious in Vagaries. In this Man the P-----I found not only a Firm and ready Assistant in all His little tyrannical Designs, but one that could supply him with admirable Distinctions to stop up any Little gaps a barefaced Management might leave open. It was necessary for him to procure such a Second, after a terrible Balk he had had in cashiering Two of the Masters, Mr Lowdon, and Mr Carmichal; who for having the intolerable Impudence to find fault with the P-----I's falsifying the Minutes of the Faculty...were by the then Rector suspended, and turned out by the College.<sup>39</sup>

Having been on the receiving end of justice as it was administered by Stirling and Simson, Smith was not likely to have a favourable attitude towards the Professor of Divinity. However, it was those that Smith characterised as “Bigots” who were to create the most prolonged difficulties for Glasgow University in the 1720s. Having overcome the initial challenge to his orthodoxy between 1714 and 1717 and received no more than a mild reprimand Simson had been able to continue teaching in the Faculty without interruption. At the time of the first criticisms of his teaching Simson had been a supporter of the squadrone faction. However, with the shifting alliances and balances of power Simson transferred his allegiance to the Argathelians, who were led by the earl of Ilay and whose ascendancy was underlined on the death of John Stirling in 1727 when Neil Campbell (1678-1761) was appointed Principal. Campbell was a kinsman of the duke of Argyll and had himself studied divinity at Glasgow before entering the ministry at Kilmallie before moving first to Rosneath and then to Renfrew.<sup>40</sup> Political expediency no doubt encouraged Simson in this shift of allegiance, although this change was not sufficient to protect him from another bout of theological investigation.

The suspicion of Simson's deviation from orthodoxy had never quite gone away in the minds of his opponents but the growing climate of alarm that

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<sup>39</sup> [John Smith], *A Short Account*, 7-8.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Wood, 'Campbell, Neil', *ODNB*, article/65005.



surrounded the perceived spread of Arianism eventually had an impact on Simson. For many conservative minded Presbyterians in all parts of the British Isles there was no distinction to be made between Arianism and non-subscription. This was clear from the initial charges brought against Haliday in the Synod of Ulster, mere association with the London non-subscribers was enough to get him labelled as an Arian. Robert Wodrow could conceive of no reason for non-subscription except as a means of theological dissembling.

Although Simson was among those who tolerated no misbehaviour from their students, even when it revolved around attempts to secure their longstanding legal rights, this did not stop people like Wodrow taking the view that he was too lax with them. By December 1724 rumours were circulating of many errors being advanced amongst the students and being tolerated by their professor. His informant was John Gray (d.1729), a Glasgow minister whose son, Andrew, was newly ordained and had graduated from Glasgow in January 1723 having commenced the study of divinity in the following April<sup>41</sup>:

When in Glasgow, I hear no good accounts of the Students of Divinity in that place. Mr Gray tells me, that very openly they oppose the Confession of Faith; and this spreads extremely through the young merchants and others, and the haranguing way of preaching is the only method that is now in vogue with them. Another tells me, that in open companies, the grace of God is openly mocked and ridiculed. Not many days since, in a public meeting, the Professor was explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, in the ordinary method; and, when saying somewhat or other, there was a general murmure and speaking among them, upon which he asked what was the matter? There was a silence. He told them, if any of them had any thing to say upon the subject he was on, he allowed them to propose their objections to him, and not to talk with one another. And so, one Mr John Miller did propose some very odd objections, and maintained them with no little warmth.<sup>42</sup>

Another meeting had included a discussion in which some words of the Westminster Confession were given as an explanation;

The Moderator of the meeting rejected the answers; and when the answerer urged that the answers were in the very terms of the Confession

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<sup>41</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 55, 255.

<sup>42</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 170-1.

of Faith, he was told, “they wer not to regulat themselves by human composures,” or words to that purpose, but wer to reason freely upon things, and regulat themselves by Scripture and reason.<sup>43</sup>

The blame for all this was laid at the feet of Simson:

Such accounts as these give a most melancholy prospect of corruption in doctrine, and make me fear, that, ere long, error may come openly to be taught; and I fear the lightness and liberty of speaking allowed to students by the Professor at Glasgow, and his open and unguarded way of expressing himself, be a sad inlet to fearfull corruption among the youth. They are not founded by any kind of reading, except loose and ill books, published by the Arrians, Deists, and the Anti-Confessionists. They have nothing before them but what they call haranging and reasoning in sermons; and have no care to be understood by their hearers, or to answer the ends of preaching Christ; and unless they be able to say somewhat that is uncommon and singular, they think they preach gloriously and fine.<sup>44</sup>

All the evidence suggests that the opponents of Simson – particularly Gray and Charles Coats (d.1749), the minister at Govan - were waiting for an opportunity to condemn Simson in public.<sup>45</sup> This opportunity duly arrived in November 1725. According to Robert Wodrow, Simson had told his students in the course of a review of Pictet’s writings on the Trinity that “*Christus est Deus, sed non Summus Deus.*” The charge that the Professor of Divinity was actually commending an Arian interpretation of the nature of Christ was bound to be a thoroughly shocking one and Wodrow had been given what he felt was incontrovertible evidence against him. The professor:

has defended what he said in privat conversation to some Preachers and students, Mr Andrew Gray, Mr George Buchannan, and others, and pretended to answer all their objections. He says he is nou reading Dr Clerk’s Essay, and sees nothing comparable to it, and bids his scholars “not be affrayed to be termed Clerkians and Arrians,” in conversation with them. He sayes the Confession of Faith will bear a safe sense, though it’s ill worded, and the doctrine in it will be unreasonable, unles understood in his sense. “These Three are One,” in the Catechisme, he sayes, he knoues not what to make of it: 1 John v and 7, “These Three are One,” is to be understood of one consent: That the ordinary systeme is come in with the Scholastick Popery, that subjects reason to faith: That

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<sup>43</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 171.

<sup>44</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 171-2.

<sup>45</sup> Skockylas, *Mr Simson’s Knotty Case*, 230-2.



all the first Fathers, whom he had not read before in the original, (till within these six weeks,) are all in his opinion.<sup>46</sup>

Such evidence at third hand being transmitted through a succession of those with a grudge against Simson can hardly be taken as conclusive. Even though Simson had started to suffer from bouts of ill-health it is very unlikely that he would openly express such sentiments in front of students or those known to be opposed to him. Indeed in a letter sent the following January Wodrow was prepared to admit that Simson was denying making such sentiments and was suffering from health problems which may have been hampering his ability to carry out his work. But this did not lessen his concerns about Simson:

I did not doubt but the melancholy accounts of PS-would soon find the way to Edinburgh, and I am troubled to think what noise they will make in England and Ireland, and in what a light they will place this poor Church...I am told, in conversation he denies what his scholars report, and says he never taught any thing against our Confession; that he asserts the Son to be 'Summus Deus', the Supreme God, of the same substance with the Father; that he teaches his Proper Divinity and Eternity; and yet he owns in conversation that he does not think the Son's Independency, his Self-Existence, and Self-Origination, consistent with his being begotten. Inconstancy, and frequent changes in this foundation-article, are loudly charged upon him by his scholars. At first he taught for twelve or fourteen years the ordinary doctrine with much zeal; for the two last years he seemd almost Sabellian, and upon every turn censured Dr Clarke; and this winter, they say, he is gone in in several things to Dr Clarke's scheme. He himself, I am told, says that he, till of late did not understand and like the Doctor, and yet he still refutes the Doctor's (or rather Sir Isaac Newton's) notions as to God's nature, which he takes to be the foundation of all the Doctor's mistakes. That which makes this matter the more strange is, that he appears still weaker and weaker, and to be in a dying condition, his flux recurring twice or thrice a-week to a great height. The very first thought I had when I got the melancholy accounts, about the beginning of November, was, that his disease had affected his head. Yet those who talked with him say he is connected and sensible to every thing he says, only brings in the subject of Dr Clarke, the Fathers, and Council of Nice, in all conversation.<sup>47</sup>

One of the problems was that the "subject of Dr Clarke" was something that had been brought into many conversations all over the British Isles ever

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<sup>46</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 242.

<sup>47</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 234-6.



since the publication of his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* in 1712. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729)<sup>48</sup> was an able theologian and advocate of the theories of Isaac Newton who had been a fellow of Gonville and Caius College, a friend of William Whiston and chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich before becoming rector of the valuable and prominent living of St James's Piccadilly in 1709. The *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* had an immediate and far-reaching impact on publication and went into several editions. There certainly were parallels between Clarke's approach and those of the non-subscribers. Like them he held to the total sufficiency of the scriptures and to the belief that all that was necessary for their own interpretation was contained within them as well as all doctrinal truth. In Clarke's own words "the only certain Rule of Truth is the Testimony or the Revelation itself."<sup>49</sup> He understood his work to be returning the church to the uncorrupted position of primitive Christianity:

In the days of the Apostles therefore, Christianity was perfect; and continued for some Ages in a tolerable Simplicity and Purity of Faith and Manners; supported by singular Holiness of Life, by Charity in matters of Form and Opinions, and by the extraordinary Guidance of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Peace, Holiness and Love.<sup>50</sup>

The nature of his book is described by its subheading *Wherein Every Text in the New Testament relating to that Doctrine, is distinctly considered; and the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour according to the Scriptures, proved and explained*, and his method was simple, if painstaking. Clarke identified every text in the New Testament that related to the Trinity, a total of 1,251 texts,<sup>51</sup> and collected "into methodical Propositions the Sum of that Doctrine, which (upon the carefulest consideration of the whole matter) appears to me to be fully contained in the Texts cited."<sup>52</sup> He illustrated all these propositions with appropriate passages from the Church Fathers. In addition, as a good Anglican, he examined the Church's liturgy in the light of his exegesis. The Scripture

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<sup>48</sup> John Gascoigne, 'Clarke, Samuel', *ODNB*, article/5530. Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) Context, Sources, and Controversy*, *Studies in the History of Christian Thought*, vol. 75, (Leiden 1997).

<sup>49</sup> Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity. Wherein Every Text in the New Testament relating to that Doctrine, is distinctly considered; and the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour according to the Scriptures, proved and explained*, London 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1719, i.

<sup>50</sup> Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, viii.

<sup>51</sup> Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, 207.

<sup>52</sup> Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, xix.



doctrine that he found there was essentially one that emphasised the unity of God and leant towards a kind of high Arianism. Recently Thomas C. Pfizenmaier has suggested that, in fact, Clarke was in line with the early thinking of Origen and the Cappadocian fathers,<sup>53</sup> but the popular response was to label this doctrine Arian and his book added fuel to the fire of the widespread fear of Arianism.

Arianism was a constant concern for churches all over the British isles. Deviancy from Trinitarian orthodoxy always seemed to provoke a vigorous reaction and the similar approach to scripture shared between non-subscribing dissenters and latitudinarian Anglicans like Hoadly or Clarke made the dissenters equally suspect in some peoples eyes. However, Arianism had already emerged from within the ranks of dissent with the case of Thomas Emlyn (1663-1741)<sup>54</sup> in 1702-3. Born in Lincolnshire Emlyn became domestic chaplain to the countess of Donegal before succeeding Daniel Williams as co-pastor of Joseph Boyse at the Wood Street congregation in Dublin. Emlyn was well qualified to be a successful minister in this influential congregation but Duncan Cumyng, one of the elders, became suspicious of Emlyn's reluctance to preach on the Trinity and after confronting him Emlyn confessed that he had adopted Arian views. On the advice of Boyse and his colleagues Emlyn left Dublin for London but on his return to Dublin in the autumn of 1702 he published *An Humble Inquiry into the Scripture Account of Jesus Christ* for which he was charged with blasphemy by the civil courts. In June 1703 he was found guilty and sentenced to a years imprisonment and a massive fine of £1,000. He was to remain in prison until the fine was paid. In a *Letter to a Friend in Lancashire occasioned by a Report, concerning Injunctions and Prohibitions, by Authority* Benjamin Hoadly had mused on the tendency towards ecclesiastical persecution by the established church and the willingness of some dissenters to participate in this. Of the Emlyn case he said

To place the Son below his own Father, in any Degree of real Perfection, this is an unpardonable Error; so unpardonable, that all Hands were

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) Context, Sources, and Controversy*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, vol. 75, (Leiden 1997).

<sup>54</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Emlyn, Thomas', rev. H. J. McLachlan, *ODNB*, article/8793.

united against that unhappy Man. And he found at length, that he had much better have violated all God's Commandments, than have interpreted some Passages of Scripture differently from his Brethren. The Nonconformists Accused him; the Conformists condemned him; the Secular Power was called in; and the Cause ended in an Imprisonment, and a very great Fine. Two Methods of Conviction, about which the Gospel is silent!<sup>55</sup>

Without doubt Emlyn received a heavy punishment, the severity of which Boyse came to regret and he was among those who eventually managed to get Emlyn's fine reduced to a still heavy £70. But the repercussions of Emlyn's disclosure were far-reaching and reverberated around Scotland and Glasgow as much as anywhere else.

In July 1702 John Milling (d.1705), newly installed minister of the Presbyterian congregation of Capel Street, Dublin, had written to William Carstares. He spoke warmly of the reception he had received from the General Synod meeting at Antrim and found the north of Ireland

well planted with ministers who make a very good appearance in their Synode, and without the assistance of civil power do things in such harmony and to such purpose as represents the vigour of the bond of love beyond a civil sanction, & hath in it certainly something apostolical.<sup>56</sup>

Although settled in Dublin, Milling, a Scot who had ministered for some years at the Scots Kirk in Leiden, was a minister of one of the Dublin congregations which was in membership of the Synod of Ulster.<sup>57</sup> He had travelled to the meeting of the General Synod on 3 June 1702 to formally accept the call as assistant to Francis Iredell at a salary of £80 per annum<sup>58</sup> and while there gained a favourable impression of the Presbyterian church functioning so harmoniously and effectively. He was clearly struck by the realisation that the Synod of Ulster seemed able to achieve so much "without the assistance of civil power". But the one issue that blighted the ecclesiastical scene for the Presbyterians was the question of Thomas Emlyn:

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<sup>55</sup> Benjamin Hoadly, *The Works of Benjamin Hoadly, DD successively Bishop of Bangor, Hereford, Salisbury, and Winchester*, 3 vols, (London 1773), 1, 537.

<sup>56</sup> John Milling to William Carstares, 18 July 1702, EUL DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/31-32.

<sup>57</sup> Armstrong, *Ordination Service*, 97-8.

<sup>58</sup> *RGSU*, 1, 55-6.



a very sad and [paper torn]ing affair hath happened here in this place just now, Mr Emlyn who hath been a minister here these several years, in great esteem, Colleague to the Rev: Mr Boise, hath declard himself to be in the judgement of the arrians, and hath denyd the deity of christ upon which account he hath left his people is discharge from preaching by the ministers and is gone to England and I believe is now in London, this hath given great offence here, is much talked of, and hath opened the mouths of many against us.<sup>59</sup>

Although Emlyn clearly had been uncovered as an Arian by his elder and he had gone on to promote Arianism he had not been doing this prior to the accusation being made. It is hard to say how far Arian ideas had actually travelled within the ranks of dissent yet the fears of its adoption were quite widespread.

No one wanted to be tainted with the reputation of heresy but the heavy sentence meted out to Emlyn made every one who might be tempted in that direction doubly cautious in announcing their thinking to the world. Not only that it was only as recently as 1697 that Thomas Aikenhead was hanged in Edinburgh for expressing blasphemous views, including unorthodox views on the Trinity. Nevertheless we now know that there were ministers at this time who concealed their doubts about the trinity. John Cook was minister at Waterford and then Tipperary from 1701 to 1733. He had been trained for the ministry by Boyse and the other Dublin ministers and was ordained in October 1701 when he gave his colleagues "a moderate satisfaction, & removed their scruples, I renounced the Systematic phrases, & did my Confession in expressions of the greatest latitude & clearness I could." In fact Cook held Arian sympathies which were suspected by Emlyn and other ministers in Dublin. Although Emlyn corresponded with him both before and after his removal from the ministry of Wood Street and sent him a dozen copies of his *Humble Inquiry* on their publication Cook was too afraid to assert his Arianism and publicly signed the protestation against Emlyn produced by the southern ministers.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> John Milling to William Carstares, 18 July 1702. EUL DK.1.1<sup>2</sup>/31-32.

<sup>60</sup> MS Diary of the Rev John Cook, 2-3,5, 8-9, 10. PHSI.

The direct impact of Clarke's book on individuals can be gauged from the case of James Clegg, minister of the Independent congregation of Chinley in Derbyshire who on reading the *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* and comparing it to Calamy's writings on the Trinity was moved to inscribe a short prayer in his diary: "Father of lights bring me to the knowledge of the truth and to that end make me ever impartial in searching after it."<sup>61</sup> Writing some years later in an unpublished autobiography Clegg remembered his time as a student at John Chorlton's Manchester academy when the students spent time reading in Chetham's Library:

twas there I first met with the works of Episcopius, Socinus, Crellius etc. The writings of Socinus and his followers made little impression on me, only I could never after be entirely reconcild to the common doctrine of the Trinity but then begun to incline to that Scheme which long after Dr Clark espousd and publishd but I admird the clear and strong reasoning of Episcopius and after that could never well relish the doctrines of Rigid Calvinism.<sup>62</sup>

That such views were circulating cannot be doubted and it is perhaps this awareness that made the reaction against non-subscription so vigorous. Certainly it was Emlyn's public avowal of Arianism that prompted the Synod of Ulster to introduce subscription for the first time in 1705.

The publication of Clarke's book together with the confusion surrounding the increasing campaign against subscription helped to increase the popular fear of Arianism. Thomas Emlyn – who had established himself as a Unitarian preacher in London following his dismissal in Glasgow – returned to print after the subscription crisis broke. George Chalmers, Principal of King's College, Aberdeen spent some time in England as events around the Exeter ministers unfolded. He had written to Robert Wodrow describing the spread of "error, particularly those of Arius and Socinus," something which Wodrow was inclined to blame on figures such as Whiston, Clarke and Newton, although so ingrained was the connection of Thomas Emlyn with Arianism that it sometimes

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<sup>61</sup> Vanessa S. Doe (ed), *The Diary of James Clegg of Chapel en le Frith 1708-1755*, 3 vols, (Matlock 1978-1981), 1, 25.

<sup>62</sup> Doe (ed), *Diary of James Clegg*, 3, 913.



earned the sobriquet of “Emlynism”.<sup>63</sup> Chalmers wrote to Stirling from London in February 1719 lamenting that:

The Arian scheme Wofully gains ground and makes great noise specially among dissenters in West about Exeter. Mr Pierce is suspected to favour it which has occasion'd some flame and renders his colleague uneasie. Severall other min[ister]s in the countrey own themselves on that side and their people thereupon divided. Mr Emlyn has lately published in one volume all his tracts which I bought last day. Dr Cal[amy] Mr Bradbury and Mr Cuming have been preaching against these errors.<sup>64</sup>

Similar concerns had reached New England where Cotton Mather had written to Glasgow asking for assistance in publishing a book countering Arian ideas. This seems to have been unsuccessful:

It is an inexpressible sorrow, that the Arian heresy has, by means of the wretched Whiston found proselytes even among the Dissenters in the English nation. I cannot but wish that from your University of Glasgow there might issue forth some testimony on the behalf of our most glorious lord. My mean hand once lodged with our excellent Principal Mr Stirling, a manuscript, whereof the title is, ‘Testimonium Glascuense,’ the design whereof is to smite that giant who has defied the armies of the living God. The treatise was in the press at London, with a preface of the famous Dr Edwards unto it; but the death of the printer first and then of the Doctor, and I suspect, a piece of monkery among some Whistonians, proved the death of the impression.<sup>65</sup>

Wodrow thought that Stirling was too busy with the affairs of Glasgow University to be able to help Mather, although he was entirely in agreement with him and thought that Clarke, in particular, needed to be answered.<sup>66</sup> Amongst Wodrow and his circle there was, at times, some recognition that the espousal of Arianism and the support for non-subscription were not necessarily identical. In September 1719 Cotton Mather wrote to Wodrow regretting the “grievous tidings” of so many English ministers going over to Arianism but noting too “the Laodicean temper of so many more who have withheld the testimonies

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<sup>63</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 391. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 504-5.

<sup>64</sup> George Chalmers, London to John Stirling, 5 February 1719, GUL MS Gen 207/81.

<sup>65</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 425. Increase Mather also wrote to Wodrow expressing his concern at the rise of Arianism in England: Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 498.

<sup>66</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 428.

which the labouring truth has called for.”<sup>67</sup> In the early days of the subscription controversies not all the opponents of the non-subscribers were prepared to make this distinction. Although there were some affinities, the non-subscribers across the British Isles were not Arians. Indeed in each country the leading non-subscribers publicly repudiated Arianism. Thus in the ‘Advices for Peace’ the signatories made plain that:

We add our earnest Supplications, that God would accompany them with his Blessing to establish Peace and truth amongst us: And freely declare, that we utterly disown the Arian Doctrine, and sincerely believe the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and the proper Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we apprehend to be clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures; But are far from condemning any who appear to be with us in the Main, tho’ they should chuse not to declare themselves in other than Scripture-Terms, or not in Ours.<sup>68</sup>

Yet it is clear that there were some Arians involved in the start of the non-subscribing controversy in England. Samuel Haliday rejected the guilt by association aimed at him by Gilbert Kennedy in strong terms:

And with what shew of Justice can you pretend to load me, with the Guilt some of broken Sentences, said to have been uttered in the West of England by, perhaps some School-Boys, or Rakes, at least by Persons whom I never saw, and of whom I had never heard, till I read your Defence? Are the Non-Subscribers in England fairly treated by you, when from some Tittle-Tattle collected and published by an angry Adversary of theirs, and the Falshood of which has been proved long ago; you would represent them as a very ignorant, erroneous, and impious Set of Men?<sup>69</sup>

In the same work Haliday angrily emphasised his commitment to doctrinal orthodoxy on the matter of the Trinity, giving examples of why he could not be “traded as an Arian, or at least as a Favourer of Doctor Clarke’s Scheme.” This evidence had already been presented to the Presbytery of Belfast in his absence and included a letter he had written in which he stated that “I

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<sup>67</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2 503.

<sup>68</sup> *An Authentick Account of Several Things Done and agreed upon by the Dissenting Ministers Lately assembled at Salters-Hall*, (London 1719), 15-16.

<sup>69</sup> Samuel Haliday, *A letter to the Reverend Mr. Gilbert Kennedy; occasion’d by some personal reflections, contain’d in his answer to Mr. Haliday’s Reasons against the imposition of subscription to the Westminster-confession, or any such human tests of orthodoxy*, (Belfast 1725), 10-11.



think it so evident from Scripture, that the Father, the Word, and the Spirit are the same eternal God, that I am not under any Apprehensions of the prevailing of Arianism amongst Us". In addition the Rev Samuel Harper produced a certificate in which he confirmed that Haliday "did in express Terms declare his Opinion to be intirely opposite to Arianism; and that he did so not in a single sentence or overly Expression, but in a Series of Discourse and solid reasoning on that Head."<sup>70</sup>

It was not surprising then that when heresy was detected in the teaching of John Simson it was Arianism that was identified. In January 1726 William Mitchell, a minister in Edinburgh and later to be appointed moderator of the assembly that year, wrote to Stirling to apprise him of the strength of the rumours circulating about Simson:

Reports having been handed about for several days of Professor Simsons having vented some gross errors and as many affirm openly declared himself Arrian, ye may safely beleive with what concern every honest man must hear them, & though I with many others incline to beleive they are wholly false & calumnious, yet they being spread with such assurance & particular circumstances & we having nothing to oppose them but the good opinion we have of the Professor who was never charged with any thing that had the least tendency to that heresie. I have presumed to advise you of this & to intreat yo'll favour me with an account as far as ye know of the rise of this.<sup>71</sup>

Stirling replied to Mitchell a short time later telling him that Simson utterly denied the allegation of Arianism:

When I spoke to him upon the first surmise of his having taught something unsound about the Deity of our blessed Saviour, he affirms that he has refuted this very session (& some students tell me the same) at the Colledge the Arrian heresy and asserted the Supreme divinity of the Son as 'tis laid down in the confession of faith Cap. 2d Act 3d the 21 no. 2. And he says he conceives the rise of this lying story was that some of the students mistook some of his expressions when he was explaining the above 3d Act of Cap. 2d of the confession, viz that the Father is of non neither begotten nor proceeding &c: And he adds that he has also refuted

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<sup>70</sup> Haliday, *A letter to the Reverend Mr. Gilbert Kennedy*, 45-7.

<sup>71</sup> William Mitchell, Edinburgh to John Stirling, 11 January 1726, GUL MS Gen 205/133.

Dr Clark's notions this Session – this is the account the professor gives of this matter who has been always noted for openness and ingenuity.<sup>72</sup>

In the intervening period correspondence had been exchanged between Stirling and William Hamilton, Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh, and between Stirling and Simson. A letter from Stirling to Hamilton emphasising Simson's absolute refutation of having gone into the Arian scheme had helped to quiet the gossip about him in Edinburgh,<sup>73</sup> and Simson told Stirling that the basis of the problem lay in students misunderstanding the terms he was using.<sup>74</sup> But once the opportunity had been provided of pursuing Simson the matter would not disappear quickly.

In March 1726 Simson sent the Presbytery of Glasgow – from his sick bed - a long letter explaining his teaching for the members of the Presbytery and his students who were present. He refuted the work of Clarke and “all branches of the Arian Heresy,” showing the agreement of the doctrine of the Confession with the articles of the Nicene creed. He explained his use of the expression *Christus non est summus Deus* and how it related to his teaching from Pictet's “little compend.”<sup>75</sup> No doubt he hoped this would lay the matter to rest, but instead it resulted in a lengthy trial. The presbytery responded with a number of questions<sup>76</sup> which Simson refused to answer on the grounds that the Act of the Assembly

forbids the Inquirers to insist upon any Article not contained in the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, and the larger and Shorter Catechisms of this Church: The Professor imagined, they were carrying their Inquiries into his Opinions, farther than the Act of Assembly intended.

To Simson such an approach was an infringement on his liberty.<sup>77</sup> This attitude was to backfire on Simson in the long run. The matter was taken to the general

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<sup>72</sup> John Stirling to William Mitchell, [1726], GUL MS Gen 205/136.

<sup>73</sup> William Hamilton, Edinburgh to John Stirling, 15 March 1726, GUL MS Gen 205/138.

<sup>74</sup> John Simson to John Stirling, and Simson's reply, 1726, GUL MS Gen 205/135.

<sup>75</sup> John Dundas (ed.), *State of the Processes depending against Mr John Simson Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow*, (Edinburgh 1728), 14-20.

<sup>76</sup> Dundas, *State of the Processes*, 24

<sup>77</sup> *The case of Mr. John Simson Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. The second edition. Containing beside what was in the former edition, an abstract of the pleadings, and all the papers which were before the last General Assembly*, (Edinburgh 1727), vi – vii.



assembly who considered it at their meeting of 1727 and established a committee to report the following year.<sup>78</sup> This it did, and caught between the shifting fortunes of the Scottish political factions and in a strained theological atmosphere it produced an unusual compromise. Simson was exonerated of teaching Arianism, finding that:

He does assert the Necessity of the Existence and Generation of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also, that he declares that the Titles, *Summus Deus*, and the *only true GOD*, are equally applicable to the Father and the Son, and not in any lower Sense to the Son than to the Father. Likewise, that he affirms that the Three Persons in the Godhead are one Substance or Essence in Number: Therefore the General Assembly does find that his Sentiments, as above expressed in his foresaid Papers upon these Articles, are sound and Orthodox.

But at the same time the General Assembly suspended Simson “from Preaching and Teaching, and all Exercise of any Ecclesiastical Power or Function” indefinitely. This was described in the ruling as meeting half way the demands for Simson to be deposed but was based on a belief that he was guilty of:

Having taught and uttered such Things, and expressed himself in such Terms as are subversive of these Blessed Truths, as they are contain'd in the Holy Scriptures, and laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and tend to shake the Belief of them, and to inject needless and ill grounded Doubts and Scruples into the Minds of Men, and to render them dark and uncertain as to what they ought to believe concerning the same.

In addition it was asserted that he had neglected “many Opportunities, during the Course of the Proceedings against him, of giving Satisfaction to the Judicatories of the Church as to the Soundness of his Faith concerning those important Articles.”<sup>79</sup>

As both M.A. Stewart and Anne Skoczylas have pointed out one of the main issues raised by this whole controversy concerned the question of

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<sup>78</sup> *The principal acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, convened at Edinburgh, the 4th of May, 1727*, (Edinburgh 1727), 21-5.

<sup>79</sup> *The principal acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, convened at Edinburgh, the 2nd of May, 1728*, (Edinburgh 1728), 26-7.

academic freedom, the rights of universities to employ teachers free from ecclesiastical or theological interference.<sup>80</sup> Also, given the way he was condemned in the final judgment, it clearly had implications for the use of creeds and the way of subscribing.

Simson's refusal to answer the questions of the Presbytery of Glasgow bore some parallels with the non-subscribers' refusal to sign the confession. Both courses of action had the effect on conservative minded opponents of assuming that this was a way of concealing theological error. Simson was not, by nature, a non-subscriber, but he received the sympathy of the non-subscribers. As English students had provided secretarial help for him during his first trial so there was continuing English support for him during his second. In 1727 when Simson was under his initial suspension it was alleged that during a visit to England he preached to the dissenting congregations of Newcastle and Coventry, a breach of the terms of his suspension, at least in the eyes of Wodrow.<sup>81</sup>

At his trial Stirling had argued that although he accepted that the Presbytery had the right to charge the Professor with error the University was vested with the power to try and judge its own members: "he therefore protested, that the present Trial of the said Professor might not prejudice the just Right of the University, nor be interpreted a passing from the said Right, nor derogate from the legal and known Privilege of the University in this Case."<sup>82</sup> As a result, although suspended and forbidden to teach, Simson was not removed from his post and continued to receive his salary and live in the College house. It was an unsatisfactory situation for both the supporters and opponents of Simson and not least for Simson and the new Principal, Neil Campbell, who was consequently given responsibility for teaching divinity for the first dozen years of his principalship.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> M. A. Stewart, 'Academic Freedom: Origins of an Idea', in Gabriël Moens (ed.), *Academic Freedom Today* (Sydney: Australian Society of Legal Philosophy, 1992), 1-31. Skoczylas, *Mr Simson's Knotty Case*, 239.

<sup>81</sup> *Analecta*, 3, 444.

<sup>82</sup> John Dundas (ed.), *State of the Processes depending against Mr John Simson Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow*, (Edinburgh 1728), 84.

<sup>83</sup> Coutts, *A History of the University*, 212.



The 1720s were also marked by the unfolding of the subscription debates which could not help but spill over into Glasgow. Stirling was kept informed of the progress of the debates on non-subscription in England<sup>84</sup> but – no doubt because of his family ties - was more closely involved in the dispute in Ireland. Samuel Henry, minister at Sligo, had informed Stirling of the Pacific Act agreed by the Synod in 1720 which both he and Stirling had initially welcomed as a way of preventing the outbreak of the kind of theological dissension that had occurred in England.<sup>85</sup> But his closest Irish correspondents throughout the period he was in office were members of the McBride family. Not long after Stirling's appointment as Principal, John McBride (c.1650-1718), the minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Belfast, had written to the Principal to introduce his two sons and two divinity students from Belfast who were embarking upon their studies at Glasgow.<sup>86</sup> McBride was himself a graduate of Glasgow and had become one of the acknowledged leaders of Presbyterianism in the north of Ireland.<sup>87</sup> As a non-juror (who refused to sign the Oath of Abjuration after the Act of 1703) and a polemical opponent of the Episcopal establishment he became a frequent target for arrest by the authorities. To avoid this he spent increasingly large amounts of time in Scotland, particularly in Glasgow, where he officiated at Blackfriars church although maintaining his ministry in Belfast. But in Glasgow he must have got to know Stirling well and he developed a friendly correspondence with him which was continued by his son Robert on his completion of studies in Glasgow and the commencement of his ministry in Ireland.

Robert McBride kept Stirling informed of events in Ulster, especially

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<sup>84</sup> Andrew Gray, London to John Stirling 16 February 1725, GUL MS Gen 207/106.

<sup>85</sup> Samuel Henry, Belfast to John Stirling 25 June 1720, GUL MS Gen 207/122.

<sup>86</sup> John McBride, Belfast to John Stirling 13 October 1701, GUL MS Gen 207/122. McBride's sons David and Robert both matriculated in the first class of John Law on 27 February 1702. They arrived in Glasgow with Philip Maire and John McMinn who formally commenced the study of divinity in December 1701. Maire (or Meares or Mairor) was presumably a graduate of Glasgow since he had previously matriculated there in March 1699. Robert McBride went on to study divinity from January 1708. *Munimenta*, 3, 173-4, 248, 166, 250.

<sup>87</sup> John McBride, *Hybernus*, matriculated in 1666 and graduated in 1673, *Munimenta*, 3, 118, 39. Alexander Gordon, *Historic Memorials of the First Presbyterian Church of Belfast*, (Belfast 1887), 54-5. Tom Moore, *A History of the First Presbyterian Church Belfast 1644-1983*, (Belfast 1983), 24, 126. D. W. Hayton, 'McBride, John', *ODNB*, article/17361.



following the installation of Samuel Haliday as his father's successor in Belfast on "a subscription to the Confession of faith which some imagine was not a sufficient Discovery of his orthodoxy, nor such as our late Synods act requir'd." If there could be any doubt as to Stirling's strongly subscribing views then they would be dispelled by McBride's confidence:

I am entirely of your sentiments, that Confessions and Creeds, (for all that is said against human composures being a Test of orthodoxy) are necessary to prevent Error. And indeed I know not a better abridgment of the Christian Doctrine that is our Westminster Confession.<sup>88</sup>

Most of Stirling's Irish correspondents were subscribers who shared their concerns with him about the progress of events following the installation of Haliday.<sup>89</sup> Stirling was seen as a potentially very useful ally by the Irish subscribers and when a decision was taken to enlist support from within the Church of Scotland it was natural that they should try and enlist his assistance. William McKnight, minister at Irvine, was approached by the Irish subscribers to try and rally support within Scotland. On 13 April 1722 he wrote to both Stirling and Robert Wodrow on very similar terms:

Yesternight I received a letter from a subscribing minister in the North of Ireland, giving an account that the circumstances of affairs in reference to subscribing the Westmin[ster] Conf[ession] are most deplorable, & that a paper war is broke out and several little pamphlets are wrote on each side of the Question. Now the thing sought most earnestly in that letter by our Revd Br[other] who writes in the name and at the desire of many of his subscribing brethren, is that I would consult with some Ministers of weight, Age and experience in this Church whither or no a letter in favour of the Subscribing Ministers in Ireland might be procured from our General Assembly seeing our practice & theirs is the same; Now, I could think of none more proper to advice with on this head than yourself and your brethren in Glasgow to whom [I] communicate this affair under secrecy, and if you be of Opinion that the favour sought may be allowed, seeing its for the interest of truth and the good old presbyterian principles, its resolved that then a minister will be sent by the subscribers to our next Assembly to Petition for this favour and for what other good offices the Assembly in their great wisdom shall think of as most expedient at this juncture for supporting the good old way of requiring subscription of Conf[ession] which is now exclaim'd ag[ains]t

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<sup>88</sup> Robert McBride, Ballymoney to John Stirling 20 October 1720, GUL MS Gen 207/121.

<sup>89</sup> Alexander McCracken, Lisburn to John Stirling 26 August 1720, GUL MS Gen 207/122. (This is one of two letters with the same identification number).



as Tyrannical Imposition.<sup>90</sup>

McKnight wanted a reply from both of them by return of post so they could make arrangements for someone from Ireland to attend the Assembly, but neither of them were in a position to grant their request. Even Wodrow was aware of the complexity of the situation. He had raised the issue with some of his colleagues at the previous year's assembly, particularly William Hamilton and William Mitchell although, given their more 'moderate leanings' compared with Wodrow, not surprisingly they had counselled against getting involved. Despite his sympathy with the subscribers Wodrow could not see a way ahead:

I found a willingness in all I conversed with at Edinburgh to do every thing competent for a General Assembly to do, for the support of the dissenting interest in Ireland; but, till the proposal be more opened out, we could not fully judge it nor how far it might be proper for this Church to fall in with our brethren's desire.

There will be no difficulty as to the form and way of introducing any thing of this nature, when it's concerted before our Assembly. All the difficulty to me is, what is needful and proper to be done, without stretching ourselves beyond our line and measure.<sup>91</sup>

Stirling was even less interested in getting involved. A note on the back of McKnight's letter in Stirling's hand records that some of his colleagues had been shown the letter but "non of them thinks proper to medle with [the] Irish Church: that they have mor work of their own at Assemble nor will be well gon through."<sup>92</sup> This remained his basic attitude to the controversy in Ireland, he held Glasgow back from taking any side. All his subscribing Irish correspondents assumed a shared attitude to the issue with both Stirling and the Church of Scotland. Robert McBride took particular and regular offence at Samuel Haliday and all his publications and assumed that Stirling "and all the Reformed Churches" would do the same.<sup>93</sup> He requested the prayers of Stirling and his colleagues "for Unity and Stability to us, for we are made a strife unto our neighbours, our enemies laugh among themselves."<sup>94</sup> The one surviving

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<sup>90</sup> William McKnight, Irvine to John Stirling 13 April 1722, MS Gen 207/123. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 631-633.

<sup>91</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 2, 634-5.

<sup>92</sup> William McKnight, Irvine to John Stirling 13 April 1722, MS Gen 207/123.

<sup>93</sup> Robert McBride, Ballymoney to John Stirling 16 May 1724, MS Gen 207/125.

<sup>94</sup> Robert McBride, Ballymoney to John Stirling 3 December 1724, MS Gen 207/126.

letter from John Stirling, the minister at Ballykelly and Principal Stirling's first cousin, lamented

The mellancally [sic] deplorable circumstances of this poor Church. She is rent to pieces by these divisions that are amongst us, which seems to be a Judgement from God upon us; all the hardships that ever we meet with, in the worst of times from our most bitter enemies did us little harm in respect of what our division has done, our discipline is like to be intirely overturn'd & a door opening to introduce both error and prophanitie amongst us, if a mercifull God of his infinit goodness does not prevent it.<sup>95</sup>

Stirling received a regular supply of letters from ministers in the north of Ireland which emphasised the subscribers' identification with the traditions of the Church of Scotland and expressed the hope that they had the blessing of the Kirk. So Samuel Hemphill (d.1741), a Glasgow graduate and one of the most vigorous of all the Irish subscribers could say, after outlining the extent of the divisions caused by "Dangerous Notions," that "We doubt not but we have the Sympathy of the Church of Scotland."<sup>96</sup> Andrew Dean, the minister at Cootehill in county Cavan, looked to Glasgow to give leadership "in this Critical, Sceptical and I may say Irreligious age." Dean had studied in Glasgow, joining the third class of Gershom Carmichael in March 1701, in the same year, although a different class, to Samuel Haliday.<sup>97</sup> In his view Haliday and his colleagues had brought about a situation where

Under pretence of new light a great many opinions of ancient Hereticks are revived that before lay in obscurity; & our excellent Confession of faith ridicul'd, preach'd yea printed against; whereby the Laudable practice of the Church of Scotland is impeached & scandaliz'd.<sup>98</sup>

Another Irish correspondent of Stirling's following the disputes over subscription was Charles Masterton who was a key figure in the ranks of the subscribers. Masterton was a Scots born graduate of Edinburgh University although he had moved to Ireland after being licensed in 1703 and was ordained

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<sup>95</sup> John Stirling, Ballykelly to John Stirling 3 January 1726, MS Gen 207/127.

<sup>96</sup> Samuel Hemphill, Castleblayney to John Stirling 16 September 1725, MS Gen 207/128. For Hemphill see Witherow, *Historical and Literary Memorials*, 250-5.

<sup>97</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 171.

<sup>98</sup> Andrew Dean, Cootehill to John Stirling 11 August 1726, MS Gen 207/131.



as minister of Connor in May 1704.<sup>99</sup> He remained there until the early 1720s when he became a vocal opponent of non-subscription and was called to be minister of Belfast's third Presbyterian congregation which was formed from those who objected to the non-subscription of Kirkpatrick and Haliday. Masterton was troubled by the intervention of the Dublin ministers who had gone "a greater length than was expected, in Espousing the cause of the Nonsubscribers, and especially the cause of on[e] Mr Colvil."<sup>100</sup> Robert McBride observed that:

The Church of Scotland indeed have been Mournful Observers of our Misunderstandings, they have Wept in secret for us, and Bewailed the pulling down our Fences... They pittie us, and pray for us, but have medled no further in our Troubles.<sup>101</sup>

However, whilst it is clear that Stirling steadfastly refused to allow Glasgow to become embroiled in the Irish controversy a point was also reached when the Irish subscribers became convinced that Glasgow was giving aid and support to the non-subscribers in the person of John Simson.

Masterton wrote an anguished letter to Stirling in November 1726:

we are much allarmed here by reports of the Revd Professor Simpsons affaires, the great respect I have for him, for his learning and piety, makes these reports the more afflicting to myself. I have seen both his first & 2d letters to the Revd P[resby]try of Glasgow, as also the Questions he put to the P[resby]try, I heartily wish he had thought fit to have taken a more direct & easier way to answer the Querys which were put to him. Our Nonsubscribers here triumph much in his conduct, alledging he is making his defense upon the foot of their nonsubscribing or nondeclaring principles, it is likeways supposed that he has been privatly corresponding with the Nonsubscribers here to ye disadvantage of the cause of the Subscribers or of ye Genll Synod here, as appears by Mr MacBride's paper in answer to Mr Higginbotham where the letter from a learned min[iste]r of the Church of Scotland to Mr Boyse of Dublin, upon the overtures of ye Genll Synod, its generally supposed here that the Revd Professor is the author of that letter, which if it be so

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<sup>99</sup> RGSU, 1, 71, 82. *Catalogue of the Graduates of...Edinburgh*, 166.

<sup>100</sup> Charles Masterton, Belfast to John Stirling 24 September 1725, MS Gen 207/129. For Alexander Colvill see pp 180-5.

<sup>101</sup> Robert McBride, *The Overtures Transmitted by the General Synod, 1725. Set in a Fair Light: in Answer to Mr Higginbothom's late Print, Entitled, Reasons against the Overtures*, (Belfast 1726), 17.



must be very disquieting to these who are sincere friends to the cause of Subscription to the Westminster Confession.<sup>102</sup>

It seems quite plausible that the non-subscribers in Ireland might have been claiming Simson as a kindred spirit but there is no evidence that he was privately corresponding with them. This is really conjecture on Masterton's part and there is no evidence that he was the author of the letter that he mentions. McBride describes the letter as being written by "one Gentleman of that Church, who has the character of being of considerable Note, but he appears to be a Noted Man in his own Esteem, more than in the Eye of an Impartial, Unprejudic'd peruser of his remarks."<sup>103</sup> The letter, criticising the General Synod of Ulster's overtures against the non-subscribers, was circulated anonymously by Robert Higinbotham, but there is no evidence that Simson was the author and it seems unlikely that he would become embroiled in such a quarrel at this time. Yet, it is true, that there was a fairly widespread suspicion that Simson was helping the Irish non-subscribers. It was also suggested that he had been influenced by them and gone over to their way of thinking. Allan Logan was a consistent opponent of Simson's who also sat on the general assembly committee to consider his first trial. In 1728 he published *An enquiry into Professor Simson's sentiments on the doctrine of the trinity* an aggressive treatment of the Simson case, and in this made the allegation that

he has in this followed these upright and Orthodox Men, the *Antrim* Non-declarers, and adopted their very Terms; his Eloquence and Learning here is wholly *Hybernian*, and borrowed from the worst Set of Men in that Kingdom. I make no Reflection here upon our Reverend, learned and worthy Brethren, and the godly People that adhere to them, who have cast off Communion with the *Antrim* faction, and all that take Part with it; but esteem them as Men that have the Testimony of Jesus.<sup>104</sup>

But although there were clear parallels between Simson's approach and that of the non-subscribers in Ireland there is no evidence that they were acting in concert. Logan was merely picking up on some similarities and using them to

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<sup>102</sup> Charles Masterton, Belfast to John Stirling, 7 November 1726, GUL Special Collections MS GEN 207/132.

<sup>103</sup> McBride, *The Overtures Transmitted by the General Synod*, 17.

<sup>104</sup> Allan Logan, *An Enquiry into Professor Simson's Sentiments on the Doctrine of the Trinity*, from his papers in the process against him, (Edinburgh 1729), 42.



tarnish Simson's reputation. What is clear, however, is that Glasgow while not favouring one side against the other continued to engage with both subscribers and non-subscribers. Both the financial implications of offending a significant portion of their source of students and the continuing expression of academic independence by the Faculty meant that they did not close down communications with either side of the argument over subscription in any part of the three kingdoms.

## Chapter Nine

“the more moderate & charitable sentiments in religious matters”

*Glasgow University's continuing engagement with non-subscribers in England and Ireland in the aftermath of the subscription controversies*

In the years immediately after the subscription controversies in England and Ireland, and for some years to come, while not taking sides with either of the contesting groups, Glasgow University remained an institution that could be regarded favourably by non-subscribers. The University continued to interact with non-subscribers, accepting their students for the ministry and honouring ministers who held such views.

Presbyterians in England had become very largely non-subscribing by the end of the 1720s. An important fund like the Presbyterian Fund had agreed, at the very start of the discussions of subscription in London not to take sides on the matter or allow themselves to be divided on the issue. At their meeting of December 1719 Calamy had proposed, and they had agreed, “that the matter of Subscribing or not Subscribing be not Considered at this Board so far as to Admit or reject Any Minister merely upon that Acco[un]t.”<sup>1</sup> On one level this was an agreement to be non-subscribers, since they were essentially not imposing any creedal test on potential applicants for grants. Given the existence of a separate Congregational Fund this was one of the factors that led to the development of an Arminian orientated non-subscribing Presbyterian body on the one hand and a more definitely Calvinist Independency on the other. Other ministers, who had supported the subscribers at Salters' Hall, soon after repudiated this stand and announced that they were “Sorry for what they then did.”<sup>2</sup> So long as Glasgow was accepting Presbyterian students from England they were accepting students who were, very largely, non-subscribers from within a community that held such an approach.

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<sup>1</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2 7 December 1719, 357, DWL MS OD68.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Gray, London to John Stirling 16 February 1725, GUL MS Gen 207/106. Gray mentions “Mr Earl, Mr Mayo, Mr Barker” as having done this.



The 1720s saw increasing co-operation between Glasgow and the Presbyterian Fund which not only provided a guaranteed source of students to the University but provided students who could be relied upon to spend relatively long periods there and could be encouraged to take a degree at the end of their studies. From the spring of 1719 onwards the Fund became more proactive in enquiring directly from the students' tutors about the progress of the students in their care.<sup>3</sup> This was as equally true of the dissenting academies as of Glasgow. The Fund had always taken a keen interest in the students it had sent to Glasgow and maintained a regular correspondence with the University over their fortunes but the system of monitoring the students across England and Scotland now became more ordered. So, along with William Hamilton in Edinburgh and all the various tutors in the provincial academies, John Stirling was approached directly by letter about the progress of the students at Glasgow, and a reply received within a couple of months.<sup>4</sup> Stirling seems to have taken the opportunity of encouraging the English students to take their degrees since on receipt of Stirling's letter they agreed that the Fund's students should "submit to Examinations, & take their degree at the Charges of the Fund, & be Enrol'd According to Custom."<sup>5</sup> The Glasgow students tended to be one of the largest student groupings supported by the Presbyterian Fund at this time so, for instance, in January 1720 there were eight students at Glasgow, compared with three at Edinburgh, four at Nailsworth, two at Findern, and one each at a further seven academies.<sup>6</sup> This regular correspondence enabled closer monitoring by the Fund of their students, for Glasgow it brought about increased payments by the students in terms of fees. So through their correspondence with Stirling the Fund managers discovered that three of the eight students on their books in 1721 had been neglecting their studies. William Tong was told to write to Michael Varndell, a student from London, who had matriculated in Gershom Carmichael's second class of February 1721 alongside Samuel Boyse and Richard Weld, the sons of the two leading Dublin ministers.<sup>7</sup> Either because he was a new arrival in Glasgow or because he had been inattentive Tong was asked

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<sup>3</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2, 6 April 1719, 342, DWL MS OD68.

<sup>4</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2, 4 May 1719, 343; 8 June 1719, 344, DWL MS OD68.

<sup>5</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2, 5 October 1719, 354, DWL MS OD68.

<sup>6</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2, 10 January 1720, 381, DWL MS OD68.

<sup>7</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 220.

to write to him “pressing him to Diligence”.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand in his letter of March 1721 Stirling had informed the board of the Presbyterian Fund that two other students had been “neglecting the Divinity Lectures the Last Session.”<sup>9</sup> These were George Gibbs and Joseph Venables who had arrived in Glasgow some years before, matriculated in the same class of Gershom Carmichael and graduated within a year of each other before embarking on the study of divinity.<sup>10</sup> Samuel Wright, on behalf of the Fund, informed Stirling that they would be contacted to explain their absence. In addition – at the Fund’s own request<sup>11</sup> - he also outlined to Stirling the Fund’s attitude to Glasgow University’s fees for degrees:

It is now ordered that all who are upon the Fund, if qualified and fit for it, should take their Degrees according to your Recommendation. 'Tis hoped in such cases you will have a Regard to the Capacities and Performances of the Persons you bestow Titles upon, and that you will make the Charge as Easie as may be.

I am withal directed to request of you an account of the whole Charge of taking the Degree of M[aster] of Arts.<sup>12</sup>

This must have pleased Stirling and illustrates the importance of Glasgow to the leaders of English Presbyterianism. Stirling replied sometime in the late spring or summer and the Fund minutes record:

Upon a Letter from Principal Sterling to Mr Wright giving an account of the Charges of takeing a degree agreed that the sum of three pounds be allow'd to each student for that purpose upon a Certificate from the Tutor that he has taken it.<sup>13</sup>

The precedent of the Fund being willing to pay for the students to graduate was subsequently extended to Edinburgh, the same amount being paid for graduation there as at Glasgow.<sup>14</sup> In the early 1720s communication with Glasgow seems to have remained much fuller. Both Stirling and Gershom

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<sup>8</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2, 3 April 1721, 385, DWL MS OD68.

<sup>9</sup> S[amuel] Wright, London to John Stirling 29 April 1721, GUL MS Gen 207/102.

<sup>10</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 210, 52, 53.

<sup>11</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2, 3 April 1721, 385, DWL MS OD68.

<sup>12</sup> S[amuel] Wright, London to John Stirling 29 April 1721, GUL MS Gen 207/102.

<sup>13</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2, 6 November 1721, 400, DWL MS OD68.

<sup>14</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2, 6 November 1721, 411, DWL MS OD68.



Carmichael provided accounts of the students in their care.<sup>15</sup> As time went on the Fund became more careful in its payment to students (in part this followed a reduction in the amount of money it was able to distribute to students<sup>16</sup>) and in 1725 produced a set of rules for students which included:

That a Committee of Three Persons be appointed from time to time to examine into the Character of the Learning, Capacity, Inclinations, & Serious Disposition, of each Student recommended to the Encouragement of this Fund. And that no Person be admitted to have any Allowance without a Satisfactory report from this Committee.<sup>17</sup>

The Fund also moved to limit the number of institutions at which it was prepared to support students. By the time it introduced new rules relating to students in 1746 the smaller academies were no longer to receive support. Rule number two declared: "That all the Students encouraged by this fund be placed only at the Academys of Findern, Kendall & Carmarthen or at the Universitys in Scotland." But the numbers of students supported by the Fund gradually decreased, including those sent to Scotland. Nevertheless the same rules still stipulated "That Students in the Universitys in Scotland submit to Examination take their Degree & be enrolled according to the Custome there & that £3 be allowed to defray the Charge of this."<sup>18</sup>

But if the importance of the Presbyterian Fund as a grant making body to students in Glasgow began to decline from the mid-1720s onwards there is no doubt that Glasgow maintained a key institution for dissenters. Following the death of Daniel Williams the provisions of his will meant that English Presbyterians were orientated towards Glasgow as a place for the education of their youth and particularly for the training of ministers. Williams died on 26 January 1716 leaving his vast estate (estimated at around £50,000<sup>19</sup>) for various charitable purposes. But it took some time to sort the matter out. Although the sum of £100 which was specifically left to the University by Williams was

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<sup>15</sup> PFB Minutes vol 2, 4 June 1722, 412, DWL MS OD68.

<sup>16</sup> PFB Minutes vol 3, 4 February 1722, 3, DWL MS OD69.

<sup>17</sup> PFB Minutes vol 3, 22 November 1725, 50, DWL MS OD69.

<sup>18</sup> PFB Minutes vol 3, 2 May 1746, 415, DWL MS OD69.

<sup>19</sup> E.A. Payne, *A Venerable Dissenting Institution Dr Williams's Library 1729-1979*, (London 1979), 9.

received by the University in March 1718,<sup>20</sup> the vast bulk of the legacy remained out of reach. Calamy recorded that “His will was very peculiar. Though he left many noble charities, and express directions, yet his trustees met with great difficulties in pursuing his designs.”<sup>21</sup> In April 1718 Calamy had to write to John Stirling to apologise for the delay in processing his bequest to Glasgow, the trustees could not settle anything until

Mrs Williams the Administratix, has made over the several Estates to us, to be dispos'd off according to the Direction of the Will. This she cannot do, til the Heir at Law (the Drs own sister) has quitted some Claims and Demands she has upon several of these Estates, for want of some formalities, on the Doctor's part. The Heir at Law is not free for this, unless we'll make some settlements for that in favour of Wales, as to Acts of Charity, than the Doctor has expressly don by his Will.

But, he told Stirling, given the “many obligations” he was under “to the College of Glasgow” he promised to expedite Glasgow's case among the first.<sup>22</sup>

Matters moved slowly but eventually the University began to take possession of its share of Daniel Williams's generosity. In January 1723 John Evans sent a copy of the relevant clauses of Daniel Williams's will to Glasgow along with a request for a Scots lawyer in London to be appointed to confer with the trustees and take the necessary steps to bring his intentions to fruition. The Chancellor of the University, the Duke of Montrose, was asked to ask the Lord Advocate (Robert Dundas) who was then in London to give his advice for the transfer of the lands bequeathed to Glasgow by Williams.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless it was not until February 1728 that Daniel Williams's estate at Barnet in Essex was “legally putt in possession of the College” and a Mr Baker was appointed “Attorney and Factor” to manage the estate on behalf of the University, John Evans, Williams's former colleague and successor and one of the executors of his will being informed of this.<sup>24</sup> There was some legal tidying up to do in the following year, although George Smith, trustee and minister at Hackney, had to

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<sup>20</sup> Register of the Proceedings of the University of Glasgow (vol 21), 28 March 1718, 8, GUA 26633.

<sup>21</sup> Calamy, *Historical Account*, 2, 344.

<sup>22</sup> Edmund Calamy to John Stirling 15 April 1718, GUL MS Gen 207/85.

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 22) 17 January 1723, 89, GUA 26634.

<sup>24</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 23) 16 February 1728, 28, GUA 26635.



inform the Faculty in 1730 that they were in danger of losing their rents because of a very difficult tenant who had caused the Trustees to take special action. They asked for help from the Faculty who appointed the Earl of Hay to represent them in negotiations with the trustees.<sup>25</sup> Presumably they were successful in this since there are no further concerns of this kind minuted. The rent from the Barnet estate was a reliable source of income and for many years its collection was placed in the hands of Jermingham Chevely, a London solicitor.<sup>26</sup> The rents of his wife's estate at Totham became available after her death in 1740. As a result of Daniel Williams's benefaction Glasgow became the destination of a guaranteed six or seven English dissenting students at any one time.<sup>27</sup>

If Glasgow was neutral, although not hostile, to non-subscription within Presbyterianism a major step towards the open acceptance of non-subscription was taken in 1730. Gershom Carmichael died on 26 November 1729, two years after his appointment as professor of moral philosophy at the end of the regenting system. Wodrow noted that his death had resulted in "all the English Students" leaving the University, although while Carmichael was certainly an attraction to would be students it is unlikely that all the English students would have departed immediately on his death.<sup>28</sup> The Faculty moved quickly to fill the vacancy and agreed to fill the appointment by election rather than "a comparative trial" by different candidates.<sup>29</sup> On 19 December 1729 the Faculty met and elected Francis Hutcheson by a majority vote.<sup>30</sup> In January Hutcheson signified his acceptance although he was not able to start work right away. Presumably he had to wind up the affairs of the Dublin academy since he revealed that he was not able to commence work until September 1730.<sup>31</sup> Hutcheson was formally admitted as professor on 3 November 1730.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 23) 14 January 1729, 84. 9 January 1730, 150, GUA 26635.

<sup>26</sup> Minutes of Faculty, (vol 27) 21 April 1741, 144, GUA 26639. He continued in the post until 1757. Minutes of Faculty, (1759-60) 26 April 1757, 222, GUA 26641.

<sup>27</sup> *Deeds Instituting Bursaries, Scholarships, and other Foundations in the College and University of Glasgow*, Glasgow 1850, 136-143 carries information concerning Daniel Williams's bequest to Glasgow as well as the various alterations to regulations made by the trustees and the Court of Chancery over subsequent years.

<sup>28</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 4, 98.

<sup>29</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol. 23), 12 December 1729, 143, GUA 26635.

<sup>30</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol. 23), 19 December 1729, 146, GUA 26635.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes of Faculty (vol. 23), 22 January 1730, 151; 20 February 1730, 158, GUA 26635.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 3 November 1730, 5, GUA 26639.



Hutcheson's background, academic experience and sympathies were non-subscribing. Following Hutcheson's stormy career in Glasgow as a part of the student protestors he returned to Ulster where he was licensed by the presbytery of Armagh in 1719<sup>33</sup> before departing to Dublin to run the academy there. Although his father was a staunch subscriber, and the (posthumous) author of a carefully reasoned discussion of the issue which questioned the results of non-subscription in terms of doctrine and church discipline,<sup>34</sup> his closest friends were all non-subscribers. Nevertheless he signed the Confession on his appointment. As was indicated in Chapter Seven, in Scotland a pragmatic approach to the Confession became the norm, it was a fixed feature of church life and subscribed to as part of that even by those whose attitudes might be suspected of being more liberal. Hutcheson himself said at one point he did not personally care for the term new light<sup>35</sup> but his closest ecclesiastical associations made quite clear where his sympathies lay. His surviving correspondence indicates his close friendship with Thomas Drennan with whom he was on regular terms although he constantly chided Drennan for not being a better respondent.<sup>36</sup> It is clear also from this correspondence that he was a close friend of Samuel Haliday and he took a close interest in his sons' welfare when they became students at Glasgow after their father's death.<sup>37</sup> Drennan was a Glasgow graduate who had worked as Hutcheson's assistant in the academy in Dublin before going north to ministry first in Holywood and then Belfast where he was Haliday's colleague in the first congregation. Hutcheson's work *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* was published in 1725 and by appointing him the University was well aware of his intellectual reputation, his connection with Molesworth and his circle, and his theological outlook. No doubt the fact that he was elected

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<sup>33</sup> RGSU, 3, 487.

<sup>34</sup> [John Hutcheson], *A Brief Review of a paper Intituled A Letter from the Presbytery of Antrim & c, With Arguments for a proper Authority and Power of Government in the Church, and for Submission to Sentences of lawful Judicatures supposed to be passed Clave Errante. Also the Right of Churches to require Subscription of such as they admit into the Ministry is maintained; and the Practice of the Presbyterians in the North of Ireland, in relation to Subscription, is defended*, (Dublin 1730).

<sup>35</sup> Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, undated [1743], GUL MS Gen 1018/15.

<sup>36</sup> See, for instance, Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, 12 April 1742, GUL MS Gen 1018/10. Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, undated, GUL MS Gen 1018/17.

<sup>37</sup> Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, 1 June 1741, GUL MS Gen 1018/7. Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, 15 June 1741, GUL MS Gen 1018/8. Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, 12 April 1742, GUL MS Gen 1018/10.



by a majority of the votes cast represents concern on the part of some of the professors about the likely sympathies of the troublesome students of 1717, although it was also bound up with the factionalism of the Faculty.

Robert Wodrow had heard that Hutcheson's standing was such that it would attract new students, not least from Ireland, although he was also linked by marriage to Alexander Dunlop, the Professor of Greek and main opponent in the Faculty of Neil Campbell, the principal. Wodrow was suspicious of Hutcheson from the start "Hou the principles he goes on agree with the truths generally received in this Church, and what influence his teaching them here may have, time will discover," he wrote. According to Wodrow the principal had his own candidate in mind to succeed Carmichael but could only rely upon the loyal support of John Simson, who never wavered in his backing for the principal's office.<sup>38</sup> The Faculty itself was split between supporting Hutcheson and Gershom Carmichael's son Frederick, who – initially through the influence of the previous principal - had undertaken some teaching in the University over the years.<sup>39</sup> Clearly the presence on the faculty of William Wishart, the Dean of the Faculty since 1728 following his appointment as minister of Glasgow's Tron church in 1724, was also crucial in seeing Hutcheson gain a majority.

Once in post Hutcheson brought Glasgow closer into the orbit of the non-subscribing Presbyterians. Less than two years after he became professor of moral philosophy, in June 1732, a University meeting was summoned to hear a candidate for not one but two degrees. This candidate applied to the University to be examined as both a doctor of medicine and a doctor of divinity. It was not uncommon for ministers to add an interest in the practice of medicine to their pastoral concerns. Many ministerial students also attended medical lectures where they could, to gain an appropriate training and suitably qualified candidates were awarded the degree of MD. Dissenting ministers from Ireland and England were not infrequent applicants to Glasgow for examination in medicine. This was a process that had begun in 1703 when Samuel Benion described as a "student of medicine" had come from England hoping to be

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<sup>38</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 4, 99.

<sup>39</sup> Coutts, *A History of the University*, 215.

examined in the subject for a degree. Although it was not recorded in the minutes Benion was minister of the dissenting congregation at Whitchurch in Shropshire and had previously matriculated at Glasgow in Arts in 1696.<sup>40</sup> His application encouraged the University to be innovative and even though they did not have a professor of medicine at the time agreed to make the professor of mathematics, Robert Sinclare, himself a doctor of medicine, “Professor Extraordinaire of Medicin” to preside at the examination. Two physicians in the town were also brought in to assist in the examination and Benion was made MD on 5 October 1703.<sup>41</sup> The award of this degree established a precedent that was taken up particularly by dissenters over the next three decades. Benion was involved in the training of ministers and one of his former students was Ebenezer Latham who soon followed him to Glasgow in 1704 and himself gained the degree of MD from Glasgow in 1710.<sup>42</sup> Amongst others honoured in this way were Theophilus Lobb, minister at Yeovil (MD 1722)<sup>43</sup> whose degree was awarded by the University “they having had sufficient documents under the hands of several physicians of his skill in medicine and his all ready a Licentiat in medicine” of fourteen years standing.<sup>44</sup> Other dissenting medical doctors were John Sherman a minister in Wiltshire (MD 1731), William Gamble, a minister in county Down (MD 1731) and Thomas Pearce minister of Chelwood, Bristol (MD 1732).<sup>45</sup> By the early 1730s Glasgow had in place an established system for examining candidates for medical degrees. However, the application of June 1732 was unique in that the candidate was putting himself forward simultaneously for a medical degree and a doctorate in divinity. Not only that, the candidate was one of the most prominent figures from amongst the non-subscribers in Ireland.

There was no doubt that James Kirkpatrick was sufficiently qualified in both areas to be considered for the degrees of MD and DD. For some years he had practised medicine alongside his ministerial office and had published a considerable work in his *Historical Essay upon the Loyalty of Presbyterians of*

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<sup>40</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 159. George Eyre Evans, *Vestiges of Protestant Dissent*, (Liverpool 1897), 223, 256.

<sup>41</sup> Minutes of Faculty (Vol 20) 29 September 1703, 20; 5 October 1703, 20, GUA 26632.

<sup>42</sup> McLachlan, *English Education*, 83-4, 132. *Munimenta*, 3, 180, 305.

<sup>43</sup> Register of Diplomas, GUA 21320. Evans, *Vestiges*, 263.

<sup>44</sup> Minutes of Faculty (Vol 22), 1 May 1722, 53, GUA 26634.

<sup>45</sup> Register of Diplomas, GUA 21320.



1713. However, his position had long been recognised as one of leadership amongst the non-subscribing Presbyterians. His two most substantial publications in the 1720s had been arguments for non-subscription<sup>46</sup> and he had been identified as a man of quite advanced views, even quite early in his career. In 1709 Robert Wodrow had written to Alexander McCracken, minister at Lisburn, complaining about his innovations:

I...am heartily sorry to hear of novelties like to be brought in by Mr James Kilpatrick and Mr Gowan; - their altering our ordinary practice on fast-days, and haranguing instead of preaching upon a portion of scripture, and spending the rest of time in prayer...I heard (but whether true or not I know not) that Mr Kilpatrick uses to kneel in time of public prayer in the Church, except when praying himself.<sup>47</sup>

Haranguing here does not appear to have a pejorative use, except in so far as Wodrow thought Kirkpatrick was departing from what should be required of a preacher of the gospel. In 1701, in a discourse *Concerning the Ministerial Office*, Robert Fleming (c.1660-1716),<sup>48</sup> minister of the Scots congregation in London, wrote of preaching as being “something else than a fine Harangue, or pretty Gingle of Words, made to please the Fancy and tickle the itching Ears of a common Auditory.”<sup>49</sup> In the early eighteenth century haranguing also had a simple meaning of making an address to an assembly,<sup>50</sup> Wodrow appears to be contrasting this approach to the pulpit with what he sees as a more strictly exegetical approach. It was an approach he later ascribed to Robert Wallace who came to Glasgow to give the sermon at the communion service in October 1724:

It was on “Faith without works is dead,” and in the neu haranging method, and pleased some of the young volage [volatile] sparks, who set

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<sup>46</sup> [James Kirkpatrick], *A Vindication of the Presbyterian Ministers in the North of Ireland: Subscribers and Non-Subscribers: from many gross and groundless aspersions cast upon them, in a late scandalous libel, entitled, An Account of the Mind of the Synod at Belfast, 1721. In a short reply to Mr. Dugud's Remarks upon their Declaration / by a Sincere Lover of Truth and Peace*, (Belfast 1721). James Kirkpatrick, *A Scripture Plea Against a Fatal Rupture and Breach of Christian Communion amongst the Presbyterians in the North of Ireland*, (Belfast 1724).

<sup>47</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 1, 70-71. “Mr Gowan” is a reference to Thomas Gowan (d.1758) minister at Drumbo, co. Down, 1706-1716, and Leiden, 1716-1758. See Witherow, *Historical and Literary Memorials*, 169-74.

<sup>48</sup> M. J. Mercer, ‘Fleming, Robert’, *ODNB*, article/9711.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Fleming, *Discourses On several Subjects*, (London 1701), 166-8. I am grateful to Professor M.A. Stewart for providing me with this reference.

<sup>50</sup> See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (1989), entry on ‘harangue’.



up nou mightily for criticks of sermons. For a full half hour he insisted on an introduction about the necessity of trying [enquiring]. In matter of religion; and the unaccountableness of being satisfied with education; and left but a quarter of an hour for his text, where he gave a cold account of faith, as an assent and crediting testimony.<sup>51</sup>

This style of preaching is another connection between the Irish non-subscribers and the ministers of the Church of Scotland who might be said to form a proto-moderate group. For Wodrow 'Haranguing' preaching was a characteristic of non-subscribers and those of liberal theological sentiments.<sup>52</sup> Rather than a form of speaking with much force and emotion, which is what the modern interpretation of the word suggests, it was instead intended to convey a less passionate address, in the minds of those employing this technique a form of preaching that was intellectual and practical, the complete opposite of what would later be termed 'enthusiasm' in preaching. As William Wishart told Viscount Molesworth in October 1722:

"Religion is Virtue and Charity; that the promoting of These is the Great Design of CHRISTIANITY; & that the Perfection of those Noble Qualitys is the Cheif Ingredient in That Happiness & those Regards by which It animates us:" Such Principles as These I have often the Pleasure of Inculcating with all the Force I am Able. But Alass! My Lord, what Benefite can be Expected from a Half-hour's Set Discourse in a Week, delivered by One whose Talents, if he may boast of having Any, lye only in the Narrative or Didactick Way; & whose Genius does not lead him to Set off a Discourse with those Ornaments of a Popular Eloquence that are so requisite to Work on the Hearts of the Multitude? What Good I say, My Lord, can one Hope to do by this means, amongst Common People, Educated and Grown up, nay Grown Old, in Prejudices & Enthusiasm!<sup>53</sup>

Kirkpatrick was at the forefront of a similar rational approach to religion. He was regarded by Wodrow, and others, as not only a non-subscriber holding objectionable opinions, but also a dangerous innovator in matters of liturgy, particularly at the sacraments of baptism and communion.<sup>54</sup> Wodrow knew also that Kirkpatrick was a significant figure in Belfast whose personality and leadership skills had brought many of the town's Presbyterians into the non-

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<sup>51</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 167.

<sup>52</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 3, 468. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 72.

<sup>53</sup> William Wishart to Viscount Molesworth, 13 October 1722, quoted in Stewart, 'Principal Wishart', *RSCHS*, 91.

<sup>54</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 2, 351.



subscribing camp. The Presbytery of Belfast was strongly in support of the non-subscribers. Wodrow told William Livingston what he had heard from Charles Masterton in Belfast, how at a presbytery meeting at the height of the Irish quarrels Kirkpatrick had 'harangued' against the decision of the Synod of 1723 for four hours.<sup>55</sup> At another meeting in Belfast, "before a vast audience in this town," Kirkpatrick spoke "with little interruption for nine or ten hours" about the injustice done by the Synod, Charles Masterton told William McKnight. When the matter came to be voted on in the Presbytery Masterton was the only person present to vote against Kirkpatrick, "which occasioned a great triumph to the Non-subscribers."<sup>56</sup> Although a new congregation was established for Masterton and the subscribers in Belfast the growth of the town was such that a third congregation probably was required to accommodate everyone in any case. The rift that created the third congregation was occasioned by the installation of Samuel Haliday in the first church and although the members of the new congregation came from both original congregations it seems to be the case that a lower proportion of Kirkpatrick's congregation left to join the third church.<sup>57</sup> Despite the dislike of his theology Wodrow was not above writing to Kirkpatrick as "one who has so little of the happiness of your acquaintance," (although they had met when they were both students in Glasgow), to try and acquire material from him for his own history.<sup>58</sup>

Kirkpatrick's background and place in the non-subscription debates was well-known in Scotland. For Glasgow to award Kirkpatrick the degree of DD would be the most bold public acknowledgement of the standing of a leading opponent of subscription to the Westminster Confession. On 2 June 1732 James Kirkpatrick appeared before the professors of the University of Glasgow "desiring to obtain the degrees of Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Divinity, offering to submit to examination."<sup>59</sup> The medical degree was rather more easily dealt with and those present agreed to set aside the consideration of the divinity degree until another meeting, in the meantime they agreed to proceed to trials

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<sup>55</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 82-5.

<sup>56</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 92-3.

<sup>57</sup> *RGSU*, 2, 16-17, 45.

<sup>58</sup> Wodrow, *Correspondence*, 3, 322-4.

<sup>59</sup> *Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings* (vol 27), 2 June 1732, 16-17. GUA 26639.

with the medical degree. The “professors of Medicine”<sup>60</sup> were appointed to examine him and gave him a “Case and Aphorism” to answer, a date being set in three days time to hear him.<sup>61</sup>

Accordingly they met on 5 June, Kirkpatrick was examined and delivered his opinion upon the case and aphorism, and it was agreed to confer on him the degree of MD which was done immediately. They then moved on to discuss his other request. The minutes record simply that the meeting “having taken into consideration Mr Kirkpatrick’s other proposal to be admitted to trials for the Degree in Divinity Agreed to admit him to trials for the said degree.”<sup>62</sup> However, there must have been rather more discussion about this since three of the twelve present – John Loudon, William Forbes and William Anderson – entered their dissent and a substantial account of this was recorded. Loudon had been a regent since 1699 and had been one of those who had questioned the authority of the principal over the minutes alongside Gershom Carmichael in 1704 and supported Carmichael in his opposition to the appointment of the rector in 1717, he had been professor of logic since the end of the regenting system in 1727.<sup>63</sup> William Forbes was the professor of law, appointed in 1714 he had joined with dissident staff and students in 1717 and had voted against what he saw as the nepotism of John Stirling in 1720.<sup>64</sup> William Anderson was appointed professor of ecclesiastical history in 1721 and was known as a leader of conservative opinion within the University.<sup>65</sup> Although they had a long history of opposing the will of the principal in this instance the three seem to have been united largely by theological concerns.

They gave five objections to the award. Their first objection was one of precedent. They argued that historically the DD had only ever been awarded as a

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<sup>60</sup> By this time there were professors of medicine and anatomy. Coutts, *A History of the University*, 186.

<sup>61</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 2 June 1732, 17, GUA 26639.

<sup>62</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 5 June 1732, 17-18, GUA 26639. Register of Diplomas, GUA 21320.

<sup>63</sup> Coutts, *A History of the University*, 196-7. Mackie, *Short History*, 174-5.

<sup>64</sup> Coutts, *A History of the University*, 192, 199. Mackie, *Short History*, 163, 166.

<sup>65</sup> Coutts, *A History of the University*, 193. Mackie, *Short History*, 198.



complement on a few persons who had distinguished themselves beforehand by their writings on Subjects of Divinity, and some of these such as had merited the greatest honour this society could confer on them by their liberal benefactions to it.

Neither was the case in this instance. Their next two arguments were based on procedure. In the first of these they argued that awarding the degree after instituting trials was also to introduce something new to the University's practices. While the Professor of Divinity was under suspension, they argued, he could not take part in such an examination or be party to its introduction. In effect, while the one who would be "one of the chief Examinators" was under a suspension by the General Assembly which they as a society could not challenge, he could give no valid opinion on the award of a DD. The third objection revolved around the fact that there was no Dean of Faculty. They argued that the Dean with his assessors was the only person who could judge what was within their authority and since they didn't have one and couldn't elect one before the 26<sup>th</sup> of the month it was impossible to proceed.

Their final objections got to the heart of the matter. First of all it was a simple question of subscription:

The only test of the Candidates orthodoxy and that he holds no opinion in matters of Divinity *contra fidem* must be his signing our confession of Faith established in this Church ratified by Acts of Parliament, and by which we ourselves are all bound. And however lightly some may be pleased either to speak or think of this our confession of Faith we own it is what we think neither ought nor can be dispensed with by us in creating any man Doctor of Divinity.

For a divinity school within a church that set subscription at the heart of their existence the objectors would appear to have a strong point. Not only that, in the person of James Kirkpatrick, they had someone whose opposition to such a standpoint was undeniable. They emphasised this in their final point:

It being too well known that the Reverend Mr James Kirkpatrick (for whom we have otherwise the justest regard) is considered both in this Church and among the Presbyterian dissenters in Ireland as one of the chief promoters of an Opinion against all Confessions of Faith conceived in words of humane composure such as our established confession plainly

is; and that generally those who pretend scruples against such human composures have not only acted contrary to the known principles and practice of Christians in all ages but in effect throw open a door at which the grossest Heereticks may enter to the great Scandal and detriment of our holy Religion: Therefor it were very improper for this Society to do any thing that might so much as seem to infer their not mistaking this opinion so publicly owned by him; and at the same time could not but disoblige the far greater part of the Presbyterians in Ireland and lay them under the temptation of sending their sons and friends to other Colleges where no such opinion is countenanced.

But this was the record of a minority view, the rest of the Faculty did not accept their arguments. At the end of the meeting Kirkpatrick was asked to give a discourse at their next meeting, in three days time, on the subject *de veritate & Prestantia religionis Christianae* (of the truth and excellence of the Christian religion).<sup>66</sup> It may be almost certainly just a coincidence but the English translation of the subject given to Kirkpatrick is an echo of the title of a book<sup>67</sup> published just the year before by James Foster (1697-1753)<sup>68</sup> an English General Baptist minister turned Independent. His book was a notable reply to Matthew Tindal's deistical *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. However, Foster was involved in the Exeter controversy from the start, his sympathies being with the non-subscribers, but he seems also to have openly expressed Arian views and when he later became a minister in London he was one of the few to allow Thomas Emlyn into his pulpit.

Nevertheless, the title given to Kirkpatrick was one that invited a general exposition of reformed apologetics and at the subsequent meeting on 8 June

Mr Kirkpatrick delivered a discourse upon the subject appointed to him, defended his Thesis; to the satisfaction of this meeting, and he was unanimously approved, upon which it was resolved to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and a Diploma was ordered accordingly.

There were eight members present, none of the objectors attended the meeting. Present were John Orr, Rector, Neil Campbell, Principal, John Simson,

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<sup>66</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 5 June 1732, 18-20, GUA 26639.

<sup>67</sup> James Foster, *The usefulness, truth, and excellency of the Christian revelation defended against the objections contain'd in a late book, intituled, Christianity as old as the creation, &c*, (London 1731). Glasgow University Library has a copy of the second edition also of 1731.

<sup>68</sup> Leslie Stephen, 'Foster, James', rev. Jim Benedict, *ODNB*, article/9958.



professor of divinity, Alexander Dunlop, professor of Greek, Andrew Rosse, professor of humanity, John Johnstoun, professor of medicine, Thomas Brisbane, professor of anatomy and Francis Hutcheson professor of moral philosophy.<sup>69</sup> Although some years had passed since the height of the subscription controversy in Ireland it was still remarkable that Glasgow should honour the leading non-subscriber in this way. Other non-subscribers certainly were awarded the degree of DD by Glasgow over the years, including Samuel Eaton of Nottingham (1738), Henry Winder of Liverpool (1740), Samuel Clarke of St Albans (1745), James Duchal of Dublin (1753) and John Taylor of Norwich (1756). The award of a DD to William Wishart, Glasgow's former Dean of faculty and the sole supporter of John Simson in the Presbytery of Glasgow, on his removal to the Scots congregation in London in 1730 can also be seen as an affirmation of a similar outlook.<sup>70</sup> It is true also that Edinburgh University was prepared to award the degree of doctor of divinity to non-subscribing divines, indeed the honouring of Jabez Earle, John Evans, Isaac Watts and Charles Owen in 1728, Jeremiah Hunt and Samuel Wright in 1729 and Benjamin Grosvenor in 1730<sup>71</sup> is sometimes seen as a public recognition of some of the leading figures of non-subscription by Edinburgh and an assertion of academic independence at a time when it would have been very impolitic of Glasgow to do the same following the suspension of John Simson. It is unlikely that Glasgow would have honoured James Kirkpatrick in this way had Francis Hutcheson, with his close connections to the Belfast non-subscribers and sympathies with their outlook not been appointed, but it has to be seen as a very clear signal of their continuing openness to all branches of the Presbyterian church, even after the formal divisions over non-subscription.<sup>72</sup>

For all the Scottish Universities the award of honorary degrees was in part a way of cementing links that would ensure a supply of students, this had been the case since the early competition over the right to honour Williams and

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<sup>69</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 5 June 1732, 20-21, GUA 26639. Register of Diplomas, GUA 21320.

<sup>70</sup> Register of Diplomas, GUA 21320.

<sup>71</sup> *Catalogue of the Graduates of...Edinburgh*, 239-240.

<sup>72</sup> We should note that Kirkpatrick's DD was not honorary but earned after oral examination. Similarly the DD given by Edinburgh to Caleb Rotheram in 1743 was awarded upon submission of a thesis.

Calamy.<sup>73</sup> What is clear is that the award of a DD to James Kirkpatrick did not have a detrimental effect on the supply to Glasgow of students from Ireland. It is very clear from Hutcheson's correspondence with Thomas Drennan that there was still a plentiful number of students travelling across from Ulster to Glasgow despite his non-subscribing sympathies and his closest links there being with the non-subscribing party. Immediately on his appointment Hutcheson brought eighteen or twenty of his Dublin students with him and his carriage and approach to discipline soon won over any who were suspicious of him, including Robert Wodrow.<sup>74</sup> His reputation was such that he remained a positive attraction for students from Ireland.

Hutcheson was also very well connected with the established church in Ireland. He had been encouraged to accept a living in the Church of Ireland at one point, but resisted this temptation yet remained on good terms with many Episcopalians. In June 1734 he was able to present to the University a deed of mortification for £250 from the Archbishop of Armagh which acknowledged the importance of Glasgow as a centre of Protestantism within the British Isles. The Archbishop stated that

being well informed that the University of Glasgow in which many students from England and Ireland are educated is not sufficiently provided with funds to support proper persons to take care of the University and College libraries, and that there are not proper funds for the maintenance of such students from England or Ireland as are of a good Genius but in low worldly circumstances, in the prosecution of their studies a sufficient time in the said University: Out of our hearty inclination to promote Literature and our Charitable disposition toward all protestant universities, have resolved to Give...Two Hundred and fifty pounds Sterling.

This fund was open to students from England and Ireland and was not confined to members of the established churches of England and Ireland but was also awarded to dissenters.<sup>75</sup> The records show that many of the recipients of the

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<sup>73</sup> For a list of some of the English dissenting ministers who were awarded Doctor's degrees in the eighteenth century see Nicholas Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century*, (London 1951), 247.

<sup>74</sup> Wodrow, *Analecta*, 4, 185, 190-1.

<sup>75</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 26 June 1734, 47-50, GUA 26639.



Armagh bursary were Presbyterians, and some of them had non-subscribing sympathies particularly later in the century. However, the most notable early example of an Irish non-subscriber being given this bursary came in the person of Samuel Bruce (1722-1767). A member of a family who produced Presbyterian ministers in six successive generations, many of them prominent non-subscribers, Samuel was the son of Michael Bruce, minister at Holywood and an original member of the Belfast Society. The Bruces were closely connected to Francis Hutcheson by ties of friendship and kinship, Michael Bruce's father being Hutcheson's uncle. Samuel Bruce graduated from Glasgow in 1740 and was awarded the Archbishop of Armagh's Bursary in November of the same year.<sup>76</sup> He was licensed by the Presbytery of Antrim and probably privately ordained by them as well but became assistant to James Duchal, who had a high regard for him, at the Wood Street congregation in Dublin following a call he received from them in 1747.<sup>77</sup>

Hutcheson was adept at finding new sources of income for the University. In 1737 James Kirkpatrick sent £10 to Hutcheson, no doubt in recognition of the degree he had been awarded in 1732, which the faculty agreed should be put towards the new library.<sup>78</sup> In the following year when Samuel Eaton, the minister of the Presbyterian congregation in Nottingham, was given the degree of DD he sent £20 which was divided equally between the new library and the principal and professor of divinity.<sup>79</sup>

The death of John Simson on 2 February 1740<sup>80</sup> created an important new vacancy in Glasgow. It was filled by a surprising choice for the post, Michael Potter (1668-1743), minister at Kippen. The members of the faculty met on 20 March 1740 to appoint a successor and elected Potter "by plurality of votes".<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 4 April 1740, 142, GUA 26639. *Matriculation Albums*, 18.

<sup>77</sup> James Duchal, Dublin to Thomas Drennan, 5 June 1746, PRONI D/1759/3B/6 MIC/637REEL 9. James Duchal, Dublin to Thomas Drennan, 4 February 1747/8, PRONI D/1759/3B/6 MIC/637REEL 10. Classon Porter, *The Seven Bruces. Presbyterian Ministers in Ireland in Six Successive Generations*, (Belfast 1885, reprinted Ballymena 2005), 35.

<sup>78</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 24 May 1737, 99, GUA 26639.

<sup>79</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 26 June 1738, 109, GUA 26639.

<sup>80</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 4 March 1740, 133, GUA 26639.

<sup>81</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 20 March 1740, 134, GUA 26639.



There were thirteen voting members present and at the next meeting no fewer than five of those who had been present, including the principal, recorded their opposition to the election of Potter and expressed their support for the defeated candidate, John MacLaurin (1693-1754).<sup>82</sup> William Forbes was the first to record his protest and he was joined by Neil Campbell, John Johnstoun, Robert Dick and Andrew Rosse. Forbes observed that he knew that MacLaurin was a fit and qualified person to be professor of divinity but “knows no more of the Reverend Mr Michael Potter...than that he is minister of Kippen and is said to be some years above sixty”. The principal noted that “he cannot find any two or three of the masters that can from their own personal acquaintance give any satisfying Account of Mr Potters sufficiency.”<sup>83</sup> Certainly Potter seems a less than obvious choice, he did not have a high profile or any obvious academic attainments.<sup>84</sup> By contrast MacLaurin was the brother of Colin MacLaurin, the noted mathematician, and was himself a Glasgow graduate who had studied divinity at the University before becoming minister of the Ramshorn Church in Glasgow in 1723.<sup>85</sup> In fact MacLaurin had commenced his divinity studies in the same class as Francis Hutcheson but unlike him held views which were orthodox and strongly evangelical. Shortly to be closely involved with the revivals at Cambuslang MacLaurin had been a member of the Presbytery of Glasgow which had pursued John Simson for heresy.<sup>86</sup> It seems hard to avoid the conclusion that Potter was simply a means of preventing MacLaurin from taking the post left by Simson’s death. However, he was not simply a stop-gap, while a different candidate was prepared for the post, at least not for Hutcheson, as some have suggested.<sup>87</sup> Although over sixty no one could have predicted his sudden death in November 1743 and the candidate whom Hutcheson was subsequently to promote towards the professorship was someone he had been encouraging to travel in quite a different direction. In any case in thanking Thomas Steward for sending some sermons for him to peruse in February 1740 Hutcheson revealed

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<sup>82</sup> Richard B. Sher, ‘MacLaurin, John’, *ODNB*, article/17644.

<sup>83</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 4 April 1740, 135-6, GUA 26639.

<sup>84</sup> Reid, *Divinity Professors*, 241-2.

<sup>85</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 47, 190, 252.

<sup>86</sup> Skoczylas, *Mr Simson’s Knotty Case*, 259, 264-5.

<sup>87</sup> Thomas D. Kennedy, ‘William Leechman, Pulpit Eloquence and the Glasgow Enlightenment’ in Andrew Hook and Richard B. Sher (eds.) *The Glasgow Enlightenment*, (East Lothian 1997), 56.



not only his uncertainty about who should succeed John Simson but his approach to his work in Glasgow:

Since my settlement in their College, I have had an agreeable, & I hope not an useless life; pretty much hurried with study & business, but such as is not unpleasant. I hope I am contributing to promote the more moderate & charitable sentiments in religious matters, in this country; where yet there remains too much warmth & Animosity about matters of no great consequence to real Religion. We must make allowances for the power of education in all places and have indulgence to the weaknesses of our Brethren. It will always give me pleasure to hear of your welfare. Our poor old Professor of Theology died about 10 days ago. I am in much fear about getting a good successor to him, and wholly uncertain upon whom our choice shall fall.<sup>88</sup>

However, there is evidence that Hutcheson attempted to promote the candidature of William Craig (1709-1784)<sup>89</sup> at this point. A letter from William Bruce to Hutcheson shows that sometime in February Hutcheson had encouraged Craig to stand against MacLaurin, apparently without success.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, by the time of Potter's death he did have an even stronger idea of who should succeed to that post. William Leechman (1706-1785) was born in Dolphintone, Lanarkshire and educated in Edinburgh under William Hamilton. Living close to Glasgow as a tutor to the Mure family of Caldwell, Renfrewshire, from 1727 onwards Leechman was able to attend lectures in Glasgow University and became acquainted with Hutcheson when he became professor. In 1736 he was presented to the parish of Beith and established a reputation as a leading figure within what would come to be called the 'moderate' side of the Church of Scotland.<sup>91</sup> The similarity in thinking between the non-subscribers and the moderates can be seen in Leechman's moderatorial sermon preached before the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr in 1741 when he outlined "the principles of true Christian moderation":

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<sup>88</sup> Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow to Thomas Steward, 12 February 1740. MS/46/73, Magee College, UU.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas Davidson Kennedy, 'Craig, William', *ODNB*, article/64367.

<sup>90</sup> William Bruce to Francis Hutcheson, 1 March 1740. NLS MS 9252, fols. 153-4. I am grateful to Professor M.A. Stewart for this reference.

<sup>91</sup> William Leechman, *Sermons by William Leechman, DD. Late Principal of the College of Glasgow. To which is prefixed some account of the author's life, and of his lectures, by James Wodrow, DD, Minister at Stevenston*, (2 vols.), (London 1789), 1, 1-95.



When we observe others differing from us in opinion about lesser points; or even, as it appears to us, erring from the truth in more important matters, it will immediately occur to us, we are all in a state of much remaining darkness, and liable to mistakes and errors equally with them. If we revolve this one thought in our minds with due attention, it can scarce fail to soften our hearts, and move us rather with pity than passion and bitterness. Real love and affectionate sympathy, arising from just views of human nature, will naturally lead us to reflect on all that vast variety of circumstances, which may prevail on honest and worthy minds, to embrace opinions widely different from those which we have espous'd; and consequently inspire us with an abhorrence of the unchristian practice of representing their mistakes and designs, as worse than they really are, and of judging harshly about their state in another world, and desiring or endeavouring to expose them to ill-usage in this.<sup>92</sup>

This rational and humane approach was also visible in his sermon published in 1743 on *The Nature, Reasonableness, and Advantages of Prayer*. For Leechman the design of prayer was not to alter God's affections: "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."<sup>93</sup> Such opinions were to make him the centre of controversy before long. In the meantime, in the summer of 1743, Hutcheson was busy trying to persuade Leechman to accept a pulpit in Belfast. Although historians have sometimes noted the fact that Hutcheson was encouraging Leechman to go to his homeland just a short time before the chair of divinity became vacant in Glasgow again they seldom notice the identity of this congregation. At some point in 1743 James Kirkpatrick died. He had been minister of the second Presbyterian congregation for around thirty-seven years and was the acknowledged leader of the non-subscribers not only in Belfast, but, especially since the removal of Abernethy to Dublin in 1730, in the north of Ireland. It was this congregation that Hutcheson was active in trying to help achieve a smooth succession to a suitable candidate for their ministry. He selected his friend William Leechman as the most appropriate candidate for the post and must have presented his credentials to the congregation since he told Thomas Drennan in August 1743 that he had received two letters from "Mr [Daniel] Mussenden," the prominent Belfast merchant and banker who was a

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<sup>92</sup> William Leechman, *The Temper, Character, and Duty of a Minister of the Gospel. A Sermon Preached before the Synod of Glasgow and Air, At Glasgow, April 7th, 1741*, third edition, (Glasgow 1742), 19.

<sup>93</sup> William Leechman, *The Nature, Reasonableness, and Advantages of Prayer. With an Attempt to answer the Objections against it*, second edition, (Glasgow 1743), 17.



leading member of the second congregation. One of the letters he had received “about 5 weeks ago” was an invitation for Leechman to succeed Kirkpatrick. This invitation followed the visit of a deputation from the congregation that travelled to Beith to see him. Apparently Leechman had declined this offer because he had just got married.<sup>94</sup> His wife’s attitude seemed to be a key factor in making a decision about a possible move to Belfast, but although Leechman had initially declined the offer Hutcheson was keen to persevere in encouraging him to go to the second congregation. Since receiving and declining the offer Hutcheson reported that he had had some ill-treatment, possibly a reference to the response to his *Nature, Reasonableness, and Advantages of Prayer* which was published in May 1743. But Hutcheson was keen to push his candidature with Drennan, the minister of the sister and neighbouring first church, telling him

You never knew a better sweeter man, of excellent literature, &, except his air, and a little roughness of voice, the best preacher imaginable. You could not get a greater blessing among you of that kind. As I have heard nothing from other Hands, I want fuller information. Are the people generally hearty for Leechman upon the Character they hear? Is there no other worthy man on the field? Unless these points are cleared he will take no steps.

Hutcheson was famously dismissive of Leechman’s congregation of Beith, describing it as an “obscure hole” where he had to preach “to a pack of horse-copers and smugglers of the rudest sort”.<sup>95</sup> But the main impetus to Hutcheson for getting Leechman to move was to see the pulpit of one of the most important non-subscribing congregations in Ireland filled by a suitable candidate. Over the next month he was busily occupied with this task and received a letter from Drennan via James Blow (1676-1759)<sup>96</sup> the Belfast printer, as well as letters from two non-subscribing minister, John Mears and James Duchal, all urging a settlement for Leechman in Belfast. It began to look unlikely that such a settlement could be made:

’Tis very difficult to persuade a modest worthy man who is tolerably settled, to adventure upon a new scene of affairs among strangers. I shall

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<sup>94</sup> *William Leechman... by James Wodrow*, 18.

<sup>95</sup> Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow to Thomas Drennan, 5 August 1743, GUL MS Gen 1018/12.

<sup>96</sup> Anthony S. Drennan, ‘Blow, James’, *ODNB*, article/2703.

use my utmost endeavours to prevail upon him, as I have been doing for some time past. I am sorry I cannot give you great hopes of success; but I don't yet so despair as to quit solicitation, as he is exceedingly moved with the affection and generosity of that people.<sup>97</sup>

By the end of October Hutcheson had to tell Drennan that he had not been able to persuade Leechman to move to Belfast. It appears that his own and his wife's relations had eventually prevailed upon him not to go "to such a kind and generous people":

His wifes friends as [we]ll as his own urged much that he should not go with a view to settle for a life in Belfast. For my own part I would prefer Belfast to either Edinburgh or Glasgow, unless one had many sons disposed to be scholars. I am heartily sorry you're all disappointed.<sup>98</sup>

But this disappointment for the congregation in Belfast came at what was to be a fortuitous time for Hutcheson and Leechman. Within a month of this letter Michael Potter was dead and Hutcheson was keen to move Leechman to the professorship. He told Drennan:

I have been these ten days in great hurry and perplexity, as I have for that time foreseen the Death of our Professor, who died last Wednesday: and some of my Collegues join me in labouring for Mr Leechman to succeed. We are not yet certain of the event but have good hopes. If he succeeds it will put a new face upon Theology in Scotland.<sup>99</sup>

So, in the space of a month, the minister who was being encouraged to take the leading position amongst the non-subscribers in Ireland, could become a potential candidate for the chair of divinity in Glasgow, one who could put a new face upon theology in Scotland.

At the end of November the Faculty set 13 December as the date for electing a new professor, although, as Hutcheson indicated in his letter to Drennan, this was not straightforward.<sup>100</sup> When it came to a vote Leechman was

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<sup>97</sup> Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow to Thomas Drennan, 20 September 1743, GUL MS Gen 1018/13.

<sup>98</sup> Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow to Thomas Drennan, 29 October 1743, GUL MS Gen 1018/14.

<sup>99</sup> Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow to Thomas Drennan, undated [November 1743], GUL MS Gen 1018/15.

<sup>100</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 29 November 1743, 166, GUA 26639.



narrowly elected in a straight contest, his opponent being John MacLaurin. Leechman's progress to the chair was smoothed by the withdrawal from the contest before the vote of his and Hutcheson's friend William Craig.<sup>101</sup> On the day of the election there were thirteen present and as soon as the vote had been taken the Principal, supported by Loudon, Forbes, Johnstoun, Dick and Anderson all recorded their dissent from the choice made. In addition William Anderson also made a protest that the "pretended election" was illegal because it was only carried by the casting vote of the rector who, Anderson argued, did not have the right to vote in an election for the divinity professor. He based his argument on the rather abstruse fact that the salary of the professor of divinity was supported by the subdeanery of Glasgow and this was governed by royal charter which granted authority only to the principal and professors. The principal, Loudon, Johnstoun and Dick all added their names to Anderson's challenge to the legality of the election. Against this Alexander Dunlop issued a counter-protest to disregard Anderson's protest and this was supported by the Rector (George Bogle), Charles Morthland, Robert Simson, Francis Hutcheson, Andrew Rosse and Robert Hamilton. In addition the Rector asserted his "undoubted right" to participate in the election. But despite the disagreements, the meeting still appointed Dunlop, Simson, and Hutcheson "to draw up reasons for loosing Mr Leechman from his charge" at Beith.<sup>102</sup>

A list of reasons was drawn up and Hutcheson and Hamilton subsequently attended the Presbytery of Irvine where Leechman – who had written a letter accepting the post - was loosed from his charge.<sup>103</sup> But all was far from plain sailing. Leechman was summoned to a University meeting to enquire if he had signed the Confession of Faith. He confirmed that he had signed the Confession, according to the law, at both his licensing and his ordination at Beith. He had accordingly gone along to the Presbytery of Glasgow where he waited "both in the forenoon and afternoon and desired to be allowed to sign the Confession of faith in their Books as by Law he was ordained to." But both in the

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<sup>101</sup> *William Leechman...* by James Wodrow, 19-20.

<sup>102</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 13 December 1743, 166-170, GUA 26639.

<sup>103</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 20 December 1743, 171; 5 January 1744, 172, GUA 26639.

morning and afternoon the presbytery had refused to allow him to sign the Confession. Leechman had “protested and took instruments” and brought his protest to the University who recorded in their minute book the protest made to the Presbytery:

Having produced before the Revd Presbytery An Extract of an Act of the University of Glasgow electing him to be Professor of Divinity and an Extract of the Act of the Presbytery of Irvin loosing him from the Parish of Beith and the Reverend Presbytery of Glasgow having by their Act this day refused to admit him to sign the said Confession of Faith He did therefore Protest that the said refusal was contrary to Law and that his not signing the Confession of Faith was thro’ no default of his And that therefore he should be held and reputed in all respects as if he had actually signed the same And further declared that he was willing to sign the said Confession of Faith at any other Presbytery when lawfully called thereto<sup>104</sup>

So a situation had developed where a Church of Scotland minister had, within the space of a month, considered an appointment as minister of an Irish Presbyterian church where subscription would not be required but had instead been appointed Professor of Divinity in Glasgow where subscription was legally required yet this was denied to him by the presbytery.

Hutcheson thought they had secured “a Right Professor of Theology, the only thorough right one in Scotland” and observed to Drennan that it had caused “the furious indignation of our zealots.”<sup>105</sup> Despite the refusal of the Presbytery of Glasgow to allow him to sign the Confession the faculty voted that Leechman be admitted as professor. The principal, Anderson, Loudoun and Dick all entered their protests against him on the remarkable grounds that “no Evidence is produced of his having signed the Confession of Faith according to Law,” but on 12 January 1744 Leechman was formally admitted as professor.<sup>106</sup> There was still a prolonged series of enquiries though as the matter was taken through the Presbytery, the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr and finally the General Assembly of

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<sup>104</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 11 January 1744, 173-5, GUA 26639.

<sup>105</sup> Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow to Thomas Drennan, undated [1744], GUL MS Gen 1018/17. Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow to Thomas Drennan, 20 February 1744, GUL MS Gen 1018/16.

<sup>106</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 11 January 1744, 175-6, GUA 26639. Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 12 January 1744, 177, GUA 26639.



1744.<sup>107</sup> His opponents in the Presbytery had widened the attack by claiming that his sermon on prayer “represents Prayer, as an absurd and unreasonable, nay as an impious and blasphemous Practice.” However, having heard all the parties involved the general assembly eventually declared that “the Professor has given abundant Satisfaction concerning the Orthodoxy of his Sentiments.”<sup>108</sup>

In his correspondence with English non-subscribing ministers such as George Benson Leechman was very open about the pressures he was under. With George Benson he was on friendly terms and sent him his sermons to proof read before publication. Writing to him in March 1744 he told Benson of the short amount of time he had to prepare for being professor as well as his heavy workload caused by teaching commitments. In addition:

I am involved in another Troublesome affair, by the Bigottry of the Clergy in the Presbytery of Glasgow. The Sermon on Prayer has given them great offence, they have appointed a Committee of their Number to examine it, & compare it with the Confession of Faith, the Touchstone of orthodoxy: As they have the Strongest Inclination to find it unsound they will Employ all their acuteness & Metaphysicks, to extract Heresy out of it: Tho' I am not affraid of any hurtful Consequences in the Event, yet I will be put to the trouble of defending it thro' the whole tedious Course of our Ecclesiastical Courts: I don't beleive it is possible for one in your Situation to imagine to what hight bigottry & Nonsense in Religion prevails in this Country, especially in this part of it: There is not one Man in the Presbytery of Glasgow, with whom I can use any freedom in discoursing on Religion or from whom I can expect freindship in the present affair, except one intimate Companion, who is quite disregarded by the Rest of them. From this View of my present Situation, you may easily perceive, how difficult a task it must be to teach pure and genuine Christianity, & at the same not to expose my self to the fury of Bigots: There is the utmost care taken to watch every word pronounced by me: The Zealots have always some Secret Spies among the Students to give the proper Information of what is taught on every Subject.<sup>109</sup>

In many ways the situation had changed very little from the time that Simson first came under attack as professor thirty years before. Academics,

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<sup>107</sup> Minutes of University of Glasgow Meetings (vol 27), 8 May 1744, 182, GUA 26639.

<sup>108</sup> *The principal acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, convened at Edinburgh the 10th day of May, 1744*, (Edinburgh 1744), 12, 14.

<sup>109</sup> William Leechman, Glasgow to George Benson, 9 March 1744. UCC Benson Collection V [B1 13] JRUL, 116. I am grateful to Dr David Wykes for supplying me with this reference. The “one intimate Companion” mentioned in the letter is William Craig.



trained in a tradition of intellectual enquiry that was willing to weigh up contrary arguments sat uneasily in a church where many ministers and lay people expected and demanded only an assertion of certainty. Leechman's own teaching methods were described as giving both sides in the great controversies that had divided Christians:

justice was done to both parties, not only in this representation of their opinions, with the grounds of them, but also by admitting their disavowal of the absurd and dangerous consequences charged on each by their antagonists and exhibiting the important points of christianity mutually acknowledged by both.

After all, the question remained undecided: that is, the hearers were left entirely to the exercise of their own judgment, and directed to the means of further enquiry. No dictatorial opinion, no infallible or decisive judgment on any great controverted point, was ever delivered from that theological chair.

At the end of every session Leechman encouraged his students to use "modesty and caution in forming their judgments [and] advised them long to retain the character of enquiry, and to keep their minds open to new light and evidence from every corner."<sup>110</sup> Such theologians found more empathy within the circle of those clergy who belonged to variants of Presbyterianism which discarded subscription, with those who followed Abernethy in his plea to "Let every man be fully convinced in his own mind". Shortly before his death Hutcheson told Drennan that he "would as soon speak to the Roman conclave as to our Presbytery."<sup>111</sup> But despite the pressures on those who tended towards more liberal minded interpretations of theology in Scotland, and despite the tightly fastened centrality of the Westminster Confession to the Scottish Church, Glasgow still remained a central feature of the nexus of connection between New Light and non-subscribing ministers all over the British Isles. In many ways the appointment of Leechman represents the high point for non-subscription. Despite the heavy pressures which were exerted on the Faculty in Glasgow they had again appointed someone who was strongly in sympathy with the non-subscribing movement all over the country. Because of this Glasgow remained for some decades a key part of this stream of thought and approach to

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<sup>110</sup> *William Leechman... by James Wodrow*, 33-4, 34-5.

<sup>111</sup> Francis Hutcheson, Glasgow to Thomas Drennan, 16 April 1746, GUL MS Gen 1018/21.



ecclesiastical authority. Although it was not to be prolonged, by 1743, with the appointment of Leechman, the non-subscribing party had achieved a predominant position across the United Kingdom. In England the non-subscribers had won the debates within the dissenting community, while in Ireland although they had lost the battles within the General Synod, in many ways the argument had still been won and instead of vanishing non-subscription actually became more common within the wider Presbyterian church after the expulsion of the Presbytery of Antrim.

## Conclusion

**“for every Christian has an equal Right of Conscience and private Judgment”**

The period from the start of the eighteenth century to the 1740s was one in which New Light and non-subscribing views spread amongst Presbyterians throughout the three kingdoms. Glasgow lay at the heart of the connections that allowed these ideas to spread and the experience of the Union, building on the shared sense of appreciation of the Revolution of 1688, encouraged these views, despite the increasingly central formal place of the Confession in Scotland at the same time. The battle was not over theological unorthodoxy, at least not over the question of the Trinity, but was concerned with authority, reason and private judgement. This was closely allied too with the question of academic freedom, particularly with the right of a divinity faculty professor to teach without interference from the local presbytery. The teaching at Glasgow did not promote unorthodox theological views, and the numbers of divinity students who left Glasgow to enter the ministry across Scotland without any suggestion of heresy or reluctance to sign the Confession is proof of this. But, by the same token, Glasgow did not close its doors to those who were against subscription. Non-subscribers could attend Glasgow on equal terms with subscribers. This process continued throughout the century, after the appointment of William Leechman, an event which really stands as the high point for non-subscription within Britain and Ireland.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to consider the situation much beyond the appointment of William Leechman as Professor of Divinity but it is worth noting his place as a key link with the non-subscribing communities in England and Ireland. We have already seen how an alternative career as a non-subscribing minister in Belfast had been suggested to him but he clearly shared in many of the theological assumptions held by non-subscribers and had many close links with them. As his former student Alexander Carlyle later observed

What Dr Leechman wanted in the talent for conversation was fully compensated by his ability as a Professor, for in the chair he shone with great lustre. It was owing to Hutcheson and him that a new school was formed in the western provinces of Scotland, where the clergy till that



period were narrow and bigoted, and had never ventured to range in their mind beyond the bounds of strict orthodoxy. For though neither of these professors ever taught any heresy, yet they opened and enlarged the minds of the students, which soon gave them a turn for free inquiry; the result of which was, candour and liberality of sentiment.<sup>1</sup>

In Leechman's time "the Divinity Hall at Glasgow...was crowded with a greater number of scholars than any other in Scotland...including young men from England and Ireland as well as Scots,"<sup>2</sup> and Leechman also enjoyed close relations with leading English dissenters, particularly non-subscribers.

By the middle of the eighteenth century non-subscription was in a surprisingly dominant position. It had become the basic approach of the Presbyterians in England, originally the largest group of dissenters in the country but by the later part of the century no longer numerically dominant but well entrenched and often growing within commercial and mercantile communities in most English towns.<sup>3</sup> Despite the legislation attempting to exclude them from civic and political life they nevertheless often had a remarkable degree of influence in their own localities. So, for instance, the seat holders of the new chapel built in Liverpool in 1727 during the ministry of Henry Winder (one of two Presbyterian chapels in the town) contained five men who were to become Mayor of Liverpool and one alderman.<sup>4</sup>

Because so many accounts of English Presbyterian history have been written from the perspective of nineteenth and twentieth century confessional standpoints, generally either Unitarian or Evangelical, the extent of the dominance of non-subscription within Presbyterianism, and even of the continuation of a vibrant Presbyterian denomination, throughout the rest of the eighteenth century has often been overlooked. Yet from the middle of the century onwards Presbyterianism – under the guidance often of Glasgow graduates – was a denomination defined, not by Arianism or theological heterodoxy but by non-subscription. It was an approach to Christianity that stood in stark contrast to the

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<sup>1</sup> John Hill Burton (ed.), *Autobiography of Dr Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk*, (London 1910), 93-4.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in McLachlan, *English Education*, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People England 1727-1783*, (Oxford 1989), 73-4.

<sup>4</sup> Holt, *Walking Together*, 111.

enthusiasm of Methodism, it continued to have affinities with the latitudinarian and anti-subscriptionist wing of the Church of England but was far from the withering failure or anti-trinitarian rump that is sometimes asserted. John Taylor was the most prominent leader of Presbyterianism in England in the middle years of the century. As we have seen he was one of four dissenting clergyman born at about the same time all in north Lancashire or Cumberland who came to have significant influence on the development of dissent. Three of them had close Glasgow links, although Taylor's came later in life when he was awarded the DD in 1756. However, prior to this he established a close friendship with William Leechman. The two seem only to have met once, in the summer of 1759 when Leechman travelled to Warrington to stay with Taylor on the way back from a visit south made primarily for health reasons, but they had corresponded for a long time and recognised in each other something of a kindred spirit.<sup>5</sup>

Taylor spent seventeen years in ministerial obscurity as he devoted himself to study. He was ordained as minister of the small Presbyterian chapel at Kirkstead in Lincolnshire in 1716, without any form of subscription but promising that "I will in a manner consistent with Christian love and charity, maintain the truths of the Gospel, especially such as are beyond controversy determined in the Holy Scriptures."<sup>6</sup> This commitment to discovering the 'scripture doctrine' was to be the characteristic approach of the majority of his published works, although the great bulk of these did not appear until after 1733 when he became minister of the main Presbyterian congregation in Norwich. Although he shared an Arminian theology with John Wesley, Taylor's more rational approach was the opposite of Wesley's evangelicalism. This was something that Wesley was aware of and told him:

Either I or you mistake the whole of Christianity from the beginning to the end! Either my scheme or yours is as contrary to the scriptural as the Koran is. Is it mine, or yours? Yours has gone through all England and made numerous converts. I attack it from end to end.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> William Leechman, *Sermons*, 72-3.

<sup>6</sup> T.S. James, *History of the Litigation*, 804.

<sup>7</sup> John Wesley to John Taylor, 3 July 1759 in John Telford (ed), *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, Standard Edition, 4, (London 1931), 67-8.



This letter was his response to Taylor's *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin* published in 1740. This was an openly Arminian refutation of the doctrine of original sin but, like Samuel Clarke's work on the Trinity, attempted to draw out the Scripture doctrine by careful and detailed study of the divine word. Indeed, according to tradition, on his arrival in Norwich he encouraged his congregation to read Clarke's book.<sup>8</sup> In 1756 his congregation opened an opulent new meeting house, a building which Wesley disparaged but which was an eloquent expression of their self-confidence and their status within the locality. Taylor's address at the opening of the Octagon Chapel gives the most clear expression of the non-subscribing understanding of English Presbyterianism at this time, an attempt to reduce all bonds of union to a minimum, based upon scriptural revelation:

We are Christians, and only Christian; a Name which in its original and true meaning includes all that is virtuous and amiable, just and good, noble and divine, excellent and heavenly...Christians is the honourable Name we wear, as a glorious Diadem upon our Heads, in Token of the Favour of the father of the Universe, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, independents, Baptists, Calvinists, Arminians, Arians, Trinitarians, and others, are Names of religious Distinctions. But, however we may commonly be ranked under any of these Divisions, we reject them all. We disown all Connection, excepting that of Love and Goodwill, with any Sect or Party whatsoever. We are a Society built and established, not upon any human Foundation, but only upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, of which Jesus Christ is the chief Corner-Stone. We are Christian, and only Christians. And we consider all our Fellow-Protestants of every Denomination in the same Light; only as Christians: and cordially embrace them all in Affection and Charity as such. Whatever peculiar Tenets they may hold, or in what respects soever they may differ from us, such Tenets and such Difference we consider not as affecting their Christian Character and Profession in general.<sup>9</sup>

Taylor was the most prominent English Presbyterian theologian of the mid-century and it was for his Hebrew Concordance that he was given the degree of DD by Glasgow University also in 1756. The Concordance was dedicated to

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<sup>8</sup> *A Sketch of the Life of The Late Dr John Taylor of Norwich (From "The Universal Theological Magazine &c" for July 1804), Corrected and enlarged 1813, 2 note 2, MS Taylor 16 HMCO.*

<sup>9</sup> John Taylor, *The Glory of any House erected for public Worship, and the true Principles, religious, civil and social of Protestant Dissenters. Represented in a Sermon Preached at the Opening of the New Chappel, in St. George's of Colgate, in Norwich. May the 12th. 1756,* (London 1756), 12-13.



the archbishops and bishops of England and Ireland and included an extensive list of subscribers containing twenty-two English bishops, fifteen Irish bishops and a host of prominent churchmen and dissenters from both England and Ireland. It is curious that the list includes none of the staff at Glasgow and in fact only two Scottish subscribers (William Wishart, the Principal at Edinburgh and his brother George) but its achievement was soon recognised by Glasgow with the award of the DD.<sup>10</sup>

Taylor was also centrally involved, although ultimately not very satisfactorily, in one of the main institutional ventures of Presbyterian dissent at this time, something that was strongly influenced by the long-standing interaction of dissenters with Glasgow. The establishment of the Warrington Academy in 1757 was produced by the same impetus that had proposed the setting up of an English dissenting college in Edinburgh at the start of the century. There is not space here to discuss the Warrington academy in any detail but we should note its importance as the first attempt to set up a dissenting academy in the manner of a university with its own building, library, scientific apparatus and variety of tutors who specialised in different fields.<sup>11</sup> It was also very much a part of the non-subscribing tradition in England.

The establishment of the Warrington academy was a notable achievement by dissenters in the north west. It marked the beginnings of a coalescence of elements into an organisational structure which, had they been successful in the longer term, might have translated into a way of sustaining a distinctive Presbyterian denomination founded on non-subscribing principles. Its leading promoter was John Seddon (1724-1770), himself a former student at Glasgow, and said to be a favourite student of Leechman and Hutcheson,<sup>12</sup> and John Taylor was called to be the first divinity tutor at Warrington. Unfortunately, what might have been a happy and effective collaboration soon turned sour because of a

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<sup>10</sup> John Taylor, *The Hebrew Concordance, adapted to the English Bible; disposed after the manner of Buxtorf*, 2 vols, (London 1754-7), 1; 4-15. Minutes of Faculty, 29 April 1756, 179, GUA 26640.

<sup>11</sup> G.A. Carter (ed.), *The Warrington Academy by Rev William Turner*, (Warrington [1812] reprinted 1857). H. McLachlan, *English Education*, 209-229. P. O'Brien, *Warrington Academy 1757-86 Its predecessors and successors*, (Wigan 1989).

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Seddon, John', rev. S. J. Skedd, article/25008. *Matriculation Albums*, 32.



combination of factors connected to personal and local disputes and the viability of the Warrington academy was damaged from the start.<sup>13</sup> The damage done to the Academy coupled, a few years later, with the promotion of the energetic uncompromisingly Unitarian theology of Joseph Priestley, who had been one of the first tutors at the academy, was to bring about the slow demise of non-subscription as a unifying principle for English Presbyterians. Although Glasgow still maintained the same relationship with the Unitarian successors of the English Presbyterians, by the end of the century, and increasingly in the nineteenth century, there was less of a shared theological approach between the two.

John Taylor died in 1761. The Warrington Academy continued until 1786, attracting a number of distinguished tutors to its staff, including a number who were Glasgow trained.<sup>14</sup> Over the period of its existence it attracted a total of 390 students. By far the largest proportion of these (107) came from Lancashire and the vast majority were English. Nevertheless there were also 28 students from Ireland and 15 from Scotland.<sup>15</sup> Its foundation followed the closure of the academies at Findern and Kendal and although established on a much more ambitious footing than anything had gone before it did not quite achieve the national predominance that it needed and, apart from in the north west, did not have any impact on English dissenters' use of Glasgow. In England there were also still other institutions that could be used for training. In Ireland, however, after the closure of the Killyleagh academy and then the Dublin academy of Francis Hutcheson in 1730 there were no academies until 1770 when the Rademon academy was founded and nothing providing a University-level education until 1785 when William Crawford (c.1739-1800),<sup>16</sup> a Glasgow graduate, founded the Strabané academy. This meant that Irish Presbyterians, both non-subscribers and subscribers, often had no choice other than to travel to Glasgow for most of the century.

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<sup>13</sup> Steers, 'English Presbyterianism', MPhil Thesis, 105-9.

<sup>14</sup> In addition to Seddon Warrington tutors who had been educated in Glasgow included Nicholas Clayton (1730-1797), George Walker (c.1734-1807), and John Holt (d.1772). *Matriculation Albums*, 47, 48. H. McLachlan, *English Education*, 219.

<sup>15</sup> Based on an examination of the information recorded in *The Inrollment of the Students in the Academy at Warrington opened October XXIV MDCCLVII*, MS Warrington 4, HMCO.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Crawford, William (1739/40-1800)', rev. I. R. McBride, article/6645.

Amongst Irish Presbyterians, after the initial divisions that concluded with the separation of the non-subscribers from the general assembly in 1726, differences became less heated and non-subscription actually became more prominent within the General Synod. What was intended as a complete severance of the non-subscribers actually proved to be no such thing. The wording of the overtures from the subscribing party and passed by the Synod excluded non-subscribers from “ministerial communion ...in Church Judicatories”<sup>17</sup> but it could not prevent ordinary ministerial fellowship nor anticipate the growing latitude within the General Synod which encouraged this. The immediate and unanimous decision of the Presbytery of Dublin and Presbytery of Munster in July 1726 to maintain fellowship with the northern non-subscribers was one factor in this tendency.<sup>18</sup> However, within just a few years of 1726 some of the presbyteries of the Synod were ceasing to report that their candidates for ordination had subscribed the confession. This was the case with Templepatrick in 1734 and in the following year the Synod apparently found that they did not have a formula of words for subscription in their minutes and had to insert a formula found in the presbytery of Armagh’s book: “I do believe the Westminster Confession of Faith to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, & therefore as such by this my subscription I do own the said as Confession of my faith.”<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, in 1743 the presbytery of Armagh appears to have installed the Rev James Moody – the new minister of Newry - without subscription, the presbytery subsequently dividing in half over the issue.<sup>20</sup>

But throughout this period the most liberal presbytery on this issue had long been the Presbytery of Killyleagh. It had been formed from the ‘moderate’ subscribers who had been disinclined to censure the non-subscribers. No doubt it was principally this group which Charles Masterton had in mind when he claimed that “the number of those in the synod who are for a strict adherence to

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<sup>17</sup> RGSU, 2, 105.

<sup>18</sup> *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Seven General Synods of the Northern Presbyterians in Ireland, with relation to their differences in Judgment and Practice from the Year 1720 to the Year 1726, in which they issu’d in a Synodical Breach. By the Ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim, in the North of Ireland, (Belfast 1727)*, 309-316.

<sup>19</sup> RGSU, 2, 202.

<sup>20</sup> RGSU, 2, 246, 289.



our confession as a term of communion seems to be but small; and a vast number are so carried off that they could make greater concessions to the non-subscribers than some of us can with peace yield unto.”<sup>21</sup> The Presbytery of Antrim might have been formally excluded from the ‘Church Judicatories’ but that did not prevent fellowship on other levels. On the death of James Kirkpatrick in 1743 the vacant pulpit of Belfast’s second congregation was eventually filled by Gilbert Kennedy. He was the son of the firm subscriber of the same name who had gone into print against Samuel Haliday.<sup>22</sup> The interest of “young Kennedy” in the pulpit had been noticed by Francis Hutcheson<sup>23</sup> and he did eventually accept a call from there in 1744. Gilbert Kennedy junior graduated from Glasgow in 1724 and commenced the study of divinity three years later.<sup>24</sup> He had been ordained in Lisburn in 1732 and subsequently became minister of Killyleagh but on his removal to the Belfast congregation in 1744, without subscription, he still retained his membership of the presbytery of Killyleagh. In 1763 he was made moderator of the General Synod and preached a sermon to the Synod which W.D. Killen described as proving

to what extent the largest section of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland had departed from its original principles. The allusions of the preacher to the great doctrines of the Gospel are most unsatisfactory and vague, and, throughout the whole sermon, Mr Kennedy apparently labours to fortify the minds of the assembled ministers against the fear of offending their orthodox congregations.<sup>25</sup>

But Kennedy’s career is evidence of the drawing together of the Synod and the Presbytery of Antrim. So also is the progress of the Seceders in Ulster whose initial appearance in the north of Ireland was linked to his old congregation. Kennedy left Lisburn after just a year in the face of opposition from a conservative element in his congregation who had asked the Synod to be included in a separate congregation.<sup>26</sup> The divisions did not heal in Lisburn,

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<sup>21</sup> Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 248 note 134.

<sup>22</sup> Gilbert Kennedy, *A Defence of the Principles and Conduct of the Reverend General Synod of Ulster. Being an answer to a pamphlet published by the Reverend Mr. Samuel Haliday*, (Belfast 1724).

<sup>23</sup> Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan, undated, GUL MS Gen 1018/15.

<sup>24</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 56, 222, 256.

<sup>25</sup> Reid (Killen), *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 3, 357-8.

<sup>26</sup> *RGSU*, 3, 172.



however, and in 1736 the Associate Presbytery received an application from a number of families.<sup>27</sup> The Seceders – with their Scottish roots in the hyper-Calvinism of the Marrow Men - became active in Ireland and because of the perceived uncertainty of the General Synod over doctrine were able to draw people away into their congregations. Within ten years of the expulsion of the Presbytery of Antrim there was plenty to cause dismay within the General Synod to the traditional Calvinist. The Rev George Cherry was the brother in law of Gilbert Kennedy junior. A graduate of Glasgow and former student of divinity in the University he had matriculated in Gershom Carmichael's class at the time of the unrest over the election of the Rector in 1717.<sup>28</sup> He later became minister at Clare in 1725.<sup>29</sup> In July 1736 he preached before the Synod of Armagh on the *Duty of a Minister to be a Pattern of Good Works*, and telling those present that:

Without Forbearance and Moderation the Peace of the Church can never be effectually secured. There are but two Ways proposed as far as I know, for obtaining that desirable End: either that there should be a perfect Unanimity amongst Christians in Matters of faith, or that they should forbear one another in Things of lesser Importance. The first of these is never to be expected while we are in our present imperfect State, where there are such different Capacities among Men, such various Ways of obtaining Knowledge, and such a vast Diversity of Prejudices, arising from Education and other Circumstances in which God in his infinite Wisdom and Goodness, hath thought fit to place us.<sup>30</sup>

It showed a great deal of affinity with the non-subscribers (and was published by non-subscribing booksellers in Dublin) and is illustrative of the theological trends within the General Synod. These trends were underlined by the first cautious considerations by the Synod in 1747 of moving to closer communion with the non-subscribers.<sup>31</sup> They were accelerated further by the establishment of the Widows' Fund in 1751 as a joint venture and by an invitation to the Presbytery of Antrim to send commissioners to Synod meetings which opened up discussions about a closer association between it and the Synod

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<sup>27</sup> David Stewart, *The Seceders in Ireland: with annals of their congregations*, (Belfast 1950), 54-64.

<sup>28</sup> *Munimenta*, 3, 54, 210, 255.

<sup>29</sup> W.D. Killen, *History of Congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, (Edinburgh 1886), 89.

<sup>30</sup> George Cherry, *The Duty of a Minister to be a Pattern of Good Works. A Sermon Preached before the Particular Synod of Ardmagh, on Tuesday, July 27. 1736*, (Dublin 1736), 18.

<sup>31</sup> *RGSU*, 3, 331, 338.



of Ulster.<sup>32</sup> By 1820 there were only five subscribing presbyteries out of a total of fourteen in the Synod of Ulster.<sup>33</sup>

George Cherry's sermon to the Synod of Armagh was typical of the practical advice that came to characterise New Light preaching. It was concerned with a religion that was useful and benevolent and as such held a great deal in common with the members of the Presbytery of Antrim, English Presbyterians and the kind of approach which was maintained by William Leechman. Despite the set back of the separation of the Antrim Presbytery in 1726 New Light opinions in Ireland were not isolated from mainstream opinion. Their influence extended and was bolstered by the ongoing interaction with the Scottish Universities particularly Glasgow. I.R. McBride can speak of this period as the 'Reign of the New Light' and rightly points out the social dominance of the New Light congregations in the north of Ireland, where the small number of New Light congregations were preponderant amongst the first ranks of congregations who received the *regium donum* according to the amount of stipend they paid.<sup>34</sup> However, from this it would be too simplistic to suggest that a successful capturing of a large proportion of the urban Presbyterian gentry necessarily resulted in a lack of appeal to the less educated and less well off. Certainly, although some congregations had been damaged by quite serious splits in the 1720s – most notably Antrim and Holywood – a congregation such as Downpatrick suffered no secessions and remained very large up to the time of the famine and beyond, and although there was a split in Belfast this did not impair the functioning of the first and second congregations, the first church continuing as a collegiate charge<sup>35</sup> throughout the eighteenth century.

The time from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards truly was the Reign of the New Light in both England and Ireland and in both countries this

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<sup>32</sup> RGSU, 3, 354, 362. James Duchal, Dublin to Thomas Drennan, 23 May 1754, PRONI D/1759/3B/6 MIC/637REEL 16.

<sup>33</sup> William McMillan, 'The Subscription Controversy in Irish Presbyterianism from the Plantation of Ulster to the Present Day: With Special Reference to Political Implications in the Late Eighteenth Century', MA Thesis, (University of Manchester 1959), 265.

<sup>34</sup> I.R. McBride, *Scripture Politics Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford 1998), 41-61.

<sup>35</sup> In other words employing more than one minister.

continued to be sustained by their relationship with Glasgow. In Scotland those with New Light leanings had to adopt a pragmatic approach, signing the Confession on the terms of its symbolic place as one of the cornerstones of Scottish church life along the lines described by William Dunlop. But just as an Irishman with strong non-subscribing sympathies such as Francis Hutcheson could easily adapt to Glasgow and the necessity of subscription, so the reverse could be true and ministers of the Church of Scotland could willingly work within a formally non-subscribing context. So in 1770 James Crombie (1730–1790)<sup>36</sup> was called to be the minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Belfast. He had been licensed by the Strathbogie presbytery in 1757 and ordained by the Elgin presbytery in 1760 according to all the formularies of the Church of Scotland. In 1770 he was called to the vacant pulpit of First Belfast, very probably on the recommendation of William Leechman, and consequently became minister of an Irish non-subscribing church. In Belfast he also established an academy just a year after William Crawford had established his in Strabane.

Crombie's appointment illustrates the final quiet triumph of the non-subscribers. It was not to be a permanent dominance or even a particularly long one yet it was the case that New Light thinking and non-subscription was evident across the British Isles. I.R. McBride suggests that "it is hard to avoid the impression that New Light influence was based partly on discretion, perhaps even deception,"<sup>37</sup> but it is the case that the leading advocates of New Light had followed the course of their reflections on the nature of scripture to their natural conclusions. Having thrown off the restrictions of the state or state church it was a small step to apply the same thinking to any requirements for subscription from within their own bodies. As James Kirkpatrick said in his final published work:

It is impossible, that the Synod's Right of Private Judgment can give them any Power or Authority to trample on the Rights of others; for every Christian has an equal Right of Conscience and private Judgment, with that of the General Council, for he has a Right to examine all their Decrees and Doctrines by the word of God, and to receive or reject them,

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<sup>36</sup> Alexander Gordon, 'Crombie, James', rev. A. D. G. Steers, *ODNB*, article/6748.

<sup>37</sup> I.R. McBride, *Scripture Politics*, 58.



as he shall find just cause, as they are agreeable or disagreeable to that perfect and only Rule of Faith. This is the only principle on which PROTESTANTISM can stand; for if you take it away, the REFORMATION falls with it.<sup>38</sup>

This accorded with the rational spirit of the times and it seems to have been the case that the leaders of this way of thinking considered the dangers that might come from heresy to be less significant than the wrong that would come from the suppression of true Christian liberty. All the main supporters of New Light thinking, in both England and Ireland, went to great lengths to disown Arianism or any other heterodox opinions on the doctrine of the Trinity. We can be sure that this was a genuine belief, although it is perhaps also the case that once they denied the necessity of subscription to that doctrine they also denied its essential nature for the Christian faith. In the longer term, in the second half of the century, it also followed that the same forensic approach that they applied to the Bible, following in the footsteps of the method drawn up by Samuel Clarke, did in the end give an impetus towards Arian belief. But unless pushed into a corner a high Arian preacher did not noticeably depart in a significant way from what might be termed orthodoxy. His Arianism might be suspected from his avoidance of doctrinal sermons and concentration on 'practical' subjects with a moral tone, but this approach could be found amongst others who nevertheless did not disown the traditional understanding of the Trinity. In some ways the key question came over the doctrine of the atonement and the understanding of the nature of the sacrifice of Christ, and prior to the spread of Arianism it was the case that Arminianism seems to have gained ground with greater rapidity.<sup>39</sup>

New Light thinking and non-subscription did allow these variations in theology to develop amongst dissenters in England and Ireland. When the bond of union was a refusal to set the parameters of faith beyond the personal conscience and the individual interaction with the Bible there was something of an inevitability about this, as their opponents had warned. Yet for many decades

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<sup>38</sup> James Kirkpatrick, *A Defence of Christian Liberty*, (Belfast 1743), 88.

<sup>39</sup> J. Johansen-Berg, 'Arian or Arminian? Presbyterian Continuity in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, 14, No.2, (May 1969), 35-58. Alan P.F. Sell, 'Arminians, Deists and Reason', *Dissenting Thought and the Life of the Churches. Studies in an English Tradition*, (San Francisco 1990), 68-87.

of the eighteenth century significant numbers of Presbyterians, in both England and Ireland followed this approach. It was an approach which, although it was not the only theological approach adopted by those who had been trained there, was drawn from the experience of many students who received their training at Glasgow University, and they formed churches with which Glasgow University never ceased to engage.



National Origins of Students at Glasgow 1662-1800<sup>1</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Number of New Students</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Irish</i>	<i>Welsh</i>	<i>Other</i>
1662	49	3 Anglus			
1663	66	7 Anglus			
1664	46	2 Anglus	2 Hibernus 1 Scoto-Hibernus		
1665	79	14 Anglus	13 Hibernus 3 Scoto-Hibernus		
1666	43		1 Hibernus		
1667	61	14 Anglus	2 Hibernus 4 Scoto-Hibernus 1 Anglo-Hibernus		
1668	88	33 Anglus	3 Hibernus 1 Scoto-Hibernus		
1669	46	3 Anglus	1 Hibernus		
1670	42	4 Anglus	1 Hibernus 2 Anglo-Hibernus		
1671	71	4 Anglus	2 Hibernus 4 Scoto-Hibernus 2 Anglo-Hibernus 1 Hybernus Scotus		
1672	86	4 Anglus	4 Hibernus 7 Scoto-Hibernus 3 Anglo-Hibernus 1 Hibernus Scotus		1 Gallus
1673	93	11 Anglus	1 Hibernus 4 Scoto-		

<sup>1</sup> Based on the information given in *Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis Records of the University of Glasgow from its Foundation till 1727*, 3 vols (Glasgow 1854), 3, 113-236 and W. Innes Addison, *The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow From 1728-1858*, (Glasgow 1913), 1-195.

			Hibernus 2 Anglo- Hibernus		
1674	46		1 Scoto- Hibernus		
1675	73	8 Anglus	1 Hibernus 1 Scoto- Hibernus		
1676	64	4 Anglus	2 Anglo- Hibernus		1 Scoto- Batavus 1 Francus a Sancta Fide
1677	94	4 Anglus	7 Hibernus		
1678	34				
1679	72	5 Anglus			
1680	66	3 Anglus			1 Gallus
1681	76	8 Anglus	1 Hibernus 1 Anglo- Hibernus		1 Germanus
1682	120	3 Anglus			
1683	47				1 Galligenus
1684	96	1 Anglus			
1685	34		6 Hibernus		
1686					
1687	60	1 Anglus	6 Hibernus		1 Wallus
1688	75	1 Anglus	1 Hibernus		
1689	65	2 Anglus	9 Scoto- Hibernus 1 Anglo- Hibernus		
1690	17				
1691	66	3 Anglus	2 Hibernus 10 Scoto- Hibernus		
1692	73	2 Anglus	4 Hibernus 6 Scoto- Hibernus		1 Gallus
1693	91	7 Anglus	7 Scoto- Hibernus		
1694	103	5 Anglus 1 Scoto- Anglus	3 Hibernus 4 Scoto- Hibernus 1 Anglo- Hibernus		
1695	130	10 Anglus	2 Hibernus 10 Scoto- Hibernus		
1696	114	13 Anglus	18 Hibernus 7 Scoto-		



			Hibernus		
1697	107	2 Anglus	2 Hibernus 3 Scoto- Hibernus 5 Anglo- Hibernus 1 Cambro- Hibernus		
1698	108		2 Hibernus 5 Scoto- Hibernus 1 Anglo- Hibernus		
1699	86	5 Anglus	2 Hibernus 17 Scoto- Hibernus 1 Anglo- Hibernus 1 Cambro- Hibernus		1 Scoto- Batavus
1700	104	6 Anglus	2 Hibernus 14 Scoto- Hibernus 1 Anglo- Hibernus		
1701	105	1 Anglus	24 Scoto- Hibernus 3 Anglo- Hibernus 1 Hiberno- Scotus		
1702	134	1 Anglus	4 Hibernus 27 Scoto- Hibernus 5 Anglo- Hibernus 7 Hiberno- Scotus		
1703	124	2 Anglus 1 Scoto- Anglus	35 Scoto- Hibernus		1 Scoto- Americanus
1704	90	3 Anglus	1 Hibernus 17 Scoto- Hibernus 1 Gallo- Hibernus		
1705	80	2 Anglus	11 Hibernus 11 Scoto- Hibernus 1 Anglo-		

			Hibernus		
1706	85	2 Anglus	2 Hibernus 13 Scoto-Hibernus 4 Anglo-Hibernus		
1707	78	1 Anglus	1 Hibernus 11 Scoto-Hibernus		
1708	94	2 Anglus 1 Anglo-Britannus	22 Scoto-Hibernus 3 Anglo-Hibernus		1 Americanus
1709	60	4 Anglo-Britannus	12 Scoto-Hibernus 2 Anglo-Hibernus		
1710	69	9 Anglo-Britannus	1 Hibernus 13 Scoto-Hibernus 2 Anglo-Hibernus		
1711	88		12 Scoto-Hibernus 2 Anglo-Hibernus		
1712	65	5 Anglo-Britannus	7 Scoto-Hibernus 2 Anglo-Hibernus		1 Scoto-Britannus
1713	70	5 Anglo-Britannus	2 Hibernus 9 Scoto-Hibernus 1 Anglo-Hibernus		
1714	85	1 Anglus	9 Scoto-Hibernus 1 Anglo-Hibernus		
1715	89	12 Anglus 2 Anglo-Britannus	1 Hibernus 14 Scoto-Hibernus 2 Anglo-Hibernus	1 Cambro-Britannus	1 Scoto-Britannus 1 Anglo-Scotus
1716	51	2 Anglus	2 Scoto-Hibernus	1 Cambro-Britannus	
1717	100	13 Anglus	1 Hibernus 8 Scoto-Hibernus 3 Anglo-		



			Hibernus		
1718	87	10 Anglus 2 Anglo-Britannus	9 Hibernus 4 Scoto-Hibernus		
1719	91	7 Anglus	11 Scoto-Hibernus 1 Anglo-Hibernus		1 Anglo-Virginiensis
1720	84	6 Anglus	1 Hibernus 9 Scoto-Hibernus	1 Caerleonensis	
1721	77	3 Anglus 1 Cestriensis 1 Londinensis	3 Hibernus 12 Scoto-Hibernus 1 Anglo-Hibernus 2 Dubliniensis		
1722	86	6 Anglus	1 Hibernus 6 Scoto-Hibernus 1 Anglo-Hibernus		
1723	89	8 Anglus	1 Hibernus 8 Scoto-Hibernus 1 Anglo-Hibernus		
1724	70	6 Anglus	1 Hibernus 8 Scoto-Hibernus 2 Anglo-Hibernus		
1725	63	6 Anglus	8 Scoto-Hibernus 1 Anglo-Hibernus		
1726 <sup>2</sup>	136	12 Anglus 1 Scoto-Anglus	5 Hibernus 8 Scoto-Hibernus 3 Anglo-Hibernus		1 Scotus ex Maryland
1727	60	8 Anglus	1 Scoto-Hibernus		
1728	53	8 Angl:	5 Hib:	1 Camber	

<sup>2</sup> In this calendar year the university changed from matriculating its students in the second term of the session (usually March) to matriculating them in the first term of the session (November). So there are two complete matriculation lists within one calendar year and a much higher total number of students.

			1 Anglo: Hib:		
1729	54	6 Angl:	1 Hib: 2 Sc: Hib: 1 Angl: Hib:		
1730	94	6 Anglus	10 Scoto Hibernus 1 Ang: Hib. 1 Dubliniensis		
1731 <sup>3</sup>	67	8 Anglus	2 Hib 6 Scoto Hibernus 2 Anglo Hib 1 Cambro Hib		
1732	69	8 Ang:	9 Scoto Hibernus 2 Ang: Hib: 1 Camb: Hib:		
1733	58	6 Ang	3 Scoto Hib 2 Hib: Ang:		1 Philadelphia
1734	71	8 England	15 Ireland	3 Wales	
1735	58	7 England	20 Ireland		
1736	68	5 England	7 Ireland		1 Antigua
1737	67	6 England	17 Ireland		
1738	57	5 England	10 Ireland		1 Virginia 2 Flandria
1739	81	14 England	15 Ireland		1 Jamaica 1 Antigua
1740	58	10 England	8 Ireland		
1741	70	4 England	12 Ireland		1 Antigua 1 Jamaica
1742	67	2 England	12 Ireland		1 Antigua 1 Nevis
1743	51	3 England	10 Ireland	1 Wales	2 Jamaica
1744 <sup>4</sup>	55	5 England	7 Ireland		
1745	32	2 England	1 Ireland		1 Barbados
1746	58	4 England	12 Ireland		1 Maryland
1747	71	6 England	7 Ireland		
1748	59	3 England	13 Ireland		
1749	61	2 England	5 Ireland		
1750	57	1 England	14 Ireland		1 St

<sup>3</sup> From this point onwards there is less mention of national designations, increasingly students are identified according to their town or county of origin in the Matriculation records.

<sup>4</sup> Town or county is the only designation of national identity used from this point onwards in the records.



					Christopher 1 Moravia
1751	58	5 England	8 Ireland		1 Virginia
1752	66	16 England	16 Ireland		1 New England 1 Barbados
1753	62	5 England	15 Ireland		
1754	55	4 England	11 Ireland		1 Jamaica
1755	48	5 England	12 Ireland		1 Jamaica
1756	69	3 England	14 Ireland	1 Wales	1 Carolina
1757	54	3 England	8 Ireland		1 Maryland 1 Jamaica 1 Antigua
1758	47		12 Ireland		1 Virginia
1759	57		9 Ireland	1 Wales	1 North Carolina 1 Virginia
1760	65	2 England	10 Ireland		1 Jamaica 1 Pennsylvania
1761	82		29 Ireland		2 Pennsylvania 2 Russia 1 Geneva 1 New Providence 1 New Jersey
1762	101	4 England	38 Ireland		1 New England 1 Antigua 1 Virginia 1 Jamaica
1763	83	4 England	17 Ireland		2 Antigua 1 Maryland
1764	102	5 England	19 Ireland		1 India 1 Barbados 1 New England
1765	84	4 England	15 Ireland		1 Jamaica 2 India 1 America
1766	132	4 England	25 Ireland	1 Wales	2 Antigua 1 Maryland
1767	91	1 England	17 Ireland		
1768	99	3 England	17 Ireland		1 Virginia 1 South Carolina 1 Jamaica 1 Maryland

1769	98		26 Ireland		1 Virginia 1 Antigua 1 Jamaica
1770	120	5 England	26 Ireland		1 New England 3 Virginia 1 St Christopher 1 South Carolina
1771	115	3 England	35 Ireland		3 Jamaica 1 Maryland
1772	135	5 England	26 Ireland		2 St Vincent 1 Jamaica 1 Virginia
1773	109	4 England	22 Ireland		1 Antigua 1 Virginia
1774	88	2 England	19 Ireland		1 Maryland 1 St Kitts 1 Jamaica 1 St Martins
1775	127	4 England	18 Ireland		1 South Carolina 1 Antigua 2 Nevis 1 Jamaica 1 St Martin 1 Maryland
1776	86	1 England	11 Ireland		1 Jamaica
1777	133	3 England	22 Ireland	1 Wales	1 Maryland 1 Antigua
1778	101	5 England	16 Ireland	1 Wales	1 Virginia 2 Jamaica
1779	99	2 England	22 Ireland	1 Wales	1 Jamaica 1 St Croix 1 Virginia 1 Poland
1780	91	3 England	16 Ireland		1 St Croix 2 Jamaica 1 Nevis
1781	99	4 England	18 Ireland		1 Barbados 1 India 1 Jamaica 1 Virginia
1782	72	4 England	8 Ireland	1 Wales	1 India
1783	97	9 England	18 Ireland		2 Jamaica 1 India
1784	101	6 England	13 Ireland		



1785	86	1 England	2 Ireland		4 Jamaica 2 Virginia 1 St Kitts
1786	131	7 England	6 Ireland		1 Virginia 1 Jamaica
1787	95	7 England	11 Ireland		
1788	103	4 England	10 Ireland	1 Wales	
1789	141	4 England	3 Ireland		1 Jamaica 1 America 1 St Croix
1790	127	6 England	7 Ireland		1 America 1 Jersey 1 Jamaica 1 Virginia
1791	122	8 England	9 Ireland		1 Jamaica 2 Antigua
1792	118	4 England	20 Ireland		1 Antigua 1 St Kitts
1793	129	3 England	7 Ireland		1 India 5 Jamaica 1 Grenada 1 Antigua 1 St Christopher
1794	116	3 England	13 Ireland		1 America 1 Maryland 1 St Christopher
1795	100	3 England	11 Ireland		
1796	92	7 England	11 Ireland		1 Canada 1 St Kitts
1797	81	1 England	6 Ireland		1 Georgia 2 India 1 St Thomas
1798	76	8 England	5 Ireland	1 Wales	1 Barbados 1 Cape of Good Hope
1799	112	4 England	19 Ireland		1 Barbados 1 Newfoundland
1800	103	6 England	12 Ireland		1 Barbados

English and Irish Divinity Students at Glasgow 1692-1727  
With selected Scottish students<sup>1</sup>

28 April 1692

Joannes Richardson [pastor Ecclesia Anglicanae in Hibernia]

13 October

Gulielmus Reid [pastor de Ballynahinch in Hibernia 1696]

5 February 1694

**J[acobus] Kilpatrick** [pastor de Belfast in Hibernia]

**Joannes Simson** [pastor de Traquire 1705, dein Professor Theologiae Sacrae in hacce Academia]

27 November 1694

**Isaack Bates** Anglus

**Robert Darroch** [Hybernus pastor de Monaghan in Hybernia]

10 December 1695

Humphredus Thomson Scoto-Hibernus [pastor de Ballybay in Hibernia]

Anno 1696

**John McClave** Scoto-Hibernus [pastor de Cookstown in Hibernia]

**Joannes Stirling** Scoto-Hibernus [pastor de Ballykelly in Hibernia]

**Thomas Kennedy** Scoto-Hibernus [pastor de Brigh in Hibernia]

18 January 1697

**Jacobus Cobham** Anglo-Hibernus [pastor de Broadisland in Hibernia]

**Joseph Beach** 1697 Anglus

**Jacobus McGregore** Scoto-Hibernus [pastor de Aghadrey in Hibernia]

**Alexander McCrackan** Hibernus [pastor de Badoney in Hibernia]

**Gilbert Kennedy** *Scots-Irish*

12 November 1697

**Archibaldus Campbell** Scoto-Hybernus

21 November 1698

**Joannes Malcolme** *Scots-Irish*

**Joannes Wisditch** Scoto-Hibernus

4 December 1699

**Archibald Boyd** Scoto-Hibernus [pastor de Maghera in Hibernia]

**Henricus Neill** Scoto-Hibernus [pastor de Ballyrashane in Hibernia]

**Jacobus Boyd** Scoto-Hibernus

**James Fleming** Scoto-Hibernus [minister de Lurgan in Hibernia]

**Joannes Bald** Scoto-Hibernus

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from *Munimenta Alme Universitatis Glasguensis Records of the University of Glasgow from its Foundation till 1727*, 3 vols (Glasgow 1854), 3, 241-256. Additional comments added in italics. All students mentioned in the text of this thesis are shown in bold type.



26 January 1700  
William Murdoch Scoto-Hibernus

18 October 1700  
Georgius Wiggett Anglus

December 1701  
**Philippus Maire** Anglo-Hibernus  
Robertus Patterson Scoto-Hibernus  
**Joannes McMinn** Scoto-Hibernus  
Hugh Ramsey Scoto-Hibernus  
Gulielmus McCay Scoto-Hibernus  
Thomas Kennedy Scoto-Hibernus  
John Bryen Hibernus  
William Dunlop Scoto-Hibernus  
Gavin Muire Scoto-Hibernus

22 January 1703  
William Hair Scoto-Hibernus  
James Campbell Scoto-Hibernus  
John McGeoagh Scoto-Hibernus  
Gulielmus Bell Scoto-Hybernus

10 January 1704  
Samuel Johnston Scoto-Hibernus  
Thomas Anderson Scoto-Hibernus  
William Wilson Hiberno-Scotus  
Jacobus Hamilton Scoto-Hibernus

12 February 1705  
Gulielmus Boyd Scoto-Hibernus  
Thomas Boyd Scoto-Hybernus  
Thomas Knox Scoto-Hybernus

January 1708  
**Robertus McBride** *Scots-Irish*  
Robertus Wear Anglo-Britannus  
**Georgius Smijth** Anglo-Britannus

11 February 1709  
Thomas Wilson Hibernus  
Johannes McDowel Hibernus  
Moses Clark Hiberno-Scotus  
Jacobus Hilhous Hiberno-Scotus  
Gulielmus Millet Anglo-Hibernus  
**Josephus Stedman** *English*  
Samuel Orr Scoto-Hibernus

15 February 1710

Samuell Gelston Scoto-Hibernus  
Samuel Watson Scoto-Hybernus  
Nathaniel Glasgow Scoto-Hibernus  
Alexander Hamilton Scoto-Hibernus  
**William Dunlop** *Scottish*  
John Montgomery Scoto-Hibernus  
Thomas Handcock Anglo-Hibernus

5 February 1711

Thomas Sawbridge Anglo-Hibernus  
George Carlile *English*  
Robert Stewart Hibernus  
Peter Seddon *English*

18 February 1712

**Clerk Oldisworth** *English*  
John Angier Anglo-Britannus  
John Harvey Hibernicus

10 February 1713

**Benjaminus Owen** Cambro-Britannus  
Thomas Maclaine Scoto-Hibernus  
Alexander Dunlop Scoto-Hibernus  
Joannes Pilkington Anglo-Britannus  
Henricus Hook Scoto-Hibernus  
**Francis Hutcheson** Britanno-Hibernus [postea Ethices Professor in hacce  
Academia]

19 February 1714

**Georgius Wightwick** Anglo-Britannus  
**William Hoëker** Anglo-Britannus  
**Samuel Jay** Anglo-Britannus

20 December 1714

Archibald Maclaine Scoto-Hibernus  
Gulielmus Dougan Scoto-Hibernus  
**Patrick Simson** *Scottish*  
Johannes Maire Anglo-Hibernus  
Robert Yates Anglo-Britannus  
Joannes Giles Anglo-Britannus  
Samuel Pye Anglo-Britannus  
Cornelius Hancock Anglo-Britannus  
**Jonathan Woodworth** Anglo-Britannus  
Cornelius Rosbotham Anglo-Britannus

6 February 1716

**James Richardsone** *English*

January 1717

**William Smith** Britanno-Hibernus



James McGarrach Scoto-Hibernus  
James Dickson Scoto-Hibernus  
Hugh Williamson Scoto-Hibernus  
John Wynn Anglus  
Thomas Drennan Scoto-Hibernus

20 February 1721

Johannes Algeo Scoto-Hybernus  
Andrew Fergusone Scoto-Hybernus  
Thomas Lightfoot Anglo-Britannus  
John Evans Anglo-Britannus  
Joseph Chandler Anglus  
Thomas Whitaker Anglo-Britannus  
James Arbuckle Scoto-Hibernus  
William Henry Scoto-Hibernus  
Richard Watt Scoto-Hibernus

15 April 1723

Gulielmus Sloan Scoto-Hibernus  
Joannes Gibson Scoto-Hibernus  
George Cherry Scoto-Hibernus

24 February 1724

John Moore Scoto-Hibernus  
Daniel Lowe Anglus  
Henry Lane Anglus  
John Harrison Anglus  
Jacobus Martine Hibernus

10 January 1726

Hugh Worthington Anglus  
Timothy Thomas Anglus  
Samuel Eaton Anglus  
Joseph Hankinson Anglus

10 March 1727

Gilbertus Kennedy Scoto-Hibernus  
David Alexander Scoto-Hibernus

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