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Scripture in the Scottish Reformation

II. Scripture in the Public and Private Life of Church and Nation

GEORGE JOHNSTON

I

THE INTRODUCTORY REVIEW of historical developments from *ca.* A.D. 1525 to 1560 has already touched on two points which deserve fuller consideration than I am able or competent to give them: the use, namely, of the Scriptures in (1) the Protestant controversies with the Roman apologists, and (2) the discussions with the Queen and the politicians on the crucial issue of Civil Obedience.¹

As to the first point, we may observe that Knox speaks of God's "most sacred word" or the "invincible word," and he wants to have "God's written word" admitted for judge. Thus in the 1558 Protestation made in Parliament the Reformers speak of just reformation according to the plain word of God; and with prescience they insist that any tumult or uproar that may arise should be laid at the door of those Romanists who refuse an orderly alteration in ecclesiastical affairs.² In the following year the "Congregation of Christ Jesus" within Scotland reminds the Nobility that "the Prophets under the law, the Apostles of Christ Jesus after his Ascension, his primitive Church, and holy Martyrs, did dissent from the whole world in their days. . . . May not the like be true this day?" Men must heed the will of God revealed in his holy word. Governors who fight against the cause of reform will suffer the fate of Ananias and Sapphira, for the ministers of the Congregation have the Apostolic authority stated in John 20:23.³ Knox undertakes to prove to the Queen Regent that her Romanist religion is false, a man-invented superstition: "Which I offer myself to prove against all that within Scotland will maintain the contrary, liberty of tongue being granted unto me, and God's written word being admitted for judge."⁴ Queen Mary is challenged by the same "touchstone."⁵ Master David Panter of Restalrig is reported as warning the Roman bishops that the Protestants will, if they can, "call you to your account book, and

1. Cf. G. Johnston, "Scripture in the Scottish Reformation. I. Historical Statement," *CJT*, 8 (1962), 249-57.

2. Cf. W. Croft Dickinson (ed.), *John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland* (2 vols., London: Nelson, 1949), Vol. I, p. 157. (This edition will be cited below as Dickinson.)

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 167ff.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

5. Dickinson, Vol. II, p. 49.

that is to the Bible; and by it ye will no more be found the men that ye are called, than the Devil will be approved to be God."⁶

St. Paul fighting for the freedom of the Gentiles from the necessity of covenant-circumcision, as something imposed for all time, had no more difficult task on his hands than Knox and the Reformers. The latter clearly wished to stand in continuity with Christ and his Apostles (and indeed beyond them with Adam and Abraham and the patriarchs of the Old Covenant), and like John Calvin they would have insisted that there was nothing novel in their program except to those for whom Christ himself and the Gospel and the untrammelled Word of God are novel. This catholic continuity, they believed, could be had only by disruption of the Roman establishment, the overthrow of the claim to Petrine primacy, and the return to the primitive simplicities of the New Testament era. Unless the developments of the Mass, the many sacraments, the power of Papacy and priesthood, the use of Indulgence and the like, could clearly appear and be made so to appear for all reasonable men and women as agreeable to the written Gospel and the Traditions of the Apostles in the canonical New Testament, there was simply no alternative to root and branch reformation. In this they were, in the judgment of the present writer, absolutely correct. We approve therefore the claim to make the written Word the standard, yet we would not wish to take a merely partisan position nor to hold that the relationship between Bible and unwritten "Tradition" was properly settled in 1560.

As to the problem of Civil Obedience and the relation of Church and State, there were certain questions put from Scotland to Henry Bullinger of Zürich, the answers to which may be consulted.⁷ We have Knox's view concerning the deposition of the Regent; this act must not affect the allegiance of true men to the King and Queen (Mary, and her French consort). Malice and private envy are not adequate cause for such action, but only the preservation of the commonwealth of Scotland. The Regent should be allowed time for repentance, and upon repentance she might be restored.⁸ This attitude is admirably restrained and Christian for those days. As conflict grew between the reforming Lords and ministers on the one side, and Queen Mary and her supporters on the other, the Protestants assembled a vast array of Old Testament examples to show the wickedness of princes and the just punishment of God. They cited the prophets' denunciations and warnings to Saul and Manasseh, Pharaoh and Sennacherib, Ahab and Herod, Jezebel and Athaliah. Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Phinehas, and many others had been the mouthpieces of God. Correspondingly Knox and his colleagues were in the place of Samuel or Elijah; Queen Mary could be likened to any one of the rulers castigated in the Bible. It is chiefly in connection with this issue of royal and national loyalty that

6. Dickinson, Vol. I, p. 131.

7. Cf. David Laing (ed.), *The Works of John Knox* (6 vols., Edinburgh: Wodrow Society, 1846-64), Vol. III, pp. 221ff.

8. Cf. Dickinson, Vol. I, pp. 250f.

Knox cites the Old Testament, and accordingly it is not really accurate to describe him as "specially a preacher of the Old Testament."⁹

If we except the wonderful interview with Mary on the question of her marriage,¹⁰ when Knox claimed to be merely a subject in the realm, though "a profitable member within the same," the most interesting passage at arms is perhaps the debate in June 1564 between Maitland and the Queen's party, on the one hand, and the General Assembly representatives led by John Knox, on the other.¹¹ Here we note citations of Jer. 36:30; 44:13; Matt. 13:52; Rom. 15:4. But the brunt of the discussion centred in the exegesis of Rom. 13: 1ff.

Knox had preached a sermon on that famous text, and we can reconstruct the "bones" of it. His introduction opened to the hearers the mind of the Apostle Paul, and did it well. Then he proceeded to the heads: (a) the causes why God has established "powers" upon the earth; (b) the necessity that mankind has for these powers; and (c) the duty of civil magistrates. No doubt each of these was treated at length, with due citation of the texts and an exposition whose content may be found in the *Scots Confession*. There were also specific "applications" of the passage to the contemporary situation, and by two of them Secretary Lethington (the Prime Minister of the day) was much disturbed.

For one thing, Knox drew a distinction between the ordinance of God that made powers possible, and the persons of those who were placed in authority. If the persons did not acknowledge their obedience to God, the source of their status and might, then they might be disowned without the divine ordinance being denied. (Men could appeal from Alexander drunk to Alexander sober. Could they not also appeal from faithless princes to a faithful God who had spoken clearly in his Word?) Knox spent much time on this point, so that he had little enough time for the second application, that subjects need not obey their princes if the princes commanded what was unlawful (that is, contrary to God's law as well as, probably, the customary law of the Commonwealth).

This was not new talk. Five years previously the Congregation had said the same thing about the authority of the divine ordinance and the persons of those in authority.¹² What offended the statesmen was perhaps the quite specific view that subjects had a right of rebellion. This question had troubled Martin Luther much earlier, and his solution has influenced German political life to this day. John Knox insisted on the Christian duty of rebellion, and his view determined the course of British history and to some extent may have influenced American history also, for his doctrine is the democratic principle expressed in one extreme form. Knox defended it with texts from the Old Testament. The Secretary produced opinions of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Musculus, and Calvin (not to mention the book of

9. James Stalker, *John Knox: His Ideas and Ideals* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1904), p. 132.

10. Cf. Dickinson, Vol. II, pp. 82-84.

11. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 106ff.

12. Cf. Dickinson, Vol. I, p. 168.

Baruch); and he whined a little about the great toil he had had in the assembling of such a *corpus* of learned judgments. Knox was not impressed in the least. He took the view, rooted in his country's rise to independence from feudal England, that Scotland *as a whole people* had consented to the new "Band" or covenant of the Reformation settlement. As a people they were bound to see that God's rule and law prevailed in the realm, from the palace to the rudest hut, whatever the Princess might say or do. For she could never be Queen of Scotland; she was Queen of Scots.

Knox too could cite "authorities." There was the *Apology* of Magdeburg to bolster the theme that resistance to a tyrant is no disobedience to God. Later, John Craig, his colleague in the ministry of the High Kirk of Edinburgh, supported the case with the report of a disputation at the University of Bologna in 1554 on this very question. There, Thomas de Finola had sustained the thesis that rulers ought to be reformed, and that they may be deposed.

Along the same line, we should note Knox's encouragement to the Provost, Bailies, and citizens of St. Andrews to "cleanse the Temple," seeing that they represented Christ himself, who had cleansed Jerusalem.¹³ Of course the result was rioting, the destruction of some churches, and the pillaging of many by the mob. Many modern writers ascribe the result to Knox, in spite of the fact that it was Knox who called the mob "the rascal multitude." Knox tried to insist that the people should truly act "*as Christ*" and therefore *in his Spirit*. It was too much to expect. If, however, we condemn Knox out of hand, must we not also condemn his Master who himself quoted good Old Testament precedent for his action? Lord Eustace Percy believed in 1937 that the position taken by Knox had been vindicated by history; in 1961 we could argue in the same way.

We must be content to stress that Knox built his case not only on the duty of Caesar to obey God, but also on the role of the prophet in the history of God's people, Israel. His own work depended on the recognition that he too was a prophet.

II

The tremendous but not incredible claim of Knox to stand in the Apostolic Succession and to be a prophet can be found in the preface to the sermon on Isa. 26: 13-21 (in the Geneva Bible version), preached at Edinburgh on 19 August 1565 and published about a month later. He calls himself "the servaunt of Jesus Christ." Then he tells the Christian reader why he has not hitherto published any sermons or written any books. He considered himself "rather cald of my God" to instruct the ignorant, comfort the sorrowful, confirm the weak, and rebuke the proud. "I dare not denie (lest that in so doing I should be injurious to the giver), but that *God hath revealed unto me secretes unknowne to the worlde.*"¹⁴ He has,

13. Cf. Laing, *Works of John Knox*, Vol. VI, p. 25; Dickinson, Vol. I, p. 182.

14. Laing, *Works of John Knox*, Vol. VI, p. 229.

accordingly, made predictions, some of which have been fulfilled. The sermon now printed was the one that caused his temporary injunction not to preach in Edinburgh so long as the King (Mary's husband, Darnley) and Queen were in the town. For preaching it he had been summoned before the Council.¹⁵ This is his own written version of what he had preached, and he had tried to be truthful.

And no lesse doe I esteeme it to be a lye to deny or conceile that which in His name I have once pronounced, than to affirme that God hath spoken, when His word assures me not of the same, for in the publike place I consulte not with flesh and bloud [cf. Gal. 1: 16] what I shall propone to the people, but as the Spirit of my God who hath sent me, and unto whom I must answer, moveth me, so I speake; and when I have once pronounced threatenings in His name (howe unpleasant so ever they be to the world), I dare no more deny them, than I dare deny that God hath made me his messenger, to forwarne the inobedient of their assured destruction.¹⁶

He concludes with prayer that the Lord will be merciful to him, in that he did not more fully express whatever his Holy Spirit laid before him in the text.

Another good example of Knox's sermon manner and meat is to be found in the long summary of a rousing discourse at Stirling early in November 1559 on the eightieth Psalm. Dr. Croft Dickinson, who is by no means blind to the faults of Knox or his *History*, states that "this sermon was undoubtedly notable and inspiring. It is referred to by both Buchanan and the author of the *Historie of the Estate of Scotland*."¹⁷

Knox was accustomed to preach straight through the books of the Bible. Thus, when the Reformation Parliament of July 1560 was enacting the religious revolution into law, he was expounding Haggai and having no difficulty at all in applying the ancient prophecies to the contemporary need for rebuilding.¹⁸ The preacher believed himself to be the Watchman (cf. Ezek. 3:17, Hab. 2:1), set by God in a place where he must sound the Trumpet of the divine Word—and woe betide, if the Trumpet ever gave forth an uncertain sound!¹⁹ We may observe here a very interesting parallel between John Knox and the Teacher of the Qumran Community. Each claims for himself direct inspiration; each was dependent on existing Scripture; and each did a notable work within an ecclesiastical establishment.²⁰ (It might be useful to discuss the relation between an inspiration unmedi-

15. Cf. Dickinson, Vol. II, pp. 159f.; Hugh Watt, *John Knox in Controversy* (London: Nelson, 1950), pp. 100f.

16. Laing, *Works of John Knox*, Vol. VI, pp. 230f.

17. Dickinson, Vol. I, p. 271, n. 1.

18. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 335.

19. Cf. Dickinson, Vol. II, p. 98. For other examples of sermon summaries that illustrate Knox's hermeneutical methods, cf. Dickinson, Vol. I, pp. 265-70 (the sermon on Ps. 80, already referred to); Vol. II, p. 44 (on Ps. 2:10). Knox's trumpet was not always loud and clear; he had moments of depression and despair, and even of failure.

20. Cf. G. Johnston, " 'Spirit' and 'Holy Spirit' in the Qumran Literature," in H. K. McArthur (ed.), *New Testament Sidelights* (Hartford, Conn.: Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1960), pp. 36f.

ated by a written tradition and an inspiration that is mediated, so to speak, through Scripture.) At any rate, Knox felt himself to belong to the succession of Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and the Apostle Paul; and he is not the first or the last who has made such claims. Is it any wonder that the English ambassador, who well knew the power Knox wielded over nobles and people alike, wrote that Knox preached "as if he were of God's privy Council"? That is *exactly* what your prophet believes. Our only question is whether Knox was deceived. Was he genuine, or did he have a lust for power? In my judgment it is a total perversion of history to accuse Knox of megalomania or to deny that he is the Maker of Modern Scotland.

But was he prophetic? Yes. Was this because his predictions came true? No. Several of them came to nothing. The reason is that he had an insight into the crucial issues of history like that of the great Hebrew prophets, who like him spoke in the name of the Lord. The reason is that Knox spoke wisely to the spiritual condition of Scotland and England in the sixteenth century. We may love and pity Queen Mary, but we must allow that she ended life like a fool; and all the modern romanticism that has been heaped on her cannot obliterate her folly and poor judgment. We may fear and tremble before the blasts of Knox in the pulpit, but we ought to allow that he saved the day for freedom and for righteousness, and that his failure would easily have involved the ruin of England and the ultimate downfall of evangelical Christianity throughout Europe. For Scotland in the 1550's occupied the most important strategic position in the struggle for power. Knox led the way into a free nation, under constitutional monarchy (albeit it took long years before this goal was finally attained); he inspired reformation in morals as well as ritual; and he certainly laid foundations for the rise of modern democracy. And these he did as a pulpiteer, as a prophetic teacher of the Scriptures as the Word of God.

It is true that Knox was not a great dogmatic theologian, even though the 1560 *Confession* was largely his work and he was the acknowledged leader of the theologians. Nonetheless, his mind was informed by a substantial system of theology. He had studied Calvin, he had known the Schoolmen. Hume Brown ventured the thesis that Knox's handling of Scripture was in fact "scholastic."²¹ This suggestion is very strange. The whole climate had been drastically altered for Knox by Wishart's Lutheran teaching and by Calvin's view of Christianity. His edition of Balnaves's treatise on Justification shows a clear grasp of the principle that sits in the heart of the Reformed faith. Hence Knox had a clue to the meaning of the divine purpose and the fulfilment of it in Christ that was not available to the scholastics. How can we understand the Lutheran or the Knoxian revolt on any other grounds, ultimately, than that the believer's approach to God, his sanctification by grace and not by legal performance or money pay-

21. P. H. Brown, *John Knox: A Biography* (2 vols., London: A. & C. Black, 1895), Vol. II, p. 116.

ated by a written tradition and an inspiration that is mediated, so to speak, through Scripture.) At any rate, Knox felt himself to belong to the succession of Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and the Apostle Paul; and he is not the first or the last who has made such claims. Is it any wonder that the English ambassador, who well knew the power Knox wielded over nobles and people alike, wrote that Knox preached "as if he were of God's privy Council"? That is *exactly* what your prophet believes. Our only question is whether Knox was deceived. Was he genuine, or did he have a lust for power? In my judgment it is a total perversion of history to accuse Knox of megalomania or to deny that he is the Maker of Modern Scotland.

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21. P. H. Brown, *John Knox: A Biography* (2 vols., London: A. & C. Black, 1895), Vol. II, p. 116.

ments, his acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord, and his reverence for the Bible as superior to late-developed traditions and practices, were all *novel* in the life of the late medieval—the scholastic—Church? It is to do Knox an injustice to think that he simply put together certain biblical “places” in the old fashion of the Schools. For in his method and exposition, as in his religion, there was a new wind of the Spirit blowing over the old citations and through the emptying cloisters. It is high time that we began to assess the Reformation once more as a necessary stage in the growth of the Church of God; without minimizing or denying the faults and the mistakes of the age, we had better try to learn from the dynamic faith and passionate devotion of the reforming fathers such as Mr. John Knox, preacher.

III

As some slight contribution to the study of Knox’s biblical outlook I wish now to set forth the results of a careful sifting of the two volumes of Knox’s *History of the Reformation* with a view to exhibiting his scriptural quotations and allusions. So far as I know, this sort of documentation is not easily available, if it has been done at all. In the result it appears that Knox was as much soaked in the English Bible as ever John Bunyan was. His whole vocabulary, his incidental allusions, his style, are biblical through and through.

The following *Old Testament* passages are to be found: Gen. 3:16; Ex. 14; 20:7; Lev. 20:3–5, 10; Num. 25:10–15; Deut. 4:2, 24; 17:6; 19:10; 1 Sam. 5; 1 Kings 18–20; 21:19, 23; 2 Kings 11; 24:3, 9; Job 37:14; Prov. 3:26; Dan. 7; Pss. 1:4; 2; 23; 26:5; 34:8; 44:21; 60:11; 80; 106:20; Isa. 1:22f.; 5; 9:14; 10:26; 49:23; Jer. 5:14; 8:14; 9:15; 10:11; 23:29; 36:30; 44:13; Ezek. 3:17; Hab. 2:1, 3; Hag. (the whole book). Knox privately read the Psalter once a month. I could not find a reference to Isa. 53, but he called for this chapter to be read to him on his deathbed.

The following *New Testament* passages are to be found: Matt. 5:13f.; 6:10; 7:17–20; 10:33; 13:52; 18:20; 21:12ff.; Mark 3:22; 6:21ff.; 7:19; 9:38; 13:7, 11; 15:24; Luke 12:19, 32; 21:9 (13?); 23:12; John 1:5, 14; 2:13ff.; 6:15–21; 8:34, 36, 44; 10:1ff., 38; 14:14; 19:16, 23; 21–23; Acts 5:1ff., 29, 39; 8:22; 21:18–33; 23:1, 3; 26:17; 1 Pet. 2:13–17; 3:15; 5:2; Jas. 1:17; Heb. 10:31; 12:29; Rev. 1:5, 14; 2:9, 13; 3:9; 17:1; 18:13; Rom. 2:4; 9:1; 10:17; 12:1–8; 13:1–6; 14:1–9, 17, 23; 15:4; 1 Cor. 1:17; 3:11; 7:5; 10:12, 32; 11:24; 12:1–28; 2 Cor. 1:12; 6:15; Gal. 1:16; 2:16; 3:11; 5:15; Col. 2:21ff.; Phil. 1:6, 8; 2 Thess. 2:3; Eph. 2:3; 4:14; 1 Tim. 2:12; 4:5; 2 Tim. 2:25f.; Tit. 1:15. Some of the references to the Synoptics may be doubtful, since I did not check all the parallels. Knox was teaching the Gospel of John to his young pupils when he first entered St. Andrews castle just before his call

to the Ministry there. On Paul's acceptance of James's proposal (Acts 21:18-33) Knox writes, "I greatly doubt whether either James's commandment or Paul's obedience proceeded from the Holy Ghost," an interesting piece of critical judgment. No reference was found in the *History* to the narrative of the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. 1 Cor. 15 is also lacking; this chapter, however, was a great comfort to him as he lay on his deathbed. He accepted the Pauline authorship of Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles.

Many of the citations and allusions fit the situation in the Kirk or the nation, so that one cannot be surprised at their use. It is, however, something of a surprise to see how constantly his writing breathes the atmosphere of the Bible. He must have known it by heart. He expounded it systematically in the pulpit, and studied it at home and with brother ministers. When he writes to his dear mother-in-law, Mrs. Bowes, it is as often to explain Scripture and doctrine as to counsel her in matters of conscience. Knox cannot write on any important subject of politics, the duty of women, education, the public weal or household management, civic affairs or religion, without continual recourse to the Word of God written in the Bible. To some extent, remarkable to those who still have eyes to see, this was true also of martyrs and nobility, ministers and superintendents, burgesses and politicians, in the Reformed cause. In the schools of Scotland Scripture was to be learned and taught, and indeed it was, with consequent blessings to men, women, and children.

An interesting point is made by Lord Eustace Percy. Knox had a large hand in drafting the Genevan service book on which the Scots Book of Common Order was based, and like Cranmer he wanted a firm biblical foundation for public worship. "But their methods differed: Cranmer's was distillation, Knox's amplified quotation," so that we have "on the one hand the music of the Book of Common Prayer, on the other the piled-up eloquence of the Book of Common Order. . . ." Percy goes on to say that "Scotsmen have always feared the sleepy enchantment of that music, Englishmen have felt stunned by that eloquence." He dubs as "typically English and exactly wrong" Clarendon's famous judgment that Presbyterian worship had not "the least appearance of any beauty of holiness." The Scottish Order, he believes, tries to put that beauty wholly into language, whereas the English uses action (and ekes out, where necessary, with the help of psalm-singing). He reminds us that Knox and Whittingham objected to the English that it was seven-twelfths made up of Epistles and Gospels; and it was therefore far more dependent on the Bible than the Scottish. "In the Scottish Order the reading of the Word ceased to be a distinct devotional act. It was absorbed into the pulpit . . . [and so] the Bible underwent a subtle process of fermentation." It is not enough to recite Scripture; and in any event the Old Testament is more quotable than the New.²²

To this suggestion it might be replied that in the Book of Common Order

22. Eustace Percy, *John Knox* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1937), pp. 200f.

the public reading and exposition of the Bible, both in the Reader's service and in the second, preaching service that followed, gave the Bible a place of authority that the Book of Common Prayer, in spite of its use of Psalms, canticles, and a Lectionary, never had. Preaching, as exposition of the Scriptures, be it noted, was of central importance for the Scots Reformers; and in their eyes it was essential to the right administration of the Sacraments. The Sacraments are to be "annexed" to the Word.

What may well be true is that the Scottish service became lop-sided and inevitably put the minister too much into the foreground.²³ Not all ministers, unfortunately, are prophetic! For almost a century the Scots Kirk has been moving away from the old pattern, and it is taking its place within the liturgical movement of today. Basically, however, the general character of public worship is still the same: a service of the Word read and expounded, in a context of prayers and praises, but with sacraments to follow only on rather rare occasions.

IV

In the Scottish Reformation it is of first significance that God is a God who has revealed himself, who elected a People and finally redeemed it in the blood of Christ. The elect are to produce the fruits of faith in the good works of "love."²⁴ Out of the Church there is no ordinary means of salvation. For the Scots nation there was to be a reformed Scots Kirk, part of the Catholic or universal Kirk.²⁵ Life is made possible for the lively members of Christ's holy and most sanctified Body, because the one perfect and sufficient sacrifice has been offered to the Father once and for all.²⁶ The *locus* of revelation is in the written Word of Scripture, but revelation demands far more than reading. The Holy Spirit must illumine the mind and heart of the reader. All the Scriptures hitherto accepted in the Church were received, apparently without question.²⁷ Each text is to be understood in relation to the whole body of Scripture. This is a fairly literalist position, and there is little evidence that Knox and the other leaders ever gave much thought to the problems of the Canon (as Luther did). In the second generation of the Reformed Church they were content to proclaim the message of God's invincible Word for the wise ordering of Commonwealth and Kirk.

"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105). There is a moving picture of George Wishart preaching for more than three

23. Cf. Gordon Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1954).

24. Cf. Dickinson, Vol. I, p. 44.

25. Cf. *Scots Confession*, Cap. xvi.

26. Cf. Watt, *John Knox in Controversy*, pp. 10-12, for a summary of Knox's "positive" evangelical preaching.

27. Ninian Winzet asked: "What Scripture have you for you to receive so many Gospels and Epistles in the New Testament as ye do, and no more?" (Watt, *John Knox in Controversy*, p. 39). Watt's discussion (pp. 37-42) of the place of Scripture in the Reformation settlement is important.

hours at the moor's edge near Mauchline in Ayrshire, after he had been excluded from the parish kirk. "It is the word of peace that God sends by me," he cried to listeners who hung upon his message, the word of new life and hope to them. Shortly afterwards Wishart went to plague-ravaged Dundee where his first sermon was on Ps. 107:20, "He sent his word and healed them." Apposite, comforting, revealing, rebuking, and delighting, the light from the Beyond, the sword of the Spirit—that is how the Scottish Reformers and their faithful hearers found the Word in Scripture, the Word in homily, the Word in him who is the Living Word, Jesus Christ, their Prophet, Priest and King, the only Head of the Church of God.²⁸

28. Cf. Dickinson, Vol. I, pp. 61-63.