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THE POPULAR PARTY IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, 1740-1800

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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CONTENTS.

Acknowledgements	1
Summary	iii
Preface	vi
Chapter 1. The Popular Party and the Historians.	1
Chapter 2. Who were the Popular Party?	35
Chapter 3. The Premises of Popular Theology.	59
1. The Nature of Religious Knowledge.	65
2. The Attributes of God.	71
3. The Nature of Man.	81
Chapter 4. Sin and Salvation.	
1. The Problem of Sin.	100
2. The Nature of the Atonement.	104
3. The Nature of Faith.	119
Chapter 5. Theology in Practice.	159
1. The Nature of Piety.	160
2. The Defence of the Faith.	176
3. Faith in Practice - The General Assembly, 1740-1800.	205
Chapter 6. The Popular Party and the Secular World.	234
1. Christianity and Society.	238
2. The Nature, Purpose, and Practice of Government.	265
3. The Problems of Poverty and Wealth.	297
4. Attitudes to Culture.	307
Chapter 7. The Problem of Patronage.	
1. The Ideology of Opposition: The Popular Party and the Doctrine of the Church.	337
2. The Ideology of Opposition: The Popular Publications.	343
Chapter 8. The Tactics of Opposition to Patronage: The Popular Party at the General Assembly.	404
Chapter 9. Conclusion.	458

Appendix A. Matters of Popular Dissent, 1740-1805.	470
Appendix B. Ministerial Members of the Popular Party and Basis of Identification.	473
Appendix C. Party Domination in Presbyteries.	479
Appendix D. Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery.	480
Appendix E. Subject Matter of Publications by Type of Presbytery.	495
Appendix F. Subject Matter of Publications by Region and Party.	496
Appendix G. Biographical Notes on Important Popular Writers.	497
Bibliography.	501

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SUMMARY.

The Popular party in the eighteenth century Church of Scotland has received little attention from historians and there has never been a comprehensive analysis of its nature and ideology. This dissertation is an attempt to remedy that defect.

It commences by surveying the nineteenth and twentieth century literature which has dealt with the ecclesiastical history of eighteenth century Scotland and identifies the deficiencies in this as they affect the Popular party. It is suggested that an analysis of the theological writings of members is a prerequisite for understanding the nature of the party.

Prior to providing this, however, the results of an attempt to identify members of the party are analysed. It is suggested that the most workable method of identification is one based on preparedness to dissent ^{from} ~~against~~ pro-patronage measures and decisions at the General Assembly. This provides a means of identification of the most committed members of the party. Its geographical spread is then delineated, as are the theological, ecclesiastical and secular interests of its members, and the effects of party dominance on them.

The dissertation then analyses Popular theology in the areas of the premises of theology, the nature of sin and salvation, and the practical implications of theology. The picture which emerges

is one of considerable theological complexity which calls in question the assumption of doctrinal unity within the party.

Popular thought on secular issues is then analysed in the areas of the nature of society, government, poverty and wealth, and culture. The interplay of liberal and conservative political impetuses is examined and the theological bases of the party's secular thought elicited.

The patronage dispute is analysed and an interpretation is offered, based on both the published works of the party and proceedings at the General Assembly, which argues that the fundamental religious or spiritual motivation of Popular opposition to the patronage system has not been appreciated, and that therefore the evolution of the Popular response to patronage as revealed at the General Assembly has been misconstrued.

The Popular party in the Church of Scotland between 1740 and 1800 emerges as a doctrinally complex party, including within its membership the full range of doctrinal opinion from Moderatism to traditional orthodoxy. The most influential section within the party, however, was an evangelical grouping which combined doctrinal orthodoxy with an Enlightened learning. It is suggested, finally, that preoccupation with the patronage dispute has led historians to misunderstand the Church of Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century and to underestimate the

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complexity and significance of the evolving theological alignment
which was the key development in the period.

PREFACE

There are two observations to be made concerning the objectives of this dissertation. First, the absence of any substantial work on the Popular party has precluded both the assumption of pre-existing accurate knowledge of the nature and thought of the party, and also the existence of guidelines which could be utilised in research. This latter deficiency, while it is not to be seen as anything other than a challenge, necessitated an attempt to identify members of the party, their distribution throughout the Church, and their theological, ecclesiastical, and intellectual interests. The results of this endeavour, contained in the somewhat free-standing Chapter 2, turned out to be of a limited nature, although they did serve to indicate the difficulties inherent in arriving at an accurate overall understanding of the Popular party. They serve, moreover, to underline the reservations with which generalisations on the subject should be treated.

Secondly, the absence of substantial accurate knowledge of the party had an even more significant impact on the nature of this study. While the primary aim was to query and to verify or disprove traditional or conventional assumptions about and interpretations of the party, it became clear that a complementary line of enquiry was essential and indeed implicit in the objective of analysing the party on its own terms rather than in those of contemporary opponents, or of subsequent

ecclesiastics or historians. This objective introduced a second dimension to the study which took it into areas which were not initially envisaged, namely those of a more narrowly theological nature. This in turn led to the construction of a theological framework to analyse the party's nature and ideology which at times almost seemed to develop a momentum of its own. To a considerable extent, therefore, the final shape of the study reflects the tension between these two impetuses, towards the transmission of accurate knowledge of the Popular party on the one hand and the verification of received wisdom on the other.

One other important qualification which needs to be made relates to the context of the party in the intellectual life of the period. It is generally assumed that the opponents of the Popular party, the Moderates, were influenced by and were significant contributors to the ideology of the Scottish Enlightenment which was, of course, a part of the wider European Enlightenment of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The concept of the 'Scottish Enlightenment', however, is one which has aroused considerable controversy about what it actually was. Such definitions as have been offered range from the remarkably general to the surprisingly restricted.' As the present study seeks to establish, the predominant ethos of the Popular party was one in which the primacy of scriptural revelation was accepted in most areas of theological and intellectual activity. This led to a relative lack of interest in Enlightenment ideas for their own sake. Nevertheless Popular

thinkers were influenced by such ideas and did respond to them and quite often utilised their insights. One of the most difficult problems, then, was that of how far to examine Enlightenment thought in the course of the study. In the end, it seemed best to restrict such coverage to a general delineation of the main areas of Enlightenment thought relevant to the perceptions of Popular writers.

For present purposes, therefore, this study accepts that the Enlightenment affected religion by stressing the significance of Reason in the pursuit of knowledge, by embodying belief in a law-governed universe, and by producing an essentially optimistic state of mind about the prospects of mankind. In the area of theology, such considerations led to acceptance by Popular writers of much of John Locke's work on the theory of knowledge and the operation of the human mind, a confidence in the rationality of the Christian religion and of what it taught about salvation, and belief in the order of a universe governed by the Creator who remained active within it as its moral governor. The particular emphases of the Scottish Enlightenment, such as its interest in the social behaviour of man, and in political economy and moral philosophy, have been noted where relevant and reference made to individual thinkers. No attempt has been made, however, to trace the nature and extent of the influence of such ideas on the Popular party. Such an attempt would have transformed the nature and scope of the present study.

NOTES: PREFACE.

1. For a recent discussion of this debate and the associated bibliography, see Richard B. Sher, Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment. The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh, (Edinburgh, 1985), pp.3-19.

CHAPTER 1: THE POPULAR PARTY AND THE HISTORIANS.

The justification for a study of the 'Popular' party in the eighteenth century Church of Scotland has been provided in a recent major publication in the field of eighteenth century Scottish history. In the bibliographical essay at the close of his Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment, Richard B. Sher states:

Since virtually nothing has been written about the Popular party as such, it is necessary to study it through the generally unsatisfactory surveys of ecclesiastical history ... or through biographies of some of its leaders ... '

Sher also asserts that 'the large literature on Scottish ecclesiastical history is often parochial, partisan, outdated, or unscholarly, if not all four'. This, together with the fact that in his section on ecclesiastical history he lists only one journal article and four biographies (two of which deal with the lives of their subjects after they left Scotland for the United States of America),² make it possible to appreciate the need for a detailed study of the so-called 'Popular' party in the Church of Scotland, to distinguish its characteristics in the years being studied.

This state of neglect can be ascribed to two main factors: in the nineteenth century much, if not almost all, historical writing on Scottish ecclesiastical history was produced in the

aftermath of the Disruption of the Church in 1843, or was heavily influenced by subsequent ecclesiastical or theological wrangling later in the century; and secondly, most twentieth century interest has centred around the relationship between the Popular party's opponents, the Moderates, and the Scottish Enlightenment.

In the Disruption years, and in those following, there emerged an attempt on the part of Free Church historians and of seceders who subsequently joined the Free Church in the various unions which followed in the 1840s and 1850s, to establish continuity for their cause with that of the eighteenth century evangelicals and the Popular party. This also involved the denigration of their nineteenth century opponents by showing them to be the heirs of the eighteenth century Moderates. What was taken to be Moderate theology was implicitly rejected by that of the evangelical revival of the early nineteenth century, and Moderate ecclesiastical polity was held to be the origin of the troubles of the mid-nineteenth century.³ The patronage controversy of the eighteenth century was interpreted as being the same issue as that of 'non-intrusion' in the nineteenth. Such concerns, however, did not on the whole serve to direct scholarly attention to the eighteenth century Popular party since most of what was written was anti-Moderate rather than consideredly pro-Popular in its objectives.

Interpretation was further complicated by the histories of denominations which derived from eighteenth century secessions

from the Church of Scotland. These usually included a range of partisan statements about the ideology and activities of the Popular party which ranged from expression of the belief that the eighteenth century Church was so Moderate-dominated as to justify the assertion that 'True religion was at a low ebb in the Church of Scotland',⁴ to the sustained denigration of the Popular party, both implicit and explicit, indulged in by Struthers in his history of the Relief Church. The latter blamed the Popular party for deserting the people in their time of need over the Secession, implied that all who stayed in the Establishment 'preferred a royal commissioner to Christ as head of the Church', asserted that in the 1752 Inverkeithing case the leaders of the party failed to refer to the law of Christ and to the practice of the apostolic church in their arguments with the Moderates, and maintained that the party 'laid the rights and privileges of the people at the feet of royalty', and so ruined the free constitution of the Church of Scotland. In time, he maintained, the party became 'supine'.⁵

The second factor which coloured the historiography of the eighteenth century Church in the following century was the impact of 'Higher Criticism' on the Free Church and on the Church of Scotland, together with moves away from traditional forms of worship notably through the introduction of hymns and instrumental music. Such changes were opposed by those who deemed themselves to be the heirs of the opponents of the eighteenth century Moderates.⁶ These factors coinciding with the emergence

of a party within the Free Church seeking union with the doctrinally more liberal United Presbyterian Church, encouraged the appearance of less partisan works, but also less interested in the evangelical or 'Popular' tradition within the Scottish Church.

The most highly regarded of the new revisionist works is John Cunningham's Church History of Scotland, the work of the future Principal of St. Mary's College at St. Andrews, who was a leading protagonist in the moves to introduce the use of the organ in the Church of Scotland.⁷ It is among the most significant ecclesiastical histories written in the nineteenth century since it became a handbook for many of the works in the field for the next fifty years,⁸ and is indeed a major source of documentary material and authoritative pronouncements to the present.⁹ As recently as 1968, William Ferguson referred approvingly to it as 'a sober appraisal up to the Disruption - the standpoint is Presbyterian but not partisan'.¹⁰ For the eighteenth century, however, such an estimate must be regarded with some reservation. Although it is indeed true so far as Cunningham's position on patronage is concerned, and he writes sympathetically on the Popular position concerning it,¹¹ two general qualifications must be made: his interpretation of overall trends during the century is 'Whiggish', and the perspective of his own times dominates many issues. For example, in the course of his analysis of the Secession in the 1730s, he asserts that

The whole commotion, in fact, arose from the spirit of the eighteenth century attempting to crush the worn-out spirit of the seventeenth, and the spirit of the seventeenth lifting up its head and leaving its sting before it died. It was the battle of progression and retrogression.¹²

This approach led to a persistent tendency to diminish the intellectual stature of Popular figures, such as Alexander Webster or George Anderson for example, in contexts where such criticism is unnecessary.¹³ Furthermore, if such sympathies are detrimental to objectivity in his approach to the Popular party, Cunningham's methodology also leaves much to be desired. After an account of the arguments put forward by the protagonists in the Douglas affair of 1756-57,¹⁴ for instance, we find him stating:

Such were the arguments of the opposite parties; and, as is usual, there is truth on both sides. Let us try the question by the light of the present day, now that the world is a century older.¹⁵

Such an attempt led Cunningham to view exceedingly favourably the campaign led by Principal Robertson to secure Roman Catholic emancipation in 1778 but to pay scant attention to the position of its Popular opponents.¹⁶ The most widely used work of nineteenth century historical scholarship on eighteenth century Scottish ecclesiastical history, cannot therefore be used as an interpretation of the Popular party without serious reservation.

A similar work, though on a much slighter scale, is John Rankin's Handbook of the Church of Scotland, dating from 1888.

Rankin asserts that several pretended histories of the Church of Scotland had been written in which the eighteenth century history had been 'distorted and envenomed and garbled for the purposes of ecclesiastical partisanship'. He avows the impossibility of dealing justly with the previous century unless one refrained from judging it by nineteenth century ideas, but fails to notice that he proclaims that the task of the Church of Scotland as he wrote was to counter, amongst other things, revivalism and 'Popular' preaching to the neglect of Christian duties and 'real devotion', all of which - as will be argued later - were characteristic of the eighteenth century Popular party.¹⁷ This self-conscious attempt to be even-handed in the treatment of the Moderate and Popular parties continued in the early years of the twentieth century. Most of these works are slight and in most cases have little of a positive nature to say about the Popular party. The broad tradition of the nineteenth century works was followed.¹⁸

The most important analysis from this period, however, is provided in William Law Mathieson's Awakening of Scotland. A History from 1747 to 1797. Although deriving in the main from the nineteenth century works already mentioned, he also drew on several contemporary works not used by earlier authors and from the Report of the Select Committee on Church Patronage of 1834. He did not, however, distinguish between their authority and that of the secondary sources. Mathieson's approach also shows his own predilections: for example, he adopted a 'Popular' stance on

patronage, seeing the Moderate hegemony as 'fast approximating to the repressive ideas which we have found to be dominant in the state', but sided against it on the Douglas controversy. The bias of his work emerges also when he summarised the period. He saw the opponents of Moderatism as increasingly 'assimilating its tolerance and good taste', and asserted that the chief doctrinal difference between them and the Moderates was the assumption of a cleavage between morality and grace. He used Thomas Somerville's My Own Life and Times in support by reference to the characters of Robert Walker, John Erskine, and Alexander Webster.¹² In other words, instead of serious analysis of the nature and achievements of the Popular party, Mathieson contented himself with relying on standard contemporary and secondary sources, and ended by justifying his generalised conclusions on the basis of a few individual vignettes.

In what way, however, do the defects suggested as being typical of the nineteenth century works of ecclesiastical history affect their value for today's historian? In the first place, almost all agree on what amounts to a common factual account from the beginnings of the Secession to the end of the century and it is impossible to find any significant divergence. The differences tend to appear in the extent of the coverage, for example, of debate at the General Assembly, or of the amount of anecdote and from whom. That this agreement is the case is no doubt due to the ready availability of Assembly reports in the pages of the Scots Magazine or, later in the century, in Nathaniel Morren's

Annals.²⁰ Subsequent research has produced little in the way of new factual information about the basic events though it has modified the understanding of them. Secondly, even in the nineteenth century there was a pronounced tendency to concentrate on the Moderate party and its policies. In some of the secondary sources there was a near dearth of attention given to the Popular party.²¹ Thirdly, nineteenth century preoccupations led to a wide range of partisan statements about the activity and ideology of the Popular party in the eighteenth century. These nineteenth century preoccupations, purposes, and prejudices intrude to varying extents on the twentieth century historian's search for information and understanding, though he too must be careful not to intrude the prejudices of later generations. It is important to note that the main effect of the defects is to lead to a lack of independent attention to the Popular party on its own terms. Distortion of truth is not evident; lack of interest all too often is. The problem is one of failure to probe beneath the surface of a commonly agreed factual account. The value of these works is for the historian of the nineteenth century, not for the one of the eighteenth.

The historiography of the Popular party in the twentieth century shares the defects which characterised it in the nineteenth. Although there was no reawakening of interest in eighteenth century Scottish ecclesiastical history until the 1960s and 1970s, the flurry of activity since then has not been

the result of direct interest in the Popular party, and there has in fact been a move away from traditional ecclesiastical history. Some of the works which discuss the subject, indeed, are the result of interests which are not necessarily ecclesiastical in a fundamental sense at all. This is the case, for example, with those works which have their origins in the study of the Scottish Enlightenment. In the twentieth century the influence of the social sciences has brought new approaches in old fields but it has not given any more attention to the Popular party in its own right; it has given perhaps even less. Secondly it has not paid attention to the thought of the party. This latter defect explains the present study's extended attempt to come to terms with the theology of the Popular party, since that is the major part of the ideology of any ecclesiastical grouping. It is important to appreciate, furthermore, the importance of an examination of the Popular party even for the secular historians of the period. This need has been stressed recently by J.G.A. Pocock, though he too identifies it in the context of its confrontation with Moderatism and of its relations with the Enlightenment.²²

The seminal twentieth century influence is the work of Ian D.L. Clark in his 1963 Cambridge Ph.D. dissertation, 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party in the Church of Scotland, 1752 to 1805'. An abbreviated version of this research reached a wider audience with the publication of an article based on it, 'From Protest to Reaction: the Moderate Regime in the Church of Scotland, 1752-

1805', in the 1970 collection of essays Scotland in the Age of Improvement.²³ Clark's work was followed by Henry R. Sefton's 1969 Glasgow Ph.D. dissertation 'The Early Development of Moderatism in the Church of Scotland' and the derivative articles published in the Records of the Scottish Church Historical Society in 1969 and 1977.²⁴ These early works, and especially Clark's, have been built upon by scholars whose predominant interest lies in the involvement of the Moderate literati in the Scottish Enlightenment, and in the politics of the period, and whose emphases have been very much those of the social scientist. The most important is Richard B. Sher whose Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment. The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh is an extended revision of his 1979 Chicago Ph.D. 'Church, University, Enlightenment: the Moderate Literati of Edinburgh, 1720-1793'. Sher has also written an article which throws light on the role of the Moderates in the ecclesiastical and political worlds of the time entitled 'Moderates, Managers and Popular Politics in Mid-Eighteenth Century Edinburgh: The Drysdale "Bustle" of the 1760s' which is another example of this new approach.²⁵

~~Probably~~ ^{probably} The recent work which throws most light on the nature of the Popular party also embodies Sher's work. He and Alexander Murdoch contributed a survey of the patronage dispute, 'Patronage and Party in the Church of Scotland, 1750-1800', to the collection of essays Church, Politics and Society.²⁶ This is the first indication of serious historical interest in the

Popular party to have appeared in print this century. It is, however, concerned solely with the issue of patronage, and it is also an off-shoot from Sher's work on the Moderates and from Murdoch's on mid-eighteenth century Scottish politics in which patronage, both in ecclesiastical and secular matters, was a fact of life.²⁷ Other than the work of Clark, Sefton, Sher and Murdoch, the only works of traditional form and not derived from the interests and methods of the social sciences are John MacInnes' Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688-1800 which, while it has much to say about Highland manifestations of Moderatism, is concerned to document the spread of evangelical religion on a parochial and individualised level and never takes cognisance of the existence of the Popular party as such; and Arthur Fawcett's case study of the revival at Cambuslang in the 1740s which is obviously restricted in its scope.²⁸

Little of significance for the understanding of the Popular party is to be found in the more general histories published in the latter half of the twentieth century. Even the lengthiest non-specialist treatment of the eighteenth century Church, to be found in William Ferguson's Scotland, 1689 to the Present, while it is decidedly pro-Popular in its sympathies, contains little beyond the standard facts which can be culled from the nineteenth century works, apart from the interesting but unelaborated assertion that 'the Popular or Evangelical Party in the Church of Scotland was by the late eighteenth century no longer 'high-

flying', and had in many ways accommodated itself to Moderatism'.²⁹ J.H.S. Burleigh's Church History of Scotland is little more than a balanced but nonetheless factual history, G.D. Henderson's The Church of Scotland. A Short History is objective and even-handed but very brief, and the erstwhile authoritative volume of Drummond and Bulloch's The Scottish Church, 1688-1843. The Age of the Moderates is dismissive of the Popular party in general, and universally acknowledged to embody little or no original research and to perpetuate the interpretations of the nineteenth century works.³⁰

In view of these defects, it is not surprising to find secular historians making sweeping and unsupported generalisations about the eighteenth century Popular party and its supporters. Kenneth J. Logue in Popular Disturbances in Scotland, 1780-1815 refers to Church of Scotland Evangelical ministers as being less likely than their English contemporaries to preach highly conservative political ideology despite their dislike of democratic political ideas, and claims that the assertion of the rights of congregations could be interpreted as 'possibly positively democratic'.³¹ John Stuart Shaw in his Management of Scottish Society, 1707-1764 mentions doctrinal beliefs 'popular among a minority', conflicting with the presentation system, and ~~and~~ 'the democratic pretensions of the Church'.³² More sympathetically, Jane Rendall in The Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment refers to 'an active and forceful evangelical wing' which was prepared to 'act aggressively to

counteract what they saw as the dangers of their [i.e., Moderate] teaching'.³³ The only secular history which contributes significantly to knowledge of the Popular party is Anand C. Chitnis's The Scottish Enlightenment, A Social History. In a perceptive chapter on the Church, Chitnis supplies the ideological context of the main Moderate-Popular debates and his analysis embodies more research in the contemporary ecclesiastical sources than any of the more recent works apart from those of Clark and Sher.³⁴ Nonetheless, this work, too, obviously derives from interest in the Scottish Enlightenment and as such is orientated towards an understanding of the Moderates.

There are, however, two exceptional general works which contribute to the ecclesiastical history of the latter half of the eighteenth century. The first, Stewart J. Brown's Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland, contains the most succinct statement yet made about the nature of the Popular party. Although he writes to elucidate the theological and ecclesiastical antecedents of his subject, Brown analyses the essential features of the ethos and traditions of the earlier Popular party. He stresses that Popular activity in the Church courts centred on opposition to patronage, but that the party was slower than the Moderates to accept the idea of party discipline in the courts, and did not really begin to do so until the late 1770s when in alliance with the Foxite Whigs. Around the same time, they became increasingly influenced by English Evangelical organisational methods. These three factors, the development of

party discipline, the alliance with the Foxite Whigs, and the influence of the English Evangelicals contributed, holds Brown, to the Evangelical revival in the the Church of Scotland in the early years of the nineteenth century.³⁵ In spite of his major contribution, however, Brown accepts that 'more work is still required for a proper understanding of the eighteenth century Popular party'.³⁶

The other work which opens virtually new territory is Callum G. Brown's Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730. This work is part of the genre of works which derive from the influence of the social sciences, and in fact goes further than most in that direction in its neglect of the theological and spiritual dimensions of its subject. Although the work's emphasis directs attention away from ecclesiastical politics as such and concentrates on their perceived social origins and social consequences, it contains relevant observations essential to an understanding of the Popular party. It takes Stewart Brown's analysis a stage further by pointing out the coincidence of rising evangelicalism and criticism of dominant elites in Church and society by many whose lives were being significantly affected by developments in agriculture, commerce and manufacturing.³⁷ As a result of this, Callum Brown is able to underline the way in which the Popular party was less influential than its numbers would entitle it to have been, and 'more divided because of its varied social composition and confused ideological alignment'.³⁸

There is, however, a fundamental flaw in the work which the author seriously underrates:

... there has been little lingering on the immutable significance of Calvinism and Scottish church tradition in the life of the people, for much of that, though not all, is romantic illusion or convenient misinterpretation.³⁹

In other words, he adopts a sociological interpretation of religion which almost completely disregards the theological and 'spiritual' dimensions of religion which should have provided part, at least, of the ideological framework of his subject.

Callum Brown, however, is not the first to have adopted this more secular approach to ecclesiastical history. A detailed examination shows how characteristic it is, though in a complex way, of Sher and Murdoch's article on 'Patronage and Party in the Church of Scotland, 1750-1800'.⁴⁰

Apart from a passing reference to the 'radical Calvinist' idea of selection of ministers by heads of households, Sher and Murdoch explain the whole patronage issue without any reference to the theological beliefs of their protagonists, far less to any considerations of a 'spiritual' dimension to the conflict. The main requirement, they assert, is to examine divisions within the Popular party during their period and to interpret them in the light of social, political, and ideological issues which are not strictly ecclesiastical. It is all a matter of ecclesiastical politics or the socio-political motivations of men influenced by

the 'Whig commonwealthman' ideal.⁴¹ It will be one of the main contentions of this study, that the Popular position on patronage cannot accurately be comprehended without consideration of the theological and spiritual dimensions. Indeed, it will be argued that consideration of these is essential to an understanding of the nature of the Popular party as a whole in the latter half of the eighteenth century and not just in relation to the patronage dispute. Failure to consider these dimensions is a fundamental weakness of virtually all that has been written in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on the subject.

It must not be thought, however, that nothing has been written on Popular theology. From the publication of James Walker's Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 1560-1750 in 1872, there was no published work on the history of Scottish theology until John Macleod's Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History since the Reformation, which first appeared in 1943.⁴² Although the latter work is the product of an impressive acquaintance with the sources of its wide-ranging subject, it is entirely undocumented and displays, in reverse, perhaps understandably coming from the hand of a Principal of the Free Church College in Edinburgh, a lack of interest in the Moderates similar to that which most of the other authors examined displayed in the Popular party. It is sketchy in its treatment of non-evangelical theologians, and Clark took issue with Macleod on several areas of interpretation of Moderate theology.⁴³ The sketchiness of Macleod's treatment of the Moderates extends to

his discussion of Popular theologians. Often he gives little more than a list of Evangelical ministers of the period being considered, an affirmation of their piety and orthodoxy, and an occasional reference to the subject matter of their works.⁴⁴ For example, he affirms that men like Thomas Boston, Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, and John Willison of Dundee were rooted in the Evangelical tradition of Reformation and Covenanting times, and asserts that they and their followers and hearers felt little of the influence of deist-influenced unbelief on the life of the community. This is to be contrasted with, for instance, John Macclaurin of Glasgow and his predecessor Halyburton who were in touch with the type of unbelieving thought which had been influencing academic and fashionable circles in Scotland since the middle of the seventeenth century.⁴⁵ But that is all the information or analysis given. In spite of its defects, Macleod's work is of value as a pointer to major Popular authors, but it does not, however, even begin to provide the analysis of Popular theology which has been provided for the Moderates by Clark and Sher.

One short article which does serve as a valuable entrance to any survey of Popular theology, and which for that reason justifies examination in some detail, is Stewart Mechie's 'Theological Climate in Early Eighteenth Century Scotland' published twenty years ago.⁴⁶ He distinguishes four theological attitudes which he argues were present in the first half of the eighteenth century, though he concedes that the divisions were

not absolute and shade into one another. While the division relates to the first half of the century, and therefore does not identify the Robertsonian Moderates of the second half of the century, Mechie includes in his examples three or four of the more important members of the Popular party.

Mechie's first grouping is those he calls 'scholastic Calvinists' whom he sees as being suspicious of any seeming deviation from the Westminster Confession of Faith and as holding the Calvinism of the Westminster Standards in a rigid and mechanical fashion. They made the doctrine of predestination of central importance. Secondly, he identifies a large grouping of 'Evangelical Calvinists' which includes men like Thomas Boston, Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, John Willison and John MacLaurin, whom he describes as popular preachers, zealous for free grace, who although 'unconscious of any deviation from the Westminster Confession ... made a warm personal appeal to their hearers and tried to do justice to the broad statements of an offer of salvation to all'.⁴⁷ It could be argued, indeed it is probably generally assumed, that the majority of the Popular party subscribed to the general theological position of such men, and for that reason it is worthwhile quoting a description of them from a nineteenth century source which Mechie himself gives at length:

... their main object was to establish the warrant of every sinner to whom the Gospel comes to receive and rest upon Christ as his Saviour. This warrant they found, not in the unrevealed, but in the revealed will of God - not in His

eternal decree, but in His inspired Word - not in His secret purpose, but in His public proclamation of grace. They knew that the unrevealed will of God forms no part of the rule either of faith or duty; that His eternal purpose, whatever it may be and however it may regulate His own dispensations towards His creatures, can in no way affect their duty to believe the Gospel ...^{4a}

Mechie's third group he describes as 'liberal Calvinists'. These men, of whom he gives as examples William Leechman, Robert Wallace, George and William Wishart, Patrick Cuming, James Oswald and William Hamilton, are to be distinguished from the younger Moderates such as William Robertson, John Home, and Alexander Carlyle. Theirs was a pragmatic position: they did not defend the full Christian faith in the traditional sense but argued that the divine origin and authority of Christianity could be inferred from its intrinsic excellence and the great benefits it had conferred on mankind. They conceded considerable grounds to the deists in their apologetic and could be regarded as accommodating the rationalistic spirit of the age, as showing reserve on various areas of confessional orthodoxy, and as trying to show their contemporaries that Christianity was intellectually respectable. Through all this, they maintained an earnest and devout piety. Finally, Mechie identifies a fourth group, Professor Simpson and his students at Glasgow, whom he rather generally regards as 'Arians'. This group, which is much less well defined and documented, he feels adopted a speculative approach to theology and were influenced by Samuel Clarke's Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, published in London in 1712, and by the deists. Mechie argues that Simpson's students showed

little regard for the Westminster Confession and saw their subscription to it as no more than a formal act of adherence required by the State in return for the establishment of the Church. He describes their theology as probably of an Arian or Pelagian tendency but regards their general attitude as humanistic or moralistic.⁴⁹

Mechie's analysis provides a sound, if brief, starting point for an analysis of later theological developments. Its significance lies in its recognition of the existence of divisions within the evangelical wing of the Church. If one bears in mind that such diverse men as Willison, Maclaurin, William Wishart, and Cuming all voted solidly for the Popular position at the General Assembly from 1740 on, a picture of potential tension in the Popular party arising from theological differences immediately begins to emerge. Furthermore, although Mechie does not bring the Robertsonian Moderates into his analysis, he does provide hints of what Popular writers, especially in the earlier years of the period of this study, may well have seen themselves as combating in their apologetical works.

Mechie's identification of theological differences within the Popular party indicates the need to examine the theology of the party in much greater detail than has been done hitherto. Such an examination will show not only the nature of the variety of opinion within it but will also serve to delineate any distinctive characteristics which may exist.

Mechie gave an introduction but any attempt to re-appraise the diversity of the theology or any other aspect of the Popular party in the latter half of the eighteenth century, however, must first examine and assess the significance of Ian D.L. Clark's interpretation of Popular theology. His concern is, of course, to examine the place of the Moderates. He argues that the characteristics of their theology are to be found at their clearest in the three areas of the relationship between natural and revealed religion, the person and work of Christ, and the connection between faith and works. Here, he maintains, the teaching of the Moderates is most distinguishable from that of orthodoxy which he defines as 'the dominant High Calvinist interpretation of the Westminster Confession'.⁵⁰ There are, of course, several important qualifications which Clark makes concerning the extent to which the varying approaches and pre-occupations of the two schools can be differentiated. He suggests that the 'scaffolding of Moderate thought' affected even the Evangelicals in that the Moderates' appeal to natural religion to establish the veracity and reasonableness of Scripture was reflected in Evangelical thought at the time, as was their pre-occupation with the ethical content of religion, the existence of an attenuated version of traditional Christology, and the development of a revised estimate of human nature and the effects of the Fall and Original Sin.⁵¹ He goes on to maintain that doctrines preached from Scottish pulpits cannot be rigidly classified as either 'Moderate' or 'Evangelical', and suggests that there was a feeling among eighteenth century Scottish

theologians that unity had to be preserved if need be at the expense of rigid doctrinal orthodoxy. He believes that theological debate within the Calvinist framework was increasingly replaced by an apologetic directed against contemporary opposition or indifference to the basic doctrines of Christianity, and that in general theologians either agreed to differ about details or else concentrated exclusively on the things that still united them.⁵² How far these qualifications are in fact borne out by an examination of Popular theology is less easily determined than the existence at presbytery level of less division between the Moderates and Evangelicals than is often believed.⁵³

In summary, Clark categorises Popular theology as reacting against a Moderate theology which gave too great a place to the role of Reason as the source of faith and which erected it into a standard of right and wrong through the role of the conscience.⁵⁴ As a result of this, there developed significant differences between the two schools on the Atonement, since the Popular view was that the Moderates rejected any element of 'propitiation' or 'substitution' in Christ's work. This led to the Moderates being charged with 'Socinianism'.⁵⁵ He sees the Popular criticism of the Moderate position as harping on significant omissions rather than on positive errors, and as reflecting a lack of balance in the Popular presentation of the concepts of 'Saviour' and 'Pattern' in the Incarnation. Clark concludes his analysis of Moderate theology by asserting that the real achievements of

eighteenth century Moderatism are to be seen in the nature of nineteenth century Evangelicalism. The Moderate objectives of a balanced presentation of the Christian faith, belief linked with practice, doctrine linked with behaviour, and the correction of what he sees as the imbalance of seventeenth century Scottish Calvinism were all incorporated in the nineteenth century Evangelical Revival.⁵⁶

While Clark's analysis of Scottish theology from 1740 to 1805 is among the fullest and most comprehensive to date, there are five reasons for treating it with reserve as an adequate analysis of Popular theology in the period. In the first place, it is based on an examination of the works of a small number of less than twenty identifiable Moderates, and on only seven readily identifiable Popular authors: Andrew Crosbie, John Love, John McLaurin, Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood, John Russel, Thomas Walker, and John Willison. In addition, Clark confined his consultation of the works of Andrew Crosbie and Thomas Walker to those on patronage, and added to Moncrieff Wellwood's on the same topic only his biography of John Erskine. Still, Clark cannot be attacked for such extreme selectivity in his sample as Sher has justifiably been.⁵⁷ Secondly, there is an even greater lack of documentation of the Popular works which he used for his analysis of that side of the debate. Thirdly, Clark does not take into account the possibility of divisions within the Popular party which reflect or are reflected in their theological positions. He did not have the benefit of Mechie's or Sefton's work on the

earlier part of the period, but it is nonetheless a defect of significance in his analysis of Popular theological thought. Fourthly, his analysis is made from the Moderate perspective, and of necessity reflects Moderate concerns, positions and preoccupations. Lastly, there is the fact that such a methodology reflects polemical interests in a way which could well obscure the actual pattern of development of theology in the period.⁵² Possibly much of what was written by Popular theologians should be regarded as a development of strands already present in Scottish theology, such as stress on the distinction between the spiritual and ecclesiastical functions of the Church, an issue which had been one of the great preoccupations of Scottish theology since the Reformation. For all that, though, one of the tasks of any thorough survey of eighteenth century Popular theological writing must be to establish the extent of the validity of Clark's interpretation of the subject.

The general neglect of Popular or Evangelical theology continued until recently. Sher accepted Clark's views on Popular theology and noted in his essay that nothing in the way of modern scholarship existed on the party. J.G.A. Pocock highlighted this deficiency in his review of Sher's work in the Journal of Modern History though he, too, saw the task as that of producing a history of the Popular party 'in its confrontation with Moderatism and its relations with the Enlightenment'.⁵³ In 1985 an article appeared in the Records of the Scottish Church Historical Society by Dr. Friedhelm Voges. Entitled 'Moderate and

Evangelical Thinking in the later Eighteenth Century: Differences and Shared Attitudes', the article is based on sections of the author's work on Thomas Chalmers.⁶⁰ Its origins in a study of the thought of Chalmers leads also to a concentration on the last few years of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth which further limits its application to any earlier period.

Early on in the work, Voges attempts to come to terms with the problem of definition: 'What was an Evangelical?' The answer he gives is vague: the terms 'Evangelical' and 'Moderate' relate to being for or against patronage, or to the 'way people thought'. He then discusses the two definitions in terms of the 'ideal Moderate' and the 'ideal Evangelical'. Although he admits that the 'ideal types' are not necessarily typical after all, he defines Moderatism as embodying the valuing of 'culture and education' and carrying 'this valuation into the realm of theology'. On the other hand, Evangelicals 'liked to point out that it was the gospel which contributed to make men civilized, not the other way round'.⁶¹ It was 'the peculiar glory of Christianity that it is adapted alike to the learned and to the unlearned'.⁶² Every man was therefore able to decide for himself in matters of religion, which belief necessitated opposition to patronage. Voges, in other words, falls into the common error of defining Evangelicalism in terms of patronage and Moderate theological preoccupations, not on its own terms. Having adopted this position, however, Voges then proceeds to delineate two

wings of the Evangelical party and in doing so draws attention to the second weakness in his work: the limited range of sources on which it is based. He divides the party into two groups: those 'conservatives whose thinking remained firmly in the past' and was rooted in the covenant era; and those, like John Erskine, Andrew Hunter, or Nicholas Sloan, who realised that the former age was over and whose preaching had a renewed urgency. The tone in which these latter men talked differed from the Moderates in that they did not value education in religious matters to the same extent; and their attitude to religious feeling was different in that they stressed 'personal religion' to a much greater extent than did the Moderates. They were concerned with reaching a man through his heart, Voges maintains.⁶³ Such a sweeping distinction, involving such theological profundities, and founded on such a narrow range of evidence, is precipitous to say the least.

In his analysis of alleged common ground between the Moderates and the Evangelicals, potentially the most significant area of his study since Clark was largely concerned with the differences, Voges is similarly unsatisfactory. He identifies four areas of common ground: apologetics or the 'evidences' for Christianity, exegesis, dogmatic theology, and views on politics and church and state,⁶⁴ but not only is his analysis based on less than thirty works for all four areas, it is also heavily dominated by Moderate authors. Such a sample scarcely reflects the overall pattern of Moderate and Popular publication in the

areas he selects.⁶⁵ In fact he identifies only seven Evangelicals in references in support of his argument and indeed for one of his areas of alleged common ground he produces none at all.⁶⁶ Much of what he claims was common to both parties is at odds with what Clark has established as not to be found in the work of Moderate thinkers.⁶⁷

There are limitations on what can be achieved in the space of a journal article, but there are three substantial reservations which should be made concerning Voges' work: it is based on an unduly narrow sample of publications which furthermore is weighted heavily towards the Moderates and towards the last ten to fifteen years of the century; it fails to establish that alleged common views were in fact held by significant numbers of members of both parties; and much of what is said concerning the Moderates is at odds with Clark's much more detailed analysis.

Modern scholarship, therefore, has produced no really adequate analysis of the Popular party in the second half of the eighteenth century. Mechie's analysis of 'The Theological Climate in Early Eighteenth Century Scotland' established the existence of significant theological differences within the evangelical wing of the Church at the beginning of the period under consideration, but the article ended too soon to take into account key figures who dominated the party in the second half of the century. He identified, too, amongst a non-evangelical

grouping, at least one figure who consistently voted for the Popular party at the General Assembly. Mechie has therefore posed at least two questions which this study will attempt to take up: the nature of divisions and tensions within the Popular party, and the question of the extent to which the term 'Popular party' has theological and doctrinal validity. Clark's work on Moderatism and the Moderate party, while it gives the most valuable insights to date on Popular theology, does so on the basis of an examination of Moderate theological interests and preoccupations, and pays no attention to areas not dealt with in Moderate publications. There is, therefore, no alternative to turning to the works of the Popular thinkers themselves if we are to begin fully to understand the nature of the eighteenth century Church of Scotland.

NOTES: CHAPTER 1.

1. Richard B. Sher, Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment. The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh, (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 353.
2. ibid., p. 351.
3. e.g., W.M. Hetherington, The History of the Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1841); Gavin Struthers, The History of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of the Relief Church, (Glasgow, 1843); David Scott, Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church: till its Disruption and Union with the Free Church of Scotland in 1852, (Edinburgh, 1886); James Walker, Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 1560-1750, (Edinburgh, 1872); G.B. Ryley and J.M. McCandlish, Scotland's Free Church, (Edinburgh, 1893).
4. Scott, op.cit., p. 13.
5. Struthers, op.cit., pp. 18, 66, 79-80, 121, 226.
6. These matters have received recent analysis in Richard A. Reisen, '"Higher Criticism" in the Free Church Fathers', Records of the Scottish Church History Society, 20, 2 (1979), pp. 119-142; and A.C. Cheyne, The Transforming of the Kirk. Victorian Scotland's Religious Revolution, (Edinburgh, 1983).
7. The Church History of Scotland, from the Commencement of the Christian Era to the Present Century, (2 vols.), (Edinburgh, 1859).
8. e.g., Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland, (London, 1872); John Tulloch, 'The Church of the Eighteenth Century, 1707 to 1800 A.D.', in St. Giles Lectures, (First Series), The Scottish Church from the Earliest Times to 1881, (Edinburgh, 1881); John Macpherson, A History of the Church of Scotland from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, (Paisley and London, 1901); William Law Mathieson, The Awakening of Scotland, (Glasgow, 1910). The preface to Macpherson's work gives an indication of how the Union of 1900 affected historical scholarship.
9. e.g., Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, The Scottish

- Church, 1688-1843. The Age of the Moderates, (Edinburgh, 1973), pp.80, 100-101, 138, 156.
10. William Ferguson, Scotland: 1689 to the Present, (Edinburgh, 1968), p. 420.
 11. Cunningham, op.cit., vol. 2, p.538.
 12. ibid., vol. 2, p.446. See also, for example, the debate over relief for Roman Catholics in the 1770s, pp.545-549.
 13. ibid., vol. 2, pp.466, 504.
 14. In this episode, the support of the theatre by the Moderate leadership, clerical attendance at it, and the author of Douglas, John Home, the minister of Athelstaneford, came under attack. See below, pp.307, 311-314.
 15. Cunningham, op.cit., vol. 2, p.511. It is interesting to note that an attack on this approach was made as early as 1888 by James Rankin, A Handbook of the Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1888), p.238.
 16. Cunningham, op.cit., vol. 2, pp.545-549.
 17. op.cit., p.231. Rankin quotes Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland and Thomas McCrie's Story of the Scottish Church as examples of Free Church partisanship, and an anonymous Scottish Kirk as displaying a United Presbyterian bias. See also, pp. xviii-xix, 238.
 18. e.g., Macpherson, op.cit.; John Mackay, The Church in the Highlands, or, the Progress of Evangelical Religion in Gaelic Scotland, 563-1843, (London, 1914); John Ritchie, Reflections on Scottish Church History, (Edinburgh, 1927); Andrew J. Campbell, Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, 1707-1929, (Paisley, 1930).
 19. (Glasgow, 1910), pp.145, 147, 157, 197-199, 229-230. See also Cunningham, op.cit., vol.2, p.446; Struthers, op.cit., p.98; Thomas Somerville, My Own Life and Times, (Edinburgh, 1861), p.106.
 20. Nathaniel Morren, Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1759-1766, 2 vols., (Edinburgh, 1838-1840).
 21. Notable examples of this are Stanley's Lectures on the

- History of the Church of Scotland (1872), Rankin's Handbook of the Church of Scotland (1888), and Macpherson's History of the Church of Scotland (1901).
22. Review of Sher, op.cit., in Journal of Modern History, 58, 4 (December 1986), pp.912-914.
 23. N.T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (eds.), Scotland in the Age of Improvement: Essays in Scottish History in the Eighteenth Century, (Edinburgh, 1970), pp.200-224.
 24. Records of the Scottish Church History Society, 16 (1969), pp.1-22, 19 (1977), pp.203-216.
 25. Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment, (Edinburgh, 1985); 'Moderates, Managers and Popular Politics in Mid-Eighteenth Century Edinburgh: The Drysdale "Bustle" of the 1760s', in John Dwyer, Roger A. Mason and Alexander Murdoch (eds.), New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1982), pp.179-209.
 26. Norman Macdougall (ed.), Church, Politics and Society: Scotland, 1408-1929, (Edinburgh, 1983), pp.197-220.
 27. Sher, op.cit.,; Alexander Murdoch, 'The People Above': Politics and Administration in Mid-Eighteenth Century Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1980).
 28. John MacInnes, The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688-1800, (Aberdeen, 1951), esp. pp.79-196; A. Fawcett, The Cambuslang Revival: The Scottish Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century, (London, 1971), esp. pp.182-209.
 29. op.cit., p.228. Ferguson's analysis is to be found on pp.102-132, 226-233.
 30. J.H.S. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland, (London, 1960); G.D. Henderson, The Church of Scotland. A Short History, (Edinburgh, 1955(?)), which was published by the Church of Scotland's Youth Committee, draws largely on Struther's History of the Relief Church, Campbell's Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland, Alexander Carlyle's Autobiography, and Mathieson's Awakening of Scotland; Drummond and Bulloch, op.cit. The present author's

- unpublished M. Litt. dissertation 'Evangelicals in Eighteenth Century Scotland: the Presbytery of Stirling, 1740-1805', (Thesis submitted in part fulfilment for the degree of M.Litt. in Scottish Studies, University of Stirling, 1981), may perhaps be regarded as the first recent attempt to put understanding of the Popular party onto a firmer footing.
31. Kenneth J. Logue, Popular Disturbances in Scotland, 1780-1815, (Edinburgh, 1979), pp.146, 176.
 32. John Stuart Shaw, The Management of Scottish Society, 1707-1764. Power, Nobles, Lawyers, Edinburgh Agents and English Influences, (Edinburgh, 1983), p.99.
 33. Jane Rendall, The Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment, (London, 1978), p.207.
 34. Anand C. Chitnis, The Scottish Enlightenment. A Social History, (London, 1976), pp.43-74.
 35. Stewart J. Brown, Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland, (Oxford, 1982), pp.46-48.
 36. ibid., p.385. It is interesting to note that Brown seems to have used a selection of the nineteenth century works already cited, with only one addition.
 37. Callum G. Brown, The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730, (London, 1987), p.16.
 38. ibid., p.30.
 39. ibid., p.248.
 40. Macdougall, op.cit., pp.197-220.
 41. ibid., p.198.
 42. Walker, op.cit.; Macleod, op.cit., (Edinburgh, 1943).
 43. Ian D.L. Clark, 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party in the Church of Scotland, 1752-1805', (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1963), pp.8, 18.
 44. op.cit., (Edinburgh, 1946), pp.193, 207, 211, 213, 219, 220.
 45. ibid., p.193.
 46. Duncan Shaw (ed.), Reformation and Revolution. Essays Presented to the Very Reverend Principal Emeritus Hugh Watt, D.D., D.Litt. on the Sixtieth Anniversary of His Ordination, (Edinburgh, 1967), pp.258-272.

47. ibid., p. 268.
48. J. Buchanan, The Doctrine of Justification, (Edinburgh, 1867), pp. 187ff, quoted in Shaw, op.cit., p. 268.
49. Shaw, op.cit., pp. 271-272. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Mechie refers to C.G. McCrie as suggesting, in the British and Foreign Evangelical Review, 33 (1884), p. 715, that the first group, the 'Scholastic Calvinists', could become in a later generation members of the fourth group because their tendency to Hyper-Calvinism could lead to preaching of duty and morality since otherwise their preaching would concern only some of their hearers. ibid., p. 272.
50. Clark, 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party', p. vii.
51. ibid., p. 204.
52. ibid., pp. 205, 207.
53. See, for example, McIntosh, op.cit., pp. 54-64, 77.
54. Clark, op.cit., pp. 200, 203, 229-230, 251-252, 281.
55. ibid., pp. 236, 294-295.
56. ibid., pp. 259-264, 270, 370.
57. See William Ferguson's review of Sher's Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment in History, 72 (October 1987), pp. 530-531, in which Sher is criticised for exaggerating the importance he attaches to the five Edinburgh literati he selects and for neglecting luminaries of the Scottish Enlightenment not connected with Edinburgh.
58. This is not to deny that there was a controversialist element in later eighteenth Scottish theology.
59. Journal of Modern History, 58, 4, (December 1986), p. 912.
60. Records of the Scottish Church History Society, 22, 2 (1985), pp. 141-157 (Hereinafter, Voges). The work on Chalmers is Das Denken von Thomas Chalmers im-kirchen und sozialgeschichtlichen Kontext, (Frankfurt, 1984).
61. Voges, p. 142.
62. John Erskine in R. Heron, Account of the Proceedings and Debate in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 27 May 1796, (Edinburgh, 1796), p. 34, quoted in Voges, p. 142.

63. Voges, pp. 146-147.
64. ibid., p. 147.
65. See below, Chapter 2.
66. Voges, pp. 148-157.
67. Clark, 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party', e.g., pp. 200, 203, 251-252, 259-264, 270.

CHAPTER 2: WHO WERE THE POPULAR PARTY?

Recent studies in Scottish ecclesiastical history in the eighteenth century have shown tensions and divisions within the Popular party and so have raised the whole question of the theological and ecclesiastical validity of the term.¹ While acceptance that the term is essentially related to opposition to patronage has the merit of providing a simple test to determine who belonged to the Popular party, namely, those who were opposed to patronage in the Church, detailed identification of adherents by this means is possible only for relatively small numbers. Nevertheless, confident assertions about the relative strengths of Popular and Moderate numbers, about their geographical distribution and, perhaps most important of all, about their theological unity, have then been made without the supporting evidence they require. Clark, in fact, has suggested that the task of thorough-going identification is well-nigh impossible:

much laborious research remains to be done on the individual composition of individual presbyteries in our period. It is improbable that an exact and accurate analysis of the party affiliations of the clergy and elders in the Church could ever be achieved, since the evidence upon which it would be based is now beyond recall, and many ministers and elders were not irrevocably aligned with either party.²

In spite of this view, the term has been used to indicate opponents of patronage in such a way that it is commonly assumed that there is a correlation between being against patronage and being an evangelical. In fact, Sher is unusual among modern

historians in recognising the unsatisfactory nature of this assumed correlation, though he sees the issue as little more than a terminological problem.³

The detailed and laborious investigation of presbytery records may well be the only way to obtain the conclusive evidence needed, but gaining it would require time and resources beyond the reach of an individual research worker. Clark devised a manageable way of providing what he deemed to be a tolerably reliable solution by making a number of 'test' analyses of the majority of presbyteries for the years 1755, 1780, and 1805 on which he based a number of crucial conclusions for his identification of Moderate and Popular men throughout the whole period. He refrained from supplying the evidence for his identification of individual ministers on the reasonable ground that it was too bulky and diffuse for inclusion in a dissertation, but he did provide the detailed evidence for his identifications for the Presbyteries of Paisley and Perth in 1780, and for that of Stirling in 1805.⁴ Although it is asserted that the analysis of presbyteries was based on presbytery minutes, contemporary newspapers and magazines, sermons, pamphlets, legal proceedings, parish histories and private correspondence, most of the evidence which Clark supplies is from the voting records at the General Assembly. Within these limitations, there is no reason to doubt the general validity of his figures, but his methodology has several weaknesses.

In the first place, there could be a wide discrepancy in the identifiable allegiances of members of a presbytery between the three years studied.⁵ Secondly, as Clark himself admits, a powerful and persuasive Moderate could sway less-committed members of a presbytery to his view, thus producing voting patterns not necessarily accurately depicting the fundamental views of the rank and file presbyters.⁶ Consequently, an overall view of the disputes and allegiances within the Church has emerged weighted towards the issues which led to conflict at the Assembly and which correspondingly underestimates the significance of more local and mundane matters. The contrast between disputes at the Assembly and at the presbytery are evident from an examination of the minutes of the Presbytery of Stirling and the specific identification of the sympathies of a high proportion of its members between 1740 and 1805.⁷ Far from being the battleground between Moderate and Popular members which Clark suggests,⁸ for the major part of the period the erstwhile Moderates in the Presbytery voted consistently for the same motions as did their Popular counterparts. Almost total unanimity existed between the two parties until the arrival of two exceedingly hard-line Moderates towards the end of the period. Their impact virtually nullified Presbytery decisions by constant appeals to the General Assembly and its Commission, and so sapped Popular morale that proposals were not opposed because it was felt to be pointless.⁹ An attempt was called for, then, to devise another means of identification than Clark's.

A stringent test of adherence to the Popular party would seem to be the preparedness of a minister or university professor to dissent from a decision of the General Assembly to enforce an unpopular presentation to a congregation, or to dissent from the Assembly's rejection of an anti-patronage proposal.¹⁰ Those so identified may be regarded as the hard-core of the Popular party. Such a device, applied to the period between 1740 and 1800, identified 271 adherents of the Popular party. This, of course, must be regarded as an underestimate of the strength of the party for the use of Assembly voting patterns, as provided by the Scots Magazine, excludes those who may well have opposed patronage but who were not present at an Assembly when such measures were debated.¹¹ In addition, the Fasti were analysed for identification of further members of the Popular party on the basis of evidence of their opposition to patronage and produced another 41 ministers, giving a total of 312.¹²

Attitudes to patronage, however, was a narrow basis for classification. It did not give the wide view of the nature of the Popular ministry which was necessary for an examination of their general characteristics. One way of gaining a less political identification of ministers and a broader understanding of their intellectual, religious, ecclesiastical and secular outlooks was by an analysis of the published works of the ministers as listed chiefly in the Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae.¹³ The 312 ministers identified as belonging to the Popular party on the basis of their attitudes to patronage, were found to have 318

publications attributed to them. Classification of the 318 publications showed that they fell into sixteen subject areas but were concentrated in nine. These were doctrine, religious experience and devotion, biblical exposition, ecclesiastical issues, political issues, the Christian life, civil and religious liberty, the relationship between Church and State, and 'Sermons'.

Given the still relatively small number of ministers identified and the rigid means adopted for identification - opposition to patronage - an attempt was made to classify more ministers on the assumption that those who wrote on the topics noted might be assumed to be adherents of the Popular party. Fifty ministers producing sixty-four works were provisionally identified on that basis, but the method (and the ministers and their publications identified by it) were rejected for several reasons. First, it involved an element of circular reasoning in that works thus identified as Popular tended to strengthen the criteria by which they themselves were being judged; secondly, there was a pressure to assume that 'evangelical' works were of Popular authorship; thirdly, it became clear that a small but none the less significant number of apparently Popular authors had voted for Moderate measures at the Assembly; and, lastly, the subsequent survey of Moderate publications detailed below made it manifest that the sixteen areas of Popular publication were not the preserve of that party, and that it was unsatisfactory to try

to attempt an assessment of an author's party affiliation purely on the basis of subject matter or title of his work.

To provide a contrast with the works published by Popular ministers, the Fasti were analysed to enable Moderate ministers to be identified. This was done on the basis of support for the enforcement of unpopular presentations or for pro-patronage measures at the Assembly, or the publication of clearly pro-patronage publications. Using mainly the Fasti, 252 were so identified.¹⁴ Their publications were then catalogued and incorporated in the list of Popular subject matter, requiring the addition of four more categories to the initial Popular list, namely those of medicine, science, secular history and topography, and philosophy.

The identification of ministers by voting patterns at the Assembly enabled an attempt to be made at a classification of the general party complexion of each presbytery,¹⁵ and the analysis of the subject matter of publication was covered by presbytery,¹⁶ by presbytery allegiance as determined above,¹⁷ and by region.¹⁸ The classification of presbyteries was made on the basis of the number of ministers identifiable by voting patterns plus the Fasti evidence, as were the other categories. Absolute confirmation of this analysis of course would require detailed analysis of presbytery records, but in view of the enormous nature of such a task, however, it seemed a reasonable objective to attempt to delineate the overall patterns which emerged. Such

an undertaking, in fact, goes far to throw a very considerable degree of light on the shape of the party divisions that existed in the eighteenth century Church.

A common assumption made by Scottish historians when discussing the Church of Scotland in the eighteenth century is that the strength of the Popular party was based in the West. The present analysis does not bear this out. Of the eighty-two presbyteries in the Church, those showing a clear preponderance of identifiable Popular ministers from 1740 to 1800 total twenty-eight, that is, almost exactly one-third. Those with identifiable Moderate dominance total twenty-one. A further eighteen were evenly balanced throughout the period, with predominance changing from time to time. For another sixteen it is impossible to ascribe affiliations owing to inadequate or nonexistent information. Most of these last were small or remote, but two - Kelso and Earlston - were in the Borders, and six were in the North-East.¹⁹ Several of the most important presbyteries were relatively evenly divided for much of the period. These were Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Linlithgow, Dalkeith, Dumfries, and Dumbarton. These ascriptions can have limited value when a presbytery was involved with a particular issue which directly affected it. For example, the apparently evenly-balanced Presbytery of Linlithgow was dominated in the early 1750's by anti-patronage ministers, seemingly led by John Adams of Falkirk, as evidenced by the Presbytery's position over the Torphichen Case in 1751.²⁰

The classification of presbyteries by voting patterns and the additional information in the Fast1 can be compared with Clark's conclusions. It led to the identification of 312 Popular ministers and 252 Moderates, a total of 564. Clark identified some 600 or some 30% of the clergy between 1752 and 1805.²¹ Of these, he classified 336 as Moderates. The difference between Clark and the present work is in the classification of presbyteries which follows. Of the forty-seven presbyteries analysed by both there is complete agreement about party dominance in only twenty-eight.²² Obviously, it is impossible to compare the two sets of figures with any degree of accuracy since Clark's method does not preclude the same man being counted twice or even thrice in the period 1752-1805. It tends also to militate against the inclusion of ministers who were not commissioners to the Assembly in the years being analysed.²³ There does seem, however, to be no reason for assuming that differences between the two methods invalidate the present method of investigation since there is agreement for most presbyteries in which more than a handful of ministers can be identified, with a few notable exceptions such as Paisley, Haddington, and Dunfermline.²⁴ Furthermore, Clark, too, accepts the contention that an active adherent of either party could influence less-committed fellow presbyters, as has been borne out in the case of the Presbytery of Stirling.²⁵ Study of the same Presbytery also indicates that, while the total numbers of Popular and Moderate ministers are greater than ^{can} be identified on the basis of voting patterns at the Assembly and the Fast1, the relative proportions of the two

parties are markedly similar.²⁶ The conclusion, therefore would seem to be that without an exhaustive analysis of presbytery records, neither Clark's approach nor the present one can be regarded as conclusive; both should be seen as having limitations of a different nature. The present method, though, goes further than anything previously attempted in illuminating the nature of the Popular party. It throws light on the geographical distribution of the party and it enables the identification of the ideological interests of the adherents of the party and the influence which party conflict may have had on those interests.

The most striking feature observable, however, is the wide geographic distribution of Popular strength. Of the twenty-seven Popular presbyteries, five were from the south-east, six were from the west, five were from central Scotland and Fife, and eight were from the northern Highlands. This compares with three Moderate presbyteries in the south-east, six in the west, two in Fife, six in the north-east, and three in the northern Highlands. Presbyteries for which affiliation is uncertain come predominantly from the north-east (six), the Northern Isles (four), the Borders (two), and the south-western Highlands (three).²⁷ It would seem clear, then, that it is impossible to sustain a simple regional analysis of Popular and Moderate strength. Beyond that, however, it would seem difficult to go. There is little scope for further analysis of the type which can be employed for the 1851 Religious Census to investigate, for example, the impact of industrialisation on the Church, or the

patterns to be found in larger towns. What can be done, though, is to note that even in the erstwhile strongholds of one party, the strength and influence of the other could be considerable. This was the case in the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Ayr.²⁸ In other words, all the indications are that in few presbyteries, if any, did one party even temporarily gain an absolute stranglehold on a presbytery.

If presbyteries are grouped into the three categories of rural, rural with a significant burgh or burghs, and urbanised, there is, however, a trend towards Popular dominance with increased urban influence in all presbyteries.²⁹ It would be unwise on the basis of the present criteria, however, to postulate any direct influence of a burgh middle class on the eighteenth century Popular party in the way that is apparent in the Disruption of the nineteenth century, since the sample is clerically based. The possibility remains, though, that burgh pressures may have influenced ~~in~~ both the selection of ministers and their likelihood of voting against patronage at Assembly level.

What overall conclusions can be drawn from this investigation of the party allegiance of presbyteries? The answer would appear to be the relatively simple assertion that the Popular party displayed a greater geographical diversity than has hitherto been supposed. It was clearly spread throughout the country, it was probably the dominant party in a majority of

presbyteries, and it was more likely to be dominant in a presbytery where there was an urban centre of local significance.

The analysis of publications in the present study does, however, provide a further illumination of the Popular party, and indeed of the Church as a whole, than has been available so far. It makes possible an attempt to analyse the intellectual interests of the Church by presbytery, by presbytery allegiance, and by region.

Analysis of the publications of the Popular party revealed sixteen categories of topics on which they wrote. As noted earlier,³⁰ these categories may be further divided into nine main areas, namely, doctrinal issues; spiritual experience and devotion; biblical exposition; ecclesiastical issues; political issues; the Christian life, including questions of morality, manners, and the problem of religious 'infidelity'; civil and religious liberty; the relationship between the individual Christian and the State; and those published merely as 'Sermons'. Apart from 'Sermons', the fourth of these, ecclesiastical issues, was the ^{wide} largest and includes works published on a number of areas, including patronage, heresy, Popery, the nature of the ministry, missions, Moderatism, the nature of public worship, revivals, covenants, religious education, stipend augmentation, and a small flurry of works just after the end of the period on the Leslie Case of 1805 in which the Moderates opposed the appointment of a doctrinally suspect layman who was supported by

the Popular party, John Leslie, to the chair of Mathematics at Edinburgh . A statistical analysis shows that within this area of ecclesiastical issues the question of patronage was the most common followed by those of revival, missions, heresy, Popery, and religious education, followed by topics such as stipend augmentation, Moderatism, and the four minor issues of public worship, the Leslie Case, the nature of the ministry, and covenants.³¹

Experiential or devotional and evangelical works formed the largest group and within it the two most common topics were exhortations to evangelism and preparation for death. A wide range of devotional topics were covered. Doctrinal works and expository analysis of scripture passages or commentaries on books of the Bible amount to roughly the same total combined as do those of a more devotional or evangelical nature. Apart from these theological publications, however, there was also a significant interest, or rather concern, about the issues of heresy or infidelity in the Church, and morality and manners in general, two problems which were held to be closely connected with defection from the faith.³² The extent to which 'defence of the faith' in the eighteenth century Church of Scotland came to mean defence against 'infidelity' can be seen when the seven general apologetical works are compared with the ~~the~~ nineteen dealing with 'infidelity' and heresy within the Church. Nevertheless, these publications amount to a smaller number than might have been expected. The final areas in which substantial

publication occurred concerned the issues of civil and religious liberty and church discipline, and the national establishment of religion. The former subjects were provoked by the political issues arising from the American War of Independence and, to a lesser extent, from the French Revolution, since works in the area appeared from the 1780s onwards. The former event was linked to the denial of religious liberty by the Moderate-dominated General Assembly. The issue of the national establishment of religion came to the fore as a result of the growth of the Secession churches and of the attempt by the Popular party to enforce the 'constitutional' position regarding patronage in the Assembly.

Compared to Popular publication, Moderate activity in most areas was substantially less.²³ The exceptions were literary works where Moderate works outnumbered Popular by almost 12:1, agriculture where the ratio was 10:1, and on social issues where, however, the total number of publications ~~both~~ both parties was very small. Areas where roughly equal interest was aroused were morality and manners, and ecclesiastical history and biography. There was little Moderate interest in doctrine, apologetics, and relatively few publications in the area of devotional and evangelistic matters. 'Infidelity' does not appear as a Moderate topic. Very little Moderate publication existed in the areas of heresy, Popery, or church discipline, or on the questions of national religion or the nature of the ecclesiastical

establishment. There was no Moderate publication at all in the areas of missions or revivals.

The first, inescapable conclusion to be drawn is that Moderate ministers were less likely to write on theological, religious, or ecclesiastical topics than were Popular ones. Out of the 299 Moderate works included in the survey, 154 were concerned with secular topics. Another fifty-six can only be classified as sermons and a significant number of these contained little of a theological or religious nature.²⁴ In ecclesiastical matters, only patronage, the defence of Moderatism, and the Leslie Case produced more than isolated works. Secondly, it is clear that the picture, perhaps even the caricature, of the Moderate ministers as men of the literary world, or of that of the arts and sciences in general, has some foundation on a national basis. Neither the relative strengths of the parties in a presbytery nor its geographical location made much difference to Moderate interests. Whereas the Popular party enjoyed a relatively wide geographical origin for its publications, the Moderate party relied disproportionately on the East of Scotland. Even the Synod of Perth and Stirling produced almost as many works by Moderate ministers as the two western synods combined. The only other areas of noteworthy Moderate publication were the Synods of Fife and of Sutherland and Caithness which each produced around half as many works as that of Perth and Stirling. In summary, the Moderates were overshadowed in religious and ecclesiastical works by their Popular opponents.

If the information on Popular publications is examined in terms of party allegiances of the presbytery of origin, there are some links between which party was dominant and the subject matter of what was published.³⁵ The majority of works of exposition, twenty-one out of thirty, were published in Popular presbyteries. It was from evenly-balanced presbyteries that the majority of works appeared dealing with patronage, though Edinburgh, Lochmaben, Penpont, and Stirling were the only ones to produce more than one work on the subject. It is possible that patronage and the implementation of the authority of the General Assembly were matters of concern mainly in presbyteries where the problem was likely to have crucial significance for the balance of power. A clear majority, for one party or the other, seems to have defused the issue. A possible interpretation of this is the very interesting one that the issue of patronage was seen as pressing only if it had significance at local level. Such a possibility might well have contributed to the difficulties which the Popular party experienced in its attempt to mount an effective opposition to the Moderates at the Assembly.³⁶ A further possible implication is that the eighteenth century Church was much more locally-orientated than historians have consistently assumed, and that what happened at the Assembly was much less important than has been supposed to have been the case.

In the subject matter of Popular publications there are some interesting regional differences. In the East, the Synods of Lothian and Tweeddale, and Merse and Teviotdale, and in the West,

those of Dumfries and Galloway, and Glasgow and Ayr accounted for slightly over two-thirds of all the Popular works published in the period. The Presbytery of Edinburgh alone accounted for eighty-three titles as compared to the total of eighty-five for the whole Synod of Glasgow and Ayr. Both regions contributed somewhat over one-third each of the total Popular publications. Within these overall figures, the debate over missions provoked only two publications in the East as compared to five in the West, and the issue of Moderatism gained its three works from the West. The West produced three works on civil and religious liberty compared to the one from the East. A curious contrast between the two regions arises in that in the West five works were published in the areas of apologetics and heresy but none in the East, whereas in the area of infidelity, morality and manners the East only exceeded the West by thirty-two works to twenty-eight. The most striking comparison, however, lies in the way the East completely overshadowed the West in the area of secular publication. Including in this category ecclesiastical history and biography, the East was the origin of twenty-seven works as opposed to the West's ten. Political matters gained twice as many titles in the East as they did in the West, the numbers being ten to five. The issue of stipend augmentation was covered by four works from the East but none in the West. In other areas, however, the proportions from the two regions were evenly balanced. In general, it is clear that the secular impulse was much stronger in the East than in the West. This may perhaps have been due to the impact of local Moderates and their secular

interests influencing the Popular men in a more secular direction than was typical of the party as a whole.

Several general conclusions may be drawn from these patterns of publication in a study of the Popular party in the years 1740 to 1805. Assuming that there was a correlation between publication and esteem and influence, it would appear that there was a much wider spread of Popular dominance than has generally been believed. A clear Popular pre-eminence in the area of publication draws attention to the unrepresentative nature of the General Assembly where Moderate control remained almost unshaken on key issues throughout the period. Some elucidation of the nature of this control has occurred in recent years and there is a greater understanding of the mechanisms of Moderate manipulation of the Assembly,²⁷ but it has not yet been reflected in an appreciation of Popular activity in areas of doctrinal, ecclesiastical, ethical, or secular thought. Those who would allege, or imply, that the Moderates dominated the intellectual life of the eighteenth century Church of Scotland have little statistical basis for their allegations.

Several basic deductions may be made about the pattern of Popular publication. First, sermons were the most common form of published work and presumably the most widely read. Secondly, there is little evidence of the publication of systematic expositions of Scripture. If it was the practice in the pulpit, there is little sign of it in what found its way into print.²⁸

And thirdly, while there was some publication in secular areas by Popular ministers, the emphasis was very much on political issues which provoked or were capable of a religious or spiritual interpretation. Such interpretation tended to emphasise the dealings of God with the nations, which reflected on their adherence or otherwise to the principles of Christianity, and on the acknowledgement of divine involvement in the affairs of men.³⁹ At the same time, there was no direct interest in social issues. Such matters were raised in the context of analysis of what may be regarded as the Christian life.⁴⁰

More importantly, examination of the publications calls into question several assumptions about the preoccupations of the Popular party. There is no evidence of a preoccupation with heresy-hunting, there is little evidence of obsession with Popery, and there is no evidence of a widespread desire to respond to Moderate control of the General Assembly by advocacy of the concept of unlimited liberty of conscience. Conversely, there is a commitment to the preservation of the practice of church discipline in its existing shape and manner of execution, and there is an interest in mission work which, while it became more conspicuous towards the end of the period, was apparent from the mid-eighteenth century when its agent was the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. The prospect of the conversion of the world to Christianity was in the minds of several leading members of the Popular party, as is evidenced by several of their more general evangelical works.⁴¹

Most important of all, a survey of Popular publications leads to a clearer understanding of the party. In the first place, patronage was not an important issue even for those who on the evidence of their actions at the General Assembly were most opposed to it. It was the subject of only fifteen Popular works out of the 318 in the present survey. Secondly, only three works deal with Moderatism as such. Thirdly, there was little preoccupation with doctrine, far less a particularly pronounced concern throughout the party to campaign for doctrinal orthodoxy, although that was a matter of deep concern for some important Popular figures such as, for example, John Willison and John Russel.⁴² This lack of concern was reflected in the few works published on the religious instruction of the young, though this need was met by the use of the Westminster Catechisms. Fourthly, there was a predominantly internal apologetic aimed at defections from within the Church rather than defence against attacks from without; there was indeed no systematic attempt to carry the attack to those outside. Of course, as with others, for much of the century, the Popular party deemed Scotland to be a practising Christian society. And finally, the pattern of publication establishes that for the Popular party the matters of paramount concern were not ecclesiastical issues, but spiritual matters. If one bears in mind that much of the content of the works entitled simply 'Sermons' was of a devotional nature, that concern becomes even more obvious. The weight of Popular publication emphasises the strong devotional and, increasingly, the evangelical

preoccupations of the party as a whole.

NOTES: CHAPTER 2.

1. Mechie, op.cit.; Clark, op.cit. Also, see above, pp. 18-20, 21-24.
2. Clark, op. cit., p. 165.
3. Richard B. Sher, Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment. The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh, (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 17.
4. Clark, op.cit., pp.185-189. It is important to note that Clark omits any analysis of the Highland synods of Moray, Ross, Sutherland and Caithness, Glenelg, Orkney, Glenelg, Orkney, and Shetland on the ground that the Moderates made no concerted effort in those synods to establish themselves as a party. He likewise inexplicably omits the key presbyteries of Edinburgh and Glasgow. (ibid., p.180.)
5. See ibid., pp. 182-184.
6. ibid., p. 180.
7. McIntosh, op.cit., pp.83-87.
8. Clark, op. cit., p. 188.
9. McIntosh, op. cit., pp. 51-53, 61-63, 77.
10. For a list of the measures involved, see Appendix A.
11. The names of those involved in these votes can only be approximate since the names given in the Scots Magazine do not always include full identification of ministers and their parishes. Names, however, have been checked with dates of admission and demission of charges and it is likely that the margin of error is not more than ten to twenty out of the total of around 290. For the names of those ministers so identified as members of the Popular party, see Appendix B.
12. For the purposes of this study, a minister is defined as a man who has been ordained to the office of the ministry and who possesses a seat on a presbytery. It thus includes holders of chairs in Divinity faculties at the four Scottish universities but excludes men who had only been licensed to preach the Gospel but who had never been ordained to a pastoral charge in the Church of Scotland.

13. A sample of authors included in the list was compared with the works cited in the British Library Catalogue and it was found that, while there were some discrepancies, these were of a minor nature and did not appear to affect the overall conclusions of this section.
14. I have here to record the kindness of Dr. Ian D.L. Clark for allowing me access to his notes and index of ministers. These enabled me to identify Moderates beyond those so identified in the Fasti. I have accepted his assertion, and have found no evidence to doubt its veracity, that he has incorporated in his Ph.D dissertation, such identification of the party loyalties as can be discovered in holdings of official documents in the Public Record Office in London and the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh.
15. See Appendix C.
16. See Appendix D.
17. See Appendix E.
18. See Appendix F.
19. Indeed, one of the most notable features produced by a survey of the Fasti was the generally colourless nature of the presbyteries in the north-east, and the almost total absence of publication by ministers in that area.
20. Nathaniel Morren, Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1739-1766, vol. 1, (Edinburgh, 1838), pp. 198-209. Also quoted in Sher, op.cit., p. 54. It is difficult to establish the degree of reliability of Morren's Annals since he rarely provides any indication of his unpublished sources. The greater part of his basic account is derived almost verbatim from the Assembly Reports published in the Scots Magazine. I have, therefore, indicated where an account or interpretation offered by Morren is uncorroborated by other evidence. On the Torphichen Case, see below, pp. 407-412.
21. Morren, op.cit., p. vii.
22. As has been noted, Clark excludes presbyteries within five synods in the Highlands, and the presbyteries of Edinburgh

and Glasgow. See n. 4 above.

23. It is, of course, true that the present study's initial identification of Popular men is based on Assembly voting, but the limitation is specifically counterbalanced by the use of the Fasti to supplement it.
24. Clark, op.cit., pp.182-184.
25. Clark, op.cit., p.180; McIntosh, op.cit., pp.51-53, 61-63, 77.
26. McIntosh, op.cit., pp.83-87
27. cf. Anand C. Chitnis, The Scottish Enlightenment. A Social History, (London, 1976), p. 66.
28. See Appendix C.
29. ibid.
30. See above, p.39.
31. For the statistics on which this discussion of publications is based, see Appendices C, D, E, F.
32. See below, pp.176-204.
33. See Appendix E.
34. For example, Robert Robertson (Kirkmichael-in-Strathardail, 1727-1766), Submission to the Present Government Asserted and the Justice of the Revolution Settlement Vindicated, (Edinburgh, 1753); Andrew Richardson (Inverkeithing and Rosyth, 1752-1790), A Free and Arbitrary Government Compared, in two sermons, (Edinburgh, 1746).
35. See Appendix E.
36. See below, chapter 8.
37. Notably, this is due to the work of Richard Sher in his dissertation 'Church, University, Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh, 1720-1793', (Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, University of Chicago, 1979), pp. 29, 52-55, 154; and in his Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment, pp.50-53, 72, 120-147.
38. c.f., Voges, op.cit., pp.151-152.
39. See below, pp.71-81, 234-306.
40. See below, pp.160-165, 297-306.
41. e.g., Alexander Webster, Supernatural Revelation the only

sure Hope of Sinners, (Edinburgh, 1741); John Russel, The Nature of the Gospel Delineated, and its Universal Spread founded upon the Declaration of Jesus Christ: a Sermon, (Ayr, 1796); John Snodgrass, Prospects of Providence respecting the Conversion of the World to Christ, (Paisley, 1796). On this subject, though almost wholly on the later years of the century, see also Gavin White, ' "Highly Preposterous": Origins of Scottish Missions', in Records of the Scottish Church History Society, 19, 2 (1976), pp. 111-124. For an assessment of evangelism in the Highlands which almost totally neglects the activities of the Established Church in the eighteenth century, see Donald E. Meek, 'Evangelical Missionaries in the Early Nineteenth Century Highlands', in Scottish Studies, 28 (1987), pp. 1-34.

42. See below, pp. 176-223.

CHAPTER 3: THE PREMISES OF POPULAR THEOLOGY.

In the introductory chapter on the historiography of the Popular party, it was suggested that the study of its theology required to be given a high priority in future research. There are three reasons for this assertion. First, it is unjustifiable and indeed misguided to claim to understand the activities of any ecclesiastical grouping without identifying the ideology which its members believe to be the rationale behind their actions. The second reason lies in the need to show the theological diversity and tensions within the party,¹ which explain the inability of the party to mount an effective opposition to patronage. This will show the place and importance of the patronage dispute in general. The third reason for examining Popular theology is the suggestion that Popular thought was significantly influenced by Moderate thought.

The attempt to provide a systematic analysis of the theological framework of Popular thought must reflect the perceptions and priorities of members of the party in the later eighteenth century. It should not therefore necessarily follow the patterns of the official subordinate doctrinal standard of the Church, the Westminster Confession of Faith. An analysis framed on its basis might be predisposed to minimise evidence which suggested diversity and tensions within a nominally united Church or group within it. This consideration is especially important in view of the tendencies of most previous works on the

subject to assume that, as well as in its opposition to patronage, the Popular party was also united in its opposition to 'Moderatism', and that it was an 'evangelical' party.

The situation is further complicated by the existence of precise, though unsupported, statements by Clark that Popular thought both differed from and was influenced by that of the Moderates in the three areas of the relationship between natural and revealed religion, the nature of the person and work of Christ, and the connection between faith and works.² The present analysis tries to examine Clark's assertions though without allowing them to dominate or determine its shape. To do so would be to fall into the trap of letting Moderatism dictate the shape of perceptions about the mind of the Popular party.

In view of these considerations, the present analysis of Popular thought has therefore been divided into four areas: the premises of theology, which covers the nature of religious knowledge, the attributes of God, and the nature of man; the nature of sin and salvation, which covers the doctrines of sin, the Atonement, and the nature of faith; Popular views on practical theology which are dealt with in a chapter on the 'Obligations of Faith' which comprises an analysis of thought on the nature of holiness or piety and the requirements of the defence of the faith against unbelief and infidelity; and the wider implications of Popular ideology which are considered in a section entitled 'The Church and the World' which attempts to

present a coherent picture and explanation of Popular attitudes to secular issues.

This approach has the advantage that it recognises confessional standards of the Church which all ministers and elders were sworn to uphold: the nature of religious knowledge covers chapter 1 of the Confession, the attributes of God chapters 2-5, the nature of man chapter 6, the nature of salvation chapters 6-15, the obligations of faith chapters 13 and 15-19, and the church and the world deals with various matters in chapters 20-25. Such a division, furthermore, enables a comparison to be made between the findings of the present study and Clark's three links between Popular and Moderate thought: the relationship between natural and revealed religion is dealt with in the section on the nature of religious knowledge, the person and work of Christ in that on the nature of salvation, and the connection between faith and works in those on the natures of faith and piety.

There is, in addition, a further consideration which justifies this approach. As was noted earlier, both Clark and Voges postulate a clinging to what they regard as outmoded doctrinal rigidity on the part of Popular thinkers, though both fail to provide adequate evidence for their hypothesis.³ The analytical framework adopted in this study, making possible a sustained comparison with both the traditional formulations of doctrinal orthodoxy and the perceived emphases of Moderatism,

provides an implicit verification or otherwise of this hypothesis. It will also make possible the establishment of the lines and extent of influence of 'the spirit of the age' on Scottish Calvinist orthodoxy in the period.

Ultimately, however, any scheme which is followed with a view to providing a systematic analysis of theology should have an inherent coherence and self-justification. In the last analysis, all religious knowledge must derive from one of two sources: from some form of revelation, or from religious truths which can be ascertained by observation or by the process of reasoning. Such latter forms of religious knowledge were known in the eighteenth century as natural religion. It could be maintained that starting from Aquinas, one of the greatest debates in the history of Christian doctrine has been over the relative importance and compatibility of these two forms of knowledge. In the wake of the Enlightenment this was especially true of the eighteenth century, and a discussion of the nature and origins of religious knowledge plays a large part in several significant works of Popular theology. Clark, indeed, argues that the issue constitutes one of the touchstones for identifying the differences between Moderatism and Popular theology.

Ideas about the attributes of God, which arise to some extent from conclusions about the nature of religious knowledge, are of fundamental importance in determining the shape of anyone's theology, especially those aspects relating to the Fall

of Man and its consequences, and the person and work of Christ. The latter doctrine, of course, is central to Christianity. The sections on sin, the Atonement, and faith also cover the ground of what is probably the biggest controversy in Protestant theology, namely, the dispute between Calvinism and Arminianism. The issue of the nature of faith, furthermore, leads to the problem of what was the nature of eighteenth century Scottish evangelicalism. These considerations explain the shape of the following discussion of Popular theology.

The objectives of this major section may then be summarised. First, the analysis of Popular theology attempts to make clear the nature of the diverse theological make-up of the party. Secondly, it attempts to define the nature and extent of the influence of 'the spirit of the age'. And thirdly, it attempts to establish the existence within the party of a varied evangelicalism. Within the Popular party there were men who espoused the main tenets of Moderatism and their influence was significant both in directly affecting the shape of Popular thought and in provoking a response within it. There were others whose traditional Calvinist orthodoxy was held in a conventional manner which went little beyond the formulations of the doctrinal standards of the Church. Most importantly, however, there were a large number of men who were sensitive to the influence of 'the spirit of the age' which owed most of its complexion to the effects of Enlightenment thought. Their response to the two forces of Moderatism and the Enlightenment was the dominant

feature of Popular theology in the later eighteenth century. That response was an attempt to restate traditional Calvinist orthodoxy in contemporary terms and to provide an alternative to what was seen as the accommodating response of Moderatism. In time, this endeavour led to the appearance of a confident evangelicalism which saw its mission in terms of its proclamation of the case for salvation through personal faith in Christ to a Scotland in which the majority of the people did not possess such a faith. As such, from a theological point of view, the Popular party was a party in transition for much of the period.

1. The Nature of Religious Knowledge.

The origin and nature of religious knowledge was perceived by Popular thinkers to be an area in which their opponents' views were liable to be suspect, and so was one where the Popular party might be expected to have had its own distinctive emphasis.⁴ The fundamental problem in discussing this topic is that of deciding exactly what contemporaries understood by natural and revealed religion. There is no clear-cut answer. William Crawford of Wilton, for example, defined natural religion as that which arises from the relationship between God the Creator and his creatures, 'considered as innocent creatures', and revealed religion as arising from the relationship between God 'as reconcilable in Christ' and men 'as recoverable sinners'. The two forms embody two inconsistent obligations in that the requirements of obedience which could be met in the pre-Fall relationship cannot be fulfilled by sinful man. This shows that they are not the same. There is, though, no 'Law of Nature' which forbids God's requiring and accepting our repentance.⁵ The inconsistency of the two forms, however, was not necessarily accepted by all Popular writers. George Anderson, for example, quoted Bolingbroke with approval for asserting that 'the Christian Law is nothing else than the Law of Nature enforced by a new revelation'. Even enemies of Christianity accepted that and were concerned instead to deny the reality of the revelation.⁶ Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood, writing over half a century later, in effect endorsed such a position when talking of the existence

and providence of God, and the moral obligations of men as 'original principles, which must be inseparable from every idea of religion'.⁷ Though several Popular writers discussed the question of natural religion, they were vague about what it was. In 1794 John Snodgrass, in spite of deeming natural religion to be 'a thing which has never yet been defined', felt confident enough to attack those who were bringing Christianity down to its level by denying the existence of such essential doctrines as original sin, the Atonement, the Holy Spirit, and others. He considered such attempts misguided, for the more Christianity was made to resemble natural religion, the less need there would be for it at all.⁸ On the other hand, Robert Walker and John Dun equated natural religion with Reason. Walker argued that all except atheists accept that Reason teaches that God is the Creator, Preserver, and Judge of all the world, and asserted that the Scriptures themselves rationally deduce the omniscience of God from the 'obvious dictates of natural religion'.⁹ In short, there was no precise definition of natural religion accepted amongst Popular writers. Most seem to have been content to use the term relatively loosely to mean those ways in which religious knowledge can be obtained other than through the direct revelation of the Scriptures. Few were as precise as Walker and Dun in identifying it as Reason.

The next question which arises is whether Popular writers saw themselves as defending or attacking natural religion. John Snodgrass was not the only person who was suspicious. From

Alexander Webster's denial in 1741 that natural religion could point out the Way of Reconciliation and of happiness, until John Russel's stress on its limitations in 1796, there was a constant strand of criticism.¹⁰ James Paton was dismissive and attacked those who argued that God can be discovered from impressions of natural religion. Current practice in theological education, he maintained, by treating natural religion or Reason first in order, and then moving to Revelation, led to too much dependence on the first which detracted from the gospel.¹¹ John Love stressed the inadequacy of ideas of God derived from it.¹² In general, however, Popular writers of all shades of theological opinion saw natural religion as having a role to play in the communication of religious truth and in the defence of true religion. Principal William Wishart, at one extreme of theological opinion and regarded as heterodox by some, saw God's requirements and the recommendations of the love of Jesus as being 'in their own nature good', even without Scriptural injunctions. Sceptics, as well as attacking the principles of revealed religion, opposed those of natural religion too, in attempting to overturn the difference between moral good and evil, and to confuse vice and virtue.¹³ At the other extreme of the party, George Anderson, the scourge of 'infidel' philosophers in the 1750's, attacked Bolingbroke for his direct endeavours 'to root out of the minds of men, a belief of the capital articles of natural religion'. These he defined as including 'God's moral attributes, the immateriality and immortality of the soul, a particular providence, and a future state of rewards and

punishments'. Natural religion, furthermore, he argued, could be defended without reference to revelation.¹⁴ Earlier, Dr. John Erskine, probably the ablest theologian produced by the Popular party, had maintained that natural religion taught the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul.¹⁵ A range of Popular writers, then, would have agreed with John Maclaurin when he saw natural religion as having the function of leading men to 'honour God's perfections manifested in the works of creation and providence, as contrasted with the Scriptural revelation which leads us to honour his perfections revealed in the work of salvation and redemption';¹⁶ and most would have accepted John Witherspoon's suggestion that it contributed along with revealed religion to give such a view of divine Providence as would lead men to adore, thank, trust, and submit to God.¹⁷ A common assertion was that natural religion provided ample justification for accepting the existence of a future life which involved rewards and punishments, and as revealing insights into the 'nature and attributes of God.'¹⁸

While Popular thought was unclear, or even in disagreement about the nature of natural religion, and therefore about its value,¹⁹ the weight of opinion held that it conveyed truths about the nature of God as shown in the works of creation and providence, and about the existence of a future life of rewards and punishments for good and evil done in this life. It was usual, also, for Popular writers to stress that the central truths of Christianity, and especially that of the Atonement,

could only be known through revelation. Accordingly, several writers saw dangers in a preoccupation with natural religion if it threatened to lead to the dilution of essential, revealed truths.

Though many in the Popular party were prepared to accept natural religion as conveying important religious truths, Robert Dick of Edinburgh wrote for many when he distinguished the chief characteristics of the Christian religion, which marked it off from natural religion and from the Jewish faith, as being the assurances of mercy to the penitent for the sake of the atonement made by Christ, the promises of divine aid in this life, and the abridgement of the ritual ordinances instituted for the early world. Christianity, which had the sole end of promoting piety towards God, charity towards man, and sober, righteous and godly living, was to be contrasted with religions which proposed to expound the 'original principles of natural, moral, and political knowledge'.²⁰ Such a position was either explicit or implicit in the writings of most Popular authors.

Though some Scottish evangelicals at least appealed to natural religion to support the veracity and reasonableness of revelation,²¹ there is no evidence that they were directly influenced to do so by the Moderates. The evidence tends to suggest that the relevant influence was more specifically a response to Bolingbroke. It would not seem to be true, either,

that natural religion preoccupied the Popular writers whose works have been examined. By the same token, Popular thinkers had little to say about revelation.²² Perhaps the most that can be said is that, like the Moderates, they did not believe that natural religion could provide a saving knowledge of God. There could be little doubt as to the essential truths which natural religion taught: God has provided men, in the principles of natural religion, with adequate proof of his existence, of his perfections, and of the immortality of the soul, so that if they refuse to believe them, they have only themselves to blame when 'they expose themselves to ruin'.²³ Beyond this baseline, the Popular party displayed a diversity of response to the question of the origins of religious knowledge.

2. The Attributes of God

Diversity of opinion appeared also in Popular writings on the attributes of God. They provided three interpretations, though individual writers frequently incorporated more than one. The first had an intellectual as contrasted to a theological or devotional emphasis in which analysis of the divine attributes originated in a discussion of God as Creator with its implications for human happiness, and for God's involvement in the world. The second was rooted in perceptions of God as benevolent and loving, giving a devotional emphasis centred around the divine perfections. The third approach had a theological emphasis and stressed God's justice, holiness and hatred of sin as well as his love. The devotional element incorporated in this third was more Christocentric than in the second. Both the second and the third, however, led to a discussion of the Atonement.

As in other ways, the ideas of Principal William Wishart, who was unsuccessfully prosecuted for alleged heresy or heterodoxy in 1738, percolated to many otherwise orthodox quarters of the Popular party. He was apparently the first to introduce to the Popular mind in the period the stress on the character of God as 'the supreme Mind, the Head and Father of the Rational System', or as the 'Universal Governor'.²⁴

This terminology was taken up first by Daniel Macqueen in his Letters on Mr. Hume's History of Great Britain in 1756, but by way of qualification: thoughts of God as 'the great legislator and governor of the world' may create fear in the minds of the ungodly, it is the sentiments of Christian faith, and of genuine repentance, which lead to an understanding of mercy and acceptance in Christ.²⁵ This in turn leads to seeing acceptance in Christ becoming 'our present peace, our support in trouble, our hopes beyond the grave, and our everlasting felicity'; a truth which must be assented to by all who believe in God 'as the supreme ruler of the intellectual world', who bears relations to us as 'creator, preserver, benefactor, our redeemer, lawgiver and judge'. God is self-existent, the almighty maker of heaven and earth, and his works proclaim his power, intelligence and goodness; he is 'glorious in holiness, justice and truth', the 'parent of nature', all-powerful; his providence is universal, his goodness diffusive.²⁶ We are absolutely dependent on God for supplying all our needs, for his protection and guidance, and we can be assured that his power, goodness, and wisdom will be extended on our behalf both in this world and the next. The doctrine of divine assistance is rational and derives from the goodness of God. It is shown at its clearest in the Christian scheme with its promises of abundant grace. God is ever-present with us and all this is 'perfectly agreeable to the dictates of our purest reason'.²⁷

Later but more direct use of Wishart's terminology and application of ideas of God as Governor of the universe is to be found in the works of Thomas Somerville, Robert Walker, and James Dun. Somerville argued that 'the righteous Governor of the universe' could not have intended nations to rise on the depression of others since all his children are the objects of his love, and with him there is no respect of persons. For Somerville, the glory of the Supreme Being, his 'brightest attribute', is his 'goodness'.²⁸ Walker maintained that all except atheists will accept from the teachings of Reason that God is 'the Creator, the Preserver, the Governor, and the Judge of all the world'.²⁹ Possibly the most significant use of this approach to the question of the attributes of God, however, was made by James Dun. In the course of one of his sermons he produced, in response to the question of how the divine government operates, a developed theory of causation.³⁰ He subsequently used the theory to defend the doctrine of free will against 'Socinian' claims that divine foreknowledge of events and actions prejudices free will and asserted that foreknowledge is not the same as causation.³¹ Emphasis on the attributes of God as Creator and universal Governor, therefore, led to what was a rare discussion of free will written by a member of the Popular party in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

The second emphasis in the analysis of the attributes of God once again appears in the works of William Wishart. The truth that the end of the Christian institution is Love, he maintained,

gives us key insights into the nature and character of God. Love animates 'the whole conduct of the Governor of the world', who is 'perfect Goodness and Love reigning above'. It shows us 'the pure Goodness and disinterested Benevolence of the Deity'.³² Wishart went on to link divine love, infinite goodness, and infinite wisdom and power with man's recovery to purity and happiness through the Father's sending his Son and 'giving Him to be a propitiation for our Sins'. This shows the divine love and goodness in its greatest lustre and glory, 'and the other Perfections of the Divine nature are exhibited to us, as acting in concurrence, for promoting the designs of the most wonderful Love and tender Mercy'.³³ God is a Being, he put it elsewhere, 'in whom perfect and unalterable goodness is joined with almighty Power and unbounded Wisdom, Eternity and Omnipresence; who is the fair and unspotted Original and Pattern of Goodness; and the foundation of all good'. The highest love of God is the exercise of the principle of the 'Love of Goodness'. God's love of goodness is such that the wicked should live in fear of the displeasure of Heaven.³⁴ The other attributes of God, which attracted the attention of many Popular writers, remained of secondary importance for Wishart.

Even those writers who shared Wishart's stress on the love of God did not reach their conclusions by the same route. Robert Walker derived his emphasis from Scripture in a much more direct way. He emphatically denied that God should be seen as an object of terror or the enemy of human happiness. 'Is it not the obvious

tendency, as well as the declared purpose of everything contained in the Scriptures of truth', he argued, 'to prove what the Apostle twice repeats [in 1 John 4] ... GOD IS LOVE?' The ultimate proof of this lies in God's reconciling the world to himself in Christ.³⁵ God, who is infinitely good and independently happy, shows mercy to the miserable who derived their existence from him, who in their fallen state are guilty and therefore fearful and suspicious, and difficult to be persuaded that there is so much goodness in God, as to freely pardon their offences.³⁶ The redemption of mankind was an act of the freest and most unmerited grace, and 'a full demonstration of the unbounded love and goodness of God'.³⁷ Approaching the question from another angle, David Savile maintained that the goodness of God appears from 'the benevolent dispositions he hath implanted in the human race'. Goodness in this life is exercised, sought after and approved by many, and, if it exists in us, 'it must supereminently exist in our Creator, from whom this and all other virtues are derived'. God is the first cause without whom we could not have had life, strength and intelligence; and a gracious and good cause without whom we could not have had the affections of generosity and benevolence. From these attributes of God proceeds the Atonement.³⁸

The second interpretation of the attributes of God was very much a minority viewpoint in Popular thought. More representative of the views of the rank and file of the party, and less selective in its emphasis on the divine attributes was a range of

Popular writers who propounded the third approach with its theological emphasis. These included Alexander Webster, Robert Dick, John Witherspoon, John Russel, John Love, and others. Their analysis emerged in response to the concentration on the attribute of divine love. Webster stressed the need to view the attributes of God in relation to each other and not in isolation. God is just as well as merciful. His goodness, explicitly, is not automatically to be taken as evidence of 'Pardoning-Mercy' to all:

...we have already shown the Absurdity of pretending, that God will act in this or that Manner, because one or other of his Perfections render it naturally possible, as in the present Instance, his Power and his Knowledge, the whole of his Attributes must be taken into Account, and their mutual Relations considered, otherwise, as before hinted, it would be no difficult Matter to prove, from the Nature of infinite Power and infinite Goodness, that Sin, and its fatal Consequences, Pain, Misery, and Distress, are Things which never had any Existence, nor can possibly happen.³⁹

In general, however, the origins of this third strand of analysis of the attributes of God are less clear. In his Letters on Hume's History, Macqueen described the devout character as including in it awareness of God's power, wisdom, and goodness, of his government and supreme authority, of our entire dependence on him, of his inspection of our conduct, and of his innumerable benefits and mercy towards us. He is 'the most high God in all his glory and grace', and he is 'our creator, benefactor, our redeemer, lawgiver and judge'.⁴⁰ Macqueen, however, whose main drift of thought places him in the first group of thinkers, did

not see fit to explain the derivation of these ideas and did not go beyond them.

Robert Dick approached the subject from the necessity of Christ's death being seen as a sacrifice. Divine justice was central to the Atonement. God is offended by sin but he is 'placable' and the mediation of Christ conduces to that end. The ultimate reasons why this is so are not revealed in God's Word and no discovery of them can be expected, nor should it be sought.⁴¹ This approach does not seem to have been enunciated clearly by any Popular thinker until John Russel of Stirling did so in response to the allegedly Socinian position advocated by William McGill of Ayr in his Practical Essay on the Death of Christ published in 1786. McGill espoused the view that Christ was afflicted by weakness at the prospect of his coming death when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, and Russel believed that McGill's explanation of this implied a denial of Christ's divinity. In the course of his response, The Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, and the Influence of Just Views of them on Universal Holiness, Russel had much to say about the attributes of God. The character of God is described as 'inflexibly just, and unspottedly holy', and, acting as the 'moral governor of the universe', upon the supposition of salvation, he required Christ to suffer his wrath for the unjust, that he might bring them to God. The 'infinite wrath of God' is the just desert of sin. God is eternally just, holy, and faithful, and 'the great Judge of all'. All God's ways are

unsearchable, but his chosen way of punishing our iniquities by laying them on his own Son shows the extent of his hatred of sin. Sin is the object of his divine indignation and wrath. We cannot conceive how God the Father might love his Son as Mediator in the tenderest manner, and yet hate the sin imputed to him, but that is part of God's unsearchability. The doctrine of Christ enduring divine wrath is 'the highest and most illustrious display of the justice and holiness of God'. The inflexible nature of his justice is also manifested at its clearest in this. His delivering up of Christ to suffering demonstrates God's 'infinite love to holiness', and the 'glory of God's holiness'. These views of justice and holiness, says Russel, are 'views of the divine perfections'.⁴²

Justice as a key element in the divine attributes has been noted in the thought of James Dun and Robert Dick, and it was also present in areas of John Erskine's work.⁴³ Their influence may have led to some distortion of the traditional balance between the love and justice of God. Robert Walker attacked those who tended to see the Son as the generous friend of fallen man and the Father as severe and unrelenting, eager to punish, and reluctant to receive the offered ransom from Christ the Mediator. He acknowledged that these views arose from 'indistinct, and even erroneous, conceptions, of the great scheme of salvation, as revealed in the Gospel', rather than from defective views of the divine attributes themselves.⁴⁴ Although Walker seems to suggest that preoccupation with the justice of God led to erroneous views

of the Atonement, there is no evidence in the mainstream Popular works that this was the case. By the latter half of the eighteenth century, though, there may have been a change in thought. In a sermon of 1801, John Russel adopted a substantially different approach in his identification of three elements in 'just views of the divine perfections' from which all true religion derives: the original and essential greatness of God; the spotless holiness of God, appreciation of which leads to contemplation of his unsearchable wisdom displayed in the plan of salvation by Christ; and the mercy of God which 'streams forth to the sinner, thro' the blood of the great Emmanuel...' ⁴⁵

The three explanations of the attributes of God discernible in the writings of the Popular party had potential seeds of theological controversy which did not develop. Those who defined the attributes of God essentially in terms of a Creator who was the head of a rational system were prone to use arguments from natural religion to elucidate their perceptions. They stressed the rationality of their concept of God, but they generally had little to say about sin, the need for repentance, or about the Atonement. The second group, who tended to see the essential characteristics of God as love and goodness, usually described him in terms of his role as Creator in preserving and governing his world. Within this group, those who arrived at the conclusion that love and goodness were the essential qualities of God from Scripture should be distinguished from the few in number who, after the manner of Wishart, arrived at the conclusion through

their perceptions of the prevalence of benevolence in man, which had the profound theological consequence of leading them to see the Atonement as proceeding from the love and goodness of God. It is only the third approach which is usually regarded as being typical of the Popular party as a whole. It defined the attributes of God in terms of his power, wisdom, holiness, and especially his justice. The starting point for these writers was usually the Atonement: if God so hated sin that he was prepared to cause his Son to suffer his divine wrath to remove its consequences, then it followed that justice was crucial to the character of God. He was fundamentally holy. His love was to be seen rather as mercy than as benevolence. This emphasis produced a devotional emphasis centred on Christ as enduring divine wrath for men. It also merged with a much older devotional tradition exemplified in John Maclaurin's famous sermon, Glorying in the Cross of Christ.⁴⁶ Overall, then, there is clear evidence that there were significant differences within the Popular party in the way its members perceived the God they served. These perceptions varied from positions of Calvinist orthodoxy to those which shared the presuppositions of contemporary Moderate thought.

3. The Nature of Man.

The variety, indeed the confusion, in Popular theology continued to be evident in their writings on the nature of man. Whereas three fairly coherent and consistent trends can be distinguished in their thought on the attributes of God, no such clarity emerged when the nature of man was considered. The divergence of ideas came from differing interpretations about the extent of the consequences of the Fall. Were the human conscience and affections totally depraved and therefore unreliable and to be suspected? Was Reason to be relied upon as valid or was it, too, affected by the Fall? Could man be disposed to benevolence or not? The proliferation of such questions would appear to have been the Popular party's response to the secular intellectual climate at the time.

The Popular position was probably the result of belief in the validity of conscience as a testimony to truth, to good and evil, and, in some cases, to the existence of God and to the future punishment of sin, but there was also a prevalent doubt about the extent of the value or reliability of conscience. On this latter question there was no real consensus. Furthermore, the Popular party clearly saw itself as under pressure from those who sought to deny the rationality of the Christian religion. Partly this was the result of the acceptance of the identification of natural religion with Reason. More probably it arose from an impression that Christianity was under attack by

those who espoused Enlightenment ideas about the primacy of Reason in relation to knowledge and truth. As such, their position on the nature of man was perhaps one of the more fundamental responses made to the Enlightenment by members of the Popular party.

Once again, William Wishart gives a convenient starting point. He was the representative of a small group of theologians who took a sanguine view of the impact of the Fall on human nature. As a result of the goodness of God, there was, he maintained,

such a disposition of Benevolence, or social affection in Human Nature independent of all deliberate views of self-interest; and exerting itself oft-times without any other prospect of advantage, but the pleasure arising from the view of happiness around us, and seeing others well... every plain man is sensible of such a benevolent principle in himself.⁴⁷

This principle rises to its greatest heights when it is exercised towards 'a Being of unalterable Goodness, the Head and Father of the rational creation'. Our other affections must be brought into subjection to this love of Goodness, and 'those unnatural passions, and excesses of our self-affections, that are contrary to it, must be uprooted.'⁴⁸ He went on to argue elsewhere that 'doing good to others' is a natural inclination of our hearts. Self-love and Benevolence are not necessarily inconsistent or in competition.⁴⁹ Since man is able to pursue and embody Benevolence, it follows that he must be able to appraise the

moral worth of his actions. This is the function of Conscience which informs us of the difference between beauty and deformity, good and evil, and of what and what not to do. Wishart maintained that 'this sense of Beauty and Deformity in life and manners, as it has a particular respect to our own affections and actions, is commonly called Conscience'. When we act contrary to the dictates of Universal Benevolence, or of 'Love and resignation to the Deity', we act 'contrary to our own Sense of things, and render ourselves deform'd and odious to ourselves'.⁵⁰ In his theories about the nature of self-love and universal benevolence Wishart would seem to have drawn heavily on the work of Shaftesbury.⁵¹

He went on, however, to a more narrowly theological matter when he attempted to define the relationship between benevolence and the passions. Initially, he had maintained that 'through the prevalency of men's selfish passions and factious humours, rebelling against Love and against the Light, it [i.e., benevolence] has not the happy effect of promoting Love as universally as might be expected from the genuine tendency of it...'⁵² Here, however, he faced a problem: if, as he admitted, 'no natural passion was formed in vain, they are all to be gratified, as far as they can consistently,' or, as Thomas Somerville was later to put it, God is the origin of all human affections,⁵³ how, then, can we have the greatest satisfaction possible in life, which is the object of God's benevolence, when not all human affections are compatible with that benevolence? His answer was that since passion and appetite are in themselves

blind guides, they will often be deceived and lead to the growth of unnatural passions. The affections to be cultivated, therefore, are those which produce 'greatest inward enjoyment', which enable us to achieve the greatest amount of outward satisfaction, and maintain the dispositions in our minds which give us those enjoyments. He then gives an analysis of the affections which achieve these ends. Inward enjoyment is produced by the kind and social Affections such as Love, Compassion, Generosity, and Gratitude. The outward means of satisfaction are Religion, Virtue, Piety, and Goodness. The state of mind appropriate to enjoyment is especially achieved by the practice of Temperance and Sobriety.⁵⁴ In discussing happiness, however, Wishart failed to incorporate any specifically theological concepts, which omission not even Thomas Somerville, the member of the Popular party most influenced by his ideas, was prepared to follow.

Somerville, writing around half a century later, was prepared to call benevolence 'that most noble principle of our nature' or 'the most exalted pleasure of which the human nature is susceptible'.⁵⁵ He was even prepared to maintain that since Christ was perfectly man and clothed in our nature he was therefore benevolent, tender, and compassionate,⁵⁶ but he still felt that benevolence was the feeblest and most indolent of the public affections.⁵⁷ Every affection of human nature applied to its proper object led to the promotion of private and public good; but lusts, the depraved affections or the inordinate

indulgence of legitimate appetites, which were originally intended to promote the accommodation and conveniences of life, had perverted and slighted the doctrines of the gospel and were a propensity of human nature. In short, man was debased by the domination of sin.⁵⁸ Somerville identified, though possibly unwittingly, the difficulty faced by any theologian who tried to combine doctrinal orthodoxy with Enlightenment ideas as they were transmitted by Wishart.

The difficulty had been identified earlier. The rejection of Wishart's analysis of human nature emerged initially in writings on the passions. John Witherspoon, arguing against the stage, maintained that though passions were not necessarily evil in themselves, the Fall of Man had so perverted them that they distracted from the prime duty of glorifying God. Furthermore, conscience was capable of being deceived by the passions. The Christian should therefore try to moderate their influence.⁵⁹

In this analysis, the crucial factor was the Fall and its consequences. Robert Walker, for example, found human nature 'wholly diseased and corrupted' by it, 'our understanding was darkened, filled with prejudices against the truth, and incapable of discerning spiritual objects...'⁶⁰ Man's temper was naturally depraved and his natural powers impaired though not destroyed, for he used them successfully in his worldly concerns. But when it came to loving God, he could not, and in fact loved the things which were contrary to his nature.⁶¹ In fact, the corporeal

appetites of man led to the Fall in the first place.⁶² The essence of this diagnosis was accepted, usually implicitly, by virtually every Popular writer. What, then, were the results of the Fall so far as they affected human nature?

In the first place, there was a broad band of agreement about a range of character defects, and religious failings. Man was given over to evil passions such as anger and cruelty, his nature was fickle and changeable, and in need of reformation. He manifested a delusive and detestable intellectual pride, or pride in human wisdom. He was inclined to love the world, and he was prone to indulge his lusts and love of pleasure.⁶³ There were more serious religious consequences. Even Wishart was prepared to concede, if somewhat vaguely, that man's passions rebelled 'against Love and the Light'.⁶⁴ Somerville was more explicit: man 'formed after the image of God, made capable of enjoying him', fell from his original dignity, forsook 'every noble purpose and pursuit', perverted his faculties, and forfeited 'life'.⁶⁵ Most Popular writers were even more precise: a depraved nature leads to a denial of Providence;⁶⁶ men's minds become clogged with sense and unbelief;⁶⁷ the idea of a crucified Saviour is repugnant and incredible in the judgement of the world;⁶⁸ fallen man is fearful of the consequences of sin but suspicious and unwilling to be persuaded of the goodness of God and of his willingness to grant free pardon of offences, and all this leads to 'enmity against God';⁶⁹ the innate corruption of the human mind prevents perception of the 'comeliness of Christ', and of

the deceitfulness of sin.⁷⁰ The overall conclusion, then, is clear: the Fall was responsible for man's inability to see the real nature of sin or the offer of salvation through Christ.

This analysis of the consequences of the Fall, however, was not extended with the same degree of unanimity to the status of the conscience or of Reason. Popular writers were not prepared to dismiss the contribution of conscience as a witness to truth or to right and wrong, but they varied on the question of its reliability. Some were prepared to assert that conscience tells us that we have sinned, or that the power of conscience remains in fallen man to remind him of sin and future judgement.⁷¹ Most Popular authors, however, were not prepared to go as far and maintained that conscience was capable of being deceived, or that the enticements of a particular pleasure could overcome conscience. The majority lay somewhere in between the extremes. Daniel Macqueen, for example, accepted that the reflections of conscience could be turned aside, and its judgement and condemnation evaded or suppressed, but still argued that its operation directed our thoughts to God and to our future, and gave proof of the subjection of man to God's righteous government.⁷² While accepting that conscience was a flawed instrument as a result of the Fall, Popular thought, then, retained a belief in its potential efficacy as a testimony to such truths of Christianity as the existence of God, the nature of sin, and the need for forgiveness. Opinion diverged more

significantly on its reliability, depending on the assessment of the consequences of the Fall of Man.

Popular analysis of the nature and role of Reason faced the same dilemma. In this case, Wishart was almost a solitary figure when he argued that Conscience was a more reliable guide than Reason in our progress to 'Love and resignation to the Deity'.⁷³ The absence of a consensus is evident when it is noted that Somerville issued a general warning against the dangers of underrating Reason when he argued that popular sentimentality could overcome the calm conclusions of sense and Reason, as happened, for example, when public opinion saw the horrors of the battlefield as honourable and glorious. He found Reason agreeable to the proposition that sin was liable to punishment in this life.⁷⁴ Witherspoon, though, followed Wishart part of the way when he contrasted the 'often immediate and clear' dictates of conscience with the 'long and involved' deductions of Reason needed to understand a doctrine, though he still regarded Reason as 'the best guide and director of human life'.⁷⁵ There were, however, some signs of doubt about the place that was generally allocated to Reason. For example, John Paton spoke categorically against over-reliance on Reason in matters of religious truth and wished to limit its role to that of a mental process, and John Love drew attention to the 'feebleness of our disabled reason in matters relating to the spiritual government of God and to his attributes'.⁷⁶ In the whole area of the reliability of Reason, however, there was great pressure to limit the effects of the

Fall because of belief in Reason's usefulness in arguing for the truth and validity of Christianity.⁷⁷

In spite of all these doubts, Popular thought was concerned to stress the rationality of the Christian religion. This preoccupation came to the fore in Macqueen's response to Hume's History of Great Britain. Protestantism, he argued, in contradiction to Hume, was 'rationally grounded', and was unafraid of free enquiry, which was in accordance with 'the principles of the clearest reason'.⁷⁸ Reason and religion combined to produce assent to religious truth.⁷⁹ Regard to God was 'perfectly agreeable to the dictates of our purest reason'. True piety, that is, the worship of God with mind and heart, was strictly rational, and as such it denied the validity of the work of Hume.⁸⁰ By the 1790s this line of argument was becoming commonplace. Reason argued for belief in a future life, maintained John Dun, and atheism and reason were incompatible.⁸¹ The use of reason and religion was urged to press home the need for holiness and moral duties.⁸² No part of our rationality was lost by acceptance of sacred truths that were not fully comprehensible by the human mind, but only a delusive pride in human understanding.⁸³ It was unreasonable, argued John Snodgrass, to reject the plain and obvious meaning of revelation because we could not comprehend it or reconcile it with other principles which we held to be necessary. It was, in fact, a 'dictate of the highest reason' to accept divinely revealed truth.⁸⁴ Approaching the issue from a different direction, Robert

Walker argued that the doctrines of truth should be tested by Scripture and Reason. Reason would lead to the acknowledgement of God as Creator, Preserver, Governor, and Judge. The omniscience of God, for example, could be rationally deduced from the dictates of natural religion, as did Scripture itself.⁶⁵ It is not unreasonable to argue, therefore, that the Popular assessment of the nature of man was a response to contemporary intellectual pressure which, in the late eighteenth century, was perceived to be seeking the assurance that conventional Christian doctrine was capable of rational belief. By the 1790s the Popular party was confident that it was, a confidence which may have helped to foster the growing assurance of evangelicalism in the next twenty or thirty years.

In summary, then, Popular thought on the nature of man shows a broad uniformity of belief that the Fall had deleterious consequences. With the exception of Principal Wishart and Thomas Somerville, the latter mainly a Moderate though an increasingly evangelical one, who were less explicit on the issue, Popular writers saw the Fall as leading to a wide range of defects in human nature and, more importantly, to an inability to comprehend the essential truths of sin and the possibility of salvation through Christ. At the same time, as a result of confidence in the role of Reason in the comprehension of the truths of the Gospel and of conviction of the rationality of the Christian religion, there was surprisingly little stress on the Calvinist doctrine of total depravity. Those who would allege that the

Popular party was characterised by a clinging to a conventional and rigid Calvinist orthodoxy would do well to consider this phenomenon.

NOTES: CHAPTER 3.

1. See above, pp.20-21, 28; 26-27.
2. Clark, 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party', pp. vii, 204-205, 207, 236, 294-5.
- 3 See above, pp.21-24; 26-27.
4. On this, see also Clark, op.cit., pp. vii, 223, 247-249.
5. Works, vol. 1, (Edinburgh, 1748), p. 118. This particular essay, entitled 'A Discourse - wherein such Principles are established as sap the Foundations of Mr. Tindal's Book, entitled Christianity as old as the Creation [London, 1730]; and also of a Letter in his Defence', is usually entitled 'A Discourse against Infidelity'.
6. A Remonstrance against Lord Viscount Bolingbroke's Philosophical Religion, (Edinburgh, 1756), pp. 10-11. See also, John Erskine, 'The Nature of the Sinai Covenant, and the Character and Privileges of the Jewish Church', in Theological Dissertations, (London, 1765), p. 45: 'The unchangeable law of nature requires a perfect obedience both in heart and life, which no son of Adam can say with truth he has yielded'.
7. Sermons, (Edinburgh, 1805), p.137.
8. The Leading Doctrines of the Gospel Stated and Defended, (1794), in John Brown (ed.), Theological Tracts, Selected and Original, vol. 3, (Edinburgh, 1854), p. 294.
9. Robert Walker, Sermons on Practical Subjects, vol. 1, (London, 1796), pp. 51-59; John Dun, Sermons, vol. 1, (Kilmarnock, 1790), pp. 10-11, 38-39.
10. Alexander Webster, Supernatural Revelation the only sure Hope of Sinners, (Edinburgh, 1741), p.5; John Russel, The Nature of the Gospel Delineated, and its Universal Spread founded upon the Declaration of Jesus Christ: A Sermon, (Ayr, 1796), p.8.
11. [James Paton], An Attempt to Show that the Knowledge of God, has, in all ages, been derived from Revelation or Tradition,

- not from Nature, (Glasgow, 1773), pp.122-129.
12. The Majesty if the King of Kings: A Sermon, preached on the subject of the Revolution, Nov. 9, 1788, (n.p., n.d.), p.2.
 13. The Certain and Unchangeable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, (London, 1732), p.4. See also, 'An Essay on the Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life to the Happiness of Heaven', in Discourses on Several Subjects, (London, 1753), p.11.
 14. op.cit., pp.8, 12. It must be admitted, however, that Anderson confused the picture by arguing that one of Bolingbroke's crimes was to reduce the authority of Christ by arguing that a particular providence and the existence of future rewards and punishments are merely articles of natural religion. (ibid., p.11). See also, [John Bonar], An Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments contained in the Writings of Sopho, and David Hume, Esq., (Edinburgh, 1755), pp.48-49.
 15. 'The Law of Nature sufficiently propagated to Heathens' (1741), in Theological Dissertations, pp.213-214.
 16. John Maclaurin, 'An Essay on Christian Piety' (1755), in W.H. Goold, (ed.) The Works of the Rev. John Maclaurin, vol. 2, (Edinburgh, 1860), p.64.
 17. John Witherspoon, A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage. Being an Attempt to show, That contributing to the Support of a Public Theatre, is inconsistent with the Character of a Christian, (Glasgow, 1757), p.64n.
 18. e.g., John Dun, op.cit., vol. 2, pp.10-11, 38-39.
 19. This is in contrast to the Moderates who apparently 'were extremely careful to delineate the spheres of natural religion and revelation accurately, and to show that the latter provides the only satisfying answers to the problems which the former leaves unsolved'. Clark, op.cit., p.251.
 20. Robert Dick, The Simplicity and Popularity of the Divine Revelations, and their their Suitableness to the Circumstances of Mankind, (Edinburgh, 1758), pp.14-15, 9-10.

See also, Webster, op.cit., p.iv.

21. ibid., p.204.
22. ibid., p.247; cf., p.249.
23. John Erskine, 'The Law of Nature sufficiently propagated to Heathens', in Theological Dissertations, p.213; see also pp.206, 214, 217.
24. Charity the End of the Commandment; or, Universal Love the Design of Christianity. A Sermon, (London, 1731), pp.7, 14; Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, p.18.
25. op.cit., (Edinburgh, 1756), pp.311-312.
26. ibid., p.312.
27. ibid., p.313.
28. A Discourse on our Obligation to Thanksgiving for the Prospect of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade with a Prayer, (Kelso, 1792), pp.7-8; A Sermon preached in the Tron Church of Edinburgh, May 7th, 1811, before the Society...for the Benefit of the sons of Clergy of the Established Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1811), pp.10, 20, 27.
29. op.cit., vol. 1, p.51.
30. Sermons, vol. 1, pp.73-78.
31. ibid., pp.181-182.
32. Charity the End of the Commandment, pp.14-15.
33. ibid., p.20. See also, 'The Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life to the Happiness of Heaven', in Discourses on Several Subjects, pp.16-18.
34. Difference betwixt Good and Evil, pp.13-14, 23.
35. op.cit., vol. 1, pp.181, 207.
36. ibid., vol. 2, p.186.
37. ibid., vol. 4, pp.279-280. It should be noted that Walker is somewhat complex as a theological figure having been assigned to both Popular and Moderate parties on the basis of his writings. On balance, it would seem that both in terms of his doctrinal positions and his voting record in the General Assembly, he should be regarded as firmly in the Popular camp. See also, Hugh Watt, 'Robert Walker of the High Church (Hugh Blair's Colleague)', in Records of the Scottish Church

- History Society, XII, pp.82-96; Clark, 'Moderates and Moderatism', p.231, n.21; John Macleod, Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History since the Reformation, (Edinburgh, 1946), pp.207-208, 213.
38. 'The Goodness of God', in Dissertations on the Existence, Attributes, Providence, and Moral Government of God; and on the Duty, Character, Security, and Final Happiness of His Righteous Subjects, (Edinburgh, 1807), pp.60-72. The main part of Savile's analysis is quite conventional in following the lines of the Westminster Confession of Faith. For example, God is defined as an uncaused Being, who is eternal, unchangeable, and infinite in all his attributes. ibid., p.20. Stress is laid in several of the Dissertations on his omnipresence, goodness, providence, and on his moral government. Savile also quotes from Dugald Stewart's Outlines of Moral Philosophy in support of his position. ibid., p.85.
39. Alexander Webster, Supernatural Revelation the only sure Hope of Sinners, pp.9-10, 16-17; David Blair, The Fear that's due unto God and the King, consider'd and recommended, (Edinburgh, 1744), p.9; John Witherspoon, The Trial of Religious Truth by its Moral Influence, (Glasgow, 1759), p.14; [James Paton], op.cit., p.114; John Love, The Majesty of the King of Kings, pp.3, 14; The Radical Cause of National Calamity, A Sermon, Preached at the Scotch Church, Crown Court, Russell St., Covent Garden, October 27, 1794, (n.p., n.d.), pp.24-25; Memorials of the Rev. John Love, vol. 1, (Glasgow, 1857), p.110.
40. op.cit., pp.298, 313. See above, p.72 and also, John Snodgrass, Prospects of Providence respecting the Conversion of the World to Christ, (Paisley, 1796), p.4, where he stresses the 'absolute sovereignty' of God.
41. The Simplicity and Popularity of the Divine Revelations, pp.28-29.
42. op.cit., pp.25, 29, 34, 36-44.
43. John Erskine, The Fatal Consequences and General Sources of Anarchy, (Edinburgh, 1793), pp.8, 40.

44. op.cit., vol. 2, pp.139-140.
45. True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism. A Sermon preached in the High Church of Stirling to the Loyal Stirling Volunteers, Yeomanry, etc., on the Fast Day, February, 1801, (Stirling, 1801), pp.7-13.
46. op.cit., in Works, vol. 1, pp.61-102.
47. Charity the End of the Commandment, p.7.
48. ibid., pp.10-11.
49. Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, p.11; The Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life to the Happiness of Heaven, pp.16-17.
50. Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, pp.14-15.
51. See Caroline Robbins, The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman. Studies in the Transmission, Development and Circumstance of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies, (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp.187, 211-212.
52. Charity the End of the Commandment, pp.28-29.
53. Discourse on...the African Slave Trade, pp.8-9.
54. Charity the End of the Commandment, pp.16-22.
55. Discourse on...the African Slave Trade, p.9; A Sermon preached...before the Society...for the Benefit of the Sons of Clergy..., p.20.
56. Sermons, p.155.
57. Discourse...on the African Slave Trade, p.9.
58. Sermons, pp.162. 81, 481, 448-449.
59. A Serious Enquiry into the Nature of the Stage, pp.18-19, 43. See also, pp.14-16.
60. Sermons on Practical Subjects, vol. 1, p.192. See also John Snodgrass, The Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion in a Time of general Corruption. A Valedictory Sermon to the Inhabitants of Dundee, (Dundee, 1781), p.10: The Christian religion is 'by no means congenial to the natural tendencies of the human mind'; p.36: 'the deep depravity of the human heart'. Snodgrass was also prepared to assert without qualification that 'truth' is 'the great

object which the human mind pursues in all its investigations'. ibid., p.14.

61. Sermons on Practical Subjects, vol. 4, p.283. See also, John Love, 'On the Corruption of Man's Whole Nature', in Memorials, vol. 2, pp.118-122.
62. Walker, op.cit., vol. 3, p.358.
63. John Dun, Sermons, vol. 1, p.96; Robert Dick, The Simplicity and Popularity of the Divine Revelations, p.33; John Love, Benevolence inspired and exalted by the Presence of Jesus Christ. A Sermon, (London, 1794), p.20; John Snodgrass, 'The Leading Doctrines of the Gospel', in Brown, op.cit., vol. 3, p.325; Robert Walker, op.cit., vol. 4, pp.354-363 and vol. 3, pp.356-358. A less condemnatory but similar line was taken by Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood in his Sermon ... before the Directors of the Asylum for the Blind, (Edinburgh, 1801), pp.15-16.
64. Charity the End of the Commandment, pp.28-29.
65. Sermons, pp.448-449.
66. Dun, op.cit., vol. 1, p.68. Dun, in fact, gives David Hume as an example of this, though he gives no specific reference to the latter's works.
67. Love, Benevolence inspired and exalted by the Presence of Jesus Christ, p.21.
68. Snodgrass, 'Leading Doctrines of the Gospel', in Brown, op.cit., pp.289-290.
69. Walker, op.cit., vol. 2, p.186.
70. John Muckersy, 'The Excellence of the Gospel', Sermon XII in Robert Gillan, (ed.), The Scottish Pulpit: a Collection of Sermons by Eminent Clergymen of the Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1823), pp.291-292.
71. John Gillies, An Exhortation to the Inhabitants of the South Parish of Glasgow, and the Hearers in the College Church, (Glasgow, 1750-1751), p.36; David Savile, Dissertations on the Existence, Attributes, Providence, and Moral Government of God, p.171.
72. Letters on Mr. Hume's History of Great Britain, p.309. See

also, Witherspoon, Serious Enquiry ... into the Stage, p. 43; Walker, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 356. It is interesting to note that Walker elsewhere drew a distinction between the regenerate and unregenerate conscience which does not seem to have been made by any other Popular writer. In the true Christian, he says, 'Conscience, long dethroned by imperious passions, hath resumed his authority; and all the faculties of his mind purified and exalted, unite in the pursuit of spiritual enjoyments'. ibid., vol. 3, pp. 359-360.

73. Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, pp. 14-15.
74. Sermons, pp. 416, 49.
75. Trial of Religious Truth by its Moral Influence, pp. 13-14, 16.
76. [Paton], Knowledge of God derived from Revelation or Tradition, passim; Love, op.cit., p. 1. See also, above, pp. 2-3.
77. e.g., John Erskine, The Riches of the Poor. A Sermon, (Edinburgh, 1804), p. 13.
78. op.cit., pp. 55, 67.
79. ibid., p. 312; Alexander Webster, Supernatural Revelation the only sure Hope of Sinners, p. 18; John Erskine, Prayer for those in civil and military offices recommended, from a view of the influence of Providence on their characters. A Sermon, (London, 1779), p. 28.
80. Macqueen, op.cit., pp. 324-327.
81. Sermons, vol. 1, pp. 10-11, 69; vol. 2, p. 141.
82. John Russel, The Nature of the Gospel Delineated, pp. 38-39.
83. John Love, Benevolence inspired and exalted by the Presence of Jesus Christ, p. 20.
84. 'Leading Doctrines of the Gospel', in Brown, op.cit., p. 297; The Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion, p. 38.
85. Walker, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 46-59. Walker, in fact, heads in the direction of identifying Reason with the soul when he subsequently says: 'I might tell you, how mean it is to let sense give law to reason, and to prefer the earthly

tabernacle to its immortal inhabitant'. ibid., vol. 3,
p. 374.

CHAPTER 4: SIN AND SALVATION.

1. The Problem of Sin.

To a large extent, beliefs about the Doctrine of Christ are the touchstone for the placing of any theologian in the theological spectrum. Such was the case in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Clark recognises as much in his identification of views on the subject as one of the three areas of theological disagreement between the Moderate and Popular parties.¹ Views on the Atonement both influence and are influenced by views on the nature of sin. It is almost customary to think members of the eighteenth century Popular party were preoccupied with the guilt and punishment of sin. Burns' 'Holy Fair' is the prototype for many interpretations. If this was true of the sermons preached in the parish kirks of the country, and that is almost impossible to determine, it was certainly not true of the published works of members of the party. Perhaps because it was taken as self-evident, they give little indication that the Westminster Confession's definition of sin was thought to be in need of elaboration or indeed of comment.

Sin, of course, came with the Fall and arose more immediately from the corruption of the heart.² Christians, too, were subject to it for, as Witherspoon put it, 'there are latent remaining dispositions to sinning in every heart that is but imperfectly sanctified'.³ John Snodgrass was even more precise:

'The Scripture doctrine, therefore, of original sin, is so far from being absurd or unreasonable, that it goes a greater length in accounting for appearances than any other principle that has yet been discovered'.⁴

Generally speaking, however, sin tended to be interpreted in one of three ways. First, though only occasionally, discussion did not go further than the Westminster standards' definition. Sin was taken to be the breaking of the Ten Commandments, or specific types of sin were examined. John Gillies of Glasgow gave a list of varieties of sin, each one of which he defined in terms of a broken commandment; Thomas Somerville referred to the sins of intemperance, especially those relating to drinking and swearing; and James Love gave a list of 'Evils of the Present Day'.⁵ Second and more common was reflection on the nature of the evil of sin, though in somewhat generalised terms. It was grieving, provoking, and vexing to God, and it defiled and polluted the soul;⁶ it led to feelings of guilt which involved dejection and anguish of mind and involvement in folly and vice; it was hateful and the object of God's highest displeasure.⁷ Towards the end of the century the strictures of Popular writers became much stronger, though their frequency did not especially increase. Sin was infinitely evil and incurred God's infinite abhorrence. It was of 'inconceivable malignity'.⁸ Even Robert Walker declaimed on the 'frightful aspect' of sin, which was so deep and black that only the blood of Christ could wash it away, and catalogued the different types of sin and their malignity.⁹

The third approach to the nature of sin arose in the course of the consideration of the Atonement. Sin was wounding to Christ in view of his sacrifice of himself on the cross, asserted John Gillies; and, for John Russel of Stirling, the contemplation of Christ on the cross led to the soul being filled with 'the keenest indignation at sin'. We should be exceedingly sorrowful when we think of how our sins led to his sufferings. The heinousness of sin could only be completely seen in those sufferings and not in the effects of sin. Our view of Christ's suffering, especially in his soul, should lead to the creation of the utmost abhorrence in believers of all manner of iniquity. Every rational creature ought to avoid sin with the utmost care as a result of its appearing as an infinite evil in the sufferings of the Son of God.¹⁰

The conclusions which can be drawn from writings on sin, however, are limited and tentative through lack of evidence. Two Popular writers who wrote at length about it were John Russel and Robert Walker, but the sermons or theological writings of the more prominent members of the party, show no particular evidence that they saw the 'preaching up' of the evil and consequences of sin as central to the preaching of the Gospel. They saw contemplation of the nature and work of Christ in the Atonement as essential. There was the beginning of a change of emphasis in the last years of the century, when a more narrowly theological and Christocentric conception of sin began to emerge to replace the earlier tendency to see sin in terms of its manifestations in

society and in the church as infidelity in general, declining observance of public and family worship, and excessive luxury in particular.¹¹ John Russel's Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, as has been noted, was written specifically to counter what he regarded as the Socinian views of William McGill of Ayr, since they divested God of his character as 'infinitely righteous and holy' and made sin seem less malignant and God's wrath no part of the just desert and demerit of sin.¹²

2. The Nature of the Atonement.

The varied nature of Popular theological thought on the issue is seen in writings on the nature of the Atonement. The three authors who contributed most to the discussion of the subject each came from different theological traditions within the party.¹³ They were Thomas Somerville, John Russel, and Robert Walker.

A general comment is called for first of all. The rigour of thought on the subject displayed by Popular ministers should not be overstressed. There was often a looseness in terminology which raises the question of how aware some writers were of the theological minefield in which they were operating. For example, Christ's atoning work was described as a sacrifice by Robert Dick, John Maclaurin, John Russel, John Snodgrass, Robert Walker, and John Muckersy.¹⁴ The controversial term 'propitiation' was used by William Wishart, John Maclaurin, John Russel, David Saville, and (with reservations) by Thomas Somerville.¹⁵ The concept of mediation was used by three writers comprehending the spectrum of Popular theological thought: John Gillies, Robert Walker, and Thomas Somerville.¹⁶ The variety continues with expiation,¹⁷ reconciliation,¹⁸ intercession,¹⁹ substitution,²⁰ and redemption.²¹ Two things were clear. There was considerable flexibility in the use of the classic terms to discuss the Atonement which seemed to transcend apparent differences of sympathy in theological approach, and the terms most commonly

used by the Popular party to describe the work of Christ were 'sacrifice' and 'propitiation'. This usage is not without theological significance.

The main preoccupations of Popular theological writers in the period, however, concerned the origin of the Atonement, its essential nature, and its consequences for piety. It is in terms of these three issues that light can be thrown on the areas of tension in Popular theology in the field.

All writers examined saw the origin of the Atonement as embodied in the attributes of God which engendered his response to the existence of sin. Few Popular theologians would have taken issue with William Wishart when he wrote

In the discovery of this great mystery of Divine Love; we behold Infinite Goodness employing Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Power in a way of Compassion to wretched men, and for bringing about their recovery to purity and happiness: we behold the Father sending his only-begotten Son to save us; and giving him to be the propitiation for our Sins: we behold the Son of God veiling his Glory, and appearing in the World in the likeness of sinful flesh, and, being found in fashion as a man, humbling himself to death, even the death of the Cross, for our Salvation and Happiness. In this glorious Work the Divine Love and Goodness shines forth in its greatest lustre and glory: and the other Perfections of the Divine nature are exhibited to us, as acting in concurrence, for promoting the designs of the most wonderful Love and tender Mercy.²²

John Witherspoon wrote in almost identical terms in his 'Essay on Christian Piety' concerning the glory of redemption displaying, 'with peculiar lustre', God's justice, power, and wisdom, but

especially his mercy and love.²³ In God's giving his Son to be a priest to die for his rebellious subjects, we see 'the highest possible effort of the infinite love of God', said John Russel almost half a century later. God the Father was not solicited by any creature, not even by Christ, he maintained, to form the plan of redeeming love. The plan of redemption originated in his own free, sovereign, good pleasure.²⁴ Robert Walker, around the same time as Russel, was to argue that the entire view of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself led to the reaffirmation of the Apostle John's conclusion that 'God is love'.²⁵ Maclaurin underlined this point most effectively of all when, in contradistinction to the generality of Moderate authors, he argued that Christ's intercession was not the cause of God's love or goodwill to sinners, but rather the effect of it. Christ's intercession and sacrifice were intermediate and subordinate causes by which the love of God produces its effects on transgressors, suitably to the glory of his justice and holiness. Both Christ's sacrifice and his intercession are manifestations of God's perfections.²⁶

Of much greater significance than perceptions of the Atonement as originating in and embodying the love of God towards sinners, however, was that strand of Popular thought which, following the line enunciated in its analysis of the divine attributes, interpreted the essence of the Atonement as the satisfaction of divine justice. It became the central feature in the analysis of the two most important contributors to the

debate, Russel and Walker. Before their time, John Maclaurin had asserted: 'By the propitiation of Christ's blood God declares his righteousness in the remission of sins, so that he may be just, and the justifier of the sinner who believeth in Jesus'.²¹ Or, as John Gillies put it slightly earlier than that, Christ 'satisfied Justice and obeyed the Law'.²² Probably the central analysis of the issue, however, was provided by Russel in his response to William McGill of Ayr's Practical Essay on the Death of Christ which appeared in 1786.²³

For Russel, the glory of God's justice requires the infliction of eternal punishment. In the economy of our redemption, the Father is to be considered as sustaining the character of the great Judge of all. The inflexible justice which he embodies is evidenced in the exaction of the last farthing of the debt incurred by the elect from the hands of his Son. The Socinian doctrine is to be rejected as failing to give accurate and affecting ideas of the justice and holiness of God.²⁴ From the justice and holiness of God, Russel also argued for the necessity of the Son's bearing divine wrath. Man, being a rational creature, is infinitely bound to love God and it follows that it was infinitely culpable of him to withdraw that love even for a single moment and to transfer it to any other object. Where there is a crime of infinite evil, surely that crime deserves infinite punishment. Since infinite evil cannot be punished in the finite body of man in this life, eternal punishment in Hell is a necessary consequence of sin, and for man to escape that

consequence, it requires that someone else suffers God's wrath for sin. Christ, motivated by 'sovereign and self-moving love', substituted himself in the stead of sinners, and consented to suffer the whole punishment due for the sins of the elect. He could not deliver his people from God's wrath in any other way than by bearing the divine wrath in his own soul.³¹ To say that Christ delivers us from eternal wrath by affording us the means and motives of repentance is to trifle with the holiness, justice, and faithfulness of God, and to show no regard for his character as 'the moral governor of the world'. Christ is, in fact, to be seen as suffering justly from the hands of God. If he did not bear divine wrath in the character of our Surety, then our sins do not deserve that wrath, and as a result the sinner need not be much alarmed about his present situation, for the eternal punishment for sin is not much more than a dream.³²

Acceptance of these doctrines does not require comprehension in finite human minds. The reasons for Christ's agony in the Garden are revealed to our faith but not explained to our reason. The fact that they are 'incomprehensible mysteries', along with the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, the all-atoning sacrifice of Christ, justification through faith in his sacrifice, and sanctification by the Holy Ghost, is not ground for their ridicule by Socinians.³³

This form of analysis of the Atonement enabled Russel, and all the other writers who used the terms, to see Christ's work as substitution,³⁴ as imputation,³⁵ as sacrifice,³⁶ as punishment,³⁷

as surety,³⁹ as propitiation,³⁹ and as intercession.⁴⁰ Russel came to three conclusions regarding the significance of the doctrine of the Atonement being seen essentially as Christ's bearing the divine wrath. The doctrine, first of all, lies at the very foundation of Christianity. Those who deny it are not really Christians and its denial threatens their souls. Secondly, without the doctrine of Christ's Atonement Christianity cannot exist. And finally, it denies the idea that the religious ideas of a man are of no consequence providing that he leads a good life. This is 'the pestilential principle which infidels wish to inculcate and disseminate', and, if it were true, preaching the gospel would be in vain. Appreciation of the importance of these perceptions is a starting-point for an understanding of the nature and causes of Popular opposition to the operation of Patronage throughout the century.⁴¹

This, then, would appear to embody the mainstream of Popular thought on the Atonement. Few attempts were made to define the Atonement in terms of covenant theology. John Dun defined covenanting with God as 'our accepting or taking hold of God's covenant of Redemption and Grace, and our dedicating and devoting ourselves unto him'; John Muckersy, at the end of the period being considered, in addressing communicants, described the sufferings of Christ as 'a sacred transaction in which you are deeply interested'; and John Maclaurin used the term fleetingly at the end of a section dealing with the way the heart is brought to accept the offer of salvation, and more extensively when he

incorporated the concept of the covenant of grace in defining the nature of faith.⁴² Apart from these three examples, the Popular writer who came nearest to an explicit adoption of covenant terminology was Robert Walker. In one of his sermons, we find him asserting that

the sacrifice of Christ is the meritorious cause of that justification of the sinner, which not only delivers him from present condemnation, and future wrath; but, in consequence of the grant annexed to the sacrifice, doth likewise invest him with a right to life that shall never end, and even introduce him to the possession of that inestimable blessing.⁴³

There was, however, in the rest of what Walker said concerning the Atonement, some important divergences from what most Popular authors seem to have regarded as the essential features of the doctrine. These divergences involved stress on the concept of Christ as mediator, and on his role in the reconciliation of God and man. Walker was not the first or the only Popular thinker to have done so for Maclaurin, Macqueen, and Love had all used these terms,⁴⁴ but these ideas dominated his thought. To some extent, Walker embodied the mainstream assertions: that the denial of Christ's divinity (the prime point of Socinianism), of his satisfaction for sin, and of the necessity virtue and efficacy of his grace all vilified the great Redeemer and detracted from his true honour and dignity; that men despise Christ when they do not receive him as 'their alone Saviour, as the true, the living, nay the only way to the Father';⁴⁵ that Christ's blood is the price which redeems the

soul, expiates the guilt of sin, and gives full satisfaction to divine justice.⁴⁶ On the other hand, he placed a much more pronounced emphasis on the recovery of the relationship between God and man in Christ's atoning work. Christ, he said, is the sole mediator between God and man, who, by his atoning sacrifice, has satisfied divine justice, 'and purchased the Holy Spirit to heal our diseased natures, and thereby render us meet for the perfection of our happiness, in the enjoyment of that God who cannot behold iniquity'. Christ is 'our relief'. The purpose of his coming into the world was to bring us to God. God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself by the ministry of his Spirit. The entire view of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself leads to the confirmation of the truth that 'God is love'.⁴⁷ There is certainly to be seen in Walker's work, therefore, a stress on human happiness and the love of God which is completely different from that which is present in, for example, that of Russel. In so far as Walker has been identified as embodying a more 'liberal evangelical' approach to theology, it is not unreasonable to find his views encapsulating those of other members of the Popular party. For example, John Snodgrass, by no means normally as flexible on such theological matters, wrote of the believer being bound 'to his benevolent and divine Redeemer' by 'a sense of his unmerited and stupendous love shed abroad upon his heart by the Holy Ghost' and displaying 'a growing perception of the excellency and glory of God, as he has revealed himself to us in the face of Jesus Christ...[which] makes us to delight in communion with him, and desire above all

things to be transformed into his image'.⁴⁸ Apart from Snodgrass, the only evidence of this being the case, however, seems to be contained in the work of John Muckersy. After talking of the 'strenuous and successful endeavours' of Christ for our salvation, he goes on to assert that the believer in Christ 'sees in his character his teacher, his example, his sacrifice, and his portion.' All our situations and our sentiments bear 'some relation to the Son of God in our nature', and bring 'his important mission' to view. Christ is the only relief from the 'malady' of sin. This, in fact, is very similar to Walker. More significant, however, is Muckersy's assertion that even in the corrupted state of man's nature, there is a principle which leads him to admire generosity, courage, and solicitude when exerted on behalf of others, and this principle is especially found when we contemplate 'the instructions, the example, and the sufferings of Christ'.⁴⁹ The importance of Muckersy in the discussion of the Atonement is that while on the one hand he faithfully repeats Walker's earlier position, on the other he draws on the Moderate tendency to stress the exemplary aspects of the Atonement. This balance in his thought places him much closer to the Moderate position than Walker whose doctrine of salvation derives much more from the traditional one.

A position closer to thorough-going Moderatism was adopted by Thomas Somerville. He saw the Atonement almost exclusively in terms of Christ's mediation. It is pleasant, he wrote, to contemplate our deliverer as 'the man Christ Jesus', clothed in

our own nature and therefore not only benevolent, but tender and compassionate to human kind. The doctrine of mediation excludes vanity or boasting on our part because all is dispensed through a mediator, as the reward for his obedience.⁵⁰ It is important, he maintained, to accept Christ not only as the propitiation for our sins, but as the pattern for our conduct.⁵¹ His discussion of the reason why Christ was appointed by God for the work of redemption, though, bears no similarity to that of other Popular writers. Even Wishart, for example, confined himself to a relatively conventional view in maintaining that Christ came into the world 'to recover and reclaim men from vice, and bring them back to that conformity to God in holiness and goodness, in which (and in his favour) their only true happiness lies...to deliver men from this degenerate and miserable condition'.⁵² Christ, Somerville held, was invested by God with 'a special and appropriate interest in this world' since he made it, and has presided over it, and this is the foundation of his subsequent mediatorial office. Since he created the world, 'there was a fitness in his being involved to restore it', to enlighten, redeem and judge it, and finally to become 'the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him'.⁵³ For Somerville, furthermore, the Atonement was an area of controversy: there was need to beware of making the doctrine of mediation the occasion of 'improper and unbecoming notions' concerning the goodness of God, in which obsession with the love of the Redeemer led to seeing him as the primary cause of salvation. He made exactly the same point as Russel had done earlier.⁵⁴ It is a dangerous

misconception, he went on to argue, to consider the doctrine of the mediation 'merely as an article of speculative faith', and to see it as an affair carried out from start to finish without any concurrence or effort on our part. ⁵⁵ This, presumably, though the charges were made in no way specific, was aimed at the more conventional, orthodox positions.

The charge of lack of human involvement in the act of Atonement, however, as implied in Somerville's assessment, arose in part from his disregard, or at least his blurring, of the Westminster standards' distinction between justification and sanctification, which was accepted implicitly by virtually all Popular writers, and in part from a lack of sympathy with more conventional views about the nature of the believer's response to the analysis or contemplation of the Atonement. For Somerville, the doctrine of mediation promoted 'an unassuming and lowly temper of mind', and led to goodwill and charity to all mankind, and to the abolition of national and other antipathies between men. ⁵⁶ For our spiritual lives the example of Christ on the cross related to our cultivation of the virtues of well-doing, gratitude, patience in suffering, and humility, and preparedness to be taught, guided, and saved by him. This, maintained Somerville, is how we should look at Christ on the cross. ⁵⁷ Muckersy adopted a similar position when he maintained that Christ's example is given for the imitation, instruction, and precept of believers. 'Do not satisfy yourselves', he wrote,

with abstract enquiries into the nature of your faith, and the sincerity of your love, but bring the question to the sure test of conduct, in preferring him to the dearest objects of affection, and his law and service to the most amiable pursuits ... in the daily walks of life we are called on to give him a single and undivided attention.⁵⁹

Muckersy's overall position, though, was a much more eclectic one than Somerville's.

Attempts to delineate further a characteristic viewpoint incorporating attention to the example of Christ, attributable to a 'liberal-evangelical' tradition in Popular thought, founder, however, on a lack of evidence. The most significant potential representative of it, Robert Walker, had little to say of the consequences of the Atonement in the lives of believers. Christ has 'purchased the Holy Spirit to heal our diseased natures, and thereby render us meet for the perfection of our happiness in the enjoyment of that God who cannot behold iniquity', is about as explicit a statement concerning this aspect of the Atonement as can be found in his work.⁶⁰ It would seem, in fact, that for Walker, the Atonement was primarily a theological matter and not especially a devotional one at all. For John Russel, however, the doctrine of the Atonement had much practical, devotional significance for the lives of believers. The viewing of Christ's sufferings should create in the minds of believing men the utmost abhorrence of all iniquity. On a more positive level, Christ's bearing the wrath of God lays the deepest foundations for spiritual joy, and the sense of the sinner's dependence on

God in Christ for deliverance should lead to true humility. It leads to 'godly sorrow' for sin without which real religion cannot exist. Awareness of the infinite love of God manifested in the Atonement results in the redeemed consecrating their bodies and souls in the service of their redeeming Lord and in spreading 'the sweet savour of the knowledge of Christ'. The whole of evangelical holiness, according to Russel, consists in conformity to the will of God's precepts and submission to the will of his providence, and the doctrine of Christ's bearing divine wrath promotes this.⁶⁰ While much of what Russel stressed was not dissimilar to some of Somerville's emphases, the latter derived them from the contemplation of the sufferings of Christ on the cross, whereas Russel drew his from the more theological implications of Christ suffering divine wrath.

The doctrinal importance of the Atonement in this connection, therefore, was its purpose of promoting holiness. 'Socinian' denial of Christ's divinity, implied in McGill's questioning of the orthodox position on Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, struck at the very heart of Scriptural teaching on the nature of holiness. It did so initially because it failed to give 'just and affecting ideas of the justice and holiness of God'. If accurate views of the divine perfections are a foundation for 'genuine Christianity in the soul', inaccurate ones must lead to false religion. The contemplation of the 'soul sufferings' of Christ, however, not just the physical ones, led to just views of God and thence to universal holiness.⁶¹

'Socinian' principles prevented discernment of the intrinsic evil of sin and thereby divested God of his character as infinitely righteous and holy. In doing so, they veiled the sinner's sight from seeing the necessity of a Saviour and encouraged continuance in impenitence and unbelief. 'Socinian' doctrine divested the Lord of the glory of being a complete surety. By presenting Christ as a mere man, suffering only in his body, it could not produce a godly sorrow in the sinner and therefore could have no influence at all on his repentance, and certainly could produce no foundation for it. It furthermore denied the freeness of the gift of salvation in Christ. The Socinian's submission to Christ was not 'a rational, holy submission' but a blind submission to a system of irrational and absurd principles.⁶²

Apart from the questions of whether it was a justified attack on McGill's position and whether it was seen by some as an attack on the implications of Moderate thought in general,⁶³ this conclusion can be seen as an attack on the principles of some who are to be regarded as members of the Popular party. Thomas Somerville's interpretation of the Atonement, for example, would have been seen by someone of Russel's viewpoint as being on the high road to a fully-fledged Socinian position. It is possible to suggest, therefore, that a feature endemic in the Popular party was tension caused by the theological differences of its members, which hindered the formation and organisation of a coherent and effective ecclesiastical opposition to the Moderates in the General Assembly. In fact, the cross-currents of theological

thought in the Church of Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century made such a task probably well-nigh impossible, It was the common theological base provided by the Evangelical Revival of the nineteenth century which made possible the emergence of the much more cohesive and effective anti-intrusion movement of those years.

Popular thought on the nature of the Atonement, then, displayed both the diversity of emphases and the cross-currents of influence which typified the party throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. There is displayed the threefold division of orthodox, near Moderate, and what might be termed 'progressive orthodox', and there was present a preparedness either to adopt or to modify, or to respond to insights derived from other positions.

3. The Nature of Faith

Faith in Christ is at the heart of the Christian religion. Without the response of faith on the part of the believer to the death of Christ and the work of the Atonement, Christianity can have no substance. It is central to the life of the Church not only as a doctrine, but also in its outworkings in the life of the individual Christian and in the corporate life of the Church. It is one half of the great dichotomy of Christianity: faith and works. A study of views on the subject is therefore an essential part of any attempt to analyse the nature of an ecclesiastical grouping such as the Popular party.

Consideration of the nature of faith in Christ led to the production of the work which is the most significant theological treatise by any member of the Popular party in the latter half of the eighteenth century, John Erskine's Dissertation on the Nature of Christian Faith which appeared in 1765. Drawing significantly on the ideas of his American correspondent, Jonathan Edwards, though not slavishly so, Erskine's work remained the classic delineation of Scottish theology on the subject until the Evangelical Revival in the nineteenth century. Such was the esteem in which this work seems to have been held that little else was published on the subject by Popular writers after its appearance. The next most important contribution to Popular thought on faith was probably the writings of John Maclaurin. The precise significance of Maclaurin's work, however, is somewhat

difficult to assess. In some ways he is best seen as a transitional figure connecting an earlier evangelical tradition, embodied in the works of Thomas Boston, and finding its latest exponent in John Willison, with what can be regarded as the main tradition of the late eighteenth century which saw its classic formulation in Erskine's work.⁶⁴ There remains also the problem of assessing the influence of a thinker and preacher whose works were published posthumously and which in any case only antedated Erskine's by a decade or so. Before turning to these potentially seminal works, however, it would seem profitable to attempt to delineate the views on the subject as revealed in the writings of less mercurial members of the party.

Relatively few Popular writers had much to say on the nature of faith, and only John Willison, John Gillies, John Dun, and Robert Walker made more than a passing reference to it in the latter half of the eighteenth century. There was a degree of uniformity in what they did say about it. Conversion to Christ was seen essentially as repentance and belief in the redemptive office of Christ; faith was seen as knowledge of the nature of God which led to repentance, and belief in the gospel which in turn resulted in surrender to God and union with him. Such concepts, however, were rarely developed.

From an evangelical viewpoint, it can be argued that the starting point for any discussion of the nature of faith is an examination of the process of conversion, or even, prior to that,

the work of conviction of sin, but there is surprisingly little to be found in the works of members of the Popular party on conversion as such, and even less on the process of conviction. John Gillies of Glasgow provided a rare attempt at a systematic analysis of the steps to conviction, and in doing so he followed the five steps given in Boston's Fourfold State: the Lord's blow of conviction of sin leads to the sinner's refraining from gross sins and fleeing to the performance of neglected duties; this is followed by another blow which shows the soul the pollution of its duties and its inward vileness of heart which leads in turn to endeavours to purify the heart and watch over its thoughts; the failure of this attempt leads to the borrowing of Christ's righteousness to make up the defects of its own; the failure of this endeavour is succeeded by belief, but with a non-scriptural belief of the sinner's own making; and finally, God cuts off the sinner from any reliance on his own works and gives a faith of his own working which ingrafts the sinner into Christ.⁶⁵ This detailed analysis of conviction of sin seems to have found no imitator and Popular discussion of the process of conviction concentrated on the essential sense of guilt in much the same way as it concentrated on discussion of the nature of sin.

There is some evidence of disagreement within the Popular party concerning the first stage in the process of conviction of sin. Gillies, himself, wrote of man seeing his vile and miserable state by nature, and realising that he deserves Hell and must suffer it unless mercy prevents it, but he nevertheless asserted

that these perceptions come through 'the grace of true repentance'.⁶⁶ More typical is John Russel who considered the sinner to be most effectually alarmed by a sense of danger and roused out of a state of fatal security by being assured of his birth under guilt and under sin, from which the only escape is belief in the Saviour who died that we might live through him.⁶⁷ The sense of guilt, for Russel, precedes repentance. Likewise for John Love, the sinner's conscience trembles under the load of guilt as he surveys the inward 'abyss of impurity and desperate wickedness', and looks up to see the 'frowning fiery aspect of that Judge, with whom dwells power, majesty, holiness, terribleness, unbounded, unknown'.⁶⁸ Such references to the guilt of sin in the process of conversion are, however, both few and slight.

Of much greater concern to Popular writers was the process of repentance for those sins. Gillies, for example, who was much prone to compile lists of steps to be followed in spiritual experience, harks back to Boston and talks of the lowest step of repentance which is the performance of neglected duties and forbearance from known sins. Then follows apprehension by faith that there is no escape but through the righteousness of Christ, and the soul then turns from sin to God and becomes a new creature, loathing itself for all its former abominations and daily striving after greater holiness.⁶⁹ The new creature, according to John Love, cannot avoid living under the eye and throne of God, and therefore loving mankind and doing them

good.⁷⁰ In the later years of the period, this change increasingly came to be expressed as being renewed and sanctified in the image of God.⁷¹

Greater attention in the process of conversion was devoted to belief in Christ as the means of salvation. 'Belief' in the process of conversion was to be contrasted with 'knowledge' or 'understanding' in the exercise of faith. When considering belief in Christ in conversion, Popular writers were unexpectedly brief, imprecise, and even vague. The contrast with their treatment of the subject when speaking of faith is striking. For, example, Gillies was content to imply that belief in the Son as the means of salvation, and of the reception of Christ into one's heart, was enough.⁷² Love wrote of the sinner breaking forth under divine influence from the gloom of condemnation into the kingdom of God's Son, and speaks in general terms of Christ's being manifested to bear the sins of many, to reconcile them to God, and to raise them to infinite blessedness.⁷³ John Snodgrass wrote at the same time as Love of the atoning sacrifice, and meritorious obedience of Christ as being the only grounds on which pardon of sin and acceptance with God into eternal life can be obtained.⁷⁴ Robert Walker, in a passage whose devotional emphasis in many ways is reminiscent of Gillies, perhaps best epitomizes the point being made about the imprecision of Popular thought concerning conversion:

Doth the guilt of sin terrify you? Do you fear that a just and holy God can never accept such offenders as you have

been? Here Christ is our relief; who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; who paid our debt, and hath purchased and sealed our pardon with his blood. The curse and condemning sentence of the law are indeed terrible; but if we have truly fled to Christ for refuge, he hath nailed them to his cross, and will give us a full and free discharge.⁷⁵

Here is to be seen the essential emphasis on Christ as the comfort and Saviour of sinners and the inherent tendency of Popular writers to express the nature and process of conversion in conventional terms.

The explanation for this tendency is discernible in another passage from the same one of Walker's Sermons:

...With regard to eternal things, the learned have no advantage above the unlearned: neither the gifts of nature, nor the improvements of art, confer any precedence in the school of Christ. The comfort of a Christian doth not depend upon a process of abstract reasoning; but results immediately from the knowledge and belief of interesting facts, attested by God, and faithfully recorded in the Scriptures of truth...⁷⁶

In other words, for Popular thinkers faith was essentially a matter of knowledge and belief, a near intellectual process. As such, and bearing in mind the relative lack of interest in the nature of sin, it was almost to be expected that the work of conversion, with its experiential basis, was likely to be of less interest and concern than faith.⁷⁷

John Willison of Dundee, one of the most devotionally-orientated of the Popular leadership, demonstrated clearly the powerful influence of the intellectual description of faith. He believed that his faith could be defended on rational grounds. He was satisfied 'of the necessity and excellency of the gospel-revelation, and of its divine original'. His reasoning, based mainly on the inadequacy of natural religion, was as follows: Natural reason, though corrupted, tells man that there is a God and that he ought to be believed and obeyed; the Christian religion confirms and perfects natural religion since it corresponds with the dictates of natural reason and religion, and supplies their defects. Natural reason, while it enjoins a just and virtuous life, and the worship and glorification of God, leaves man ignorant of how these things should be done, whereas the Christian religion informs us how to worship and serve God and enforces the purpose of natural religion, namely, the abandoning of sin and vice, and the practice of virtue and piety. Reliance on reason alone leads to vagueness in divine things, unworthy notions of God and even to gross idolatry and perverse practices. Natural religion, furthermore, can give no satisfactory account of the creation of the world, the original state of man, or of his fall into guilt and impurity, nor can it account for the conduct of divine providence in the government of the world: Christian revelation can account for all. Natural religion, based solely on reason, cannot ease the conscience of a convicted sinner, nor assure us that there is forgiveness with God. Natural religion gives no certainty of the immortality of

the soul and of a future life. Biblical revelation supplies the defects of natural religion by setting forth Christ as Mediator who satisfies God's offended justice, removes the guilt and power of sin, and brings sinners into the favour of and communion with God. The miracles testify to Christ's heavenly kingdom.

Historically, the success of the gospel leads to the conclusion that it was brought about by God himself, the author of the Christian religion. All these things, being certain facts, says Willison, clearly demonstrate not just the truth of Christianity, but the unreasonableness of infidelity. And, lastly, there is the inward evidence and 'experimental demonstration of the truth and excellency of the gospel-revelation' from the effects of it in the souls of the thousands who have been touched by the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸ It is important to note that, even for Willison, the 'experimental demonstration' of the truth of the gospel does not come from any inward experience on the part of the individual, but from the united testimony of Christians to the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Possibly the only significant place given to a 'non-rational' factor in the Popular conception of the nature of faith in the late eighteenth century was the ultimate dependence of the sinner and the believer on the operations of the Spirit of God.⁷⁹ The importance of this point should not be overlooked. Stress on the role of the Holy Spirit as a complement to stress on faith as knowledge of, and belief in the mediation of the Son of God

provided the balanced portrayal of the nature of the Christian faith which was fundamental to the concerns of the Popular party.

Even at this stage, it is already apparent that the essential emphases were those of defining faith as the believer's relationship with God, and as knowledge of or belief in God and in Christ as Mediator. These two emphases were not mutually exclusive. There are numerous instances of both among leading Popular figures. Gillies, for example, saw faith as 'receiving the Kingdom of God'. By this he meant God ruling in one's soul and 'being all in all' to one; the sinner's returning to his Maker by Christ's mediation and through the mediation of his Spirit. 'It is to take God, Father, Son, and Spirit as thy God, or in other Words, to repent and believe the Gospel'.⁸⁰ For John Dun, forty years later, faith was a matter of accepting God's covenant. It meant cleaving to Christ as our righteousness, strength, and Redeemer; submission to his laws, resembling him in temper and conduct, striving for the highest degree possible of perfection in holiness in this life; and seeking him as the healer of spiritual diseases, as comforter and supporter in death and in judgement. This near-Moderate emphasis was balanced by the devotional concept of total surrender to the Lord: 'faith also meant dedication, devotion and hearty surrender to God, and that surrender must be entire and involve the submission of all to the will of his providence as well as to his laws. We are, concluded Dun, most truly and nobly our own when we are most entirely God's'.⁸¹ Robert Walker, too, accepted this concept of faith as

union with God since he stressed that the duties of morality and works of righteousness were to be seen as the effects and evidences of faith in Christ and love to God, and that they could not be manifested without being 'ingrafted into Christ'.⁸² Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood also saw the virtues of Christianity deriving their obligation from the authority, the doctrines, the precepts and the example of the Son of God as 'the test of our relation to him'.⁸³ For John Snodgrass, the relevant terms were 'communion' with God, and 'conformity' to his image.⁸⁴ The only variation on this line of analysis seems to have appeared later in a sermon of John Muckersy's, 'The Excellence of the Gospel'. Muckersy saw faith as the means or the ground of union with God: Christians, he held, are 'distinct from the world by their conduct, and united to Christ by their faith...'; that faith 'must be the ground of our union with the Saviour'; belief in the gospel carries along with it 'the experience of the favour of God'.⁸⁵

More important, however, than this first emphasis was the way in which the nature of faith was seen as knowledge of or belief in God and the mediatorial role of his Son. Gillies, based most of his 'steps to belief' on knowledge of the true nature of God: God as a being of supreme wisdom, power, and goodness, as ever present and pleased or displeased with our conduct, and as therefore worthy of our dependence, fear, and love. Christ should be accepted as an historical person, whose life, miracles, and doctrines were witnessed by persons worthy of belief, and who is

therefore worthy of our credit. The nature of true saving faith is to be ascertained by weighing the import of scriptural expressions relating to 'receiving', 'trusting', and 'fleeing' to Christ; by consideration of faith as it reflects the different faculties of the soul; and by the study of the scriptural examples of faith. The list of faculties of the soul which Gillies subjoins is significant: 'Assent of the Understanding, Consent of the Will, Approbation of the Judgement, Out-going of the Affections'. He went on to approve of a definition of faith as 'the Soul's Approbation of, and acquiescence in that Glorious Device of Salvation by Jesus Christ'.⁸⁶ Four decades later, Dun put the same point when he maintained that the knowledge of God and ourselves leads to approval of the plan of redemption by Christ as worthy of God and well-suited to man. Faith, for Dun, was belief in Christ as Messiah, Teacher, atoner, and interceder, and acceptance of him in all his offices.⁸⁷ Walker made the same point when he asserted that the comfort of a Christian results from the knowledge and belief of 'interesting facts, attested by God, and faithfully recorded in the Scriptures of truth...'⁸⁸ On the other hand, though, John Love defined true faith in terms of three predominantly devotional criteria: when the soul leans confidently on Christ for justification and acceptance; when the soul is drawn to love him in whom it trusts; and when the soul is drawn to yield itself to Christ as Lord.⁸⁹ Love, however, was very much an exception to the pattern of Popular perceptions of the nature of faith.

The main features of Popular thought on the nature of faith, then, were general agreement that faith was concerned with the nature of the Christian's relationship with God, and that it was a matter of knowledge of or belief in God and the mediatorial role of Christ. There is little indication that many members of the party defined it in devotional or experiential terms. Although on the whole the process aroused relatively little interest, there was some disagreement about how faith was attained and especially about the nature of conviction of sin. For most writers, however, the crucial thing was repentance for sin. There was no desire to dwell on the guiltiness of sin, or indeed on the nature of belief in Christ as Saviour. Such matters were marked by vagueness and imprecision and by the use of conventional terminology. In contrast, there was unanimity that the Holy Spirit played a key role in the whole process. Since the operations of the Holy Spirit are ultimately unknowable by the human mind, it may well have been this assumption which led to the process of conviction of sin and attainment of faith receiving so little attention from Popular writers.

To what extent, then, are these themes and tendencies reflected in or indeed do they originate in the magisterial works of John Maclaurin and John Erskine? The fullest account of the doctrine of faith in the writings of the former is in his Essay on Christian Piety. Faith in Christ, he says, includes: acknowledgement of the meritorious cause of salvation, that is, the blood of Christ; and our applying to God's mercy through

redemption; and our building our hope and pleading upon it. It must include the acknowledgement of those things concerning Christ that are of greatest importance, namely, his role in redemption, his atonement for sin, and of the redemption as the highest manifestation of divine love and mercy. This last is an especial function of the operations of the Holy Spirit. He summed up:

Seeing therefore that due acknowledgement of redemption is a main design of the work of the Spirit of God, of the doctrine of his law, of all the instructions of his word, and of all the ordinances of his worship; it is evident that such an acknowledgement not only is included in that faith in Christ which the gospel requires but even that it is the very main and principal thing included in it.⁹⁰

Faith, Maclaurin continued, is the means of securing privileges such as access to God in worship, and fulness of peace and joy in God. It has for its object that redemption in Christ's blood which is the meritorious cause of the privileges. The doctrine of redemption explains God's bestowing all these blessings on us, and his acceptance of all our sincere services, for Christ's sake. Acknowledgement of the redemption, therefore, may be considered as the life and soul of practical Christianity. The 'transcendent importance' of acknowledging divine mercy in redemption, however, ought not to interfere with habitual consideration and contemplation of the other doctrines of religion. 'This is contrary to the nature and ends of true faith in Christ and is a very dangerous extreme', he warned, though it

was also very dangerous to give only a superficial acknowledgement of redemption in the act of faith.⁹¹

He proceeded to stress that the chief end of faith in Christ is the glory of God. The end of belief in the truths of natural religion is the honour of God's perfections as displayed in the works of creation and providence; in a like manner, the end of knowing and believing the gospel is the honour of God's perfections in the works of redemption and salvation. 'A rooted disposition and propensity to comply with that excellent end, must be the chief character of that faith which the Scripture calls faith unfeigned'.⁹² It is a further 'chief end' of faith, that by it we are justified before God, and given a right to eternal life and to all the blessings of the covenant of grace. The influence of faith in Christ on our justification does not reduce the necessity of repentance since it includes as well as a sincere sorrow for sin, a returning from sin to God and universal holiness. These things, argued Maclaurin, are inseparable from true faith and of equal necessity with it, although not of the same influence on our interest in Christ's mediation. Acknowledgement of that mediation is the 'immediate effectual means' of salvation.⁹³

A further 'principal end' of faith is sanctification or universal holiness. True holiness, held Maclaurin, is the end of our redemption by the Son of God. It is the end of faith in Christ not only to direct us in seeking all the parts of

salvation in prayer and other duties of worship, but also to direct us in all other endeavours in the work of our salvation, and especially of our sanctification. By faith, too, we are to seek assurance of our salvation.⁹⁴ This led Maclaurin to an examination of the role of the Holy Spirit in faith.

Scriptural descriptions of the object of faith, and of the nature and ends of it, show that interest in Christ as Mediator is given by means of a free and gratuitous donation. The sanctifying grace of God's Spirit which is the 'efficient cause' of holiness, and faith itself which is 'a principal cause' of it, are both the fruits of Christ's redemption, and both are to be regarded as the gift of God. The gospel in other words, promises salvation through sincere acceptance of Christ with the whole heart, and it also contains promises of God's Spirit to enable sinners to gain such acceptance.⁹⁵ Maclaurin held closely to Calvinist orthodoxy.

Acceptance of Christ with the whole heart in turn implies, first, 'sincere persuasion of the divine offers and promises' and dependence on them; and, secondly, a 'cordial esteem' of them. This last is sometimes, held Maclaurin, called acceptance of the offers of the gospel. He continues that

it is evident that to receive or accept of a thing, supposes not only that we esteem it, but that it is offered to us, that we know and believe that it is offered, and that we hope for it, by accepting of it in the manner required of us.

Acceptance of the divine promises and offers is 'a principal branch of true practical faith'. Without believing and relying on the offers and promises of the gospel, its doctrines cannot give that relief and consolation needed by an awakened conscience, nor by a sinner sensible of sin and concerned about salvation.⁹⁶ This is, in effect, almost a psychological argument for the validity of a definition of faith in terms of knowledge and belief. Esteem of Christ's mediation is summarised as including

a hearty willingness to be indebted to divine free mercy in Christ's redemption, as the source of our salvation; a holy propensity to honour the love and grace, and other perfections of God, manifested in the Mediator of the covenant of grace and in the promises of it, with a careful improvement of these things as our relief from the fears that are the effects of sin, and as the grounds of our hope and pleading before God, for remission and for all other blessings.

Above all, however, it is important to all the attainments appertaining to faith in Christ, 'to have just apprehensions of the object of it', and of its end, namely, the glory of God's perfections. The end of our acknowledging redemption is our glorying of God's perfections manifested in it. The glory of God in redemption should be 'the object of the Christian's transcendent esteem and habitual contemplation'. This is the main feature of a life of faith in Christ, and as such is the main purpose of the work of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁷

This line of thought brought Maclaurin to consider the means by which the heart is brought to accept the offer of salvation.

It is, he suggested, the result of appreciation of the necessity, worth, and excellence of what is offered. The principal means by which this is produced is a 'just impression of the hatefulness and danger of sin'. But faith in Christ is a faith which works by love, and this fixes men's hearts not just on deliverance from the punishment of sin, but on deliverance from sin itself. Faith produces not just desire for the favour of God as a means of happiness, but for the enjoyment of God himself, the image of God, and our active glorifying of God, as the principal effects of God's favour, and as the most valuable objects of desire. The benefits of the covenant of grace are the principal objects of the desires central to the nature of holiness. The favour, image, and enjoyment of God are the object of the chief desires included in divine love; whereas deliverance from sin is the object of the chief desires belonging to the nature of repentance. All these desires meet with full satisfaction in the promises of the covenant of grace.⁹⁹

It has been suggested that Popular thought on the nature of faith dwelt on repentance from sin and belief in Christ's redemptive office as being embodied in conversion, on faith as involving knowledge of the nature of God which led to repentance from sin and belief in the gospel, which in turn led to union with God.⁹⁹ While John Maclaurin reflected some of these emphases inasmuch as he depicted faith as involving acknowledgement of Christ's redemptive role as its main ingredient, stressed the dependence of man on the Holy Spirit as the 'efficient cause' of

faith, and perceived its results to be the securing of access to God, the enjoyment of him, and conformity to his image, on the other hand his approach to the subject was much more analytical, and there are significant differences between his analysis and those offered by other Popular writers. First, while he made common cause with other Popular theologians in seeing faith as a matter of intellectual assent in so far as the words most commonly used by him in its connection were 'acknowledgement', 'persuasion', 'esteem', and 'appreciation', he differentiated between acknowledgement of the 'meritorious cause of salvation', which was Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, the acknowledgement of his redemptive role which he saw as the principal ingredient of faith, and acknowledgement of Christ's mediatorial role, which he described as the 'immediate effectual means' of faith. Secondly, while he defined human sanctification as being a chief end of faith, he gave much more prominence to the idea of the ultimate end of faith as being the glorification of the divine perfections. And, lastly, he appeared to see the whole question of the nature of faith more in terms of the classic doctrine of the covenant of grace than did any of the other Popular writers on the subject. The conclusion to which this would appear to lead is that while Maclaurin stood head and shoulders above other Popular theologians in the earlier years of the period, his influence was relatively small. As was suggested earlier, however, this is not altogether surprising owing to the late appearance of his works in printed form. Is the same, however, to be said of John Erskine?

From the beginning of Erskine's Dissertation on the Nature of Christian Faith it is obvious that this is a different theological work from anything produced in the century by other members of the Popular party. Apart from its narrowly defined subject matter and its theological rather than devotional intent, the work marks its author as a theologian of acumen and some independence of mind. For example, Erskine eschewed the lists of truths relating to faith which were a feature of some earlier writers such as Boston and Gillies,¹⁰⁰ took issue with Jonathan Edwards' sermons on justification,¹⁰¹ and quoted the suspect John Glas sometimes but not always with approval.¹⁰² He was prepared to recruit support from Principal Leechman of Glasgow, probably regarded by most of Erskine's Popular compatriots as being heretical.¹⁰³ and was even prepared to stand apart from 'the generality of Calvinists' in the matter of the place of the consent of the will in the receiving of Christ.¹⁰⁴

Erskine, like Maclaurin, was in the mainstream of eighteenth century Popular thought in regarding faith as signifying persuasion or assent. It is, he maintained, the only notion of faith applicable to every passage of Scripture where any kind of faith is mentioned. It is an assent to something revealed and that was true prior to our believing it.¹⁰⁵ It is true, too, that he saw faith as embodying belief in the gospel account of Christ as Messiah,¹⁰⁶ as Son of God,¹⁰⁷ as Saviour of the world,¹⁰⁸ and as Redeemer.¹⁰⁹ As with most other Popular writers on the subject, he understood faith as leading to increased knowledge of

God.¹¹⁰ Like them also, he saw faith as leading to the sanctification of the Christian,¹¹¹ and like them he ascribed the efficacy of all these beliefs to the operation of the Holy Spirit.¹¹² There is, therefore, convincing evidence that Erskine stood in the midst of the Popular tradition of thought on the nature of faith, but the matter, however, is considerably more complex. Erskine's whole approach to the question was much more 'doctrinal' than the 'practical' concerns of, for example, Maclaurin, and his preoccupations reflected that approach. He realised that the Popular perception of faith as involving fundamentally intellectual assent to the truths of the gospel allowed a faith which might not be 'saving faith'. The significance of his work, therefore, is that he provided an analysis of faith which made it possible to retain the mainstream, orthodox Calvinist perception of faith as 'saving knowledge' and yet assimilate contemporary insights relating to the operation of the understanding, the will, and the senses. His was, therefore, a modification of the analysis of Maclaurin in response to the intellectual environment of the Scottish Enlightenment.

The first stage in this process was to give the understanding an even greater role in faith than had hitherto been the case. The Puritan, John Owen, was quoted approvingly as asserting that 'Faith is in the understanding, in respect of its being and subsistence: in the will and heart, in respect of its effectual workings'. But in the Scriptures, asserted Erskine, the

heart refers to intellectual powers.¹¹³ Faith could not influence temper and conduct 'if it did not include some degree of knowledge and apprehension of what is believed'. Truths, however interesting in their own nature, could not engage the will and affections unless they were understood. Although no man understood the whole of the Christian revelation, and no man assented to it but with 'a general implicit assent', faith was not just a general implicit assent to Christianity, or to what was contained in the Scriptures. Such a consent to divine revelation, without understanding what it contained, would not produce conviction of sin in the thoughtless or unconcerned, it would not produce peace of conscience in the convicted, and it would not encourage holiness of heart or life.¹¹⁴ It was evident, too, that 'faith is not to be found in the generality of those who call themselves Christians'.¹¹⁵ The reason for this was that a distinction must be drawn between faith and 'saving faith'.

'Saving faith', for Erskine, was a knowing what and in whom the Christian believes:

there is one radical comprehensive truth, assent to which is represented as saving faith, and which supposes, includes, or necessarily infers every other truth thus fundamental. That truth is expressed in a variety of language, in different passages of Scripture... the only begotten of the Father was sent by him to this wretched world, to be the propitiation and advocate of sinners: and that a fullness of grace dwells in him, and power is given him over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to those given him of the Father. This doctrine is with peculiar propriety termed the truth.¹¹⁶

Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity was referred to as 'largely and unanswerably' proving that the proposition that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God*, was the only proposition in which belief was necessary to be a Christian.¹¹⁷ Locke, furthermore, pointed out that a man could not give his assent to any affirmation or negation unless he understood the terms conjoined in the proposition, and the thing affirmed or denied. To believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, therefore, says Erskine, is of no purpose if we understand nothing by it or something different from what the Scriptures reveal.¹¹⁸ We must, therefore, believe the proposition 'in the fullest and most emphatical sense of the word'. Saving faith sees Christ as a person of infinite dignity, and consequently as able to bear the Father's anger, to satisfy his justice, to achieve the recovery of fallen souls, and to enable his people to conquer all his enemies. This knowledge lays the foundation for an unlimited trust in him. Without it we would have 'infinitely unsuitable apprehensions of the Son's love in coming to save us, of the Father's love in sending his Son, and of the assurance that with the Son, the Father will freely give us all things. The necessity of the shedding of blood, at the same time, proves the infinite evil of sin, and the spotless purity and justice of God.'¹¹⁹

Faith, therefore, is a believing of what the gospel says about the Father sending the Son to be the Saviour of the world. The way in which Erskine reached this conclusion, however, was

different from that of Maclaurin,¹²⁰ though he saw its results in similar terms. Salvation purchased and applied by Christ includes deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin and restoration to the favour of God; deliverance in this life from the power of sin and the beginning of conformity to God's image; and a deliverance in the end from all the remains of sin and sorrow, and the possession of the fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore. All this leads men to seek 'that better country', renounce the pleasures of sin, and suffer affliction with God's people. Faith is, therefore, 'a lively realizing persuasion of the glories of an unseen world'.¹²¹

Faith, however, is also concerned with believing in Christ's name, which denotes believing in the doctrine of justification through his merits, and in the doctrine of the glory which is his as Mediator in order to apply the purchased redemption. Faith, therefore, means being persuaded that sinners may be pardoned and accepted through Christ's blood and merits, that he rose from the dead, and that God justifies sinners through his blood and righteousness. It is also the case that since men are unable themselves to satisfy divine justice, they are wholly dependent on God's mercy for salvation.¹²² It is increasingly obvious, then, that for Erskine, faith has a strongly 'doctrinal' emphasis.

While, however, faith is concerned with believing in Christ's name, Erskine was also concerned to delineate what faith

is not. Where faith is expressed as hearing Christ or hearing his words, or receiving Christ, it may be that this signifies the heart choosing and the affections embracing Christ as prophet, priest, and king, and the whole soul as consenting to, approving of, and delighting in the Saviour and in the gospel scheme of salvation. But this is not saving faith although it is connected with it, is always present with it or necessarily flows from it, and therefore is essential to the Christian character. Every believer experiences these actions of the soul, but they are not faith. Coming to Christ, or receiving Christ is the 'immediate fruit of faith' rather than faith itself. It is the seeking of all spiritual blessings only in the way of union and communion with Christ from a persuasion that in this and in no other way may the blessings be obtained. So, too, 'drawing near to God', 'coming to the throne of Grace', or 'coming to God through Christ' are not descriptions of faith, but of the believer's application to God through the Redeemer for every blessing.¹²³

But Erskine still had to tackle the problem of differentiating clearly between faith and saving faith. The faith of God's elect not only differs from that of others in the thing assented to. The nature and foundation of assent in saving faith is specifically different from the nature and foundation of assent in self-deceivers. Self-deceivers may have 'orthodox sentiments of religion'. They may understand religious mysteries and knowledge, and yet lack charity. They may even believe by means of miracles and other external evidences that these

mysteries constitute a divine revelation. But saving faith, too, is founded on evidence and does not assent to truth without understanding the reasons why. The answer which Erskine produced, in the first place, is that what distinguishes saving faith is the operation of the Holy Spirit:

The spirit takes from the scripture, the grand evidence of faith which he has lodged there, and carries it to the hearts of the elect, and then the light and power of divine truth so apprehends and overcomes the soul, that it can no longer resist.

That triumphant evidence, is no other than the glory and excellency of the gospel scheme of revelation [marg. salvation] manifested by the holy spirit in such a manner, as produces full conviction, that a scheme so glorious could have none but God for its author.¹²⁴

In the Scriptures, furthermore, the nature of God's wisdom, grace, authority, and other attributes 'are as legible to the faith of the meanest, as of the most learned believers'.¹²⁵ When men's minds are enlightened by the Spirit, they can see the divine origin of the Scriptures and their words of grace fall with such power and evidence on the soul of the enlightened sinner that he cannot withhold his assent. The soul, therefore, is 'meerly [sic] passive' when faced with the operations of divine power. Saving faith may therefore be defined as

a persuasion that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, flowing from spiritual views of such a glory in the gospel, as satisfies and convinces the mind, that a scheme so glorious could have none but God for its author...

Such an assent, founded on discovery of the glory of the gospel, is impossible without 'the special saving operations of the Spirit'.¹²⁶

This led Erskine to a brief examination of the doctrine of assurance. A further ground of certainty of their faith for Christians is their experiencing that Jesus is the Christ in his 'enlightening their understandings as a prophet, speaking peace to their consciences as a priest, and renewing their wills as a king'. There is, therefore, not only a knowledge of God and faith in him which precedes our 'espousal' to God, but a subsequent one which involves the knowledge that God is faithful to his promises. This subsequent knowledge involves the feeling of the promises accomplished in the believer. This evidence of faithfulness, however, is not the primary foundation of faith because it comes after belief. It is a certainty from our own feelings rather than 'a crediting of the divine testimony'. It is 'an assurance of sense, not of faith'; it is an assurance of our own particular interest in God's favour and in the operations of his Spirit.¹²⁷

Saving faith, however, is further distinguished from counterfeits by its 'attendants and genuine fruits'. True faith affects the affections and conduct. The truths of divine revelation contribute to the improvement of the believer's spiritual life. God works on men 'in a way suited to their rational natures, and to the established connection between the understanding and will'. He enlightens the understanding so that the will may be attracted to a right choice. As a result, the believer thinks and judges in some measure as does God, and God's mind and will as revealed in Scripture become his. And as

Leechman had said, it is the doctrines of revelation and not its precepts that are the chief means of sanctification. We are prompted to love God, for example, not because he said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God', but by our discoveries of God's beauty and love. The doctrines of Christianity relating to the plan of man's redemption are well calculated to promote holiness of heart and life, and are indeed the origin of both.¹²⁹

Erskine then formulated his final distinction between saving faith and its counterfeits. No one rightly believes that Christ is a Saviour who does not have 'suitable conceptions' of from what he saves. And no one can have such conceptions without perceiving the goodness and excellence of the gospel salvation and acting upon it so as to desire it, choose it, and rely upon it. The Scriptures often depict faith as a preservative against sinning and this is accurate since, if we know a thing to be greatly desirable and yet do not desire it, or know it to be dreadful and fail to do our utmost to avoid it, we act contrary to human nature. Belief in the Father sending the Son to be the Saviour of the world implies that the world needed such a salvation, and consequently a belief in the infinite evil of sin, and the infinite obligations to duty. This last supposes a knowledge of and belief in the infinite glory and perfection of God from which those obligations arise. Saving faith always produces a personal application of these truths. A true knowledge of God cannot but influence our dispositions and actions. It is this crucial point which led Erskine to reject the profession of

'the generality of those who call themselves Christians'. 'If men really understood and believed the truth they profess', he says, 'they could not go on thus frowardly in the ways of their own heart'.¹²⁹

Erskine's contribution to Popular thought on the nature of faith would seem to be fourfold: first, he emphasized the all-embracing significance of the role of the understanding in faith; secondly, he delineated the differences between mere intellectual assent or understanding and saving faith, the essence of which difference he saw as epitomized in the central role of the Holy Spirit in applying to believers the evidences for faith in the Scriptures and as producing the conviction that God is the author of the scheme of salvation; thirdly, he analysed the doctrine of assurance in terms of the assurance of faith which satisfies and convinces the mind of the truth of the gospel doctrines of the offer of salvation through Christ, and of the assurance of the senses which concern personal experience of God's promises being applied to the individual; and, fourthly, he ascribed to the operation of the will the development of the spiritual life of the believer which leads to the believer's conformity to the mind and will of God. This last he explained in terms of the connection between the understanding and the will. His analysis led Erskine to conclude that a significant number, if not the majority, of those who profess Christianity, do not in fact profess true faith. As a result, the stage was set for a renewed evangelical onslaught on infidelity and lack of belief.¹³⁰

Is there any evidence, however, that Erskine's work made any more impact than Maclaurin's? In the first place it must be emphasized that Erskine, and indeed Maclaurin, did not share the vagueness, imprecision, and conventional expression involved in most Popular writing on the nature of faith. On the other hand, he reflected, as did Maclaurin, the Popular perception of faith as rooted in the understanding of key Scriptural doctrines regarding the person and work of Christ, the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in making faith possible, and faith as leading to knowledge of God, union with him, or conformity to his image. In particular, there is evidence that he was influenced by Gillies' analysis of the faculties of the soul.¹³¹ Erskine shared with earlier writers, too, a certain lack of interest in Christian experience such as in the process of conversion, though he developed such thoughts as they did have about the doctrine of assurance. There are indications, however, that Erskine influenced two, or perhaps three, other Popular writers in the latter part of the century. John Dun accepted Erskine's view on the knowledge of God leading to approval of the plan of redemption;¹³² Robert Walker adopted his analysis of sanctification being an effect of faith, as well as his assertions about the truths of Scripture being accessible to those of little learning.¹³³ John Russel, too, possibly derived his ideas on the operation of the Holy Spirit from those of Erskine.¹³⁴

There was, therefore, a degree of unanimity in Popular thought in the period about the nature of faith. The two greatest exponents of the subject differed significantly, however, in that Maclaurin's intention was to elucidate its nature as an aid to devotion, whereas Erskine's analysis, embodying contemporary ideas about the nature of knowledge and the operation of the will, was concerned to resolve the problems posed by earlier writers who defined faith in terms which looked suspiciously like a mere intellectual assent. In doing so he reached the inexorable conclusion that most who professed Christianity in mid-eighteenth century Scotland were not in fact true Christians at all since they did not possess saving faith. Failure to appreciate both the reasons for the consensus among earlier Popular writers regarding the use of conventional and imprecise terms by most of the few who did touch on the subject, and the reasons for the rejection of the faith of most Scots by later Popular writers has, as much as anything else, led the historians of Moderatism to dismiss its Popular opponents as being backward-looking in their faith and doctrine, and as having nothing to say of relevance to the eighteenth century world.¹³⁵

A survey of Popular works which deal with the nature of faith leads to several conclusions. First, there was present within the party, a number of ministers who were content to remain vague, imprecise, and generally uninterested in defining the nature of faith. They were content to write in terms of belief in Christ as being the means of salvation, of faith as

being concerned with the Christian's relationship with God, and of faith as being knowledge of or belief in God and the mediatorial role of Christ.

Secondly, this approach to the nature of faith came to be regarded as unsatisfactory by some elements within the party, not because they saw it as unscriptural or inconsistent with the doctrinal standards of the Church, but because it was perceived as opening the way to two defective tendencies. The first was its dissociation of the work of sanctification from the act of faith, which could lead to the Moderate treatment of sanctification as arising from the contemplation of the example of Christ, and more generally to a reduction in the levels of holiness and spirituality in the community. This response is clearest in the thought of John Maclaurin, but there is insufficient evidence to indicate that his devotional emphasis was adopted or shared by significant numbers of the party. The second defective tendency was the likelihood that faith would be reduced to the level of mere intellectual assent to the truths of Christianity. Its classic exposition in Erskine's Dissertation on the Nature of Christian Faith did affect Popular thought on faith. He defined much more clearly and precisely the role of the intellect, the senses, and the will in faith than had been done hitherto, and he differentiated for the first time in the period, between a faith requiring an intellectual assent and one which was a 'saving faith'. This distinction is of crucial significance in eighteenth century Scottish theology for it revealed the essential

invalidity of the assumption of all sections of the Church of Scotland, and probably to all sections of the Church in Scotland, that they were preaching the gospel in a Christian society in which the most difficult problem they faced was that of infidelity and the backslider. After Erskine, it had to be accepted, and it seems to have been relatively quickly accepted by most Popular writers and preachers, that the Church was faced with numbers of people who believed themselves to be Christians but who in reality were not. This perception was perhaps the most essential prerequisite for the development of the fully-fledged evangelicalism which was to be the hallmark of the nineteenth century Evangelical Revival. Its absence, or at least its relative absence, before Erskine, calls in question whether the term 'evangelical' should be applied to the members of the Popular party in the earlier part of the period.¹³⁶ It certainly cannot be applied in the same sense as it can in the nineteenth century. Appreciation of the problem does more than considerations of doctrinal orthodoxy or ecclesiastical organisation to explain the ambivalent response of erstwhile 'evangelicals' in the Scottish churches to Whit^efield in the 1740's and the Haldanes in the 1790's.¹³⁷

In the third place, the attempts of Maclaurin, Erskine, and the later writers who were influenced by them, to define more clearly the nature of faith, saw a preparedness to be influenced by contemporary secular thought. Maclaurin and especially Erskine were willing to use and to adapt Enlightenment perceptions

concerning the human mind, and the nature of knowledge and of the will in explaining basically orthodox theological positions. That they did so more discriminatingly and to better success than the Moderates is partly confirmed by their growing intellectual confidence as demonstrated, for example, in the Leslie Case of 1805. The demise of Moderatism as an intellectual force could also be adduced in support of such a thesis.

For our immediate purposes, however, the existence of these strands in Popular thought concerning essential doctrines of the faith, the implied criticism of the doctrinal positions of members of the party by several of its most able and notable leaders such as Maclaurin, Erskine, Russel, and Walker, and the positive response of several of these leaders to key areas of Enlightenment thought, all point to the diversity of theological opinion within the party, hint at areas of potential tension, call fundamentally into question the validity of assuming that the Popular party can be regarded as 'evangelical' in the usual sense of the term, and indeed cast fundamental doubt on whether the concept of 'the Popular party' should be used outwith the issue of the debate over patronage in the eighteenth century Church.

NOTES: CHAPTER 4.

1. Clark, 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party', pp.236, 294-5.
2. John Maclaurin, 'On Préjudices against the Gospel', in Works, vol.2, p.1.
3. Serious Enquiry into...the Stage, p.45.
4. 'Leading Doctrines of the Gospel', in Brown, op.cit., p.299.
5. Gillies, op.cit., p.38; Somerville, Sermons, p.290; Love, Memorials, vol. 1, p.370.
6. Gillies, op.cit., pp.37-38.
7. Macqueen, op.cit., p.309.
8. John Russel, The Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden and the Influence of Just Views of them on Universal Holiness, (Kilmarnock, 1787), pp.45-46; David Johnston, The Heinousness and Aggravation of Theft, (Edinburgh, 1788), p.15; John Love, 'On the Nature of Sin', 'On the Evil of Sin', in Memorials, vol. 2, pp.112-115; James Somerville, The Fatal Consequences of Irreligion and Negligence in the Heads of Families, (Edinburgh, 1790), p.29.
9. op.cit., vol. 2, p.283; vol. 5, p.356. On Walker, see above, pp.94-95, n.37.
10. Gillies, op.cit., pp.38; Russel, Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, pp.80-81, 45-47.
11. Again, there is a connection to be made here with the nineteenth century Evangelical Revival.
12. Russel, op.cit., pp.47-48. See above, pp.77-78.
13. See, for example, above, p.80, and below, pp.115, 118.
14. Simplicity and Popularity of the Divine Revelations, p.27; Maclaurin, Works, vol. 2, p.99; Russel, op.cit., p.28; Snodgrass, 'Leading Doctrines of the Gospel', in Brown, op.cit., p.304; Walker, op.cit., vol. 1, p.142 and vol. 2, p.173; Muckersy, 'Excellence of the Gospel', in Gillan, op.cit., p.294.
15. Wishart, Charity the End of the Commandment, p.20; Maclaurin, Works, vol. 2, p.80; Russel, op.cit., pp.35, 45; Savile, Dissertations on...God, p.76; Somerville, Sermons, pp.426-

428.

16. Gillies, Exhortation, p.35; Walker, op.cit., vol. 1, p.142; Somerville, Sermons, pp.147-148, 151, 155-158, 160-161.
17. Russel, The Nature of the Gospel Delineated, p.14.
18. Macqueen, op.cit., p.311; Walker, op.cit., vol. 2, p.141; Love, Benevolence inspired and exalted by the Presence of Jesus Christ, p.13.
19. Maclaurin, op.cit., vol. 2, pp.98-99.
20. ibid., p.21; Russel, Nature of the Gospel Delineated, p.28.
21. Dun, Sermons, vol. 1, p.25.
22. Charity the End of the Commandment, p.20.
23. Works, vol. 2, p.80.
24. Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, pp.64-65; Nature of the Gospel Delineated, p.15.
25. op.cit., vol. 2, p.207.
26. op.cit., vol. 2, p.99.
27. ibid., pp.80-81.
28. op.cit., p.39.
29. There is, in fact, some evidence to suggest that study of the Atonement increased in the latter part of the century possibly as a result of the publicity surrounding the affair. For example, eight of the thirteen works so far identified as containing significant discussion of the Atonement were published after McGill's work appeared in 1786. Of course, some of the sermons contained in them were possibly preached earlier. See above, pp.102-103.
30. Russel, Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, pp.37, 34, 41, 43, 47.
31. ibid., pp.29-33.
32. ibid., pp.33, 73.
33. ibid., pp.13, 71.
34. ibid., p.28; Maclaurin, op.cit., vol. 2, p.21.
35. Dick, op.cit., p.27.
36. ibid.; Snodgrass, op.cit., p.304; Walker, op.cit., vol. 1, p.142 and vol. 2, p.173; Russel, op.cit., pp.28, 56, 71; Muckersy, op.cit., p.294.

37. Russel, op.cit., pp.23-24.
38. ibid., pp.33, 51, 73.
39. ibid., pp.35, 45; Maclaurin, op.cit., vol. 2, p.80;
Somerville, Sermons, p.428; Savile, Dissertations, p.76.
40. Dun, Sermons, vol. 2, p.112.
41. Russel, op.cit., pp.74-76.
42. Dun, op.cit., vol. 1, p.25; Muckersy, op.cit., pp.295-296.
Maclaurin, Essay on Christian Piety in Works, Vol. 2, p.78.
It is one of the central contentions of this study's analysis of the patronage dispute that for most of the Popular party the origin of their opposition was the alleged tendency of patronage to place men in the pastoral ministry who had no interest in these key doctrines. The system, therefore, was to be opposed because it hazarded the eternal souls of huge numbers of the people of Scotland.
43. op.cit., vol. 2, p.173. John Russel, though, refers to the sinner's inability to keep God's holy law, viewed as a covenant of works, as an 'effective alarm in his ears'.
Nature of the Gospel Delineated, p.34.
44. See above, p.104, nn.16, 18.
45. op.cit., vol. 1, pp.141-142.
46. ibid., vol. 2, p.283. The legal vocabulary is interesting in this connection and is one of the hallmarks of Scottish covenant theology. See M Charles Bell, Calvin and Scottish Theology. The Doctrine of Assurance, (Edinburgh, 1985), passim. See also, Walker, op.cit., vol. 1, p.279.
47. Walker, op.cit., vol. 1, pp.142, 279; vol. 2, pp.140-141, 207.
48. Snodgrass, Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion, p.19.
49. Muckersy, op.cit., pp.293-295. On Walker, see above, pp.110-111.
50. Sermons, p.155.
51. ibid., pp.426-428; A Sermon...preached...before the Society for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy..., pp.2-8, 13, 17-19, 21, 27; Wishart, The Indispensible Necessity of a Holy

- and Good Life, p. 18.
52. Wishart, op.cit., pp. 20-21.
 53. Sermons, pp. 147-148. See also, A Sermon...preached...before the Society for the Benefit of the Sons of Clergy..., p. 11.
 54. See above, n. 24.
 55. Sermons, pp. 148, 151; cf., Walker, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 139-140.
 56. Sermons., pp. 155-158.
 57. ibid., pp. 426-428.
 58. op.cit., pp. 292-293.
 59. op.cit., vol. 1, p. 142. See above, pp. 110-111.
 60. Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, pp. 49, 52-54, 58, 61, 64, 67. For Erskine, too, the sufferings and obedience of Christ on the cross bestow on believers 'all things pertaining to life and godliness, to time and to eternity'. The Riches of the Poor, (Edinburgh, 1804), p. 11. See also, Savile, Dissertations, p. 76.
 61. ibid., pp. 43-44.
 62. ibid., pp. 47, 51, 61-62, 67, 70-71.
 63. See, for example, the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr's 'Declaration on Doctrine', Scots Magazine, 53 (December 1791), pp. 592-593.
 64. For this line of analysis, I am indebted to a conversation with Dr. David W. Bebbington of the University of Stirling. A fuller analysis of the issues has appeared in his Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A History from the 1730s to the 1980s, (London, 1989).
 65. Gillies, Exhortation..., pp. 196-197.
 66. ibid., p. 35.
 67. Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, pp. 72-73. See also, Snodgrass, Life and Power of Religion, p. 18.
 68. Benevolence inspired and exalted, p. 11. See also, Alexander Webster, Supernatural Revelation the only sure Hope of Sinners, pp. 13, 17.
 69. op.cit., p. 35.
 70. op.cit., p. 304.
 71. e.g., Snodgrass, 'Leading Doctrines of the Gospel', in Brown,

- op.cit., pp.304, 307; Walker, op.cit., vol.2, pp.79-80.
72. op.cit., p.39.
 73. op.cit., p.13.
 74. op.cit., p.304.
 75. op.cit., vol.1, p.279.
 76. ibid., p.282. See also, [James Paton], The Knowledge of God derived from Revelation or Tradition..., p.113; Snodgrass, Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion, p.17.
 77. Curiously enough, one of the most extensive analyses of conversion is contained in Wishart's Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life, pp.19-20, 57, where he argues that repentance and faith in Christ which carry the promises of salvation, do not mean one act of sorrow or regret for sin, and one act of confident and presumptuous reliance on the mercy of God and merits of Christ. Such a position would not seem to have been acceptable to the overwhelming majority of Popular writers.
 78. An Example of Plain Catechising, (Edinburgh, 1731), in W.M. Hetherington, The Practical Works of the Rev. John Willison, (Glasgow, 1844), pp.594-598.
 79. See also, for example, Russel, op.cit., p.73; Snodgrass, op.cit., pp.304,317; Maclaurin, 'Essay on Christian Piety', in Works, vol. 2 , pp.52-53, 67-68, 72-73, 82; Walker, op.cit., vol. 2, p.74.
 80. op.cit., p.35.
 81. Sermons., pp.25-27.
 82. op.cit., vol. 2, pp.74, 79-80.
 83. A Sermon on 2 Corinthians ii, 17, (Edinburgh, 1799), p.28.
 84. Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion, p.19.
 85. Sermon XII in Gillan, op.cit., pp.287-288.
 86. op.cit., pp.18-19, 196-197. See also Russel, Nature of the Gospel Delineated, pp.38-39.
 87. op.cit., vol. 1, p.25; vol. 2, p.112.
 88. op.cit., vol. 1, pp.282-283.
 89. Memorials, vol. 1, p.368.
 90. op.cit., in Works, vol. 2, pp.50-53.

91. ibid., pp. 53-55.
92. ibid., pp. 63-64. cf., Willison, Example of Plain Catechising, as discussed above, pp. 124-126; and Erskine, Nature of Christian Faith, pp. 182-183.
93. op.cit., pp. 64-65. Erskine, however, seems to dispute the idea of faith giving the believer a 'right' to eternal life when he asserts that faith has 'no moral efficacy' in procuring pardon and acceptance. op.cit., p. 141.
94. op.cit., pp. 65-66.
95. ibid., pp. 66-68.
96. ibid., p. 70.
97. ibid., pp. 70-72, 81-82.
98. ibid., pp. 73, 78. On the use of the terminology of covenant theology, see above, pp. 109-110, and below, p. 136.
99. See above, pp. 127-130.
100. op.cit., in Theological Dissertations, p. 167. See above, pp. 121-122.
101. ibid., p. 178.
102. e.g., ibid., pp. 151, 178.
103. ibid., pp. 187-188.
104. ibid., p. 170.
105. ibid., pp. 139-145.
106. ibid., pp. 151, 158.
107. ibid., pp. 151-152, 158-159, 161.
108. ibid., pp. 161-163, 168-169, 173, 177-178, 180, 183, 190.
109. ibid., pp. 165-166.
110. ibid., pp. 181, 183, 185-186, 188-189. On this aspect, Erskine draws significantly on the works of the seventeenth century Puritan, John Owen. See, for example, pp. 181, 187.
111. ibid., pp. 187-188, 195.
112. ibid., p. 145.
113. ibid., p. 143. The reference is to Owen's Catechism but it is not further identified.
114. ibid., pp. 145-147.
115. ibid., p. 198. It could be argued that this position is logically implied in Erskine's Character and Privileges of

- the Christian Church, Dissertation II in Theological Dissertations, pp.84-89, in which he discusses the state of those who make false professions of Christianity.
116. Nature of Christian Faith, pp.145, 150.
 117. ibid., p.152.
 118. Locke, Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity, folio ed., p.583, quoted in ibid., pp.152-153.
 119. Nature of Christian Faith, pp.159-161, 166-167.
 120. See above, pp.130-134.
 121. Nature of Christian Faith., pp.162-163.
 122. ibid., pp.163-167.
 123. ibid., pp.168-175.
 124. ibid., pp.176-178.
 125. ibid., p.181.
 126. ibid., pp.182-185. cf., Somerville, Sermons, pp.148, 151; see above, pp.113-114 and n.55.
 127. Nature of Christian Faith, p.186.
 128. ibid., pp.186-188. The reference is to Leechman's sermon at the opening of the General Assembly of 1758.
 129. ibid., pp.188-193, 198.
 130. See, for example, ibid., pp.198-199.
 131. See above, p.129.
 132. ibid.
 133. See above, pp.127-128, 124.
 134. Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, p.73; see above, p.126 and n.79.
 135. e.g., Voges, 'Moderate and Evangelical Thinking in the Later Eighteenth Century: Differences and Shared Attitudes', in Records of the Scottish Church History Society, XXII, 2 (1985), pp.146-147, 156-157.
 136. For a stimulating definition of 'Evangelicalism' and an analysis of the British Evangelical movement from the 1730s, see Bebbington, op.cit., especially chapters 1 and 2. The work, though, is somewhat generalised in its treatment of the eighteenth century period in Scotland.
 137. See below, pp.216-222.

CHAPTER 5: THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE.

In his dissertation 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party in the Church of Scotland, 1752-1805', Clark suggests that the real achievements of eighteenth century Moderatism are to be seen in the nature of nineteenth century evangelicalism. The Moderates, he says, stood for the balanced presentation of the Christian faith in that they linked belief with practice, and doctrine with behaviour.¹ On the basis of the evidence he cites, some at least of the Moderates saw their theological opponents as separating abstract and practical theology, and as emphasising profession and comprehension of the former at the expense of 'the acknowledgement and practice of those religious and moral virtues of the Christian life, which it is the purpose of all the doctrines of religion to promote'.² Perusal of the writings of members of the Popular party, however, reveals a picture which is more complicated than either their Moderate contemporaries or Clark himself appear to suggest, although the ~~the~~ Moderate critique of a neglect of practical issues has some validity. On general apologetics and defence against infidelity in particular, however, it would seem more tenable to maintain that eighteenth century Moderates and their Popular opponents shared more theological 'common ground' than has usually been suspected.

1. The Nature of Piety.

The complexities of the theological scene are evident in the response of Popular thinkers to the problem of the nature of piety, or, to put it another way, in the answers they gave to the question of how to define godliness. To some extent, the complexities of the subject are revealed in the terms they used, often interchangeably, in connection with it: holiness, piety, godliness, devotion, practical religion were all used without precise definition. Not only that, Popular theologians at opposite ends of the theological spectrum are often to be found sharing the same emphases. For example, on the one hand that figure of orthodox suspicion, William Wishart, while failing to give a clear-cut definition of piety, speaks of the 'devout mind' feeling delight and joy in contemplation and adoration of the 'amiable Perfections of God' in a way which is not dissimilar to John Russel writing of the Christian contemplating with delight God's wisdom in the institution of salvation through Christ. The source of the delight is more specific in his case.³ On the other hand, Thomas Somerville, along with other Moderate theologians, stressed the obligation on the Christian to look to Christ as a pattern for our lives, and the evangelical John Dun asserted that submission to Christ's laws, constantly striving to obey them, to resemble Christ in temper as well as in conduct, is 'the highest degree of perfection in holiness that we are capable of in this life'.⁴ All, however, were concerned to define or delineate the essential features which were the hallmark of the Christian life.

Popular thought about the nature of Christian piety or holiness followed three directions. Some regarded holiness as contained in those religious 'affections' or dispositions which manifest themselves in the leading of holy lives. The second group saw holiness lying in the balance between holy dispositions and pious actions. The third group stressed the essential nature of the example of Christ and the obligations on the Christian to follow it.

An admirable summary of those Popular writers in the first group, who found the essence of piety and devotion in the religious affections, and one of the earliest definitions of the devout character or of 'true piety' appeared in the course of a rebuttal of Bolingbroke's philosophy in Daniel Macqueen's Letters on Mr. Hume's History. 'The devout character', asserted Macqueen,

includes in it such a sense of the power, goodness, and wisdom of God, of his government and supreme authority, of our entire dependence upon him, of his inspection of our conduct, of his numberless benefits and overflowing mercy, as effectually sways the soul to the fear and love of its creator and benefactor, to a willing subjection to his authority, to an ardent desire of his favour, and a full resignation to his disposal, mingled with humble trust, and with the animating prospects of a future state. This in general is true piety; and these are its natural effects. External worship and obedience flowing from such sentiments and dispositions - this is the service, the reasonable service which God requires.⁵

Furthermore, true piety essentially concerns the dispositions of the heart and does not consist in 'abstract speculations', or even in 'a full assent of the understanding to the fundamental

articles of religion', though it does suppose a knowledge of and belief in 'the prime articles of religion'. It includes 'every becoming affection of the soul' towards God in his grace and glory and in all the relationships he bears to us as creator, preserver, benefactor, redeemer, lawgiver, and judge. Piety, it is to be noted, is Christocentric in that in all pious acts we are to be encouraged by those doctrines which lead us to consider Jesus the Saviour as our mediator and intercessor. True piety, that is the worship of the heart and mind, consists of sentiments and dispositions which are strictly rational and excellent, and are founded in right apprehensions of ourselves and of God. External acts of worship 'are the proper expression of devout dispositions'. The spirit of diffusive benevolence is the true Christian spirit and will enter into our private and social worship, and, while we will thank God for his benefits toward us, we will also pray for the good of all mankind, for their greatest good in the advancement of God's kingdom on earth.⁶ In summary, said Macqueen,

true piety in all its parts, in all its acts, has a manifest tendency to strengthen every virtuous principle, to cherish every noble aim, to purify and elevate the soul, to encourage and to animate us in the path of our duty, and to lead us onward through every stage of life, to its concluding period, with serenity and hope.⁷

In other words, true piety is an act of worship. It does not of itself involve the performance of acts as such, though it contributes to the improvement and strengthening of the

Christian's disposition to virtuous actions. It concerns the relationship of the Christian to God, and only indirectly the Christian's relationship to his fellow men.

This same strand of reasoning was pursued by John Russel of Stirling, though contemplation of the mediation of Christ played a much more central role in his thought than it did in the case of Macqueen. For Russel, piety included contemplation of Christ bearing God's wrath, indignation at sin, a sense of Christ's love, sorrow for one's own sin, and a desire to live for the glory of God. He analysed at some length the means of promoting holiness and produced a list which had much in common with Macqueen's. Holiness is promoted by godly sorrow for sin, which arises from the sense of God's infinite love as demonstrated in the work of redemption, by gratitude to God resulting from it, and especially by submission to the various appointments of God in the course of his providence. 'The whole of evangelical holiness', maintained Russel, 'consists in conformity to the will of God's precepts, and submission to the will of his providence'. In contradistinction to Macqueen, however, use of the means of divine appointment for obtaining a personal interest in the Saviour, contributes to holiness rather than to a demonstration of it.¹⁰

Russel returned to the emphasis on this type of description of holiness fourteen years after the appearance of his Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden. The 'divinely illuminated man'

contemplates 'with peculiar delight, the unsearchable wisdom of God, displayed in the formation and execution of the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ...' The features of true religion are 'the lively traces of the holy image of God, delineated on the soul'. The sense of God's greatness produces just sentiments of our meanness and unimportance, and awareness of divine purity leads to abhorrence of sin; all lead to a holy and humble confidence in God's boundless mercy in Christ and 'forms the character of him who truly fears the Lord'. The resultant deep impressions on the heart have a transforming influence on the Christian's life and conversation and he 'departs from sin' or renounces 'the love of all sin in the heart, and the practice of all sin in life'.⁹ In his later works, Russel became more insistent on a close link between sound doctrine and true holiness, and at the same time underlined the importance of holiness. Second only to the extension of his own glory, it was 'the great object in the view of God...to promote holiness in his own people'.¹⁰

While this definition of the nature of holiness found its most detailed expression in the works of Macqueen and Russel, it was the dominant line taken by members of the Popular party. An early manifestation was in the work of David Blair who spoke of holiness as embodying the knowledge and love of the Lord, an abiding sense of the divine excellencies and perfections on the mind, and a dread of the divine majesty, and who asserted that religious fear led to a holy life and a well-ordered

conversation.¹¹ Later, John Bonar limited himself to asserting the perpetual obligation of the moral law, the necessity of holiness (which he did not define) for salvation, and the inefficacy of a faith which did not purify the heart.¹²

Subsequently, there was a steady stream of Popular works which treated holiness in this way. John Snodgrass, writing over twenty years later in 1781, saw the Christian's obligation as one of keeping himself in the love of God which meant 'the lively and vigorous exercise of all the religious and devout affections in the soul'. The principles of real holiness in the soul depended on the discovery of the Lord's infinite amiableness which aroused and drew forth our affections to him. Prayer was the means of deriving these spiritual blessings from God; and frequent contemplation of God led to the development of a divine character, 'like unto God'. These were the effects of a devout and pious disposition and led to their presence in life and conversation.¹³ John Muckersy, likewise, urged Christians to glory in nothing save the cross of Jesus and count all things 'valueless and insipid' compared with the excellence of the knowledge of Christ. Furthermore, sincerity of love to Christ should be tried by the test of preferring Christ above all else.¹⁴ This, of course, postulated a spiritual rather than a practical test. The characteristic of the first group, then, was that the defining features of the life of a Christian lay in the nature of his relationship to God, and in the cultivation of personal devotion.

The second line of interpretation of Christian piety or holiness may be illustrated by John Witherspoon's assertion in 1757: 'Now we glorify God by cultivating holy dispositions, and doing pious and useful actions'.¹⁵ This blend of devotion and practice was the hallmark of the second group. For Witherspoon, an action is 'truly holy' when it is done from a sense not just of our obligation to God, but of the perfect excellence of God's law, with a renunciation of all pretence of merit on our part, with a dependence on divine assistance, and with the purpose of glorifying God.¹⁶

Witherspoon, however, is not the clearest example of this second approach for he defined pious actions in language similar to that used by Macqueen to define the devout character.¹⁷ The Sermons of Robert Walker, published in 1796, provide the the most masterful blend of devotion and practice. 'Godliness, in general', said Walker,

is the subjection or devotedness of the soul to God himself. It is the practical acknowledgement of his unlimited sovereignty, and the unreserved dedication of the whole man to his service.

It is not ~~with~~ assent to religious truth, or natural sweetness of temper or disposition, or abstention from gross sins, or giving a portion of our hearts or time to God.

...We are not godly, whatever we profess or seem, if, in our most deliberate and affectionate choice, we do not prefer the one true God, and the enjoyment of his favour, to all

that can be found throughout the wide extent of his works; if we make not his will the measure of ours, his law the sovereign guide of our conduct, and his glory the ultimate end of our obedience.

Having stated these general points of principle, Walker proceeded to give a further list of practices which are the hallmarks of godliness. Godliness includes a supreme love to God himself and a desire to please him; it consists in the conquest of our corrupt and rebellious passions; it enobles the soul with a holy indifference to earthly things; it embodies a vehement thirst after the enjoyment of God himself; and it is manifested by a steadfast course of holy living and by a uniform and unreserved obedience to all God's commandments.¹⁹

This interpretation had appeared as early as 1741, when Alexander Webster urged Christians to help to convert others by 'an exemplary Walk and Conversation, copying out in their Lives the amiable Precepts of our holy Religion, and the lovely Pattern of its Divine Author'. If all Christians gave non-believers such a tangible proof of the worth of Christianity, its influence would grow beyond belief. Ten years later, he bemoaned not just the absence of the power and life of godliness in its professors, but of the sympathy, love, and mutual forbearance, which is 'the distinguishing badge' of Christ's disciples.²⁰ At around the same time Patrick Bannerman made the same point and, more influentially, so too did John Erskine.²⁰ By the end of the century, Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood asserted it even more

forcefully: it was his chief purpose in publishing a collection of his sermons

to represent the doctrines and the duties of Christianity as inseparably united, in the faith and practice of those who embrace it. Practical religion is of much more importance than the solution of difficult questions; and the sanctification and salvation of those who profess to believe the gospel, than the soundest opinions.²¹

Throughout the period from 1740 to the end of the century, there existed a second approach to the nature of piety: the life of the Christian was to be marked by his relationship to God being demonstrated in the operation of the Christian virtues in practice.

Stress on the example of Christ, which is the hallmark of the third stream of interpretation, is to be seen at its clearest in the writings of Somerville.²² He was at one with the Moderates in disputing the type of devotion shown by all the Popular writers mentioned so far. He denounced the idea that the love owed to Christ was fulfilled by meditating on him, by feeling our hearts overflowing with joy and praise, and by attending public and family worship. It could be fulfilled only by dwelling on his love, his doctrine, his character, and his humility and benevolence, and by looking forward to the time when we will 'be made like him, and see him as he is'.²³ Examination of the example of Christ, rather than meditation on the nature of the Atonement or the believer's relationship to God, as was the case

with the first and second approaches, led to the understanding of the powerful sanctifying influence of the scriptural injunction to 'Look at Jesus'.²⁴ Somerville elsewhere poses the question: 'Who then is the best Christian?' and answers it by the assertion

Not the man who is the most learned and orthodox, and most zealous in the outward professions of love to Christ; but the man who is the most humble and self-denied, the most charitable and useful. Such is the man who continues in the love of Christ.²⁵

This type of idea is more than a little reminiscent of Wishart's assertion that the Creator did not form us to be idle and merely contemplative, but to be active and useful, which virtues can only be fulfilled by following the example of Christ.²⁶ The laws of Christ, he continues, 'contain a complete system', and his example 'exhibits a perfect pattern of every moral duty'. One's love of Christ is demonstrated by 'studying to excel in love to mankind', by avoidance of systems of faith which restrict charity, intolerance, and bitterness towards fellow Christians.²⁷ The connection between these ideas and those of Wishart concerning universal benevolence is striking.²⁸

Somerville's contemplation of Christ on the cross produced a profoundly different response from that of most other Popular writers. It 'awakens the ingenuousness of the mind, and inculcates perserverance in well-doing, by the pleasing influence of gratitude, as much as by a sense of duty'. When Somerville

contemplates Christ on the cross, he bursts out, unwittingly perhaps implying a doctrine of justification by works,

I feel my courage and magnanimity revived. I discern a conformity, in my lot and circumstances, to those to which he submitted. I glory in this resemblance. O that I may be conformed to him in patience and humility, then shall I also hope to partake of the glory to which he is exalted!²⁹

Somerville proceeded to a polemical definition of 'the true Christian'. He castigated study of the life and doctrine of Christ from curiosity, knowledge of the speculative truths of religion, contention with zeal for the faith while strangers to its 'practical influence', and confiding in the merits of Christ without possessing or desiring to possess likeness to his dispositions which 'constituted his meritorious righteousness'. Rather, the Christian is exhorted

To accept Jesus, not only as the propitiation for our sins, but as the pattern of our conduct; to contemplate the virtues of his life, as well as the fruits of his death; to have it for the paramount desire of our hearts, to be taught, and guided, and saved by him; - this indeed is looking at Jesus.³⁰

There would appear, then, to be a direct connection between the thought of Somerville and that of Wishart when the latter maintained that contemplation of the divine perfections led the devout mind 'to form his own mind and conduct more and more after the Model of that exalted pattern of moral excellence'.³¹ There were, then, at least one or two Popular writers who shared the

Moderate view that the essence of Christian living lay in following the example of Christ's life on earth, rather than in the cultivation or implementation of inward piety or devotion.

It should not be assumed, however, that the perspectives revealed in the thought of those who saw the essence of piety as lying in spiritual experience were not apprehended by others who did not share their overall position on the subject, and vice versa. For example, John Dun echoed Macqueen when he spoke of 'grateful, rational piety towards God', and is not far removed even from Russel when he advocated submitting all to the will of God's providence as well as to his laws, and the dedication, devotion and surrender to God of all we have, and are, and can do; when he spoke of hearts having felt 'the power of religion' by which he meant communion with God by meditation, prayer, reading, speaking, and hearing God's word; when he stressed that language flowing from a devout heart in turn produced devotion in the hearts of others who heard us; and when he urged frequent communicating, watchfulness, and self-examination.³² Yet Dun stood virtually in the Moderate tradition when he asserted that resembling Christ in temper and conduct was the highest degree of perfection in holiness of which man was capable in this life; that 'living in the Lord' involved submission to Christ's laws, delighting in his ordinances, breathing the same spirit, and treading the same paths with the divine Leader - being, like him, 'without guile'; and of righteousness as implying, as the source of everything, 'that faith which purifieth the heart, and

produces benevolence - charity - love'.³³ Somerville, too, was not that far removed from Russel when he argued that meditation, praise, and attendance at ordinances were inadequate to acquit ourselves of the love we owe to Christ, and urged heartfelt contemplation of Christ's doctrine, character, humility and benevolence, and eager anticipation of seeing and dwelling with Christ in glory as touchstones of our love to him.³⁴ It is interesting to note, however, that Somerville followed Macqueen rather than Russel in seeing attendance at public worship as a declaration of our love to Christ rather than as a means to holiness.³⁵ Even members of the Popular party closest in theological sympathies to what is generally taken to be Moderatism, therefore, manifested surprising similarities to the positions of some of the most orthodox.

Popular thought on the nature of piety as reflected in practical Christian virtue, gives a hazy picture, although that is not surprising in view of the concentration on spiritual virtue. The topic aroused so little interest that, apart from those writers nearer the Moderate tradition such as Somerville and Wishart, the only author of note to contribute in a major way was John Snodgrass. The evidence is so thin that no general interpretation may be offered. Witherspoon wrote at length on the bounds or limits of charity, in the biblical sense, largely, it would seem, to set limits of acceptability to Wishart's ideas of universal benevolence;³⁶ James Paton asserted that both justice and morality required scriptural bases;³⁷ Snodgrass, though, made

detailed comment on the remarkable distinction in large cities between the righteous and the wicked, warned against Christians keeping the society of those 'who are outwardly regular and decent in their deportment, but, at the same time, are strangers to the influence of real religion upon the heart'. Frequent repetition of wickedness reduced our sense of its evil, made us less fearful of its approach, and less anxious to guard ourselves against it. The conversation of the wicked resulted either in the Christian being driven from their society or in his conforming to their behaviour in some measure.³⁹ Such detailed analysis, however, was rare.

Generally speaking, it is possible to suggest that Popular thought warned against involvement in the world, stressed the way in which its pleasures or interests were transitory and therefore not worthy of serious concern, or directed the Christian to spiritual improvement or evangelistic effort. Alexander Webster urged private Christians to be useful in the conversion of others by 'warm Addresses' to the throne of grace on their behalf, by 'instruction and advice', and by good example.⁴⁰ Snodgrass urged prayer to maintain a constant intercourse with heaven and frequent 'godly conference' with fellow Christians 'to minister to each other's spiritual benefit, and to be helpers in each other's joy'. A mind occupied with worldly cares cannot be in a suitable frame for spiritual activity. A sense of sin, for Snodgrass, should lead to the renunciation of all temporal enjoyments as vain and unsatisfying, and to the cleaving to God

as one's only portion.⁴⁰ David Johnston of North Leith was something of a solitary voice when he gave an explicit list of steps to enable people to refrain from dishonesty.⁴¹ In fact, Wishart was the only Popular author to write extensively about the obligations of the Christian and he did so in terms which tended dangerously close to justification by works. Repentance, he argued, did not make a man immediately fit for heaven, but should mark the beginning of a course of good works by which the sinner would be trained up for a state of perfection. The Christian's state in this life was a state of trial and exercise, discipline and improvement, in which he could only advance toward perfect bliss, in so far as he improved in this present state. A disposition toward goodness and integrity belonged to a truly worthy and amiable character. The true happiness of rational creatures was to be found in such rational and virtuous enjoyments for which a sensual man had no desire. As far as the Christian was improved in true goodness and divine love, so far had he subdued the flesh to the spirit, and brought his inferior appetites into subjection to the nobler dispositions.⁴²

In general, then, the Popular party would seem to have displayed a good measure of the tension between faith and works which could be regarded as having been a feature of the Christian Church since apostolic times. The dominant strand was one which stressed the primacy of a personal relationship with God, but there were also significant numbers of Popular authors who were concerned to emphasise the essential nature of the balance

between personal faith and its demonstration in the performance of good works. The emphasis of this second group is doubtless one of the features which led Clark, to postulate such a significant impact of Moderatism on nineteenth century evangelicalism.⁴³ The existence of such a strand in eighteenth century Popular thought before Moderatism became established as a clearly identifiable ideology calls in question the validity of Clark's hypothesis. The third group of Popular writers, Moderate in their theological affinities, were motivated to a considerable extent by a desire to counter what they saw as the unscriptural position of the dominant influence within the party. Their position was undermined by, or became less influential because of, those who emphasised the essential nature of the balance between faith and works in the Christian life. There was also a pattern of devotional cross-fertilisation which affected the whole of the party. These complexities in the doctrinal composition of the Popular party have not been recognised either by its partisans or by the historians of Moderatism who emphasise the impact of the latter on the future development of Scottish evangelicalism.

2. The Defence of the Faith.

It is striking that only seven works of an apologetical nature and only thirteen directed against 'infidelity' in particular, can be identified as having been written by those who can be regarded as of the Popular 'leadership'. These included those to which reference has already been made by George Anderson, Daniel Macqueen, John Russel, John Snodgrass, and David Saville.⁴⁴ Apparent lack of concern, while initially surprising, is less so when Popular perceptions of the problem are examined more closely. It is also striking, yet again, that an analysis of the problem led to different alignments of members of the party.

Three approaches to the problem of the identification of the causes of infidelity may be distinguished prior to examining each in turn in more detail. First, there were some who believed that infidelity was not a fundamental danger to Christianity since infidelity and atheism were ultimately irrational. The appropriate response was to emphasise this and to stress the rationality of the Christian faith. By the late 1750s, confidence in this analysis had been seriously eroded and, although there were manifestations of it as late as the early years of the nineteenth century, such a complacent response was felt by most Popular writers to be inadequate. Increasingly, this intellectual response came to be replaced by an essentially theological or even spiritual one. This second approach was that infidelity was the result of man's depravity arising from the Fall. It was to be

fought by the encouragement of godliness and piety. The third approach had its origins in the second and derived from an analysis of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the Church's attempts to counter declining spirituality. The growth of infidelity was the result of the Church's lack of faithfulness in its preaching of the gospel and its failure to promote sound doctrine.

In the first place, then, a significant number of members of the Popular party believed that, while infidelity had to be guarded against, it was not a fundamental danger to Christianity. The justification for their complacency derived from a conviction of the ultimate irrationality of infidelity and atheism and of the rationality of Christianity. Wishart, for example, asserted that the belief of sinners in the heavy and tyrannical nature of divine government and the arbitrary form of divine law is groundless since God requires only those things which are in their own nature good. Scoffers who revive the 'schemes and cavils of the ancient Scepticks, and worst sort of Epicureans', attack not only revealed religion and Christianity, but also the common principles of natural religion itself.⁴⁶ The implication is that no rational mind is going to reject the latter. At the other end of the theological spectrum, John Willison expressed his conviction that his faith could be defended on rational grounds. He maintained that the inability of natural religion to provide adequate answers to questions about the nature of God, the creation of the world, the Fall, and the possibility of

forgiveness for sin all clearly demonstrated not just the truth of Christianity but also the unreasonableness of infidelity.⁴⁶ John Bonar, although he qualified the assertion, noted that advocates for infidelity had been unable for a hundred years to weaken the smallest support for the Christian religion.⁴⁷ John Dun, as late as 1790, maintained that every 'unbarbarian' and every unbiased man admitted, or could be easily be made to admit, that God made the world. There were many practical atheists, he said, but no rational man who was an atheist in theory.⁴⁸ It is significant, however, that, with the exception of Dun, no prominent Popular author seems to have felt confident enough to dismiss infidelity in quite such a cavalier fashion after the 1750s. In this the influence of Hume may well have been decisive.

Instead, the 'complacent' line on infidelity was supported more often by stress on the converse of the irrationality of atheism, that is, on the rationality of Christianity. George Anderson, for example, castigated authors opposed to religion as prone to despise the science on which abstract reasoning is based when the latter does not favour them, and quoted Hume as an example of this for his disparaging of the Thirty-nine Articles as 'the metaphysics of the church of England'.⁴⁹ Subsequently, he dealt with the connection between Christianity and the continuance of established society and contrasted it with the social implications of atheism.⁵⁰ This approach to the problem was common in the 1750s. Daniel Macqueen, for instance, adhered to it by describing irreligion as 'manifestly subversive' to the

interests and love of virtue, and to the peace and happiness of mankind. The vicious and debased may be strongly inclined to adopt irreligion, he asserted, but there is nothing attractive in it to virtuous minds. Hume and others were criticised for speaking of the imagination instead of the understanding and will, and of contemplation and abstract speculation instead of the rational aims, desires, and affections of the soul.⁵¹ Such conviction of the essential rationality of the Christian position remained secure until the end of the century and beyond. James Steven, preaching in 1802, confidently spoke of the foundations of Christianity being too deeply laid to be threatened by 'human sophistry' and argued that in fact such attacks only gained Christianity greater credit and esteem. Likewise David Savile asserted that Reason was forced to admit that God exists though it had to concede ignorance as to the manner of his existence.⁵²

Little attempt was made to link this conviction of the rationality of the Christian faith to specific doctrines. Apart from Savile's assertion of the rationality of the doctrines of the eternal existence of God, of his unchangeability, of his unlimited and perfect attributes, and of the existence of only one such Being,⁵³ the only serious application of this line of thought is in Snodgrass's Leading Doctrines of the Gospel Stated and Defended. Snodgrass both denied that it is reasonable to reject revelation because we are unable to comprehend it or to reconcile it with other principles which must be held, and also is noteworthy for his direct and explicit assertion of its

truths. He maintained that the doctrine of original sin, for example, is not absurd or unreasonable because it answers more of men's questions than any other principle yet uncovered, and noted that 'men of sensibility' fail to supply any substitute for the doctrines of the gospel which they reject so vehemently.⁵⁴

Snodgrass's preparedness to defend explicitly the doctrine of original sin leads directly to the second explanation of the reasons for the rise of infidelity. There was considerable agreement among Popular writers that it was the result of spiritual decline arising from the defects of human nature which arose from natural depravity. As such it was to be expected. As John Bonar put it in 1756, 'a heart-love to wickedness' was at the root cause of the opposition to the gospel of the advocates of infidelity. So long as men were vicious they wanted to throw off the restraints laid on their passions by Christianity and free themselves from the dread which it inspired.⁵⁵ Even earlier, John Willison linked this interpretation with attempts by deists and other heretics to advance the belief in reason as an adequate guide in matters of religion.⁵⁶ Macqueen quoted Plato in support, and argued that irreligion could be attributed to pride and an 'affectation of superior parts'.⁵⁷ This analysis of the origin of irreligion and infidelity was almost standard in Popular works on the subject. Dun applied Macqueen's argument almost word for word to Hume; Snodgrass talked of 'the pride of human wisdom' staggering at the mysterious truth of revelation 'through unbelief'; and James Steven argued that since men disliked having

their understandings rated low, or having restraints imposed upon their vices, they have openly or insidiously attacked the truths of the gospel under 'the specious pretence of enlarged wisdom'.⁵⁹

Popular apologists were not necessarily content to leave their analysis at this general level but sought to offer specific examples of the consequences of natural depravity. Witherspoon ascribed at least part of the cause of the irreligion of the day to those who considered Christianity as answerable for all the hypocrisies and wickednesses of those nominal Christians who had not renounced their faith, and to the difficulty of engaging in controversy with them because they had formed no fixed principles at all since they had never really thought on the subject.⁶⁰ Love referred to the 'big and fallacious words of prejudiced bigots' or of infidel scoffers at the majesty of the Son of God which influenced many 'in the present dissipated age';⁶¹ and James Somerville of Stirling maintained that the most readily identifiable cause of folly and irreligion was the neglect of masters and heads of families to instruct their children and servants in the principles of religion and morality.⁶²

More common still was the argument concerning the deleterious effects of luxury on the lives of the upper ranks in society. A striking example was in a sermon of Robert Walker's. He stressed the consequences for faith of human depravity

together with analysis of the effects of national affluence on spirituality:

Luxury is the common attendant upon affluence: This unfits the mind for serious thinking, and breeds a coldness and indifference towards spiritual things; in consequence of which, a secret disaffection to those laws which would restrain him, soon takes root in the heart of the sensualist, till, wearied with the struggle betwixt Reason and Appetite, he at length sets himself in opposition to God and his ways; reproaches with the names of ostentation or hypocrisy, all serious religion and godliness in others; turns away his eyes from the light which reproves him, and even doth what he can to extinguish it altogether.⁶²

The assault on luxury by Popular writers had appeared before Walker's work was published. Alexander Webster, as early as 1742, spoke of the ridicule of the fashionable world for the preaching of Christ crucified, and its esteem for the dilution of the doctrines of the gospel and their substitution with secular philosophy.⁶³ John Warden blamed the abounding of infidelity and profanity and the fashionableness of vice on the example of the great. Luxury and sensuality, as well as being the origins of sloth and poverty, led also to weakness of mind and spirit.⁶⁴ John Snodgrass contrasted decline in respect for the Sabbath, and of participation in public, family, and private worship with the dissipation, luxury, and impiety so present in contemporary society, in a similar way to Patrick Bannerman thirty years earlier.⁶⁴ John Erskine, himself, identified the formal, superficial, lukewarm religion of many and contrasted it with the way in which riches, honours and pleasures were esteemed more than the favour of God. The upper ranks' contempt for religion,

he warned, would have fatal consequences for them, however, for it would communicate itself to the lowest orders in society and lead to revolution and tyrannical and cruel rule.⁶⁶ Infidelity was thus essentially a spiritual as opposed to an apologetical problem. It was to be fought not by attacks on the various writers who were assaulting the faith, but by encouraging godliness, piety, and spirituality.

The third approach in Popular analysis of the causes of infidelity held that if infidelity arose from human depravity, it was the role of the Church to counter it by effective preaching and teaching. It followed that if infidelity was increasing, it could well be the fault of the Church in failing to remain faithful to its God-given commission. This approach first appeared in the writings of John Willison of Dundee. In his Fair and Impartial Testimony of 1744, Willison delineated the theological and ecclesiastical positions which provide the starting point for any attempt to understand the theological and spiritual preoccupations of 'evangelical' thought in the later eighteenth century Scottish Church. Willison saw the defence of Christianity from infidelity as integrally involved with purity of doctrine and worship. Earlier, in 1733, in The Church's Danger and Ministers' Duty, he prayed for their continuance so that God would preserve the Church from deism and similar tendencies, and from all Popish, Socinian, Arian, Pelagian, and Arminian principles which prevented men from seeing the hand of God in all things.⁶⁷ Laxity of doctrine and failure to move against

heretical opinions were sinful and were being punished by God in his refusal to bless the Church's endeavours in both spiritual and ecclesiastical matters:

the Lord's hand is visibly lifted up against us at this day, and hath been for some years past, in shutting up the church's womb, blasting gospel-ordinances, and withdrawing his spirit from the assemblies of his people and from our judicatories.

The flood-gate is opened to error, infidelity, and looseness, to overspread the land; so that the gospel of Christ, the holy scriptures, and all revealed religion, are condemned and ridiculed by many... There is a way opened for a carnal, self-seeking minister to get into the vineyard, when faithful labourers are thrust out, and godly preachers and students are discouraged from entering in...

By all which proceedings it appears that God hath a peculiar controversy with Scotland, and threatens to punish her remarkably for her heinous sins and provocations... Infidelity, immorality, and contempt for the gospel, are come to a prodigious height: our hearts are become cold and frozen to Christ and his interest, to his people and holy laws... And yet so great is our impenitence and perverseness, that we will not see the Lord's hand, nor be reformed by all these judgements.⁶⁸

The situation was made even worse because of the wrangling of those who profess Christianity and which took place while infidelity was growing apace.⁶⁹

Increasingly, however, Willison's priorities became more polemical. In The Balm of Gilead, a series of sermons published in 1742, his list of diseases for which the blood of Christ was needed consisted of the following: atheism, ignorance of God, hardness of heart, aversion to spiritual duties, indwelling corruption, hypocrisy and formality in God's service,

discouragement and downcasting of soul, ingratitude to God for his mercies, trusting to our own righteousness, heresy and error (including Deism, Socinianism, and Arianism), schism and division, 'giddiness and unsettledness in religion' (by which he meant patronage, denial of national covenants, and Erastianism), and spiritual barrenness and unfruitfulness.⁷⁰ Thereafter, he was quick to identify these trends with the Moderates in the Church. He came to be more and more concerned that increasing numbers of the clergy were guilty of looseness and immorality in their lives as well as of laxness and unsoundness in their principles, and that some of these were allowed to teach divinity to students for the ministry at the universities. Furthermore, many such men neglected evangelical preaching, and espoused 'legal doctrine, and a sort of heathenish morality', instead of preaching Christ to sinners. Many of these, too, were giving unnecessary encouragement to patronage which led to schism.⁷¹ James Paton reflected the same view when he attacked what he regarded as the disgracing of the pulpit with quotations from Plato and Seneca which, he maintained, implied that the gospel had imperfections and needed supplementing.⁷² Willison also criticised the Church's attitude to heresy, which he defined as 'errors in the fundamentals of religion, maintained with obstinacy',⁷³ and identified heresy as present in the cases of Simson, Campbell, and Principal Wishart. The latter he regarded as suspect in the areas of Erastianism, Christian liberty, subscription to the Confessions, the final state of non-Christians, and original sin. Leechman's sermon on prayer was likewise attacked as saying

little of Christ's mediatorial role, and for generally omitting mention of Christ. He criticised the General Assembly for its failure to act unequivocally in its dealings with these cases.⁷⁴ A Popular man like Willison arrived at his ecclesiastical position of opposition to the Moderates, therefore, not solely or indeed mainly because of opposition to what he conceived to be their doctrinal position, but because he came increasingly to see them as unwilling to challenge the defections of the Church and of the nation from evangelical religion, and as countenancing the holding and teaching of heretical opinions. This, above all, was dishonouring to God and could only lead to the withdrawal of his blessing on both the land and the Church.⁷⁵ Ultimately, therefore, opposition to Moderatism was not a doctrinal matter, it was a practical one, and in some ways even a devotional one.

The link between Moderatism and infidelity in the writings of Willison was taken up by other Popular writers, but never so explicitly. Alexander Webster, in the 1740s, argued that attempts to satisfy or accommodate objections to Christianity had resulted in departures from its doctrines. In this view he was joined much later in 1773 by James Paton. Webster implied the existence of a link between the growth of Deism and Principal Wishart's analysis of the attributes of God which, he alleged, led to the denial of the reality of sin and of its fatal consequences. Religious liberty, he asserted elsewhere, had been turned into an occasion for propagating atheism and infidelity.⁷⁶ The same response was evident as late as 1799 when Sir Harry Moncrieff

Wellwood maintained that the progress of the gospel had been reduced and obstructed by 'the variety of human inventions which men of worldly passions have attempted to graft on it'.⁷⁷ John Snodgrass in 1794 had attacked the watering down of the gospel to the level of natural religion as making Christianity pointless. Singled out for especial condemnation was the denial of the doctrines of original sin, the Atonement, and the Holy Spirit. Stress in preaching on the morality of the gospel was attacked on the grounds that it obscured the importance of Christian piety, sobriety, humility, self-denial, contempt for the world, and heavenly-mindedness. It led men to believe that these holy virtues were no more than unattainable ideals. The Christian churches in general had fallen from their former purity and zeal as shown by the languishing of religion, and the spread of infidelity and licentiousness. In Scotland, this was due to the Church's departure from 'those great and cardinal doctrines which had once been its glory'.⁷⁸

Robert Walker advanced a similar but much more qualified diagnosis. Those who professed a general regard for Christ but entertained or published opinions inconsistent with real esteem for him were attacked, as were those who denied his divinity and satisfaction for sin and those who denied the necessity, virtue, and efficacy of his grace. All, in effect, vilified the Redeemer and detracted from his true honour and dignity. This is little more than a restatement of Willison's case made forty years earlier. Walker went on to castigate those who did not receive

Christ as their only Saviour and as the only way to the Father. These declensions among hearers of the gospel, he suggested, were caused by a secret unbelief of which they were unaware: they were not thoroughly persuaded of the truth of the Scriptures; their position was that the Scriptures may be true and so, while they were not downright infidels, neither were they true believers.⁷⁹ In spite of his near-Moderatism, Thomas Somerville subscribed to this view, though for somewhat different reasons: errors and misconceptions of the gospel, he maintained, 'interwoven with essential tenets during the ages of ignorance and superstition', had given sceptics in the present time the most specious arguments for calling in question its sacred origin.⁸⁰ The progress of this scepticism was to be noted by remissness in attendance on the ordinances of worship and public duties of the Christian religion by many who professed reverence to Christ. Ministers were at least partly to blame, he believed, because they often tended to encumber the gospel with 'foreign and eccentric difficulties' which the ill-disposed used to disparage the Christian faith. An even greater danger, according to Somerville, was the resulting lukewarmness of pretended friends to religion. There was, in other words, a decline of piety. Not only was there a desertion of ordinances by 'a great proportion of people in the higher ranks of life', the ordinances were not even attended by 'the generality of professing Christians' as had been the case. This led to laxity in family worship and private devotion. All these manifestations of infidelity or lukewarmness could be laid at the Church's door.⁸¹

In the same way as there was a variety of analyses of the reasons for the growth of infidelity, there was a corresponding variety in the prescription of detailed remedies. The first group, those who were convinced that the rationality of the Christian faith would overcome the problem, argued that an 'educative' response was called for. While few members of the party would have gone as far as William Wishart when he asserted that the general corruption of youth was in a great measure due to 'the gross and general neglect of a rational and virtuous Education',⁸² most of those who saw infidelity as irrational thought the appropriate response was one of conventional apologetical writing. It could range from the relatively quiescent approach of John Gillies, who set about the printing of a collection 'from some of the Authors of greatest genius, who are friends of the Gospel... as an antidote' to the poison spread by 'fashionable Deistical writers',⁸³ to the detailed defences of traditional doctrines relating to the Being and existence of God, causation, and of proofs of the Christian religion by leading Popular authors such as George Anderson, David Savile, Robert Dick, John Dun, and others.⁸⁴ All these writers would have agreed with both Dick and Moncrieff Wellwood when they asserted that some branches of human learning were highly useful for vindicating the honour of divine revelation, and for guarding men against both 'Enthusiasm' and infidelity.⁸⁵ In short, the analysis of infidelity as irrational and therefore as not embodying a fundamental threat to either Christianity or the Church led to a relatively muted and conventional response. It

involved the defence of revelation and natural religion as being rational, and defence of the truth of Christian doctrine especially that regarding the nature and existence of God. It was fundamentally educative and above all confident.

The second analysis of the cause of infidelity, the identification of it as a spiritual problem, led to the formulation of a cohesive programme for recovery. An exception was John Bonar, who limited himself to the assertion that Christians, and ministers in particular, should 'stand in the gap against impiety as well as infidelity' since discouragement of the latter depended on suppression of the former.⁶⁶ Most of those who shared the second analysis, however, made explicit proposals for dealing with the problem. Willison, Snodgrass, and Walker in particular offered a spiritual answer to deal with the encouragement given by human depravity to infidelity. All three started by accepting the primacy of the Holy Spirit. As Snodgrass wrote:

the suggestion of human ingenuity must be excluded; the means which unerring wisdom has appointed must be adopted; the word of salvation must be clearly and faithfully declared; and, like the first teachers of Christianity, those to whom it is committed must, 'by manifestation of the truth, commend themselves to every man's conscience as in the sight of God'... But let it not be forgotten, that after all that can be done in this important work, the whole is in the hand of God, and therefore success is to be expected only from his favour and blessing.⁶⁷

Willison came to the issue through his complaint against the

Moderates but his basic approach was determined by his view of the role of gospel preaching in the function of the Church. In the Balm of Gilead he regretted the deposition of the Seceders in 1740 because they were 'upright and zealous in preaching a crucified Jesus to fallen men, especially at a time when Deism and dry moral discourses are like to thrust out true Christianity', and spoke against 'the preaching up of a sort of heathen morality, and the neglect of the preaching of Christ and gospel holiness'.²⁹ Any reform of these defects, however, depended on the operation of the Holy Spirit in the same way as it did for Snodgrass later in the century. As he argued in 1733 in The Church's Danger,

Let us pray for God's pouring out his Spirit from on high upon the ordinances and assemblies of this land, for convincing, enlightening, and converting of souls to the Lord: for our affairs will never take a turn for the better, 'until the Spirit be poured out from on high'... for a time when gospel ordinances dispensed by us, shall be remarkably backed by God's power, and presence.³⁰

The operations of the Spirit would be present, too, in leading divinity students to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the glory of Christ and the winning of souls.³¹ He identified, furthermore, two areas as holding the key to a crucial shift in the direction of the Church in response to the problem: ministerial piety combined with the conscientious performance of pastoral duties, and evangelical preaching. The evidence seems to suggest, as Hetherington argued in his introductory biographical essay to his edition of The Practical Works of Rev. John

Willison, that Willison and his friends discharged their pastoral duties with increased zeal since they regarded the public sins of the Church as a matter of deep guilt, and that they strove with renewed vigour against spiritual lethargy in their congregations and to convince them of the necessity of regeneration, faith, and new obedience.⁹¹ Certainly, in the Church's Danger and Ministers' Duty, Willison argued in favour of frequent visitation and catechising as a means of ascertaining the spiritual state of congregations and the results of sermons, and supported the more frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper as a means of encouraging spiritual growth.⁹²

The significance of evangelical preaching in Willison's perceptions came to take a more prominent place in the 1740s when, for a time, he became interested in millenarian speculation, in the course of which he predicted a revolution in France around 1792. More importantly, it led him to identify encouraging signs of revival of true religion throughout the world,⁹³ in which Evangelical preaching was of critical importance. The first signs of the fall of Antichrist were to be the great defection among the churches of Christ, deadness and formality among the Lord's people, and abounding errors and false doctrines. The latter were identified in particular as involving corrupt principles concerning justification, the operations of the Holy Spirit, revelation, and the salvation of sinners by the imputed righteousness of Christ. There were indications that God was beginning to counteract these tendencies. In particular,

religious awakenings in various parts of the world, presumably the Great Awakening in New England and the Cambuslang 'Wark', were evidences of God's blessing. Ministers and preachers should concur in promoting the Lord's work 'by proclaiming the saving doctrine and offers of free grace to the world', and by exerting themselves 'for removing out of the way all lets and hindrances of the kingdom of Christ'.⁹⁴ If, therefore, evangelical revival was to be linked to the approaching millenⁿium, it becomes easier to see why Willison was not especially interested in specific proposals to counteract Moderate influence in the General Assembly. Evangelicals were on the winning side and they should contribute to its near approach by their preaching of salvation through Christ. It is not clear, however, whether millenarianism affected Popular strategies of opposition to the Moderates at the Assembly. Apart from Snodgrass, who fifty years later detected the signs that the reign of Antichrist was ending in the contrast between the spread of the gospel occurring at a time of religious decline, there are no signs of such speculation in Popular writings other than at the time of the Cambuslang revival.⁹⁵

The converse of stress on the decline of evangelical preaching, which has been noticed as a cause of infidelity in the works of Webster, Warden, and Paton, was obviously a desire for its revival.⁹⁶ Perhaps most notable of all the suggestions made for the improvement of current preaching was the list of defects which John Love gave in 1778. This was unusual in the specificity of its reference to what he believed to be too common: failure to

distinguish between grace and counterfeits of grace (by which he meant the need to insist that there was no intermediate position between openly avowed profanity or hypocrisy and true grace or regeneration); failure to distinguish between the different exercises of faith, repentance, love, and new obedience; the offering of only general directions in the work of self-examination without details of how to discover what it is to believe; the absence of preaching on particular 'heart plagues' (such as hardness of heart, blindness of soul, and so on); and the lack of any solution to problems of perplexity and distress; preaching as if there were only a few unbelievers in the congregation; and the want of trembling at the divine visitation on the Jews.⁹⁷ If Love's ^{dia}prognosis was accurate, there would appear to have been a neglect of evangelical preaching even within the evangelical wing of the Popular party around the late 1770s.

Thomas Somerville, one of those in the Popular party furthest removed in his theological sympathies from Willison, also subscribed to the same need for revived evangelical preaching. He argued that when ministers set about reading the Scriptures they should forget, at least temporarily, the interpretations and opinions they had previously adopted and rather

indulge no wish or purpose, but that of discovering the genuine doctrine of the gospel, and of embracing it; fervently praying to God to free our minds from every prejudice and party attachment, and to inspire our hearts

with a supreme love of the truth... From the Scriptures alone, we can derive pure, rational notions of all the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion, their relative importance and subordination, and the views and motives, most pertinent and powerful for inculcating them on the people under our care.⁹⁸

There is, he maintained, no point in attacking infidelity in sermons since the sceptics are not likely to be at public worship to hear it, and in any case the proper answers to objections are too complicated for treatment in a single discourse. If ministers were alarmed at the growth of scepticism, they should adhere conscientiously to the simplicity and purity of the gospel and avoid encumbering it with unnecessary difficulties which could be seized upon by the opponents of the faith.⁹⁹ There was little in this which would have been unacceptable to Willison. Somerville agreed, too, with Willison in noting the decline of piety, the desertion of public worship by 'a great proportion of persons in the higher ranks of life', and the increasing laxity in the practice of family and private devotions.¹⁰⁰ A parting of the ways would have occurred, however, when Somerville went on to declare

It is therefore more than ever incumbent upon preachers of the gospel, to inculcate the importance of social worship, and the necessity of piety towards God, in order to lay the foundation of every social and moral duty.¹⁰¹

Probably more indicative of the extent to which Willison's analysis had permeated the thought of the Popular party as a whole was the stress to be found in one of Robert Walker's

sermons on 'preaching Christ'. Preaching Christ Jesus the Lord was, asserted Walker, the great means appointed by God for the conversion and salvation of sinners, and therefore it was 'not only highly reasonable, but absolutely necessary'. Lectures on morality might restrain men from scandalous sin, but it was the gospel alone which could make a sinner a saint. It alone could change men into the divine image, so renewing their nature that they might be suited for the enjoyment of God. Preaching Christ, or 'the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel', had in every age been the means of 'convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation'. To the extent that this had been neglected, 'the power of godliness hath declined and languished, till a cold formality hath at length given way to the open profession of infidelity itself'. Where revivals of religion had occurred, they had been introduced and sustained by the blessing of God on the preaching of the doctrines of Christianity. What was meant, though, by the preaching of Christ? Walker adduced three criteria. Ministers should make Christ the principal subject of their sermons; they should handle every other subject in such a way as to keep Christ constantly in the minds of their hearers; and they should make the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and the salvation of men, the sole aim of their preaching.¹⁰² While Willison, Walker, and other members of the Popular party would appear, then, to have insisted on a more Christocentric emphasis in preaching which laid little on the example of Christ than those closer to the Moderate position, it is important for the analysis of the

Popular response to infidelity and scepticism to notice the place which members of both wings of the party ascribed to the efficacy of the preaching of the gospel in a pure and simple form as the main antidote to defection.

In view of the remarkable degree of support for a return to evangelical preaching as the most effectual means of counteracting the rise of infidelity, it is surprising that the third strand in the analysis of its causes, namely stress on the Church's failure to respond adequately to its rise, and in particular on its failure to insist on gospel preaching, should have received as little attention as it did. There was a clear reluctance to ascribe the blame for it to any particular section of the Church. There was an obscure reference in Bonar's Observations on the Conduct and Character of Judas Iscariot to friends of Christianity who 'have been more careful to preserve our principles, than to reform our lives', and he enjoined the Church to stand fast against impiety as well as against infidelity. This oblique attack stood virtually alone.¹⁰³ The only sustained and detailed attempt to ascribe blame for the Church's failure to combat infidelity successfully was that of John Willison who laid the responsibility largely, though not exclusively, at the feet of the Moderates. If, as has been suggested,¹⁰⁴ Willison's opposition to them was as much a spiritual as a doctrinal one, the question arises as to why he saw them as unable or unwilling to respond firmly to the decline of true religion. The answer is twofold: first, he believed that

religion had for them become a matter of mere morality; and, secondly, he regarded them as too much influenced by the views of the patrons and gentry on whom they depended for preferment. In The Church's Danger he bewailed the influence of 'many of the younger clergy and preachers, who seem to affect a new way of moral preaching and lax management, suited to the taste of many patrons and heritors'.¹⁰⁵ In 1742, he declared that

it would help greatly if those consecrated to spiritual office would be more suitably and profitably employed in opening up and recommending the Balm of Gilead [i.e., the blood of Christ] and the glorious ministrations of the Spirit than in attending courts, and pursuing secular designs.¹⁰⁶

He returned to the same theme in the Fair and Impartial Testimony of 1744 where he referred to 'legal sermons and moral harangues, to the neglect of the preaching of Christ, introduced by many of the young clergy'.¹⁰⁷ As has been noted, he identified the Treaty of Union of 1707 as marking the decline in spirituality of the nobility and gentry since it led to a neglect of family religion among them, and as leading to the multiplication of public oaths which he associated with the growth of infidelity.¹⁰⁸ In other words, the close links of the Moderates with the nobility and gentry explained, at least in part, the attraction to moral preaching and laxness in doctrine of the younger Moderates. What more could be expected 'while these are chosen by statesmen, magistrates, or regents, several of whom have no concern for

Christianity, but may even be tinged with error or infidelity?'¹⁰⁹

In response to the alleged moral preaching of the Moderates, Willison provided an analysis of its defects as a supplement to the positive reasons for the promotion of evangelical preaching which have already been noted.¹¹⁰ This analysis is to be found in the Fair and Impartial Testimony. Morality, or obedience to the moral law, maintained Willison, was absolutely essential to true Christianity since God required it and without it and true holiness, 'no man can see the Lord'. But it must originate from the principles of the gospel, 'be performed in a gospel manner, and be pressed mainly by gospel motives and arguments'. If not, men were apt to think that they might win heaven by their own morality and without Christ or his righteousness. If allowed to replace the imputed righteousness of Christ, obedience to the moral law could prevent conversion and entry to heaven. Morality without Christ was a reversion to the covenant of works. While faith was required as the means or instrument by which Christ and his righteousness was received and applied, and true repentance and sincere obedience were required as evidence and fruits of faith, neither faith, repentance or obedience were any part of justifying righteousness. None should think they were saved partly by their own obedience, and partly by Christ's; they were saved only by Christ's obedience.¹¹¹

The problem remained of how morality and the duties of the moral law were to be preached. Willison's answer, which can be seen as a response to what was to become the Moderate stress on the example of Christ, had several aspects. First, duty was the natural and necessary fruit of faith in a crucified Christ and love to him. Secondly, desire to keep the moral law could be encouraged by a devotional emphasis on the attractions of a crucified Christ which would make his laws acceptable and indeed compelling. Thirdly, duties should be enforced from a principle of love and gratitude to Christ in return for the love he has shown. Fourthly, the people should be directed to rely on the grace and strength of Christ himself to help them to perform their duties and not follow preaching which assumed the sufficiency of man's own natural powers. Such preaching was typical of 'moral preachers'. Fifthly, men should be persuaded to leave sin and perform moral duties, by the terrors of the coming judgement and the 'wrath of the Lamb'. And finally, stress should always be placed on the fact that all our duties and good works had no worth or merit before God but were only accepted by him through the mediation and merits of Christ. While Christianity enforced morality strongly, morality without the renewal of the heart through conversion would never please God. Everything said about morality should point to Christ.¹¹²

Failure to preach morality along these lines, argued Willison, was failure to preach in the way God had appointed. Preaching should above all concentrate on the person and work of

Christ. The preaching of Christ crucified was the God-appointed means of converting sinners to Christ, it was the method which the apostles used with such great success, it was the God-chosen way of reforming men from vice and encouraging virtue, godliness and good order in civil life; and those ministers who preached Christ most had the most success.¹¹³

Willison saw the Church of Scotland in the 1740s being led astray by the Moderates' exclusion of Christ in their preaching:

How can we expect assistance from Jesus Christ in our work, or the influences of his Spirit in preaching, upon which all our success depends, when we take no more notice of Christ in our sermons than the moral philosophers among the heathens? Woe will be to this national church, if such a way of preaching prevail in it, notwithstanding of the foresaid act of assembly [of 1736 concerning evangelical preaching], and a sound Confession of Faith, which all ministers subscribe to. God forbid that the church of Scotland ever become like the church of England in this respect, who subscribe to sound articles of doctrine, and never mind them more afterwards.¹¹⁴

The touchstone of the truth of a church, therefore, for Willison depended on the orientation of its preaching. He found it difficult to condemn the Seceders for they testified 'against the preaching up a sort of heathenish morality, and the neglect of the true preaching of Christ and gospel holiness, etc.'; he praised the English Methodists, 'although not altogether purged from the corruptions of that land', since 'they preached with great warmth, choosing subjects very much neglected in that church [i.e., the Church of England] such as the doctrine of

grace, of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; of original sin and the corruption of our nature, of the nature and necessity of regeneration, and the new birth, etc.'. The Cambuslang revival, which he saw as a justification of the correctness of his analysis of the state of the Church, could not but be accepted as a work of the Spirit because it had been produced by evangelical preaching, and its converts were marked by their testimony to the centrality of Christ's role in their religious experience.¹¹⁵

Although apparently no other member of the Popular party espoused Willison's critique of Moderate preaching explicitly, four decades later Robert Walker followed his support for stress on the preaching of Christ as an antidote to infidelity,¹¹⁶ by taking up Willison's analysis of moral preaching indirectly. It was not sufficient, he argued, to publish the laws of Christ unless they were published as his laws, and unless the arguments advanced for obeying them were those 'peculiar to his gospel'. The 'great duties of morality' should be depicted as 'the genuine effects and proper evidences of faith in Christ and love to God'. In particular, ministers should remind their hearers that they should not rely on any actions of their own for their justification, but that they should renounce all confidence in them and 'seek to be found in Christ alone'. The apostles themselves introduced, on all occasions, 'the peculiar doctrines of Christianity' and always urged the duties they were commending 'by those regards which are due to Christ himself'.¹¹⁷ The

similarities to what Willison had maintained earlier are striking. By implication, then, Walker thought many ministers of the Church of Scotland failed to urge morality as a duty arising from our obligations to Christ. He went on, though once again by implication, to level a much more fundamental charge, that of failure to preach about the necessity of faith in Christ.

Understanding of the nature of faith was essential because

Morality grows out of faith in Christ, as the branches grow from the stock. This, and this only, is the principle of that holiness, without which no man can see God. Whosoever, therefore, would preach morality with any hope of success, must begin here, and lay the foundation of it in that faith which purifieth the heart, and worketh by love; otherwise his sermons may supply fuel to pride and vain-glory, but shall never be the means of saving one soul. In vain do we attempt to improve the fruit till the tree be made good. Let sinners first be ingrafted into Christ, and then works of righteousness will follow in course... ¹¹⁸

The emphasis of Walker is not the same as that of Willison. While both agree that morality is the fruit of faith, Willison's emphasis is on the Christocentric response of the Christian, while Walker's analysis is rooted in the nature of faith and its doctrinal foundations. It is a more intellectual response, and probably reflected the influence of Walker's contemporary, John Erskine, and his analysis of the nature of faith. ¹¹⁹

Analysis of moral preaching took Willison, though not Walker, directly into the debate over patronage. ¹²⁰ It emphasised the essentially spiritual nature of the opposition of the Popular party to its exercise, or at least of its more evangelically-

minded members. It is difficult to explain, however, the reason why Willison's anti-Moderate explanation of the rise of infidelity was not taken up by more Popular writers. The whole issue of infidelity became submerged in the struggle over patronage, and the symptoms of the malaise were neglected in the struggle to right its cause. If such were the case, it would embody a remarkable victory for Willison's position. More probable, though, is an interpretation which stresses the degree of equanimity about the whole problem of infidelity, Deism, and atheism which was encouraged by the conviction of the essential rationality of the Christian faith. Mainstream Popular thought was sensitive to and influenced by the secular thought of the period. After the flurry of concern over the works of Bolingbroke, Hume, and Kames, infidelity was deemed to be a less important problem. In the longer term there are reasons to suggest that the 'lukewarmness' of the nobility and gentry, and its spread throughout the community, was beginning to be seen not so much as backsliding or as infidelity, but simply as non-Christianity. The problem was not one of reclamation, but one of conversion. The theological rationale for the perception had been provided in Erskine's work on the nature of faith. It was this which united Willison and Somerville and the two theological extremes of the Popular party.

3. Faith in Practice - the General Assembly, 1740-1800.

There remains, however, the question of the extent to which these responses to the problem of infidelity were reflected in the life of the Church in the period under consideration. One source of information exists in the accounts of the proceedings of the General Assembly.¹²¹ Examination of these verifies the lines of interpretation which have been established from the survey of the published works of the Popular party.

It is not the intention to examine in detail the proceedings in the various heresy trials or the details of the charges connected with the issue of infidelity. These may be found elsewhere.¹²² The issue to be examined is the Popular attitude to the questions of heresy and infidelity and how to proceed against them. It is clear, in the first place, that there was a considerable reluctance, among the Popular leadership at least, to initiate proceedings against heresy. John Adams of Falkirk, in his closing address as Moderator of the 1744 Assembly which saw the accusation of heresy against Professor Leechman, asserted

In that case of more than usual delicacy...have we not seen the beauty of Christian charity, in condescension on the one hand to remove offence, and readiness on the other to embrace satisfaction. We have had the most agreeable evidence too of impartial regards to the merit of questions debated before us, in the honest declarations of many, that after hearing a case fairly stated, they came to judge of it in a quite different manner from what they had done upon some imperfect representations before the meeting.¹²³

James Robe of Kilsyth, the Popular hagiographer published an appendix to a pamphlet 'vindicating the Act passed by the Assembly in this affair'.¹²⁴ Such declarations set the tone for the response of the Popular leadership to heresy for the rest of the century.

Probably the most famous of the heresy trials at the Assembly was that involving David Hume and Henry Home, Lord Kames. The complaint against infidel writers, as it came to be known, was set in motion in 1755 by George Anderson, by this time almost eighty years of age and chaplain to Watson's Hospital in Edinburgh, who had published his Estimate of the Profit and Loss of Religion in 1753. He was joined by the anonymous author, now thought to be John Bonar of Perth, of a pamphlet entitled An Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments contained in the Writings of Sopho and David Hume, Esq., addressed to the consideration of the Reverend and Honourable Members of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.¹²⁵ Bonar summarised Kames's position in a series of propositions which held that Kames denied the possibility of knowledge of God and of divine providence over the material world; that he asserted the perfection of all classes of being; and that God had implanted a deceitful feeling of freedom of action in man, since all actions were in fact determined and subject to an irresistible necessity; and that therefore there could be no sin or moral evil in the world. Hume's position was summarised as denying all distinction between virtue and vice, and asserting that justice had no

foundation beyond its contribution to public advantage; that religion and its ministers were prejudicial to mankind; that there was no evidence that Christianity was a divine revelation; and that Popery was the best form of Christianity, the Reformation being the work of 'madmen and enthusiasts'.¹²⁶ In other words, Kames was being alleged to hold heterodox if not heretical views, and Hume was attacked as denying the validity of Christianity and arguing the case for infidelity. To some extent, the case was a backlash after Gillespie's deposition in 1752 for the Analysis concluded by charging the Assembly that

you deposed a minister who disowned your authority, but enrol as a member of your courts, an elder who has disowned the authority of Almighty God, and that some of you at least live in the greatest intimacy with one who represents the blessed Saviour as an imposter, and his religion as a cunningly-devised fable.¹²⁷

The 1755 Assembly contented itself with unanimously passing a general denunciation of 'those impious and infidel principles which are subversive of all religion, natural and revealed, and have such pernicious influence on life and morals...'¹²⁸

The issue was not closed, for an overture was proposed in the Committee of Overtures the following year directed against certain infidel writers. The debate in this case hinged on whether or not Hume could be regarded as a Christian and on whether opinion as opposed to action could be the object of censure. It was argued that what was happening was that 'the

grossest immorality [was] taught and subscribed, and then defended as freedom of enquiry', and it was maintained that to censure writers was not to punish them in their bodies, or even hinder them from publishing their opinions, 'but only hindering them from injuriously possessing that to which they have no right, viz., the Christian name'.¹²⁹

The question, therefore, hinged on two issues: who were liable to church censures, and whether Hume was one of them? It was argued in a pamphlet entitled Infidelity a proper object of censure, that the Church was obliged to preserve the purity of the doctrines and sacraments of the Christian religion 'not by forcing any who are unwilling, to make a hypocritical profession in regard to them, but by separating themselves from those who openly and grossly impugn, abuse, and corrupt them'. Neither were Church censures of a temporal nature, nor should they be. They could not therefore infringe any right, for the highest form of censure, excommunication, was only declaring those not to be Christians who were not so in any case.¹³⁰ It was pointed out, in addition, that the Confession of Faith required the Church to call to account and censure those who 'upon pretence of Christian liberty, do publish such opinions, or maintain such practices as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity'. Attention was also drawn to the annual instruction to the Commission of Assembly to investigate the publication of works promoting opinions inconsistent with the

Confession, and that those who recommended such works should be called before it.¹³¹

The inference from these arguments is that those who were calling for the censure of Hume considered that the Church had a constitutional obligation to pursue the author of opinions deemed to be as objectionable as Hume's if he laid claim to the title of being a Christian. This was admitted by Hume's opponents after two days of debate in the Committee of Overtures. One who, however, was not a member of the visible church was not subject to its discipline. Hume, it was argued, was not in that category since he had been neither excluded from it by a sentence, nor had he excluded himself from it by a formal declaration or by renouncing his baptism. He frequently included himself in its ranks by referring to 'our holy religion' and this showed the necessity of a visible separation. At this point, the argument of Hume's opponents broke down for the Moderates pointed out that while Hume had not said in express words that he was not a Christian, he had said it as publicly and as strongly by other forms of expression. Furthermore, his antagonists' contention that formal exclusion would prevent professing Christians from associating with him was rejected on the grounds that Christians should frequent his company in order to attempt his reformation. The overture's supporters then retreated to seeking a judgement that Hume was no Christian and therefore not subject to discipline. They were outmanoeuvred by the argument that they were demanding a sentence without trial or proper defence, and

that, since the overture represented Hume as no Christian, it ought not to be transmitted as proceeding on a supposition which made its own demand unnecessary. Against this, it could only be argued that any censure or exclusion by a sentence would be precluded since, as soon as anyone was guilty of anything worthy of censure, he would be declared, or declare to be, no Christian and so not a subject of censure. The overture was then dropped by the Committee because it would not, in their opinion, serve the purpose of edification. Their resolution was passed by 50 votes to 17.¹³²

Several conclusions may be drawn from the debate over the alleged heresies of Hume and Kames. In the first place, it is often assumed that the attack was mounted by the Popular party as a whole. Mossner, for example, in his biography of Hume writes of 'the concerted effort of the persecuting cabal' and implies that the weight of the party was behind it.¹³³ There is no evidence that the attack on Hume and Kames was supported by the Popular party as a whole. Apart from Anderson and Bonar, no Popular minister of note is recorded as supporting the move for censure. Even Witherspoon did not attack Hume or Kames directly until 1757, and that was provoked only by the Douglas affair.¹³⁴ The Assembly, furthermore, unanimously passed the 1755 Act which condemned infidelity and immorality in the most general terms only, and there was no attempt to move a more specific condemnation. In the Assembly of the following year, which had Popular commissioners, there was no attempt to move for the

condemnation of Hume after it had been decided against in the Committee of Overtures.

After the unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Assembly to condemn Hume, Anderson raised a complaint before the Presbytery of Edinburgh against the publishers of Kames' Essays on Morality and Natural Religion. It was rejected by the relatively Popular presbytery with only two dissents. Furthermore, apart from the efforts of Anderson and Bonar and perhaps one or two of their firmest supporters, the debate over Kames was carried on at high philosophical levels and for a time involved Jonathan Edwards through his correspondence with Kames between 1755 and 1757. It would seem from the debate at the Edinburgh Presbytery that Kames had modified his views by 1756, to the extent that some, if not the majority, of the Popular membership of the presbytery, were not prepared to pursue the matter. The stature of their criticism of Kames should not be lightly regarded, however, for in the Preface to the 1779 edition of his Essays, he publicly retracted most of the doctrines on liberty and necessity which had been objected to by Edwards and which were the central point of the debate.¹³⁵

The problem faced by the Popular party in church discipline over matters of heresy and infidelity was complex. Opinion differed on the problem of infidelity and the means of combating it. The Popular party was also compromised in its response by the arguments it used to counter patronage. From the Reformation

until the middle of the eighteenth century, the Church of Scotland had been able and accustomed to assume Scotland was a nation professing Christianity and accepting the writ of the Kirk with the exception of small numbers of Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, who were nevertheless forced to accept the authority of the Kirk in various ways such as its establishment, its control of education, and the reservation of the offices and emoluments of State. Doctrinal orthodoxy was to be enforced and, as late as 1697, Thomas Aitkenhead had been executed for heresy. These attitudes had been challenged in the area of church government by Ebenezer Erskine and the Seceders in the 1730s and the Church had responded by deposing him. Those most hostile to the Seceders continued to advocate their exclusion, but most of the Popular leadership shared the principles for which the Seceders stood, and they continued to maintain friendly relations with them wherever possible. The policy of rigorous censure of those who denied the writ of the Kirk was clearly applied selectively. The writings of Hume in the 1750s, however, seemed aimed at the very foundations of Christianity and to be encouraging doubt and promoting 'infidelity' and 'immorality'. Members of the Popular party sought to combat the problem in their own writings. Partly, however, because of their assault on patronage and their defence of Thomas Gillespie in 1752 in terms of 'Christian liberty', and partly because they appreciated that they could not apply the strictures of the seventeenth century to those who denied the faith, they could not mount a confident move for censure, nor did they wish to. When a small group of Popular

men moved to censure and in effect to excommunicate Hume, the Moderate defence of him was based on the same principle of liberty which the Popular party had been using in discussion on patronage. While it is going too far to claim, as has been done, that the Hume decision showed that the Church now saw itself as a voluntary body,¹³⁶ it would seem that the majority of the Popular party at the time was in favour of a tolerant approach to non-orthodox thought and to dissent whether it was ecclesiastical or more general.¹³⁷ The mainstream Popular response to the writings of Hume and other 'infidel writers' remained one of counteracting the impact of their ideas by publication and sermons. More drastic attempts at suppression were eschewed.

This interpretation is confirmed by the two best known, indeed the only other heresy cases of any significance in the latter half of the eighteenth century, those of Alexander Ferguson of Kilwinning in 1767 and William McGill of Ayr in 1789. The first arose over the allegation that in an article in the Scots Magazine Ferguson had expressed suspicious sentiments in point of doctrine, especially justifying dishonesty in subscription by ministers to the Confession of Faith.¹³⁸ When his case came before the overwhelmingly Popular Synod of Glasgow and Ayr it was thrown out partly on technical grounds and partly on the grounds of the 'odium, trouble, and expence' to which the Synod would be exposed if it was decided to proceed. Instead, on the casting vote of the Moderator, there was passed a declaration of the Synod's 'disapprobation and detestation of all

disingenuity or equivocation in subscribing the Confession of Faith' and an exhortation of all the members to oppose and discountenance such principles. The next day, a complaint named Ferguson and the case dragged on for a further year. In the end, the two parties in the Synod, realising that they were evenly balanced, accepted an overture which expressed the Synod's 'detestation and abhorrence of every doctrine and opinion that is contrary to or inconsistent with that great and capital doctrine of our holy religion, the satisfaction of Christ, and his substitution in our room', as contained in the Confession of Faith. Ferguson's presbytery was to take such measures as would be 'for edification' in view of his age and infirmities. In other words, a compromise was reached in which the doctrines were explicitly condemned but their proponent allowed to go unpunished.¹³⁹ This was very much the typical response of the Popular party during the period under consideration.

The case of Dr. William McGill, minister of the second charge of Ayr, reached the Assembly when several members of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr complained against a decision of the Synod to investigate an alleged fama clamosa arising from the publication of McGill's Practical Essay on the Death of Christ which was commonly regarded as being Socinian. The Assembly reversed the Synod's decision and referred the matter back to the Presbytery of Ayr. The offending work was in the end withdrawn, and the case ended in compromise with the acceptance of McGill's explanations and apologies. Shortly afterwards, the Synod of

Glasgow and Ayr issued a 'Declaration of Doctrine' which lamented the spirit of the age in giving so much favour to dubious theological publications and stressed the conventional doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, and the obligations of divine law as a rule of life, and warned against replacing 'perfect' obedience by 'sincere' obedience as the aim of the Christian. McGill's position was almost certainly a Socinian one and the failure to censure him was especially criticised by the Seceders but, although one of the leading advocates of the case against him was John Russel of Stirling, it seems to have aroused little comment from the Popular party as a whole.¹⁴⁰

It is clear that the Popular party increasingly saw the problem of heresy and unorthodox belief as a phenomenon to be prevented before it occurred rather than as something to be repressed after it had manifested itself. As early as 1744, in his closing speech as Moderator, the Popular leader, John Adams of Falkirk, alluded to the great care necessary in the licensing of probationers, so that none should be licensed 'to dispense the bread of life, but such as, on the best grounds that can be had, we have reason to judge have themselves tasted the good word of life, and felt the powers of the world to come'.¹⁴¹ In 1780 there was a Popular dissent from an Assembly decision on the grounds that it encouraged non-attendance of students on the regular divinity classes 'whereas private study is apt to lead to singular notions, and is consequently productive of schism and heretical opinions'.¹⁴² From the 1780s a series of Popular

overtures to the Assembly requested the enforcement of the regulations relating to the courses of divinity students.¹⁴³

The Popular position on the matter had ramifications in two areas: in the admission to the ministry of the Church of Scotland of men who had received their theological education or had been ordained in other churches outside Scotland, and in the response to the missionary and church planting activities of the Haldane brothers in the 1790s. In the first place, there is some evidence that the Moderate party used the regulations regarding the theological training of divinity students as a means of excluding potential supporters of the Popular position concerning patronage. In 1790, a licentiate of the Scots Presbytery in London was unanimously refused permission to preach as a probationer in Scotland since his petition was inconsistent with the Act of Assembly of 1779 respecting persons going to be licensed and ordained outwith the bounds of the Church.¹⁴⁴ In May 1798, however, a complex case came before the Assembly. A presentation had been made to the parish of Brechin of a man who had received his theological education and been ordained in England. He had had a charge in Dublin, had been the minister of the 'Presbyterian chapel' in Perth, had been refused admission by the Assembly, but had acted as a Sunday evening lecturer in Perth, and had been admitted as a minister of the Church by the Presbytery of Chanonry. The Presbytery of Brechin had referred the matter to the Assembly. Here it was moved by the Moderate leader, Dr. George Hill, that the presentee had not received a

proper university education in philosophy and theology, that there was not satisfactory evidence of his ordination in England, that the Presbytery of Chanonry's action was rash and unwarrantable, and that therefore the presentation should not be proceeded with. A counter motion was moved by Sir Harry Moncrieff finding the presentee ordained a minister in England and qualified to accept a presentation, and that therefore the Assembly should sustain it and order the presbytery to proceed to a settlement. The Moderate motion carried by 'a very great majority' and several of the supporters of the Popular motion dissented.¹⁴⁵ Although the evidence is perhaps slight, there is the possibility that the Popular party found difficulty in maintaining an effective opposition to the Moderate policy since the legislation they supported as a means of preventing the spread of heresy was deemed applicable at least by some of its members to applicants from England. What had originally been a Popular policy of insisting on sound theological training to counter heresy may well have become embroiled in wider controversies.

The second area, that is, the situation which arose over the Haldane brothers' missionary activities in Scotland, provides confirmation. The response of the great majority of the Church of Scotland was contained in several overtures from different synods to the Assembly of 1799 with regard to the employment of persons to preach in the parishes of the Church who were not duly licensed by some presbytery, and who had not received a regular

education in one of the Scottish universities. The Assembly unanimously agreed to the overtures, prohibited the preaching of such persons, and unanimously passed a declaratory act which argued that the requirement of prudence and strictness in the trial and judgement of those who were to be pronounced faithful and apt to teach was laid down by the Apostles, and that the laws regarding the education of candidates for the ministry were based on the rules of Scripture. It went on to argue that that it was crucial for the interests of true religion, the sound instruction of the people, the quiet of their minds, and the peace of the church and state, that unqualified ministers should not be countenanced by ministers of the Established Church. Ministers were forbidden to employ or to hold ministerial communion with such persons. This was justified, without comment by the Popular party, on the grounds

that it is essential to the unity and good order of the church, and implied in the principles of Presbyterian Government, that no minister shall presume to set up his individual judgement in opposition to the judgement of those to whom at his ordination he promised subjection in the Lord... ¹⁴⁶

It is difficult to argue that there was much difference between this assertion and the main argument of the Moderate 'Reasons for Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing' nearly fifty years earlier.¹⁴⁷ This time, however, the Popular party were responding to an attack on presbyterian polity from outside the Church. Before proceeding further, however, a qualification needs to be

made. It should not be assumed that all parts of the Church, or of the Popular party, were especially bothered about the activities of the Haldanes. The 1799 Assembly had also seen overtures concerning the setting up of Sunday Schools by the Haldanes and their followers. At the next Assembly it was reported that less than a quarter of the presbyteries had made any report on the matter, though requested to do so. Even when the matter was deferred to the following year less than half had complied.¹⁴⁸ This low priority given to the whole matter by many in the Church of Scotland is reflected in an absence of detailed discussion of the subject by Popular writers or commissioners to the Assembly.

There remains, however, the question of why the Popular party adopted a hostile attitude to the Haldanes in view of their doctrinal sympathies with them. It is in marked contrast to the attitude of the Popular party to the Secession, at least in its early days. There were several reasons for the hostility. In the first place, there were various features of the Haldane¹⁴⁹ movement which were particularly alien to the Scottish ecclesiastical environment at the time.¹⁴⁹ Apart from the question of church government, the Haldanes were probably seen as embodying several English influences to which the Scottish ecclesiastical tradition was profoundly hostile. There was large-scale itinerant preaching and ministry south of the Border which was, of course, incompatible with the whole settled system of presbyterial church organisation. There also seems to have been a movement in the late 1790s in England aiming at the reduction of

denominational differences and rivalries which could be connected, at least in the minds of Scottish observers, with the Haldanes. Secession and its subsequent growth and rivalry with the Established Church was linked in the minds of Popular churchmen with the departure of Greville Ewing from Lady Glenorchy's Chapel in Edinburgh in 1798, and with the demission of his Stirling charge in 1799 by William Innes who had accompanied the Haldanes on their preaching tour to the north in 1793. The Haldanes' practice of withholding their approval from ministers who did not meet their standards, which were based on the simplicity of their preaching as well as doctrinal criteria, also alienated many potential sympathisers in the Popular party. The Haldanes made the situation worse by their opposition to the commutation of public repentance for immorality to a fine. There is no evidence that the relaxing of ecclesiastical strictures in this area did not have the support of most Popular ministers by this time. The Haldanes were seen as threatening the strength of the link between Church and State, and presumably also there was doubt about the new role and importance which they gave to the laity. The absence of direct reference to such matters by members of the Popular party, though, is marked.

It is important to realise, however, that real Popular opposition did not appear until after the Haldanes started to engage in the training of preachers in 1799. Even then the issue was not clearcut for it was complicated by the desire of the Popular party to recognise English ministerial credentials.¹⁵⁰ In

the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale in 1798 there was a move, presumably aimed at the Haldanes, to request the Assembly to prohibit the occasional employment of preachers who were not members of the Church of Scotland. It was opposed by Popular members of the Synod on the grounds that there was no law either of Church or State prohibiting it, that the laws and regulations adduced by the supporters of the proposals were concerned with applications for the ministry of the Established Church, and that it had been the practice since the Reformation to invite to preach 'worthy and respectable ministers of other churches, who had come here to visit their friends or the country, and that no bad consequences had ever been known to occur as a result.' It was desirable, furthermore, to have communion with men 'who have one faith, one baptism, and one hope of their calling', and 'most consistent with that liberality for which the Church of Scotland has ever been distinguished'. The Churches of England and Scotland differed only in form, it was maintained, and many of the English dissenters were at one with the Scottish Church in doctrine, discipline, and worship, so that it showed a most illiberal and bigoted spirit to shut Scottish pulpits to them.¹⁵¹ In spite of all these arguments, the perceived hostility of the Haldanes to ecclesiastical establishments was a stumbling block for the Popular party, and one which caused them to be classified alongside the enemies of the gospel who were 'labouring to sap the foundations of true religion, and to overturn all religious establishments'. In January 1799 the Haldanes set up the first of nine seminary classes and the Popular party raised no further

protests against the moves aimed by the Assembly at countering their activities. They were passed unanimously.¹⁵²

It was this commitment to the Scottish concept of Establishment which explains the Popular party's acquiescence in some of the steps taken to ostracise Popular ministers who left the Church such as James Bayne of Paisley,¹⁵³ Greville Ewing of Lady Glenorchy's,¹⁵⁴ and William Innes of Stirling.¹⁵⁵ In the last case, although a Moderate motion which condemned the Presbytery of Stirling for accepting Innes' resignation simpliciter, was passed by the Assembly with a majority of more ^{two to one} than ~~two to one~~, the defeated Popular motion nevertheless had described Innes' practices as 'schismatical and divisive, and if established by proof would have inferred the highest censures of the Church'.¹⁵⁶

It is evident that in responding to doctrinal innovation, as indeed to schism or ecclesiastical innovation, the Popular party's ideological positions were influenced by more practical considerations. The first was their perception of the nature and benefits of the Establishment, which was conceived to be based on Scriptural authority and was not to be diluted or compromised. The primacy of strictly controlled and orthodox educational procedures as a means of ensuring support for it explains their hostility not only to the Haldanes' preachers, but also to their introduction of Sunday Schools with what were seen as unqualified teachers.¹⁵⁷ Secondly, there was a concern that proper procedure

should be followed even if that meant less rigorous censure of heresy than some would seem to have wished. It was not surprising that this should have been so in view of their constant battles with the Moderates over patronage in which they consistently stressed the constitutional nature of their contentions. Thirdly, there is some evidence that the Popular party came to value increasingly highly for the Church 'that security for the Stability of her doctrine, worship, discipline and government, she enjoys from the avowed conformity of all her office-bearers to her standards'.¹⁵⁹ In other words, the Popular party was not inclined to regard the threat of infidelity as best met by a rigorous policy of ecclesiastical censure. It had come to believe that it could best be promoted, within the Church, by a commitment to unity on the basis of allegiance to its doctrinal standards. Both these positions would appear to postulate a considerable degree of doctrinal confidence.

NOTES: CHAPTER 5.

1. op.cit., p.370.
2. William Craig, Sermons, vol. 2, pp.86-87, quoted in Clark, op.cit., p.27.
3. Wishart, Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, p.19;
Russel, True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism, p.9.
4. Somerville, Sermons, pp.426-428; Dun, Sermons, vol. 1, p.26.
5. Letters on Mr. Hume's History of Great Britain, p.298.
6. ibid. pp.307, 312-313, 321, 325-326.
7. ibid., pp.326-327.
8. The Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, pp.79-84, 58-60, 62-63, 67, 72.
9. True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism, pp.9, 13-14.
10. Russel, The Nature of the Gospel Delineated, pp.26-27;
Snodgrass, The Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion, p.20.
11. Blair, The Fear that's due to God and the King, considered and recommended, (Edinburgh, 1744), pp.8-21.
12. Bonar, 'The Nature and Tendency of the Ecclesiastic Constitution in Scotland' (1760), in The Scotch Preacher, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1775), p.15.
13. The Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion, (Dundee, 1781), pp.7-8, 29, 19, 27-28.
14. Muckersy, Sermon XII in Robert Gillan (ed.), The Scottish Pulpit: a Collection of Sermons by Eminent Clergymen of the Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1823), pp.289, 291-292.
15. A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage, p.14.
16. ibid., p.39.
17. See above, pp.161-162.
18. Sermons on Practical Subjects, vol. 1, pp.112-120.
19. Supernatural Revelation the only sure Hope of Sinners, (Edinburgh, 1741), p.44; 'Zeal for the Civil and Religious Interests of Mankind recommended' (1754), Sermon XVI in The

- Scotch Preacher, vol. 1, (Edinburgh, 1775), p. 347.
20. Bannerman, A Sermon upon Reformation and Revolution Principles, (Edinburgh, 1751), p. 33; Erskine, 'The Qualifications necessary for Teachers of Christianity' (1750), in Discourses on Several Occasions, (Edinburgh, 1798), pp. 13-22, 25-27.
 21. Sermons, (Edinburgh, 1805), p. xiii.
 22. See above, p. 160.
 23. Sermons, pp. 254-255.
 24. Sermon preached before the Society... for the Benefit of the Sons of Clergy, (Edinburgh, 1811), p. 16.
 25. ibid., p. 321; see also Sermons, pp. 148-149.
 26. The Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life, pp. 16-17.
 27. Sermons, p. 322.
 28. See above, pp. 73-74.
 29. Sermons, p. 426.
 30. ibid., pp. 426-428.
 31. The Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, p. 19.
 32. Sermons, vol. 1, p. 26; vol. 2, pp. 133, 141.
 33. ibid., vol. 1, pp. 26, 35-36, vol. 2, p. 112.
 34. Sermons, pp. 254-255.
 35. See above, p. 163.
 36. See above, pp. 82-83; Witherspoon, An Enquiry into the Scripture Meaning of Charity (1768), (Portland, 1811), p. 33.
 37. An Attempt to Shew that the Knowledge of God, has, in all ages, been derived from Revelation or Tradition, not from Nature, (Glasgow, 1773), pp. 117n, 127-129.
 38. The Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion, pp. 9, 11-12.
 39. Supernatural Revelation the only sure Hope of Sinners, p. 44.
 40. op. cit., pp. 41-43; see also Prospects of Providence regarding the Conversion of the World to Christ, (Paisley, 1796), pp. 26-27.
 41. The Heinousness and Aggravation of Theft, (Edinburgh, 1788), pp. 17-27.

42. The Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life, pp. 31, 17-18.
43. Clark, op.cit., pp. 204, 370-371.
44. John Bonar, Observations on the Character and Conduct of Judas Iscariot, in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. J. P., (Edinburgh, 1750), and An Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments contained in the Writings of Sopho, and David Hume, Esq., (Edinburgh, 1755); George Anderson, Estimate of the Profit and Loss of Religion, (Edinburgh, 1753), and Remonstrance against Lord Viscount Bolingbroke's Philosophical Religion, (Edinburgh, 1756); Daniel Macqueen, Letters on Mr. Hume's History of Great Britain, (Edinburgh, 1756); John Russel, Reasons of our Lord's Agony in the Garden, and the Influence of Just Views of them on Universal Holiness, (Kilmarnock, 1787); James Somerville, The Fatal Consequences of Irreligion and Negligence in the Heads of Families, (Edinburgh, 1790); John Snodgrass, Leading Doctrines of the Gospel Stated and Defended (1794), in John Brown, (ed.), Theological Tracts, Selected and Original, (Edinburgh, 1854), vol. 3; David Saville, Dissertations on the Existence, Attributes, Providence, and Moral Government of God; and on the Duty, Character, Security, and Final Happiness of his Righteous Subjects, (Edinburgh, 1807). See also above, Chapter 2, pp. 45-47, 50.
45. Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, pp. 3-4.
46. See above, pp. 124-126.
47. On Willison, see above, pp. 124-126, and An Example of Plain Catechising, (Edinburgh, 1731), in Hetherington, op.cit., pp. 594-598; Bonar, Observations on the Character and Conduct of Judas Iscariot, pp. 38-39.
48. Sermons, (Kilmarnock, 1790), vol. 1, p. 69; cf. Macqueen, Letters on Mr. Hume's History of Great Britain, pp. 187-188.
49. A Remonstrance against Lord Viscount Bolingbroke's Philosophical Religion, pp. 18-19. The reference given is to Hume's History, p. 389.
50. ibid., pp. 448-450.

51. op.cit., pp.297, 308.
52. James Steven, The Unrivalled Felicity of the British Empire. A Sermon preached at Salter's Hall, November 7th, 1802, at the Commemoration of our Great National Deliverance, (London, 1802), pp.8, 21-22; Savile, Dissertations on the Existence ... of God, (Edinburgh, 1807), p.8.
53. op.cit., pp.4-20.
54. op.cit., pp.297, 299, 319. It is interesting to note that Russel argued that the acceptance of Adam's role as federal head or representative of all his posterity is the fundamental principle on which divine revelation proceeded. A secret or open denial of it was the first step to infidelity. Reasons for our Lord's Agony in the Garden, p.5.
55. Observations on the Character and Conduct of Judas Iscariot, pp.38-40.
56. An Example of Plain Catechising, in Hetherington, op.cit., p.594.
57. op.cit., p.185, 297. The reference is to Plato's De leg. lib. 10.
58. Dun, op.cit., pp.68-69; Snodgrass, op.cit., p.325; Steven, op.cit., pp.21-22.
59. The Trial of Religious Truth by its Moral Influence, (Glasgow, 1759), pp.18, 29.
60. The Majesty of the King of Kings: A Sermon preached on the Subject of the Revolution, Nov. 9, 1788, (n.p., n.d.), p.17.
61. The Fatal Consequences of Irreligion and Negligence in the Heads of Families, (Edinburgh, 1790), pp.2-9.
62. Sermons, vol. 1, pp.466-467.
63. Divine Influence the True Spring of the Extraordinary Work at Cambuslang and Other Places in the West of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1742), p.45.
64. The Happiness of Britain illustrated: in a Sermon, (Edinburgh, 1749), p.56.
65. The Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion, (Dundee, 1781), pp.36-37; Bannerman, A Sermon upon Reformation and Revolution Principles, (Edinburgh, 1751),

pp. 18-20.

66. The Fatal Consequences and General Sources of Anarchy, (Edinburgh, 1793), pp. 43-44.
67. op.cit. (1733), in Hetherington, op.cit., p. 833.
68. The Afflicted Man's Companion (1737), in Hetherington, pp. 730-731.
69. An Example of Plain Catechising (1731), in Hetherington, p. 884.
70. op.cit., in Hetherington, pp. 401-405. A further exhaustive list is given in the Fair and Impartial Testimony, in Hetherington, pp. 937-940.
71. A Fair and Impartial Testimony, in Hetherington, p. 881. See also The Church's Danger, in Hetherington, pp. 824, 881; Balm of Gilead, in Hetherington, pp. 910, 930.
72. An Attempt to Shew that the Knowledge of God, has, in all ages, been derived from Revelation or Tradition, not from Nature, (Glasgow, 1773), pp. 128-129.
73. Sacramental Meditations and Advices (1747), in Hetherington, p. 291.
74. Fair and Impartial Testimony, in Hetherington, pp. 905, 914, 926-928, 945, 882.
75. For a more detailed account of Willison's response to Moderatism and the role of the Moderates in the patronage issue, see below, pp. 190-191, 197-202, 344-348, 368-370, 374-376.
76. Webster, Supernatural Revelation the only sure Hope of Sinners, (Edinburgh, 1741), p. iii; Zeal for the Civil and Religious Interest of Mankind recommended (1754), Sermon XVI in The Scotch Preacher, vol. 2, (Edinburgh, 1775), pp. 347-348. Paton, Knowledge of God derived from Revelation or Tradition, (Glasgow, 1773), pp. 121-122.
77. A Sermon on 2 Corinthians 11, 17, (Edinburgh, 1799), p. 16.
78. op.cit., pp. 294, 299, 319, 326-327, 333.
79. Sermons., vol. 1, pp. 141-142, 147.
80. There is something of a hint here of response to some of Hume's arguments in his History of Great Britain.

81. Sermons, pp.462-468. For Willison's views on the matter, see above, pp.183-184.
82. Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, p.33.
83. Exhortation to the Inhabitants of the South Parish of Glasgow, p.277ff.
84. See above, n.44.
85. The Simplicity and Popularity of the Divine Revelations, and their Suitableness to the Circumstances of Mankind, (Edinburgh, 1758), p.26. See also, Sir H. Moncrieff Wellwood, A Sermon on 2 Corinthians 11, 17, p.31.
86. Observations on the Character and Conduct of Judas Iscariot, p.39.
87. The Leading Doctrines of the Gospel Stated and Defined, in Brown (ed.), op.cit., p.334.
88. op.cit., in Hetherington, op.cit., pp.929-930.
89. op.cit., in Hetherington, p.833.
90. ibid.
91. op.cit., p.xvi.
92. op.cit., in Hetherington, pp.837-838.
93. Hetherington, p.xvii.
94. Balm of Gilead, in Hetherington, pp.435, 391.
95. Prospects of Providence respecting the Conversion of the World to Christ, (Paisley, 1796), pp.32-33; Erskine, The Signs of the Times Consider'd, (Edinburgh, 1742), *passim*.
96. See above, pp.183-188.
97. Memorials, vol. 1, p.370. cf., John Erskine's position on the distinction between an intellectual faith and 'saving faith' as discussed above, pp.142-146.
98. Sermons, pp.461-462.
99. ibid., p.466. See also above, p.188.
100. See Willison's Fair and Impartial Testimony, in Hetherington, op.cit., p.900, where he linked the Act of Union with the decline of family religion among the nobility and gentry, and identified the multiplication of public oaths with the progress of atheism, deism, and infidelity. He elsewhere argued that the Seceders, although unjustified

in their secession, were maintaining an honest and scriptural witness against the same things which he was attacking. ibid, p.930.

101. Sermons, p.468.
102. Sermons, vol. 2, pp.78-81, 70-76.
103. op.cit., p.39.
104. See above, p.186.
105. op.cit., in Hetherington, op.cit., p.824.
106. Balm of Gilead, in Hetherington, p.391.
107. op.cit., in Hetherington, p.910.
108. See above, n.99.
109. Fair and Impartial Testimony, in Hetherington, p.882.
110. See above, n.100.
111. Fair and Impartial Testimony., in Hetherington, pp.923-924.
112. ibid., pp.923-925.
113. ibid. It is tempting to speculate that this analysis, or derivatives of it, may well have been the origin of Clark's analysis of Popular theology. See above, pp.21-23, 61-62.
114. ibid., pp.925-926.
115. ibid., pp.930, 933-937.
116. This probably explains Clark's assertion that the distinction between 'moral' and 'gospel' preaching was something of a cliché. Willison was one of the four Popular authors to whom he makes reference. Clark, op.cit., p.373. For Willison's views on Moderate preaching, see above, pp.185-186, 192.
117. Sermons, vol. 2, pp.73-75.
118. ibid., pp.79-80.
119. See above, pp.137-146.
120. See above, p.185.
121. See above, p.56, n.20.
122. e.g., the relevant issues of the Scots Magazine; Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, The Scottish Church, 1688-1843. The Age of the Moderates, (Edinburgh, 1973).
123. Nathaniel Morren, Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1739-1766, vol. 1, (Edinburgh, 1838),

p. 308.

124. ibid., p. 61.
125. See above, n. 44.
126. Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 56-57.
127. ibid., p. 58. As Morren points out, Kames never sat in the Assembly although he was named a member of the Commission by the Assemblies of 1753 and 1754. He was not named as a member by the Assembly of 1755. See ibid., p. 58n.
126. ibid., p. 59.
128. ibid., p. 89.
130. The references to this pamphlet are based on the abstract published in the Scots Magazine, 18 (May 1756), pp. 223-237.
131. ibid., p. 226.
132. Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 91; Scots Magazine, 19 (June 1756), pp. 283-284. E.C. Mossner in The Life of David Hume, (London, 1954), p. 348, asserts that many left the meeting to avoid voting one way or the other. He does not give any authority for this statement, however, and it seems somewhat dubious as neither the Scots Magazine nor Morren mention it. Furthermore, to judge by Morren's voting figures, a Committee of Overtures of 67 members was larger than usual in any case which must call Mossner's contention into question.
133. Mossner, op.cit., p. 341.
134. See below, pp. 307, 311-314.
135. Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 98-100.
136. Drummond and Bulloch, op.cit., p. 98.
137. See above, p. 53; and below, pp. 213-215, 222-223.
138. Scots Magazine, 29 (April 1767), pp. 171ff.
139. ibid., 29 (October 1767), pp. 553-554; 30 (October 1768), pp. 557-558; 30 (November 1768), pp. 610-612; 30 (December 1768), p. 670; 31 (January 1769), pp. 51-53; 31 (April 1769), pp. 220-222. In the March 1769 issue of the Scots Magazine there was published a pamphlet entitled 'The Grounds of Process set on foot by the Synod Glasgow and Air against Mr. Alexander Ferguson, minister at Kilwinning', which suggests that those

who appealed to the General Assembly over the matter did so in the confidence that they would find a majority there in their favour who would protect the maintainers of Pelagian and Socinian errors (pp. 151-153). To talk of 'the casual dismissal' of the case, as do Drummond and Bulloch (op.cit., p. 107), is clearly mistaken.

140. Scots Magazine, 51 (July 1789), p. 359; 53 (December 1791), pp. 592-593. On Russel, see above, pp. 107-109.
141. Morren, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 309.
142. Scots Magazine, 42 (May 1780), p. 273.
143. ibid., 43 (May 1781), p. 273; 47 (May 1785), p. 270; 48 (June 1786), pp. 306-307.
144. ibid., 52 (June 1790), p. 309.
145. ibid., 60 (May 1798), pp. 358-359.
146. ibid., 61 (June 1799), pp. 419-420.
147. See below, pp. 414-419.
148. Scots Magazine, 61 (June 1799), p. 422; 62 (June 1800), p. 429; 63 (June 1801), p. 446.
149. For much of this discussion I am indebted to a paper given by Dr. Deryck Lovegrove of the University of St. Andrew's to the 1982 Conference of the UCCFA Historians' Study Group for Scotland, entitled 'The Haldane Brothers and their Context: Breaking the Mould of Scottish Ecclesiasticism'. I understand that this is to be published as 'Unity and Separation: Contrasting Elements in the Thought and Practice of Robert and James Alexander Haldane' in a festschrift for Professor W.R. Ward edited by Professor Keith Robbins and likely to be entitled Protestantism: Britain, Germany, America, c. 1750-1950, and due from Oxford University Press in 1990.
150. Scots Magazine, 61 (June 1799), pp. 419-422. See above, pp. 216-217.
151. Scots Magazine, 60 (November 1798), pp. 789-790. It is of course true that the Haldanes also antagonised Moderate ministers in the Church. James Haldane was especially opposed to Socinian ministers and the first appearance of a

'tabernacle', which occurred in the Elgin area, was probably in response to an Elgin minister who had introduced his own Socinian catechism to schools. See above, n. 149.

152. Scots Magazine, 61 (June 1799), pp. 419-420.
153. Morren, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 313-329.
154. Scots Magazine, 61 (June 1799), p. 421.
155. ibid.
156. ibid.
157. ibid., 61 (June 1799), p. 422; 62 (June 1800), p. 429. There is doubtless some connection between the Haldanes' establishment of Sunday Schools and the reawakened interest in the salaries of schoolmasters reflected in overtures to the Assembly at this time. See ibid., 62 (May 1800), p. 361; 64 (June 1802), pp. 525-526.
158. From a unanimously passed motion of Principal Hill in the Assembly of 1800 concerning the use of questions at ordination other than those of the Formula of 1691. ibid., 62 (June 1800), pp. 428-429.

CHAPTER 6: THE POPULAR PARTY AND THE SECULAR WORLD.

The most striking feature of Popular analysis of secular society was its postulation of a crucial link between religious faith and social stability. Infidelity was to be feared on social, as well as religious, grounds. Beyond that, however, Popular perceptions of the nature of society were not especially theological. Preoccupation with issues which had clear religious or theological implications meant that there was no distinctive Popular response to secular developments except for the questions of relief from civil disabilities of Roman Catholics and the American War of Independence. Moderate causes célèbres such as the Militia scheme and the Ossian controversy aroused no Popular interest at all.

Two main themes were the hallmark of Popular thought in its analysis of the relationship between the principles of Christianity and the nature of society. These were a stress on the essential role of religion as the basis of society, which stress derived from the relationship of all men to God; and an awareness of the link between society and morality which meant that all actions had consequences for others which affected their morality. These preoccupations appeared throughout the whole of the latter half of the eighteenth century.

The contrast with a secular analysis of the nature of society was most marked in Popular writing on the nature of

government. Almost all Popular writers saw government as necessary and as instituted by God as a result of the Fall and the natural depravity of man. As a consequence, the emergence of a conservative view of government was a logical development. At the same time, though, Popular political thought embodied an espousal of more liberal ideas supported by parallel theories of religious liberty of conscience, and by ideas of the unity of men through all being the objects of God's love. As a result of these concepts, there developed a dichotomy in the ideology of the party. The liberal impetus led some of its members to oppose the Tory government of the period, and to adopt an intellectual alliance with the Foxite Whigs. The outbreak of the French Revolution with its propagation of anti-Christian ideas, together with its hostility to Britain, led to a thorough-going stress on the obligations of Christians to support the existing political establishment. That such support was often virtually without question emphasises the paramountcy in the Popular mind of religious principles and values in determining responses to secular developments.

The theological foundation of the analysis of the nature of government was reflected in Popular thought on what was perceived to be the most serious social problem of the time, the problem of poverty and wealth. Poverty as such did not attract much attention because of increasing prosperity throughout the community, relative complacency with the efficacy of the parochial system of poor relief, and the assumption that care for

the poor was a fundamental and obvious Christian obligation. The problem was that of the failure of the rich to devote sufficient of their wealth to the relief of the poor. Dominating this discussion was the belief that wealth led to a love of luxury, which gave rise to moral and religious dangers. Sometimes, Scriptural doctrines about acceptance of obedience to divinely ordained authority led to acceptance of existing social structures for similar reasons, and Popular analysis often displayed a conservative position on social issues, for example, centring on the role of poverty in the preservation of the distinction of ranks. In this area at least some writers drew on the ideas of several key figures in the Scottish Enlightenment.'

The same distinctively religious character of the Popular party's analysis of society and its approach to secular problems was also evident in its attitudes to culture. Consideration of the area of personal behaviour which was covered by the scriptural injunction to be 'in the world but not of it' in particular led to some difficulties. In the 1730s and 1740s, a school of thought deemed all recreations not strictly necessary for physical and mental refreshment as sinful, but by the 1750s it was increasingly accepted that the touchstone in matters of culture was whether a particular activity could be directed to the glory of God. This remained the Popular position for the rest of the century. Both these approaches, however, retained the Popular insistence on a religious test of the acceptability of social attitudes and activities, and were theologically

consistent and difficult to attack on their own terms.

Comprehension of this makes possible the placing in its proper context of the Douglas affair of the 1750s, which was the only cultural controversy to affect the Church of Scotland as a whole.² There is considerable evidence that the Popular party increasingly believed the participation of Christians in secular culture was both permissible and desirable.

What is remarkable overall about the Popular party's attitude to the secular world, is that it was for the most part a profoundly religious or theological viewpoint. As such, it is to be contrasted with the outlook of the Moderates who were much more prepared to allow secular philosophy to influence their approach. Although Popular thinkers not infrequently incorporated secular ideas and concerns in their analysis of some aspects of secular affairs, the overwhelming majority returned to an orthodox Calvinist interpretation of the secular world. Occasionally, their use of secular concepts led to unperceived inconsistencies in their work, and in some areas it led to divergence in their views, and to tension within the party.³ Nonetheless, their perception of issues in the context and in the language of the intellectual debates of the second half of the eighteenth century, indicates their awareness of them and of the need to provide a response which asserted the validity of their religious and theological beliefs.

1. Christianity and Society.

The first identifiable member of the Popular party to contribute to analysis of the nature of society was Principal William Wishart. He is a key figure because in his writings are to be found the two main themes in Popular thought on the nature of society: the religious basis of society, and the link between society and morality. The influence of his thought on younger and subsequent members of the party was extensive. It also illustrates the diversity of opinion within it. Wishart, too, was one of the first to see the problems posed for the Christian and for the Church by such developments as population growth, the rise of crime, and the increase of entrepreneurial activity. He saw society as 'natural to men, and necessary to their Improvement and Perfection [as] both the natural Abilities, and the natural Weakness of Mankind concur to shew'.⁴ It was required by 'the Defence of Men's Persons and Possessions against lawless Power, and the securing their Enjoyment of the Means of Prosperity'.⁵ This description of society led Wishart to define the nation in a similar way:

Our native country, then, is not so much that Spot of Earth on which we have our Birth; as that Society of Men in conjunction with whom we are born, under the same Government and Laws; Laws formed for the Welfare of every Person, as best suits the general Good of the whole Society; Laws by which we are protected and defended, in the Enjoyment of our just Liberties and Properties; and from which we derive various Advantages, long before we are capable of making any Return, or Acknowledgement for them.⁶

True love of country, then, was not 'a Fondness for any particular distinguishing Customs, good or bad; but a Concern for its real Welfare'. It was 'a special Branch of the Love of Mankind; never to be detached [sic] from, far less set in opposition to, that general Affection, of which it is a Branch'.⁷ The problems of a society, therefore, were those actions which infringed the liberties, properties, and advantages which accrued from membership of the society.

Whatever the problems, Wishart saw the remedy as the application of Christian principles and in particular of what generally came to be called 'Universal Love'. He saw Universal Love as striking at the root of the mischiefs which disturbed and embittered human society. It promoted the benefit of those around as well as public prosperity in general. Furthermore, it was binding on the Christian: it was 'the End of all [God's] Laws and Institutions to us'. It was 'the Religion of Jesus'.⁸ It was of the greatest importance, therefore, that young people should be educated in the principles of 'Universal Love and Goodness' since it would lead them to become 'reasonable and social creatures'. Love of goodness could be inculcated, and must therefore be studied since it was owed

to a Perfectly-Good God, and a compassionate Saviour; to their Native Country, our Happy Constitution, and the Auspicious Government of our Gracious Sovereign; to their Parents, Masters, Instructors, and Benefactors; and to all their Fellow-creatures.⁹

Here Wishart established the religious basis of the nature of society, a perception which was to remain the essential feature of Popular social thought. Universal love was seen as the cement which bound society together in all its relationships. Twenty years later, he took this idea to its ultimate conclusion, and argued that society was a concept to be interpreted in its widest sense since God had not only formed human beings 'for the exercise of love and beneficence towards those of our own kind; but for a more extensive exercise of kindness and goodwill towards the whole body of reasonable beings'.¹⁰ He took the idea a step further in 1732 when he argued that 'the highest Love of God is the proper and natural Exercise of this Principle, the Love of Goodness'.¹¹

He then assessed the application of universal love in society. It was, he said, 'an active and operative Principle', and therefore its corollary was the obligation on the Christian to do what he could to suppress vice. This should be done by instruction, by persuasion, and good example. Suppression of vice, however, raised the question of the punishment of offenders. The method of punishing offenders, he argued, should be confined to such crimes as were hurtful to others around the criminal and which 'disturb the peace of human society'. He justified this on two grounds: because the rights of others to free enquiry, or to freedom of conscience must not be infringed; and, more fundamentally, because virtue and vice were to be defined in terms of social effect:

...Piety and Virtue is, in its own nature, always the Good; and Vice the Ill; of every man: that temper and conduct which is the best for others about us; is also best for ourselves: and so far as we are wanting to promote the good of our neighbours and of mankind; we are so far wanting to ourselves, and cease to promote our own good and happiness.¹²

This line of argument led to Wishart's blurring of the distinction between moral good and evil, in spite of the title of his work on the subject. He upheld 'the free exercise of ... [men's] natural and inalienable right of enquiring for themselves in affairs of religion; and acting agreeably to the light of their own minds'. Accordingly, he drew attention to the need not to limit this right in 'so far as it does not lead them to commit any matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, by which their neighbours are injured or their natural or civil rights invaded'.¹³

Wishart's retreat from absolute standards of virtue and vice was a move which few in the Popular party were prepared to condone outright, though it proved a feature of Popular thought until the last two decades of the century.¹⁴ His thinking on liberty of conscience was increasingly accepted in the 1740s and 1750s.

The most serious moral problem facing society in Wishart's opinion, however, was what he saw as the 'general dissoluteness of Youth' which manifested itself in the espousal of 'the most loose and dissolute principles', combined with a desire to distinguish themselves from others. They could be seduced by 'shallow argument, merry stories, and sordid jests', which were more than adequate to counter the 'sober admonitions' or

arguments of others or the remaining checks of their consciences. All this, Wishart ascribed to the universal neglect of 'rational and virtuous Education'. Parents took more care in training their dogs and horses than their children. Even more worrying was the fact that much of the 'looseness and debauchery' was found in those who had the benefit of a 'Religious Education'. This serious problem was to be ascribed to the preoccupation of parents and instructors with inculcating the 'Shibboleth of a Party', and making children familiar with 'the particular doctrines or peculiar forms of their own Sect', instead of 'forming their minds to a rational sense of Good and Evil, a taste and relish for true Piety and Virtue'. Such instances of good behaviour as were taught were enforced by 'meer [sic] authority, or by the awe of future rewards and punishments' which were never explained. The devotion and piety of parents, furthermore, was not attractive but rather 'disgusting and forbidding'. All this encouraged 'every selfish passion and appetite'. No reformation of youth could be expected until the gross faults in their education were remedied, maintained Wishart.¹⁵ In what he saw as the biggest problem facing society, there was little of the traditional pre-occupations of orthodox Calvinists with original sin, the depravity of man, or the need for the intervention of the Holy Spirit to improve the situation. It may seem surprising that so much of his thought was adopted by Popular thinkers who did not accept his theological positions. It should not be thought, however, that Wishart completely disregarded the spiritual or doctrinal aspects of the problem,

and, in a passage which bears some relationship to the approach of later Popular writers he delineated the role of religion:

Great pains must be taken to instil into them, according as their capacities gradually open, some understanding of the nature of true goodness and virtue; good thoughts of God, and of the obligations we are under to him; just notions of the nature of pure and undefiled Religion, as 'tis founded in a sense of the unalterable difference betwixt moral Good and Evil, and the belief of a perfectly good God; together with some just understanding of the natural tendency and influence of true piety and virtue prevailing in the heart, to the present improvement, pleasure, and satisfaction of the mind, and to the settled peace and tranquillity of the whole life. And with this care to inform their judgements, must be joined the most careful and engaging endeavours, to form their minds to a taste and relish of true goodness, virtue, and piety ... affording them an easy, familiar, and engaging view of the beauty of holiness and goodness; such an example of exact conformity to the several rules of pure and undefiled Religion, as may set true piety, and the several virtues to which it animates, before their eyes in its native amiableness; and to show them that it is a most kind and benign, a most happy and comfortable thing.¹⁶

It could be argued that Wishart was never precise about what he meant by 'pure and undefiled Religion', but nonetheless it would seem that while on the one hand there is here a statement that behaviour can be improved by a general morality based on such concepts as 'goodness' and 'virtue', there is on the other an implicit statement that religion has a unique social role. These two ideas, the latter of which was to become a dominant one in Popular thought, together with the definition of the morality of actions in terms of their effect on others, were first to be found in Wishart's work.

Several of Wishart's ideas were taken up by subsequent Popular writers. Possibly the most direct influence was on Thomas Somerville who returned to Wishart's concept of universal benevolence in a sermon on the slave trade in 1792. God, the righteous Governor of the universe, could not have intended that one nation's prosperity should be built on the depression of another since all his children were the objects of his love. The common relationship of all men to God is the fundamental basis of society and leads to the primacy of universal benevolence in all relationships between men. Somerville, too, saw the prejudices of 'vulgar education' and 'the narrow politics of states' as preventing the implementation of plans 'for the common welfare of the species', and maintained that these had been lost in preoccupation with allegedly hostile national interests. Societies could be made more satisfactory, however, when 'furnished with the means of rational improvement'.¹⁷

In the late 1780s, both David Johnstone of North Leith and James Somerville of Stirling accepted much of Wishart's position on the importance of education. Johnstone stressed the essential nature of sound parental education for the future well-being of society in terms which were decidedly reminiscent of Wishart's, though with a more devotional emphasis;¹⁸ and Somerville devoted a whole sermon to the responsibilities of parents in the education of their children.¹⁹ A less sanguine view of the efficacy of education was later to be found in the work of John McFarlan of the Canongate. He maintained that among mankind there

was a variety of character and disposition; some may be trained to virtue who, without education would turn to vice, but others were 'of such natural depraved propensities, that no education, no hope of reward, no fear of punishment can restrain from the extreme of folly and vice ...' We wish that we could correct the depravity of such a large proportion of fellow creatures 'but where this is impracticable, the sooner their miserable existence is terminated, it is the better both for themselves and society'.²⁰ The significance of this passage, apart from its implications for Calvinist doctrine, would seem to lie in its acceptance of a position similar to Wishart's on the possibility of the inculcation of virtue by means of education, and at the same time the holding of the conviction that for some members of society education was ineffectual because of the extent of natural depravity in some men.

Towards the end of the century there was a move away from ideas of universal benevolence, encouraged by the outbreak of the French Revolution and the consequent war with France. In his 1801 sermon, True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism, John Russel argued that acceptance of the need for civil government as a result of man's apostasy from God, derived from true religion which was therefore the foundation of true patriotism. Echoing Wishart and the doctrine of universal benevolence, Russel held that all men, being made of one blood, had an affinity with each other and were therefore neighbours. He was unwilling, however, to accept the implications of this and introduced an unidentified

quotation to the effect that since our ability to do good was limited, and we could not perform acts of benevolence to the whole human race, we should chiefly consider as our neighbours amongst whom we dwelt, those with whom we were united in civil society. Love of one's country, therefore, was highly laudable.²¹ James Steven of the Crown Court Church in London and subsequently of Kilwinning, in his 1802 sermon to celebrate the signing of the Peace of Amiens, identified those who despised patriotism with infidelity since they sought to 'blast every remaining comfort in this life as they had done for another'. True patriotism, he argued, giving a rather different emphasis from Wishart,²² 'meant a peculiar attachment to the land which gave us birth, and a warm predilection for its interests and prosperity'. This was not only honourable and defensible, it was 'the suggestion of nature, the dictate of wisdom, the voice of God'. While universal benevolence and enlarged philanthropy should be urged, it was appropriate to maintain warmer sympathies with our fellow countrymen to whom we must feel more closely united. Revelation, as well as Reason, sanctioned the idea.²³

Not all supporters of the Popular party, however, shared Wishart's expansive view of the nature of society. This was especially true concerning their views on the necessity of religion for its very continuance. As early as 1751, Patrick Bannerman had argued that 'To preserve a free state, without preserving its Virtue, is a mere Chimaera; and to preserve the public Virtue, without a sense of God and Religion, is no

better'.²⁴ Another such was George Anderson whose main claim to fame was his attack on Hume and Kames in the 1750s. In his Remonstrance against Lord Viscount Bolingbroke's Philosophical Religion of 1756, Anderson argued for the incompatibility of atheism and society:

Sure, an Atheist can have nothing in view, in his personal capacity, but his own interest; and in a civil or social capacity, nothing but the happiness and prosperity of the society, as far as his own depends on it. Let every man be an Atheist, and there is an end of all trust, and an end of all society and government.²⁵

William Porteous made a similar point twenty years later when he argued that Atheism was not tolerated in British law because, having no fear of God, an atheist could have no fear of an oath which was 'the bond of society'.²⁶

Such reasoning, possibly connected indirectly with Wishart's argument that social or public virtue arose from universal love, which in turn derived from the Christian religion, appeared in the thought of a number of other Popular writers. Bannerman talked of the 'Divine Principle of Love' being the 'true cement of society', and argued that it was the obligation of every member of society to cultivate it.²⁷ Daniel Macqueen of the Old Kirk of Edinburgh, for example, combated Hume on similar grounds:

How dreadful for any one to go about, by opposing the essential truths of religion, to weaken the foundations of human happiness and hope; nay of society itself, and of all truth, justice, and probity among men.²⁸

John Paton maintained in 1773 that a man could not be said to be just if he disregarded the Word of God, 'the great head of society'.²⁹ Much later, in 1790, John Erskine held that Christianity promoted diligence, frugality, and the faithful discharge of every trust, and thus contributed to success in the different offices and employments of life.³⁰ John Dun of Auchinleck also drew this causal connection between religion and social stability, but gave it a significantly different emphasis, when he argued that

when our Princes, Nobles and Commons shall, through infidelity and deism, lose a sense of religion, and, through luxury and vice, lose a sense of honour, then the fair fabric of the British constitution shall moulder, decay, and fall to ruin.³¹

As a result of this analysis, some Popular thought openly castigated the life style of the upper class. John Warden, for example, argued that infidelity and profanity abounded, and vice was fashionable and kept in countenance by the example of the great;³² and John Love declaimed against 'the detestable vices, which the great and wealthy have long exemplified', which were 'now diffused through all the inferior orders of society'.³³

It was John Erskine, however, who delineated most clearly the nature of the operation of the relationship between religion and society in his Fatal Consequences and General Sources of Anarchy which, published in 1793, was no doubt a response to the political and religious ideas of the French Revolution:

Anarchy is occasioned by transgressing the great laws of religion. Without justice, integrity, and kindness, in the various intercourses and connexions of life, there is no social happiness. Now religion, alone, inspires that love to mankind, which habitually inclines to those virtues, and guards against the temptations, and supports under the trials and difficulties, with which the exercise of them is often attended. Religion produces the most perfect union: for it inspires, with the same general principle of action, supreme regard to the glory of God, unfeigned affection to our neighbour, and a willingness to sacrifice, whatever its own nature opposes, or, through peculiar circumstances, becomes incompatible with, these. In proportion as the law of love is observed, and God's will done on earth, as it is in heaven; rulers and subjects cheerfully perform their respective duties, and are happy in one another ... The honour, the perfection, the comfort of each individual, rejoices the whole community; and the prosperity of the community, rejoices each individual. Where there is no religion, the firmest support of government is removed, the surest bond of social union is broken, and a wide door is opened for vice to enter, and to usher in disorder and misery.³⁴

Shortly after the turn of the century, David Savile of the Canongate Chapel-of-Ease returned to the same theme, although he linked it much more closely to the concept of divine law. 'Irreligion and immorality are as injurious to the peace and order of society as to the best interest of the individual', he declared.³⁵ Observation of God's law was also the law of society. It preserved the comforts and indeed the existence of society, for without the fear of God, there would be no attention paid to truth, honesty, sobriety, temperance, kindness, and beneficence. The country would be a prey to disease and pain, as it would be to treachery, robbery, murder and massacre. 'Man would become a very devil; and earth be really converted into hell'. On the other hand, if all men conscientiously kept God's law, poverty would be unknown, oppression would not exist, war would cease,

and men would dwell together as brothers, in love and unity. The world would again be paradise.³⁶ There was, argued Savile, a correlation between progress in righteousness, in growing regard for divine law, and proportional advances towards the depicted state of happiness. Corresponding decline appeared where people made progress in vice. Whoever lived in violation of divine law was not only a traitor to God, he was also an enemy of his country. Society and faith were thus united:

If we have any reverence for God, any regard for the good of society, any regard for our present peace and eternal felicity, we must listen to the voice of God, and be all zeal to obey his law.³⁷

In a move which reveals the theological cross-currents operating within the Popular party, Thomas Somerville went further and specifically linked the good of society with the mediation of Christ. Not only did the latter suggest strong arguments for exercising good will and charity to all mankind, the doctrine of the mediation abolished antagonism and ill-feeling between nations and hostile communities, and would 'reconcile them by the sacred bonds of religious affection'.³⁸ He repeated his affirmation of the essential link between religion and the existence of society in a sermon 'On Oaths'. Policy and legislation, the protection of the innocent, and the detection and punishment of the guilty required the underpinning of belief in the existence of God, and the fear of his name:

Feeble and unregarded the threatenings of the law must often prove, were they not to be ratified by the sanction of future rewards and punishments. Narrow, and easily eluded, the discernment of the most upright and sagacious magistrate, if an appeal to an infallible Judge did not overawe the accuser and the accused.³⁹

The Popular party, therefore, was united on the vital role of religion as the basis of society.

The second identifiable interest among Popular writers in their evaluation of Christian influence on society is their stress on the social implications of morality. This was based on the belief that, as Alexander Webster asserted, 'private happiness is not to be enjoyed on any sure and lasting foundation, but in subordination to the public good'. Failure to appreciate this could only lead to the war of all men against each other. The giving up of personal ease and advantage, furthermore, was blessed by God in a similar way to that in which the spiritual interests of members of the Body of Christ necessarily depended on suffering or rejoicing with one another.⁴⁰ 'All visible actions have an effect upon others as well as themselves', wrote John Witherspoon. 'Everything we see or hear makes some impression on us, though for the most part unperceived, and we contribute, every moment, to form each other's character'.⁴¹ On a more secular level, Patrick Bannerman maintained that 'Service of one another' was 'the proper Improvement of Liberty'.⁴² A large political body was only really healthy, argued John Erskine at the time of the American War of

Independence, when the whole relieved the distress of every part.⁴³ Twenty years later, John Snodgrass of Paisley made the same point as Witherspoon.⁴⁴

The social implications of virtuous behaviour led to the development of a critique of wealth.⁴⁵ The trend first manifested itself in the work of Witherspoon. His analysis of the future prospects of British society was singularly pessimistic, and indeed was possibly connected with his eventual departure for America. Societies, he believed, followed a cyclical pattern of growth and decline: poverty by virtue of industry became wealth and power, from whence societies proceeded to luxury and vice, and thence to poverty and subjection again. It was probable, he felt, that Britain was now in the age of luxury.⁴⁶ John McFarlan of the Canongate, while accepting Witherspoon's assessment of the present state of British society, took a less pessimistic view of urbanisation. While conceding that cities 'offer so many temptations to extravagance and dissipation, that a young person of warm passions and inexperience in life is in the utmost danger of ruin', on the other hand ^{he} doubted whether they were such national evils as were often thought. Such evils were unavoidable in an advanced state of society which was bound to embody luxury and dissipation. McFarlan argued that if the threat of poverty, disease, and contempt did not restrain a young man from extravagance and profligacy, then his virtue or manly resolution could never have been well established.⁴⁷

Is it possible, then, to conclude that there was a discernible Popular view of the nature of society? The answer is a qualified affirmative. There was, in the first place, a clear conviction that there was a significant, even a crucial, connection between faith and social stability. Decline of faith led to the collapse of society. Infidelity was to be feared not just on religious grounds, but also on social ones. Secondly, deriving from ideas of universal benevolence as propounded by William Wishart, which led to a desire to stress ideas of the kinship of all mankind, there was a perception that all actions had social implications which, in the minds of some, determined their morality. This led at times to a degree of moral relativity in Popular perceptions of right and wrong, good and evil. Towards the end of the century, however, this approach was being replaced by a more directly Scripturally-based one which gave greater emphasis to the conception of divine law.

Strikingly absent, however, was any stress on the social implications of Calvinist doctrines of original sin, total depravity, or consideration of the question of free will. The only Popular writer to raise the last issue was John Dun. After stressing the social implications of men's actions, he argued that, when the good or evil of actions extended beyond the persons who performed them, to do good or hurt to others, the

providence of God intervened to hinder, to order, or to permit it depending on whether other men were likely to be improved by it or not, and on whether they deserved well or ill of God. Man in society was a free agent but he was still governable by God.⁴⁸ Dun's voice, however, was very much a lone one, and even he tended to attach praise or blame to actions depending on their effect on others.

Popular thought on the nature of society, then, owed much to the social thought of William Wishart. It was certainly not an especially theological analysis, and it tended to accept Enlightenment-influenced ideas of universal benevolence as an important Christian virtue. It did not consciously perceive revelation as contributing significantly to the analysis of human society. Possibly this last phenomenon explains why there were few Popular writers who dealt specifically with the subject. To what extent, however, is this analysis reflected in the actions of the party at the General Assembly?

Evidence of the views of the Popular party on the secular world at the General Assembly reveals similar patterns. Apart from occasional requests from presbyteries and synods for some action to stop the desecration of the Lord's Day or general immorality,⁴⁹ the only secular subjects which impinged on the Popular mind were the questions of relief from the civil disabilities of Roman Catholics and the American War of

Independence. In other areas it is much more difficult to identify any distinctively Popular response as opposed to a common response from the Church as a whole, though there is some evidence that the Popular party did become more responsive to secular developments as the century progressed. There were several instances towards the end of the century of subjects on which both the Popular party and their Moderate opponents were largely agreed: taxation of ministers,⁵⁰ the issue of abolition of the slave trade (as opposed to the question of how to achieve it) in the late 1780s,⁵¹ and in 1790 the operation of the Test Act (which forced public officials to take the sacraments according to the usage of the Church of England) were examples of this.⁵² At the end of the day, even over the question of Roman Catholic Relief the two parties often found themselves in agreement about the political realities relating to the Church.⁵³

Although there were aspects of the debate over the American War of Independence which were informed by considerations of the nature of society and the relationship of religion to it, the major debate was conducted over a narrowly political field, and as such is not relevant here. The implementation of Popular perceptions of the relationship of religion and society is, therefore, to be seen most clearly in their response to the question of relief for Roman Catholics. It is an issue over which the party has suffered much vilification but on which the evidence has received little real analysis.⁵⁴ The issue was first raised at the Assembly of 1778 where the Moderates, led by

Principal Robertson and John Home of Douglas fame, were successful in defeating a Popular move to instruct the Commission of Assembly to watch over the interests of Protestantism and, if necessary, to call an extraordinary meeting of Assembly concerning the Bill. A Popular dissent ensued which, while detesting 'anything which appears persecution for conscience sake', argued that it was necessary to defend the Reformed interest against 'the arts and violence of those whose intolerant principles oblige them to persecute all who differ from them'. Refusal to do anything would only increase the fears of the people. Most importantly, however, greater vigour was necessary to support and preserve the Protestant interest

as there is good reason to believe, that the Popish emissaries have of late been unusually active and successful. And it is notorious, that in several places in Scotland, and even in the metropolis, Popery has been on the increase for several years past.⁵⁵

The initial response to the idea of Roman Catholic relief, then, was prompted by concern over inroads made by Roman Catholicism in areas hitherto regarded as firmly Protestant. During the course of the year, the General Session of Glasgow and the Synods of Glenelg, Glasgow and Ayr, Dumfries, Angus and Mearns, Galloway, and Perth and Stirling publicised their concern with the spread of Popery and exhorted their members to take measures against it.⁵⁶ The Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale showed a considerable measure of political circumspection. It declared

their firm adherence to the principles of liberty, and the rights of private judgement; that while they have no intention to interfere with the legislature in matters of civil right, and do by no means wish that any person should be deprived of his inheritance, or subjected to civil penalties for conscience sake; they, at the same time express their hopes, that if such repeal be extended to this part of the united kingdom, the wisdom and attention of the legislature will make effective provision, under proper sanctions, to prevent all the dangers that are apprehended from that repeal.⁵⁷

During the course of the next year or so, several works were published by protagonists on the Popular side. The three most important were the work of leading ministers: William Porteous of Glasgow, John Erskine, and John McFarlan. These three authors established the framework for the debate which continued until the end of the 1779 Assembly: Roman Catholicism was to be seen as a religious, political, and moral system. As a religious system it was entitled to toleration; as a political system it was a matter for the secular authorities; as a moral system, if it encouraged immorality, it should be restricted. Toleration, however, should not imply freedom to propagate publicly its beliefs, and under no circumstances should Roman Catholics be entrusted with the education of the young.

At the end of 1778, Porteous' sermon, which he had preached at the fast-day appointed by the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr in connection with the matter, was published as The Doctrine of Toleration applied to the present times. After a short history of toleration in which Protestant intolerance in the past was castigated, it argued that the Christian position should be that

all religions should be tolerated 'provided that they preach no doctrines which are destructive to the state, or dangerous to the particular members of it'. The existing legal toleration in Britain fell short of this principle. Popery, however, could be considered in three ways: as a false religion, as a faction in the state, and as a system of immorality. Porteous then established the guidelines which it has already been stated were accepted by other writers. As a religion it should be tolerated; as a faction of the state, the question of toleration should be determined by politicians; but if it was a system of immorality, self-defence forbad toleration. The key issue was the last. Popery, argued Porteous, was an immoral system on three grounds: it taught that no faith was to be kept with heretics in matters where the interest of Popery was concerned; it taught that heretics ought to be destroyed and put to death; and as a result of its doctrines of pardons and indulgences, French monarchs had been given a perpetual right by Pope Clement VI not to keep treaties. Nevertheless, Roman Catholics should retain their present rights. It was likely, though, that few Protestants would wish to allow them to hold public processions, to establish schools and seminaries, or to receive similar extensions to their rights. Porteous made quite explicit, furthermore, as did all the other Popular writers, his complete condemnation of all acts of violence against Roman Catholics or their property.⁵⁰

John Erskine's contribution to the debate was a much more apocalyptic one and was in a somewhat more traditional mould. He

published his Considerations on the Spirit of Popery, and the intended bill for the relief of Papists in Scotland in 1778.

Starting from a theological position in which he referred to contemporary Protestant views on the identification of Popery with prophecies in the Book of Revelation, he argued that the world-wide dominion of Popery before its final destruction, while inevitable, should not be hastened by 'fool-hardy experiments'. Still, since it was expedient that one man should die for the people, it was legitimate to impose sanctions on a few to preserve the safety of thousands. He argued at some length that extensions on the rights of Roman Catholics to purchase land could end with Protestant tenants being evicted from many corners of the land. Once again, opponents of relief were enjoined not to weaken their cause by attacks on the persons, property or intended places of worship of Papists, and were encouraged to seek the legitimate means of influencing the legislature in the certainty that Parliament would not disregard the addresses of men of known loyalty.⁵⁹ Erskine's work was fairly representative of the views of the more respectable 'hard-line' opponents of repeal.⁶⁰

A more constructive approach to the problem was presented by John McFarlan who published A Defence of the Clergy of the Church of Scotland who have appeared in opposition to the intention of an unlimited repeal of the penal laws against Roman Catholics. He was in favour of the repeal of those statutes then in force so far as they respected succession to property, civil liberty, or

the private exercise of religion, but not repeal which gave liberty of public teaching or the education of the young. Voltaire's Traité de Tolérance was quoted as proving the failure of Roman Catholics to extend similar toleration to Protestants in Catholic countries, and reference was made to a pamphlet published shortly before by a priest in Edinburgh, which endorsed the principles of persecution. McFarlan went on to reject the charge that the opponents of relief fomented disturbances and were the enemies of the administration or disloyal: 'No insinuation can be more unjust, he asserted, 'than to suppose, that we are averse to the present government, or inclined to democratical or republican principles'.⁶¹ This reaction to the suggestion of disloyalty raises the possibility of a fear of similar accusations to those made as a result of the espousal of the American cause among Popular leaders a few years earlier.⁶² In view of McFarlan's subsequent leading role in the 1779 Assembly debate, though, it may be assumed that this response to the question of repeal was acceptable to the majority of the commissioners and not unrepresentative of views in the Church as a whole.⁶³

In the course of the 1779 Assembly, it became clear that the majority of commissioners were against relief, and in the end its Moderate supporters agreed without a vote to McFarlan's motion which proposed an overture to Parliament urging opposition to the idea of extending the English proposals to Scotland.⁶⁴ The Assembly debate, in contrast to the pamphlet one in the year

preceding it, showed some interesting developments in the Popular position. In the first place, opponents of relief were obviously concerned to counter Moderate arguments that the Assembly had no right of interference in what was essentially a political matter.⁶⁵ It was asserted that it was invalid to argue that the Assembly should not interfere with the decree of the legislature since the commissioners were members of society as well as guardians of the religious interest of those committed to their care.⁶⁶ The minister of Renfrew, Colin Campbell, adopted a more legalistic approach to the dispute on this point by maintaining that relief was directly opposite and repugnant to the laws of the country and especially to the Claim of Right. Furthermore, it was proper for the members of the Assembly to act as the guardians of the people's religious rights and privileges.⁶⁷ This argument was given an even more unequivocal airing by McFarlan himself when he moved the motion which was to be adopted:

there is no other public meeting where the sentiments of this part of the kingdom can be so fully given. We are not to consider this assembly as a general meeting only of the clergy; but by the admission of lay elders from every part of the country, from royal burghs and universities, it is a complete delegation from the whole body of the people. If we agree in our opinions ... such a declaration may be justly considered as expressing the sense of this part of the kingdom. This, publicly and explicitly given, cannot fail to have the greatest influence in preventing such a repeal as has been proposed.⁶⁸

Another striking aspect of the debate was the way in which opponents of relief attempted to predict the way in which it would have significant political consequences. The source of

anxiety about this was the conviction that if Roman Catholics were granted the right to educate the young, it would be only consistent to admit them to every office and place of trust in the government, such as those of judge and member of parliament.⁶⁹ This conviction led to two consequences: on the one hand, to the attempt to prove that Roman Catholics believed socially and politically unacceptable doctrines, such as those relating to keeping faith with heretics;⁷⁰ and on the other, to an attempt to predict the likely social, and especially political, consequences should repeal be granted. The former followed the lines already set out in the published works on the subject, but the latter was especially significant for the way in which it revealed the extent of anti-Catholic feeling in the Church at the time. The central feature of the argument was that relief would lead to sustained attempts to wield and manipulate political power by the Papists. If they were to have the right to purchase estates, it would enable them to finance the extension of Popery and to use their influence at elections for Parliament.⁷¹ This was claimed to be especially dangerous at the time for it was alleged that there was an unusual quantity of landed property on the market at the time and 'power and influence always follow property'.⁷²

For all the determination of the attempt to ensure that relief was not extended to Scotland, and for all the light which the debate throws on Popular attitudes to a key public issue of the day, it should be noted that one of the more significant

features which was revealed in the episode, was the extent to which the difference between Popular and Moderate was not wide. McFarlan, in proposing the motion which became the finding of the Assembly, went out of his way to defuse the threat of party rivalry clouding the issue:

I therefore hope, that we can hear one another with candour, and not impute that to party spirit, or meaner influence, which arises, it is to be supposed, from the full conviction of our own minds.

Even more striking was the eulogy of Principal Robertson which he gave after denouncing the rioting which had occurred and the attacks on Robertson himself:

I think it is my duty at this time to declare, that since I have had the honour to know him, he has acted with a degree of candour and moderation seldom to be found in the head of a party; yea, further, I may venture to say, that I do not believe this country to contain a sounder Protestant, nor is there in the church one more zealous to promote what he believes it to be its interest.⁷³

Robertson, for his part, although he proposed that the overtures on relief be dropped, revealed that since he believed that the opponents of relief were most worried by the idea of Popish ecclesiastics opening schools, he had applied to the Lord Advocate and to the Solicitor-General, and had then proposed to Dr. John Erskine and a Popular elder, John Walker, that provisos on this should be inserted. Their response was that, if such a proposition had been made earlier, it might have produced good

effects. Nothing would now satisfy the people, they argued, but a resolution to drop the Bill altogether, and he accepted the truth of their representations.⁷⁴ At the very least, such exchanges indicate that the differences between the two parties did not preclude amicable and productive consultation.

The significance of the Popular position over Roman Catholic relief was twofold. It demonstrated that Popular opposition to the measure was not merely the manifestation of a narrow religious prejudice existing only within the party, but a complex belief, shared across both parties in the eighteenth century Church of Scotland, that Roman Catholicism was both religiously and politically too dangerous to be granted further liberty within the country at the time. Care should be taken, in this connection, not to cloud the picture of Popular commitment to civil liberty by preoccupation with one issue. Like most Protestants at the time, they found it difficult to come to terms with their fears about the nature of the Roman Catholic Church and its intentions toward Britain. Secondly, it provided a practical demonstration of the perception of the nature of the link between religion and society as postulated in Popular social and political thought. The connection in the Popular mind between right religious views, and social and political stability was clearly demonstrated, as was the threat posed to secular society by infidelity.

2. The Nature, Purpose, and Practice of Government.

The Popular perception of a key link between religion and society led to theories on the nature of government and authority, the place of the magistrate, and the nature of civil and religious liberty, among others. Popular analysis of the nature and purpose of government was much more theologically based than its analysis of society.

Deriving some of its aspects from William Wishart, the Popular interpretation was that the origin of government lay in human nature, and that its purpose was to promote the security and welfare of the community. Society, for Wishart, was 'natural to Men, and necessary to their Improvement and Perfection [as] both the natural Abilities, and the natural Weaknesses of Mankind concur to shew'. These abilities and weaknesses led to the necessity of government.

The Defence of Men's Persons and Possessions against lawless Power, and the securing their Enjoyment of the Means of Prosperity, require that they be formed into particular Societies or States, each under some one Government; which, whatever its particular Form be, has for its sole End, and should have for its supreme Law, the general Safety and Welfare. Where Men have not the Happiness of such a Constitution, they can scarce be reckoned to have a Country to be concerned for: But, where they are blessed with it, the Prosperity of that Constitution, and the Welfare of that Society must be the special Object of the hearty Concern of All its Members.⁷⁵

Thomas Somerville was the closest adherent of Wishart's position that the origins of government were to be found in human nature. All schemes of government, he held, exhibited the 'necessary connection between vice and misery', and maintained the connection between good and evil. The 'seeds, or elements, of civil government are placed in the frame, and social disposition of human nature'; therefore government should be considered as 'a branch of divine Providence'. Proof of the proposition was that sin was actually punished in this life.⁷⁶

Following from Wishart, several Popular writers accepted the possibility of secular explanations of the origin of government. John Russel applied secular considerations especially in relation to the form of government. He declared that nowhere in the New Testament did God sanction any particular form of government so that errors inherent in any particular constitution were the result of weaknesses or imperfections in human understanding, of 'pre-posessions', or to 'pre-conceived prejudices'.⁷⁷ Christianity had existed and flourished under all types of civil government. The only religious point to be accepted about the origin of civil government was that since the Fall, the state of the world had been such as to necessitate its institution. Civil government, asserted Russel, while it had 'the sanction of divine authority', was introduced before the commencement of the New Testament dispensation. Civil magistrates' powers, therefore, commenced with the existence of civil society and were in no way either increased or reduced by Christianity.⁷⁸ Such a position,

of course, ruled out any 'divine right' theory, as George Logan of the Canongate pointed out as early as 1746 in his debates with the Jacobite publisher, Thomas Ruddiman.⁷⁹ More importantly, however, as subsequent Popular writers accepted, the exclusion of direct, divine approbation allowed alternative explanations of the basis of government and made possible the use of Enlightenment ideas about the origin of society. As Logan argued:

whatever the Form of Government is, that Men have established, agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason, so as to answer to the valuable Ends of it; it draws after it the Divine Approbation, and is of God ...⁸⁰

John McFarlan was a rare example of the use of a secular approach. He arrived at the subject in his Tracts on Subjects of National Importance of 1786, dedicated to Henry Dundas, through his discussion of the stages of development experienced by societies. Nations, he argued, progressed from youth to maturity in a process from the commencement of political existence to its final dissolution. These different stages required different rules and regulations for their government. In the earlier stages, manners were pure and simple, and there were few temptations to fraud and violence. A small number of plain laws were all that was necessary. But as a nation increased in wealth, numbers, and 'the refinements of life', there was a loss of primitive virtue, and the rise of selfishness, avarice, and ambition which in turn led to fraud and violence. A variety of new laws were needed, therefore, and 'a strict, executive

government' to prevent injuries and oppression.²¹ The origin of government, then, lay in the loss of virtue and the increase of vice which went hand in hand with the development of society.

In spite of the way being opened to accept secular theories of the origins of government, few Popular writers did so and most analysed the subject in theological terms. John Erskine, for example, asserted that it was the purpose of government to restrain men from injuring each other and to defend them from attacks by public enemies.²² Without it there would be disorder, misery, robbery, murder, and so on. It was therefore necessary, 'from the depravity of mankind', that there should be courts and magistrates with power and authority to prevent these evils and to secure the peace and order of society.²³ God, furthermore, was in complete control of rulers, who had no power to serve the public, or to hurt it, except it was given by God: 'They are ministers of God, and their services are in kind, degree, and continuance, just what God, whose ministers they are, sees meet'.²⁴ John Love, a decade later, made the same point: no degree of civil power could be attained 'without, at least, permissive ordination from above'.²⁵ John Russel argued that the very appointment of civil government supposed men to be apostate creatures. When they acknowledged the need for civil government, they should be humbled before God because apostasy had introduced disorder and confusion into God's beautiful, orderly, and harmonious world. Hence, true religion was the foundation of a right view of the nature of government and of true patriotism.²⁶

There was, however, little discussion of the positive aspects of the purpose of government. Russel limited himself to the assertion that the end of civil government, was the preservation of peace and the promotion of the good of society.⁹⁷ The function of the monarch, maintained John Dun, was to govern by fixed and stated laws, and his power was exercised by means of aiding, protecting, and relieving, in distributing justice, and tempering it with mercy. Ministers, to whom power was delegated, were accountable for maladministration to the representatives of the people, and to the supreme judicature. This process secured 'the dignity of the sovereign' and 'the welfare of the people'. The overall system was sanctioned by its being glorifying to God and in accordance with his laws:

The prince has the honour of being the minister of God for good to his people; of ruling subjects, not slaves; of governing by law, and not by caprice: and the people, conscious of their own rank, are happy in obeying a legal monarch - in security from oppression under him - in power of doing whatever the laws permit - and of not being compelled to do what the laws do not command - in which the very essence of true and perfect civil liberty does consist.⁹⁸

Assumption of the existence of fundamental natural rights led Popular thought in the direction of the political liberalism which was one of the main characteristics of the Popular party for much of the second half of the eighteenth century. In many cases the discussion of matters relating to government arose from issues such as the nature of vice, and religious toleration and liberty. Wishart, for example, did so in connection with how one

should attempt to improve one's neighbour, and immediately assumed the existence of natural and civil rights which included 'the right of enquiring for themselves in affairs of religion; and acting agreeably to the light of their own minds' providing it did not lead to the injury of the neighbours' natural or civil rights.⁸⁹ Furthermore, he assumed that it was in the possession and exercise of which rights it was 'the proper office of the Civil Magistrate to protect and defend all good subjects'. One of the hallmarks of the happiness of British society was that the existing government 'in the making of Laws and the administration of justice, acts with such a sacred regard to these rights'.⁹⁰ Although it must be admitted that Wishart was primarily concerned with such rights in their religious applications, it does seem that he felt no need to probe more deeply into their origins.⁹¹ It is true, moreover, that if the case for religious toleration was accepted, given the primacy of religion in the Popular mind, then it was a relatively short step to acceptance of liberty of conscience in general.⁹² Daniel Macqueen, for example, implied this step in his answers to Hume's strictures that Protestantism was inimical to rational enquiry, when he stressed Protestantism's commitment to 'freedom of enquiry and the rights of conscience'. This commitment accorded with 'the principles of the clearest reason, and with the natural rights of mankind'.⁹³ Certainly, Macqueen wanted to establish the existence of the beneficial influence of Protestantism in this connection for advancing 'the interest of truth and learning in the world'.⁹⁴

Acceptance of the need for government, combined with the assumption of the inalienable right to liberty of conscience (based usually on the argument from the right to religious liberty in particular),⁹⁵ led Popular writers to a 'contractual' view of the nature of government. For example, John Dun, writing in 1790, at the start of the French Revolution, argued that the British constitution had always been founded on the liberty of the people. Such liberty was an essential part of the type of government which was usual among 'the northern nations'. The people had their acknowledged rights, and the obligations between them and their governors was reciprocal. Their kings were legal kings, not arbitrary tyrants: they were bound by the laws of the community, framed with the people's participation and consent.⁹⁶ There was, in fact, a balance of political power. British government lay between the extremes of 'despotic power' and 'popular licentiousness'. The only real threat to this was the potential loss of 'a sense of religion' by 'our Princes, Nobles and Commons' as a result of the espousal of infidelity and deism, and a loss of 'a sense of honour' through luxury and vice.⁹⁷ This idea was emphasised shortly afterwards by Love and Erskine, the latter linking the contempt of religion among the upper classes with the possibility of violent revolution: a mob, which, following the example of the great, had no character or honour to lose, could attack the property of their rulers, seize the reins of government, and rule with tyranny and cruelty.⁹⁸ The guarantee of freedom, according to Dun, lay in the moderating influence of the balance between the regal, aristocratic, and popular powers

or orders. The 'Aristocratical Power' was perhaps crucial as it kept both the others within bounds.⁹⁹ The influence of the collective body of the people as a whole was guaranteed by their freedom and frequency in the choice of new representatives. The proof of the true liberty of any people is that they cannot be deprived of any part of that liberty, or of the benefit of it, but by their own fault. Freedom, however, in its very nature was liable to abuse. A connection existed here between national freedom which embodied 'civil dignity', and free will which was the foundation of 'moral worth'. To restrict either more than God had done, would be in effect to annul and destroy them.¹⁰⁰ Effective government required a balance between consultation of the wishes of all in the legislative power, and immediate action on the part of the legislative power. As a result, republics were 'weak and contemptible', as was ~~exemplified~~^{exemplified} by the Italian Republics and even Holland, which had required assistance from monarchies in the past.¹⁰¹

This type of analysis was applied to the constitution of Great Britain with near unanimity. Indeed, throughout the second half of the century, the only qualifying notes in the litany of satisfaction with the state of Britain were sounded by John McFarlan in his Tracts on Subjects of National Importance of 1786, and, in a general way, by John Erskine in the early 1790s. The strength or weakness of a nation, McFarlan asserted, was in proportion to the number of its industrious and virtuous inhabitants, who would find themselves interested in supporting

or defending their country. McFarlan tied this thesis to a radical argument for a more equal distribution of land. This, combined with good government, would afford the best prospects for security of liberty and property to individuals, as well as promoting love to one's country.¹⁰² McFarlan, who inherited a landed estate,¹⁰³ certainly seemed to flirt with radicalism by arguing that ownership of large tracts of land by a few increased the possibility of 'haughty lords' attempting a tyranny over their country.¹⁰⁴ But while he argued for a more equal land distribution, he was not in favour of equality. Strict execution of justice seemed incompatible with an equal distribution of property. The distinction of ranks was necessary to maintain that subordination on which justice depended, for the multitude would not accept the government of equals, and some degree of superior wealth or property was necessary for the preservation of the distinction. This superiority produced respect for those of superior wisdom or social ascendancy.¹⁰⁵ McFarlan's radicalism, therefore, was not political radicalism as such, but rather concern lest socio-economic developments should make it harder for the common man to be virtuous and industrious, and easier for the great landowners to gain more than their due share of the constitutional balance of power.

Erskine, in his Fatal Consequences and General Causes of Anarchy, also made the general point, possibly overlooked at the time, that even the best forms of government and law, and the wisest administration were not perfect. Anything, therefore, was

'of a malignant tendency, which discourages legal and constitutional measures, for reforming what is wrong, and remedying what is defective' The threat and fear of anarchy and disorder prevented even the most proper and reasonable alterations being attempted. Party spirit had the same effect.¹⁰⁶ There is no evidence, though, that this reservation made any impact on Popular thought at the time.

Inherent in Popular thought, however, was an impulse towards conservatism. Ultimately, this derived from the Scriptural injunctions, of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2, to obedience to the divinely ordained established powers. In the minds of Popular writers this was more assumed than analysed. More in the forefront of their minds was the connection between religion and society. As Dun asserted, since God has supplied us with all the benefits we enjoy

It becomes us to cherish in our minds a proper esteem and reverence, a due affection and zeal, for our most holy religion, and our excellent civil polity. We should be careful not to disgrace our profession by vicious practices, or intolerant principles, equally ruinous to a nation.

He went on to reinforce the nature of the duty of Christians as it related to British society at the time:

The daily remembrance, and the due sense of what we owe to Almighty God, as a highly favoured people, and as citizens and members of the best regulated polity, will, and ought to engage us in a conscientious discharge of every branch of duty arising from that relation: to aid, assist and concur with our governors, according to our several stations and

abilities, in pursuing the great ends of government, in procuring the peace - the security - the welfare of the whole community: in promoting order, unanimity, probity and justice among our fellow-citizens: in discouraging and restraining all immorality and profaneness, and every kind of vice, as the bane of society - the sure destruction of states and empires: and always to testify our regard to the laws of our country, by a ready and cheerful obedience to all who are in authority - by reverence to magistrates of every degree - and by distinguished reverence to the highest.¹⁰⁷

Such an analysis, although it was almost certainly not intended to be, could be construed as a manifesto of political conservatism. It arose from satisfaction with the capacity and willingness of the system of British government to act in accordance with the laws of God to produce an adequately moral society and to preserve religious freedom. It was 'the peculiar Blessing of Britons to enjoy Liberty and Government in Perfection', asserted Bannerman; and most would have agreed with John Warden who claimed that the national liberty of Britons was 'greater than anywhere else in the known world'.¹⁰⁸ In view of this, it was the duty of Christians to accept the British government's legitimate authority, and to give it their consistent support and obedience.¹⁰⁹

Thomas Somerville, writing in the same period as Dun, accepted the same assessment of the existing state of the government of Britain. He declared that the British constitution was adequate for 'the reformation of every abuse, and the accomplishment of every beneficial institution, suggested by the increasing light of the world in which we live'.¹¹⁰ Two decades

later, in 1813, he subscribed to the idea that 'the social and external felicity' enjoyed by members of the British Empire had never been greater, and he enumerated as evidence for this the mildness and wisdom of the laws, the regular and impartial administration of justice, the increase in manufacturing, the extension of commerce, agricultural improvements, more liberal recompence of labour, legal provision for the poor, the flourishing state of the arts and sciences and their application to provide comfort and utility, and 'the abounding accommodation of life' across the social classes.¹¹¹ James Steven had foreshadowed Somerville on this topic when, at the turn of the century he linked the firm establishment and the wise administration of the civil government, and due honour and cheerful obedience to it, with the flourishing of the political body, the maturing of learning, freedom, the arts and sciences, and trade and commerce. The fruits of honest industry would descend from generation to generation in such a nation; and in this situation rulers and subjects would perform their respective duties without encroachment or oppression on one side, or agitation on the other.¹¹² Steven went on to argue that while it was not absolutely perfect, for that would be unreasonable to expect, the British constitution had certain guardians, provided by its terms, to provide for the reform of abuses, supply deficiencies, and oversee improvements. Nowhere was rational, genuine, practical freedom more fully present than in Britain.¹¹³

It should not be thought, however, that the establishment of the link between religion and the British constitution was only begun in the 1790s. As early as 1754, Alexander Webster stated it unequivocally and comprehensively:

whatever arguments, for promoting the welfare of mankind in general, arise from the laws of nature and of grace, from the practice and writings of the prophets and apostles, from the command and example of the great God and Saviour, and from our own best interests, they all plead strongly for the preservation and support our constitution in particular, both in church and state, as the great means of our happiness in this world, and in the world to come.¹¹⁴

The relationship between godliness and obedience to the civil authorities was delineated at length by Russel in his True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism of 1801. Its objective was 'to deprecate those evils, which evidently arise from the want of fear to God, or from the want of respectful homage due to the Sovereign'.¹¹⁵ When men enter into civil society, they surrendered some rights in order that the remaining ones could be more effectually secured. In this, Russel would seem to be harking back to the contractual approach of Dun a few years earlier, and to Erskine's analysis of the purpose of government.¹¹⁶ When authorities, to secure the ends of the preservation of peace and the good of society, executed laws agreeable to reason and to divine revelation, it was the duty of subjects to obey. Only when the commands of a king evidently interfered with those of 'the Supreme Governor of the world' did the obligation to obey the civil powers cease. Such was in

accordance with common sense, as well as reason and religion. Those who resisted the exercise of lawful authority, furthermore, would incur deserved punishment from the civil powers. If they did not repent, they would receive higher punishment from God 'whose authority in the institution of civil government, they despise; and, whose order established in the world, they endeavour to reverse'.¹¹⁷ In other words, Russel was throwing the full panoply of divine justice into the scales against those who would question legitimately established civil government.

The king should be honoured since he had been placed at the head of our government 'by the wisdom of an all-superintending Providence'. Especially should we be thankful that he was not a despot but only the supreme civil magistrate, not elevated above the law, and that he was 'officially authorised, the appointed guardian of the rights and privileges of his subjects'. The true notion of 'equality' in Britain was embodied in the way he was equally bound to protect all his subjects in the possession of their 'just rights and immunities'. This, asserted Russel, was the only notion of equality that could exist in civil society.¹¹⁸

Russel, furthermore, took his theories down to the everyday areas of society by extending the respect due to the king to all 'inferior rulers and magistrates in their official capacity'. These derived their authority from the king, and, since the monarch possessed his just authority from God, any insult offered to an inferior magistrate, in his public capacity, was really

offered to the king and ultimately, therefore, to God.

Magistrates might personally be wicked men, but their office was to be highly respected because it derived its origin from divine authority.¹¹⁹ In all this, however, with the exception of points made in connection with the French Revolution, there was little of significant difference from the analysis given almost sixty years earlier, in the face of the Jacobite threat, by David Blair of Brechin in his sermons on The fear that's due to God and the King considered and recommended, or from John Warden's Happiness of Britain illustrated.¹²⁰ Popular concepts of monarchy, then, in some ways showed little sign of real development.

The applicability of these ideas to the situation in which Britain found itself on the outbreak of the French Revolution is obvious, so obvious that few Popular writers saw need to comment directly on it. The French Revolution was the proof of the validity of their analysis of the attractions of the British constitution. Steven did refer explicitly to the perniciousness of French Revolutionary principles. That liberty, or rather licentiousness, which allowed freedom to be false, malicious or injurious in writings or actions was not allowed in Britain, but all persons were under the protection of laws which were just in principle and impartial in operation. Men of talent, irrespective of social origin, could rise to preferment. Liberty of the press guaranteed the absence of arbitrary government. So-called liberty in France, on the other hand, perverted its first principles and became nothing more than ambition, venality, and despotism.

British society should be contented, and show devout gratitude to God.¹²¹ John Russell was more emphatic on the point: Disunity, discord, and the alienation of men's minds from each other threatened the peace of civil society, and even its very existence. The people must therefore do their utmost, depending on divine grace, 'to counteract the influence of those impious tenets, relating both to church and state, which have, with so much art and industry, been disseminated among us, by the emissaries of France'. Russel declared that he was more afraid of the spread of French principles than of their military success. The call to opposition to the French revolution was couched in the language of a rousing call to opposition to the spiritual enemy:

Let every one therefore, who is a determined enemy to these principles, show, that he hates their atheism, their infidelity, and their other licentious doctrines, - by cordially embracing the interesting truths of divine revelation, - by attending statedly the places of public worship, where these truths are preached, - and, by living daily under their happy influence. And let all those, who hate their detestable principles of anarchy, confusion and depredation, exert their combined influence, in support of that excellent system of salutary laws wherewith we are blessed.¹²²

The most consistent element, then, in Popular analysis of the nature and purpose of government was the delineation of an integral link between civil polity and religion. Government was seen as having its origins in the nature of society, but as a result of the loss of virtue and increase of vice which were the result of wealth and luxury or, in the minds of the more orthodox

or the more evangelically-inclined, the result of the Fall of Man, an increasing amount of government action was necessary. In the opinions of most Popular thinkers, and especially of those whose theological positions were more rigorous, the crucial nature of man's apostasy from God meant that right religious perceptions were essential to an understanding of the nature of government and of the reasons why God had sanctioned it.

Assumption of the essential nature of religious liberty, as the result of the existence of the right to liberty of conscience, led to the espousal of doctrines of political liberty. This in turn led to the emergence in Popular thought of a contractual theory of government. In this theory, a balance of power between king, aristocracy, and people was held to be essential. True liberty, it was believed, consisted of liberty within the law. Such a theory showed more than passing resemblance to traditional doctrines of Christian liberty within the law of God.

These convictions, in an almost paradoxical way, merged into a complacent analysis of the existing political situation in Britain. The manifest blessings which God was apparently bestowing on Britain and her Empire indicated that God was giving his approval to the existing constitutional arrangements. Since magistrates were appointed by the king, whose rule enjoyed God's approval, revolt or even the questioning of their authority was an impious act. Infidelity among the ruling classes was a serious

threat to the long-term stability of the system, for infidelity led to the loss of civic virtue. The religious element was thus of key importance. This conservative political philosophy emerged most explicitly in the period of the French Revolution and was strengthened by its outbreak. It is no coincidence that the majority of Popular writing on the subject appeared after 1789. French Revolutionary ideas posed a two-fold threat: first, they endangered political stability and threatened anarchy; but secondly, and more importantly, they threatened the religious principles on which, in Popular minds, the whole governmental structure was based. The ideas espoused by France had to be opposed for religious as well as political reasons. There was, therefore, no alternative to support for the Government, even in its policy of repression, during the period of the Revolution and subsequent war. Such ideas as might have derived from secular thought were articulated within a theological framework and by means of essentially religious and theological concepts. For most Popular thinkers, religion was paramount and thoroughly controlled their political perceptions.¹²³

As with the Popular interpretation of the Christian view of society, which led to stands on Roman Catholic emancipation and the French Revolution, so Popular ideas of government were also reflected in responses to more general political events. Forays by members of the Popular party into other political events, in their ecclesiastical capacities, were rare. Alexander Webster, as a result of Queen Caroline's intervention in the Porteous affair of 1736, identified himself with the faction of Frederick, Prince of Wales. He was joined by the Moderate, Robert Wallace, and both were rewarded with appointments as the Prince of Wales' chaplains for Scotland in 1739. Around the same time, Webster attacked Sir Robert Walpole in a sermon in which he compared him to Haman in the Book of Esther.¹²⁴ Popular ministers were not involved generally in day to day political activities, but the party as a whole, following the conviction that the Church of Scotland had a right, and indeed a duty, to represent the views of the people of Scotland on issues of moral or social importance, became involved in the course of the second half of the century in political debate over three subjects: the American War of Independence, the abolition of the slave trade, and the operation of the Test Act.

The American War of Independence elicited a clear Popular response. Initially, however, this response was shrouded by a desire on the part of a majority of the party to avoid the appearance of disloyalty. For example, although it was well-known in 1776 that significant numbers of the clergy were opposed to the Ministry's management of the crisis which led to the

rebellion, and were in favour of addressing the King to recall the troops from America, and to put an end to 'so unnatural a war', the Assembly's actual address to the King on the existing situation of affairs showed no signs of such sentiments and spoke instead of 'the present dangerous and unnatural rebellion' and praised 'the humane means employed by your Majesty to recall our fellow subjects to a sense of their duty'. The committee which drew up the address included at least one Popular minister, Daniel Macqueen, and was accepted unanimously by the Assembly.¹²⁵ Later the same year, the careful, middle path steered by the mainly Popular opponents of the war was shown in the response of the Edinburgh ministers to the day of general fast called in connection with it. The 'friends to government' were at pains to show 'the absurd and unnatural conduct of the colonists', whereas

those of an opposite way of thinking were equally assiduous to avoid everything, which, on the one hand, could show the most distant reflection on the Americans, or, on the other hand, give offence to the friends of government.¹²⁶

In spite of this line of response, the following year the draft of the address to the King, this time drawn up by a committee including no known Popular men, and talking of 'the continuance of the unnatural and unjust revolt of his Majesty's subjects', was nevertheless passed unanimously.¹²⁷ The same thing happened in 1778, and each year until 1782.¹²⁸

A clear indication of why the Popular party acted as it had appeared in February 1778 when James Muirhead of Logan, minister of Urr, introduced an overture in the Synod of Dumfries against 'the present ruinous and unnatural war in America'. He withdrew it because of the small attendance, declining such an advantage for 'the friends of liberty', though possibly also because of divided opinions within the Synod. In April, however, the Moderator of the normally Popular Synod wrote to the Scots Magazine

'to vindicate themselves, and the people within their bounds, from the false and most injurious aspersions of their principles, with regard to government ...'

The letter went on to stress their affection to government, attachment to the existing constitution, loyalty to the King, and their abhorrence of the unnatural rebellion. The letter implied that the overture was not presented at a subsequent meeting of the full Synod, though there was some doubt about this.¹²⁹ It is clear, then, that a Popular synod was almost desperate not to be seen as disloyal. In view of Popular belief in the satisfactory nature of the existing constitution and government in general, as detailed in their published works,¹³⁰ this reaction was not surprising.

The way out of the corner into which they had put themselves was either not perceived by the Popular party or not believed to be possible until 1782 when unanimity at the Assembly was broken by William Porteous of Glasgow who proposed, to the committee

drawing up the reply to the King's address to the Assembly, another reply which applauded the appointment of a new ministry 'of the highest abilities, and possessing the confidence of the people'. It went on to hope for the speedy restoration of peace. This letter was remitted to the Assembly simpliciter where it led to 'very long debate'. The Moderates attacked it mainly on the grounds that it was not the business of the Assembly to meddle with politics, or to become the vehicle of faction; and that, if carried, it would establish a precedent, and with every change of ministry, the whole Church would be split into divisions and political factions. The Popular response was based on one of the same principles which was prominent in their response to patronage at this time - the principle of constitutional consistency. The Assembly had been in the practice of addressing the King upon the state of the nation, and in the past it had addressed him in favour of war against its American brethren, and on other political matters. There was, therefore, nothing novel about the spirit of the proposed address. The new ministry listened to the voice of the people and acted on constitutional principles. The English bishops had a right to judge matters of politics in the House of Peers, and the Assembly had the right to give its opinion on public affairs, as it had done for the previous two hundred years.¹³¹

Nevertheless, Porteous's proposal to express support for the new ministry was rejected by 86 votes to 49. A dissent was then entered which took the political reasoning of the Popular party a

stage further. Amongst other assertions, the Popular party contended that the nature of the link between religion and society gave the Church a right to intervene in government, especially, in this case, to censure maladministration which affected the welfare of the people.¹³²

As well as identifying the Popular party with the political opposition to the Tory government, the debate on the American Revolution indicated that the party had identified itself with relatively democratic political ideas. Admittedly, this identification contrasted with Popular satisfaction with the existing constitution and government of Britain, and was not to survive the outbreak of the French Revolution. There are parallels to be made with the position of the party in the patronage controversy where it made constant references to the the right to ecclesiastical liberty.¹³³

It is now clear that extensive and highly-organised letter-writing took place between evangelicals in Scotland, England and America in the 1740s and 1750s with the aim of providing information about and encouraging revival of religion and missions. Prominent in Scotland in the network were James Robe, John Maclaurin, and John Erskine.¹³⁴ As a result of this interest and contact with the American colonies, it is possible that the fundamental reason for Popular sympathy for the American position may well have lain in religious unity and sentiment rather than in political ideology. In 1777, John Witherspoon's fast-day

sermon in America had been published by the Scots Magazine together with his Address to the Natives of Scotland residing in America.¹³⁵ It is true that John Erskine's pro-American pamphlet Shall I go to war with my American brethren? had appeared in 1769, but the publication of Witherspoon's sermon and address with its detailed arguments possibly had a more direct impact on the situation in Scotland. Erskine's work, though popular with the public as its frequent editions indicated, was relatively slight, arguing its case for the Americans from historical and contemporary political considerations.¹³⁶

Witherspoon's contribution to the Scottish debate is to be found in his welding of the religious and political themes into a coherent account of Popular ideology as it affected the issue of the American war. The fast-day sermon was predominantly devotional in intent, and, although he referred to the temporal alternatives of wealth or poverty, liberty or bondage, national prosperity as a result of the active industry and possession of land by independent freemen as opposed to low production being eaten up by 'hungry publicans while timid proprietors dread the tax-gatherers approach', he was concerned to point to the greater spiritual issues of whether his listeners and readers were to be 'the heirs of glory or the heirs of hell'. Nevertheless, he did produce a picture of the American situation in which spiritual and temporal considerations were closely linked. Providence had singularly interposed to bring success to the 'new and maiden courage of freemen, in defence of their property and right'. He

quoted approvingly an observation that 'True Religion' brought the consequences of 'Dominion, Riches, Literature, and Arts'. The American cause was

the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature ... the confederacy of the colonies has not been the effect of pride, resentment, or sedition; but of a deep and general conviction, that our civil and religious liberties, and consequently in a great measure the temporal and eternal happiness of us and our posterity, depended on the issue.

He went on to argue that 'the knowledge of God and his truths have been chiefly , if not entirely, confined to those parts of the earth where some degree of liberty and political justice were to be seen', and that there was not a single instance in history where civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire.¹³⁷ When Witherspoon referred to the difficulties arising from 'the imperfection of human society, and the unjust decisions of usurped authority', and argued that 'if we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage',¹³⁸ it is possible to assume that Popular readers in Scotland found it difficult to resist identification of the Americans' struggle with their own against patronage and the Moderates.

As well as providing the Popular party with an ideological basis for sympathy for the American colonists, Witherspoon also provided them with the germ of the idea of opposition, not to the King personally, but to his ministers and their supporters in

Parliament. He did not refuse submission to their claims 'because they were corrupt or profligate, although probably many of them are so; but because they are men, and therefore liable to all the selfish bias inseparable from human nature'.¹³⁹ Although his line of argument was virtually incompatible with the overall tendency of Popular political thought, its connection with the strategy of Porteous' motion in the 1782 Assembly is obvious. Witherspoon's Address to the Natives of Scotland residing in America further developed his political position. This involved assertion of the necessity of American independence, and the denial of its real disadvantage to Britain.¹⁴⁰

Witherspoon, therefore, although he was writing in America, and was doubtless more than a little influenced by American democratic ideals, nevertheless identified traditional Popular ideas about religious freedom and welfare, and freedom of conscience, with radical political ideas about liberty, democratic government, and opposition to the existing political system in Britain and the people who stood to gain by it. His views received wide publicity through the pages of the Scots Magazine a few years before the first Popular attempt to involve the General Assembly in support for opposition to the dominant political grouping in mid-eighteenth century British government. The move was urged for reasons which bore strong resemblance to those advanced by Witherspoon to defend the Americans in their quest for independence.¹⁴¹ Witherspoon's publications crystallised the increasing Popular reservations about the

existing political situation and gave them the basis of an ideology of opposition. The fall of the Fox-North coalition ministry in 1784, however, stifled the further development of such a political ideology.

The subject of the abolition of the slave trade, while apparently raised in the first instance as a Popular initiative, was remarkable for the unanimity which it produced throughout the Church. It also provoked a debate both within the Church as a whole and within the Popular party as to how to proceed in matters concerning the government of the country. The first occasion on which the matter was discussed in the ecclesiastical courts, so far as was recorded in the secular press, occurred early in 1788 when the Presbytery of Edinburgh debated the issue. A motion to petition Parliament for the abolition of the trade was moved and seconded by two Popular ministers, Messrs. Walker and Randal. John Erskine also suggested that the Moderator of the previous General Assembly should be requested to call a meeting of the Commission in order to procure the sentiments of the whole Church. Both motions were unanimously accepted and a cross-party committee appointed to prepare and transmit the petition.¹⁴²

The same year, overtures relating to the trade were sent up to the Assembly from three synods. The Assembly was unanimous on the measure but debate ensued on the manner in which it should be pursued. The proposal to petition the House of Commons was strongly opposed by the Lord Advocate and others on the grounds

that Parliament in general paid little attention to petitions from bodies of men 'not personally or patrimonially' interested in the issues. The Popular Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, Henry Erskine, and other ministers, both Popular and Moderate, considered it equally effective and more consonant with the dignity and practice of the Church, to confine themselves to a resolution. A Moderate-led group, including Alexander Carlyle and the Lord Advocate, were in favour of mentioning the Assembly's views in the proposed address to the King, but this was opposed by Erskine and others on the grounds that an address to the King on a subject already before Parliament was highly unconstitutional, if not in fact a breach of privilege. In this they were immediately supported by the Lord Advocate. In the event, Erskine proposed a motion approving the spirit of the overtures from the synods, and asserting that

the General Assembly think themselves called upon, as men, as Christians, and as members of this national church, to declare their abhorrence of a traffic contrary to the rights of mankind, and the feelings of humanity, and their earnest wish, that the wisdom and mercy of the legislature may be speedily exerted for the relief of that unhappy portion of their fellow creatures.

This motion met with general approbation but another motion was made by several members still in favour of a petition to the House of Commons. Supporters of Erskine's motion argued that if this motion were to be passed by a small majority, it could lead outsiders to believe that the Assembly was divided even on the principle of the matter. This argument was effectual in

persuading a number of the second motion's supporters to abandon their point, but a number remained who thought it affronting to those synods and presbyteries which had already petitioned Parliament if the Assembly did not follow a similar mode of action, and they insisted on a vote. The move for a petition, however, was defeated by 64 votes to 30.¹⁴³

The debate on the slave trade may appear of little importance in throwing light on the distinctive views of the Popular party in that there would seem to have been little difference on the issue between its members and those of Moderate faction. The issue does indicate, though, a developing division within the Popular party over the way in which objectives should be pursued when they involved the secular authorities. Differences emerged between one group, which had its most articulate spokesman in Henry Erskine and which believed in the efficacy, or at least the desirability, of working within a legally constitutional approach in dealings with the state, and another group of Popular men who were less sensitive to such arguments. Around the same time there is evidence of the emergence of a more pragmatic and 'constitutional' approach to the problem of patronage with which Henry Erskine was identified.¹⁴⁴ The 'constitutional' approach to the slave trade, however, although dominant at Assembly level, was not necessarily successful at presbytery level for petitions to Parliament continued.¹⁴⁵

A further instance of this new approach of the Popular leadership in the last two decades of the century to issues of secular concern occurred in 1790, when the Prebytery of Jedburgh sent up an overture to the Assembly respecting the operation of the Test Act. It urged the Assembly to take steps to secure relief from the provisions forcing those in public office to take the sacrament according to the usage of the Church of England. A considerable number of Popular men supported the overture, including Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood and Henry Erskine. They were opposed by a smaller number of Moderates including Professor Hill of St. Andrews, Robertson's successor as leader of the Moderates, together with the Lord Advocate and the Lord President. Sir Harry Moncrieff then moved four resolutions, the last of which asserted that it was the duty of the General Assembly, as the guardians of the Scottish religious establishment, to use the earliest opportunity to obtain effectual relief from the grievances arising from the Test Act. The other resolutions were the same in spirit and effect. In order to ensure unanimity, he and his supporters consented to several alterations by Professor Hill, and the resolution was then passed, the establishment of a committee to pursue the matter was unanimously agreed to, and Moncrieff Wellwood named convener.¹⁴⁶

In general terms, then, a survey of the attitudes of the Popular party to political and governmental issues reveals two main trends: the emergence of a liberal, and in some ways even

radical, approach to such issues; and an increasing political sensitivity concerning how to achieve their ends in secular matters which was seen in Popular tactics in the management of their ecclesiastical cause in the General Assembly. The former trend led them in the direction of the ideology of the Foxite Whigs, and the latter was spearheaded by a group of men who either were or had sympathy with them. Whatever potentialities a liberal political orientation may have had, however, it was to be stifled by the French Revolution and the consequent re-emergence of an ideology of political conservatism.

It was only in the case of their response to the issues raised by the American Revolution that the Popular party differed completely from their Moderate opponents. Other issues portray a considerable measure of cross-party agreement. The exception to this generalisation was over the issue of Roman Catholic relief, and even here the Popular position was accepted at the end of the day by the Moderates as being the only realistic policy. Notable also, however, was the way in which in the whole range of secular matters, the initiative in Assembly business was being seized by a group of younger Popular leaders centred around Henry Erskine and Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood. Time after time, from the 1780s onward, the Moderates were to find themselves responding or reacting to Popular proposals. As yet, they still retained their majority on most issues, but their intellectual dominance was being eroded by a Popular party which was gaining in acumen and confidence as a result of their handling of secular issues.

The actions of the Popular party at the General Assembly indicate the operation of the two main features in Popular ideas about government. During the period of the American Revolution, the liberal impetus within the party's ideology moved it in the direction of political liberalism. As a result of belief in the vital nature of the link between religion and society, and conviction that it was the prerogative of the Assembly to speak on behalf of the Scottish people in matters of general concern, which latter conviction was shared by the Moderates, the party displayed unity in secular matters. In the last two decades of the century, however, the same convictions swung the party in the opposite direction, towards political conservatism. This was in the main a response to the French Revolution although the seeds of the move were already present in the party's perceptions of the theological obligations of obedience to established authority. Associated with this development, but not arising from it, was the appearance of a politically capable leadership, notably in Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood and Henry Erskine, which, while initially orientated to traditional Popular liberalism, was aware of the potential advantages to be gained from alliance with the Foxite Whigs. Their commitment to a policy of operating within the confines of accepted constitutional practice may be seen as enabling a painless transition from the earlier political liberalism of the party to conservatism in the early 1790s.

3. The Problems of Poverty and Wealth.

In eighteenth century Scotland, most Popular thinkers were more concerned with the social consequences of the possession of wealth than they were with those of poverty. John Gillies's views were representative. In his Exhortation to the Inhabitants of the South Parish of Glasgow he held that: 'If thy poverty is not the Effect of Idleness or Prodigality, it is not Flattery to tell thee, thou art probably an honest Man than many of the Rich'.¹⁴⁷ As such, poverty was a social problem if it was not brought upon oneself, and not a socio-religious or moral problem as was wealth.¹⁴⁸ John McFarlan, though, paid attention to the problem of poverty on a moral level. He identified sloth as one of the most frequent causes of poverty, and declared there to be no habit to which mankind in general was more inclined.¹⁴⁹ Later in the 1780's, David Johnston argued the same case.¹⁵⁰

That poverty as such did not appear to require attention was the result of two factors. First, as David Savile put it, '... the poor, the humble, and the helpless; these (and especially if they be deserving creatures) we feel naturally disposed to compassionate [~~sic~~] and aid'; furthermore, in the words of Sir Harry Moncrieff, '... the RELIEF of the miserable, and the GENERAL INSTRUCTION of the poor', were 'essential and peculiar characters of the Messiah's reign...'¹⁵¹ Aid for the poor was taken for granted to be a Christian duty. Secondly, the latter half of the eighteenth century was a period of sustained, though

slow, growth in prosperity. which affected many sections of the community.¹⁵² In most areas, it was believed that poverty was being held in check by the traditional system of poor relief at the hands of the kirk sessions.¹⁵³ On occasions when the parochial system of poor relief was in difficulty, the response was to seek aid from special collections authorised by presbyteries. More widespread problems were met with the appointment of fast days and calls to communal repentance.¹⁵⁴ Since these problems were usually the result of poor harvests, such difficulties tended to be of a transient nature. Preoccupation with the dangers and obligations of wealth reflected the increasing wealth in all sections of the community. Acceptance of the Christian obligation to be charitable and relative complacency about the causes and extent of poverty in Scotland was the first theme in Popular thought on the subject.

The clearest delineation of Popular social thought on poverty and wealth was John Erskine's sermon of 1804, The Riches of the Poor. It demonstrates the coherence of Popular thought on the matter in the second half of the century, and the extent to which secular developments were not perceived to require new responses. It is not unreasonable to interpret Erskine's analysis as an enjoiner of social quiescence on the deprived in society, and as such it was based on his conservative approach to government.¹⁵⁵ Certainly, the place of poverty and riches was seen as part of God-given order, and the inferiority of material as opposed to spiritual wealth was stressed. While the overall

aim of the sermon was to explain why the poor had no real cause to envy the wealth and life of the rich,¹⁵⁶ the analysis started with a discussion of the relationship of the will of God to poverty and wealth. The distinction of rich and poor arose naturally from the right of property. A community of goods was neither appropriate nor possible in man's present depraved state. It would encourage the indolent and dissipated to do nothing, and it would provide them with the comforts of life by depriving the sober and industrious of the fruits of their labours. As a result, diligence would be discouraged, and all the ills deriving from lack of the necessities of life would be common. 'It was therefore the will of God, that every one should have the exclusive right to what he acquired by honest labour, a right to possess and enjoy it himself, and to bestow it upon or bequeath it to others, as he pleased'. If the right to property was destroyed, all would be reduced to misery by the uncertainty of retaining tomorrow what they possessed today. This, in fact, was the basis for society, since greater or lesser societies were necessary to secure property by providing for the general protection by giving power to one or more. From these distinctions of fortune and power all ranks derived benefit. The rich needed inferiors to provide the conveniences of life, and the poor needed superiors to encourage and reward their labours. God was not unjust in placing men, no worse or no better than their neighbours, in poverty or trying situations because all that we had was the gift of his Providence, and he could do what he wished with his own. He did not regard the rich more than the

poor, and in any case, the greatest calamities of life affected rich and poor equally. Although his discussion of the role of property indicates that he was acquainted with at least some of the work of Ferguson, John Millar, and Kames, it is important to note that the whole structure of Erskine's view of the problem of poverty was a theological one.¹⁵⁷

Erskine's work was published later - in the early nineteenth century - but much earlier John Witherspoon considered the problem of wealth in the context of the debate over the nature and effects of the theatre. He divided the possessors of wealth into two classes and, in so doing, established the framework of the discussion of the uses of wealth which was the second dominant theme in Popular thought on the subject during the rest of the century. First, there were

those who live in affluence, and know no other use of riches but to feed their appetites, and make all the rest of mankind subservient to the gratification of their violent and ungovernable passions.¹⁵⁸

On the other hand, there were those who used their wealth virtuously. The rich had 'the distinguished honour, if they please to embrace it, of contributing to the happiness of multitudes under them, and dispensing, under God, a great variety of the comforts of this life'. In spite of the immoral attitude of the first category of the wealthy, Witherspoon eschewed radical action against them or their wealth since 'none in this

world have any title to hinder them from disposing of their wealth as they please, they must be called to consider that they have a master in heaven' who would call them to account for their riches. The seriousness of this final accountability should, in fact, cause those less well off to be less envious of the rich and to moderate their appetite after wealth since the more that is committed to men, the more they have to account for. Nevertheless, the greatest and richest have no licence in the Word of God for unnecessary waste of their substance or ~~with~~ its consumption with unprofitable or hurtful pleasures.¹⁵⁹

Witherspoon's ideas in this area were taken up by Robert Walker in one of his Sermons on Practical Subjects of 1796, where he argued that the rich, in proportion to their abundance, should contribute to the necessities of their fellow creatures, and castigated those who argued that 'by the plenty of their tables, the splendour of their dwellings, the sumptuousness of their equipage, and other articles of their luxury, they find employment for the poor in providing for their consumption'. This certainly benefited society, but it avoided facing up to the moral and religious issues of obligations to society and gratitude to God for his gifts:

For what mark of gratitude to God is it, that we consume his bounty upon our own pleasures, although, in so doing, we cannot avoid distributing a part of it to our fellow creatures?¹⁶⁰

Witherspoon probably also influenced Thomas Somerville, who, in a sermon delivered in 1786, ten years earlier than the publication of Walker's sermon, made the same point that indirect provision for the poor did not meet the requirements of Christian charity. Somerville's work was much more concerned with specific schemes of charitable relief and does not seem to have contributed to Walker's thought on the issue.¹⁶¹ Worldly ⁶prosperity, maintained Somerville, obliged exemplary charity. The poor were God's representatives on earth and alms were a test of gratitude to him. Persons who owed their wealth to ingenuity and labour, were too ready to hold poverty in contempt, to ascribe it to 'indolence and demerit', and to be opposed to charity. They argued that it was harmful to industry, that there ought to be no fixed or legal provision for maintaining the poor, and that exceptional measures in times of crisis tended to multiply candidates for charity and to increase the distress. He countered these arguments by stressing that the giving of alms was a precept of the Christian religion, by pointing out that objections could be brought to any scheme of benevolence and that there was therefore no hope of universal approval of any scheme, and by asserting that hard-hearted men were always in the forefront of opposition to charitable proposals. Donations of charity with incitement to industry, however, would be the most successful and the benefits derived the longest lasting. Even the 'idle and undeserving', while they should not take priority to the industrious and virtuous, 'must not be consigned to irretrievable wretchedness'.¹⁶²

Those of the Popular party who wrote on the subject of wealth and poverty were unanimous that there was a moral and religious obligation on the wealthy to contribute part of their wealth to the relief of the poor, and that they could be regarded as seriously accountable to God if they did not. Equally unanimously, however, they held out little hope that the wealthy would honour their obligations. The reason was that the wealthy were less likely to be godly than the multitude of mankind. As Witherspoon put it in connection with his argument against the stage:

The far greatest number of the world are ungodly... And as none can attend the stage, but those in higher life, and more affluent circumstances than the bulk of mankind, there is still a greater proportion of them who are enemies to pure and undefiled religion... This does not at all suppose, that those in high life are originally more corrupt in their nature than others, but it arises from their being exposed to much greater and stronger temptations.¹⁶³

This was because the rich were tempted to luxury and to irreligion because of it. Witherspoon's suspicion of wealth was reinforced by his pessimistic, cyclical interpretation of national development in which wealth led to luxury which was the precursor of a return to poverty.¹⁶⁴ John Erskine, too, accepted such a cyclical theory when he argued that increasing luxury and dissipation derived from the increase of commerce and wealth.¹⁶⁵ Even John McFarlan, while seeing wealth and civilisation as the marks of an advanced state of society and therefore as leading to the introduction of pleasures and fashionable amusements, and

while regarding their attendant problems as being more than counterbalanced by the role of wealth in preserving the distinction of ranks necessary for the maintenance of stability, orderly government and justice, asserted that the increase of luxury introduced selfishness, venality, and corruption of manners. McFarlan politicised the potentiality of wealth by arguing for a more equal distribution of land ownership since

there are then no temptations to the refinements of luxury, by the overgrown wealth of individuals, nor is the great body of the people bowed to servility by an abject dependence. No man is so much exalted above the multitude as to attempt a tyranny over his country.¹⁶⁶

Luxury increasingly became the object of attack, and a preoccupation with it is the third theme of Popular thought on social issues. John Dun put the moral dangers of wealth with dramatic starkness: 'Man... is he rich? [He is tempted to] sensuality...'¹⁶⁷ John Snodgrass went further, and linked dissipation and luxury with impiety.¹⁶⁸ In some respects, though, sensuality induced by luxury led to an even greater charge being levelled against luxury and ultimately against wealth by Robert Walker. He identified it with the growth of infidelity:

Luxury is the common attendant upon affluence: This unfits the mind for serious thinking, and breeds a coldness and indifference towards spiritual things; in consequence of which, a secret disaffection to those laws which would restrain him, soon takes root in the heart of the sensualist, till, wearied with the struggle betwixt Reason and Appetite, he at length sets himself in opposition to God and his ways; reproaches with the names of ostentation or hypocrisy, all serious religion and godliness in others;

turns away his eyes from the light that reproves him, and even doth what he can to extinguish it altogether.¹⁶⁹

This analysis subsequently led Walker to identify as evidence of a worldly mind, discontent with one's present state, whether rich or poor, the consideration of wealth and happiness to be inseparable, and the consideration of industry in endeavouring to obtain a share in this world's goods to be superior to diligence in preparing for the next. Adoption of even moderate goals in wealth and property still implied slavery to the world; 'competence' was different for the rich and the poor; bequeathing wealth to charitable purposes was only 'an absurd delusion' since it was only offering one's worldly possessions to God after they had been abused when they could have been properly used.¹⁷⁰ Men indeed should be suspicious of prosperity for it was difficult to possess much wealth without loving it to excess. There was an added spiritual dimension, too, for the devil 'would give all his servants liberal portions in this world if he could'.¹⁷¹

Although there were relatively few writers who contributed to the debate, Popular analysis of wealth and poverty had three themes. First, it was accepted that charity was a fundamental obligation for the Christian. Secondly, wealth could be used in two ways: virtuously, when a significant proportion of it was devoted to aiding the poor or improving the lot of all in the community; or reprehensibly, when it was devoted to luxury and self-indulgence. The latter was more likely. And thirdly, luxury

was to be condemned as evil in itself and as having the consequences of sensuality and even infidelity. The general view was that the virtuous use of wealth would be the exception rather than the rule, since there was a profound tendency in the pursuit and possession of wealth for the claims of true religion and godliness to be lost sight of, however good the intentions.

4. Attitudes to Culture.

Since, as has been pointed out in the previous section, the Popular party was increasingly concerned with declining religious observance and growing 'infidelity', which it saw as connected with the growth of wealth and luxury, it would not be unexpected if Popular writers had shown an overall pattern of hostility to matters of culture. Certainly the Popular party united against the theatre in the Douglas affair in the 1750s. They were outraged that ministers should have attended its performance, and especially that a minister should have been the playwright. Most historians have therefore assumed that Popular sentiment was narrowly anti-cultural and obscurantist in general in such matters.¹⁷² This view is based on a failure to analyse, or, in most cases, even to seek out, the relevant sources.¹⁷³ Even if the initial instincts of some members of the party were to repress, or at least eschew, cultural activity, they still produced reasoned defences of their position. More importantly, the consistency of their theological positions and their religious view of human activity led most of the influential members of the party to accept that general condemnation of cultural activities and amusements was untenable. Moncrieff Wellwood, for example, even allowed that ministers could legitimately study 'any branch of literature or knowledge to which your mind naturally turns', for that would enable them to be 'so much the more prepared to support the character of

respectable ministers'.¹⁷⁴ Certainly, however, the Douglas affair must be seen as the starting point for the debate.

The debate, in fact, had been opened as early as 1733 by George Anderson in his Use and Abuse of Diversions, where he linked the pursuit of pleasures and diversions with Epicurean philosophy and contrasted it with the stress on pain, diligence, work, and labour which Scripture used to describe religion and the way to salvation. Those who were 'above the Wants and Necessities of this World' were already 'Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God'.¹⁷⁵ He described Edinburgh as the city most given over to 'a Spirit of Idleness and Levity', proportionate to its size, in all of Europe.¹⁷⁶ More importantly, he provided a definition of legitimate diversions which was rejected by several writers who were to determine Popular opinion in the years after 1750:

... there are few, yea very few of our ordinary Diversions but what exceed the Limits of Christianity. All Pleasures and Diversions are to be regulated and managed according to their End and Use. Now all the Use of Diversions is to ease the Body and Mind when wearied with Thought and Labour. Diversions, then, are only so far lawful as they unyoke the Mind from Study and Meditation, and the Body from Toil, in order to recruit and refit both for other and fresh Undertakings. This is their End, and this only is their Use. Whatever more enters into the Matter is beyond all Christian Measure, and consequently sinful and unlawful.¹⁷⁷

Furthermore, diversions led to an unlawful waste of time, means, and wealth. 'They weaken the Mind for Piety and Devotion, and lead to many Temptations'. An idle life devoted to pleasure led

to domestic quarrels, neglect of children, delay in the payment of debts, deception in order to gain further credit, and even to the possible ruin of families. The poor were deprived from benefiting from God's provision for them by works of charity, and diversion of potential funds for charity was akin to sacrilege.¹⁷⁸ Analysis of this type paved the way for the attack on Douglas and its supporters. It was a pragmatic argument which, on its own terms, was difficult to counter. Its weakness was that it failed completely to consider that there were any legitimate activities other than spiritual improvement and the obtaining of physical sustenance. It certainly failed to consider the implications of life in a society where increasing numbers were distancing themselves from traditional religious observance and spiritual activity. It was these factors which led to the development of a more comprehensive attitude to the participation of Christians in secular culture.

It was John Witherspoon who was responsible for the transition to a more liberal interpretation of what was and was not legitimate in the area of culture and entertainment. On one level, he contrasted questions of taste with religious truths. 'There is a great difference', he wrote, 'between the shining thoughts which are applauded in the world by men of taste, and the solid and profitable truths of religion'.¹⁷⁹ He regarded the literary forms of 'romances and fabulous narrations' as doing the world little good and much harm, though he was far from specific about the nature of the alleged harm. He affirmed that such

literature was only exceeded by stage plays in their capacity for mischief.¹⁸⁰ It was not merely because of his assessment of their moral impact that Witherspoon was suspicious of fashionable taste and judgement. It was also part of his assessment of the pattern of the development of societies.¹⁸¹ His cyclical theory of national rise, decline, and fall viewed questions of cultural taste as potential benchmarks of the overall health of society:

with respect to learning, men rise from ignorance to application, from application to knowledge, this ripens into taste and judgement, then, from a desire of distinguishing themselves, they superadd affected ornaments, become more fanciful than solid, their taste corrupts with their manners, and they fall back into the gulf of ignorance.¹⁸²

It would be a mistake, however, to see Witherspoon's position as simply one of opposition to, or disinterest in, matters of culture. It was more complex. All human accomplishments without an immediate reference to spiritual improvement were not to be condemned. They should rather be kept in a subordinate position to the chief end of man. There were many useful and ornamental arts which had immediate effects other than making men holy, but since they were usually abused, they were often thought of as having no religious significance. This was mistaken, for a good man would choose and apply such arts in accordance with the main purpose of his life, which was more than just to make a name for himself in the fashionable world. That would be inconsistent with one's Christian profession.

In short, these arts are among the number of indifferent things which should be supremely and ultimately directed to the glory of God. When they are not capable of this, either immediately or remotely, much more when they are contrary to it, they must be condemned.¹⁸³

Witherspoon, therefore, produced a new touchstone to assess the acceptability of cultural pursuits or diversions: could it be either directly or indirectly capable of contributing to the glory of God? It was still a pragmatic approach, but it was more permissive than Anderson's.

Appreciation of the significance of the debate within the Popular party on these issues makes it possible to place the Douglas affair of 1757 in its proper perspective. The Tragedy of Douglas by John Home, minister of Athelstaneford, was first performed publicly in Edinburgh on 14 December 1756. The author and several other ministers were present. On 5 January 1757, the Presbytery of Edinburgh attacked the theatre and theatre-going in an 'Admonition and Exhortation to all within their bounds'. This document commenced:

The Presbytery taking into their consideration the declining state of religion, the open profanation of the Lord's Day, the contempt of public worship, the growing luxury and levity of the present age - in which so many seem lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, - and being particularly affected with the unprecedented countenance given of late to the playhouse in this place, when the state of the nation, and the circumstances of the poor, make such hurtful entertainments still more pernicious, judged it their indispensable duty to express, in the most open and solemn manner, the deep concern they feel on this occasion.¹⁸⁴

Some of this, admittedly, was of the nature of the conventional rhetoric of such occasions, but the social concern was a theme to which the document returned. Mention was made of the numbers of servants, apprentices, and students who had been diverted from their proper business by attending the theatre; attention was called to the unseemliness of mirth and jollity when the King had called for humiliation and prayer in view of the war then being fought; and the needs of the poor were proclaimed: 'When the wants and cries of the numerous poor require extraordinary supplies, how unaccountable is it to lavish away vast sums for such vain and idle purposes'.¹⁸⁵ The Presbytery of Glasgow endorsed this line of reasoning in a resolution of 2 February 1757 which covered much the same ground and talked of 'the wasteful expense of money and time' occasioned by stage entertainments.¹⁸⁶ To some extent, it is true that the Popular case against Douglas and its patrons was supported to a considerable extent by reiteration of earlier legislation and precedents hostile to the theatre and the traditional arguments against theatre-going and the theatre in general, but it does emerge that the campaign against Douglas was stimulated by social concerns as much as by religious ones. The affair was more complex and not just a re-emergence of traditional prejudices.

The Douglas affair is not only important for the light it throws on the attitudes of the Popular party to culture. Its attitude on the issue indicates that the party was more in step with opinion within the Church as a whole than was the Moderate

leadership. The 'great majority' of the Presbytery of Edinburgh were in favour of suspending rather than merely rebuking the minister of Liberton who had attended the performance, though they limited the suspension to one month.¹⁸⁷ The Presbyteries of Haddington, Ayr, Earlston, Chirnside, Duns, and Dalkeith, which had been sent the names of ministers who had attended the theatre by the Edinburgh presbytery, all took action against their offending members.¹⁸⁸ It is notable that, in his defence before the Presbytery of Dalkeith and the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, Alexander Carlyle, the most celebrated of those charged, at no point attempted to argue in favour of the stage, although he did do so in his pamphlets A Full and True History of the Bloody Tragedy of Douglas and An Argument to Prove that the Tragedy of Douglas ought to be Publickly Burnt by the Hands of the Hangman.¹⁸⁹ Neither did the supporters of Douglas attempt to argue in favour of the stage in the Church courts; Carlyle's case, which was the only one to reach the Assembly, was a purely legal and procedural one which was accepted by an overwhelming number of Assembly members. The Assembly was equally overwhelming in condemning theatre-going by ministers. Carlyle may have avoided further censure in 1757, and may have avowed that the Act passed 'Forbidding the Clergy to Countenance the Theatre' was a deadletter, and John Witherspoon may have lamented in 1763 that it had served to encourage rather than to prevent the theatre, but it was passed overwhelmingly.¹⁹⁰

The significance of the controversy over Douglas, therefore, is not that it represented another instance of the Popular-Moderate split in the Church, or that it indicated the reactionary nature of the Popular response to Enlightenment ideas, but that the majority of the Church felt that the theatre was a highly dubious place, if not in fact a sinful one, to be attended by a minister, since, for social as well as religious reasons, theatre-going raised inconsistencies with their professions of faith and with their duties both as ministers and as Christians. The former arose as a result of the immorality of much of what was depicted on stage, the latter because of the unacceptability of spending prodigal amounts on the theatre while the poor needed relief. It is overdramatising the issue to see it as a watershed which pointed the Church and Scottish society in the 'direction of cultural and intellectual freedom, religious moderation, and respect for serious endeavours in all branches of the arts and sciences'. No more did it signify 'the triumph of the Moderate ideal of a polite ministry leading Scotland down the path to enlightenment'.¹⁹¹ Carlyle himself was closer to the truth when he asserted that the Assembly's decision to affirm the Synod's expression of its 'displeasure' with him and its requirement of him to refrain from theatre-going in the future, proved that 'the heat and animosity raised against the tragedy of Douglas and its supporters was artificial and local'.¹⁹²

Forty years later, the somewhat limited context of the Douglas affair had been widened, but Robert Walker was still to

be found reasoning in the same way as Witherspoon, though he followed its implications further. 'We may lawfully love the world', he maintained, 'as it is the workmanship of God, and the mirror in which we behold the perfections of the invisible Creator'. The creatures of his creation, as well as supporting us as we performed the duties we owed God, enabled us to supply the wants of others, and heightened the lawful joys of our fellow creatures. Love of the world only became excessive and sinful, when we gave it the room in our hearts which was due only to God, and when it was desired for its own sake, independent of his favour and friendship.¹²³ Walker made these points, however, in the context of a general discussion of the sin of idolatry and did not pursue them further in the direction of taste and culture. Their implications are clear. He was making the same permissive point as Witherspoon.¹²⁴

To some extent Popular sentiment, even in more 'liberal' quarters, saw taste and culture as connected to the growth of luxury. In view of the link of luxury with spiritual decline, it is probably true to say that culture remained an area of moral suspicion in the minds of Popular thinkers, even when it was regarded as a legitimate area of Christian involvement.

It should be noted, however, that there are grounds for doubting whether the Popular party was monolithic in its delineations of what was or was not acceptable in these matters. Lay supporters may well have been much more flexible on the

issues than their ministerial spokesmen. John Maclaurin the advocate, later to be elevated to the Court of Session as Lord Dreghorn, and a leading Popular figure, produced a substantial piece of literary criticism in his Apology for the Writers against the Tragedy of Douglas. It is evident from the work that Maclaurin was familiar with a wide range of literature and that he took an active interest in the literary life of Edinburgh. It is implied that he was accustomed to attend the theatre. He subjected Douglas to a sustained critical analysis but found no evidence to justify regarding it as more than 'a tolerable modern tragedy'.¹⁹⁵ He did not share the unqualified castigation of the stage as was demonstrated, for example, by Anderson or Witherspoon. He deprecated the clerical status of its author:

We would have rejoiced to see a countryman of ours excel in tragedy. We are indeed sorry that a Scotch clergyman has written a play; but we would have admired the tragedy, had it been good, though we thought it blameable in the author to write one.¹⁹⁶

Apart from savaging 'the puffers of Douglas' for their gross overestimation of its qualities, Maclaurin's work was notable for an onslaught on the Edinburgh literati and their pretensions:

Some years ago, a few gentlemen in this town assumed the character of being the only judges in all points of literature; they were and still are styled the geniuses, and lately erected what they called a select society, which usurps a kind of aristocratical government over all men and matters of learning.¹⁹⁷

According to Maclaurin, the 'first and fundamental maxim of this dictatorial club is, That a punctilious correctness of style is the summum bonum of all compositions'. Preoccupation with grammar and syntax led these authorities to miss seeing genius in a work and led to bizarre estimations of the works of writers. Voltaire and Hume were to be preferred to Shakespeare and Addison, and Douglas was to be esteemed superior to anything written by Shakespeare and Otway.¹⁹⁸

In a satirical work which he wrote around the same time in 1757, The Philosopher's Opera, Maclaurin made the same criticism even more pointedly, and in fact turned the Moderate boast of their contribution to Scotland's intellectual status on its head. If Shakespeare and Otway were to be replaced by the author of Douglas, 'the taste of the country is at an end'. The club of gentlemen was unable to direct it, but since some men of learning were among them, many were misled by their authority and, though detesting the innovations, were reluctant to contradict them. Consequently, Douglas was performed thirteen times in Edinburgh, but Othello (which had not been performed there for seven years) 'brought no house at all'. All this proved, held Maclaurin, 'that the run Douglas had here, was owing to the influence of a party'. And then came the conclusion which used the Moderate literati's claim against themselves:

It is certainly the duty of every man who regards the honour of his country, to make a stand against that unhappy barbarism which the cabal I have already mentioned is

endeavouring to establish... a set of men who owe their title of geniuses to the country of Scotland alone.¹⁹⁹

It is significant that an eminent lay member of the Popular party, related to the eminent Revd. John Maclaurin of the Glasgow Ramshorn parish, was to be found moving with such ease, expertise, and confidence in a field which the Moderate literati regarded as their own. And, so far as can be ascertained, there was no murmur of protest from other members of the party.

Overall, what is striking in the attitudes of Popular writers on the subjects of culture and entertainment was the flexibility of their position, and the extent to which they were prepared to go to accommodate participation in secular activities. Especially is this so when the evidence is contrasted with general perceptions hitherto. It is true that Popular writers were not greatly concerned with matters of taste, literature, or culture in general. Apart from the Douglas controversy, these were topics which impinged on their perceptions only when they were raised by the more fundamental questions of the nature and obligations of the Christian life. Their perspective was a religious one. If men ensured that they were in a right relationship with God, matters of taste and culture, as indeed their activities in the secular world in general, would not be causes for concern. While the religious state of the nation was unsatisfactory, culture could only be a potential preoccupation to take men further away from God. There

was, however, no inherent reason why taste and culture could not be participated in and directed to the glory of God.

NOTES: CHAPTER 5.

1. On this see, e.g., Chitnis, The Scottish Enlightenment. A Social History, (London, 1976), pp.106-111; Richard B Sher, Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment. The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh, (Edinburgh, 1985), pp.192-206.
2. See below, pp.311-314.
3. See below, pp.241, 244-246, 270 n.92, 297 n.149.
4. Public Virtue Recommended. A Sermon preached in the High Church of Edinburgh ... at the opening of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1746), p.3.
5. ibid., p.5.
6. ibid.
7. ibid., p.6.
8. Charity the end of the Commandment; or, Universal Love the Design of Christianity. A Sermon, (London, 1731), p.27.
9. ibid., pp.32, 34.
10. 'An Essay on the Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life to the Happiness of Heaven, shewing That this Necessity, according to the plain tenor of the Gospel, is without any Reserve or Exception, with a Practical Improvement of the Argument', in Discourses on Several Subjects, (London, 1753), pp.16-17. cf., Patrick Bannerman, A Sermon upon Reformation and Revolution Principles. Preached in the Church of Stirling, April 10, 1751: By Appointment of the Very Reverend Synod of Perth and Stirling, (Edinburgh, 1751), p.23, quoted below, p.247.
11. The Certain and Unchangeable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil. A Sermon preached before the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, at Salters' Hall on Monday, 3rd of July, 1732, (London, 1732), p.14.
12. ibid., pp.13, 28-29.
13. ibid., p.30. It was the commitment to the first of these propositions which was a major factor in the reluctance of the Popular leadership to participate in the prosecution of

Hume and Kames at the General Assembly of 1756, in spite of the desire of some members of the party to do so. See above, pp. 206-211.

14. See 'The Indispensible Necessity of a Holy and Good Life ...', in Discourses on Several Subjects, pp. 11, 16-24.
15. Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, pp. 30-35.
16. ibid., pp. 35-36.
17. A Discourse on our Obligation to Thanksgiving for the Prospect of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade, with a Prayer, (Kelso, 1792), pp. 7-15.
18. The Heinousness and Aggravation of Theft, illustrated in a Sermon preached in the Old Church of Edinburgh, on the 29th of Nov. 1787, (Edinburgh, 1788), pp. 27-28.
19. The Fatal Consequences of Irreligion and Negligence in the Heads of Families. A Sermon preached in the Tron Church of Edinburgh on the Twenth-third of May 1790, (Edinburgh, 1790).
20. McFarlan, Tracts on Subjects of National Importance, (London, 1786), pp. 31, 33-35, 37-38.
21. True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism. A Sermon preached in the High Church of Stirling to the Loyal Stirling Volunteers, Yeomanry, etc., on the Fast Day, February, 1801, (Stirling, 1801), pp. 26-28. Thomas Somerville was the only Popular writer who did not follow the otherwise standard path to espousal of patriotism. Returning much more to the theme of universal benevolence, after expatiating on the blessings and developments of British society, he enjoined as a legitimate response to divine goodness, letting 'our hearts expand with good wishes to all mankind', associating their interests with our own, and beseeching God 'that superstition, tyranny, and every form of oppression, may be banished from the earth, and that the light of true religion, justice, liberty and happiness, may universally prevail'. Sermons, pp. 48-49.
22. See above, pp. 238-239.
23. The Unrivalled Felicity of the British Empire. A Sermon

Preached at the Salters' Hall, November 7th, 1802, at the Commemoration of Our Great National Deliverance, (London, 1802), pp. 7-9. See also, Somerville, Sermons, p. 451.

Somerville does not seem to have recognised the potential inconsistency involved in stressing unity in Christ and preference 'to be attached most closely to those most like us in station and circumstance'. ibid., p. 450.

24. op.cit., p. 16.
25. op.cit., (Edinburgh, 1756), p. 449.
26. The Doctrine of Toleration, Applied to the Present Times, (Glasgow, 1778), pp. 10-11.
27. op.cit., p. 23.
28. Letters on Mr. Hume's History of Great Britain, (Edinburgh, 1756), p. 307.
29. An Attempt to Shew that the Knowledge of God, has, in all ages, been derived from Revelation or Tradition, not from Nature, (Glasgow, 1773), p. 127.
30. The Riches of the Poor. A Sermon. Preached before the Governors of Heriot's Hospital, (Edinburgh, 1804), p. 9.
31. Sermons, vol. 2, (Kilmarnock, 1790). p. 53. See also John Love, The Radical Cause of National Calamity, A Sermon. Preached at the Scotch Church, Crown Court, Russell Street, Covent Garden, October 27, 1794, (n.p., n.d.), p. 33.
32. The Happiness of Britain illustrated; in a Sermon, (Edinburgh, 1749), p. 56.
33. op.cit., p. 20. These points overlap with the earlier discussion of the poor morals of the upper class. See above, pp. 181-183.
34. The Fatal Consequences and General Causes of Anarchy. A Discourse on Isaiah, xxiv. 1-5, (Edinburgh, 1793), pp. 35-36. See also pp. 43-44.
35. Dissertations on the Existence, Attributes, Providence, and Moral Government of God; and on the Duty, Character, Security, and Final Happiness of His Righteous Subjects, (Edinburgh, 1807), p. viii.
36. ibid., 167-168. John Russel was possibly the origin of this

- idea for, in his Nature of the Gospel Delineated of 1796, he attacked 'That pernicious practice of enforcing the obligations of morality, without the sanctions of religion'. The Nature of the Gospel Delineated, and its Universal Spread founded upon the Declaration of Jesus Christ: A Sermon, preached in the Parish Church of Kilmarnock on Thursday, August 18th, 1796, (Ayr, 1796), p. 38.
37. Saville, op.cit., p.173. See also, James Somerville, Practical Sermons, (Edinburgh, 1827), p.249.
 38. Sermons, p.156.
 39. 'On Oaths', Sermon III in Robert Gillan, (ed.), The Scottish Pulpit. A Collection of Sermons by Eminent Clergymen of the Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1823), pp.57-58.
 40. Zeal for the Civil and Religious Interest of Mankind recommended, Sermon XVI in The Scotch Preacher, vol. 1, (Edinburgh, 1775), pp.341-342.
 41. A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage. Being an Attempt to show, That contributing to the support of a Public Theatre, is inconsistent with the Character of a Christian, (Glasgow, 1757), p.59.
 42. op.cit., p.32.
 43. Shall I go to War with my American Brethren? A Discourse Addressed to All concerned in determining that Important Question, (first published 1769), (Edinburgh, 1776), p.15.
 44. 'The Leading Doctrines of the Gospel Stated and Defended' (1790), in John Brown, (ed.), Theological Tracts, Selected and Original, vol. 3, (Edinburgh, 1854), p.309.
 45. See below, pp.297-306.
 46. op.cit., p.69.
 47. Tracts on Subjects of National Importance, (London, 1786), pp.33-35, 37-38. See also p. 31.
 48. Sermons, vol. 1, pp.99-100.
 49. S.M., 55 (June 1793), p.302; 56 (October 1794), pp.652-653; 59 (February 1797), pp.141-142.
 50. ibid., 50 (June 1788), p.307; 51 (June 1789), p.359; 54 (June 1792), p.306; 55 (June 1793), p.303; 63 (June 1801),

p. 445.

51. ibid., 50 (February 1788), pp. 99-100; (June 1788), pp. 305-306; 53 (June 1791), p. 303; 54 (June 1792), p. 305.
52. ibid., 52 (July 1790), pp. 351-352. It is perhaps of significance that the report of the committee to the following Assembly was recorded without debate as Professor Hill moved, and it was unanimously agreed, to proceed to another case. The Scots Magazine gave no details of the report and its nature awaits investigation.
53. See below, pp. 262-264.
54. On this see the works noted in Chapter 1. The honourable exception to this pattern is Sher in his Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment where he provides a very fair account of the Popular position based on an examination of the main anti-relief literature. His interpretation, though, is flawed as a result of his failure to comprehend the essentially religious and theological motivation of the Popular response to the issue, and by his misinterpretation of the motivation of Assembly members when the crucial vote was taken. This latter misinterpretation appears to have arisen as a result of his assumption that there was a greater degree of support for the Moderate position in the Church as a whole than the evidence justifies. See op.cit., pp. 290-294; and above, chapter 2.
55. S.M., 40 (February 1778), p. 267, 269-271.
56. ibid., 40 (June 1778), p. 331; 40 (October 1778), pp. 565-566.
57. ibid., 40 (October 1778), p. 566.
58. Extracts quoted in S.M., 40 (December 1778), pp. 673-675.
59. ibid., pp. 678-679.
60. Sher's attempt to argue that Erskine was guilty of contributing to the outbreaks of anti-Catholic violence by the use of 'several loose remarks' (op.cit., p. 285)) depends on the assumption that the word 'zeal' would be interpreted as indicating approval of the violence. In fact, the concept was a standard one in Popular works and its use in a wide range of contexts did not imply anything more than a sincere

commitment to the support of one's principles. e.g.,
Alexander Webster's sermon Zeal for the Civil and Religious
Interest of Mankind recommended.

61. S.M., 40 (December 1778), pp.679-680.
62. See, e.g., Sher, op.cit., p.267.
63. cf., ibid., pp.290-294.
64. S.M., 41 (June 1779), pp.310-311; 41 (August 1779), pp.409-415; 41 (September 1779), p.474. Robertson's motion to refer the matter to the Commission, with instructions 'to employ every legal and proper endeavour to prevent repeal being passed into law', was thus passed from. The motion as agreed to had an additional but not important last paragraph from Robertson's motion concerning new erections.
65. ibid., 41 (June 1779), pp.312-315.
66. ibid., 41 (May 1779), p.226.
67. ibid., p.229.
68. ibid., 41 (June 1779), p.311.
69. e.g., ibid., 41 (May 1779), pp.229-231.
70. e.g., ibid., 41 (July 1779), pp.362-368; 41 (September 1779), p.472.
71. ibid., 41 (May 1779), pp.228-229.
72. ibid., 41 (July 1779), p.368. An attempt was also made to link Roman Catholicism with infidelity. Campbell of Renfrew, for example, argued that Popery was the kind of religion most convenient for an infidel in that it exhibited religion in such an absurd light, that virtually anyone would think himself justified in rejecting it. In an entirely different way, the impious man would lay hold on it as a way of being saved after a lifetime of iniquity, and as the most ready means of silencing his half-stifled conscience. ibid., 41 (May 1779), pp.228-229.
73. ibid., 41 (June 1779), p.309.
74. ibid., 41 (August 1779), pp.411-412.
75. Public Virtue Recommended, p.5.
76. Sermons, pp.48-49.
77. True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism. A Sermon

- preached in the High Church of Stirling to the Loyal Stirling Volunteers, Yeomanry, etc., on the Fast Day, February, 1801), (Stirling, 1801), p.15.
78. ibid., p. 18.
 79. A Treatise on Government; shewing, That the Right of Kings of Scotland to the Crown was not Strictly and Absolutely Hereditary, (Edinburgh, 1746); A Second Treatise on Government; Shewing, That the Right to the Crown of Scotland was not Hereditary, in the Sense of the Jacobites, (Edinburgh, 1747).
 80. A Treatise on Government, p.vi.
 81. McFarlan, op.cit., pp.6-7.
 82. cf., Wishart. See above, p.238.
 83. Prayer for those in Civil and Military Offices recommended, from a view of the Influence of Providence on their Characters, Conduct, and Success. A Sermon preached before the election of the Magistrates of Edinburgh, Oct. 5, 1779, (Edinburgh, 1779), p.5.
 84. ibid., p.18.
 85. The Majesty of the King of Kings: A Sermon preached on the subject of the Revolution, Nov. 9, 1788, (n.p., n.d.), p.7.
 86. Russel, True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism, pp.26-28.
 87. ibid., pp.14-15.
 88. Sermons, vol.2, p.58.
 89. Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil, p.30. See above, p.241.
 90. ibid., pp.30-31.
 91. See also Public Virtue Recommended, p.21.
 92. Patrick Bannerman argued a curious case in which religious freedom was derived from civil liberty which 'admits no Infringements of the Rights of private Judgement ... No claims are allowed of Lordship over the Conscience, or Dominion over the Faith'. A Sermon on Reformation and Revolution Principles, (Edinburgh, 1751), p.9. See also p.23.

93. Letters on Mr. Hume's History of Great Britain, pp. 55, 67.
94. ibid., p. 187.
95. See, e.g., Bannerman, op.cit., pp. 5-6.
96. Sermons, vol. 2, pp. 51-52. The correlation between such views and the attempt of the Popular party to persuade the General Assembly to adhere to the 'constitutional' position regarding liberty of conscience in the patronage debates is striking. See below, pp. 404-405, 407-415.
97. ibid., p. 53. See above, p. 248.
98. Love, The Radical Cause of National Calamity, p. 20. On this, see above, pp. 248-249. Erskine, The Fatal Consequences and General Sources of Anarchy, pp. 43-44.
99. There would seem to be a possible connection between this kind of conception of the role of the aristocracy in government, the effect of luxury, and the need for balance in the constitution, with the attempt made by the Popular party under the leadership of Andrew Crosbie and Henry Erskine to recruit the landed gentry to the anti-patronage cause. It could well be, also, that Whig lay leaders of the party were not unaware of the political possibilities of such an alliance. See below, pp. 383-395, 426-432, 441-442, 444-445.
100. Sermons, vol. 2, pp. 54-55. It is interesting to observe that Dun went on to argue that Scottish liberty had been restricted in three ways: by arbitrary excise laws, by the removal of the legal right of enforcing church discipline by the 1712 Act which prevented compulsion of scandalous persons and witnesses to compear at church courts, and by the reintroduction of patronage. See ibid., pp. 55-57.
101. ibid., pp. 57-61.
102. op.cit. (London, 1786), pp. 2-3.
103. Fasti, vol. 1, p. 29.
104. McFarlan, op.cit., pp. 4-5.
105. ibid., pp. 6-7. This particular section of McFarlan's work was supported by references to Hume's Observations on the Reign of Henry VII, Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations,

Wallace's Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind, Price's Essays on the Population and Unhealthiness of London, and to the works of the French theorist Quesnai and his followers. ibid., pp. 10-19. Several years later, John Erskine took up the point about the distinction of ranks, tying it not only to the administration of justice, but also extending it to social happiness in general. It was anarchy to turn the relationships upside down. The Fatal Consequences and General Sources of Anarchy, pp. 4-5.

106. op.cit., pp. 10, 29.
107. Sermons, vol. 2, pp. 68-69.
108. Bannerman, op.cit., p. 38; see also pp. 17, 26, 39. Warden, The Happiness of Britain, p. 10.
109. See, e.g., Bannerman, op.cit., p. 17. This type of appraisal of the government's qualities contributes, too, to an understanding of the Popular party's attempt to seek parliamentary action to remedy the grievance of the patronage system.
110. Somerville, Abolition of the African Slave Trade, p. 22.
111. Sermons, (Edinburgh, 1813), pp. 284-285.
112. Unrivalled Felicity of the British Empire, p. 14.
113. ibid., pp. 14-17.
114. Zeal for the Civil and Religious Interests of Mankind recommended, in The Scotch Preacher, vol. 2, p. 348. There is more than a little similarity in this line of reasoning to John Erskine's analysis of the sources of anarchy, in which he distinguished between licentiousness which permitted any to be false and malicious in their words, writings, and actions, and liberty which was only truly to be found under law which guaranteed both the rights of the citizen and gave him access to his superiors for his complaints. The Fatal Consequences and General Sources of Anarchy, p. 12.
115. True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism, p. 5.
116. See above, pp. 271-272.
117. Russel, op.cit., p. 18.
118. ibid., p. 19.

119. ibid., pp. 22-23.
120. Blair, The Fear that's due unto God and the King, consider'd and recommended; in two Sermons preached at Brechin, April 11th, 1744, (Edinburgh, 1744), pp. 32-36, 45-47; Warden, op.cit., p. 39.
121. Unrivalled Felicity of the British Empire, pp. 14-17.
122. True Religion the Foundation of True Patriotism, pp. 20-22.
123. Only a few Popular writers were directly influenced by the thought of the Scottish Enlightenment, and that only in the areas of cyclical theories of national development, and social structures. John Millar's Origin of the Distinction of Ranks of 1771 informed Erskine and McFarlan. Millar, too, espoused cyclical theories of the rise and decline of societies. There is little evidence, however, that Popular thinkers were influenced by the thought of Ferguson, Hume, Kames, Smith, or Robertson on the importance of property in relation to government and law, though there is reason to believe that they were indebted to secular thinkers on the nature of wealth. On Millar, see op.cit., in William C. Lehmann, John Millar of Glasgow 1735-1801: His Life and Thoughts and his Contribution to Sociological Analysis, (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 291-292. See also, p. 204, and Millar's Historical View of the English Government from the Settlement of the Saxons in Britain to the Revolution in 1688, vol. 1, (London, 1803), p. 127; Adam Ferguson, Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767), (Duncan Forbes, ed.), (Edinburgh, 1966), pp. 81-82; David Hume, Political Discourses, (London, 1908), pp. 3-4; Henry Home, Lord Kames, Historical Law Tracts, pp. 88-156; Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, in Works, (Edinburgh, 1811-1812), vol. 4, pp. 72-81; William Robertson, Works, (London, 1812), vol. 4, pp. 265-266; vol. 6, pp. 311-313, 372. For a discussion of the ideas concerning property of these representatives of the Scottish Enlightenment, see, Chitnis, op.cit., pp. 106-111. For a discussion of the ideas of the Moderate literati of Edinburgh on matters referred to in this chapter, see Sher,

op.cit., pp.206-211. Sher refers to Robertson's History of Scotland in Works, vol.2, pp.155-156; Hugh Blair's Sermons, vol.2, pp.86-87 and vol.5, no.6; and to Alexander Carlyle's sermon, National Depravity the Cause of National Calamities, (Edinburgh, 1794). It is interesting to note that Moderate thought was more influenced by covenantal theory on the subject, especially in relation to the American War of Independence, than was Popular thought.

124. Morren, op.cit., vol. 1, p.302n.
125. S.M., 38 (May 1776), pp.271-273.
126. Caledonian Mercury, quoted in S.M., 38 (December 1776), p.677.
127. S.M., 39 (May 1777), p.271.
128. ibid., 40 (May 1778), p.267; 41 (May 1779), p.277; 42 (May 1780), p.273; 43 (May 1781), pp.270-271.
129. ibid., 40 (April 1778), pp.220-221.
130. See above, pp.274-277.
131. ibid., 44 (June 1782), pp.325-328. On the principle of constitutional consistency, see below, chapters 7 and 8, *passim*.
132. ibid., pp.327-328.
133. See below, chapters 7 and 8, esp., for example, pp.407-411.
134. Susan O'Brien, 'A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755', in American Historical Review, vol.91, no.4 (October, 1986), p.819. See also, L.H. Butterfield, John Witherspoon Comes to America, (Princeton, 1953), referred to in Sher, op.cit., p.268, n.28.
135. S.M., 39 (February 1777), pp.93-96; 39 (March 1777), pp.113-120.
136. op.cit., *passim*.
137. S.M., 39 (February 1777), pp.94-95.
138. ibid., p.95.
139. ibid. Witherspoon also argued here that 'There are few surer marks of the reality of religion, than when a man feels himself more joined in spirit to a truly holy person of

another denomination, than to an irregular liver of his own'. There is a connection in this with Willison's earlier attitude to both the Secession and to the English Methodists, and a noticeable contrast with the Moderate attitude to ministers who had been ordained outwith Scotland. On these matters, see above, pp.201-202, 216-217.

140. S.M., 39 (March 1777), pp.114-117. In the course of his analysis, Witherspoon referred to Hume's 'Three Essays: I. On the Balance of Trade; II. On the Jealousy of Trade; III. On the Balance of Power', in Essays Moral and Political (1741). Witherspoon also made a reference to taxes raised in America only serving 'to feed the insatiable desire of wealth in placemen and pensioners, to increase the influence of the crown, and the corruption of the people'. The reference to the influence of the Crown foreshadowed one of the key arguments used by the writers of the Edinburgh Review in their case for parliamentary reform in the next century. See, e.g., Edinburgh Review, 1808-1832.
141. It should be noted that Witherspoon's Sermon and Address were also printed in London, probably around the same time that they appeared in Scotland.
142. S.M., 50 (February 1788), pp.99-100.
143. ibid., 50 (June 1788), pp.305-306.
144. See below, pp.429-445.
145. e.g., The Presbytery of Stirling petitioned Parliament for the abolition of the slave trade in 1792. In this petition, the traffic was specifically linked with the prevention of 'the Propagation of the Gospel among unenlightened Nations'. See McIntosh, op.cit., p.59. Furthermore, the 1791 Assembly saw further petitions from the Synods of Lothian and Tweeddale, and Merse and Teviotdale which were approved in spirit but not proceeded with. Another overture the following year resulted in a further motion, unanimously passed, expressing the Assembly's abhorrence of the trade. See S.M., 53 (June 1791), pp.351-352; 54 (June 1792), p.305.
146. S.M., 52 (July 1790), pp.351-352. It is possibly significant

that the report of the committee to the following Assembly was recorded without debate, as Professor Hill moved, and it was unanimously agreed, to proceed to another case. The Scots Magazine gave no details of the report and its nature awaits investigation. See ibid., 53 (June 1791), p.302.

147. An Exhortation to the Inhabitants of the South Parish of Glasgow, and the Hearers in the College Kirk, (Glasgow, 1750-1751), p.29. Whether the poor emerged particularly clearly as an identifiable group in the minds of Popular writers in the second half of the century is uncertain. Even the obligation to preach the gospel first to the poor was a subject to which reference was rarely made. John Snodgrass made one of the rare allusions to it when he pointed out that the Gospel was intended to be understood by the poor as well as 'the learned and speculative', and that, therefore, preaching should be suited to their level of comprehension. Leading Doctrines of the Gospel, in Brown, op.cit., vol. 3, p.291.
148. Snodgrass, Leading Doctrines of the Gospel, in Brown, op.cit., vol. 3, p.291.
149. Inquiries concerning the Poor, (Edinburgh, 1782), pp.23-24. After making this point, however, McFarlan proceeded to divest this assertion of its moral impact by claiming that it really only applied to the 'lower stations of life', and that in the 'higher ranks of life' such factors as ambition, a sense of honour, or fear of contempt, stimulated men to shake off sloth and raise themselves, by 'the exertion of their active powers to a state of affluence and distinction'. McFarlan's equanimity about the ability of the upper classes, though, was not shared by other Popular critics of society. See, e.g., James Somerville, The Fatal Consequences of Irreligion and Negligence in the Heads of Families, p.16; John Erskine, The Fatal Consequences and General Sources of Anarchy, p.19.
150. The Heinousness and Aggravation of Theft, (Edinburgh, 1788), p.21.

151. Saville, Dissertations on the Existence, Attributes, Providence, and Moral Government of God; and on the Duty, Character, Security, and Final Happiness of His Righteous Subjects, (Edinburgh, 1807), p.141; Moncrieff Wellwood, A Sermon preached in St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, April 9. 1801, before the Directors of the Asylum for the Blind, (Edinburgh, 1801), pp.38-39.
152. On this see, e.g., R.H. Campbell, Scotland since 1707: The Rise of an Industrial Society, (Oxford, 1965); T.C. Smout, 'Where had the Scottish Economy Got to by the Third Quarter of the Eighteenth Century?' in Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (eds.), Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment, (Cambridge, 1983), pp.45-72; T.M.Devine and Rosalind Mitchison (eds.), People and Society in Scotland, vol. 1, (Edinburgh, 1988); and the various other works on Scottish economic history.
153. On this subject see, R. Mitchison, 'The Making of the Old Scottish Poor Law', in Past and Present, 63 (May 1974), pp.58-93; R.A. Cage, 'Debate: The Making of the Old Scottish Poor Law' and Rosalind Mitchison, 'A Rejoinder', in Past and Present, 69 (November 1975), pp.113-121; R.M. Mitchison, 'The Creation of the Disablement Rule in the Scottish Poor Law', in T.C. Smout (ed.), The Search for Wealth and Stability. Essays in Economic and Social History presented to M.W. Flinn, (London, 1979), pp.199-217; R.A. Cage, The Scottish Poor Law, (Edinburgh, 1981).
154. See, e.g., McIntosh, op.cit., pp.16-19.
155. See above, n.105.
156. op.cit., pp.4-5.
157. ibid., pp.1-3. See Adam Ferguson, Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767), pp.11-12, 82, 125; John Millar, Origin of the Distinction of Ranks (1771), in Lehmann, op.cit., pp.176, 204, 250; Historical View of the English Government (1786), pp.176, 204, 250; Henry Home, Lord Kames, Sketches of the History of Man (1774), vol.1, (Edinburgh, 1807), p.97; Historical Law Tracts, pp.57, 88-156. For a discussion

- of the views on the matter of these writers, see Chitnis, op.cit., pp.100-111.
158. A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage, pp.22-23.
 159. ibid., p.22. See also Bannerman, op.cit., p.37.
 160. Sermons on Practical Subjects, vol. 4, (London, 1796), p.362.
 161. See above, n.158.
 162. Sermons, pp.485-488.
 163. A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage, p.35.
 164. ibid., p.69. See above, p.252.
 165. Shall I go to War with my American Brethren, p.30.
 166. Tracts on Subjects of National Importance, pp.5-7. See also Bannerman, op.cit., p.35f.
 167. Sermons, vol. 1, p.42.
 168. The Means of Preserving the Life and Power of Religion in a Time of General Corruption, (Dundee, 1781), p.37.
 169. Sermons on Practical Subjects, vol. 1, pp.466-467.
 170. ibid., vol. 4, pp.364-367.
 171. ibid., pp.378-379.
 172. e.g., W.L. Mathieson, The Awakening of Scotland, pp.197-199,229-230; J.H.S. Burleigh, A Church History of Scotland, pp.304-305; Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, The Scottish Church, 1688-1843. The Age of the Moderates, pp.76-78; Anand C. Chitnis, op.cit., pp.54-55.
 173. e.g., those works cited in n.172; Cunningham, op.cit., in Chapter 1, n.15. Sher, op.cit., pp.74-92 is a notable exception to this pattern, but even he misinterprets the context and the significance of the affair. See below, p.314.
 174. A Sermon on 2 Cor. ii,17. Preached February 14. 1799, at the Ordination of Mr. Walter-Fogo Ireland, appointed Assistant and Successor to Dr. David Johnston, as Minister of North Leith. To what are subjoined, The Charge to the Minister, and the Exhortation to the People, (Edinburgh, 1799), p.40.

A different interpretation of the situation was given a decade later by Thomas Somerville, who asserted that the ministers of the Church of Scotland, amongst other adversities, were '... sometimes disheartened with obstacles, which repress their desire of pursuing those literary and scientific improvements, which are congenial with their tastes and habits'. A Sermon preached in the Tron Church of Edinburgh, May 17th, 1811, before the Society incorporated by Royal Charter for the Benefit of the Sons of Clergy of the Established Church of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1811), p. 23.

175. The Use and Abuse of Diversions. A Sermon on Luke xix, 13, with an Appendix, shewing that the Stage in particular is an Unchristian Diversion, (Edinburgh, 1733), pp. 14, 19, 22.
176. ibid., p. 12.
177. ibid., p. 24.
178. ibid., pp. 27-29.
179. A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage, p. 26.
180. ibid., p. 49.
181. See above, p. 252.
182. Witherspoon, op.cit., p. 69.
183. ibid., pp. 66-67.
184. Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 112.
185. ibid., p. 114.
186. For the Presbytery of Glasgow's resolution, see ibid., pp. 130-131.
187. ibid., p. 115.
188. ibid., pp. 117-122. It is interesting to note that of the six presbyteries involved, Clark ascribes Moderate majorities at the time to all except Carlyle's Presbytery of Dalkeith, which he believes was evenly balanced. See 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party in the Church of Scotland, 1752 to 1805', pp. 182-183.
189. Morren, vol. 2, pp. 122-130.
190. Alexander Carlyle, Anecdotes and Characters of the Times,

- (James Kinsley, ed.), (London, 1973), pp.159-163;
 [Witherspoon], A Serious Apology for the Ecclesiastical Characteristics, in The Works of John Witherspoon, D.D., vol. 4, (Edinburgh, 1805), pp.270-271.
191. Sher, op.cit., p.86.
 192. Carlyle, Autobiography, (John Hill Burton, ed.), (London, 1910), p.338, quoted in Sher, op.cit., p.85.
 193. Sermons on Practical Subjects, vol. 4, pp.354-355.
 194. See above, pp.309-311. John Muckersy of West Calder, preaching after the turn of the century, made virtually the same case. Scripture never asserted, he declared, that love to Christ 'extinguishes the feelings or checks the pursuits of men', or means that 'we are not to be diligent in the business and duties of life'. We are to love Christ more than these, that is the point. Muckersy, too, did not explicitly extend the point to matters of taste or pleasure, but there is no reason to assume that it was not implied, since he went on to stress that Christ was to be preferred to 'the most amiable pursuits'. The Excellence of the Gospel, in Gillan (ed.), The Scottish Pulpit, pp.291-292.
 195. Apology for the Writers against the Tragedy of Douglas, with some Remarks on that Play, (Edinburgh, 1757), p.7.
 196. ibid., pp.3-4.
 197. ibid., p.4.
 198. ibid., pp.4-5. Maclaurin took Hume especially to task for his denigration of Shakespeare.
 199. [John Maclaurin], The Philosopher's Opera, (Edinburgh, 1757), p.iv.

CHAPTER 7: THE PROBLEM OF PATRONAGE.

1. The Ideology of Opposition: The Popular Party and the Doctrine of the Church.

Fundamental to an understanding of the response of the Popular party to the problem of patronage is an appreciation of the significance of four central themes which are applicable to virtually the whole life of the Christian Church. The first two are the doctrines of the primacy of Christian liberty and the unity of the Church, the first being stressed particularly within the Protestant tradition. The third and fourth themes, while not of the standing of doctrines, are found within most branches of the Christian Church. They are the democratic impulse, and the need for consistent and coherent church government and discipline. In the case of the Popular party, the last came to be a demand for 'constitutionalism'. All four point towards the fundamental doctrine of the nature of the Church. The Popular argument against patronage returned constantly to the conception of the Church as a body whose paramount purpose was the salvation and edification of souls. Nothing could be allowed to hinder that role. If that be the definition of 'evangelical', then the Popular party was predominantly an evangelical party. In the context of the history of the Church of Scotland, however, what is meant by the 'Doctrine of the Church'?

It is agreed that this doctrine was one which received considerable attention in Scotland from the Reformation on. 'Traditionally in post-Reformation Scotland, it was held that the Church of Christ consisted of all who had been elected to salvation by the grace of God. It was for these that Christ had died and for whom he had purchased salvation. Those who were effectually called by God's Spirit became the Christian Church. The Church, therefore, was historically made up of those who had been saved, some of whom had died and were with God in heaven, and some of whom were alive on earth and were striving towards the goal of being with the Lord in heaven. The Church was a unity which was God's instrument to carry out his purpose of grace in the salvation of men. As well as a past and a present, the Church also had a responsibility for the future, namely, to take the Word to those who were yet to hear God's call and who were needed to complete the Body of Christ.

From the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ, came the idea of Christ as the source of blessing and the seat of authority. The Church was his means of giving what he died to purchase to those who were his. It was for him to say what those for whom he died ought to be and ought to do. He had full control over natural forces and rational beings as individuals and as organised bodies. Whether men resented this authority, or rebelled against it, his will was destined to be implemented.

The implications of this doctrine, however, were in many ways as important as the doctrine itself. In general terms it is probably true to say, along with Macleod in his Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History, that

it came to hold such a place of control as that it is largely in connection with the application and working out of this doctrine that the most remarkable struggles and discussions of national Church life have taken place.*

The central issue in the doctrine, so far as it affected the patronage dispute, was the regulative authority of Scripture. This came to be interpreted in such a way that the Headship of Christ and the subjection of the Church to his authority meant that the Church was a society under the obligation to obey his Word. As a result, his revealed will in the Scriptures was the ultimate source of authority both in the Church and in the world in general, and the freedom of the Church could only be attained when it was subject to no other authority. In the same way, too, as Christ's revealed will was regulative for the Church, it was regulative also for the individual. Hence was derived the doctrine of Christian liberty. Only when the Christian had freedom to conform his life to Christ's injunctions did he have real freedom or liberty. This explains the Scottish Church's concern, and indeed that of the Reformed Churches in general, for the rights of the individual and for civil liberty.

There was, of course, in all this an area of potential tension in all those matters in which ecclesiastical and temporal jurisdictions overlapped. Temporal rulers and governments who acknowledged Christ's claims upon them had an obligation to defend and further the interests of the Church, though this did not give the civil government any authority within the Church itself. Conversely, of course, the Church did not have the right to intervene in the normal exercise of the prerogative of the civil authorities who were as fully entitled to liberty in their own domains as the individual was in his. It was in this dichotomy that lay the seeds of the patronage controversy.

To what extent is the Doctrine of the Church¹ the key to the understanding of the Popular party's position on patronage in the eighteenth century Church of Scotland? In the first place, an appreciation of its significance gives coherence and point to its response to patronage. It explains the Popular stand on the Inverkeithing Case and the deposition of Gillespie,² and on the Schism Overture;³ it explains the consequences of the secularisation of the Popular position under Andrew Crosbie and Henry Erskine in the 1760s and 1780s;⁴ and it explains the acquiescence in patronage of the Popular and Evangelical parties until the 1830s, when the intellectual leaders of the Church came to the conclusion that the harm it did outweighed the benefits to be derived from Establishment. It explains, too, the unanimity of the Church of Scotland's response to the Haldanes in the 1790s.⁵ Secondly, it shows the Moderate 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case

of Inverkeithing' as essentially a secular interpretation of Church government profoundly alien to the Scottish theological tradition. The Moderate position was obviously attractive to many of the lay eldership of the Church, dominated as it was by the legal establishment, but there are some indications that it failed to attract substantial support among the clergy, even among those who supported Moderate motions at the General Assembly. It would, in fact, go far to explain why there is evidence to suggest that at presbytery level there was a measure of unanimity between erstwhile Moderates and their Popular colleagues.⁷ Thirdly, it provides the context for the Popular - Moderate theological 'debate' as categorised by Clark, and gives coherence to the Popular response to the phenomenon of Moderatism.⁸ Fourthly, it explains both the Popular reaction to the problems of infidelity and heresy,⁹ and at the same time throws light on why the Popular leadership was reluctant to become involved in the debate on Hume and Kames in the 1750s,¹⁰ while being prepared to anathematise the theatre.¹¹

The history of the Popular party in the second half of the eighteenth century can be fully understood only with an appreciation of this fundamental doctrine. While the Popular response to the problem of patronage, as it developed from around 1740, was along the lines of traditional Scottish theology, it was nonetheless a flexible and constructive response. It was also more consistent than were the policies of the Moderates to which it was responding. It was, furthermore, an eminently respectable

response intellectually, even if the Popular leaders were on occasion less than impressive as ecclesiastical managers or theological polemicists.

2. The Ideology of Opposition: the Popular Publications.

It is not unreasonable to maintain that patronage became a key issue in the eighteenth century Church of Scotland with the publication of the Moderate 'manifesto' in the 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing' of 1752. It had, of course, raised its head earlier with the 1733 secession of Ebenezer Erskine and his supporters and their final deposition in 1740. Even their strongest sympathisers within the Church, however, did not regard their action over patronage as justifiable.^{1,2} Perusal of the published sources on the subject points towards an earlier appearance of concern with the abuse of patronage, but not as an object of concern in its own right. The leaders of what was to become the eighteenth century Popular party were increasingly worried at its incompatibility with the doctrine of the Church and the legitimate purpose of the ministry. Their publications show that their concern revolved around three key issues: the nature of the Christian Church as a unique institution deriving its function and authority from Christ himself, which led amongst other things, to the doctrine of Christian liberty; the nature and operation of the constitution of the Church of Scotland; and the case for a secular or political initiative to counter the inability of the Popular party to produce effectual ecclesiastical strategies or policies to meet Moderate control of the General Assembly. It should not be assumed, however, that these three issues can be detected systematically in an analysis of Popular writings on the subject of patronage. In fact, the

essential feature of the literature is that it was an evolving response whose emphases varied according to the pattern of events at the General Assembly, though it is noteworthy that there was not a close correlation from year to year. The Popular response to patronage, even in its literary manifestations, had a strikingly pragmatic character. For this reason, it would be wrong to attempt an analysis of the ideology of Popular opposition to patronage in terms of the three key issues. That would be to accord to Popular thought a coherence which it did not consistently display.

Probably the key publication which set the tone for the debate, which was to continue for the rest of the century, was John Willison's Fair and Impartial Testimony, essayed in Name of a Number of Ministers, Elders, and Christian People of the Church of Scotland, unto the Laudable Principles, Wrestlings, and Attainments of that Church, and prevailing evils, both of former and present Times, And namely, the Defections of the Established Church, of the Nobility, Gentry, Commons, Seceders, Episcopallians, etc., published in Edinburgh in 1744. As can be gathered from its title, this extensive pamphlet was much more than just an analysis of patronage and its effects. As has been noticed,¹² amongst the reasons for its publication were the prevalence of infidelity and error; the toleration of heretical doctrines; 'looseness', immorality and doctrinal laxness of ministers, some of whom were allowed to hold divinity posts in the universities; the decline of evangelical preaching and the

spread of 'legal doctrine'; the encouragement given to patronage by some in the ministry when there was no legal necessity to do so; the practice of intrusions which denied congregations their scriptural and constitutional right to call their pastors; the divisions and separations which existed amongst Presbyterians contrary to scriptural injunctions; reproaches cast on spiritual awakenings; and the taking up of Popish doctrines and practices by the Episcopal clergy.¹⁴

In the broad sweep of his objectives, Willison was launching a comprehensive onslaught on the state of the Church from an orthodox evangelical position, and it is in the context of this that his analysis of patronage must be seen. Patronage concerned Willison fundamentally as incompatible with the entire purpose of the Church and with its rights. In the words of an Act of the Synod of Fife of 2 April 1735, which he quoted with approval, patronage 'with power of presenting men to take the oversight of souls, is a manifest encroachment upon the rights and liberties of the Church of Christ'; and those who accepted presentations showed 'little regard to the weighty ends of a Gospel-ministry, the glory of the great and chief Shepherd, and the edification of his flock'.¹⁵ This included, perhaps even was to be largely ensured by, careful observation of the 7th Act of Assembly 1736 concerning 'the preaching of Christ and regeneration' to the people, and 'pressing morality in a Gospel-strain'.¹⁶ This function of preaching was elsewhere described as 'taking charge of the souls' of the people,¹⁷ or the 'edification of the Body of

Christ',¹⁹ or, at perhaps its most evangelical, as 'the very means of salvation to yourselves, your friends, your countrymen, and even to posterity'.¹⁹ The most important function of the ministry, therefore, was the preaching of the Gospel in an evangelical manner.²⁰

This being the case, then, the next key issue was the way in which ministers should be appointed to parishes. Without exception, the position adopted by the Popular party was that a call was essential. If there was unanimity about the necessity of a call, however, the party was split on the exact nature of the call and who was entitled to participate in it. It is important to appreciate the significance of this division for in it lay the seeds of the change from a theological or spiritual strategy of opposition to patronage to a secular or political one. This change was provoked by the failure of the Popular party to modify the Moderate determination to enforce patronage. Ultimately, it explains the virtual disappearance of the issue of patronage from the ecclesiastical scene in Scotland until the nineteenth century.

The basis of the Popular position was undoubtedly that of Willison's Impartial Testimony. Intrusions spoiled the right of congregations to call their own pastors 'contrary to the Word of God and our known principles'. These rights 'Christ hath purchased for them'.²¹ Congregational choice of ministers was the

practice of the 'primitive and purest Ages of the Church'. Any encroachment on such rights was

a plain Incroachment on the natural Rights of Mankind, and upon the Laws of free Societies ... The Churches of Christ are as free Societies as anywhere in the World, having their liberties from Christ to chuse their own Pastors; and ought not to be brought in Bondage to any in this Matter.²²

If this was the starting point for the Popular position on the nature of the call, it is important to realise that it is difficult to find an eighteenth century publication from an identifiable member of the Popular party in the Church of Scotland, after the secession of Ebenezer Erskine, who actually ascribed to the congregation, or heads of families, the sole right of calling a minister.²³ Willison himself maintained that it was evident from the Word of God and Apostolic practice that it was only the Church herself, with her officers, that exercised the power of nominating and electing ministers and officers to the Church, according to the authority derived by them from Christ their Head and Founder.²⁴ The basic Popular position, therefore, may be described as a 'constitutional' position, in that, it was based on doctrinal principles and their legal outworking, not on notions of ecclesiastical democracy or standards of piety.²⁵ The constitutional nature of the position was emphasised by James Gordon, minister of Alford, who was a leading opponent of patronage at the General Assembly in the 1730s and 1740s. He felt it unnecessary, in his State and Duty of the Church of Scotland, to prove that God's people had the power

of right by divine law to choose their own pastors, since this was a principle of the Church. Nor did he deem it necessary to discuss the question whether the people's power should be exercised directly by themselves or by their representatives, by every individual voting personally or by the eldership only with freedom to the congregation to assent or dissent as they wished. This latter, Gordon pointed out, was the manner prescribed in the Directory for Election of Ministers, enacted by the General Assembly on 4 August 1649, although that gave the eldership the first moves in the exercise of the right of election.²⁶ The general principles of this position were endorsed by the Popular leader John Adams of Falkirk in 1754.²⁷

The constitutional nature of the basic Popular position, however, was compromised as early as 1732 by Gordon who, after committing himself to it, at the same time modified it in two ways. First, he introduced the notion of a 'Presbyterial Call', and secondly, he limited the divine right to nominate or elect their own pastor to 'the intelligent religious people of God that reside in that parish'. He postulated two types of Presbyterial Call, the first when a presbytery concurred with the election or call of a parish within its bounds, and the second when a presbytery made a choice of a minister for a parish which would not or could not make a choice for themselves. A Presbyterial Call was necessary for every lawful settlement but 'the shape in which it comes out does not alter the nature of the thing'.²⁸

Although it was not Gordon's intention, the concept of a

Presbyterial call was taken up and extended by a section of the Popular party which was less committed to the preservation of congregational rights. Gordon's limitation of the right of election to the 'intelligent religious people of God' in a parish was linked to an attempt to exclude those who were not members of the Established Church, and he elsewhere qualified the limitation by adding the rider 'whether they be elders, heritors or heads of families'. It was, nevertheless, a significant departure from the Second Book of Discipline which he otherwise endorsed.²⁹ It is perhaps fair to point out that Gordon's work was a response to what he saw as attempts to undermine the Established Church in the 'Northern Counties' by Jacobites, Episcopalians, or Roman Catholics amongst the gentry.³⁰ Nevertheless, it marked a significant development from the basic constitutional position of the Popular party, especially as it came from the hand of a leading opponent of patronage.

Espousal of such ideas, and their extension, were not long in appearing. John Lawson, in his Speech concerning the Settlement of Parishes of 1752, after stating that it was a presbyterian principle that no man should be intruded into a parish, went on to assert that this was not 'pleading the cause merely of the populace, of the weak and ignorant part of mankind', but was also

pleading the cause of the best, of the most judicious and intelligent in every congregation ... the cause of elders, of heritors, of gentlemen as respected as any in the nation, ... of some of the peers of this realm, who, by the rigorous

exercise of patronage, are divested not only of a natural right, but a right secured to them by the rules of the Church, and by the laws of the land.³¹

This no doubt was part of an attempt to enlist support for the anti-patronage cause, but it can be seen as embodying a move from the strict constitutional position. Certainly, only two years later, in 1754, Adams of Falkirk denounced those who had 'contrived for themselves a sort of construction of the meaning of the word "congregation"' which enabled them to operate a system, based on what they claimed to be the practice of the Church, which 'substitutes the heritors and elders, and sometimes the heritors alone, and sometimes the rich and noble of them ... in place of the congregation'.³² To some extent he was supported by the author of the Loud Cry for Help to the Struggling Church of Scotland of 1753, probably John Macclaurin, later to be Lord Dreghorn of the Court of Session. He asserted that 'We do not pretend that all men have an equal right in calling a minister upon an Establishment', and that that right remained with those to whom the law gave it, but struck a more 'popular' note by asserting that as men, Christians, Protestants, and Presbyterians, members of the Church of Scotland had 'a right to judge for ourselves in matters concerning religion'. For example, dissatisfaction with the doctrine or ministry of an established minister could be relieved by going to another either in or out of the Establishment.³³ Departure from unacceptable ministers could only be prevented by the settlement of ministers who could retain the love and affection of their people.³⁴ Then followed a

defence of the prejudices of the common people as being based on valid grounds throughout history from Classical times.³⁵ The pattern of rejection of unlimited congregational rights was quickly established, though, and within a few years John Witherspoon himself disclaimed any belief in the unlimited exercise of a congregational vote in the moderation of a call.³⁶

For much of the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the Popular position wished to deny the right of heritors to separate consideration in the moderation of the call. Gordon, for example, maintained that heritors had no divine or ecclesiastical right to vote in the election of a minister in a parish in which they did not reside or 'hold communion in Gospel-ordinances', except as 'religious parishioners' in which case they were included in the Session or eldership, or amongst the people of the congregation.³⁷ Willison, likewise, would have prohibited the settlement of a parish 'contrary to the mind of the eldership and Christian people', though he was careful to stress that all judicatories and ministers should have

a due regard to all members of Christ's flock, and to all serious praying Christians, and not to despise those who are poor and mean in the world, but to esteem and put honour upon them, and seek an interest in their prayers, and have a regard to their inclinations in planting parishes. And in all decisions about settlements ... to guard against the fear of man which brings a snare.³⁸

In other words, Willison, too, while anxious to defend the rights

of all the congregation, ascribed an important role to the eldership as a separate body.

Apart from this division of opinion within the Popular party on the nature of a call, there was unanimity that the Church was a unique institution and that secular assumptions about the nature of society and authority in a society were inapplicable. The Church was not just a human society, it was a society which was concerned with religious acts and it derived its authority from God alone. This raised the issue of freedom of conscience. In the words of John Adams of Falkirk, who was Moderator of the General Assembly of 1744:

The essence of religious acts, as such, consists in their being done out of regard to the authority of God alone, and in whatever degree the mind is influenced by other motives and considerations, particularly by the commandments of men, its acts in so far cease to be religious - It cannot therefore be supposed that God has given to any man, or society of men, an authority which shall bind the consciences of others, that is, that shall oblige them to do religious acts, because they are prescribed by that authority - For an authority, purely human, which should by itself bind the conscience, and be the immediate reason of obedience in matters of religion, would be inconsistent with the very essence of true religion, and tend to its destruction. 39

This doctrine is crucial to an understanding of the Popular position and was, of course, the main feature of the Popular response to the Moderate 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing'. No minister, argued Adams, could be deprived of his benefice but by 'a departing from the laws of Christ, and the

great ends of his institution' since the whole purpose of an establishment bestowing benefices 'seems plainly to have been to encourage, and support able, active, and faithful ministers in the discharge of their ministerial functions'. Church courts, furthermore, could have no liberty to pardon some and punish others who were equally guilty. That was the prerogative of the Crown in civil government. In ecclesiastical government the judicatories were limited in exercising the penal laws of Christ's government by a fixed and invariable standard - his own authority.⁴⁰ Sometimes, 'regard to the laws of God, the success of the Gospel, and the edification of the body of Christ' called for severe government, but there was a distinction to be drawn between civil and religious societies and their laws:

... civil society calls for a strict and rigorous observation of those laws, upon which the order and security of it depends, because the very essence of civil society, as such, consists in outward order. - And therefore, every plea is imperfect and unreasonable by which disobedience is attempted to be justified, if it once appears that the laws requiring such obedience, are the laws of the society ... with regard to religious societies, there is something very different, in which are two things totally distinct, the oeconomical or constitutional part ... and the radical: the first, wherein the particular outward order, form, or discipline - The last - wherein the very life of religion, as such, consists. - With regard to the last, there is, perhaps, less indulgence to be expected - But with regard to the first, there is great latitude; and a Christian meekness of spirit will lead to great forbearance towards scrupulous minds, when opposition to the outward form and oeconomy, arises from a tender and honest, though mistaken, regard to the more substantial part. - A contrary conduct and spirit wears too much the appearance of political and dangerous designs in religion - It looks like enlarging, and laying a wider foundation on, for enslaving conscience, and introducing spiritual tyranny. - In the infancy of such designs, men have always attempted to confound two things that ought ever to be carefully distinguished - The nature

of religion itself - and the outward form under which it subsists.⁴¹

Adams' definition of the Popular position on the nature of church government and church discipline, then, embodied a complete rejection of the Enlightenment-inspired conceptions put forward by the Moderate authors of the 'Reasons of Dissent'. It was also a much more succinct and tightly argued definition than that put forward in the Popular 'Answers to the Reasons of Dissent'.⁴²

How, then, was all this related to the powers of the General Assembly and its relationship to the constitution of the Church? The most detailed exposition of the Popular position relating to the powers of the General Assembly, ~~however~~ ^{in fact}, was given by Adams in his Inquiry into the Powers committed to the General Assemblies of this Church. In view of this, an extended analysis of Adam's position is called for. In this work, which was prompted by the Inverkeithing Case and the deposition of Gillespie in 1752, the first issue which he sought to elucidate was the relationship between the ordination vows of ministers (and elders) and the authority of the judicatories. He rejected the argument that the ordination vows made every act of disobedience a formal transgression of the vows or a breach of the conditions on which membership of the society and its privileges were forfeited. The ordination vow was to support and maintain the constitution 'with regard to doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, as laid down in our acts and

standards; and to submit to our superiors exercising an authority agreeable to and consistent with these'. To defend absolute obedience to the judicatories was to fail to distinguish two things which the vows inseparably linked: the obedience insisted on; and the doctrine, worship, and discipline established in the Church. When the orders of the superiors were founded on the latter, they were indisputable; if not, they were 'despotic and arbitrary'; if they were inconsistent, it was worse, and one must be neglected. The honest man had to choose between 'his faith and the constitution' on the one hand, and the capricious acts of men, 'who can have no manner of right to demand obedience which would have that effect' on the other.⁴³ The proper authority of the Church, and proper regard for the decisions of its courts, therefore, could only be effectually supported by steady adherence to its 'established principles, and constitutional laws'.⁴⁴ The argument that the Church, since it had powers from Christ himself of doing everything for edification and order, must consequently have the power of enforcing that order by excluding from her society those who refused to submit to such regulations as she might judge appropriate, was rejected as specious on the grounds that 'the order and oeconomy of the Church of Christ, as the Church of Christ' was not 'left to the indefinite determination of any one, or any number of fallible men'. The order established by such men was not so essential to the Christian Church that refusal to comply with it would be deemed by Christ himself a violation of his laws 'and subject the

offender, in his name and authority, to the censures that are peculiar to the open transgressors of his laws'.⁴⁵

Adams was perfectly prepared to allow that Church courts could make illegal decisions, which were usually justified, he claimed, under the term 'the practice of the Church'.⁴⁶ Indeed, he came quite close to arguing that the Church of Scotland could act illegally and be a false church when he asserted that the difference between a true and a false church lay, not in the fact that 'the one can authorise iniquity, and the other cannot; but in this, that the one is directed in all her determinations by the laws of Christ, and the other by false and pernicious principles'. If the true church deviated from the laws of Christ, in that case she acted the part of the false church, and such instances were to be condemned 'and cannot be in any ways binding on the consciences of men, whether of minister or private Christian, without sacrificing the regard due to the authority of God, and to his ministers enforcing his laws'.⁴⁷

Adams then turned to delineate the nature of the change which had occurred in the relationship between the Assembly and the inferior courts of the Church. Originally, the authority of Assemblies and the subordination of judicatories were designed as a fence around the constitution. Recently, however, important parts of constitutional laws and church-order were being disregarded, and the authority of presbyteries was being destroyed by licentious appeals and the encouragement given to

them by arbitrary decisions. Presbyteries and synods were now regarded as the officers of the General Assembly and its Commission 'to execute their will and pleasure without asking questions', instead of as possessing the legislative powers which had been usurped by the General Assembly.. Parishes were little more than tracts of land and congregations 'must not pretend to either conscience and sentiments of their own, much less to rights or privileges'. As well as these objections to the existing state of affairs based on doctrinal or constitutional considerations, Adams also drew attention to a practical factor relating to the need for adherence to the constitution. He argued it was essential to prevent confusion and inconsistency arising from the annual change in the membership of the General Assembly, or the unscrupulous use of artifice or the operation of interest.⁴⁹

More important, however, Adams argued for the radical power of the presbytery over against that of the General Assembly. General Assemblies were 'not the church, but her delegates, vested with a limited power, and which she may limit further, as shall be found useful'. The subordination of judicatories was not the constitution but a defence around the doctrine, worship, and discipline which, as laid down in the public authorised standards and Acts of Assembly, made up the constitution. The constitution and the established principles of the Church, 'lodge a discretionary power in presbyteries, to judge of all acts and orders given out by men, even General Councils', and presbyteries

were committed in the strongest possible way to watch over the doctrine and discipline of the Church, to the utmost of their power.⁴⁹

Adams's exposition remained the Popular party's conception of the Church of Scotland and its organs of government. As such, it was a consistent and potentially effective doctrine on which to base its opposition to the Moderate party with its conception of the Church derived from philosophical ideas about the nature of society, and its policy of the enforcement of patronage. Unfortunately for the Popular party, even though the Moderates were unable effectively to counter its arguments, it was unable to persuade them to change their policy.

Slightly earlier than Adams's work, the anonymous Loud Cry for Help covered similar ground. Like Adams's Inquiry, it arose from the deposition of Thomas Gillespie in 1752, and the main drift of its argument was a dissection of the legality of the Assembly's action. It concluded by denouncing the decision as denying fundamental principles of the doctrine of the Church. After referring to his reading of the Puritan divines who drew up the Westminster Confession of Faith, the author affirmed his belief that Christ, in his capacity as supreme Head and King of the visible Church, had laid down the terms of admission into it, and the qualifications of its members and ministers. Any church which added to or subtracted from its terms of communion sinned grievously and would be subjected to severe trial. The section

dealing with the deposition of Gillespie concluded with an attack on the lawyers in the General Assembly, the vast majority of whom had supported the deposition, for their assertion that men could not have a scruple of conscience at obeying the sentences of their superiors whatever the decision.⁵⁰

Whoever was the author of the Loud Cry for Help to the Struggling Church of Scotland, there seems to be little doubt that John Maclaurin of Glasgow was the author of the impressive Nature of Ecclesiatic Government, and of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland Illustrated. Being a Second Conference on the Terms of Communion attempted to be imposed on the Church of Scotland by a prevailing Party in the General Assembly. Also arising from the Gillespie affair, the work was an attempt to construct a coherent constitutional defence of the Popular position. It is, by the standards of the day, an impressively learned work, showing familiarity with and quoting freely from a wide range of Continental authorities ranging from Pufendorf, Turretine, and Pictet to Montesquieu, Bossuet, and Rollin and referring to English Deists on the way.⁵¹ While the starting point of the work was in some ways the fear that Moderate policies would lead to Popery, Deism, or even Atheism, the emphasis was not overwhelmingly directed towards the specific case which provoked it. The objective, in fact, would appear to be the creation of a theory of church government with

which to counter the arguments of the Moderate 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing'.⁵²

The essential difference between civil and ecclesiastical government, Maclaurin argued, was that the former had as its object only temporal property, and things belonging to this present life, whereas the latter had as its object the eternal salvation of souls. The first might be yielded to others to dispose of without sin or indeed any significant loss, but the care of our eternal interests, contrary to the position of the 'Reasons of Dissent', was inalienable in its nature, the duties it inferred were immutable, and the potential loss absolute.⁵² A further difference between the nature of civil and ecclesiastical government was that the former had a 'legislative' power whereas the latter had only a 'ministerial' power. By this, Maclaurin meant that civil government bound the conscience by reason of the nature of law in things not forbidden by God, whereas the 'ministerial' power of church government consisted of enforcing the laws of Christ who was the only legislator in the Church. If ecclesiastical rulers ordered anything in a manner disagreeable to Christ's word, they exceeded their commission, and had no right to be obeyed because Christians were Christ's subjects, not their¹s. The authors of the 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing' mistook this Protestant doctrine, Maclaurin alleged, for an Independent doctrine and thus felt justified in attacking those who condoned the actions of the Presbytery of Dunfermline. Christ himself expressly differentiated the

government of our civil rulers, and that of the officers of his Church. As a result of this, even the apostles disclaimed any dominion over the Church.⁵³ The question had been debated since the Reformation, he asserted, and the Moderates had no justification for confusing an issue which divided Protestants and Papists with the doctrines which divided Presbyterians and Independents.⁵⁴

The Nature of Ecclesiastic Government further differentiated between the natures of ecclesiastical and civil law by arguing that since Christ's kingdom was not a temporal one its laws were directed towards men's hearts and consciences, and were not therefore to be enforced by means of temporal punishments. Civil magistrates, in contrast, had a power not only to enforce the laws of God but also to make laws of their own which concerned matters of indifference, so that it was a sin for subjects to refuse obedience to them. The Church, even in matters of disobedience to the laws of Christ, if the proper means of reproof and instruction failed, had to proceed to cut off the guilty from participation in the spiritual benefits pertaining to Christ's subjects and from the society of the members of his Church. In matters left undetermined by Christ, the Church, or any part of it, had no power to bind the conscience. It was invalid to argue from civil government to church government for a further reason: the nature of censure or punishment was different. A censure inflicted by a church judicatory could not be lifted without a confession of guilt, and a profession of

repentance, whereas in civil law the inflicting of the requisite punishment was regarded as a sufficient expiation of the offence.⁵⁵ By implication, the whole strategy of the Moderate 'Reasons of Dissent' in arguing from the nature of society and civil government to the nature of the Church and ecclesiastical government was invalid. Even more, it was irrelevant.

There was a further important distinction to be drawn between civil and ecclesiastical authority. In contrast to the former, in a Christian society there was no visible power that had a right to determine authoritatively for those within it, what the supreme power, namely Christ, had left undecided. There was no power in Christian society that was 'strictly and properly supreme'. The governors of Christian society indeed had full power to enforce Christ's laws in a 'ministerial, subordinate, and executive' sense, but they had no power to make any laws of their own which bound the consciences of Christ's subjects. The Assembly, therefore, had only this 'executive' power.⁵⁶ In addition, while the judgement of the Assembly was final in the constitutional sense that it was the last 'public judgement' which could be made, it was obligatory for the Christian always to exercise his private judgement in the matter, since even an ecclesiastical synod could do wrong. The Church was not to be treated as being in principle the same as a civil society in the way embodied in the 'Reasons of Dissent'. It followed from this, furthermore, that the theory of 'absolute and unlimited active obedience to superior judicatories', regarded by Maclaurin as

stated in the 'Reasons of Dissent', was denied by the doctrine of the Church of Scotland.⁵⁷

Maclaurin then proceeded to make a distinction between a free and a despotic government, and to contrast legal government with arbitrary government in a way which would seem to have given rise to Witherspoon's definition of the distinction between a free constitution and despotism.⁵⁸ He maintained that the difference between a free and a despotic government was that the former was 'a legal government or a government by laws', whereas the latter was 'an arbitrary government where the mere will and pleasure of those who have the administration in their hands prevails over the laws'. True liberty consisted in living in a society where laws prevailed, where the supreme administrators of the government, that is, the executive powers, were so bound by them that individuals were protected and punished according to them. The advantage that British subjects had over most of the rest of the world consisted in being under 'the government of laws, and not of men'.⁵⁹ The final three pages of The Nature of Ecclesiastic Government were taken up with an attempt to establish that the actions and arguments of the Moderate party in the Gillespie Case proved that the Church of Scotland no longer had a legal constitution. The first reason in the Moderate 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing' confused the rights of the General Assembly in its legislative capacity with those when it acted in its executive or judicative capacity. Maclaurin quoted Montesquieu's L'Esprit des Lois in his support. In its

legislative authority, the Assembly's decisions were binding; when its executive decisions did not conform to the constitution of the Church, there could be no obligations on members of presbyteries to obey them. Secondly, if it was argued that the Assembly was 'unlimited in her executive power', it had the effect of rendering the whole body of the laws of the Church useless. Thirdly, to argue that the Assembly had the whole legislative power, and therefore must be obeyed, was to disregard the legislative power of the presbyteries who had at least a nominal share in it.⁶⁰ As he argued in his proposed 'Humble Remonstrance of the _____ of _____' to the General Assembly, attached to the Nature of Ecclesiastic Government, 'there cannot be a more effectual usurpation of the legislative power, than the enforcing of a thing so contrary to our standing constitutions by the actual infliction of this censure [on Gillespie] in a mere executive capacity amounts to ...' The Moderate line of reasoning, therefore, had led to the disregard of the Form of Process in the case of Gillespie; and the influence of 'secular men of high rank in the world' appointed by negligent presbyteries as commissioners to the Assembly which, when combined with the doctrine of the unlimited executive power of the Assembly, would enable them 'to overturn every article of our doctrine, worship, discipline, or government, that might happen to incur their displeasure'. If obedience to the arbitrary commands of the Assembly in its executive capacity was to be substituted for the laws of the Church, and insisted upon as a term of ministerial communion, it

would be holding the ministry on a basis uncertain and liable to change in a way that might prove destructive to the interests of Christ's kingdom. It would be unconstitutional and it might render it impossible for ministers to adhere inviolably to their ordination vows, 'notwithstanding of whatever trouble or persecution may arise', if they should be ordered by any superior on earth. In other words the Moderate position opened the door to an Erastian Establishment. The great part of the ministers of the Church of Scotland and by far the greater part of the elders and members, Maclaurin asserted, adhered to the position he had delineated. The proceedings of the 1752 Assembly in deposing Gillespie should be reversed, and failing that, the question should be transmitted to presbyteries. Failing both these alternatives, the majority in the Assembly should at least justify their actions in terms of the constitution of the Church.⁶¹ The strain of defeatism evident in many Popular perceptions of the situation is again obvious.

The significance of Maclaurin's Nature of Ecclesiastic Government lies in the way it complemented Adams' Inquiry into the Powers committed to the General Assemblies of this Church.

The latter work was perhaps at its strongest in its rejection of the ideas of ecclesiastical government espoused by the Moderates in the 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing', and in its advocacy of the concept of the Church as a unique institution deriving its structure and constitution from its nature as the

Body of Christ on earth. When it came to the analysis of the relationship between the General Assembly and the constitution of the Church, Adams' reasoning was much looser. Maclaurin, while in no way moving away from traditional Scottish conceptions of the doctrine of the Church, produced a much more developed theory of the constitution of the Church of Scotland, derived largely from Montesquieu, which based the Popular position on a clearly defined differentiation between the legislative and executive powers of the General Assembly.⁶² Both Maclaurin's work, and the contemporaneous Loud Cry for Help to the Struggling Church of Scotland, however, by removing the debate from a predominantly theological context into political and legal areas, may be seen as paving the way for the secularisation that was to dominate Popular thought on patronage in the 1760s.

Before turning to the development of the new, secularised approach to the nature of the Church and its implications, however, it is desirable to assess the impact of the theories that had been propounded on the issue of patronage up until the 1750s. The evidence suggests that the Popular reaction to patronage was aroused not by objections to the institution in principle, but by concern about its effect on the ministry. Consideration of the wider questions of the constitution of the Church and its government raised questions of the nature and necessity of a call to a parish. As a result of the debate over patronage, much that was written on these subjects related to the powers and membership of the General Assembly and its Commission.

The essence of the Popular position appeared in John Witherspoon's 'Reasons for Dissent from a Vote of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the 21st of May 1757, Receiving the Commissions of several elders not attested in terms of the Act 9. Assembly 1722.' This document shows signs of having been influenced by the arguments of Maclaurin's Nature of Ecclesiastic Government. Commissions from 'constituents', argued Witherspoon, bound members of the Assembly to determine all cases according to the constitution of the Church of Scotland 'but vest us with no power of determining contrary to that constitution'. The underlying justification for this was that

It is the very essence and security of a free constitution, that then, not men, not judges, but laws bear rule. When laws are suspended, dispensed with or set aside, by the decisions of any executive court, that security ceases, and despotism prevails.⁶³

Appreciation of the implications of this are crucial for an understanding of the approach of the Popular party at the Assembly to the problem of patronage. The party was convinced that the constitution of the Church of Scotland was, to use Witherspoon's terms, a free constitution, and that patronage was contrary to it and incompatible with the spiritual purpose of the Church. Their perception, therefore, was that the way to counter it was by rational argument both in publications and at the Assembly. In view of this, what proposals did the party apologists put forward to secure their objectives?

James Gordon was the first to enunciate the policy which was to become the Popular strategy at least until the Moderate 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing', and, in a somewhat different form, for fifteen or twenty years after that. He argued that the Church had the power to end the grievance of patronage because the Act of 1719 was intended to make the Church 'easy' under the system of patronage, since it allowed its collapse if ministers and probationers declined to accept presentations.⁶⁴ Willison's Fair and Impartial Testimony, which has already been referred to,⁶⁵ opened its detailed analysis of patronage patronage with this very point. The 'Door of Patronage' was the means by which a corrupt ministry entered the Church. Those who were 'erroneous, immoral, intruders, supporters of patronage, and spoilers of Christian congregations of the rights which Christ hath purchased for them', if they did not repent, should be 'purged out of the Church'.⁶⁶ The 1719 Act was the equivalent of a plain repeal of patronage because no presbyterian would accept a presentation.⁶⁷ In addition to such legal arguments, however, Willison produced six 'Reasons against Patronages'. First, according to the authority derived from Christ, the Head and Founder of the Church, only the Church herself, with her officers, should exercise the power of nominating and electing ministers and officers to the Church. Secondly, it was contrary to the practice of the primitive and purest ages of the Church, and the Church Fathers declared in favour of the liberty and power of the Church to choose her own pastors without any extrinsic influence whatever. Thirdly, it was

contrary to Scripture, to Antiquity and Reason, and to the interest and safety of the Church that the power of choosing pastors should be in the hands of heretics and profane men because of the possibility of the power falling into the hands of declared enemies of the Church, and because of the possibility of simony. Fourthly, patronage was a plain encroachment on 'the natural rights of mankind, and upon the laws of free societies'; and the churches of Christ were as free societies as any anywhere in the world because their liberties to choose their own pastors came from Christ and should not be in bondage to any in the matter. Fifthly, it was a cruel oppression to societies of men who valued their immortal souls and desired proper spiritual guides for their edification, comfort, and eternal concerns to place them under the care of patrons who were liable to be 'indifferent about the concerns of their own souls, being negligent, erroneous or profane', and as a result unlikely to be 'much concerned to choose proper pastors to take inspection of the souls of others'. And, sixthly, as afore-mentioned, patronage was to be seen as an open door for 'a corrupt ministry' to enter the Church as had been established in those churches which were dominated by patronage. ⁶⁸

Those who accepted presentations, however, were especially condemned by Willison. They were partners in sin with the patrons 'by homologating [their] usurped power, and strengthening [them] in it'. Those who accepted presentations were 'properly the oppressors of the Church of Christ'. They encouraged and hardened

patrons in their guilt and sinful usurpation, and obstructed their conviction, repentance, and reformation. The acceptance of presentations, indeed, was presented as the root cause of much that was to be deplored in the Church. It led to

simoniacal pactions and intrigues, unchristian contentions and divisions in judicatories, oppressive concussions in parishes, vexatious prosecutions and appeals, and many scandalous intrusions in churches, to the great discredit of religion, and reproach of the ministerial character.

Ultimately, it led to schism. On the basis of the Second Book of Discipline, those who accepted presentations were chargeable with defection and breach of faith. Willison touched on the doctrine of the Church when he argued that the system of presentation and acceptance of presentation inverted Christ's appointed order in the Church in that a minister's right to maintenance should be consequential to his ordination to the ministry. It was an 'inversion contrary to Christ's stated order, and the nature of things', and it led ministers to limit the success of the Gospel and their own ministries by offending the parishes concerned, as well as others, by their conduct. This offence was worsened when it was seen that there was no need to accept presentations.⁶⁹ The idea that acceptance of presentation before ordination was an inversion of the proper order of things was logically developed to include the suggestion that ministers could be seen as seeking their livelihoods rather than the success of the Gospel,⁷⁰ or, as Adams put it, as turning Christ's 'sacred institution' of ordination 'into a mere passport, to a temporal benefice'.⁷¹

Adams, in fact, took the argument a stage further when he integrated it into his case against the deposition of Gillespie in 1754. The purpose of granting a benefice was 'to encourage, and support able, active and faithful ministers in discharge of their ministerial functions'. This being the case, it could be forfeited only if the minister departed from the laws of Christ and failed to fulfil the purposes of his ministry. The office of the minister and the benefice, therefore, stood or fell together. As well as accepting the general direction and implications of Willison's analysis of the reasons against patronage, Adams' work extended the range of the argument by maintaining that those who accepted presentations, together with members of Assemblies which appointed their ordination to a parochial charge, were chargeable with a breach of their ordination vows.⁷² This last point, however, perhaps owed more to the Assembly's treatment of the Presbytery of Dunfermline which refused to comply with its instructions to ordain the presentee to Inverkeithing, than to a concept which emerged from the overall Popular analysis of the reasons against patronage.

It is noteworthy that most of the features delineated as emerging in the Popular position by the mid-1750s continued to appear as late as 1770. For example, in John Snodgrass's Effectual Means of Recovering our Religious Liberties, there was the same assertion that the Church had only itself to blame for the 'spiritual oppression and tyranny' of patronage, since it was under no necessity by law to carry out violent settlements. In

particular, Snodgrass inveighed against the corrupt state of the ministry caused by patronage, which had led to ignorance of the truths of the Gospel, the rise of infidelity and wickedness in all the great towns, 'a famine of the word of life', ministerial immorality, the growth of contempt for religion, and ultimately, to a threat to the very means of salvation.⁷³

In short, then, Popular ideology concerning patronage stressed two concepts: the unique nature of the Church as deriving its purpose and authority from the commands of Christ himself and as a result not being susceptible to analysis by means of secular social or philosophical theories; and the existence of the Church of Scotland's constitution which both precluded patronage and provided the means for the removal of its effects. Persuading the Moderate-controlled Assembly to accept either of these concepts or to modify its enforcement of patronage was another matter, and failure to do so led to the development of a more secular polemic against patronage and of the associated secularised strategy from the early 1750s. The case for this strategy is the third issue emerging from Popular publications on patronage.

The Popular assessment of the reasons for its failure to persuade the Assembly were uniform throughout the second half of the century. It criticised those who were elected as ruling elders to be commissioners to the Assembly, and the way in which the Assembly, and especially the Commission of Assembly, were

open to influence by factions and by the Government, but the failure was also the result of the absence of a coherent Popular strategy.

As early as 1732, James Gordon was arguing in favour of denying the right of separate representation at the General Assembly to universities, royal burghs, and non-residing commissioners, including heritors, from presbyteries. Furthermore, he maintained that the method of nominating the Commission of Assembly and defining its functions were not founded on the Word of God, and that it was not, by Scriptural definition and example, 'an ecclesiastick Synod'.⁷⁴ Willison, when referring to the Assembly of 1734 and its efforts to appease the Seceders, referred to the opposition 'of great men, ruling elders, who had a strong party in the House to support them', and in general ascribed a political motivation to opposition to Popular efforts to tackle the patronage problem.⁷⁵ The Assembly's failure over the years to do anything was ascribed to 'pusillanimity, or sinful fearfulness of offending the Government', regard for patrons and heritors, and the influence of the Crown which was alleged to have the patronage 'of most of the Churches of Scotland', strong influence from the Court, and 'the activity of several leading ministers, who had their dependence upon or expectations from that airth'.⁷⁶ Adams of Falkirk, on the other hand, ascribed the deposition of Gillespie to the cowardice of those who did not vote, and particularly to the lay eldership whose judgement in such matters should be of

less weight since they had no part in the execution of such sentences, and would therefore be less interested in their nature and more indifferent about their consequences.⁷⁷ By the 1760s, however, Popular suspicions about the role of the ruling eldership had become less pronounced.⁷⁸

More revealing than analysis of why the Popular party thought they had been unsuccessful in attempts to persuade the Assembly to oppose patronage, however, is analysis of what they proposed to do about it. The apparent inability of the Popular party to produce concrete proposals for gaining control of the General Assembly in the short-term is striking. Willison, for example, certainly saw the patronage issue as being part of the much larger problem of spiritual declension in the Church as a whole.⁷⁹ He advocated that greater concern should be shown by members of the judicatories for the support of the truths that they had sworn to uphold in their subscriptions to the Confession of Faith. His proposals for dealing with patronage were a mixture of exhortation of the Assembly to enforce the existing legislation limiting the rights of patronage and acceptance of presentations, and a set of administrative proposals. The latter commenced with the suggestion that acceptance of, or adherence to, a presentation should be treated as contravention of the ordination formula if it stood in the way of a presbytery's right of free moderation of a call or a parish's right to free election. The Assembly should endeavour to ensure the absence of 'any compulsion or undue influence' in the calling of ministers,

and should adopt measures to transport and remove ministers to whom parishes could not be brought to submit. Appeals from synods should only be to the General Assembly or to the meeting of the Commission immediately after the Assembly when their meetings were numerous, 'it not being agreeable to Presbyterian principles and parity, that the greater number of ministers should be subjected to the authority and judgement of a lesser'.

Presbyteries should be most careful and conscientious in licensing men to preach the Gospel and should enquire into their 'true godliness' and Scriptural doctrine, and also into 'their sentiments concerning patronage and other grievances of the Church.' The Assembly should declare that it was the duty of ministers to testify against the corruptions of the times, 'and even against what is wrong in the Acts and Proceedings of the Church judicatories'. Presbyteries should also be strictly conscientious in their attestation of ruling elders who were to sit in Assemblies or Commissions that they were qualified according to the Act of 1722. And finally, Willison urged that the Assembly should investigate the rights of Colleges and royal burghs to chose ministers or elders to sit in the General Assembly.⁸⁰ In other words, Willison was proposing to defeat patronage by the rigorous selection of ministers and elders in order to reduce the presence at the Assembly of those who supported patronage. The other proposal of substance was to reduce the influence of the Commission of Assembly. Everything that Willison proposed, however, ultimately depended on a majority of presbyteries being prepared to adopt a systematic and

sustained policy of excluding from the Assembly all who would not take a consistent anti-patronage stand. Analysis of dissents from the decisions of the General Assembly suggests that such a policy would have had no chance of implementation even if presbyteries were to have been prepared to adopt such a divisive course of action.⁸¹

The inability of the Popular strategists to produce an alternative policy with any real chance of success was revealed clearly enough in Adams' Inquiry into the Powers committed to the General Assemblies of this Church as well as in the Loud Cry for Help to the Struggling Church of Scotland. After considerable analysis, Adams produced four proposals: undue solicitation and jobbing at Assemblies should be dealt with by enacting that such practices would lose the cause of those adopting them; no sentences or orders issued found to be inconsistent with the standing rules of the Church should have any effect, irrespective of whatever precedents or former practices might be pretended; all presbyteries should be enjoined to call their Assembly commissioners to a strict account and those found faulty in terms of their commission should be censured; and no sentence should be insisted upon if presbyteries concerned in its execution deemed it to be illegal or unconstitutional until the case was considered by the next General Assembly and dealt with according to the laws and rules of the Church.⁸² The lameness of the proposals, with the exception of the last, which was aimed at the Commission, is obvious. The proposals of the Loud Cry for Help

were equally unrealistic, as were Maclaurin's for obtaining the reversal of the deposition of Gillespie in the Nature of Ecclesiastic Government.

The factors behind the attraction of a political or secular strategy are seen clearly when the Loud Cry for Help's proposals for immediate implementation in the courts of the Church are compared with those of Willison's Fair and Impartial Testimony.¹⁷⁹ The Loud Cry urged Sessions who concurred in its views to wait upon their minister if he is inclined to support 'the tyrannical measures now in vogue', expostulate with him to consider the divided state of the Church, and to represent the absurdity of treating with contempt those he had in his care 'while he almost worships the gentry who trample upon his character, and despise his ministrations'. Secondly, it urged elders not to consider secession because 'the high-flying clergy' said that no opponent could do them as much harm out of the Church as in it. Thirdly, Sessions should choose elders who would promise to attend the presbytery and synod. This point the author saw as critical since there were seldom half as many elders as ministers present, though by right the numbers should be equal. The author had 'always looked upon the elders as representatives of the people, and therefore expect, when the elders are all or mostly absent, to find the interest of the people in a great measure neglected'. Fourthly, Presbytery elders should also remember to vote for 'proper' commissioners to the General Assembly, 'not regarding whose turn it is'; that they should ensure that those chosen were

duly qualified according to the relevant Acts of Assembly; and that evidence of qualification should be obtained. Evidence of conduct of family worship and attendance at public worship especially should be sought. Fifthly, Kirk Sessions throughout the nation should send representations or remonstrances to the General Assembly. This device had proved useful in the past, If it was a privilege of inferiors in the civil state to petition their superiors against grievances, the same privilege must also exist in an 'Ecclesiastick Society', and surely as much 'mildness and tenderness' could be expected in the Church as in the State. And, finally, Kirk Sessions should seek and follow 'the advice of such ministers as you esteem to be the most prudent and faithful'.⁸⁴

Such proposals embodied a retreat from the specific type of administrative proposals made, for example, by Willison in 1744 and in 1754 by Adams of Falkirk in his Inquiry into the Powers committed to the General Assemblies of this Church.⁸⁵ Several of the Loud Cry's proposals were little more than the expression of pious hopes. The ecclesiastical strategy was beginning to crumble. Apart from this, the Loud Cry for Help is notable for its almost 'populist' emphasis on the rights and role of 'the people'. In general, however, there can be little doubt that the closely argued, legalistic reasoning of the work opened the minds of many supporters of the campaign against patronage to the possibility of a political and secular strategy to replace the ecclesiastical initiatives which were so signally failing.

It is not unreasonable to suggest, therefore, that the secularisation of the Popular analysis of and response to patronage, and the development of a new strategy based on the role of the heritors, were the result of growing awareness of two matters. First, the attempt to fight patronage by appealing to what the Popular party understood to be the constitution of the Church was doomed to failure because of inflexible Moderate domination of the Assembly. Second, the attempt to persuade the presbyteries to preclude any supporter of patronage from appearing as a commissioner to the General Assembly was seen to be futile.

There are three possible implications of this perception of the unwillingness or inability of the presbyteries to cooperate in Popular proposals for combating the Moderate majority in the Assembly. All have implications for the interpretation of the Popular party and its role in the eighteenth century Church. First, there is the possibility that the party had limited reliable support at the Assembly. It is notable, for example, that there was a wide disparity between the numbers of those who were prepared to vote against the Moderate view of disputed settlements and the numbers of those who were prepared to adhere to dissents concerning them. Furthermore, there were considerable fluctuations in the numbers voting for Popular motions at the same Assembly. This was pronounced at and after the deposition of Gillespie. As a result the second possibility arises, that the rank-and-file of the party had lost heart before those in the

leadership.⁸⁶ Most important, however, is the third possibility: that at presbytery, and even at the General Assembly, the common assumption of a wide division between Popular and Moderate ministers is not valid and that, apart from the issue of patronage, there was little evident party division at all.⁸⁷

The appearance of a secular or political emphasis in the evolution of the Popular strategy for combating patronage was not merely the result of Popular impotence at the General Assembly. As early as 1754, John Adams concluded his Inquiry into the Powers committed to the General Assemblies of this Church by attempting to enlist lay and even Governmental support for the Popular position by linking the threat of the alienation from the civil constitution of the affections of the people with their hostility to violent settlements and encroachments on the ecclesiastical constitution. This in turn was linked to the growth of Dissent and its implications for the landed interest. Tenants would use their incomes to set up and endow dissenting congregations with their buildings and stipends, and finance which would otherwise have been available for land improvement and payment of rents would not be put to such use.⁸⁸ John Maclaurin's Nature of Ecclesiastic Government, published in the same year, also introduced a note of political theory to the debate as has been noticed, but A Loud Cry for help to the Struggling Church of Scotland of 1753, although it had evangelical stresses, was very much a political document. The work displayed a Whig tone with the identification of patronage

as having been introduced by a Tory ministry hostile to Presbyterianism.⁸⁹ The idea of 'concurrence' being introduced to replace the doctrine of the call was condemned,⁹⁰ and the argument was taken up that the Church had the power to make the law of patronage what it thought it fit to make it.⁹¹ From here on, however, the Loud Cry for Help took on a more profound significance in the development of the Popular response to patronage. The author regarded the most common argument in favour of settling ministers with little or no concurrence as being the fear that refusal to settle a presentee without a good reason would provoke the patrons, who were 'mostly great men', to bind patronage more closely on the Church by an Act of Parliament. Then, in a passage which may well have been the origin of the later strategy of attempting to enlist the support of the landed gentry for the Popular cause, he argued that he could safely say that all the heritors, elders, and heads of families would prefer patronage to be forced on them by an Act of Parliament than by an Act of Assembly for two reasons: first, it was more honourable to submit to the stronger rather than weaker master, and Parliament was stronger than the Assembly 'as consisting of two Houses to one, besides the King, not to mention smaller differences'; and, secondly, it was preferable to be wounded by a distant source, rather than by one with which one was closely connected and related.⁹² Apart from the Erastianism implied in this position, this assessment opened the way for a political offensive against patronage. The rights of the Church of Scotland, if they were not

asserted before Parliament, would lose their force by desuetude in the same way as many ministers throughout the country had lost the power of discipline over the nobility and gentry.⁹³ If brought before Parliament, the case against patronage would not be lost, first of all because the King, 'whose candour and goodness are universally acknowledged, as well as his abilities to discern his own interest well known', could easily see that violent settlements were contrary to the interest of the Crown since alienation of the Presbyterians would lead the Ministry to seek the political friendship of the Jacobites. The old spectre of Jacobitism was then raised by identifying the strongest supporters of patronage as those who in the 1747 Assembly were most in favour of allowing 'disaffected nonjurant Episcopalian heritors' a share in the election of a Presbyterian minister. The argument then alleged that those ministers who were settled contrary to the will of their people, were forsaken by their people, had least to do at home, always wandered most abroad, spent the most money, and were therefore the strongest supporters of stipend augmentation which was contrary to the interest of the heritors, several of whom were Members of Parliament! The 'keenest, fiercest and most indiscreet' prosecutors of the stipend augmentation scheme were known to be 'the Abettors of presentations', whereas those ministers who 'used in settlements to have some small consideration of US the vulgar, and consequently, to show comparatively less regard to the gentry ... discovered the greatest modesty and deference' in the matter.⁹⁴

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In the aftermath of the Schism Overture of 1766, in which the Popular party sought to use the growth of the Secession Church as an argument for the restriction of patronage, many of these ideas reappeared in an anonymous pamphlet entitled A Short History of the Late General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, shewing the Rise and Progress of the Schism Overture, the Reasonableness or Necessity that some Restriction be put on the Exercise of the Patronage Act, and the Means which the Church hath in its own Power to mitigate or remove that Grievance.⁹⁶ In this hitherto overlooked publication is to be found the exposition of most of the ideas which were later popularised by the lay leader, Andrew Crosbie, in his Thoughts of a Layman concerning Patronage and Presentations.⁹⁷ The work was characterised by a pronounced political awareness or preoccupation in its analysis.⁹⁸ It stressed that the propounders of the Overture did not mean that popular elections should take the place of presentations 'whatever might be meant by some warm ministers and elders', but that what was sought was some mitigation of the law, 'or that some regard should be had to the elders and residing heritors in settling a vacant parish'. Election by the majority of heads of families would seldom result in the candidate of greatest merit being preferred and would soon 'introduce a weaker set of clergy than have hitherto filled the pulpits of Scotland'.⁹⁹

Two main reasons were advanced why the author of A Short History believed that the heritors could be counted upon to

oppose unpopular presentations. First, patronage was prone to produce ministers who might be disagreeable companions to the gentlemen-heritors, and therefore the heritors would endeavour to obtain some relief against the rigid exercise of patronage. Secondly, dissent promoted by unpopular presentations would adversely affect the heritors economically.⁹⁹ In other words, the second reason was virtually the same as was advanced by Adams a decade earlier. While the Short History expressed uncertainty as to what the promoters of the Schism Overture meant to do if the motion had been successful, it unequivocally rejected as improper the idea that the General Assembly should enforce the principles of the 1719 Act concerning acceptance of presentations. Instead, it advocated that presbyteries should not transport a minister already in a charge unless there was a sufficient call, that the 1732 Act lodging the power of election in the conjunct body of the heritors and elders should be re-enacted, and that there should be a return to popular doctrines, sentiments, and language in preaching since the absence of these latter features were the key to the growth of schism.¹⁰⁰ The first of these three alternatives did not embody any significant advance on the strategy of the earlier supporters of the Popular position, the last was not likely to have been any more successful if it was patronage which was placing non-Popular ministers in pulpits. The second alternative was then the key one. The Short History, however, is of interest in a further way in that, for the first time, it gave a detailed analysis of the Assembly membership and attempted to establish the nature of the Moderate majority. After

drawing attention to the in-built ministerial majority in presbytery representation arising from the two-to-one representation of ministers to ruling elders, it was argued that this advantage was negated by lay representation from the royal burghs and the universities, by the ability of Edinburgh lawyers and gentlemen to represent distant parishes or royal burghs, the inability of ministers to represent another presbytery, and the inability of increasing numbers of ministers to attend the Assembly for financial reasons.¹⁰¹ This produced a situation where the Moderate interest found it easier to prevail.

Apart from its introduction of a secular and political perspective to the debate in a more fundamental way than hitherto, and its analysis of the reasons for Moderate domination of the Assembly, the Short History also dealt with the possibility of a policy by Government of weakening the democratic power in the Church in order to promote monarchical power in the State. To do so, it was argued, the Government promoted patronage in order to disjoin the people from their ministers, it had a deliberate policy of pauperising the clergy, it welcomed the absence of the nobility and gentry from worship in order to discredit the clergy, and it encouraged the divisions between the Moderate and Popular parties in order to divide the clergy and overcome their potential influence. The use of pensions, rich benefices, chaplaincies and other such devices succeeded wonderfully well in ensuring that matters in the Assembly went 'entirely to the satisfaction of the ministry'. Certain of the

clergy, in turn, entertained the judges 'copiously and cheerfully' and this led to further biased voting.¹⁰²

In brief, then, the Short History of the Late General Assembly for the first time introduced a completely secular basis into what had hitherto been a religious or ecclesiastical debate. The context in which it put forward its views was a political rather than an ecclesiastical one. It took the debate firmly into the political arena. There was certainly no mention of the spiritual function of the ministry, and little of the constitution of the Church. When referring to the religious state of the Highlands and Islands, the purpose of the erection of parishes was that of 'instructing and civilising them', and the function of a minister was seen somewhat ambiguously as 'teaching the people their duty to God and man'.¹⁰³ Both of these concepts embodied a process of secularisation of the patronage debate which was to become even more pronounced in the key contribution of Andrew Crosbie in his Thoughts of a Layman concerning Patronage and Presentations.

It is obvious from the first page of Crosbie's work that he argued from different premises from all the works on the subject except the Short History. Indeed, the tenor of the opening paragraphs was closer to that of the Moderate 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing' than it was, for example, to Willison's Fair and Impartial Testimony. After an introductory paragraph which blandly informed the reader that 'religion is of

the utmost importance to mankind', and that those 'who feel sentiments of religion' would exert themselves to their utmost in its interest and extension, there followed a section which, while derived quite closely from Popular social and political thought, gave an unequivocal secular vision of the purpose of religion.

Even those who have never felt its force, will own, that it is a matter of attention to human society. Experience will tell them, that in proportion as religion is unknown, the social ties are weak. Order and good government must assume it for their chief support: for it is religion alone that can form the principles of by far the greater part of the human race; who, if ignorant of it, will hardly be sensible of moral obligations at all.

Hence, even those who are insensible to the impressions of religion, will from self-concern, and from a desire of the security and tranquillity of society, wish to forward its interest among men. They may differ perhaps in their ideas of what the real interest of religion is; but they will nevertheless endeavour to prevent its annihilation.¹⁰⁴

Further indication of the nature of Crosbie's conception of the nature of society was revealed immediately thereafter. The majority of all societies consisted of men 'who are unable to form proper opinions of things themselves, far less to argue upon abstract ideas'. The common people of all countries had no time to make such enquiries and had not the education to do so in any case.¹⁰⁵ Few were so stupid or insensible as to be unconscious of 'the existence of a Supreme Being', and of the due reverence and duty they owed to him, but without instruction this sense only produced 'a gross and absurd superstition' or a careless reliance on the Deity's protection without knowledge of or implementation of his laws.¹⁰⁶

The function of an established ministry, therefore, was to instruct such people of the 'true nature and end of religion', and 'to form their ideas with respect to religion'. This had to be done frequently if it was to be effectual. From an established clergy the most important services to society were to be expected: through their efforts, all the inhabitants of a country, but especially 'the lower class of people', were 'imbued with the principles of religion, and their manners are formed according to its dictates, which include every important duty incident to human life'.¹⁰⁷ In proportion to the conscientiousness of the ministry, 'the manners of a people are more or less perfect; and that country may be said to be in the highest state of civilisation, where the purest doctrines of religion are most universally taught, and where the clergy are most assiduous in discharging their duty of teaching them'.¹⁰⁸

To achieve these ends, Crosbie produced as criteria for entrance to the ministry a list of qualifications which were markedly unspiritual when compared with those of earlier Popular writers. The responsibilities of the ministry were not only to conduct public worship but also to discharge pastoral duties such as catechising, visiting the sick, friendship and companionship with the parishioners, and the clarification of their religious doubts. As qualifications for these duties

polite literature, and elegant erudition, will be of no use. Plain sense, a sincere heart, and a sufficient knowledge of practical divinity, are the chief requisites in a pastor; together with a competent knowledge of controversial

divinity, in case a parish falls to his charge where Popery or schisms prevail.

Learning, though, was not a disadvantage, and might in fact enable a minister to rise in popular esteem and be more useful to the public, though it should not be seen as an essential part of the qualifications for the ministry. "" The contrast between this kind of definition and the predominantly spiritual requirements of, for example, Willison, is striking. ""

It followed from Crosbie's views on the qualifications for entrance to the ministry that qualifications for admission to a particular parish should be based on similar considerations. If the parish was viewed in a theoretical way, 'the man to whom the people are willing to listen for instruction' was the most proper person to instruct them if he was capable of doing so. If such a man could not be found, 'he to whom the people shew the least aversion to listen is, ceteris paribus, preferable to any other'. A pastor should know the doctrines he was to teach and be able to teach them, and the people should be willing to have him instruct them. If either or both were absent, his labours would be futile, the people would degenerate in manners and knowledge, he would become a burden on the Establishment, and he would prevent others from performing the functions which he could not. It followed that the simplest and most obvious method of settling a minister was by the election of the people, combined with 'a proper scrutiny into the abilities of the man chosen by the people'. If

he was ignorant or incapable of instructing, he should be rejected.''' In this, Crosbie was following a conventional Popular line of thought relating to the obligation of the Church to provide an effectual ministry, though his conception of its purpose was not notably spiritual. Few Popular ministers, too, would have accepted that the divinity courses at the universities and the system of presbyterial examination of the attainments of candidates for licence would have allowed an ignorant or incapable man to be ordained.

Crosbie then turned his attention to the system of patronage. He argued that presentations were not agreeable to the original constitution of the Church of Scotland by reference to the First and Second Books of Discipline, that patronage had its origins in the medieval Church of Rome, and he refuted alleged legal and historical arguments in support of patronage.''' Arguments in its support on the grounds that endowment of a benefice carried with it the right to presentation were refuted on the grounds that patrons at present possessed the teinds in lieu of the right of patronage, as were arguments on the basis of administrative expediency. He then raised the spectre of the link between violent settlements and ideas of political liberty felt by 'the lower class of mankind in Scotland'. As a result of the existing laws governing qualifications for voting in parliamentary elections in both county and burgh, electors were reduced to a very small number and the lower classes were totally excluded. Instead of spreading the spirit of liberty among the

people, or making them aware of their political role, the existing system tended rather to introduce 'aristocratic ideas', and as a result deprived the lower classes of 'every feeling of liberty'. In the election of ministers, the people felt their own political strength and such occasions tended to arouse some sense of liberty, which in any case was aroused by the whole system of Presbyterian church government. The political drift of such ideas was revealed when Crosbie attempted to identify support for and opposition to 'genuine ideas of Presbytery' with administrations 'favourable to liberty' and 'governments of an opposite stamp' respectively.¹¹³

The association of patronage with illiberal government paved the way for an analysis of the evils arising from patronage. Crosbie claimed that out of a total of 944 benefices in the Church of Scotland, the patronage of 334 was in the hands of the Crown, that of 309 in the hands of the nobility, and that of 233 in those of the landed gentry. This caused presentation to be open to political evils of a very serious nature. The right of presentation could be used for corruption in elections, both by local individuals and by the Crown, it could lead to the possibility of simony, and it led to the possibility of enemies of the Church such as Papists or Non-jurants finding the means of undermining the Establishment. It allowed non-religious patrons the chance of presenting immoral presentees, and irresponsible patrons the chance of presenting an unpopular man merely in order

to assert their rights over the community for ostentatious reasons. All such abuses opened the way to schism.¹¹⁴

Crosbie offered several alternatives. He rejected the idea that patrons and principal heritors were sufficient judges of ministerial qualifications since their style of life was too different from that of the majority of the people. In his opinion, 'the middle rank' were best qualified, because they had some knowledge of their own, and were also able to sense those powers of instruction which would produce the best effects on the lower class. They would know what style of preaching was likely to be most useful in country parishes and which was relevant for large towns in being 'instructive to the people, and better answering the ends of public worship'. It was also unreasonable to exclude the middle rank of people from a voice in the choosing of pastors.¹¹⁵ This idea fitted well with another suggestion of Crosbie's, that the concept of a 'qualified' person for a settlement was misunderstood. It was usually assumed, he maintained, that a man who 'has sufficient literature, and who can acquit himself upon his trials, is qualified'. Instead, the qualification of a person should depend much more on the circumstances of the presentee and the parish taken in conjunction.¹¹⁶ The implications of this, though Crosbie did not make them explicit, were that his 'middle rank of people' should have much greater influence in the process of appointing a minister at both parish and presbytery level than they had at the time, since they were in the best position to judge.¹¹⁷

To overcome the problem of patronage, Crosbie advanced three propositions: first, that a careful judgement of the qualifications of presentees should be made in the light of the particular circumstances of the parish; secondly, this required precision by the courts of the Church in fixing the requisites of each settlement; and thirdly, the judicatories should be especially precise in defining what call or concurrence was necessary in each case. These suggestions were not radical and did not represent a dramatic variance from conventional Popular thought, but Crosbie did make a break from the traditional viewpoint with his next assertion. The question might be raised, he claimed, 'founded on matter of pure faith and theology, viz., Whether the people have a divine right to call their own pastor or not? Although Crosbie accepted that it was difficult to determine if there was a question of theology or not, he went on to claim that 'in the present state of the Church of Scotland, it is not so much an article of faith, as a question of political arrangement, when applied to the settlement of a parochial pastor.''' He rejected the argument in favour of a congregational call based on the practice of the early or apostolic Church by means of a cursory examination of the election of Matthias to the apostleship, and argued that 'it will appear impracticable, that the whole members of the Church of Scotland should vote in the call of a minister to every particular parish'. Voting should obviously be limited to the members of the particular parish in question. He left out any discussion of the claims of heads of families to have voting

rights and confined his analysis to the relative claims of heritors and elders. After analysis of the difficulties of the various schemes which had been proposed, he put forward a new one whereby the call would be decided by the votes of delegates or commissioners, some of whom would be chosen by the heritors, some by the elders 'considered in their ecclesiastical capacity only', and some by the parishioners. If the patron did not exercise his right of presentation, he would have the right to nominate delegates. This system, claimed Crosbie, would bid fair to remove all the grievances complained of, and was within the power of the Church of Scotland to implement. It could also be applied to burghs without difficulty. '''

The significance of these proposals was threefold. In the first place, it was assumed that the heritors were entitled to separate representation in the election of a minister. No justification was produced for the assumption other than that they, as the 'middle rank of the people' were best able to judge the qualifications of a minister for a particular parish. The common people were incapable of the conceptual thought necessary to assess the relevant requirements. Secondly, it was assumed that it was necessary and justifiable to balance the interests and representation of the heritors and elders in the process of election. Once again, no justification for this assumption was produced except the vague expectation that 'all different denominations of people would be represented in such a call', and that such a system would prevent tumults and disturbances. 120

Both these assumptions represented a significant departure from the ideas to be found in earlier Popular publications dealing with patronage. Thirdly, the proposals embodied a change of strategy on the question of patronage. Until Crosbie, the Popular party aimed at the abolition of the practice, or at least at rendering it ineffectual or irrelevant. Crosbie, however, proposed its modification in order to remove the civil consequences of its operation through the agency of the middle-ranking heritors, and to some extent at least in their interests. As such, he neglected the theological and constitutional issues which had been the basis of earlier Popular opposition and adopted a secular outlook on the problem in the interests of producing a broader-based opposition. Such a strategy did not prove unattractive to a party which had met with lack of success in its efforts thus far. It was adopted wholeheartedly for a time.¹²¹

What has to be determined, however, in view of its lack of success, in view of the transitory nature of the strategy, and in view of its secular orientation, is the question of whether the Crosbie approach represented a genuine strand in Popular opinion, or whether it should be seen as something in the nature of a temporary aberration. The answer to that question is to be sought, not in further publications, for none of real significance were forthcoming until the next century, but rather in the history of the patronage dispute at the General Assembly.

NOTES: CHAPTER 7.

1. The following analysis of the Doctrine of the Church is based on the accounts given in James Walker, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 1560-1750, (Edinburgh, 1888 and 1982), pp. 95-156; John Macpherson, The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology, (Edinburgh, 1903), passim; and John Macleod, Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History since the Reformation, (Edinburgh, 1946), pp. 31-40. Macleod's work draws heavily from that of Walker.
2. Macleod, op.cit., p. 33.
3. See below, pp. 413-419.
4. See below, pp. 383, 426-432.
5. See below, pp. 386-395, 432-433, 444-445.
6. See above, pp. 217-222.
7. McIntosh, op.cit., pp. 54, 57-58, 87.
8. See Clark, 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party', pp. vii, 200-207, 229-230, 251-252, 281.
9. See above, pp. 176-216.
10. See above, pp. 205-213.
11. See above, pp. 308-319.
12. For example, John Adams. See below, pp. 409.
13. See above, p. 183-186.
14. op.cit., pp. vi-vii.
15. ibid., p. ix.
16. ibid., pp. 122-123.
17. James Gordon, The State and Duty of the Church of Scotland, especially with respect to the Settlement of Ministers set in a just light, (Edinburgh, 1732), pp. 25-26.
18. John Lawson, A Speech concerning the Settling of Parishes in general, and more especially relating to the Settlement of the Parish of Terreagles, (Glasgow, 1752), p. 18.
19. John Snodgrass, An Effectual Method of Recovering our Religious Liberties, addressed to the Elders of the Church of Scotland, Showing, That they may easily bring about a total

Change of Administration in this Church, and thereby remove the principal Grievances arising from the Law of Patronage, with particular Directions for attaining this desirable End, (Glasgow, 1770), p. 42.

20. John Erskine linked this idea with an exhortation to patrons to consider carefully the qualifications of their presentees when they exercised their legal right lest the souls 'that may be lost by a bad nomination, will be required at their hands'. 'The Qualifications necessary for Teachers of Christianity' (1750), in Discourses preached on Several Occasions, vol. 1, (Edinburgh, 1798), pp. 38-40.
21. op. cit., p. ix-xii.
22. ibid., p. 47.
23. Sher and Murdoch fail to identify a single supporter of this position, apart from Ebenezer Erskine and his followers and subsequent Seceders, during the century. It is curious, therefore, to identify as significant a school of thought within the Church, whose only members were those who had left the Church, and who therefore held little direct influence in it, and presumably also, the isolated individuals who did so later but who did not publish their views before they seceded. 'Patronage and Party in the Church of Scotland, 1750-1800', in Norman Macdougall (ed.), Church, Politics and Society: Scotland 1408-1929, (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 205-206.
24. Willison, op. cit., p. 46.
25. Sher and Murdoch, in Macdougall, op. cit., p. 206, argue that this was the policy of the First Book of Discipline.
26. op. cit., p. 32.
27. An Inquiry into the Powers committed to the General Assemblies of this Church, and the Nature of Deposition from the Holy Ministry, occasioned by the Character and Procedure of the Assembly 1752, (Glasgow, 1754), p. 20.
28. Gordon, op. cit., pp. 27-33.
29. ibid., pp. 33-35.
30. Gordon claimed that it was quite a common practice in the north and north-east of Scotland for Episcopalian or non-

juring patrons and heritors to attempt to influence presentations and elections by transferring rights to trustees qualified in law. Gordon, op.cit., pp.2-4.

31. op.cit., p.21.
32. op.cit., p.24.
33. Anon., A Loud Cry for Help to the Struggling Church of Scotland. Being a Letter from an Elder in Glasgow, to the Several Members of Kirk Sessions thro' the Land. Proper to be read and seriously considered before the Election of Members to the Next General Assembly, (Glasgow, 1753), p.7. On the authorship of the work, see below, n.52.
34. ibid., pp.7-8. This point was supported by an elaborate and apparently authentic analogy drawn from experience of pleading before the Court of Session. It strongly supports the idea of a legal hand in the authorship of the work.
35. ibid., pp.8-9.
36. See below, pp.424-426; 'Speech in the General Assembly on the Transportation of Dr. C _____', in The Works of John Witherspoon, D.D., vol. 8, (Edinburgh, 1805), p.287.
37. Gordon, op.cit., p.35.
38. op.cit., p.120.
39. ibid., p.19.
40. ibid., pp.25, 28.
41. ibid., pp.29-30.
42. See below, pp.414-419.
43. Adams, op.cit., pp.19-20.
44. ibid., p.31.
45. ibid., p.18.
46. ibid., pp.32, 33.
47. ibid., p.18.
48. ibid., pp.30-32.
49. ibid., pp.32-35.
50. A Loud Cry for Help, pp.15-23.
51. (Glasgow, 1754), pp.vi-vii, 13-16, 120. See also MacLeod, Scottish Theology, pp.189-197. There is some uncertainty about the authorship of this work and the Loud Cry for Help.

The British Library Catalogue identifies them as the works of two separate authors. The Catalogue of New College Library, Edinburgh, ascribes them to Rev. John Maclaurin of the Ramshorn Church. The National Library of Scotland possesses only The Nature of Ecclesiastic Government which it identifies in the same way as the other two libraries.

Maclaurin also issued The Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion imposed on the Church of Scotland by a prevailing Party in the General Assembly, in opposition to the great Bulk of both Office-bearers and private Christians

(Glasgow, 1753), but it differed little from the nature of the subsequent work which contains a more detailed presentation of the arguments of the earlier one.

52. The Nature of Ecclesiastic Government, p. 11.
53. ibid., pp. 11-12. Maclaurin refers to Luke 22, 25; 2 Corinthians 1, 24; 2 Corinthians 4, 5; 1 Peter 5, 3; Matthew 23, 8-10.
54. ibid., p. 13.
55. ibid., pp. 17-19. See also pp. 30-31, in which the responsibilities of civil and ecclesiastical rulers in relation to the same crime are similarly differentiated.
56. ibid., p. 46.
57. ibid., pp. 95-101.
58. See below, p. 367.
59. Maclaurin, op. cit., p. 119. There would seem to be an interesting connection here between these ideas and the political ideas of the sixteenth century Scottish Reformers and the seventeenth century Puritans deriving from the 'nature-grace' model of federal theology. The possibility of this line of thought was suggested by a lecture given by Professor J.B. Torrance of Aberdeen on 'The Calvinism of the Sixteenth Century' at the UCCFA Historians Study Group for Scotland, held at the University of Stirling, 4 October 1986. Key works are George Buchanan, On the Right of Scots; the Vindiciae contra Tyrannos (1579); and especially Samuel Rutherford's Lex Rex (1644).

60. MacLaurin, op.cit., pp. 121-123.
61. Ibid., pp. 143-152.
62. See above, pp. 363-364.
63. op.cit., (n.p., n.d.), pp. 1-2.
64. See below, pp. 423.
65. See above, pp. 183-186, 198-202.
66. op.cit., pp. vii-xii.
67. ibid., p. 45. See also Adams, op.cit., pp. 22-23, where the same argument is advanced.
68. ibid., pp. 46-48.
69. ibid., pp. 48-51.
70. Lawson, op.cit., p. 18.
71. Adams, op.cit., p. 23.
72. ibid., pp. 23-25.
73. op.cit., pp. 7, 39-42.
74. The State and Duty of the Church of Scotland, pp. 157-160.
75. Fair and Impartial Testimony, p. 76.
76. ibid., pp. 51-52. Recent research on the extent of Crown influence in the patronage system, however, indicates that it was not as considerable as was believed by the Popular party at the time. See Sher and Murdoch in Macdougall, op.cit., pp. 198-203.
77. Inquiry into the Powers committed to the General Assemblies, p. 31.
78. See below, pp. 383-395, 426-433, 442-445.
79. See above, pp. 183-186, 198-202.
80. op.cit., pp. 118-121.
81. See below, pp. 411-413, 440-441.
82. op.cit., p. 34.
83. See above, pp. 368, 374-376.
84. A Loud Cry for Help, pp. 30-32.
85. On Willison's proposals, see above, pp. 374-376; on Adams's proposals, see above, pp. 376.
86. See below, pp. 412, 444.
87. McIntosh, op.cit., esp. pp. 41-51, 53-54, 55-64, 77, 87. See also above, pp. 262-264, 295, 312-314; below, p. 461.

88. op.cit., pp.36-37.
89. op.cit., pp.5-7. The Loud Cry for Help struck an evangelical note early on when it commented unfavourably on the alleged tendencies to levity of the 'younger clergy' and their abhorrence of 'a religious Professor of the grave kind'. It held that the end of ordination was the salvation of souls by the successful preaching of the Gospel, and that settlements made under the existing system of patronage did not have the glory of God in view. (pp.5-7). The blatant political position it espoused (p.9), however, would seem virtually to rule out Rev. John Maclaurin as its author. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, Popular ministers studiously avoided the making of overtly political comment.
90. ibid., p.10.
91. See above, pp.345, 368-372.
92. A Loud Cry for Help, p.11.
93. The point being made here was that the infidelity of the nobility and gentry had necessitated an appeal to the heritors. The subsequent 'Crosbie' initiative of the 1760's could therefore be seen as brought about by spiritual decline in society, especially among its upper ranks. As such, it would provide an interesting application of 'commonwealthman' theory as applied by Sher and Murdoch. See Macdougall, op.cit., pp.208-214.
94. A Loud Cry for Help, pp.13-14.
95. (Glasgow, 1766).
96. Crosbie may have had a hand in the earlier work, though there is no indication that such was the case. The Glasgow publication would tend to suggest that the author could have been a member of the solidly Popular Presbytery of Glasgow, and, judging from the sentiments contained in it, probably a ruling elder. See, e.g., pp.35-36, 36-37.
97. It is worth pointing out that the work ascribed the origin of

support for the Schism Overture to dissatisfaction with the acquittal by the 1765 Assembly of Carson of Anwoth on an immorality charge, and the desire of some at least in the Assembly of discomfiting Principal Robertson, 'the chief Ecclesiastic Conductor of the Assembly'. Short History, pp. 8-9.

98. ibid., pp. 30-31.
99. ibid., pp. 33-34.
100. ibid., pp. 37-39. See also above, pp. 197-199, 350-351, 380.
101. ibid., pp. 40-42.
102. ibid., pp. 48-53, 56-57, 60-65.
103. ibid., pp. 51-53.
104. op.cit., (Edinburgh, 1769), pp. 1-2. It is, of course, true that these sentiments are perfectly in accord with Popular thought on the nature and purpose of government. See above, pp. 234, 246-251, 253.
105. cf. Gordon, op.cit., p. 33, and Lawson, op.cit., p. 21. See above, pp. 348-350.
106. Crosbie, op.cit., pp. 2-3.
107. ibid., p. 3. Later in the work, Crosbie asserted that it was the office of the minister 'to instruct all his parishioners, without distinction, in the principles of religion', and went on to maintain that these should be urged on their minds 'as the rule of their life and conduct'. ibid., p. 32. It would appear that Crosbie's theology was not dissimilar to that of the Moderates.
108. ibid., pp. 3-4.
109. ibid., p. 33. Crosbie was, in fact, taken up on this very point by the main answer to his pamphlet, Henry Grieve's Observations on the Overture concerning Patronage, (Edinburgh, 1769), p. 14, quoted by Sher and Murdoch in Macdougall, op.cit., p. 213. Failure to comprehend Crosbie's position on the special responsibilities of the ministry to the lower classes led to Alexander Carlyle's missing the point Crosbie was making here in his Usefulness and Necessity of a Liberal Education for Clergymen, (Edinburgh,

- 1793), pp. 1-2, referred to in Sher, op.cit., p. 159.
110. See above, pp. 191-192, 198, 200.
111. Crosbie, op.cit., pp. 4-6.
112. ibid., pp. 7-20. It is interesting to note, however, that Crosbie made only a passing reference to the Act of 1690 which vested the right to call with the congregation, with trial and admission by the presbytery. See ibid., p. 16.
113. ibid., pp. 23-28.
114. ibid., pp. 36-40.
115. ibid., pp. 34-35.
116. ibid., pp. 21-22.
117. Just how Crosbie rated the capacity of the ministerial body in a presbytery was not made clear.
118. Crosbie, op.cit., pp. 42-44.
119. ibid., pp. 49-51.
120. ibid., p. 50.
121. See below, pp. 426-433, 441-445.

CHAPTER 8. THE TACTICS OF OPPOSITION TO PATRONAGE: THE POPULAR PARTY AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Though events at the General Assembly were often the stimulus for the publications, contributions to Assembly debates were only generally informed by the published works and identifiable specific references are rare. The absence of a consistent, direct correlation between the ideology of the party as it evolved in the published works on patronage and its policies at the Assembly makes it likely that at the day-to-day level of proceedings in the Assembly the response of the Popular party was much more pragmatic than its ideology would suggest. The response went through five distinct phases from 1740 to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The first of the phases began in the late 1740s and reached its climax in the 'Answers to the Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing' of 1752. In it stress was placed on what was seen as the Reformation principle of liberty of conscience, or, as it was usually termed, 'Christian liberty'. The two most important Popular spokesmen in the Assembly at the time were John Adams of Falkirk and Dr. Alexander Webster of the Tolbooth Church in Edinburgh. Their line of argument, derived from the nature of Christian liberty, was increasingly overshadowed by the growth of the Secession and led to the second phase in which the dominant emphases were an attempt to show that patronage negated the purpose of establishment, which was to provide a ministry which

would provide for the spiritual needs of the population, and was inconsistent with the constitution of the Church of Scotland. This second phase, which ended with the Schism Debate of 1766, saw the most heated controversy between the two parties. The most important protagonists on the Popular side were Dr. John Erskine and John Witherspoon. A short third phase followed in which Popular polemic attempted to enlist the aid of the 'landed interest' in order to outmanoeuvre their ecclesiastical opponents. This phase, under the leadership of Andrew Crosbie, was in fact the shortest-lived attempt to defeat or alter the patronage system and lasted from 1768 to 1769, although it could perhaps be argued that the germs of the strategy emerged in the Schism Debate of 1766. The fourth ~~and final~~ phase, which saw acceptance of patronage as an ecclesiastical fact of life, was a return to the second phase's attempt to force adherence to the constitution of the Church in matters of patronage and the settlement of ministers. The central issue this time, however, was seen to be the nature of the call to the minister. This phase began to emerge around 1770, though it did not crystallise until the early 1780's when it merged into a revived attempt to reintroduce the secular strategy in 1782-1785. In the course of the debate at the 1785 Assembly, the Popular leadership gave an undertaking not to raise the issue of patronage again if their *and this outcome led to the final phase, that of acquiescence in the system.* proposals should not be approved. The dominant strand in Popular reasoning for the last quarter of the century, though, was preoccupation with the nature and necessity of a call from the congregation. This became the hallmark of Popular and Evangelical

doctrine on the issue until the Veto Act of 1824, which gave up the attempt to gain clear-cut constitutional recognition of the essential nature of the call and truncated the presbytery's right to decide on its merits.' This, then, is the framework which a study of the Popular party at the General Assembly from 1740 to 1800 suggests as being the key to an understanding of its policies as they were implemented in practice. For much of the time, though not for all of it, the policies gained their consistency and purpose from the fundamental and central doctrine of the Church which had been enunciated in the published works of the party. At the end of the day, however, the Popular party failed to achieve their aims because too many of their ecclesiastical opponents did not accept, or were not interested in, the theology of the Popular position. That had to await the consequences of the Evangelical Revival of the following century, which was to see the extension of the influence of the theological perspectives which motivated the mainstream of the eighteenth century Popular party.

The deposition of the Seceders in 1740 marked something of an end of an era in the history of the Church of Scotland. It marked the first significant dissent from it; it marked, too, the first significant reservations about the principle of Establishment. It signalled at the time the failure of the Seceders' theological and ecclesiastical sympathisers to persuade them to return to the fold of the established Church. Furthermore, the enormity of their separation may well have

discouraged both patrons and presbyteries from potentially divisive courses of action during the best part of the following decade, for the first three important patronage cases of the years after 1740 were essentially legal disputes."

The case of Torphichen, however, which came before the Assembly of 1751, after a brief debate in 1749, was more significant and marks the start of the first phase of the eighteenth century patronage dispute: the phase which stressed liberty of conscience. In spite of the instructions of the 1749 and 1750 Assemblies to proceed to settle the presentee to Torphichen, the Presbytery of Linlithgow had declined to do so. The 1757 Assembly censured the Presbytery, again instructed it to settle the presentee, and appointed a 'riding committee' to carry out the settlement should the Presbytery still decline, as in fact it did. The original objections to the presentee were that he could not be heard in the church, and that his opponents 'never could submit to his ministry, in that he had accepted of a presentation without the consent and concurrence of almost the whole parish'. The Presbytery of Linlithgow justified its refusal to settle the presentee on three grounds: the strong opposition in the parish to the settlement; the threat of the scattering of their own parishes if they should have a hand in it, and the consequent rendering useless of their own ministries; and the argument that it was agreeable to presbyterian government, and the constitution of the Church, that 'the authority of its judicatures should always be exercised in a subordination to the

authority of Christ, and with a tender regard to the conscience' The Presbytery argued that the injunctions of higher courts should never be arbitrary or binding in all cases whatsoever. Nevertheless, they accepted that the sentences of the Assembly had to be executed although they insisted that this should and could be done by using men whose ministries would not suffer by executing them, and who would not violate their consciences by doing so.³ This was, of course, a plea for the continuance of the use of the much-maligned, so-called 'riding committees'. In other words, the congregation objected to the physical incapacities of the presentee, and in effect claimed the congregation's right of veto. Strictly, they would seem to have required congregational approval before acceptance of the presentation. The Presbytery, on the other hand, were most concerned with the effectiveness of the ministry within the Church and the Church's unity for that purpose in the face of the risk of secession, and with the constitutional primacy of liberty of conscience. At the same time, the Presbytery accepted the authority of the higher courts of the Church and that their decisions should be implemented providing that the other principles were respected. As early as 1751, therefore, the complex and potentially paradoxical principles inherent in the Popular position were clear. There was a definite tension between the doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ, and the concept of the Church of Scotland as a body committed to the Establishment Principle and operating the law of patronage as a result.

The Presbytery's line of argument, however, was extended and made more explicit in a speech made at the bar of the Assembly by a member of the Presbytery, almost certainly John Adams of Falkirk.⁴ The speech pointed out that the Seceders had been unable to justify their breaking off from the Church upon being forced to act contrary to their own consciences, but had been forced to base it merely on their disagreement with certain actions of the Church. Adams went on to raise the spectre that the Secession had now established an alternative for parishes feeling themselves oppressed. He attempted to grapple with what was to become the Moderate position the following year. In doing so, he revealed how the Popular party was coming to view its opponents. Assemblies subsequent to that of 1749, it was asserted, were acting only with consideration of their own authority and without regard to the circumstances of the case: 'All was to be sacrificed at once to this single principle, submission to authority ...'⁵ The argument that 'conscience has no concern in the orders of superiors, but in obliging to obey them' was rejected, as were the claim that the rights of private judgement could have no place in such matters and the contention that it was a breach of faith to decline any command since the ministers of the Church vowed obedience on entering the Church. The first and most essential right of private judgement in the Scottish Establishment, it was claimed, was the right to decide what was a matter of conscience in relation to one's personal conduct.⁶ Such, of course, followed directly from the doctrine of the Church.⁷ In view of this speech, and in view of the fact that

an attempt led by John Home and William Robertson to have the Presbytery of Linlithgow suspended rather than censured was defeated, there are some grounds for regarding the 'Reasons of Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing' the following year, as being the response to a Popular polemic arising from the Torphichen case rather than as an ad hoc response to the Inverkeithing case which has come to be regarded as the manifesto of the Moderate party.

The speech from the bar at the 1751 Assembly, however, developed two further lines of defence which were to become increasingly common in the next few years: if the usefulness of ministers was destroyed not only would the people suffer spiritually, they would also, as events had proved, fall under the influence of one or other of the dissenting parties 'some of whom are well known to teach wild and pernicious principles of government, as they do of religion'.²³ The Popular apologetic at the Assembly was therefore ready, as early as 1751, to adopt secular arguments when opportune. The argument concluded with the assertion that no body would maintain that absolute and unlimited obedience was required or promised in a Protestant church, and a distinction was drawn between absolute obedience and absolute submission, the latter of which required peaceable and respectful retiral in the face of the Church's judgement.

In spite of such arguments, however, the Assembly decided to censure the Presbytery of Linlithgow. Their decision provoked a

dissent by Principal William Wishart to which twenty-one ministers and one elder adhered. The reasons for the dissent which embody the views of a member of the party who cannot be regarded as sharing the theological views of the majority, took the Popular response to patronage a step further.⁷ Three reasons for the dissent were given. First, Church censures should be inflicted only on open transgressors of the laws of Christ, and not for failure to obey the commands of an assembly of fallible men when the disobedience arose from a conscientious regard for the laws of Christ according to a man's best understanding of them. The Assembly's decision, therefore, was derogatory to the laws of conscience of which God alone was Lord, and to the sole absolute authority of Christ in his Church. Secondly, Presbyterian church government as described in the Church's standards and in the laws of the Establishment did not imply that the supreme judicature was vested with absolute authority or infallibility. Every man had an inalienable right to judge for himself what was 'in the Lord' as the subscription to the Confession put it. And thirdly, the sentence was unnecessary to support the constitution and authority of the Church.¹⁰ What was clearly implicit in these reasons was the defence of the primacy of conscience in determining response to ecclesiastical decisions, and a conception of the Church as a unique type of body whose constitution ultimately rested on grounds, the interpretation of which had to remain subjective in many ways.

If the Popular case was stated exhaustively and with considerable clarity, the response of Popular commissioners to the Assembly was much less clear. It highlighted the uncertainty which must exist about who exactly should be classified as members of the party, about the nature of relationships between the 'leadership' and the 'rank-and-file', and about whether a distinction should be drawn between hard-line and more accommodating factions within the party. The 1751 Assembly would seem to have had a Popular majority in that it agreed without a vote to a letter instructing its commissioners in London not merely to seek redress of the grievance of patronage, but also to guard against extension or stricter enforcement of it.¹¹ Furthermore, although the election of the Moderator was seen as a trial of strength between supporters and opponents of the stipend augmentation scheme, both nominees were of Popular sympathies.¹² If, in fact, the Popular party did have the majority, the complex nature of its response was clear in the voting on the Torphichen case, and there was more than a hint of an ambivalent response on the part of many of its adherents. The Presbytery of Linlithgow's defence of its actions was partially effective in that, while the Assembly voted 200 to 11 against suspension of the Presbytery, there was a majority in favour of censure. Nevertheless, the Assembly decided only to enforce the previous two Assemblies' appointment to ordain and admit the presentee, and set up a riding committee to act if the Presbytery did not comply.¹³ To a considerable extent, this ambivalent response was seen the

following year at the Assembly in the voting on the Inverkeithing Case.

The Inverkeithing Case, which saw the dominance of the Moderates clearly established in the General Assembly, first appeared at the November 1751 and April 1752 meetings of the Commission. At the 1752 Assembly, the Moderates were in control, and their candidate, Patrick Cuming, was chosen Moderator by a very great majority.¹⁴ The case, as is well known, related to an allegedly unpopular presentee whom the Presbytery of Dunfermline had refused to settle. The case had been carried on appeal to the Commission of Assembly and thence to the Assembly itself. After a lengthy debate, the Presbytery was ordered, by a vote of 102 to 56, to admit the presentee and report back. There were eleven dissents, mainly on the grounds that the appointment of five ministers as a quorum instead of the usual three was 'a very material alteration in our constitution', but also because it was argued that this was in fact contrary to the interests of the presentee who could have been settled long ago by the methods formerly used, that is, a riding committee. The Presbytery of Dunfermline still declined to admit the presentee and the Assembly voted to depose one of the ministers of the Presbytery by a vote of 93 to 65. Thereafter, 52 voted for the deposition of Thomas Gillespie, minister of Carnock, and 102 declined to give their votes.¹⁵ There has been some speculation concerning the reasons why Gillespie was singled out,¹⁶ but it is of greater importance to analyse the debate which was carried on over the

issue, and in particular to look at what were regarded as the manifestoes of the Moderate and Popular parties. Recently, the former, the 'Reasons of Dissent from the Judgement and resolution of the Commission, March 11, 1752, resolving to inflict no censure on the Presbytery of Dunfermline for their disobedience in relation to the settlement of Inverkeithing', has received considerable attention,¹⁷ but the answer to it has received scant notice and not the analysis it deserves.¹⁸

It is not proposed to enter upon a detailed analysis of the arguments of the 'Reasons of Dissent' since this may be found elsewhere.¹⁹ They may be summarised as dissenting from the decision of the Popular-dominated Commission, which had voted against censuring the Presbytery, on the grounds that its decision was inconsistent with the nature and first principles of society in general, with the nature and preservation of ecclesiastical society, with Presbyterian church government, and with the practice and procedure of the Church of Scotland. Laxity with regard to censure of ecclesiastical disobedience would lead to laxity in the area of doctrinal declension. The action of the Commission, it was argued, exceeded its powers and undermined the constitution of the Church, its Establishment and the authority of the Assembly.

The Popular reply was contained in the much lengthier 'Answers to the Reasons of Dissent from the Sentence of the Commission in the case of Inverkeithing, March 11, 1752; drawn up

by the Committee appointed for that purpose, and dated May 16'.²⁰ Some of the lines of argument had appeared already, others were newer and pointed more towards the future. The 'Answers to the Reasons of Dissent' commenced by seizing on the very foundation of the Moderate case, which was held to require absolute obedience to the judgements of a society, and so was contrary to the principles of the Confession of Faith by destroying liberty of conscience as well as reason. To assert such unlimited authority in the supreme powers in every society, and to apply it to ecclesiastical government, would be as much as was claimed by any Pope. Even civil powers allowed the choice of active obedience or passive submission to their wills and punished only active disobedience. It was suggested that the dissenters' case militated against the obligation of men, as rational creatures, to answer for their deeds on the day of judgement when it would be no defence to plead that they were willingly obeying the commands of earthly superiors.²¹

The reasoning contained in this section was, it must be admitted, much less coherent, and in some ways much less convincing, than the corresponding section of the Moderate 'Reasons of Dissent'. Apart from the fact that the Popular document was the work of a committee of eight men,²² whereas the Moderate document was probably the work of William Robertson, there were several reasons why this was so. The Moderate case embodied a profoundly secular vision. The Popular apologetes, with their biblical view were of necessity operating in

unfamiliar territory. The assumptions on which they based their view were simplistic by philosophical standards, although not by theological standards. Apart from stating their theocentric view of society, the Popular case at this point tended to limit itself to an attempt to discern inconsistencies and invalidities in the Moderate argument.

The Popular response to the second reason of dissent was much more coherent, and convincing. The dissent had stated that 'this sentence of the Commission is absolutely inconsistent with the nature and preservation of ecclesiastical society in particular'.²² Here the Popular apologists were stung by the assertion that their contention that church censures should only be applied to open transgressors of the laws of Christ himself, ^{also} and that not obeying the commands of an Assembly of fallible men if one's conscience led one to disobedience, were ^{both} calculated to establish the most extravagant maxims of Independency', and to overthrow the Church's constitution. To counter this allegation, the 'Answer to the Reasons of Dissent' produced a clear distinction between the functions of the Church and the ecclesiastical functions of an Establishment. Christ's commission to his Apostles, and hence to the Church in general, comprised the whole purpose of their work and was to 'teach all men to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them'. Church censures were one part of the methods by which they were to teach men these things, and therefore to be confined to those who neglected or refused to observe what Christ had commanded. When

the civil government and the laws of the land gave the Church another power to do with granting or withholding civil emoluments to the ministers of the Church, the courts were not acting as ministers of Christ inflicting Church censures, but as trustees of the public executing those laws which had been given to them to execute, unless of course, transgressions of those laws of the land also involved transgression of the law of Christ. The power given by Christ to his ministers had nothing to do with giving or taking away civil privileges or emoluments. Furthermore, the reason legal emoluments were bestowed on ministers was with a view of service done by them to religion and the public. To turn men out of their benefices for not acting contrary to principles in which they were supported by the standing rules of the Church, and for endeavouring to be useful to religion and to the public, was absurd.⁴⁴ In other words, contrary to the Moderate thesis that all members of the Church were bound to obey the orders of the courts or, if they were to become aware that the decisions being consistently made by the supreme judicatures could not be reconciled with their consciences, to withdraw from the Church, the Popular party produced a theory of the Church which removed the legal aspects of the Establishment from entanglement with the essentially spiritual nature of the Church. It was a solution of considerable shrewdness for it was ^Ystrongest where the Moderates were probably at their weakest, in their inability to produce coherent biblical support for their position on the nature of the Church.

The remaining 'Answers' rejected Moderate notions of the 'absolute' authority of the Assembly, and the 'obedience' they required to it, stressed the principle of the Church that no minister should be intruded on a congregation without its consent, and rejected the Moderate assertion that acceptance by the Commission of Assembly of the Presbytery's refusal to settle was inconsistent with the practice of the Church.²⁶

The 'Answers to the Reasons of Dissent' concluded with a lengthy assertion that leniency in such matters, instead of encouraging disobedience and displaying the weakness of the Church, would in fact encourage simplicity and godly sincerity, and would preserve and improve the strength of the Church by refraining from giving arbitrary and unnecessary commands. Such reasoning cannot be regarded as more than the expression of conventional platitudes with reference to the issues under scrutiny. It is also true that in the course of the 'Answers' last section the comparison between ecclesiastical and civil government, so essential to the Moderate case, was explicitly rejected. The 'Answers' contended that the purpose of civil government was the preservation of the outward peace of society, and that its object was only the outward actions of men. It was the outward actions of men which civil government punished without regard to the inward principles from which they proceeded. In contrast, in ecclesiastical discipline and censures the object was the actions of professed Christians when they transgressed the law of Christ, and the objective of discipline

was the reformation of the mind and the maintenance of the Church as a pure religious society. Great scope had therefore to be allowed to the exercise of the conscience in such matters."

What is inescapable in a comparison of the positions in the Moderate 'Reasons of Dissent' and the Popular 'Answers to the Reasons of Dissent' is the gulf between their preoccupations and their conceptions of the nature of the Church. For the Moderates, as Chitnis puts it, 'the prime issues ... were integration, authority, and freedom from political interference'.¹² For the Popular party, however, the starting point was their theological stress on the doctrine of the Church. The Church had been commissioned by Christ to preach the Gospel and to teach the people to do what he had commanded them. It could be aided in its tasks by an Establishment such as was possessed by the Church of Scotland, but such an Establishment was essentially a civil matter. Its purpose was to aid the Church in fulfilling its mission, and any aspect of it or result from it which hindered the Church should be rejected.

The implications of this for patronage are clear. The spectre of Erastianism was raised and the effectual carrying out of Christ's commission to his Church was threatened. The problem for the Popular party was that their Moderate opponents were more influenced by secular ideas of order and authority than they were by theological ones relating to the purpose of the Church or liberty of conscience. The one area, however, where for the time

being the Popular case could not be answered by the Moderates to their own satisfaction was the Popular delineation of the detrimental effects of the enforcement of patronage on the loyalty of the people. This could be seen as leading to the

(cont. p.421)

resort of the Moderator of 1752, Patrick Cuming, to the threat of the withdrawal of the civil support guaranteed to the Establishment by the Treaty of Union of 1707 if discipline in the Church was not maintained.¹¹² The dilemma of the Popular party was perhaps shrewdly identified by Cuming who may well have perceived the strength of Popular commitment to the Establishment in view of its 'usefulness'. The doctrinal offensive of the Popular party against patronage had failed and its polemic became based more on the consequences of its excessive or arbitrary enforcement. In other words, the Popular party began to stress that the operation of patronage was defeating the whole purpose of Establishment and would lead to inevitable schism. This marks the start of the second phase of opposition to patronage. In comparison with the stress of the published works, however, at the Assembly the Popular party failed to deploy the full range of 'constitutional' arguments which were to become such a prominent feature of the main Popular publications on patronage. This was presumably because their appearance was a response to the debate in 1752 rather than the elaboration of ideas which were used in the Assembly itself.

It should not be assumed, however, that defeat in the Assembly saw the demise, even temporarily, of Popular agitation against patronage. In 1753, the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr sent an overture to the Assembly against forcing ministers, under pain of deposition, actively to execute such settlements as appeared to them to be contrary to the Word of God, the standing rules of the

Church, and her constantly avowed principles. The Synod accepted by implication the use of riding committees, and, by means of several references to overtures being regularly transmitted to presbyteries, indicated its belief that the majority of presbyteries were against enforced settlements.²⁷ By this new emphasis on procedure the Popular attack on patronage entered its second phase in which an attempt was to be made to ameliorate its effects, and to argue for its end by emphasising its inconsistency with the purpose of establishment and with the constitutional principles of the Church. Such a strategy would have been in keeping with the constitutional emphases of Adams's Inquiry into the Powers committed to the General Assemblies of this Church, and Maclaurin's Nature of Ecclesiastic Government.

The commencement of this second phase was indicated when four Popular ministers of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, in a dissent from an overture of the Synod, claimed that the actions of the preceding Assembly in effect deprived ministers of the privileges of the civil establishment in a summary and arbitrary way without a regular process.²⁸ The most obvious case, however, which can be identified as marking the emergence of this second phase in the patronage struggle, was the case of Biggar which reached the Assembly of 1753. Here, the Popular party attempted to defeat the supporters of patronage by proving the latter's actions illegal or unconstitutional. They chose to do so by basing their arguments on the Moderates' own case for consistency and legality in Church government as was to be found in the

'Reasons for Dissent in the Case of Inverkeithing'. This device was to remain a standard feature of Popular polemic for the remainder of the century. The Popular position is to be found in the 'Reasons of Complaint against the sentence of the Commission, unanimously offered, to the next General Assembly by the Presbytery of Biggar'. These contained most of the legal, theological, and ecclesiastical arguments used by the Popular party to try to persuade the Moderate-controlled General Assembly to ameliorate the worst features of the patronage system. The Popular argument attempted to establish that the decision enjoining the Presbytery to proceed to settle an unsuitable presentee was legally and constitutionally unsound. The first part of the 'Reasons of Dissent' centred on various legal technicalities relating to the respective powers of presbyteries, the Commission of Assembly, and the Assembly itself, along with the right of one court to alter the decisions of the previous one after a year.³¹ The second part of the Dissent made two further points in relation to the nature of calls which pointed the way to the subsequent strategy of the Popular party. It was claimed, in the first place, that the Commission's judgement was an attempt to abrogate the invariable practice and procedure of the Church in that it disregarded the non-concurrence of virtually all parishioners and heritors. Secondly, it was alleged that the decision introduced a new law and form of procedure that patrons could not relieve the Church by making a second presentation, and that the Church could do nothing but settle, even when there was no concurrence, and that it was doing so in an irregular manner,

without it being referred to all the presbyteries for majority consent. Neither the civil nor the ecclesiastical law justified the decision since the law of patronage did not lay the Church under any compulsion to ordain even the most unexceptionable presentee, nor did it give him any right to the benefice without ordination. To justify the decision, the law would have had to state that it did. The Complaint concluded by suggesting that the Commission had been 'packed' by a 'designing few' for the particular diet appointed to judge the case. "

The grounds for dissent in the Biggar case are important for four reasons. In the first place, it marked the emergence in the Assembly of a legal rather than a theological opposition to patronage at the time secular considerations were being dealt with in the published works of the party. Secondly, it raised the issue of the nature of the 'concurrence' required to justify settling a presentee. Thirdly, it indicated Popular confidence in their control of the majority of the presbyteries. Fourthly, it implied the Popular belief that a section of the Moderate party was determined to enforce patronage irrespective of whether or not the law actually required it. The following six years were a period of numerous presentation disputes, but they were all conducted in terms of the principles and arguments which were used in the case of Biggar, and in terms of the interpretation of the 1690 Act which abolished patronage and gave the elders and heritors the right to nominate a minister subject to the approval of the congregation and presbytery. "

Possibly the most important of these disputes was the Kilconquhar Case of 1760 in which a settlement was opposed by the normally Moderate-dominated Presbytery of St. Andrews on the grounds that the Commission of Assembly had exceeded its powers. In the Assembly debate, John Witherspoon made a key speech in which he took up the Popular argument for a conceptual differentiation between calling a minister to a pastoral charge and calling a minister on an Establishment. Witherspoon, who subsequently dissented along with five other ministers from the Assembly's decision to enforce the settlement, after accepting that the ordination of a pastor without the support of his congregation was sometimes felt by conscientious ministers to be necessary, though it was not the situation in the Kilconquhar case, went on to make an assertion open to misinterpretation:

I do not believe, and I know nobody so foolish as to believe what is commonly imputed to us, that any Christian, as such, has a right to call a minister on an establishment. We know that nobody has a right to call a minister on an establishment except those to whom the law has given it; neither would I contend that every man ought to have a right, though we had it in our power to make laws on that subject, since this seeming equality would be a vile inequality.²⁴

Superficially, this would seem to have been paving the way for the view that under men like Andrew Crosbie, and Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood, the Popular party had an élitist Whig view of Church government based on the ideology of 1688-90 and the 'commonwealthman' tradition, rather than being a fundamentally 'Popular' grouping at all.²⁵ To include Witherspoon and his

supporters in this thesis, however, is to fail to see the significance of much of the rest of the speech. Witherspoon went on to argue, that since any man in the country had the right to adhere to the minister of his choice, and since a legal pastor could be of little or no service to his people if he was on bad terms with them, it was the indisputable duty of a Church court never to make unpopular settlements without a real necessity. He rejected the argument that the people could easily be led in a direction other than that in which they wished to go, and held that such settlements could only lead the people to believe that ministers who accepted such settlements had no more than a desire for a comfortable benefice and stipend for life.³⁶

Witherspoon's position was not, therefore, that the people should have no say in the appointment of a minister, but that, providing the minister settled was acceptable to them, the actual method of selection was not crucial.³⁷ Witherspoon's case stressed the idea of providing ministers acceptable to their congregations as essential to the concept of establishment. If, however, the system allowed unacceptable ministers to be appointed, the whole purpose of establishment and the provision of a legal stipend, namely 'to provide a sufficient and useful pastor to the people within the bounds of a certain parish', was nullified.³⁸ In other words, although the Presbytery, which was usually Moderate in complexion, did not use the argument, Witherspoon, their most articulate advocate on the floor of the Assembly, defended them by maintaining that the grounds for

opposition to the patronage system lay in the nature of the role of the ministry in relation to the members of the Body of Christ. To see the Popular position as the ideology of an elitist socio-political grouping within the Church is to misapprehend the significance of the evangelical religious impetus behind it. It is to mistake tactics for objective.

The Assembly of 1766 which debated the overture of the committee on Schism marks both the end of the second phase of the patronage debate and the beginning of the short third phase, in which an attempt was made to gain the support of the 'landed interest'. The committee had been set up by the previous Assembly which had been unexpectedly under Popular control, and its report is usually regarded as marking the peak of Popular opposition to patronage. The committee's overture identified patronage as the cause of the growth of the Secession and proposed that the Assembly should set up a committee to discuss with presbyteries and the 'landed interest' the matter of how to reform the abuse. The overture, which was rejected by 99 votes to 85, marked the beginnings of the emergence of a coherent ecclesiastical and secular polemic at the Assembly. By the mid-1760s, the Popular party, or at least its leaders, had decided that the benefits of patronage in the context of the Scottish Establishment were too considerable to be rejected out of hand, but they were still committed to the maintenance of an acceptable ministry for each congregation. Amelioration had to be the goal. The problem was how to attain it? In 1766, the answer was an attempt to enlist

the support of men of property by a crude appeal to their economic interests, but this should not be misread and interpreted as paving the way for an attempt by a socio-political group to extend their influence in and their ideas to the Church.³⁹ What, then, was the real nature of the Popular position in the Schism debate?

The Popular case rejected arguments that schism was a necessary evil and that supporters of the overture were persecutors of the Seceders.⁴⁰ Indeed the overture aimed at remedying the grievances of which the Seceders complained. It then distinguished two senses in which the term 'the rights of the people' in calling their pastors could be used:

it might seem to relate to the natural right which every man has to choose or judge for himself in religion, and everything belonging to it; and therefore, in particular - to choose his own pastor, to whom he was to commit the care of his soul, and on whom he was to depend for daily instruction and comfort: Or, 2, It might relate to the question, Who had a right in fact, or who ought in justice to have the right, of calling a parochial minister upon an Establishment?⁴¹

The first sense, it was argued, belonged to every individual and could not be denied by any consistent Protestant. The second, it was contended, was not asserted by anyone. This developed Witherspoon's argument put forward six years earlier on the case of Kilconquhar,⁴² and it went on to maintain that 'probably nobody would plead for every adult inhabitant having an equal share since a seeming equality would be a real inequality'.⁴³

Where any power of judgement was left to the Church, the general principle and end to be regarded was the settlement of a 'Gospel ministry' which was for the edification of the people within a certain district. If this end was not met, it was just so much of the public money thrown away.

At this point, the Popular argument moved away from the more theological and spiritual in the direction of ecclesiastical considerations and here the seeds of misinterpretation began to appear. Four consequences of settling churches by presentations were identified: patrons were led to see the right of presentation as a piece of private property to be disposed of in their own private interests; the wishes of men of rank and influence in the parishes were disregarded; a student's or probationer's character and behaviour were made virtually irrelevant; and whole parishes were disrupted and ministers were rendered useless in both civil and religious capacities. There would appear to be two possible reasons for the insertion in this section of the overture of the reference to men of rank and influence. There was the implication that there were many in the parish as good as one patron, and there was an attempt to detach heritors from patrons. There is no evidence that its insertion at this stage of the overture was made as part of a socio-political philosophy. The point was that men with as good claims as many patrons to a say in the choice of ministers were being excluded. The issues were still purely ecclesiastical.⁴⁴

Afterwards, the Popular case became more secular. Secular arguments were espoused so forcefully that much more significance has been read into them than can be justified when their context is taken into consideration.. It was argued that the existing system was contrary to the interests of religion and to the civil interest of the country, and also to the revenue of men of property, since the erection of new churches outside the Establishment would render the lower classes less able to pay their rents or to increase them. Every new establishment of that kind was, in effect, a tax on land. The possibility of greater indifference about religion would increase ignorance and vice, which would be immediately destructive of industry, whether of agriculture or manufactures. A distinctly unspiritual analysis of the social function of religion followed. It was argued that men of higher rank, could supply the want of religion by a sense of honour or other worldly principles so as to serve their country and themselves; the common people without religion were almost constantly idle and poor at the same time. If they retained their religion and were obliged to set up separating meetings, the country would be saddled with an immense charge, while the Established ministers would receive their stipends without work and would seem excrescences on the body politic. Furthermore, violent settlements were greatly detrimental to the poor's fund. If the evil of secession were to spread and the greatest part of the congregations were to be driven away from the Established Church, the poor would starve or the heritors would have to maintain them by a voluntary taxation which would shortly be so

badly executed that parliament would institute a poor rate similar to the much-complained of one in England.⁴⁵ The substance of this section of the 1766 overture was so alien to all that had gone before, and, virtually to all that came after, that to seize on it and to argue that the Popular party's position on patronage was dominated by it and that the party was the vehicle of an elitist socio-political group is superficial.

After this secular digression, the Popular apologists returned to ecclesiastical concerns and stressed that they were complaining that the law, as it stood, had been made much harsher by ecclesiastical decisions than the statute necessitated. It was claimed that the Court of Session had in fact confirmed the power of the Church courts to appoint the legal pastor of the parish, though they had allowed the patron to retain the stipend. The Popular case thereafter concluded by rejecting as invalid the argument that it was for the presbyteries to take care in the licensing of probationers since presbyteries could be deceived or unfaithful.⁴⁶ Finally, the proposal to consult with gentlemen of influence and property was justified as flowing from the persuasion that no effectual relief could be obtained but by their concurrence.⁴⁷ In other words, the proposal to enlist the support of men of property was a purely pragmatic move.

There were, then, some curious inconsistencies in the latter part of the debate on the overture of the committee on Schism submitted to the 1766 Assembly. It is clear that the Popular case

had three central points: first, the distinction between the religious or spiritual nature of the call of a congregation to a man to be their minister, and the question of who should call a minister to be appointed to a charge on a legal establishment; secondly, the unfortunate consequences, both religious and civil, of settling presentees irrespective of the wishes of the people; and, thirdly, the conviction that the Church had the legal power to ameliorate the situation which was leading to secession if only it were prepared to adopt the obvious alternative to settling every presentee almost automatically, namely, by foregoing the stipend and settling a man acceptable to the congregation. This interpretation, however, poses a problem: why was there such a strong attempt to involve 'men of rank and property' on the Popular side and to justify the attempt on such uncharacteristically non-religious grounds? There were two possible reasons. First, it may have been a concession to an articulate and aggressive section of the party, who were possibly providing the most effective debate on the floor of the Assembly, of whom Andrew Crosbie was probably the most important. Secondly, and more likely, there was an increasing awareness in the Popular party that the control of the Assembly was a matter of management of the lay eldership. If they could be brought to support the Popular cause, then the exercise of patronage could be reduced to spiritually acceptable proportions.⁴² What was not present was the suggestion that the landed interest should be recruited for a parliamentary role in the abolition of patronage, nor any

suggestion for a permanent role for the landed interest in patronage or in the Establishment.⁴⁹

The Popular party, although defeated on the Schism Overture in 1766, was successful in the 1768 Assembly in securing the appointment of a committee to correspond with the landed interest, the royal burghs, and the presbyteries on the grievance of patronage with a view to seeking redress from Parliament. This strategy, which implied increased influence within the party of Andrew Crosbie and similar advocates of the lay interest, engendered no response.⁵⁰ In the ensuing Assembly, the Moderates defeated an attempt to reappoint the committee by 115 votes to 87. The 'Reasons of Dissent' of Crosbie and others of the Popular party added little to what had already been said during the Schism debate except to raise the spectre of civil disloyalty arising from separation from the ecclesiastical Establishment, and linked the arguments used against the reappointment of the committee to arguments destructive of civil and religious liberty and in favour of arbitrary power of any kind. Patronage was also linked with Jacobitism, disloyalty and disaffection to the present constitution. In addition the dissent also spoke of patronage as depriving the landed interest and the elders of 'their just right in the election of ministers of the gospel'.⁵¹ This was the first time that this argument had been advanced at the Assembly although it had appeared in the publications on the subject.

The defeat of the Crosbie initiative, which aimed at mobilising the landed interest on the Popular side, ended the third phase of opposition and resulted in the fourth phase which led to a reversion to the constitutional emphasis of the second phase and so to the practice of opposing unpopular presentations by means of drawing attention to the physical limitations of the presentees and by efforts to point out the inconsistency or illegality of Assembly decisions to enforce presentations. Central to this fourth phase was the Popular attempt to defeat patronage by the insistence on the existence of a legal call from the congregation to the presentee, though clear identification of the call as being central to the issue did not emerge until the early 1780s. The new phase, however, began as early as the case of St. Ninian's which came before the Assembly of 1769 in the form of a dissent from a decision of the Presbytery of Stirling, and the case of Glendevon which appeared in 1770.²²

The St. Ninian's dissent in 1769 hinged on the role of non-jurant heritors and the infirmity of the presentee. In the Glendevon case for the first time the question of the definition of a call, and of its moderation, was explicitly raised. It was maintained by the dissenters from the Assembly's decision to sustain a call to an unpopular presentee to Glendevon, that it was impossible to found 'a pastoral relationship' on a call of three or four persons, and that such a decision tended towards the abolition of the practice of moderating calls at all. The following year, 1771, saw the Popular case at St. Ninian's

centred around the right of a presbytery to decide if resettlement of a minister already in a charge was for the greater good of the Church, even after a decision of the Assembly to order a settlement on other grounds.⁵³ This case was argued in detail in the subsequent year, with reference to the various Acts of Parliament, by Dr. John Macqueen of Edinburgh who concluded his speech by detailing the grounds for deeming the presentee unsuitable. Andrew Crosbie himself affirmed Macqueen's assertion of the categorical right of the Church courts to decide such matters and its guarantee in terms of the Treaty of Union, and went on to assert that the people, while they did not have an elective voice, did have a negative one to which the Church was bound to listen. Both Macqueen and Crosbie were at pains in this context to reject the Moderate claim made by several speakers that they were opposing the civil constitution of the land with the religious one. Patrick Freebairn, the Popular minister of Dumbarton took this a step further and gave some credence to theories of a rift in the Popular party. It is, however, much more likely that he was referring to lay Moderates, when he defended 'the rights and judgement of the common people' by attacking the bullying of 'professed lawyers, or men of high office who have seats among us'.⁵⁴ What emerged clearly in all the major Popular speeches in this debate was the determination to establish that the Popular position was the constitutional position of the Church, and that it was not contrary to the civil constitution in any way. Indeed, the Popular position in this fourth phase of the patronage dispute could aptly be described as

one of 'constitutionalism' in much the same way as the second phase.

The same type of constitutional argument appeared again in 1774 in the reasons for dissent in the Cambuslang case,⁵⁵ and in a more detailed dissent in the case of Biggar in 1780.⁵⁶ In Biggar, there were originally no subscribers to a call to a probationer, but afterwards four-fifths of the heritors apparently 'concurred', as did several heads of families. The Presbytery declined to proceed and the case was taken to the Assembly. By a vote of 85 to 77, the Assembly voted to sustain the concurrence and order the Presbytery to proceed, rather than moderate the call anew. Twenty-eight Popular commissioners dissented. They argued that nothing in the case had the form or nature of a call; that the Assembly had ordered the settlement to proceed according to the rules of the Church while the call was still nothing but a blank sheet; that the concurrence came eleven months after the moderation; that the alleged subscriptions were unauthenticated and therefore inadmissible; that where the consent of the people had not been obtained in accordance with the practice of the Church, an ordination was an absurdity or worse.⁵⁷ A similar case, that of Fenwick, saw a settlement enforced by the Assembly, in which the opposition centred around the validity of a call concurred in by only four residing heritors out of the whole parish.⁵⁸ It is significant, however, in the case of Biggar, that the Popular opposition was unable to produce a clear-cut definition of a call, or at least of what the

practice of the Church regarded as a call.⁵⁷ Much thought was to be devoted by the Popular party in the next few years to reach a workable definition of the call and the moderation of one.

The case of Fenwick returned to the 1781 Assembly and provoked a dissent which tied the new phase of 'constitutionalism' firmly to the theological and ecclesiastical bases of Popular opposition to patronage. A new settlement had been attempted by the Presbytery of Irvine in accordance with the instructions of the 1780 Assembly, but with almost equal lack of success. The Synod of Glasgow and Ayr suspended procedure and asked the patron to present anew, but twelve members of Synod dissented and the case went to the Assembly.. Without a vote, the Assembly agreed to reverse the Synod's decision and appointed the Presbytery to proceed to a settlement. Twenty-five ministers and four elders dissented from the decision as being contrary to the practice of the Church, in that there was not one subscription to the call, and that the four concurrences of non-residing heritors were of dubious legality and disregarded the non-concurrence of forty residing heritors, all the elders, and the great body of the people. The Assembly's decision was therefore unconstitutional and inexpedient. The only result could be the uselessness of the presentee, the alienation of the people of Scotland from the established Church, and the erosion of confidence in the Assembly and the weakening of its authority and the effect of its decisions.⁵⁸ In other words, at the foundation of opposition to patronage there was still the conception of a

ministry acceptable to the congregation and 'useful' in the spiritual sense.

Immediately after this decision, the 1781 Assembly proceeded to discuss overtures from the Synods of Glasgow and Ayr, Dumfries, and Perth and Stirling concerning the method of settling vacant parishes. The overture from the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr was the most ambitious of the three and argued that a call should not be sustained or a settlement made in any way

unless where a majority of the heritors and elders, and other members of the congregation, shall subscribe the call or assent thereto; and that all settlements made without the consent of the congregation, as above, are hereby declared to be null and void ... that no minister, by the constitution of this church, is to be intruded into any parish contrary to the will of the congregation.''

This overture was dismissed as incompetent and 'of a dangerous tendency' on a technicality since no member of the Synod appeared to support it. The overture from the Synod of Dumfries sought that the Assembly should gather together in a body all the relevant Acts of the Church relating to the settlement of ministers until 1712 when patronage was restored and

that they will declare what is the sense of the church on these laws, and particularly define what concurrence is necessary by these laws to form such a call as the church ought to proceed upon to the settlement of a minister in any vacant congregation ...

This overture, and a part of that from the Synod of Perth and Stirling requesting the Assembly to enjoin 'that the moderation of a call to a presentee shall in no case be dispensed with by any of the presbyteries of this church' were dismissed without a vote.⁶³ Popular uncertainty about the exact requirements of a call were borne out also in this Assembly by a sentence in the dissent from the decision to dismiss the overture from the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr which referred to 'those happier days of the church, when her ministers were settled by the call, or at least with the consent of the congregations among whom they were to labour'.⁶⁴ The central part of the Perth and Stirling overture, however, was an attempt to restrict the ability of superior courts to receive new evidence when hearing appeals or complaints, and to ensure that no letters or writs of concurrence be taken into consideration unless they were regularly authenticated by the relevant presbytery. This overture was dismissed on the grounds that its proposals were already secured by the standing rules of the Church.

What is clear from these overtures is that synods under Popular control were responding to specific actions by the Assembly in its handling of the cases of Biggar and Fenwick. These two cases brought to a head the need for a legal definition of a call and the necessity of some means of forcing a Moderator-controlled Assembly to pay due heed to the wishes of congregations.⁶⁵ It is clear, also, that the Moderates were

either unable or unwilling to allow the Assembly to produce a definition of a call, at least, not in 1781.

That this was so was borne out by the case of Carsphairn considered at the same Assembly. This case was also notable for the dissent which espoused sentiments of an exceedingly 'popular' or 'democratic' kind. The Presbytery of Kirkcudbright had refused to settle a presentee because of sustained opposition by the overwhelming majority of heritors, elders, and heads of families. By a narrow vote of 74 to 72, the Assembly agreed to reverse the Presbytery's decision. The dissent signed by forty ministers and ten elders argued that the Assembly was replacing sustaining a call, with sustaining concurrence with the presentee; and that in the settlement of ministers

no regard is to be paid to any class or order of men but to the patron; and in particular that the sentiments of gentlemen of landed property will be more regarded than those of the meanest of the people."⁶

Apart from its expression of 'radical' sentiments which could not have been condoned by members of a faction espousing the 'ideology of "commonwealthman" civic virtue',⁶⁷ the dissent in the Carsphairn case was subscribed by a greater number of ministers than subscribed any other dissent but one in the period from 1740 to the end of the century, and adherences by ten ruling elders was above the average number of elders involved in dissents on patronage cases.⁶⁸ The Carsphairn case deserves

considerably more weight being given it than has been the case hitherto.

The following year, 1782, the need for a legal call continued to occupy the Assembly as an overture from the Synod of Perth and Stirling was presented, concurred in by the Synods of Fife, Glasgow and Ayr, Galloway, Lothian and Tweeddale, and Angus and Mearns, which asserted that several presbyteries had ordained ministers without the moderation of a call, and prayed the Assembly to enjoin that no presbytery should in any case dispense with the moderation of a call. This time, the Moderates felt obliged to respond. Professor George Hill, the Moderate leader in the Assembly, while believing that the overture could have been justifiably dismissed, feared the misinterpretation of such a simple resolution and moved that the Assembly 'declare that the moderation of a call is agreeable to the immemorial practice of this Church', but that the overture be dismissed for the present because of inadequate evidence. Another leading Moderate, Dr. Macknight of Edinburgh, felt that the situation obviously required more than this and, 'with a view to unite the House', moved that 'The Assembly having considered overtures, declare, that the moderation of a call in settling ministers, is agreeable to the immemorial and constitutional practice of this church, and that it ought to continue'. Although the Assembly had just rejected a request from the Presbytery of Irvine to appoint a riding committee for the settlement of Fenwick by 72 votes to 49, Dr. Macknight's motion was approved by 90 votes to 76 and converted

into a declaratory act." The reasons for the fluctuation in the Popular vote are difficult to assess. In this instance they were almost certainly complex, since the debate produced a larger vote than usual and probably a larger than usual attendance of commissioners at the diet during which the issue was under consideration.

The Popular party were encouraged by this and by the existence of a sympathetic ministry,⁷⁰ and the 1783 Assembly saw overtures from the Synods of Perth and Stirling, and Fife requesting it to procure the repeal of the Act of 1712 which restored patronage and the revival of the Act of 1690. The new-found strength of the Popular interest was reflected in the voting which saw the overtures dismissed by only 87 votes to 78. Forty-eight members of the Assembly dissented and among the conventional reasons was the portentous assertion that the question of patronage had been a subject of debate for 'too long and should be brought to an issue. The refusal of the Moderates even to countenance a debate showed that the majority feared a defeat and were determined to pay no heed to 'the voice of their countrymen'." The existence of the Rockingham-Fox-Shelburne ministry coincided with two key Popular ~~conclusions~~ ^{conclusions} in 1782. The first was that the Moderates were prepared to countenance no change whatsoever in the administration of the patronage system. The second was that action was required to end the patronage wrangle which a significant number of the Popular party felt had been going on for an unacceptable length of time. These two

decisions had one logical outcome - a further appeal to Parliament which might be successful owing to a sympathetic ministry in London. This, of course, meant another attempt to enlist the support of the landed interest.

Confidence in the possibility of a Popular majority at the Assembly was shortlived, however, as was confidence in the longevity of the Rockingham-Fox-Shelburne ministry. The 1784 Assembly rejected overtures urging the repeal of patronage from the Synods of Glasgow and Ayr, and Perth and Stirling, by a huge majority of 90 votes.⁷² This points to successful efforts by the Moderate leadership to secure a Moderate 1784 Assembly after the strong Popular representation in 1783. During the course of the debate, little new argument was produced on either side. Moderate overtures from the Synods of Aberdeen, and Angus and Mearns were deflected by Professor Hill's motion that the Assembly did not believe 'that there is any reason for an innovation being made in the mode of settling vacant parishes'. This motion was carried against the Popular motion for rejection without assigning any reason by 108 votes to 77.⁷³ The Moderate-controlled Assembly then proceeded to delete the longstanding instruction to the Commission to seek 'deliverance from the grievance of patronage' without a vote.

In August of the same year the Popular party's position on patronage was affected by the General Sessions of Edinburgh's passing of an anti-patronage resolution by a majority of four

votes. It supported an application to Parliament on the subject and was apparently a reaction to an attempt by the Edinburgh town council to return to the exercise of their power of patronage in much the same way as they had in the 'Drysdale Bustle' of 1762. The nine resolutions on the matter were restrained in tone and were largely a restatement of the Popular constitutional position but they also included an unequivocal statement on the role of the landed interest in the settlement of parishes. The revival of the Act of 1690 would, it was asserted, 'give the landed gentlemen that influence in the settlement of their respective parishes, which they formerly possessed, and which ought always to belong to them'. The resolution went on to assert that it would 'give much satisfaction to the eldership, and to the great body of the people'. It was also claimed that the loyalty of the people to the Crown and government would be increased and that they would be made more ardent in the service of their country.⁷⁴

What was absent from these resolutions, however, was the theological basis on which earlier statements were founded. It was purely legal and constitutional in tone and reflected once again the second phase in the patronage struggle in the Assembly during which the Popular party had attempted to adhere to what they believed was the constitution of the Church and its traditional practices. The theology had gone and with it the attempt to force a religious and ecclesiastical solution to the problem. For the foreseeable future, relief from patronage would depend on political influence.

The demise of the theological impetus in the Popular position on patronage was evident in the debate in the General Assembly of 1785 on overtures from the Presbyteries of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, and from the Synods of Dumfries, and Perth and Stirling. They proposed consultation of the landed interest and the royal burghs on a repeal or alteration of the relevant laws. The tone of the debate was set by Dr. Hunter of Edinburgh. In moving to grant the overtures, he asserted the propriety of consulting the landed interest since 'if it should be found, that so responsible a body were averse to any alteration in the mode of settling ministers, then the matter was at an end'.⁷⁶ The ensuing debate was almost wholly taken up with the question of the 'propriety' of this consultation. The principles of the issue being debated were scarcely mentioned.⁷⁶ The debate was notable, however, for the appearance of Whig 'commonwealthman' ideas. The Honourable Henry Erskine himself, the Popular lay leader and Lord Advocate for a few months in the Fox-North coalition ministry of 1783, stressed that the friends of the motion had pledged themselves to give up the contest for ever if the landed interest should declare against any change in the existing law, but went on to politicise the debate by identifying patronage as a Tory device to prevent the Hanoverian succession and by asking: 'Can men, pretending to be Whigs, be so fond of a Tory brat?' He concluded his speech by applying Whig 'commonwealthman' ideals. The Assembly, he urged, should consult the landed interest

1st, Because they constitute the country; the island belongs to them, and they are the most competent judges of the point

in debate; 2nd, Because this is properly their own cause, in which their interest is most materially concerned, to which, therefore, when laid before them, they will pay attention, and come to a decision; and that their decision, be it what it may, will lay this long litigated business to sleep for ever.⁷⁷

The attempt to involve the landed interest was, of course, defeated. So ended the fourth and last phase of Popular opposition to patronage, which was marked by emphasis on the constitutional requirement of a valid call from a congregation to a minister acceptable to them. Although the Popular leadership had guaranteed that they would let the issue fall into abeyance, however, it is clear that the rank and file of the party at presbytery and synod level were not prepared to conform.⁷⁸ The frequency of patronage disputes declined after 1785 but six cases reached the Assembly between 1786 and 1794.⁷⁹ They were not, though, the source of a sustained Popular onslaught on patronage in the manner of earlier cases.

At Assembly level, therefore, the religious dimension of the patronage debate had disappeared. It was almost a secular issue which did affect the Church, but it was an issue which even the Popular party were prepared to settle outside the Church. Why this was so is not clear. It has been suggested that the tensions between different sections of the party which favoured different alternatives to patronage so fragmented it that an effective anti-patronage initiative was difficult, and that inability to mobilise the landed interest in their support precluded the

formation of an adequate socio-economic power base.⁹⁰ Such an interpretation does have relevance for the subsequent century and the struggle which led to the Disruption of 1843, and it no doubt has some relevance for the position in the eighteenth century. It does, however, fail to take into account the fact that the Popular party was at its most convincing and at its most confident when it was arguing on the theological basis of the nature and function of the Church, on the basis of the spiritual purpose of the ministry, and on the constitutional necessity of duly moderated and sustained calls. The Moderates clearly had no answer to these contentions. That they had not was most obvious in the definition of a call. In the late 1760s and again in the mid-1780s the Popular party was led, mainly by a group of influential lay leaders, into allowing its case to become secularised and the final decision to be taken out of the hands of the Church. For the Popular party this was catastrophic. The unsolved problem of how to force the Moderate majority in the Assembly to abandon the patronage system led to attempts to persuade it to modify its enforcement of patronage since such enforcement was constitutionally and legally unnecessary. The unpreparedness of the Moderates to do even that / led the Popular party to seek a pragmatic solution to a problem which was essentially one of principle, as was recognised in their publications and in much of their contribution to the debates at the General Assembly.

The reason for the virtual disappearance of the Popular-Moderate struggle over patronage at the Assembly after 1785 is that the Popular party had abandoned the ultimate theological and ecclesiastical grounds of their attack on, and resistance to, patronage. Such a position was possibly inherent in its commitment to the Establishment Principle as it was implemented in Scotland, and as such could have been foreseen. Nonetheless, it is difficult to see an ecclesiastical party, committed to an evangelical doctrine of the Church, recovering quickly from such a blunder.

NOTES: CHAPTER 8.

1. Drummond and Bulloch, op.cit., p. 228.
2. Morren, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 133-153, 169-180. The cases were those of Culross (1749), Duns (1749), and Lanark (1750).
3. ibid., pp. 181, 199-200.
4. ibid., pp. 200-208. The tentative identification is made on p. 206n. See also Scots Magazine, 14 (March 1752), pp. 137ff.
5. Morren, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 203.
6. ibid., p. 204.
7. See above, pp. 337-342, esp. pp. 339-340.
8. Morren, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 206.
9. See above, Chapters 3-5, passim.
10. ~~Morren~~, op.cit., pp. 209-211.
11. ibid., pp. 194-195.
12. ibid., p. 190.
13. Amongst the eleven members were the future Moderate leaders William Robertson, John Home, and Hugh Blair. See Drummond and Bulloch, op.cit., p. 58.
14. Morren, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 260.
15. ibid., p. 269.
16. ibid.
17. e.g., Drummond and Bulloch, op.cit., p. 65; Anand C. Chitnis, The Scottish Enlightenment. A Social History, (London, 1976), pp. 62-64; Sher, Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment, pp. 52-54.
18. Its contemptuous dismissal by Drummond and Bulloch is inexcusable. op.cit., p. 66.
19. Most conveniently in Chitnis, op.cit., and Sher, op.cit. See above, n. 17.
20. Morren, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 243-260. The Scots Magazine published 'An Abstract of the Answers to the Reasons of Dissent ... ', 14 (May 1752), pp. 229-238. This version is, however, identical with that given by Morren. See above, p. 56, n. 20.
21. ibid., p. 248 and n. The Lord Advocate of the time had earlier

been, as William Grant, Solicitor-General and Procurator of the Church. The reference was to his (anonymous) Occasional Writer.

22. ibid., p.230. The seven ministers were the Moderator (James Mackie), Principal Wishart, John Adams, Lawrence Hill, George Lindsay, Robert Walker, and Alexander Steadman. The elder was Albert Munro.
23. ibid., p. 249.
24. ibid., pp.249-251.
25. ibid., pp.256-257.
26. See above, pp.352-354.
27. Chitnis, op.cit., p.64.
28. Morren, op.cit., vol. 1, pp.289-290.
29. ibid., vol. 2, pp.1-2. It is worthy of note that later Popular opinion did not share the acceptance of riding committees apparently current at this time. In the Appendix to his Life of Erskine published some fifty years later, the Popular leader Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood attacked their use as neither sanctioned by constitutional law nor justified by expediency, failing to remove the prejudices of the people, and lowering the respect for the ministry. See Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, Account of the Life and Writings of John Erskine, D.D., (Edinburgh, 1818), p.457.
30. Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, pp.4-9. Associations had been formed and public meetings held by ministers in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr to stir up opposition to the deposition of Gillespie, and criticisms of the deposition had been made in the course of public worship. A paper had been submitted to the western Synod objecting to the use of public worship for such purposes, but the debate had resulted in the passing of a much watered-down version urging tolerance, abstention from mutual reproach, and suchlike expressions. The Moderate eastern Synod was provoked by this into passing an overture condemning the Glasgow Synod and supporting the General Assembly. As a result, Moderates in the Synods of Glasgow and Ayr, and Lothian and Tweeddale, were seen by the Popular

party as limiting or trying to limit freedom of speech and as restricting ecclesiastical liberty.

31. The 'Reasons of Dissent' do not, however, appear to have been influenced by either Adams's or Maclaurin's ideas on the subject. See above, pp.356-358, 363-365.
32. ibid., pp.35-41. It is interesting to note the unanimity of the Presbytery in its complaint against the Commission's sentence. It is possible to identify at least two Moderate members of the Presbytery at this period from the Fasti.
33. Sher and Murdoch in Macdougall, op.cit., pp.200-202. Sher and Murdoch interpret the 1690 Act as giving the landed interest the upper hand in the selection of ministers for vacant churches outside the burghs and consequently argue for the predominance of a 'Whig commonwealthman' theory as being the most important hallmark of the Popular party's opposition to patronage. Presumably, although they do not analyse individual presentation disputes, they would see the Kilconquhar case of 1760 as evidence for their position.
34. Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, p.204.
35. Macdougall, op.cit., p.211.
36. Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, pp.201-207. cf., The Loud Cry for Help's assertion that liberty of conscience could lead to leaving one minister for another if dissatisfied. See above, p.350.
37. cf., Gordon, The State and Duty of the Church of Scotland, pp.27-35.
38. Morren, op.cit., vol.2, p.204. In the patronage debate in the early 1760s there occurred an interlude in the second phase of the controversy. It centred on the respective rights of Church courts and municipal corporations in the presentation of ministers to burgh charges. This was the so-called 'Drysdale Bustle' of 1762-1764 in Edinburgh which has received detailed analysis recently, and which need not be repeated here. (e.g., Jeremy Cater, 'The Making of Principal Robertson in 1762: Politics and the University of Edinburgh in the second half of the eighteenth century', Scottish

Historical Review, 49 (1970), pp. 60-84); and Richard B. Sher, 'Moderates, Managers, and Popular Politics in Mid-Eighteenth Century Edinburgh: The 'Drysdale Bustle' of the 1760s', in John Dwyer, Roger A. Mason and Alexander Murdoch (eds.), New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 179-209. The case of Lady Yester's Church, for such was the 'Drysdale Bustle', was an attempt by the Moderate leadership in conjunction with the Edinburgh Town Council to place a Moderate minister, Revd. John Drysdale, in a vacant Edinburgh charge. As such, therefore, it was an integral part of the Moderate-Popular struggle. The whole debate, however, with one small exception, was carried on in legal terms as to whether the Town Council had the sole right of presentation. This was contested by the Popular ministers and their supporters in the General Sessions of the city. The only area of the debate where non-legal issues acquired prominence was when an objection to the Council's action was made on the grounds that such presentations would alienate the minds of the people from attending the regular ministry, would lead to the erection of separate places of worship to the detriment of the morals of the people, and would be destructive to the revenue of the poor's house which was largely maintained by the collections at the church services. The Moderate response to this line of argument was the expression of pious hopes that no well-disposed persons would neglect their duty, that the Town Council would always choose ministers most conducive to the interests of true religion and sound morals, and an assertion of faith in the loyalty of the people to the ordinances of the Gospel and in their charity to the poor. (Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 275.) It should be noted, however, that the General Sessions, which included both Moderate and Popular ministers and their supporters, disapproved unanimously of the exercise of the right of patronage; and that, on the other side, no exception was ever made to the presentee by Popular members. The significance of

this has so far gone unregarded. It was one of several instances of substantial agreement between members of the two parties which seem to have occurred regularly away from the higher echelons of party leadership. (*ibid.*, p.285.) There was an even more striking instance of this type of cross-party agreement in the famous St. Ninian's case of 1766-1773, in which Moderate members of the Presbytery of Stirling voted unanimously for the hard-line anti-patronage policy of the Popular majority for seven years. See McIntosh, *op.cit.*, pp.42-49, 54. See also below, pp.433-435.

39. There would seem to be two reasons why Sher and Murdoch develop their theory in the way they do. First, there is a failure to comprehend the religious or spiritual impulse in the issue of settlements, that is, the necessity of an acceptable minister to provide for the spiritual needs of a congregation. And secondly, there is a reliance on a limited range of pamphlet literature which obscures the nature of the overall balance of views as revealed in the Assembly debates. See Macdougall, *op.cit.*, p.211.
40. Scots Magazine, 28 (July 1766), pp.337-341; (August 1766), pp.393-399. The account of the debate in Morren, *op.cit.*, pp.329-347 is a verbatim reprint of the report by the correspondent of the Scots Magazine.
41. Scots Magazine, 28 (August 1766), p.395; Morren, *op.cit.*, vol.2, p.339.
42. See above, pp.424-425. The first appearance of this distinction, of course, occurred in the Loud Cry for Help to the Struggling Church of Scotland of 1753. See above, pp.350-351.
43. Scots Magazine, 28 (August 1766), p.395; Morren, *op.cit.*, vol.2, p.339. The exact meaning of this last statement is unclear. The similarity to the almost identical statement in Witherspoon's earlier speech prompts the speculation that this idea may also have been part of his contribution on this occasion. See above, p.424.
44. The argument took on a more political emphasis by the

refutation of the Moderate contention that patronage led to peace and good order on the grounds that such peace and order as was produced was that found under tyrannical and arbitrary governments. Liberty produced greater apparent disorder in public proceedings but more comfort and happiness, and only occasional and temporary dissent. The example of the system of patronage operating in the Church of England was dismissed as invalid and useless since it led to the neglect of parishes and a church membership 'perhaps more ignorant and profane than the members of any Protestant church in the world'. Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 341-342.

45. ibid., pp. 340-343.
46. This argument was made at its most explicit in the period before the Schism debate by Dr. George Kay in his closing address as Moderator of the 1759 Assembly. See Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 397.
47. See above n. 40.
48. See below, pp. 442-443.
49. Such a case was, of course, made two years later in the 1768 Assembly. See below, p. 432.
50. See Sher and Murdoch in Macdougall, op.cit., p. 210.
51. Scots Magazine, 31 (May 1769), pp. 227-228. Sher and Murdoch stress this line of argument in their thesis that the Popular party was dominated by men seeking to restore the primacy of the landed interest in the filling of vacant churches. (Macdougall, op.cit., pp. 207-211.) While there were doubtless significant numbers of men within the Popular party who were concerned to do so, it would not seem to have been a dominant group at the time. This is substantiated by an examination of developments in the patronage debate over the next sixteen years. Sher and Murdoch's position neglects the overall drift of the anti-patronage case until around 1784, it gives undue emphasis to a small number of pamphlets from a very narrow period, and it disregards the fundamental Popular conception of the separation of congregational and civil rights in the settlement of ministers. On this last aspect, see above,

pp. 350-351, 424-426.

52. Scots Magazine, 31 (May 1769), p. 226; 32 (May 1770), p. 305.
Both the Scots Magazine and Morren refer to this charge as that of Glendovan. (Morren, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 308.)
53. ibid., 33 (May 1771), pp. 274-275.
54. ibid., 34 (May 1772), pp. 226-231.
55. ibid., 36 (June 1774), p. 297.
56. ibid., 42 (May 1780), pp. 274-275.
57. ibid.
58. ibid., pp. 276-278.
59. ibid., p. 275.
60. ibid., 43 (May 1781), pp. 272-273.
61. ibid., p. 273
62. ibid., pp. 273-274.
63. ibid., p. 274.
64. ibid., p. 273
65. Sher and Murdoch identify an anti-patronage offensive of 1782-1785, and link it to the Rockingham-Fox-Shelburne ministry of the period which was considered friendly to 'popular' causes. There would seem to be little reason to dispute that the Popular party was encouraged by the change of ministry, but it is equally clear that in 1781 the Popular party was goaded into action by two Assembly decisions which blatantly disregarded the need for a call or even concurrence in a presentation. See Macdougall, op.cit., pp. 202-203.
66. Scots Magazine, 43 (May 1781), pp. 276-277. It is interesting to note that the following year, 1782, the Assembly sustained the relevancy of a libel against the presentee accusing him of immorality, possession of unlawful and false deeds, and simony. Scots Magazine, 44 (June 1782), p. 329. The Assembly of 1783 affirmed the Presbytery's decision finding the libels proved and revoking the presentee's license. This case, which came three times before the Assembly, indicates the reservations which should be applied when considering the validity of Sher and Murdoch's analysis of the number of presentation disputes in the period 1751-1800. See

Macdougall, op.cit., pp.199-201. Another case, presumably included by Sher and Murdoch, that of Cathcart in 1784, was not a typical presentation case at all, since it was caused by a sympathetic patron's inability for reasons of legal procedure to accommodate a change of mind by the parishioners whom he had already consulted. The Presbytery of Glasgow, however, refused to sustain the call and the patron appealed. Scots Magazine, 46 (May 1784), p.279.

67. See Caroline Robbins, The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman, (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), pp.185-195; Sher and Murdoch in Macdougall, op.cit., pp.207-211.
68. See below, p.441.
69. Scots Magazine, 44 (June 1782), pp.329-330.
70. See below, pp.441-442.
71. ibid., 45 (June 1783), pp.329-331.
72. ibid., 46 (May 1784), p.277.
73. ibid., pp.277-278.
74. ibid., 46 (August 1784), pp.444-445. The move by the General Sessions was successful for the Town Council withdrew its appeals from the Presbytery of Edinburgh's sentences in the case and agreed to return to the former practice for settlement of vacancies in the city. It is worthy of note, though, that in its initial response to the General Sessions' resolutions, it turned the Popular 'democratic' argument on its head by arguing that it was in a better position to do the will of the people because its members were elected annually and not, like the kirk sessions, for life. Furthermore, kirk sessions were open to influence by ministers. In any case, the Town Council needed 'popular' ministers to keep up contributions to the poor's fund. Scots Magazine, 46 (September 1784), p.501; (October 1784), p.554.
75. ibid., 47 (May 1785), p.240.
76. ibid., pp.240-242.
77. ibid., p.244.
78. At least not in the way that Sher and Murdoch seem to suggest. See Macdougall, op.cit., p.202.

79. The Presbytery of Jedburgh in 1786 requested extracts relating to overtures on contested settlements from the Synods of Fife and Moray in the previous year which the Assembly had dismissed, but the request was refused (Scots Magazine, 48 (June 1786), p. 310; 47 (June 1785), p. 269). In 1787 there were overtures from the Synods of Perth and Stirling, and Dumfries concerning the sale of patronages (ibid., 49 (May 1787), p. 256); and from the Synods of Glasgow and Ayr, and Galloway the following year (ibid., 50 (June 1788), p. 305). In 1789, the Presbytery of Irvine and the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr were involved in a heated presentation dispute which came before the Commission (ibid., 51 (June 1789), pp. 359-360); and the Synod was again before the Assembly in the case of Renfrew in 1790 (ibid., 52 (June 1790), p. 308). The latter case involved disputed legality of concurrences. In both cases the Assembly ordered settlement of the presentee. The 1794 Assembly rejected as irrelevant a libel against the presentee to Larbert and Dunipace which the Presbytery of Stirling had accepted, and ordered a settlement (ibid., 56 (May 1794), p. 305; McIntosh, op.cit., pp. 51-53).
80. Sher and Murdoch in Macdougall, op.cit., pp. 197-215.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION.

While it is difficult to generalise, and while such generalisations as might be made cannot apply with equal validity on all issues, it must be accepted that the Popular party was in no way a monolithic organisation either in matters of doctrine and ideology or in matters of its responses to the ecclesiastical and secular problems with which it was faced. Not only that, it must also be stressed that there was also only limited consistency displayed by members of the party regarding their position in the spectrum of theological or secular opinion to be found within it.

The first point revealed by the study of the theological and ideological positions of the Popular party is that it was a doctrinally complex party, even on some issues a diverse one. The diversity is evident in the existence of three groupings in most areas of doctrine. The first was a group of men who saw little or no need to express theological truths in other than conventional terms or who were little interested in the technicalities of theological discussion; a second group, significant beyond their numbers as a result of the influence of the ideas of Principal Wishart of Edinburgh, held a theology similar to that of the Moderate leadership; and a third group which, while orthodoxly Calvinist in its theology, responded to contemporary secular thought and used it to express their doctrinal positions. From

this third group came an increasingly evangelical impetus within the Church.

This having been established, however, it is also evident that the pattern did not operate with consistency in all areas of doctrine. For example, it appeared when the doctrines relating to sin and salvation were being discussed (though with little regard to the use of key theological terms); it was present to a notable extent in Popular attempts to define the nature of faith and the nature of holiness; and to some extent it was to be found in the question of how best to defend Christian society against infidelity. Individual figures, however, did not remain in the one grouping from subject to subject, and there was considerable cross-fertilisation of ideas. Furthermore, the diversity of theological opinion was sometimes embodied in the absence of any clear-cut division of opinion; in other cases there was no agreement at all. The question of the role and importance of natural religion as a source of religious knowledge saw substantial disagreement within the party with a very limited consensus that natural religion gave adequate proofs of the existence and perfections of God, of the immortality of the soul, and of the blameworthiness of man if he chose to disregard the proofs. Likewise there was only limited agreement on the nature of man. Beyond accepting that the Fall led to man's natural inability to comprehend the nature of sin and the offer of salvation through Christ, the party was unable to agree on the extent to which the testimony of the conscience was valid or

reliable. In matters relating to practical Christianity, that is, to the requirements of Christian living, and to the response to infidelity and atheism, even the more evangelical members of the party were divided. In general terms, the party was hampered in any attempt at doctrinal unity by a commitment to the essential rationality of the Christian religion and the consequent desire of some, but not all, to accommodate what the contemporary secular world took to be in accordance with Reason.

While, then, it is clear that there was a substantial diversity within the theology of the Popular party, it should also be appreciated that there was a considerable degree of unity at the same time. The most notable area of theological unity occurred concerning the nature of faith: there was little disagreement that faith was essentially a matter of knowledge and belief and that it had to do with the nature of a Christian's relationship to God (though the party's two greatest authorities on the subject, John Maclaurin and John Erskine, differed appreciably). Notable, too, was the extent of agreement that the way to counter the spread of infidelity was by a renewed stress on evangelical preaching. In some respects even more striking, perhaps, was the near unanimity on the question of heresy: the way to counter it was through careful supervision of the education of the ministry, the adoption of proper procedure when it had to be censured, and the belief that unity on the basis of the confessional standards of the Church was a better answer to infidelity than a rigorous policy of ecclesiastical censure.

If, however, substantial qualifications need to be made about the extent of the doctrinal unity of the Popular party, the extent of unity of opinion was much greater in secular matters. There was a stress on the essential role of religion as the basis of society and as the guarantor of social stability, and an implicit acceptance of Calvinist conceptions of fallen human nature as necessitating government. This led to an initially conservative view of politics. At the same time, a commitment to religious and civil liberty of conscience led to adoption of doctrines of political liberty. There was, therefore, an inherent tension in Popular attitudes to society and government which was shared by all sections within the party. The conservative impulse explains why there was so little difference from the Moderates on most political issues; the commitment to religious and civil liberty explains why there was a Popular-Moderate split on the American War of Independence. The only exception to this pattern occurred over Roman Catholic toleration where the religious fears of the Popular party dominated its usual tolerant sympathies. In social and cultural matters, too, the party displayed a very considerable degree of unity. Dominating the social perceptions of the party was a preoccupation with the growth of luxury. Luxury led to inattention to poverty, to sensuality, and to infidelity. The virtuous use of wealth was the exception; possession of wealth led to the loss to sight of true religion and godliness. While culture was viewed with some suspicion at the start of the period under examination, by the 1760s, if not earlier, cultural activity came to be seen increasingly as a

legitimate area for the Christian provided it could be used for the glory of God. The overall pattern on secular issues, therefore, was one of greater unity than that in theological areas. In the secular field there was also often a measure of common ground between the Popular party and the Moderates. Combined with the degree of unity to be found in theology between mainstream Popular theologians and Wishart Moderates, some at least of whom were influenced by 'evangelical' emphases, it must raise the possibility that the division between the two parties was less than appears if the Moderate leadership is regarded as representative of the views of the party as a whole.

It is possible, therefore, to define certain areas of unity and disunity in the theological and ideological positions of members of the Popular party but it is obvious that it is not an especially coherent picture which emerges. In other words, the term 'Popular party' has limited use as a concept to denote the doctrinal or ideological positions of those who opposed the patronage system in the later half of the eighteenth century. There clearly were theological tensions within the party, whose members ranged from theological Moderates to arch-traditionalists. The theological position was complex, and in some areas confused. What is clear, is that it is impossible to make valid generalisations about the party as a whole based on one grouping within it, namely the traditionalist faction, as was done at the time by the Moderate leadership and which has continued to be done by their later sympathisers. Far less is it

valid to produce a caricature of the party as a whole on that basis.

On the other hand, this is not to deny that a term such as 'Popular theology' has any validity at all. Especially is this true if the dominant tendencies within the party are analysed. The overall picture is that of a party in which the dominant characteristic was one in which Scriptural revelation was seen to be the starting point for all theological and religious activity. Whether in writing of the primacy of revelation over natural religion as a source of religious knowledge, or of the attributes of God as ascertainable through analysis of the Atonement, or of the centrality of the Atonement for Christian faith, stress on the authority of Scripture as divine revelation was common to all Popular writing. Human philosophy remained only subsidiary. From time to time inconsistencies arose when secular insights which sometimes had theological implications were accepted in peripheral areas.

It should not be assumed, however, as has often been done, that in view of this the Popular party should be described as 'evangelical' in the modern sense of the term. The main reason for this is that until John Erskine published his Dissertation on the Nature of the Christian Faith in 1765, there were few Popular ministers who perceived themselves to be preaching to a majority of men who were not Christians. Furthermore, there were few members of the Popular party who allowed much role to the senses

in the process of conversion or in the nature of assurance of salvation. Post-Wesleyan evangelicalism gave a place to sense experience in religious experience which, with the exception of John Erskine, was relatively unknown in Popular writings. Even for Erskine, the role of the senses was limited to the assurance of God's promises being applied to the individual in the matter of salvation. For most members of the Popular party, affinity with, and support for the international evangelical movement was much more orientated around the exaltation of scriptural doctrines and right perceptions of the Atonement and of man's consequent relationship to God, rather than around concern with religious experience per se.

It should also not be assumed that the Popular party remained doctrinally or ideologically static throughout the period under consideration. At the doctrinal heart of the Christian religion, namely the question of the nature of faith, the two most important theologians produced by the party, John Maclaurin and John Erskine, displayed a preparedness to be influenced by, and to use, contemporary secular thought concerning the operation of the human mind and of the will, and on epistemology. The process was continued by later writers. These contemporary insights were used to express basically orthodox theological positions. It could be argued that preparedness to be influenced by contemporary thought led to the absence of a Popular consensus in areas such as the relevance of natural religion, the attributes of God, and the nature of man.

In the latter case especially, Popular thinkers saw orthodox perceptions being challenged by Enlightenment thought and moved to modify traditional positions as a result. In secular matters, too, Popular thinkers were influenced by contemporary thought. There was a move to liberal positions until the trend was dramatically halted by the French Revolution. Ideas of universal benevolence derived from William Wishart led to the appearance in Popular works of a moral relativity in which all actions were regarded as having social implications which determined their morality. It was largely accepted that civic virtues could be inculcated by educative means irrespective of theological considerations. It was generally assumed that revelation did not contribute significantly to the analysis of human society. The increasingly dominant grouping within the party, however, was able to apply contemporary ideas in a constructive way. This led to the development of an increasingly confident evangelicalism which led to the appearance of the nineteenth century Evangelical Revival in Scotland. This dominant section of the party, therefore, had a much more seminal influence than has hitherto been suspected.

The Popular party should not be regarded as having any tight theological unity, but it was dominated intellectually and possibly numerically by a group of influential thinkers who were broadly evangelical in their outlook. Although care should be exercised over the use of the term 'evangelical' since their perceptions of the nature of saving faith and such central

doctrines as the Atonement were orientated towards an intellectual rather than an experiential conception of conversion and faith, and their preaching was not directed to the emotions of their hearers in the way that later nineteenth century evangelical preaching often was, this dominant 'evangelical' emphasis within the party is the element which gives the term 'the Popular party' the degree of theological validity which it has.

Analysis of the patronage dispute reveals that the Popular party displayed the same features of diversity, unity, and evolution as were present in its theology and ideology. For the majority of the party, the seeds of the dispute ultimately lay not in differences about church-state relations or about the rights of congregations to decide who should be their ministers, but rather in perceptions about the nature and purpose of the Christian Church, the nature of faith, and the function of preaching. For most of them, the problem with patronage was that it restricted the likelihood of faithful ministers of the gospel being appointed who would preach for the salvation of their parishioners' souls. Such a priority, of course, can only be understood in the light of its protagonists' theological position. This raises the question of the grounds for opposition to patronage of members of the party who did not share the 'evangelical' perceptions of the majority. The answer is, as was revealed for example in the 'Reasons' attached to Principal Wishart's dissent in the Torphichen Case of 1751, that patronage

was seen by some of even Moderate theological persuasion as incompatible with the constitution of the Church. It was at bottom even Erastian. This perception cut across theological divisions.

The response of the Popular party to Moderate control of the General Assembly as it affected the patronage issue was determined by three factors. First, the perception of the majority was that the Christian Church was a unique institution deriving its purpose and its authority from the commands of Christ himself. This meant that anything which interfered with its role and authority had to be fought for spiritual and theological reasons. Patronage, therefore, was a spiritual issue best to be fought with spiritual weapons. Secondly, there was the perception of almost all the party that the issue had a constitutional dimension, since patronage was contrary to the laws and privileges of the Church of Scotland, and was therefore also to be debated in 'legal' terms. Commitment to the principle of Establishment and a high estimation of the benefits which it was regarded as bringing for the propagation of the gospel introduced a secular, political, and legal dimension to the debate. Thirdly, a pragmatic response developed when faced by Moderate immovability on the issue. This response embodied a preparedness to utilise a secular strategy when it became clear that the Moderate hegemony in the General Assembly would not countenance any change in its policy of adherence to and enforcement of patronage. This last development undercut the

fundamentally theological basis of opposition to the patronage system, and in the end led to the virtual disappearance of the issue until the next century.

Rather than being the touchstone for analysis of the Church of Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century, therefore, the patronage controversy should be seen as more in the nature of a separate issue, though one of importance which affected the whole Church and which preoccupied the minds of many. Concentration on the issue serves only to obscure a balanced and more comprehensive picture of the life of the Church. Concentration on the ideology and role of the Moderate leadership has produced a picture of a divided Church. It has obscured the extent of unity which existed between Popular and Moderate factions on many issues, and it has drawn attention away from the study of the relationship between the Church and people of Scotland. Analysis of the Popular party in the latter half of the eighteenth century, apart from revealing the nature of the party and the limitations of the use of the concept of the 'Popular party' as an historiographical tool, has highlighted these deficiencies. The way forward for the study of the Scottish Church in the period involves a supplementing of the history of ideas and a moving away from preoccupation with the debates and actions of the General Assembly, and from preoccupation with the significance of a small group of possibly unrepresentative Moderate literati.

The attempt of this study to do so suggests that far from the key issue in the Church of Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century being the dispute between the Popular and Moderate parties over patronage, of much greater importance was the evolving theological alignment. There seem to have been three parties in the eighteenth century Church. First, there were traditionalists: orthodox Calvinists who stressed Church polity and who saw little need or justification for diverging from traditional forms and modes of doctrinal expression. Secondly, there were liberals, formally Calvinistic but influenced in varying degrees by Stoic ethics and in general by what is known as Moderatism. This position, in its purest form, was epitomised by the Moderate literati. There are signs, however, from the existence in the Popular party of Moderates and near-Moderates, that Moderatism was almost certainly not so monolithic as is usually assumed. Thirdly, there was a group which, for want of a better term, may be regarded as 'Evangelicals'. They were orthodox, like the first group, but they were 'Enlightened', like the second. The Popular party, that is, the section of the Church of Scotland who opposed patronage, included all three. In 1740, the first group was possibly the strongest within the party; the second group was always small; the third group grew until by the end of the century it was dominant. If it were to be established that the Moderate party contained the same elements, though obviously in different proportions, present understandings of the history of the eighteenth century Church of Scotland would require fundamental revision.

Appendix A: Matters of Popular Dissent, 1740-1805.

1. Dissent from Act of Assembly deposing Seceders.
2. Signing of John Willison's Fair and Impartial Testimony, 1744.
3. Dissent from sentence of Assembly 1751 censuring the Presbytery of Linlithgow in Torphichen case.
4. Dissent ^{from} ~~against~~ judgement of Assembly in refusing to delay decision concerning offices of Church Agent and Assembly Sub-Clerk, 1753.
5. Dissent from decision of Assembly 1753 not to repone Thomas Gillespie.
6. Dissent from judgement of Commission of November 1753 in case of Biggar.
7. Committee appointed by Commission of November 1753 to draw up address to King criticising the conduct of the ministry in the French War.
8. Dissent from the decision of Assembly 1757 to receive the commissions of elders not attested in terms of Act 1722.
9. Dissent from decision of Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale reversing decision of Presbytery of Dalkeith in case of Alexander Carlyle, 1757.
10. Dissent from decision of Assembly 1760 in Kilconquhar case.
11. Dissent from decision of Assembly 1769 not to reappoint the Patronage Committee.
12. Dissent from decision of Assembly 1769 in St. Ninian's case.
13. Dissent from decision of Assembly 1769 sustaining the election of an elder from the Presbytery of Ayr not attested as to the signing of the Confession of Faith and Formula.
14. Protest against the decision of Assembly 1770 to suspend a minister deposed by the Synod of Perth and Stirling for drunkenness.
15. Dissent from the decision of Assembly 1770 in the Glendevon case.
16. Dissent from the decision of Assembly 1770 in the St. Ninian's case.

17. Speakers in support of the Presbytery of Stirling in the St. Ninian's case at the Assembly 1770.
18. Dissent from the judgement of Assembly 1772 upholding a commission to an elder alleged to be an irregular attender at divine worship.
19. Dissent from decision of Assembly 1772 in Kinglassie case.
20. Dissent from judgement of Assembly 1773 in St. Ninian's case.
21. Dissent from decision of Assembly 1773 to receive an improperly attested commission for an elder from the Presbytery of Ayr.
22. Dissent from the decision of the Assembly 1780 to sustain 'concurrence' to the presentee to Biggar.
23. Dissent from the decision of Assembly 1780 reversing the decision of the Synod of Angus and Mearns not to take on trials a man who had not pursued a regular Divinity course.
24. Dissent from the decision of Assembly 1780 to sustain 'concurrence' to the presentee to Fenwick.
25. Dissent from the decision of Assembly 1781 to sustain the call to the presentee to Carsphairn.
26. Dissent from the decision of Assembly 1781 to uphold 'concurrence' to the presentee to Fenwick.
27. Dissent from the use of the phrase 'of a dangerous tendency' in the rejection by the Assembly 1781 of the overture from the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr concerning calls.
28. Dissent from the decision of the Assembly 1782 not to include in the address to the King a clause critical of North's ministry and favourable to Rockingham's.
29. Dissent from the decision of Assembly 1783 rejecting the anti-patronage motion.
30. Speakers in favour of the anti-patronage overtures at the Assembly 1784.
31. Speakers in support of the overtures from the Synods of Dumfries and of Perth and Stirling to consult landed gentlemen on changes in the law of patronage and dissent from the decision of the Assembly 1785 not to grant the overtures.
32. Speakers in support of seeking repeal of the Test Act in the

debate at the Assembly 1790.

33. Speakers in support of Missions at the Assembly 1796.

34. Supporters of Leslie in the Leslie case at the Assembly 1805.

APPENDIX B. MINISTERIAL MEMBERS OF THE POPULAR PARTY AND BASIS
OF IDENTIFICATION.

Aitken, George	Montrose	14, 16, 2
Aitken, Robert	Morton	25
Aitken, William	South Leith	9
Anderson, John	Glasgow Univ.	23
Anderson, Walter	Chirnside	23
Anderson, William	Gorbals	25
Baillie, Patrick	Bo'ness	19
Baird, John,	Dunning	29
Balfour, Robert	Glasgow	24, 31
Ballingall, John	Cupar	3
Bannerman, Patrick	Saltoun	19, 22, 23
Barclay, George	Haddington	23
Bayne, James	Killlearn	6
Bell, William	Campsie	11
Bisset, John	Brechin	2, 8
Blinshall, James	Dundee	13, 15, 16
Bogie, Robert	Logie	20, 28
Bonar, Archibald	Cramond	22, 34
Bowmaker, Robert	Duns	23
Boyd, Robert	Muiravonside	1
Bremner, James	Walls & Flotta	18
Brown, Lawrence	Lentrathen	1
Brown, Richard	Lochmaben	17
Brown, William	Aberdeen Univ.	34
Bruce, John	Forfar	29
Bryce, Daniel	Logie-Pert	15, 16, 25, 26
Bryce, Robert	Dron	3
Buchanan, Robert	Lesmahagow	29
Buchanan, Walter	Stirling	25, 26
Burn, James	Forgan	11, 12, 13
Burns, John	Glasgow (Barony)	28
Burnside, William	Dumfries	25
Calder, Hugh	Croy	25, 26, 31
Campbell		34
Campbell,	Lochow(?)	23
Campbell, Colin	Renfrew	11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 29
Collo, John	Penpont	5
Colquhoun, John(?)	Edin. (St. John's)?	33
Colvill, Robert	Dysart	23
Connel, David	East Kilbride	11, 18
Cooper, Robert	Girthon	19
Corse, John	Glasgow	11, 12
Cuming, Patrick	Edinburgh	14
Currie, John	Burntisland	6
Currie, John	Kinglassie	3, 5
Dalglish, William	Ferryport-on-Crg	24, 26
Dalling, Alexander	Cleish	24
Davidson, Alexander	Stenton	23
Davidson, David	Kippen, Dundee	25, 26, 29, 31
Davidson, Thomas	Tolbooth	34

Denoon, David	Killearnan	11, 12, 13, 22, 24
Dick, Alexander	Dalry	3, 10, 18, 19
Dick, Robert	Edinburgh	11, 12
Dickson, David	Edin. (St. Cuthbts)	34
Dickson, David	Edin. (New North)	34
Dickson, David	Libberton	29
Dickson, George	Bedrule	8
Dickson, Jacob	Mouswald	31
Dickson, John	Kirkcowan	29, 31
Dobie, Alexander	Glasford, Eaglesham	18, 19, 22, 24, 29
Douglas, Robert	Galashiels	23
Dow, David	Dron	11, 25
Dow, William	Blairgowrie	14, 16
Drummond, Robert	Auchterarder	3, 11
Duff, Alexander	Tippermuir	28, 29, 30
Dun, Alexander	Bendochie	11
Dun, John	Auchinleck	5, 6, 30
Dun, William	Kirkintilloch	32
Dunbar, Lewis	Dunning	25, 26
Duncan, Andrew	Auchterarder	29
Duncan, Andrew	Ratho	34
Duncan, George (Jnr)	Lochrutton	23
Duncan, John	Alva	11, 22, 24
Erskine, John	Edinburgh	6, 18, 19, 28, 33
Fergusson, John	Port of Menteith	5
Fernie, Thomas	Dunfermline	18
Ferrier, John	Largo	6
Findlay, John	Paisley	25, 27
Foote, Robert	Eskdalemuir	11
Forrest, John	Port Glasgow	25
Frame, John	Alloa	17
Fraser, Alexander	Kirkhill	19, 29
Freebairn, John	Dumbarton	11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19 20, 21
Furlong, James	Rutherglen	25, 26
Gibbon, David	?	18
Gibson, John	Edin. St. Cuthbt's	18, 19
Gilchrist, John	Bedrule	1
Gillespie, George	Strathmiglo	1
Gillies, Colin	Paisley	28
Gillies, John	Carraldstone	2
Gillies, John	Glasgow	10, 20, 21, 28
Glas, Hugh	Kettle	3
Glen, John	Forgandenny	3
Glen, John	W. St. Giles	9
Gordon, Alexander	Greenlaw	28
Graham, William	Fossaway	25
Gray, Andrew	Abernethy	18
Grieve, Henry	Dalkeith	23
Haddoway, John	?	31
Hall, James	Lesmahagow	33
Hally, Andrew	Lundie & Fowlis E	19
Hamilton, John	Cathcart	11, 12, 13, 20
Hamilton, John	Glasgow	19

Henry, Robert	Edinburgh	22, 24, 30
Hill, Laurence	Glasgow (Barony)	3
Hume, Alexander	Polwarth	23
Hunter, Andrew	Edinburgh	19, 25, 26, 31, 33, 34
Hunter, David	Saline	1, 3
Hunter, Henry	South Leith	14, 15, 16
Hunter, James	Kirkden	11
Hutton, Andrew	Kilmany	29
Inglis, Harry	Forteviot	11, 20, 28, 29, 31
Innes, James	Mertoun	5
Innes, James	Yester	29
Inglis, John	Kirkmabreck	25, 31
Jardine, Walter	Bathgate	26
Jobson, James	Errol	11, 12, 22, 24
Johnson, Bryce	Holywood	25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32
Johnston, David	North Leith	25, 26, 33, 31, 34
Johnston, John	Durrisdeer	11
Johnston, John	Eckford	1
Johnstone, John	Biggar	9
Johnstone	Crossmichael	33, 31, 34
Keith, George	Keithhall	34
Kemp, David	Gask	18, 19, 29
Kemp, John	Edinburgh	25, 26
Kerr, Abraham	Nenthorn	16
Kerr, John	Carmunnock	15, 18, 19
Kettle, Thomas	Leuchars	25
Kingan, John	Crawford	11, 12, 13
Kirkpatrick, Joseph	Dunscore	28
Laing, James	Glasserton	18, 19
Lamont, David	Kilpatrick-Durham	34
Lapslie, James	Campsie	30, 32
Lauder, James	Dun & Ecclesjohn	11
Lawson, Archibald	Kirkmahoe	11, 12, 13, 17, 29
Lawson, John	Closeburn	3
Lindsay, George	North Leith	3, 6, 9
Linning, Thomas	Lesmahago	15
Little, Archibald	Morton	5
Little, Bryce	Covington	23
Logan, John	Leith	28
Lundie, John	Oldhamstocks	9, 11, 12, 13, 20, 25
Lyon, George	Longforgan	2
Lyon, George	Strathmiglo	25, 26
Lyon, James	Glamis	25
MacBride, John	?	19
MacCaul, John	Symington	12
MacCourty, Thomas	Penicuik	23
MacCulloch, Robert	Dairsey	20
MacGibbon, David	Buchan	19, 21
Mackaill	?	19
Macleod, Roderick	Bracadale	14
Macmillan, James	Torthorwald	11, 23, 29
Macphail, Hector	Resolis	11, 12, 13, 18, 19
Macqueen, Daniel	Edin. Tolbooth	17
Macqueen, Daniel	Prestonkirk	11, 12

Mair, John	Cameron	28
Marr, George	Murroes	2
Martin, Samuel		18
Martin, Samuel	Balmaghie, Monimail	25, 26
Mathieson, John	Kilmuir-Easter	29
Maxwell, Patrick	New Monkland	19, 22, 24
McBean, William	Alves	33
McFarlan, John	Edin. Canongate	30
McKill, John	Durisdeer	28
Meek, Patrick	Kinnoull	17
Menteith, John (Jnr)	Houston	29
Mylne, James	Kinnaird	16
Millar, John	Inchtur	29
Miller, John	Newburgh, Inchtur	11
Mitchell, Andrew	Monkton & Prestwick	32
Mochrie, James	Colmonnell	18, 25, 26
Mollison, Alexander	Montrose	22
Moncrieff, Sir Harry	Edin. St. Cuthbert's	18, 32, 33, 34
Moncrieff, Sir Wm.	Blackford	5
Monteath, John (Jnr)	Houston & Killellan	28, 31
Moodie, Alexander	Riccarton	14, 15, 16
Moodie, John (Alex?)	(Riccarton?)	18
Moody, James	Perth	20, 24
Morison, James	Strathblane, Paisley	11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21
Morison, Philip	Dunscore	11, 12, 13
Muckersy, John	West Calder	34
Muir, George	Old Cumnock, Paisley	5, 11, 12, 13
Munro, Donald	Lochcarron	25
Murray, Alex.	Foulis-Wester	3
Muschet, John	Stirling	28
Nimmo, William	Bothkennar	22
Nimmo, William	Roberton	5
Nisbet, Charles	Montrose	18, 20, 25, 26, 29
Noble, John	Libberton	11, 12, 18, 19, 20
Ogilvie, James	Aberdeen	3, 5
Oliphant, James	Dumbarton	25, 27
Orr, William	Spott	9
Osborn, William	Tillycoultry	24
Paton, James	Craig	11
Paul, William	Newbattle	25, 26
Peebles, William	Newton-on Ayr	25
Penman, John	Bothkennar	6
Porteous, James	Monyvaird	3
Porteous, John	Kilmuir-Easter	11, 12
Porteous, William	Whitburn, Glasgow	14, 17, 28
Pyper, David	Pencaitland	34
Ramsay, James	Bendochy	1
Randall, Thomas	Edinburgh	29
Randall, Thomas	Inchtur	5, 6, 8, 18, 19
Riddel, Simon	Tinron	1
Ritchie, William	Athelstaneford	34
Robe, James	Kilsyth	3
Robertson, James	Callander	29

Robertson, James	South Leith	34
Robertson, John	Kirkconnel	18, 19, 25, 26
Rose, Daniel	Dingwall	20
Row, John	Navare & Lethnot	2
Russell, Robert	Yarrow	34
Scott, Andrew	Stitchell	29
Scott, James	Auchtergaven	5
Scott, James	Carluke	23
Scott, John	Avendale	29
Scott, Richard	Ewis	14, 15, 16, 19, 28
Shepherd, John	Muirkirk	25, 29, 33
Simpson, William	Edin. Tron	34
Small, James	Carmylie	2
Smith, Archibald	Strathblane	21
Smith, James	Newburn	3
Snodgrass, John	Dundee	25, 26
Somerville, James	Whitburn, Stirling	31, 32
Somerville, Thomas	Jedburgh	32
Spankie, Thomas	Falkland	25, 26
Spears, Robert	Burntisland	5, 11, 12, 13, 18
Spears, Alexander	Kirkcaldy	20, 21
Spence, David	Cockburnspath	9
Spence, John	Orwell	3, 17
Squire, John	Forres	1, 5
Stark, Robert	Torryburn	1
Steadman, Robert	Beith	1
Stedman, Alex.	Tillycoultry	3
Stevenson, Archibald	St. Madoes	18, 19
Stevenson, James	Edinburgh	6, 9
Stirling, James	Glasgow	18
Sutherland, John	Golspie	3
Tait, William	Kilbucho	9, 15, 18, 19, 25
Taylor, Lauchlan	Larbert	11
Taylor, William	Paisley	22
Telfer, John	Kilsyth	14
Thomson, Andrew	Sprouston	34
Thomson, Alexander	Carnock	25, 27
Thomson, John	Libberton	1
Thomson, John	Sanquhar	29
Thomson, William	Strathmartin	1
Weatherston, Adam	Bathgate	14
Walker, Andrew	Collessie	18, 19
Walker, David	Temple	8
Walker, James	Leuchars	8
Walker, Robert	Cramond, Canongate	25, 26, 32
Walker, Robert	Edinburgh	9, 19, 22, 23, 24
Walker, Thomas	Dundonald	8, 14, 15, 20
Wallace, James	Keir	29
Warden, John	Canongate	9
Wardrop, Alex.	Whitburn	9
Watson, George	Inverness	19, 22, 24
Watson, James	Canongate (Torph?)	9
Webster, Alex.	Edin. Tolbooth	9, 17
Williamson, Andrew	Arngask	9

Williamson, John	Tinwall	25, 26
Wilson, James	Tynron	11, 12, 13, 22, 24
Wishart, William	Edinburgh Univ.	3
Witherspoon, John	Beith, Paisley	8, 10
Wright, James	Logie Wallach	29
Wright, John	Trinity-Gask	25, 26
Young, James	New Cumnock	22, 24

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and
Presbytery.

1. Doctrine.
2. Apologetics.
3. Experiential or Devotional and Evangelical Works.
4. Exposition.
5. Ecclesiastical Issues.
 - 5a. Patronage.
 - 5b. Heresy.
 - 5c. Popery.
 - 5d. Nature of the Ministry.
 - 5e. Missions.
 - 5f. Moderatism.
 - 5g. Public Worship.
 - 5h. Revivals.
 - 5i. Covenants.
 - 5j. Religious Education.
 - 5k. Stipend Augmentation.
 - 5l. Leslie Case.
6. Political Issues.
7. Infidelity, Morality, Manners.
- 8a. Sermons.
- 8b. Sacramental Sermons.
- 9a. Civil and Religious Liberty.
- 9b. Church Discipline and Government.
10. National Religion and the Church Establishment.
11. Practical Subjects.
12. Social Issues.
13. Ecclesiastical Biography and History.
14. Textbooks and Grammars.
15. Literature and Fine Arts.
16. Agriculture, etc.
17. Medicine.
18. Science and Mathematics.
19. History and Topography.
20. Philosophy.

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery

	E Edinburgh		E Linlithgow		M Biggar		M Peebles		E Dalkeith		P Haddington		P Dunbar		Synod of Lothian & Tweeddale	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1	5	1									1				6	1
2		1													0	1
3	9	3		1											9	4
4	5	2													5	2
5a	4	3	1				3								5	6
5b							1								0	1
5c	2														2	0
5d		2													0	2
5e	2														2	0
5f		1							1						0	2
5g		1		1											0	2
5h	2		1												3	0
5i															0	0
5j		1													0	1
5k	4	1							1						4	2
5l		3													0	3
6	7	3													7	3
7	5		1	1											6	1
8a	21	20		3			2	2		4	1				24	29
8b															0	0
9a		4									1				1	4
9b	1	1	1												2	1
10	1								1						2	0
11	2						1								3	0
12				1											0	1
13	3	2								1					3	3
14	1														1	0
15	4	11	1	3					2		6				5	22
16	1	1		1				1			1		4		1	8
17															0	0
18		3		1							1				0	5
19	4	10	1	5							1				5	16
20		2													0	2
Totals	83	76	6	17	0	0	3	7	1	9	3	9	0	4	96	122

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery

	P		M		U		P		U		P		Synod of Merse & Teviotdale	
	Duns		Chirnside		Kelso		Jedburgh		Earlston		Selkirk			
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1											1		1	0
2													0	0
3											3		3	0
4													0	0
5a					1								1	0
5b													0	0
5c													0	0
5d													0	0
5e													0	0
5f													0	0
5g													0	0
5h													0	0
5i													0	0
5j													0	0
5k													0	0
5l					2								2	0
6							3						3	0
7							1						1	0
8a							6				2		8	0
8b													0	0
9a								3					0	3
9b													0	0
10													0	0
11									1				1	0
12												1	0	1
13							1						1	0
14													0	0
15													0	0
16												1	0	1
17													0	0
18								1					0	1
19							1	2					1	2
20													0	0
Totals	0	0	0	0	3	0	12	6	1	0	6	2	22	8

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery.

	E Langholm		E Lochmaben		P Annan		E Dumfries		P Penport		M Stranraer		M Wigtown		M Kirkbright		Dumfries & Galloway	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1							1										1	0
2																	0	0
3							2										2	0
4							2										2	0
5a			2						2								4	0
5b					1												1	0
5c																	0	0
5d																	0	0
5e							1										1	0
5f																	0	0
5g																	0	0
5h																	0	0
5i									1								1	0
5j																	0	0
5k																	0	0
5l																	0	0
6			1				3										4	0
7							2				1	1			2		3	3
8a					1		4				1						5	1
8b																	0	0
9a							1										1	0
9b																	0	0
10											1						0	1
11																	0	0
12																	0	0
13			1														1	0
14																	0	0
15				1												7	0	8
16		1														1	0	2
17																	0	0
18																	0	0
19																	0	0
20																	0	0
Totals	0	1	4	1	2	0	16	0	3	0	0	3	1	0	0	10	26	15

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery

	M		M		P		P		P		M		E		P		Synod of Glasgow & Ayr	
	Ayr		Irvine		Paisley		Greenock		Hamilton		Lanark		Dumbarton		Glasgow			
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1	1	1			5												6	1
2		2													4		4	2
3	1	2			4						1				6		12	2
4					3						1		1		2		5	2
5a													1				1	0
5b															1		1	0
5c					1												1	0
5d																	0	0
5e					4												4	0
5f		1			3												3	1
5g					1												1	0
5h									4						1		5	0
5i																	0	0
5j													2				2	0
5k																	0	0
5l																	0	0
6		2	1								1						1	3
7		1		1	1								1				1	3
8a	3	10	2		6				1		1	2			9		23	11
8b					1												1	0
9a		1			1										1		2	1
9b	2														1		3	0
10	1														2		3	0
11		2			1										1		2	2
12																	0	0
13				1											2		2	1
14															1		1	0
15																	0	0
16													1		1	1	1	2
17																	0	0
18																	0	0
19																	0	0
20																	0	0
Totals	8	22	3	2	31	0	0	0	5	0	1	3	5	3	32	1	85	31

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery

	U		U		P		E		M		P		U		Synod of	
	Inveraray		Dunoon		Kintyre		Islay & Jura		Lorn		Mull		Abertarff		Argyll	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1															0	0
2															0	0
3															0	0
4															0	0
5a															0	0
5b													3		3	0
5c															0	0
5d															0	0
5e															0	0
5f															0	0
5g															0	0
5h															0	0
5i															0	0
5l															0	0
6															0	0
7													2		2	0
8a															0	0
8b															0	0
9a															0	0
9b															0	0
10															0	0
11															0	0
12															0	0
13															0	0
14															0	0
15								2							0	2
16						1									0	1
17															0	0
18															0	0
19															0	0
20															0	0
Totals	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	3

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery

	P Dunkeld		E Weem		P Perth		P Auchterder		P Stirling		E Dunblane		Synod of Perth & Stirling	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1						1			2				2	1
2					1	1							1	1
3	1					1					1		1	2
4					1	1		1	3				4	2
5a									2				2	0
5b													0	0
5c					1	1							1	1
5d													0	0
5e													0	0
5f													0	0
5g													0	0
5h													0	0
5i													0	0
5j					1								1	0
5k													0	0
5l													0	0
6								2			2		0	4
7						2							0	2
8a						9			7	1			7	10
8b									1				1	0
9a		1											0	1
9b													0	0
10					1				1				2	0
11													0	0
12													0	0
13													0	0
14													0	0
15								1			1		0	2
16											4		0	4
17													0	0
18		1											0	1
19								2	1		6		1	8
20													0	0
Total	1	2	0	0	5	16	0	6	17	1	0	14	23	39

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery

	P		P		E		M		M		Synod of	
	Dunfermline		Kinross		Kirkcaldy		Cupar		St Andrews		Fife	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1											0	0
2											0	0
3			1							1	1	1
4			1	1			1				2	1
5a		1			1						1	1
5b											0	0
5c											0	0
5d			1								1	0
5e											0	0
5f											0	0
5g		1							1		1	1
5h											0	0
5i											0	0
5j											0	0
5k											0	0
5l											0	0
6											0	0
7										1	0	1
8a						1	2				2	1
8b											0	0
9a		1				1				1	0	3
9b									1		1	0
10					2		1				3	0
11					1						1	0
12											0	0
13											0	0
14											0	0
15						6					0	6
16										1	0	1
17								2			0	2
18								2			0	2
19						2					0	2
20											0	0
Totals	0	3	3	1	4	10	4	4	2	4	13	22

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery.

	M		E		E		P		E		M		Synod of Angus & Mearns	
	Meigle		Forfar		Dundee		Brechin		Arbroath		Fordoun			
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1					2								2	0
2					1		1						2	0
3					8		6						14	0
4						1							0	1
5a													0	0
5b													0	0
5c					1								1	0
5d													0	0
5e					1								1	0
5f													0	0
5g													0	0
5h					1								1	0
5i													0	0
5j					2								2	0
5k													0	0
5l						1							0	1
6							1						1	0
7			1										0	1
8a			1		2		3						3	3
8b					1								1	0
9a													0	0
9b													0	0
10					2								2	0
11													0	0
12						1							0	1
13													0	0
14													0	0
15								2					0	2
16													0	0
17			1										0	1
18						4							0	4
19													0	0
20													0	0
Totals	0	0	0	3	19	9	11	2	0	0	0	0	30	14

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery

	E		U		U		U		U		M		M		U		Synod of	
	Aberdeen		K-O'Neill		Alford		Garioch		Ellon		Deer		Turriff		Fordyce		Aberdeen	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1																	0	0
2																	0	0
3	4									1							4	1
4																	0	0
5a	1																1	0
5b	1																1	0
5c																	0	0
5d																	0	0
5e																	0	0
5f										1							0	1
5g																	0	0
5h																	0	0
5i																	0	0
5j																	0	0
5k																	0	0
5l																	0	0
6	1																1	0
7																	0	0
8a	4									1							4	1
8b																	0	0
9a																	0	0
9b	1																1	0
10																	0	0
11																	0	0
12																	0	0
13																	0	0
14										2							0	2
15																	0	0
16										1						1	0	2
17																	0	0
18																	0	0
19																	0	0
20										1							0	1
Totals	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	12	8

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbtery.

	M Strathbogie		U Aberlour		U Abernethy		M Elgin		P Forres		E Nairn		P Inverness		Synod of Moray	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1													1		1	0
2															0	0
3													3		3	0
4															0	0
5a															0	0
5b															0	0
5c															0	0
5d															0	0
5e															0	0
5f															0	0
5g															0	0
5h															0	0
5i															0	0
5j															0	0
5k															0	0
5l															0	0
6															0	0
7															0	0
8a															0	0
8b															0	0
9a								1							0	1
9b								1							0	1
10															0	0
11								1							0	1
12															0	0
13															0	0
14															0	0
15															0	0
16															0	0
17															0	0
18															0	0
19								5							0	5
20															0	0
Totals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	8

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery.

	P		P		P		Synod of		M		E		M		Caithness &	
	Chanonry		Dingwall		Tain		Ross		Dornoch		Tongue		Caithness		Sutherland	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1															0	0
2															0	0
3														3	0	3
4														1	0	1
5a															0	0
5b															0	0
5c															0	0
5d						1		1							0	2
5e															0	0
5f				1				1							0	2
5g															0	0
5h															0	0
5i															0	0
5j															0	0
5k															0	0
5l															0	0
6															0	0
7															0	0
8a															0	0
8b															0	0
9a															0	0
9b															0	0
10															0	0
11															0	0
12						1		1							0	2
13															0	0
14															0	0
15						1		1						9	0	11
16														1	0	1
17															0	0
18															0	0
19														5	0	5
20						2		2							0	4
															0	0
Totals	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	31

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery.

	P Lochcarron		P Skye		P Uist		E Lewis		Synod of Glenelg	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1									0	0
2									0	0
3									0	0
4									0	0
5a									0	0
5b									0	0
5c									0	0
5d									0	0
5e									0	0
5f									0	0
5g									0	0
5h									0	0
5i									0	0
5j									0	0
5k									0	0
5l									0	0
6									0	0
7									0	0
8a									0	0
8b									0	0
9a									0	0
9b									0	0
10									0	0
11			1						1	0
12									0	0
13									0	0
14									0	0
15									0	0
16									0	0
17									0	0
18									0	0
19			1						1	0
20									0	0
Totals	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery.

	U Kirkwall		M Cairston		U Nth Isles		Synod of Orkney	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1							0	0
2							0	0
3							0	0
4							0	0
5a							0	0
5b							0	0
5c							0	0
5d							0	0
5e							0	0
5f							0	0
5g							0	0
5h							0	0
5i							0	0
5j							0	0
5k							0	0
5l							0	0
6							0	0
7							0	0
8a							0	0
8b							0	0
9a							0	0
9b							0	0
10							0	0
11							0	0
12							0	0
13							0	0
14							0	0
15				1			0	1
16							0	0
17							0	0
18				1			0	1
19				2			0	2
20							0	0
Totals	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4

Appendix D: Subject Matter of Publications by Synod and Presbytery.

	U Lerwick		U Burravoe		Synod of Shetland		Total	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1					0	0	19	3
2					0	0	7	4
3					0	0	46	13
4					0	0	21	9
5a					0	0	15	7
5b					0	0	6	1
5c					0	0	5	1
5d					0	0	1	3
5e					0	0	8	
5f					0	0	3	5
5g					0	0	2	3
5h					0	0	9	0
5i					0	0	1	0
5j					0	0	5	1
5k					0	0	4	2
5l					0	0	2	4
6					0	0	17	10
7					0	0	13	11
8a					0	0	76	56
8b					0	0	3	0
9a					0	0	4	13
9b					0	0	7	2
10					0	0	12	1
11					0	0	8	3
12					0	0		4
13					0	0	7	4
14					0	0	2	2
15					0	0	5	53
16					0	0	2	22
17					0	0		3
18					0	0		14
19					0	0	8	40
20					0	0		5
Totals	0	0	0	0	0	0	318	299

Appendix E: Subject Matter of Publications by Type of Presbytery.

	Popular		Moderate		Even		Uncertain		Total	
	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M
1	10	1	1	1	8	1			19	3
2	6	1	0	2	1	1			7	4
3	21	1	2	6	23	5		1	46	13
4	13	3	1	2	7	4			21	9
5a	4	1		3	10	3	1		15	7
5b	2	0		1	1		3		6	1
5c	2	1			3				5	1
5d	1	1				2			1	3
5e	4				4				8	0
5f	3	1		1		2		1	3	5
5g	1	1	1		0	2			2	3
5h	5				4				9	0
5i	1								1	0
5j	1				4	1			5	1
5k					4	2			4	2
5l						4	2		2	4
6	4	2	1	3	12	5			17	10
7	2	2	1	6	8	3	2		13	11
8a	36	10	9	14	31	31		1	76	56
8b	2				1				3	0
9a	3	5		3	1	5			4	13
9b	1		3	1	3	1			7	2
10	5		2	1	5				12	1
11	3		1	3	3		1		8	3
12		2				2			0	4
13	3			1	4	3			7	4
14	1				1			2	2	2
15		10		17	5	26			5	53
16	1	8		4	1	8		2	2	22
17				2		1			0	3
18		3		3		8			0	14
19	3	5		12	5	23			8	40
20		2				2		1	0	5
Total	138	60	22	86	149	145	9	8	318	299

Appendix F: Subject Matter of Publications by Region and Party.

	East		West		Total	
	P	M	P	M	P	M
1	7	1	7	1	19	3
2		1	4	2	7	4
3	12	4	14	2	46	13
4	5	2	7	2	21	9
5a	6	6	5		15	7
5b		1	1		6	1
5c	2		1		5	1
5d		2			1	3
5e	2		5		8	
5f		2	3	1	3	5
5g		2	1		2	3
5h	3		5		9	
5i			1		1	
5j		1	2		5	1
5k	4	2			4	2
5l	2	3			2	4
6	10	3	5	3	17	10
7	722	129	428	612	13	11
8a	32	29	28	12	76	56
8b			1		3	
9a	1	7	3	1	4	13
9b	2	1	3		7	2
10	2		4	1	12	1
11	4		2	2	8	3
12		2				4
13	4	3	3	1	7	4
14	1		1		2	2
15	5	22		8	5	53
16	1	9	1	4	2	22
17						3
18		6				14
19	6	18			8	40
20		2				5
Total	111	129	107	40	318	299

APPENDIX G: BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON IMPORTANT POPULAR WRITERS.

John Adams: Minister of Dalrymple (1726-1744) and Falkirk (1744-1757). Moderator of General Assembly of 1744. Strongly defended Presbytery of Linlithgow in the case of Torphichen in 1751.

George Anderson: Missionary at Abertarff and Chaplain at Fort William (1733-1741), Governor of George Heriot's Hospital, 1741. His several publications concerned the theatre and apologetic against deist writers.

Patrick Bannerman: Minister of St. Madoes (1741-1746); Kinnoull (1746-1760), Saltoun (1760-1790).

David Blair: Minister of Lochlee (1729-1733), Brechin and Kelimore (1738-1769). Believed to have opened the first Sabbath evening school in Scotland.

John Bonar: Minister of Cockpen (1746-1756), Perth (1756-1761). Published one of the main apologetical works against Hume and Kames, and one of the major ones on ecclesiastical polity.

Andrew Crosbie: Advocate and lay leader of the Popular party at the General Assembly. Possibly the original of Scott's Councillor Pleydell in Guy Mannering, he was involved in a bank failure and died in 1785 in great poverty.

John Dun: Minister of Auchinleck (1752-1792). Tutor to James Boswell the biographer.

John Erskine of Carnock: Minister of Kirkintilloch (1744-1753), Culross (1753-1758), New Greyfriars (1758-1767), Old Greyfriars (1767-1803). Colleague of Principal Robertson in Old Greyfriars and remained on amicable terms with him despite their different theological and ecclesiastical positions. One of the most important eighteenth century Scottish theologians, corresponded with the famous Jonathan Edwards of New England, and actively propagated the cause of foreign and home missions.

John Gillies: Minister of Glasgow (Blackfriars) (1742-1796). Son-in-law of Rev. John Maclaurin whose mantle he seems to have assumed as a leader of the Popular party in the West. Most prominent at the Assembly for his opposition to the war with the American colonies and to Roman Catholic emancipation. He was a key figure in the evangelical propaganda network of the mid-eighteenth century. Published on a wide range of subjects.

James Gordon: Minister of Premnay (1706-1709), Bourtie (1709-1717), Alford (1717-1735), Alloa and Tullibody (1736-1749). Elected but not appointed Professor of Divinity at Kings College, Aberdeen. Moderator of General Assembly of 1734. Was a leading opponent of patronage during the early years of the Secession.

George Logan: Minister of Lauder (1707-1719), Sprouston 1719-1722), Dunbar (1722-1732), Trinity (Edinburgh) (1732-1755). Moderator of the General Assembly of 1740 which deposed the Seceders. Numerous publications, almost all concerned with the issue of patronage.

John Love: Minister of a Presbyterian congregation in London where he was founding secretary of the London Missionary Society. Minister of Glasgow (Anderston) (1800-1825). Became secretary of the Glasgow Missionary Society. Highly regarded for the devotional warmth of his preaching and writings.

John McFarlan (Warden): Minister of the Canongate (1765-1788). Published mainly on social and political matters.

John Macclaurin: Minister of Luss (1719-1723), Glasgow (Ramshorn) (1723-1754). One of the ablest preachers and theologians of the eighteenth century Church of Scotland. His sermon 'Glorying in the Cross of Christ' is widely regarded as the epitome of Scottish evangelical preaching of the century. A widely-read scholar, he was also active in poor law reform and promoting improvements in living conditions in Glasgow.

Daniel Macqueen: Minister of Dalziel (1736-1740), Stirling (1740-1756), Edinburgh (Old Kirk) (1758-1777). Took an active part in the patronage struggles around Edinburgh and was influential in Popular circles.

John Muckersey: Minister of West Calder (1794-1831). Notable for his literary and linguistic interests and was probably one of the small group of Popular men who had theological affinities with the Moderates.

William Porteous: Minister of Whitburn (1760-1770), Glasgow (St. George's) 1770-1812. One of the more prominent members of the Popular party in the West. Active opponent of Roman Catholic emancipation. Wrote on a range of contemporary issues.

Thomas Randall: Minister of Inchtute (1739-1770), Stirling (1770-1780). Compiler of Tracts concerning Patronage which attempted to establish a wider based opposition to patronage. One of the leaders of the Presbytery of Stirling in their seven year defiance of the Moderate-controlled General Assembly in the St. Ninian's case of 1766-1774, for which he was rebuked at the bar of the Assembly.

John Russel: Minister of Kilmarnock (High) (1774-1799), Stirling (1799-1817). The 'Black Russel' of Burns's 'Twa Herds' and 'The Holy Fair', he was a preacher of great power and an able polemicist. A leading figure in the attack on 'Socinianism' in the later eighteenth century.

David Savile: Minister of Dunfermline (St. Andrew's) (1799), Canongate Chapel-of-Ease (1799-1810). Published several works, most with a theological or philosophical emphasis.

John Snodgrass: Minister of Norrieston Chapel-of-Ease (1772-1774), Dundee (South) (1774-1781), Paisley (Middle) (1781-1797). Wrote prolifically on a wide range of subjects

James Somerville: Minister of Scots Church, Rotterdam (1775-1779), Whitburn (1779-1793), Stirling (1793-1817). His sermons were published posthumously. He was notable in the Presbytery of Stirling for his strong Popular line but also for his efforts to maintain amicable relations with Moderate members.

Thomas Somerville: Minister of Minto (1767-1773), and of Jedburgh until the 1830s. Declined the Chair of Church History at Edinburgh in 1798. A prolific author on a considerable range of subjects, he was a theological Moderate but voted with the Popular party on the patronage issue. His My Own Life and Times is a valuable record of the issues and characters of the late eighteenth century Church of Scotland.

James Steven: Minister of Crown Court Church, London (1787-1803), Kilwinning and Dalgarven (1803-1824). He was one of the founders of the London Missionary Society. He was the subject of Burns's satirical poem 'The Calf'.

Robert Walker: Minister of Straiton (1738-1746), South Leith (1746-1754), Edinburgh (High Kirk) (1754-1783). A leading opponent of patronage, his sermons were published under the editorship of the leading Moderate, Hugh Blair.

Alexander Webster: Minister of Culross (1733-1737), Edinburgh (Tolbooth) (1737-1784). One of the main leaders of the Popular party in the mid-eighteenth century, he was also an eminent statistician who compiled the 1765 Census of the Population of Scotland and performed the actuarial calculations for the Ministers' Widows and Orphans Fund set up in 1742. He defended the Cambuslang revival, was a strong Hanoverian, and is reputed to have first suggested the construction of the Edinburgh New Town.

Sir Harry Moncrieff Wellwood: Minister of Blackford (1771-1775), Edinburgh (St. Cuthbert's) (1775-1827). Moderator of the General Assembly of 1785. Assumed the leadership of the Popular party at the Assembly from the 1780s on and was one of the most influential churchmen of his day. He was probably the ablest ecclesiastical manager produced by the party and it could be argued that his skill led to the beginning of Moderate decline at the Assembly. A prolific author, he published numerous sermons as well as works on Church government and patronage. His biography of John Erskine is an important source for the history of the Church of Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

John Willison: Minister of Brechin (1703-1716), Dundee (South Church) (1716-1750). Probably the most commonly read religious writer in eighteenth century Scotland, a notable evangelical and supporter of the Cambuslang and Kilsyth revivals of the 1740s (the last of which started after his sermon on the way back from Cambuslang). His earlier ministry was preoccupied with struggles against Episcopalians and Jacobites, he actively countered the Glassites, and fought unsuccessfully for the rehabilitation of the Seceders with whom he sympathised. He was the earliest and possibly the most fundamental opponent of Moderatism.

William Wishart: Minister of Edinburgh (New Greyfriars) (1739-1745) and the Tron (1745-1753). Principal of Edinburgh University 1737. Although he supported the Popular party on patronage, his theology was regarded as suspect by many within the party. He was charged with heresy but acquitted in 1738. His writings, although Moderate in character, were very influential in the Popular party through his role in the teaching of divinity students.

John Witherspoon: Minister of Beith (1745-1757), Paisley (Laigh Kirk) (1757-1768). In 1768 he accepted an invitation to become President of Princeton College, New Jersey. He subsequently became the only clergyman to sign the American Declaration of Independence. Possibly the ablest of the Popular leadership in the mid-eighteenth century, he played a key role in the attack on patronage until he left for America. He is most famous for his devastating satirical attack on the Moderates, the Ecclesiastical Characteristics, or the Arcana of Church Policy, being an Attempt to open up the Mystery of Moderation, but he was also an able theologian and was responsible for spreading the Scottish 'Common Sense' philosophy across the Atlantic.

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