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Reformation
& Revival



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- Question: What is the chief end of man?
Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.
- Question: What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?
Answer: The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.
- Question: What do the scriptures principally teach?
Answer: The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.
- Question: What is God?
Answer: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

So begins the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. For those of us who memorized it in childhood, along with scores of Bible verses, it proved to be a precious introduction to Christian theology. In more mature years we typically moved to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, some devouring its systematic setting forth of Christian teaching in a single sitting upon their first enthusiastic encounter with its thirty-three concise chapters. Usually, only later, in our development did we come to appreciate the *Larger Catechism*, some four or five times longer than the *Shorter Catechism*, and with its detailed exposition of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, valuable helps to one's devotional meditation and Bible study.

Where did these documents come from, and how were they produced?

The Westminster Assembly of Divines (or clergymen)

was a group of 121 English Puritan ministers, assisted by six Scottish commissioners and thirty laymen, ten from the House of Lords and twenty from the House of Commons, who met from July 1, 1643, to February 22, 1649, with an average of 60-80 in attendance, as an advisory body to Parliament for the further reformation of religion and the church in England, Ireland, and Scotland. The political context was one of Civil War, as the Parliamentary forces, eventually led by Oliver Cromwell, were already engaged militarily with the Cavalier Army of King Charles I by October 23, 1642. The immediate roots of this conflict lay in the uprising of the Scots, rallying behind their National Covenant of 1638, against the imposition by Charles and Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud of episcopacy, Anglican liturgy, and Arminian doctrine. But the more remote roots go back to tensions between the Stuart monarchy, beginning with James I in 1603, and the English Puritans, leading up to the Short Parliament starting in November 1640, and even to the back-and-forth development of the English Reformation under the Tudor monarchs Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth I in the sixteenth century. The Westminster Assembly comes at the culmination of the era of the Protestant Reformation and represents a consummation of that movement's effort to understand and apply the Bible's teaching.

Philip Schaff says of the Westminster Assembly:

It forms the most important chapter in the ecclesiastical history of England during the seventeenth century. Whether we look at the extent or ability of its labors, or its influence upon future generations, it stands first among Protestant Councils.¹

Almost a century later, John Leith claims even more:

The place of the *Confession* in the history of Christian doctrine is such that a grasp of its significance is crucial for an understanding of the contemporary theological situation. The *Confession* was not only the conclusion of one hundred and twenty-five years of Protestant theology; it was also in a real sense, along with other seventeenth-century statements of the faith, the conclusion of sixteen centuries of theological work.²

But the work of the Westminster Assembly was influential not only among Presbyterians. Again, John Leith comments:

The *Westminster Confession* was adopted with a few modifications as the *Savoy Declaration* of the English Congregational churches. It was adopted by the Congregational Synod of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1648, and with the *Savoy* modification, by the Synod of Boston in 1680, and by the Congregational churches of Connecticut at the Synod of Saybrook in 1708. It was adopted with modification by the London Baptists in 1677 and in America as the Baptist Confession of 1742 (Philadelphia). . . .

Certainly the number of children who received their religious instruction from the *Shorter Catechism* must be estimated in the millions.³

Philip Schaff says further:

The *Westminster Confession*, together with the Catechisms, is the fullest and ripest symbolical statement of the Calvinistic system of doctrine. In theological ability and merit it is equal to the best works of the kind, and is not surpassed by the *Lutheran Formula of Concord* or the *Roman Decrees* of the Councils of Trent and the Vatican (I). Its intrinsic worth

alone can explain the fact that it has supplanted the older Scottish standards of John Knox and John Craig in the land of their birth, and that it was adopted by three distinct denominations: by Presbyterians in full, and by the Congregationalists and the Regular Baptists with some slight modifications. . . . Altogether it represents the most vigorous and yet moderate form of Calvinism. . . .⁴

If all of this is even nearly the case, then we naturally want to know what sort of people were involved in this Assembly. The main focus of this article will be a consideration of three important Puritan leaders.

There were 121 members of the Assembly originally nominated by Parliament (two for each English county, one for each Welsh county, two each for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, four for London, and one for each of the Channel Islands), plus almost twenty more who replaced those who died or did not participate, and also the thirty members of Parliament and the six Scottish commissioners. To profile even a few of these men is daunting—a task that demands selections be made to the exclusion of others. In writing a book on this subject I chose forty-six members. In this briefer article I will choose only three as representative.⁵

Profile Number One: Stephen Marshall (c. 1594–November 19, 1655)—“A Noted Puritan Preacher”

Stephen Marshall was the favorite preacher of the Long Parliament. According to Thomas Fuller:

He was their Trumpet, by whom they sounded their solemn Fasts, preaching more publick Sermons on that occasion, than any foure of his Function. In their Sickness he was their Confessor, in their Assembly their Councillour, in their Treaties their Chaplain, in their Disputations their Champion.⁶

During the course of the Westminster Assembly he preached eight times before the Houses of Parliament on the regular monthly Fast Days, plus three times before the monthly system was established, and he was enlisted to preach on ten other special occasions, as well as at the funeral of his patron John Pym. He also preached two more times to the Rump Parliament in 1649 and 1653. Of these twenty-four sermons, sixteen were printed. No one else matched this record.⁷

Not only was Marshall the foremost preacher among the Westminster Divines, but he was also a leading activist among the English Presbyterians. Clarendon would later say, “And without doubt, the Archbishop of Canterbury had never so great an influence upon the councils at court, as Mr. Marshall and Dr. Burgess had upon the Houses of Parliament.”⁸ H. R. Trevor-Roper, with only one misleading statement, otherwise describes him accurately:

In the Long Parliament he would emerge as the inseparable political and spiritual ally of Pym, the interpreter of Pym’s policy after Pym’s death. At every stage of the revolution we can see him. Now he is thumping his pulpit on great occasions; now he is meeting with Pym, Hampden and Harley to prepare parliamentary tactics; now he is bustling through Westminster Hall to push voters into the Parliament before the division; now he is retiring, exhausted, to recuperate in the well-appointed house of his good friend “my noble Lord of Warwick.” Later he would be the Parliament’s envoy to Scotland, its chaplain with the captive King; he would pass unscathed from Presbyterianism to Independency; and if he always appeared as the spokesman for the winning side, his changes can be explained by one consistent aim, which was also the aim of Pym: to preserve the unity of opposition against royal and clerical reaction.⁹

Marshall did not move from Presbyterianism to Independency, as we shall see, but his political realism did lead him to cooperate with Oliver Cromwell, the Army, and the Independents when he perceived this as the necessary way to maintain the Puritan-Parliamentary cause. He was a Presbyterian of the English sort who sometimes puzzled his Scottish allies.

Stephen Marshall was born about 1594 at Godmanchester, Huntingdonshire, son of a poor glover. As a boy he had to glean in the fields. He entered Cambridge April 1, 1615, and enrolled in Emmanuel College, received the B.A. in 1618, the M.A. in 1622, and later the B.D. in 1629. In 1618 he became lecturer at Wethersfield, Essex, after the death, on April 21, of the famous Puritan preacher there, Richard Rogers. In 1625 he became Vicar of Finchingfield, Essex, just a couple of miles from Wethersfield. In 1636 he was reported to the ecclesiastical authorities for "irregularities and want of conformity," and in March 1637, Sir Nathaniel Brent described him to Archbishop Laud as

a dangerous person, but exceeding cunning. No man doubteth but that he hath an inconformable heart, but externally he observeth all. . . . He governeth the consciences of all the rich puritans in those parts and in many places far remote, and is grown very rich.¹⁰

He had become a client of Robert Rich, second Earl of Warwick and Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, and in the first quarter of 1640 he spoke on behalf of Warwick's candidates for Parliament throughout Essex.

Marshall was scheduled to preach on the first Fast Day of the Short Parliament, but it was dissolved on May 5, 1640, before this could take place. When the Long Parliament opened in November 1640, Marshall and Cornelius Burgess were the preachers on that momentous

first Fast Day on November 17.¹¹ He would preach again on September 7, 1641 (with Jeremiah Burroughes), and then again on December 22, 1641 (with Edmund Calamy). What further brought him to national attention, however, was the response to Bishop Joseph Hall's claims for divine right episcopacy produced by Marshall with Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstowe under the name "Smectymnuus," taken from their initials. In a literary exchange running through 1641, with three pieces written on each side, the third in support of the Smectymnuans from John Milton in 1642, Marshall and his colleagues set the stage for the abolition of episcopacy. The five Smectymnuans would all support Presbyterianism in the Westminster Assembly.¹²

It was for his preaching, though, that Marshall was primarily known. James Reid says: "His sermons which have been printed abound with striking comparisons, and pointed appeals to the hearers. . . ."¹³ Much of his effectiveness apparently resided in his personal delivery. Alexander Gordon comments:

His sermons, denuded of the preacher's living passion, often have the effect of uncouth rhapsodies. His funeral sermon for Pym (December 1643) made an indelible impression, and is the finest extant specimen of his pulpit eloquence as well as of his "feeling and discernment". . . . His ordinary preaching is described as plain and homely, seasoned with "odd country phrases" and "very taking with a country auditory." . . . He was listened to because no man could rival his power of translating the dominant sentiment of his party into the language of irresistible appeal.¹⁴

His most famous sermon was *Meroz Cursed*, based on Judges 5:23 where Deborah in her victory song pronounces a curse on the Israelite city in Naphtali that would not come

to the aid of the Lord's people. It was preached before Parliament at the first of the regular monthly Fast Days, on February 23, 1642, and was a stirring call to arms that left royalists like Clarendon outraged. Trevor-Roper calls it "the first of a long series of incendiary sermons which, from now on, scandalized royalists and moderate men alike."¹⁵ It found favor with the majority of his hearers as a call to commitment to the Parliamentary cause, for, by his own account, "he afterwards preached it, up and down the country, sixty times, and it was several times printed."¹⁶

The freedom to preach was revolutionary, and the preaching itself had revolutionary consequences. After the first Fast Day sermons of Marshall and Cornelius Burgess, Thomas Knyvett wrote home to a friend in Norfolk on November 24, 1640, "Now reformation goes on again as hot as a toast. If thou didst but hear what sermons are preached to Parliament men, thou wouldst bless thyself." Paul Seaver comments: "In effect, from the opening of the Long Parliament those Puritans who commanded London pulpits were for the first time free to preach without fear of episcopal censure."¹⁷ William Haller adds: "The fixing of the custom of regular fast days, with special services at St. Margaret's for the house of commons, gave the preachers recognition and responsibility such as they had never known."¹⁸

When apocalyptic themes were combined with this new freedom of preaching, the effect could indeed be revolutionary. On June 15, 1643, Marshall preached from Revelation 15:2-4:

He used the imagery of the Apocalypse in order once more to bring the struggle of parliament against the king and the prelates into line with the legend of the true church beset by Antichrist and of Christ's expected advent and triumph. He would have his hearers see themselves again in the

most valid and compelling of perspectives. The great stream of history, directed by God from eternity to eternity, having reached its present point, would inevitably go on, and they were called to be the agents and actors of its next advance.¹⁹

While not as extreme as some others, Marshall had commended the millenarian writings of Joseph Mede²⁰ and the Scot Robert Baillie was to comment on the English clergy, ". . . the most of the chief divines here, not only Independents, but others, such as Twiss, Marshall, Palmer, and many more, are express Chiliasts."²¹

John F. Wilson draws out the possible implication of such preaching:

. . . even such relatively moderate sentiments as those articulated by the equivocal Marshall testify that the apocalypticism and millenarianism which were clearly present in some of the preaching to the Long Parliament worked toward revolutionary ends, whether or not they were directly intended to do so. Stated very simply, whereas prophetic and reformist puritans sought merely to make the times intelligible, another strain within Puritanism labored to interpret the times according to a calculus which required their basic transformation. That latter rhetoric, in effect if not intent, was basically disruptive of all acknowledged authority.²²

It is clear that neither Parliament nor Marshall himself perceived the imminent kingdom of Christ as undermining all other legitimate authority. Early in 1642, Parliament, overriding a petition from the church in Finchfield to retain his services, recommended that the people of the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, appoint Marshall as a regular lecturer.²³ On February 28, 1644, he was appointed

one of the seven daily lecturers at Westminster Abbey.²⁴ It is true that Marshall preached to the House of Lords on January 31, 1649, the day after the execution of Charles I, thus condoning that act,²⁵ but his associate Giles Firmin tells us that he was “so troubled about the king’s death” that on Sunday, January 28, he interceded with the heads of the Army, “and had it not been for one whom I will not name, who was very opposite and unmovable, he would have persuaded Cromwell to save the king. This is truth.”²⁶ Preaching before the Barebones Parliament in November 1653, he spoke in favor of tithes to support a national ministry.²⁷ Marshall was not one for overthrowing all authority.

In the Assembly’s debates over church polity Marshall moved gradually to a *jure divino* Presbyterian position,²⁸ but as Robert Baillie observed, he was seeking a “middle way of his own.” At the beginning of the Assembly he was commissioned, with Philip Nye, to accompany Sir Henry Vane, Jr., to Scotland, where they negotiated the Solemn League and Covenant on August 17, 1643, for uniformity with the Scottish church. He was concerned, however, to find a way that would avoid a breach with the Independents, granting local congregations some powers of discipline and ordination, though not without involvement with presbytery.²⁹ In December 1643, he had drafted a pamphlet, *Certain Considerations to Desswade Men From Further Gathering of Churches in This Present Juncture of Time*, and had gotten several leading men of the Assembly and also of the Independents to endorse it, in order to wait to see what polity the Assembly would decide on. But this counsel of patience was followed by the “Five Dissenting Brethren,” who produced their *Apologeticall Narration* in January 1644, appealing the Congregational cause directly to Parliament and the public.³⁰ In the summer of 1647, when the Army, having seized the King, threatened the City of London, it “was Stephen Marshall, who once again, in a

moment of crisis, emerged as the politician of the hour.”

Like other men who were neither Cromwellians nor radicals, Marshall believed that, at that moment, the unity of Parliament and Army was all-important and that the alternative would be confusion leading to unconditional royal reaction. So, in these last days of July, he flung himself into action. He made a party in the Westminster Assembly, worked on the aldermen of the City, darted to and fro between Lords, Commons and Army headquarters, and finally, with seventeen supporters in the Assembly, presented a petition to Parliament and City offering to make their peace with the Army. His efforts were successful. The City militia offered no resistance, and the Army entered London without a struggle. When all was over, the defeated party recognized Marshall as the chief architect of their ruin. “In that nick of time,” wrote Baillie, when “one stout look more” would have established Presbyterianism forever, it was Mr. Marshall, “the main instrument” of the Solemn League and Covenant, who, with “his seventeen servants of the Synod . . . put presently in the Army’s power both Parliament, City and nation.”³¹

Marshall maintained his Presbyterian convictions to his deathbed, but he was able to cooperate with Cromwell and the increasingly prevalent Independents. He was among a group of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists with whom Cromwell consulted for the sake of reconciliation and peace in October and November 1653, with some of whom he was appointed “Triers” by Cromwell on March 20, 1654.³² Perhaps it helped that one of his daughters had married John Nye, a son of Independent leader Philip Nye.³³

Marshall’s broad and accommodating spirit is shown also in the manner in which the Assembly’s Directory for Worship was drawn up. As chairman of the committee responsible for doing the preliminary work, he

presented the general reasons for a Directory and the criteria adopted by his committee—to find a mean between a completely fixed liturgy and a form of worship in which everyone would be “left to his own will.”³⁴

As Alexander Mitchell described it:

In other words those who conducted the ordinary services were not directly prohibited from turning the materials furnished to them into an unvarying form of prayer, keeping as near to the words of the Directory as they could; but at the same time they were not only not restricted or counseled to do so, but they were counseled and encouraged to do something more, according to their ability and opportunities.³⁵

This spirit has continued in Presbyterian worship to the present day.

Marshall himself felt great freedom in prayer and sometimes prayed at great length in public. When he and Joseph Caryl were chaplains to the commissioners treating with the King at Newcastle in 1646, they were at the dinner table with Charles, and Marshall

put himself more forward than was meet to say grace; and, while he was long in forming his chaps, as the manner was among the saints, and making ugly faces, his Majesty said grace himself, and was fallen to his meat, and had eaten up some part of his dinner, before Marshall had ended the blessing. . . .³⁶

In 1651, Marshall had left Finchingfield to become town preacher at Ipswich at St. Mary’s at the Quay. He died of consumption on November 19, 1655, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. On September 14, 1661, however, by

royal warrant of Charles II, his remains were taken up and cast into a grave in St. Margaret’s churchyard. He had married, about 1629, a rich widow, Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Castell of East Hatley, Cambridgeshire, and they had a son and six daughters. He was described as “of middle height, swarthy, and broad shouldered, rolling his eyes in conversation; not fixing them on those he addressed; his gait was ‘shackling,’ and he had no polish.” It is said that he was an indulgent father, allowing his daughters to dress in unpuritanical fashion. He could jest, and “he frequently read himself asleep with a playbook or romance.”³⁷

Richard Baxter regarded him “a sober and worthy man” and said that if all the Bishops had been of the same spirit as Archbishop Ussher, the Independents like Jeremiah Burroughes, and the Presbyterians like Stephen Marshall, the divisions of the church would soon have been healed.³⁸

Not long before his death Marshall said, “I cannot say, as one did, I have not so lived that I should now be afraid to die; but this I can say, I have so *learned Christ*, that I am not afraid to die.”³⁹

Profile Number Two: Robert Harris (1581-December 1 or 11, 1658)—“A Noted Puritan Scholar”

When Sir Anthony Cope, Member of Parliament, sought to fill the vacancy in the church of Hanwell, Oxfordshire, with Robert Harris in 1607, Archbishop Richard Bancroft was not going to make it easy for another Puritan to succeed the ejected John Dod. He first said that Harris must be examined by his most learned chaplain, who upon sufficient examination reported him to be “moderately learned.” Unsatisfied, the Archbishop committed Harris to William Barlow, Bishop of Rochester (and later to be a translator of the Authorized Version), a man of great wit and learning, who was glad for the opportunity to conduct the further examination. He covered divinity, then other

branches of learning, and finally the Greek language: "They Greeked it till they were both run aground for want of words, upon which they burst into a fit of laughter, and so gave it over."⁴⁰

Harris served as pastor at Hanwell for the next thirty-five years.

Harris served faithfully in the Westminster Assembly and then was appointed president of Trinity College, Oxford, on April 12, 1648, at which time he received the degree of D.D. It is said that in the Assembly he heard all and said little.⁴¹ He was, however, one of the seven English divines most influential in preparing the *Confession of Faith* along with Edward Reynolds, Cornelius Burgess, Thomas Temple, Charles Herle, Joshua Hoyle, and Thomas Gataker.⁴² This important role makes his life and theological development of special interest.

Born in 1581 to a large family of modest means in Broad Campden, Gloucestershire, Harris did not receive the best schooling before entering Magdalen Hall, Oxford, on June 10, 1597, but his tutor there, a Mr. Goffe or Gough, encouraged him spiritually while instructing him in philosophy. Eventually Harris instructed Goffe in Greek and Hebrew, and they read together Calvin's *Institutes*. Harris received the B.A. on June 5, 1600, and decided to pursue the ministry rather than the law which was his original intention.⁴³

He preached his first sermon in 1604 at Chipping-Campden, where he had attended school. Upon his arrival at the church, there was no Bible to be found from which he could read his text. Even in the greater town there was not one to be obtained. Finally, in the house of the vicar of the parish one was located although it had not been seen for some months. Harris preached from Romans 10:1, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." His sermon was so well received that his friends sought to persuade him that he needed no

further education. He returned to Oxford, however, only to be thwarted by the plague, which had closed down the University. A Mr. Doyly invited Harris to stay in his home near Oxford, and there he met the rector of Chiselhampton, Mr. Pries, who was in a weak condition and needed assistance in his church. Harris's effective preaching there brought him to the attention of Mr. Doyly's brother-in-law, Sir Anthony Cope, who secured his appointment to the church in Hanwell in 1607.⁴⁴

Although the congregation at Hanwell was still loyal to John Dod, who had been their pastor for twenty years, Dod helped to get the younger Harris established there.⁴⁵ It also helped that at about the same time two contemporaries of Harris were appointed to churches within a couple of miles of Hanwell, William Whately at Banbury and Henry Scudder (who would also become a member of the Westminster Assembly) at Drayton. The three young ministers met together weekly to translate and analyze a chapter of the Bible, and eventually Harris married Whately's sister and Scudder married Whately's wife's sister, Elizabeth Hunt.⁴⁶ Harris's wife suffered a long and difficult illness upon the birth of their first child, and late in life experienced mental disorder and spiritual torment, although she had lived a devout life and managed a large household well with Harris for about fifty years.⁴⁷

Harris continued his studies, receiving the B.D. from Oxford on May 5, 1614. His reputation as a preacher apparently spread, for he preached at St. Lawrence Jewry in London in the summer of 1619,⁴⁸ gave a sermon at Paul's Cross in 1622,⁴⁹ served as lecturer at St. Saviour's in Southwark from September 1623 to January 1625, and was invited to be lecturer at St. Mary Aldermanbury when the Archbishop put a stop to it.⁵⁰ On February 18, 1629, he preached for a Fast Day to the House of Commons.⁵¹ From 1629 to 1631 he preached every other week at Stratford-

upon-Avon, and crowds came to hear him.⁵² The Long Parliament invited him to preach on the monthly Fast Day, May 25, 1642.⁵³

When the Battle of Edgehill, the first battle of the Civil War, took place on Sunday, October 23, 1642, just a few miles from Hanwell, Harris held his customary services without being aware of it: “. . . the wind being contrary, he did not hear the least noise of it until the public exercises of the day were over; nor could he believe the report of the battle till soldiers, besmeared with blood, come to make it known.”⁵⁴ Royalist troops were quartered in his home, and some of those abused him with derogatory names and swearing. The latter he could not tolerate, and so he preached on James 5:12, “But above all things, my brethren, swear not.” This was so offensive that they threatened to shoot him if he should preach upon that text again. When he preached on the same verse again the next Sunday, “he observed a soldier preparing his firelock, as if he designed to shoot; but Mr. Harris went on without fear, apprehending that the soldier intended only to disturb him, and he finished his discourse without interruption.”⁵⁵ Eventually his property was burned and his and his family’s safety was sufficiently endangered that they fled to London.

While serving in the Assembly, he ministered at St. Botolph’s, Bishopsgate, and continued to preach to other audiences, such as the London City Council on April 7, 1645, where he encouraged order and mercy to the poor.⁵⁶ Of Harris’s preaching, Samuel Clarke the biographer said that he

could so cook his meat that he could make it relish to every palate: He could dress a plain discourse, so as that all sorts should be delighted with it. He could preach with a learned plainness, and had learned to conceal his Art. He had clear Notions of high Mysteries, and proper language

to make them stoop to the meanest capacity.⁵⁷

Sermons, he said, should not be divinity lectures.⁵⁸ He complained that

some preachers spent too much time insisting upon doctrinal points and too little upon applications, “wherein . . . a Sermons excellency doth consist.” He for his part “contrived the Uses first,” and “did often handle the same Texts, and the same Points, and yet still would pen new Applications.”⁵⁹

He said of the Bible that “we must be careful to read it, hear it, lodge it in our hearts, apply it close to our consciences, and then it will heal our hearts.”⁶⁰

With regard to the *Westminster Confession’s* doctrine of Predestination, Harris was an infralapsarian, emphasizing that unbelievers were responsible for their own condemnation.⁶¹ Committed to the doctrine of Election, he also declared that God’s Fatherhood was universal in some sense:

God’s adversaries are in some way his own. He is a piece of a Father to them also. For he is a *common Father by office* to all, a *special Father by adoption* to saints, a *singular Father by nature* to Christ. A Prince, besides his particular relation to his children, is *pater patriae*, . . . and is good to all, though with a difference. So here, though Christ hath purchased a peculiar people to himself, to the purpose of salvation, yet others taste of this his goodness.⁶²

Harris had a very practical approach to the covenant of grace, emphasizing the personal application of the doctrine. When Noah looked outward into the flood he saw “nothing but feare and death.” And when he looked inward

“there were no neighbours but Bears and Lyons, and other beasts.” But Noah and his Ark are “a pledge of God’s care.” And so too “stands our case,” for “looke wee inward into our selves, there’s nothing but guilt, sin, death, rottenesse, corruptions crawling in every roome in the soule; looke we outward . . . there’s nothing before our eyes but confusion and destruction, every place is a sea.” But we too have a pledge and, Harris added, “for such as are already enrolled within the covenant . . . there is not onely a possibility, but a certainty too of their blessedness.”⁶³

He stressed that a troubled soul should make use of the means of grace available in the church:

Especially apply your selves to the communion of the Saints: A dead coale, put to live coales, will take fire from them, which it would never do lying in the dead heape: so here . . . sort your selves with such as are godly, and frequent the ordinances . . . that you may have part in the new covenant.⁶⁴

He saw assurance of salvation as a matter of degree, something to be desired, but not necessarily complete in every believer: “There be Christians of all ages and of all sizes in Gods family,” meaning that “all Gods children have some assurance, though all have not alike.”⁶⁵

In characteristic Puritan fashion Harris kept a spiritual diary for the sake of self-examination. He would write down “the evidences which he found in himself, on account of which he hoped to reach heaven.” Usually these were propositions from Scripture or syllogisms that contributed to his own assurance.⁶⁶ The way such a spiritual diary functioned in place of the confessional for Puritans is illustrated by Harris’s pastoral care of Elizabeth Wilkinson. This young woman had become concerned about her soul at age twelve, being assailed by atheistic doubts. These were relieved

by reading Calvin’s *Institutes*, but then she despaired that she had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. She was helped by reading Henry Scudder’s *Christians Daily Walk* and by Christian fellowship.

The upshot of her struggle was that she wrote out a “particular account of Gods gracious dealing” toward her and sent it to Robert Harris, then Master of Trinity, Oxford, begging him to admit her to communion. He granted her request; she entered upon the life of a saint, kept a diary, and when she died (in 1654), the story of her spiritual progress was published by Edmund Staunton, the preacher chosen to pronounce the sermon at her funeral.⁶⁷

Harris spent the last ten years of his life as president of Trinity College, Oxford, and as rector of Garsington, near Oxford. He preached regularly on Sundays at Garsington and once a week at All Soul’s College, also preaching in turn at the University in English and in Latin.⁶⁸ He died on December 1 or 11, 1658, at the age of 77.⁶⁹ One of his sayings was “That a preacher has three books to study: the *Bible*, *himself*, and the *people*—That preaching to the people was but one part of the pastor’s duty: he was to live and die in them, as well as for, and with them.”⁷⁰ Robert Harris exemplified the Puritan preacher/pastor/theologian.

Profile Number Three: Edmund Calamy (February 1600–October 29, 1666)—“A Noted London Clergyman”

From the events leading up to the Westminster Assembly on through the outworking of the Assembly’s actions in Revolutionary England, no single figure provided greater leadership for the Presbyterians than Edmund Calamy. As Archibald Alexander says:

No minister of his time was more popular; and none had more energy and public spirit, together with a fearless boldness in declaring his sentiments, and going forward in

the path which conscience directed. He may well be considered the leader of the Presbyterian party; their confidence in his courage, prudence, and integrity, was unbounded; and they manifested their estimation of his talents and address, by generally making him their chairman, at all their meetings.⁷¹

James Reid says: "Mr. Calamy was well acquainted with the subjects appropriate to his profession: as a preacher, he was plain and practical; and he boldly avowed his sentiments on all necessary occasions."⁷² William Haller, comparing him to Stephen Marshall, the greatest preacher of the Assembly, says: "Calamy, his colleague in the pulpit on several occasions, was, perhaps, among all the preachers, the next greatest favorite with parliament."⁷³ Tai Liu says that

. . . Calamy commanded unparalleled prestige and exercised an irrefutable influence in the City of London during the revolutionary era. As his grandson would later say: "No Minister in the City was more follow'd; nor hath there ever been a Week-day lecture so frequented as his; which was attended not only by his own Parish, but by Eminent Citizens, and many Persons of the Greatest Quality, and constantly for 20 years together; for there seldom were so few as 60 coaches." Indeed it was often in Calamy's house in Aldermanbury that strategy and actions of the London Puritan brethren were planned. . . .⁷⁴

Edmund Calamy was born in February 1600, the only son of a tradesman in Walbrook, London, who came from the island of Guernsey where, according to family tradition, he was a Huguenot refugee from the coast of Normandy.⁷⁵ Young Edmund entered Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, on July 4, 1616, and received the B.A. in 1620 and the M.A. in 1623.⁷⁶

His aversion to Arminianism prevented him from becoming a Fellow, in the English reaction to the Synod of Dort, but he was elected *Tanquam Socius*, an arrangement peculiar to Pembroke Hall that allowed him most of the privileges of a Fellow without any share in the government of the College.⁷⁷

Nicholas Felton, Bishop of Ely, made him a chaplain of his household, permitting him to spend much time in study. During this stage of his life Calamy not only acquainted himself with the writings of Robert Bellarmine and Thomas Aquinas, but read over Augustine's works five times.⁷⁸ Bishop Felton presented him to the vicarage of St. Mary, Swaffham Prior, Cambridgeshire, on March 6, 1626, but in the next year he resigned this position to become a lecturer at Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. He would remain there for ten years, with Jeremiah Burroughes, his colleague, from around 1627 to 1631. The enforcement of Bishop Matthew Wren's articles of 1636 drove him from Bury, but Robert Rich, second Earl of Warwick, secured him a position at Rochford, Essex, where he served as rector or lecturer from November 9, 1637, until May 1639.⁷⁹ The marshes of Essex did not agree with him, however, and an illness left him with a chronic dizziness that prevented him from mounting a pulpit, so that he always afterward preached from the reading-desk.⁸⁰

Calamy was elected on May 27, 1639, to the perpetual curacy of St. Mary Aldermanbury, London, a parish with a strongly Puritan tradition and with many prominent citizens in its membership.⁸¹ It also paid its minister handsomely. From the beginning Calamy was given what was "probably the highest annual stipend a London minister received so early in this period."⁸² It was from this base that Calamy became involved in the attack upon episcopacy. From early in 1641 he joined with Cornelius Burgess, John White, Stephen Marshall, and various noblemen and lay

leaders to plot their strategy.⁸³ When Bishop Joseph Hall published his defense of episcopacy by divine right, Calamy joined with Stephen Marshall, Thomas Young, his brother-in-law, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstowe to produce responses over the name “Smectymnuus,” an anagram of their initials. The full title of their first treatise reveals their subject matter: *An Answer to a Book entitled, An Humble Remonstrance; in which the Original of Liturgy and Episcopacy is discussed: and Queries propounded concerning both. The Parity of Bishops and Presbyters in Scripture demonstrated. The occasion of their Imparity in Antiquity discovered. The Disparity of the Ancient and our Modern Bishops manifested. The Antiquity of Ruling Elders in the Church vindicated. The Prelatical Church bounded.*⁸⁴ Five years later Calamy wrote:

After my coming to London at the beginning of this Parliament I was one of those that did joyn in making Smectymnuus, which was the first deadly blow to Episcopacy in England of late years. . . . I was the first that openly before a Committee of Parliament did defend that our Bishops were not only not an Order distinct from Presbyters, but that in Scripture a Bishop and Presbyter were all one.⁸⁵

It was toward the beginning of the Long Parliament that Calamy for the Presbyterians and Phillip Nye for the Independents made an agreement at Calamy’s house in Aldermanbury,

That (for advancing of the publicke cause of a happy Reformation) neither side should Preach, Print, or dispute, or otherwise act against the other’s way; And this to continue ‘til both sides, in a full meeting, did declare the contrary.⁸⁶

Presbyterians and Independents thus were aware of their differences before the Westminster Assembly, but were united in opposing episcopacy.

On December 22, 1641, Calamy and Stephen Marshall preached before the House of Commons for a special Fast Day for the Irish crisis. Calamy’s sermon, *Englands Looking-Glasse*, based on Jeremiah 18:7-10, developed four points that made Parliament’s responsibility clear: (1) “That God hath an independent and illuminated Prerogative over all Kingdoms and Nations to build them, or destroy them as he pleaseth”; (2) “Though God hath this absolute power over Kingdoms and Nations, yet he seldome useth this power, but first he gives warning”; (3) “That Nationall turning from evill, will divert Nationall judgments, and procure Nationall blessings” [repentance he construed as “Humiliation for sins past, Reformation for the time to come”]; (4) “That when God begins to build and plant a Nation; if that Nation do evill in Gods sight, God will unbuild, pluck up, and repent of the good he intended to do unto it.”

Along with other preachers Calamy urged Parliament to call a “free Nationall Synod” for the sake of reform.⁸⁷

When the system of regular monthly Fast Days was established, Calamy and Marshall were selected by the House of Commons to begin the series on February 23, 1642. Calamy’s sermon, based on Ezekiel 36:32, was titled *Gods free Mercy to England. Presented as a Pretious, and Powerful motive to Humiliation*. John F. Wilson refers to it as “something of a classic exposition of puritan doctrine for the times.” Steering between Arminian moralism and Antinomian irresponsibility, it argues: “That Nationall mercies come from free grace, not from free will; Not from mans goodnes, but Gods goodnes.”

“The contemplation of Gods free mercy to Nations and persons ought to be a mighty incentive, and a most effectually argument to make them ashamed to sin for the time to

come.” Repentance for the past and reform for the future, or change in attitude and change in action, were the available means of salvation. Sundered from each other, both were ineffectual and potentially heretical. Conjoined, they defined the religious practices appropriate to a people or a nation in explicit covenant with God.⁸⁸

In another move to pave the way for cooperation between the London clergy and the Westminster Assembly, the Puritans gained control of Sion College in London. In April 1643, Andrew Janaway of All Hallows was elected president, and Calamy and Henry Roborough, who would be one of the two scribes for the Assembly, were elected assistants. Calamy would serve as president in 1650.⁸⁹ On June 15, 1643, as the Assembly was about to get under way, Calamy preached to the House of Lords a sermon, *The Nobleman’s Pattern of true and real thankfulness*, from Joshua 24:15; he said, “It is the duty of all men, but especially of such as are Joshuah’s, such as are Rulers and Nobles, to ingage themselves and their Families to serve god resolutely, speedily, and publickely. . . .”⁹⁰

In the Assembly itself Calamy was the fourteenth most active speaker in the debates on church government, just behind William Bridge in number of speeches recorded in Minutes down to November 15, 1644, and ahead of Joshua Hoyle.⁹¹ His role in the debates shows him arguing for distinctively Presbyterian positions from the beginning of the Assembly.⁹² He served on the Grand Committee for the treaty obligations to the Scots.⁹³ He also served on the committee to consider the “Reasons” offered by the Independents.⁹⁴ He and Stephen Marshall were entrusted with distribution of money paid by Parliament to the Assembly on January 3, 1644, and he, Marshall, Cornelius Burgess, and William Spurstowe said that they did not wish to share in the distribution of April 7, 1645, evidently because of being better off than most of the divines.⁹⁵

Repeatedly in the discussions Calamy showed an awareness of actual situations in English parishes and a concern for the practical consequences of decisions made at the Assembly.⁹⁶

From 1643 to 1648 he had as his assistant at St. Mary Aldermanbury his brother-in-law and fellow Smectymnian, Matthew Newcomen, who was also a member of the Assembly.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, when the idea of toleration had been broached in Parliament, Calamy preached to the House of Commons on the special Fast Day of October 22, 1644, *England’s Antidote against the Plague of Civil War*, based on Acts 17:30. In this sermon he said:

If you do not labour according to your duty and according to your power, to suppress the errors and heresies that are spread in the Kingdom, all these errors are your errors. . . . You are Anabaptists and you are the Antinomians, and it is you that hold all religions are to be tolerated, even Judaism and Turkism.⁹⁸

Just two months later, on December 25, 1644, the regular Fast Day, Calamy preached to the House of Lords on *An Indictment against England because of her self-murdering Divisions; with an Exhortation to Concord*, based on Matthew 12:25. With the differences between Independents and Presbyterians in mind he said: “Divisions, whether they be Ecclesiasticall, or Politicall, in Kingdomes, Cities, and Families, are infallible causes of ruine. . . .” He concluded that if England should perish in the Civil War, her epitaph could be written: “Here lyeth a Nation that hath broken Covenant with God. . . .”⁹⁹ Incidentally, since the regular Fast Day fell on Christmas Day, Calamy expressed some Puritan sentiments on the superstition and profaneness connected with that day and opined that since Christmas could not be reformed, it should be dealt with as Hezekiah

dealt with the bronze serpent.¹⁰⁰

On January 14, 1646, Calamy preached to the Lord Mayor with the sheriffs, aldermen, and Common Council of London on the occasion of their renewing the Solemn League and Covenant. His text was 2 Timothy 3:3, and his title was *The Great Danger of Covenant-refusing, and Covenant-breaking*. He said that “the famous City of London is become an Amsterdam, separation from our churches is countenanced, toleration is cried up, authority lieth asleep.”¹⁰¹

This and other sermons, according to George Yule, “stressed that settling the Presbyterian system, having no toleration and maintaining the Covenant were all of a piece, and thus helped the Council see the issue as a whole which was a powerful weapon against the Erastians.”¹⁰² After this date Calamy seems not to have preached on the Parliamentary Fast Days. He was invited for June 24, July 29, and August 26, 1646, but asked to be excused on account of illness on the first date and declined the other invitations. Since he was previously enthusiastic about the monthly Fast Days, either his illness continued or he had become disenchanted with the practice.¹⁰³

Part of his disillusionment may have stemmed from an incident in his own parish. Henry Burton was permitted to hold a “catechistical lecture” on alternate Tuesdays at St. Mary Aldermanbury, and on September 23, 1645, he spoke out in favor of “his congregational way.” At the instigation of Calamy the churchwardens locked Burton out, and an exchange of pamphlets ensued: *The Door of Truth Opened*, by Calamy, and *Truth still Truth, though Shut Out of Doors*, by Burton, both in 1645, and *A Just and Necessary Apology* (i.e., defense), by Calamy in 1646.¹⁰⁴ The kind of atmosphere that was increasingly developing in London in the late 1640s is described by Christopher Hill:

In 1648 the General Baptist, Edward Barber, was invited by

parishioners of St. Benet Fink, London, to come to the parish church and add to what the minister (Edmund Calamy) should say, or contradict him if erroneous. Hanserd Knollys created several “riots and tumults” by going around churches and speaking after the sermon. One can imagine the irritation this practice might cause when, as time went on, the parson himself became the main target of itinerant interrupters, professionally skilled hecklers, denouncing his self-righteousness and his greed in taking tithes.¹⁰⁵

After the triumphant Army occupied London in the summer of 1647, Calamy “openly denounced the latter in a sermon for the morning exercise at St. Michael Cornhill,” with the result that a pamphlet responded:

When we come to hear you, we expected to be instructed in Divinity, and not to be corrupted in Civility; if we had a desire to learn the language of *Billingsgate*, we should not have gone to Michael Cornhill in London, especially when Mr. Calamy was the Teacher.¹⁰⁶

Under these circumstances it is understandable that the English Puritan majority sided with the Scottish Presbyterians for reasons such as Robert S. Paul enumerates: “fear of the growing sectarianism, determination to maintain an established state church, and a strong desire to maintain the status and authority of the clergy.”¹⁰⁷

Calamy was a member of the Presbyterian Sixth London Classis.¹⁰⁸ He was one of the signers of Cornelius Burgess’s *A Vindication of the Ministers of the Gospel in, and about London* that opposed the Army’s actions leading to the trial and eventual execution of the King.¹⁰⁹ Under the Protectorate he “kept himself as private as he could,” but he was the main author in 1650 of *Vindication of the Presbyteriall-government*,

reaching out to Independents, and in 1654 of *Jus divinum ministerii evangelici*, or *The divine right of the Gospel-ministry*, appealing to the Episcopalians as well as to Independents.¹¹⁰ Oliver Cromwell did consult with some of the London clergy, including Edmund Calamy, when he was contemplating expulsion of the Rump Parliament, probably in early April 1653. Calamy advised that it was both unlawful and impracticable that one man should assume the government of the country. Concerning its being unlawful Cromwell appealed to the safety of the nation as the supreme law. When asked why he thought it impracticable, Calamy said, "Oh, it is against the voice of the nation; there will be nine in ten against you." But Cromwell responded, "Very well; but what if I should disarm the nine, and put the sword in the tenth man's hand, would not that do the business?"¹¹¹

In the period following Oliver Cromwell's death on September 3, 1658, Calamy was involved with other Presbyterian ministers in support of Richard Cromwell and the restored Long Parliament, but when the government began to disintegrate, he worked for the restoration of monarchy.¹¹² He went to Holland with Edward Reynolds, William Spurstowe, Thomas Case, and Thomas Manton to consult with Charles II, and their delegation was well received.¹¹³ Along with all of the delegation plus John Wallis, Simeon Ashe, Richard Baxter, and one or two others, he was appointed a Royal Chaplain.¹¹⁴ On the one occasion when he preached before the King, August 12, 1660, Samuel Pepys commented in his *Diary* that he "made a good sermon upon these words, 'To whom much is given of him much is required.' He was very officious with his three reverences to the King, as others do."¹¹⁵

At the crucial point of negotiations with the King's representatives and the Bishops, Calamy joined with Edward Reynolds in seeking to tone down some of Richard Baxter's response, but even so the Presbyterian exceptions were

more than the Bishops would accept.¹¹⁶ Offered the Bishoprics of Hereford, Norwich, and Lichfield and Coventry respectively, Baxter declined, Reynolds accepted, and Calamy hesitated and then declined.¹¹⁷ J. I. Packer explains what was operative for Calamy at this juncture:

. . . these Puritan clergy were prevented from trying to stretch their consciences by the sense that the eyes of their own flocks—indeed, of all Englishmen—were upon them, and that they could not even appear to compromise principles for which they had stood in the past without discrediting both themselves, their calling, and their previous teaching. Calamy records a contemporary comment which focuses their fear: "had the ministers conformed, people would have thought there was nothing in religion." It had become a question of credibility. The Puritan clergy held that they should be ready to confirm what they had publicly maintained as truth by suffering, if need be, rather than risk undermining their whole previous ministry by what would look like time-serving abandonment of principle.¹¹⁸

When it became clear that the King and his advisers were not going to accommodate those who could not conform, Calamy did not hide his feelings. On one occasion when General George Monck, who had persuaded him and Simeon Ashe that the Long Parliament must be dissolved, was present in his church, he had occasion in his sermon to refer to filthy lucre:

"and why," said he, "is it called filthy, but because it makes men do base and filthy things? Some men," said he, "will betray three kingdoms for filthy lucre's sake." Saying this, he threw his handkerchief, which he generally waved up and down while he was preaching, toward the General's pew.¹¹⁹

With the passage of the Act of Uniformity, knowing he would be ejected, he preached his Farewell Sermon on August 17, 1662, a week before the Act would take effect, on the text of 2 Samuel 24:14. James Reid summarizes it:

The chief design of it is to illustrate and improve this point, "that sin brings persons and nations into great perplexities." He observes, That beside many outward troubles, this brings a spiritual famine upon a land: a famine of the word. . . . Have not some of you *itching ears* who would fain have a preacher who would feed you with dainty phrases; and who begin not to care for a Minister that unrips your consciences, and speaks to your hearts: some who by often hearing sermons are become sermon proof? There is hardly any way to raise the price of the gospel-ministry, but the want of it. . . . Give glory to God by confessing and repenting of your sins, before darkness comes; and who knoweth but that may prevent that darkness.¹²⁰

On August 20, just days before St. Bartholomew's Day (August 24), Simeon Ashe, who had been Sunday-afternoon lecturer at St. Mary Aldermanbury since 1651 and Calamy's assistant there until January 1655, "went seasonably to Heaven at the very Time when he was cast out of the Church."¹²¹ Calamy preached his funeral sermon on August 23, at St. Austin's Church on the text Isaiah 57:1, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

After St. Bartholomew's Day, Calamy continued to attend St. Mary Aldermanbury from which he had been ejected. On December 28, he was present as usual when the assigned preacher did not appear. Urged by the people, he entered the desk "and preached with some warmth."¹²² His sermon was based on 1 Samuel 4:13, "And when he came,

lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching; for his heart trembled for the ark of God." It was later written out and published in the collections of farewell sermons as *Trembling for the Ark of God*. His fifth and final application was:

The ark was called the ark of the covenant. Keep covenant with God, and God will preserve the ark. But if you break the covenant of the ark, the covenant made in baptism, and that covenant often renewed in the sacrament, if you break covenant, God will take away the ark.¹²³

On January 6, 1663, Calamy was arrested and committed to Newgate Prison, the first of the Nonconformists to be penalized for disobeying the Act of Conformity for preaching without permission. Many of Calamy's friends came to visit him in prison, their coaches jamming the traffic in Newgate Street. "A certain Popish lady," apparently the King's mistress, was detained by the jam and, inquiring as to its cause, learned from disturbed people standing by that "a person much beloved and respected, was imprisoned there for a single sermon." She immediately reported this to the King, whose express order set Calamy free, although the House of Commons said that the Act had not provided for longer restraint and took steps to tighten the regulations against toleration.¹²⁴

Edmund Calamy lived to see the great fire of London of September 3, 1666. It is said to have overrun 373 acres within the city's walls, burning down 13,200 houses, 89 parish churches, besides chapels, and leaving only eleven parish churches within the walls still standing. Driven in a coach through the ashes and ruins as far as Enfield, Calamy was devastated by the sight. Heartbroken, he never again emerged from his room and died on October 29, 1666. He was buried on November 6 in the ruins of the church he

had served for twenty-three years, "as near to the place where his pulpit had stood as they could guess."¹²⁵

Calamy was the first of six Edmund Calamys, and to avoid confusion is known as Edmund Calamy the Elder. His son Edmund Calamy the Younger (1635?-85) was one of three children of his first wife, Mary Snelling. He was educated at Sidney Sussex College, and Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, and was ordained as a Presbyterian in 1653, was ejected from the rectory of Moreton, Essex, in 1662, and attended his father in London until his death. Edmund Calamy the Elder's second wife was Anne Leaver, of the Lancashire Leavers, who bore him three sons, Benjamin, James, and John. The older two became ministers who conformed to the Church of England after the Restoration, but enjoyed cordial relations with their Nonconformist half-brother, Edmund. Benjamin Calamy (1642-86) gained the D.D. in 1680 and, as vicar of St. Lawrence Jewry (with St. Mary Magdalene Milk Street annexed) and a prebendary of St. Paul's, was a prominent churchman.

Edmund Calamy the Younger had one son, Edmund Calamy (1671-1732), the great biographical historian of Nonconformity, often referred to as "Dr. Calamy" since he received the D.D. from the University of Edinburgh upon a journey to Scotland in 1709. His eldest son, Edmund Calamy (1697?-1755), was a Dissenting minister who served on the Presbyterian Board, as did his son, Edmund Calamy (1743-1816), who became a barrister of Lincoln's Inn. His son, Edmund Calamy, the great-great-great-grandson of Edmund Calamy the Elder, died August 27, 1850, at age 70. His younger brother, Michael Calamy, who occasionally preached for the Unitarians at Exeter and Topsham, died unmarried on January 3, 1876, aged 85, the last of a notable line.¹²⁶

Conclusion

An American Presbyterian friend, when taking the guid-

ed tour of Westminster Abbey, asked the tour guide if he could see the Jerusalem Chamber. The guide responded by inquiring why he would want to see the Jerusalem Chamber. When my friend replied, "Because that is where the Westminster Assembly met," the guide had to be informed as to what the Westminster Assembly was.

There is a certain irony about the influence of the Westminster Assembly. A half-dozen Scottish delegates come south to London for more than four years to get a group averaging from sixty to eighty Englishmen to produce a *Confession of Faith*, two catechisms, a *Directory for Worship*, and a *Form of Government* which become standards for the Kirk of Scotland, and for Presbyterianism wherever English-speaking Christians take them around the world, but which have only a very momentary influence on England itself. It is perhaps not so unusual that our God would work in such a way "that no flesh should glory."

The lives of the members of the Westminster Assembly help to fill a gap in the story of the English Puritan movement. Because the products of the Assembly were not lastingly adopted in England, they are sometimes overlooked in the study of English Puritanism. Learned articles on English Puritan ethics have been produced, for example, that skip from William Perkins and William Ames to the period of Richard Baxter without commenting on the important statements in the *Westminster Larger Catechism* on the proper understanding and application of the Ten Commandments. The work of the Westminster Assembly should be seen as reflecting the core of English Puritan theology and spirituality.

For those churches that profess to adhere to the Westminster Standards, the lives of the members of the Assembly shed much light on the foundations of continuing truths. The extended discussions on church government, including such matters as the office and role of the ruling

elder, can be studied profitably still today. The same can be said about the Lord's Supper, the reading of Scripture in worship, the conscience, and many other topics. The writings of Joseph Caryl on "what is good" are still relevant to the study of biblical ethics. The fact that Independents, Erastians, Scots, and English Presbyterians—good Puritans all—did not always agree was a healthy stimulus to study of the Bible in depth and thorough debate as to its meaning and application in the immediate context of the mid-seventeenth century.

The historical context of the Westminster Assembly must not be forgotten. There were differences of theological emphasis and nuance among the members, all of whom were Calvinists. The supralapsarian/infralapsarian issue was not pressed, nor was the matter of the millennium, on which there were differences. It is also interesting to see that there were differences among the members on the specific role of the active obedience of Christ in the justification of the believer.

Most instructive is to realize the strong interest in evangelism and missions on the part of many members of the Assembly. Thomas Hill sought to see missionaries sent not only into the dark corners of the realm, but also abroad. John White, Anthony Tuckney, William Gouge, Edmund Calamy, and others maintained an active interest in the American missions to the Indians. Herbert Palmer's dying prayers were for the spread of the Gospel around the world.

It was a rare collection of God's servants with a rich variety of gifts that gathered in the Westminster Assembly to produce the documents that continue to bear fruit in the understanding and living out of God's Word. The members of the Westminster Assembly, imperfect as they were, were nevertheless gifts to the church from the ascended Christ, to whom be thanks and all glory given.

Endnotes

- 1 Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., 6th ed. (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1877, 1931), 1: 728.
- 2 John H. Leith, *Assembly at Westminster: Reformed Theology in the Making* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1973), 12.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 11-12.
- 4 Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 1: 788.
- 5 It should be acknowledged that I have not had the opportunity to read many of the primary sources, but my work is largely derivative from many excellent secondary sources. At the same time, where possible, I have quoted from the Westminster divines themselves so that one may hear the voice of the Assembly. Copious endnotes are intended to guide those who are interested to test my conclusions or to pursue further research. Certainly such figures as Stephen Marshall, Cornelius Burgess, Edmund Calamy, William Gouge, Thomas Gataker, Herbert Palmer, Thomas Goodwin, and Alexander Henderson deserve modern full-length studies. As will be apparent to anyone who peruses the endnotes, I am especially indebted to the works on the Assembly by Robert S. Paul, John Richard De Witt, S. W. Carruthers, and Alexander F. Mitchell. For biographical information I owe much to the standard reference works, such as A. G. Matthews' *Calamy Revised* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*, in which the entries on Assembly members that I have used are almost half by Alexander Gordon, no other contributor doing more than two. The 1979 Yale Ph.D. dissertation by Larry Jackson Holley contains much helpful biographical information for the period up to 1643, but also several errors. James Reid's *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines* (1811, 1815)

is an invaluable source of information not to be found elsewhere, but it also tends to be fulsome and excessively devotional. I have relied on him to be the channel, nevertheless, for accounts from earlier biographers such as Samuel Clarke, Thomas Fuller, Daniel Neal, and Benjamin Brook. A more concise source for much of the same information is the anonymous *History of the Westminster Assembly . . . and Biographical Sketches of Its Most Conspicuous Members* published in 1841, which the minutes of the Presbyterian Board of Publication at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia show most likely to be by Archibald Alexander of Princeton Theological Seminary.

- 6 Quoted in Eilliam Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1955), 36. Cf. James Reid, *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines*, 2 vols. in 1 (Edinburgh and Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth, 1982 reprint of 1811 and 1815 edition), 2: 73.
- 7 John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), 87, 109-10.
- 8 Quoted in Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 73.
- 9 H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (New York and Evanston, Illinois: Harper & Row, 1968), 297-98. Trevor-Roper says, "There is no adequate biography of Marshall, whose importance, at least as the spokesman for policy, seems to me greater than has been allowed" (298 n. 1).
- 10 *Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, 22 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1921-22), 12: 1128; Larry Jackson Holley, "The Divines of the Westminster Assembly" (New Haven: Yale University Ph.D. diss., 1979), 325.

- 11 Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 36-37.
- 12 Robert S. Paul, *Assembly of the Lord* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), 119; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, 34-35.
- 13 Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 79.
- 14 *D. N. B.*, 12: 1131.
- 15 Trevor-Roper, *Crisis*, 307-308; cf. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 63-64, and Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, 69.
- 16 Trevor-Roper, *Crisis*, 307; cf. *D. N. B.*, 12: 1131. Extracts from the sermon are to be found in George Yule, *Puritans in Politics* (Appleford, Oxfordshire: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1981), 297-304.
- 17 Paul S. Seaver, *Puritan Lectureships* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1970), 268.
- 18 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, 68.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 101.
- 20 Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 221.
- 21 Quoted in Paul, *Assembly of the Lord*, 394 n. 24.
- 22 Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 233-34.
- 23 *D. N. B.*, 12: 1129; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, 67.
- 24 Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 16.
- 25 Trevor-Roper, *Crisis*, 337; Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 95. This sermon was not published, so we do not know what he preached.
- 26 Quoted in *D. N. B.*, 12: 1130.
- 27 Tai Liu, *Discord in Zion* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 128-29.
- 28 *D. N. B.*, 12: 1130; George Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, 150; John Richard De Will, *Jus Divinum* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1969), 149 and n. 32, 223-24.
- 29 Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, 139-40.
- 30 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, 116; De Witt, *Jus Divinum*, 87.
- 31 Trevor-Roper, *Crisis*, 327-28.

- 32 Liu, *Discord*, 133; *D. N. B.*, 12: 1131.
- 33 Liu, *Discord*, 128. Marshall was not Philip Nye's father-in-law, as many modern sources have it.
- 34 Paul, *Assembly of the Lord*, 364.
- 35 Alexander F. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1897), 240-41.
- 36 Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 78.
- 37 *D. N. B.*, 12: 1131. Eliza Vaughan, *Stephen Marshall, A Forgotten Essex Puritan* (London: Arnold Fairbairns & Co., 1907), 15-16, 121, refers to Marshall's wife as Susanna Castell.
- 38 Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 81.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 2: 80.
- 40 *D. N. B.*, 9: 23; Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 12.
- 41 Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 15.
- 42 Jack Bartlett Rogers, *Scripture in the Westminster Confession* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966), 174-76. Rogers' careful analysis concludes that the main supporters in this work were Matthew Newcomen, Anthony Tuckney, Jeremiah Whitaker, and John Arrowsmith, along with the Scottish divines Alexander Henderson, Robert Baillie, George Gillespie, and Samuel Rutherford. Cf. Mitchell, *Westminster Assembly*, 367-68.
- 43 *D. N. B.*, 9: 23; Holley, "Divines," 314; Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 8-9.
- 44 *D. N. B.*, 9: 23; Holley, "Divines," 314; Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 10-11.
- 45 Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 57.
- 46 Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 12-13; Holley, "Divines," 340.
- 47 Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 3, 19.
- 48 Holley, "Divines," 314; Paul S. Seaver, *Puritan Lectureships* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1970), 234.
- 49 Seaver, *Puritan Lectureships*, 57.

- 50 *Ibid.*, 135, 137-38, 272.
- 51 John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), 35. Holley, "Divines," 314-15.
- 52 Emerson, *English Puritanism*, 260; Holley, "Divines," 314.
- 53 Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 65, 204.
- 54 Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 14.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 2: 4-15.
- 56 George Yule, *Puritans in Politics* (Appleford, Oxfordshire: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1981), 167, 199 n. 108, 109.
- 57 Quoted in Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 132.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 129.
- 59 *Ibid.*, 135.
- 60 Quoted in Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 153.
- 61 John von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1986), 41.
- 62 Quoted in Alexander F. Mitchell, "Introduction," lxiii, n. 1, in *Minutes of the Westminster Assembly*, ed. Mitchell and Struthers. Cf. Mitchell, *Westminster Assembly*, 396 n. 1.
- 63 Von Rohr, *Covenant of Grace*, 12, quoting from Harris's *The Way to True Happiness* (1632), twenty-four sermons on the Beatitudes.
- 64 Von Rohr, *Covenant of Grace*, 57, quoting from Harris's *A Treatise of the New Covenant* (1632).
- 65 Von Rohr, *Covenant of Grace*, 156-57.
- 66 [Alexander], *History*, 307; Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 18-19.
- 67 Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 99.
- 68 Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 16; *D. N. B.*, 9: 23.
- 69 *D. N. B.*, 9: 23 has December 1; Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 22 has December 11.
- 70 Reid, *Memoirs*, 2: 23.
- 71 [Archibald Alexander], *A History of the Westminster*

- Assembly of Divines* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841), 222-23.
- 72 James Reid, *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines*, 2 vols. in 1 (Edinburgh and Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth, 1982 reprint of edition of 1811 and 1815), 1: 185.
- 73 William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1955), 37.
- 74 Tai Liu, *Puritan London* (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1966), 74.
- 75 *D.N.B.*, 3:679. Holley, "Divines," 288, says he was born in Walbrook, Suffolk.
- 76 Holley, "Divines," 288; *D. N. B.*, 3: 679.
- 77 Reid, *Memoirs*, 1: 166.
- 78 *Ibid.*, 167.
- 79 *D. N. B.*, 3: 679; Holley, "Divines," 288; *Calamy Revised*, ed. A. G. Matthews (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 97; Reid, *Memoirs*, 1: 169.
- 80 Reid, *Memoirs*, 1: 171; *D. N. B.* III, 3: 679.
- 81 Liu, *Puritan London*, 29, 75-76, 173.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 151-52.
- 83 Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and Roundheads*, (Cambridge, New York, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 112-13; Paul S. Seaver, *The Puritan Lectureships* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1970), 264; Richard L. Greaves, *Saints and Rebels: Seven Nonconformists in Stuart England* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1985), 15.
- 84 Reid, *Memoirs*, 1: 172. Cf. Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, 34-35.
- 85 Tai Liu, *Discord in Zion* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 36 n. 24.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 9. George Yule, *Puritans in Politics* (Appleford, Oxfordshire: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1981), 122-23.
- 87 John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament* (Princeton, New

- Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), 55-56. Cf. Liu, *Discord in Zion*, 20, 31, 35.
- 88 Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 183-84; cf. 63, 158-159. For other references to this sermon, cf. Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, pp. 68-69; Liu, *Discord in Zion*, 19; H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1968), 306-307.
- 89 Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), 118-19; *Calamy Revised*, 97. E. H. Pearce, *Sion College and Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 344, shows the following Assembly members to have been president: John Ley (1644), George Walker (1645), Cornelius Burgess (1647-48), William Gouge (1649), Lazarus Seaman (1651-52), and Edward Reynolds (1659).
- 90 Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 70. Cf. Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, 100-10; Liu, *Discord in Zion*, 23.
- 91 Wayne R. Spear, "Covenanted Uniformity in Religion" (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Ph.D. diss., 1976), 362.
- 92 John Richard De Witt, *Jus Divinum* (Kampen: J. K. Kok, 1969), 72, 84.
- 93 Paul, *Assembly of the Lord*, 243 and n. 87.
- 94 *Ibid.*, 427 and n. 190.
- 95 S. W. Carruthers, *The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Historical Societies of America and of England, 1943), 62, 64.
- 96 Cf. Paul, *Assembly of the Lord*, 371, 373-74, 439 n. 10, 435 and n. 228, 450-51 n. 62; Greaves, *Saints and Rebels*, 25-28.
- 97 Seaver, *Puritan Lectureships*, 273. Newcomen's wife was sister of Calamy's first wife, Mary Snelling, who died between 1638 and 1641. They were probably of the same family in Ipswich from which William Ames's mother, Joane Snelling, came (*D. N. B.*, 3: 681) which

- was also connected by marriage to the family of John Winthrop (Keith L. Sprunger, *The Learned Doctor William Ames* [Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1972], 3, 9).
- 98 Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, 139.
- 99 Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 177; Liu, *Discord in Zion*, 52. Cf. Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, 142.
- 100 Reid, *Memoirs*, 1: 186-87. Cf. Carruthers, *Everyday Work*, 44.
- 101 Quoted in C. Gordon Bolam, Jeremy Goring, et al., *The English Presbyterians* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 50.
- 102 Yule, *Puritans in Politics*, p. 169.
- 103 Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament*, 88-89. In 1641 Calamy had written: "Blessed be God, we have now our Christian new moons and evangelical feast of trumpets. We have not only our monthly sacrament feast to refresh our souls withal in most of our congregations . . . but our monthly fasts in which the word is preached, trading ceaseth, and sacrifices of prayer, praises, and alms are tendered up to God," thus indicating that the Lord's Supper was observed monthly at that time (Alexander F. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly*, 2nd ed. [Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1897], 243 n. 1).
- 104 *D. N. B.*, 3: 680; Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, 145; Seaver, *Puritan Lectureships*, 281; Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 134; Greaves, *Saints and Rebels*, 23-24.
- 105 Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 85. Cf. also Greaves, *Saints and Rebels*, 29.
- 106 Liu, *Puritan London*, 74.
- 107 Paul, *Assembly of the Lord*, 322 n. 44.

- 108 Liu, *Puritan London*, 73.
- 109 Liu, *Discord in Zion*, 163.
- 110 Bolam, Goring, et al., *English Presbyterians*, 50-51, and n. 1, 59; A. H. Drysdale, *History of the Presbyterians in England* (London: Publication Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1889), 312 and n. 1.
- 111 Reid, *Memoirs*, 1: 175. Both Robert S. Paul, *The Lord Protector* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1964), 264-65 and n. 4, and Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men* (London: Mandarin, 1993 reprint of 1973 ed.), 416, believe Cromwell's statement to be not so much political cynicism as a sense of providential use of force to support what is right.
- 112 Cf. Bolam, Goring, et al., *English Presbyterians*, 74-79.
- 113 George R. Abernathy, Jr., "The English Presbyterians and the Stuart Restoration, 1648-1663," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, 55, Part 2 (1965), 65-66.
- 114 Abernathy, "The English Presbyterians," 68; Drysdale, *History*, 375 and n. 1.
- 115 *Calamy Revised*, 97-98.
- 116 Abernathy, "The English Presbyterians," 74-75; Greaves, *Saints and Rebels*, 50-51.
- 117 Bolam, Goring, et al., *English Presbyterians*, 76; Abernathy, "The English Presbyterians," 77, says Calamy was dissuaded by his wife and Matthew Newcomen, his brother-in-law.
- 118 J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1990), 121.
- 119 Reid, *Memoirs*, 1: 176; Greaves, *Saints and Rebels*, 42-43 n. 49, regards this story as "probably apocryphal."
- 120 *Ibid.*, 1: 177-78.
- 121 *Calamy Revised*, 16; Seaver, *Puritan Lectureships*, 271-72.

- 122 *D. N. B.*, 3: 681.
- 123 *Sermons of the Great Ejection*, ed. Iain Murray (London: Banner of Truth, 1962), 34.
- 124 Reid, *Memoirs*, 1:180-81; *D. N. B.*, 3: 185.
- 125 *D. N. B.*, 3: 681; Reid, *Memoirs*, 1: 185.
- 126 *D. N. B.*, 3: 678-87.

Author

William S. Barker has been professor of church history since 1987 and vice president for academic affairs at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was editor of *The Presbyterian Journal* (1984-87) and previously president, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He is editor of *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique* (Zondervan, 1990) and a frequent contributor to various magazines and scholarly journals. He also authored *Puritan Profiles: Leading Figures of the Westminster Assembly* (Christian Focus Publications, 1996) from which this edited article has been excerpted with appropriate changes for journal style.