



*The Shorter Writings of George Gillespie*

*Volume 1*



NAPHTALI PRESS SPECIAL EDITIONS

V

*Series Editor*  
*Chris Coldwell*



Naphtali Press Special Editions

Volume V (2021). *The Shorter Writings of George Gillespie, Volume 1*

Produced for this series in a quantity of 750 ± 10%

2020–21 SERIES SPONSORS

1. Benjamin and Emily Albaugh, Kensington, Maryland.
2. Tom and Becky Albrecht, Downingtown, Pennsylvania.
3. Mr. & Mrs. David C. Austin, Fort Worth, Texas.
4. Paul J. Barth, Houston, Texas.
5. Christopher Bartkowski, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.
6. Trey and Hailey Bearden, Etoile, Texas
7. Gavin Beers, Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Free Church Cont., Burlington, NC.
8. Brendon & Rose Branigin, Greenville, South Carolina.
9. Vic and Lauren Bottomly, Clarkston, Washington.
10. In memory of Tim Broberg, Cheltenham, Pennsylvania.
11. Peter J. Butler, Jr., Maplewood, New Jersey.
12. Trent, Audrey, and Hannah Cannon, Lavonia, Georgia.
13. Mason Chase, Van Meter, Iowa.
14. Charles and Ann Coldwell, Tallahassee, Florida.
15. Drew and Eva Coldwell, West Palm Beach, Florida.
16. David and Barbara Coldwell, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
17. Scott & Adria Cormier, Milford, Maine.
18. Matthew & Lindsey Cover, Richmond, Virginia.
19. Bradley S. Cupples, Eagle, Colorado.
20. Mr. & Mrs. Ken DeJong, Lansing, Illinois.
21. Zach and Wilma Dotson.
22. Wyatt and Gianna Finn, Fresno, California.
23. Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Greenville, South Carolina.
24. Zachary & Jocelyn Groff.
25. Chris and Christina Hansen, Salem, Virginia.
26. Rev. Martin L. & Shari R. Hawley, Hope Presbyterian Church (PCA), Marietta, GA.
27. James and Valorie Hoffman, Mays Landing, New Jersey.
28. Anonymous, Jasper, Indiana.
29. Stephen and Anna Huffman, Montgomery, Alabama.
30. Edgar and Juana Ibarra, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.
31. Andrew Imeson.
32. Anonymous, Cheshire, United Kingdom.
33. William Keyton, Charlotte, North Carolina.
34. Adam King, Topeka, Kansas.
35. Rev. & Mrs. Trevor Kirkland, Ballyclare & Doagh Free Church Continuing.
36. Ricky and Deborah Kortyna.
37. Mr. Nicholas Kroncke.
38. Michael Krueger, Centennial, Colorado.
39. Earl and Tina Maier, Winter Park, Florida.
40. Dr. and Mrs. Ben Manring, Edinburgh, Indiana.
41. Campbell McBain, Scotland.



2020–21 SERIES SPONSORS

42. Donald John and Ruth MacLean, Cambridge, UK (Honorary Copublisher)..
43. Mr. & Mrs. Delbert McGowan, Greeneville, Tennessee. (Dedication/Epigraph)
44. Matthew Messer (RPCNA).
45. Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Miller, Etta, Mississippi.
46. The Mora Family, Modesto, California.
47. Brian & Debbie Myers, Trinity Presbyterian Reformed Church, Des Moines, Iowa.
48. Marty O’Connell, Sperry, Oklahoma.
49. Anonymous, Pewaukee, Wisconsin.
50. Alexander & Tiffany Paunovic, Newland, North Carolina.
51. Rev. & Mrs. Bryan Peters, Presbyterian Reformed Church, Columbus, Ind.
52. The Phillips Family, Cape May Court House, New Jersey.
53. Pilgrim Covenant Church, Singapore.
54. Dr. & Mrs. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., Greenville, South Carolina.
55. Thomas Powell, Islesford, Maine.
56. Lucas Procee, La Center, Washington.
57. Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, N.C.
58. Arnie Robertstad, Lakewood Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas.
59. Anonymous, Essex, United Kingdom.
60. Paul Rowland, Charleston, Scotland.
61. The Rev. Todd L. and Joanna Ruddell, Christ Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCGA), Wylie, Texas.
62. David Sargent.
63. Mr. and Mrs. Nick Schoeneberger, McKinney, Texas.
64. R. Martin Snyder, Speedway, Indiana.
65. Wayne Sparkman, PCA Historical Center, St. Louis, Missouri.
66. Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Justin B. Stodghill, Royse City, Texas.
67. Sycamore Reformed Presbyterian Church, Kokomo, Indiana.
68. A. Taglieri, Presbyterian Church in America.
69. Richard Tallach, Perth, United Kingdom.
70. David and Jeri Tanner, Trussville, Alabama.
71. The Teoh Family, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
72. Stephen Trigero, San Jose, California.
73. Steven Welch, Suwanee, Georgia.
74. The Logan West Family.
75. Kevin and Sarah White, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
76. Dr. & Mrs. C. N. Willborn, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, Tenn.
77. Jeremiah and Alison Wood, Denver, Colorado.
78. Yarashus Family, Annandale, Virginia.

The above sponsors of Naphtali Press Special Editions have helped make Volume V in this series possible. Thank you all very much.

Chris Coldwell





NAPHTALI PRESS SPECIAL EDITIONS

2019–2020

- I. *A Commentary upon the Book of the Revelation*, Volume 1, by James Durham.
- II. *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici, or The Divine Right of Church Government*, by Sundry Ministers of the City of London.
- III. *Sermons on Jeremiah's Lamentations*, by David Dickson.

2020–2021

- IV. *A Commentary upon the Book of the Revelation*, Volume 2, by James Durham.
- V. *The Shorter Writings of George Gillespie*, volume 1.
- VI. *The Sabbath and Holy Days*, by Gisbertus Voetius.



THE SHORTER WRITINGS  
OF  
GEORGE GILLESPIE

Volume 1

*Edited by Chris Coldwell*

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall  
be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The  
mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6.*

NAPHTALI PRESS &  
REFORMATION HERITAGE BOOKS

*The Shorter Writings of George Gillespie*, Volume I. Copyright © 2021 by Chris Coldwell.

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this new edition may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews and fair use. For information, write Naphtali Press, P. O. Box 141084, Dallas, Texas, 75214.

**Naphtali Press**  
P. O. Box 141084  
Dallas, Texas, 75214  
[www.naphtali.com](http://www.naphtali.com)  
[naphtali@naphtali.com](mailto:naphtali@naphtali.com)

**Reformation Heritage Books**  
3070 29th St. SE  
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49512  
616-977-0889 / Fax 616-285-3246  
[orders@heritagebooks.org](mailto:orders@heritagebooks.org)  
[www.heritagebooks.org](http://www.heritagebooks.org)

ISBN 978-1-60178-862-7

The Fell Types used in the border designs in this publication are from the versions digitally reproduced by Iginò Marini. [www.iginomarini.com](http://www.iginomarini.com). The Naphtali Press Special Editions logo designs were created by Jean Withnell.

The editor and publishers are grateful for the kind  
and enthusiastic support of Mr. & Mrs. Delbert McGowan,  
which has helped make possible this first volume of  
*The Shorter Writings of George Gillespie.*

The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us....

*1 Kings 8:57*



## CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	11	
INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS		
Memoir of George Gillespie by William M. Hetherington .....	15	
Appendix. Extracts From Wodrow's <i>Analecta</i> .....	46	
Ancestry of George Gillespie .....	53	
University Studies and Ordination to the Ministry of George Gillespie .....	61	
George Gillespie versus John Selden .....	80	
AN ASSERTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (1641) .....		[99]
ANONYMOUS WRITINGS		
REASONS FOR WHICH THE SERVICE BOOK URGED UPON SCOTLAND OUGHT TO BE REFUSED (1638) .....	[261]	
FACES ABOUT: OR, A RECRIMINATION CHARGED UPON MR. JOHN GOODWIN (1644) .....	[269]	
A LATE DIALOGUE BETWIXT A CIVILIAN AND A DIVINE (1644).....	[281]	
WHOLESOME SEVERITY RECONCILED WITH CHRISTIAN LIBERTY (1645) .....	[321]	

## Abbreviations of Common References

<i>Analec̄ta</i>	Robert Wodrow, <i>Analec̄ta: or, Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences; mostly relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians</i> , 4 volumes. Edinburgh: for the Maitland Club, 1842–1843.
ANF	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i> . Edited by James Donaldson et al. 10 volumes. Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1885.
<i>Letters &amp; Journals</i>	<i>The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie</i> , 1637–1662. Edited by David Laing. 3 volumes. Edinburgh: [Bannatyne Club], 1841–1842.
Bellarmino, <i>Opera</i>	Roberti Bellarmini, <i>Opera Omnia</i> . 12 volumes. Parisiis: Ludovicum Vivès, 1870–1874.
Calvin, <i>Commentaries</i>	Calvin's <i>Commentaries</i> , 45 volumes. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844–1856; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983.
CO	<i>Ioannis Calvini Opera quæ supersunt omnia</i> , 59 volumes. In <i>Corpus Reformatorum</i> , volumes 29–87.
CR	<i>Corpus Reformatorum</i> . Edited by G. Baum, Ed Cunitz, Eduard Reuss, and Alfred Erichson. 87 volumes. Brunsvigæ: C.A. Schwetschke, 1834–1900.
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> . Vienna, 1866–.
EPC	George Gillespie, <i>A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies</i> . 1637; Naphtali Press, 2013.
Hefele	Karl Joseph von Hefele, <i>A History of the Councils of the Church: From the Original Documents</i> . 5 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871–1896.
JDRE	<i>Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici, or the divine right of church government by sundry ministers of Christ within the city of London</i> . 1646. Naphtali Press Special Editions. Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2020.
Mansi	<i>Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio</i> . Edited by Giovanni Domenico Mansi, Philippe Labbe, Gabriel Cossart, and Niccolo Coleti. Florence and Venice: Zatta, 1759–1798.
<i>Minutes</i>	Chad Van Dixhoorn, <i>The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly 1643–1652</i> . 5 volumes. Oxford University Press, 2012.
NPNF1	<i>A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, first series</i> . Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 volumes. Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1886–1890.
NPNF2	<i>A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, second series</i> . Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 volumes. Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1890–1900.
PG	<i>Patrologiæ cursus completus, series Græca</i> . Edited by J. P. Migne. 166 volumes. Petit-Montrouge, Apud J.-P. Migne, 1857–1866.
PL	<i>Patrologiæ cursus completus, series Latina</i> . Edited by J. P. Migne. 217 volumes. Petit-Montrouge: Apud J.-P. Migne, 1844–1855.
Thomason	<i>Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers, and Manuscripts Relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration collected by George Thomason, 1640–1661</i> . 2 volumes. London: British Museum, 1908.
<i>Works</i>	<i>Works of Mr. George Gillespie</i> , The Presbyterian's Armoury. Volumes 1 and 2. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1844–1846.

## PREFACE

THE VARIOUS WRITINGS of George Gillespie had become exceedingly rare by the nineteenth century, and little read except by bibliophiles. One such lover of books was Robert Ogle, bookseller of old and new theological tomes, who had a bookshop in Edinburgh in several locations beginning circa 1824. Ogle had taken over the premises of David Laing on South Bridge in 1838, who was perhaps the preeminent Scottish bibliophile of the day, when he had become librarian of the Signet Library.<sup>1</sup> In addition to bookselling, Ogle had dabbled in publishing. He issued editions of Fraser's *Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification* (1824, repr., 1830), Rutherford's *Trial and Triumph of Faith* (1827), John Brown's *Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life* (1830), and John Newton's *Cardiphonia* (1839). He was then chosen by The Bannatyne Club to publish in 1841–42 the common edition of *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, edited by Laing, the former shopkeeper on South Bridge.<sup>2</sup> Meantime, William M. Hetherington, minister in the Church of Scotland, had become known for his *History of the Church of Scotland* (1841) and *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (1843). In the latter, Hetherington makes note of the existence of the manuscript notes on the Assembly by George Gillespie. Also in 1843 occurred the Disruption and formation of the Free Church of Scotland.<sup>3</sup> It was a time of general decline, and interest in returning to the Roman Catholic Church had been fueled by the tracts of the Oxford Movement. Many of these factors seem to have led to Ogle's plan for The Presbyterian's Armoury. *The Witness* of April 19, 1843, notes with approval,

It gave us great pleasure to observe in a late advertisement which appeared in our column, that Mr. Ogle has commenced the republication of the most

---

1. "A few yards further down, at the corner of Antigua Street, was the shop of Robert Ogle, successor to the old business of his uncle, John Ogle, who had been burnt out of his premises in Parliament Close at the great fire of 1824. His trade was, like that of his uncle, chiefly in old theological books, but with it he now combined that of 'librarian, stationer, and stamp distributor;' he left Antigua Street in 1838 to occupy the shop 49 South Bridge vacated by Mr. David Laing." James Thin, *Reminiscences of booksellers and bookselling in Edinburgh in the time of William IV* (Oliver and Boyd, 1905), p. 23. In 1832–33, it is stated that Ogle had a "circulating library." *Gray's Annual Directory*, "Booksellers" (Edinburgh: John Gray, [1832]), p. 255.

2. The Bannatyne Club would contract for a common edition to be published and sold in the bookshops. See *Lists of members and the rules, with a catalogue of the books printed for the Bannatyne Club since its institution in 1823* ([1867]), pp. 32–33, 35–36, 39.

3. Ogle left money in his will to various Free Church Committees. 1876 Ogle, Robert (Wills and Testaments, SC70/4/161, Edinburgh Sheriff Court Wills).

celebrated standard works which bear upon our Presbyterian constitution. The series is to embrace such works as Gillespie's "Aaron's Rod Blossoming," and Rutherford's "Lex, Rex," with others of similar value, and will form a cheap and elegant edition of these rare and valuable works. These works are loudly called for at the present time; and we hail their appearance in their new dress as harbingers of good.

Appended to the Armoury edition of Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod Blossoming* (1844), after a listing of his wares, appears Ogle's description for the series.

At a time when the minds of men are drawn to the examination of the subjects connected with the various religious controversies now at issue, and especially when error so much abounds, and skepticism is unblushingly rearing its bold front, and while Church of England Puseyism is making such rapid strides towards a union with the Church of Rome,—at such a time it is hoped that "Presbyterian's Armoury" will not be deemed useless. It is earnestly trusted that the issuing to the Public, in a popular form, a series of reprints of the writings of the Reformers of the Second Reformation, will tend to fix in the hearts of the People those principles of truth and right reason which will be opposed to false doctrine, superstitious errors, and unbelief; and it is confidently expected that the undertaking will meet with that encouragement and success which will ensure a continuation of the Series.

The series would be issued in pieces that would then be bound by the purchaser as they wished. The first work, Rutherford's *Lex, Rex*, paired with Buchanan's *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos*, appeared in 1843.<sup>4</sup> Others included were Calderwood's *The Pastor and the Prelate* (1843),<sup>5</sup> *Causes of the Lord's Wrath* (1844), and Brown's *An Apologetical Relation* (1845).<sup>6</sup> A separate title page was issued noting all these were to be bound together as volume three of the Armoury in 1846.<sup>7</sup> Per the preface to *Aaron's Rod*, it appears

4. *Lex, Rex*, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son and William Collins, Glasgow. D. Dewar, Perth. A. Brown and Co., Aberdeen. W. M'Comb, Belfast. Hamilton, Adams and Co., and James Nisbet and Co., London, MDCCCXLIII). Buchanan's work has a separate undated title page but is not a separate publication.

5. *The Pastor and the Prelate* (same imprint as *Lex, Rex*).

6. *Causes of the Lord's Wrath* (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son and William Collins, Glasgow. J. Dewar, Perth. W. Middleton, Dundee. G. & R. King, Aberdeen. W. M'Comb, Belfast. Hamilton, Adams and Co., and James Nisbet and Co., London, 1844); with *A Humble Acknowledgment of the Sins of the Ministry of Scotland. An Apologetical Relation*, etc. (Same imprint as *Causes*, but 1845).

7. The Presbyterian's Armoury. In three volumes. Vol. III. Rutherford's *Lex Rex*. Brown of Wamphray's *Apologetical Relation*. Calderwood's *Pastor and Prelate*. *Causes of the Lord's Wrath* against Scotland. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son and William Collins, Glasgow. Hamilton, Adams and Co., London. 1846.

the suggestion to include Gillespie's works in the project was suggested by several people.

There are few conversant with the Works of the Scottish Reformers who do not appreciate the talent and learning, and admire the style of composition and eloquence displayed in the writings of GEORGE GILLESPIE. As his Works have always been held in high estimation, and have been long exceedingly rare, and, consequently, high in price, the publication of a Complete Edition of his works has been suggested by several Gentlemen of judgment and discrimination.

Of Gillespie's works that appeared, *Aaron's Rod* was published first in 1844,<sup>8</sup> as was the *Miscellany Questions*.<sup>9</sup> Gillespie's *Notes* on the Westminster Assembly appeared in 1846.<sup>10</sup> A separate title page was issued for volume 2 of the Armoury and of volume 2 of the works noting these three works formed the contents.<sup>11</sup> Also in 1844 was issued the *English Popish Ceremonies*.<sup>12</sup> *An Assertion of the Government* appeared in 1846.<sup>13</sup> The three tracts engaging Thomas Coleman appeared in 1844. The *III Propositions*,<sup>14</sup> Gillespie's sermon before the House of Commons and sermon before the House of Lords also bear

---

8. *Aaron's Rod Blossoming* (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son and William Collins, Glasgow. D. Dewar, Perth. A. Brown and Co., Aberdeen. W. M'Comb, Belfast. Hamilton, Adams and Co., and James Nisbet and Co., London, MDCCCXLIV).

9. *A Treatise of Miscellany Questions* (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son and William Collins, Glasgow. D. Dewar, Perth. G. & R. King, Aberdeen. W. M'Comb, Belfast. Hamilton, Adams and Co., and James Nisbet and Co., London, MDCCCXLIV). The Armoury has mixed use of Arabic and Roman numerals for the year published.

10. *Notes of Debates and Proceedings*, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son and William Collins, Glasgow. Hamilton, Adams and Co., London. 1846).

11. The Presbyterian's Armoury. In Three Volumes. Vol. II. *Works of Mr. George Gillespie*. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son and William Collins, Glasgow. Hamilton, Adams and Co., London. 1846. *The Works of Mr. George Gillespie*, etc. with Memoir, etc., in two volumes. Vol. II. Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son and William Collins, Glasgow. Hamilton, Adams and Co., London. 1846.

12. *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies*, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son and William Collins, Glasgow. D. Dewar, Perth. G. & R. King, Aberdeen. W. M'Comb, Belfast. Hamilton, Adams and Co., and James Nisbet and Co., London. MDCCCXLIV).

13. *An Assertion*, etc. (Edinburgh: same imprint as *Causes of the Lord's Wrath*, but 1846).

14. *A Brotherly Examination*, etc. (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd. M. Ogle and Son, and William Collins, Glasgow. J. Dewar, Perth. W. Middleton, Dundee. G. & R. King, Aberdeen. W. M'Comb, Belfast. Hamilton, Adams, and Co., and James Nisbet, and Co., London, 1844). *Nihil Respondes*, etc. Same imprint. *Male Audis*, etc. Same imprint. *III Propositions*, etc. Same imprint. Gillespie's letter to the General assembly, testimony and an extract from his will appear after the propositions but with no title page or date.

the date of 1844.<sup>15</sup> Under title pages issued in 1846 these all were to be bound as volume 1 of Gillespie's *Works*, as well as the first of the *Armoury*.<sup>16</sup> The *Memoir* by Hetherington appeared in 1846 with the *Notes* on the Assembly but was also to be bound in the first volume.<sup>17</sup>

Much like James Nichol's later effort to issue puritan works, no specific editors are named for any of the works issued for the *Armoury*. Hetherington is only noted as author of the *Memoir* of Gillespie. There may have been several editors or possibly compositors set directly from the old texts. Whatever the case, the amount of work created in a few years may indicate the work was done by the partnering firm of Oliver and Boyd, whose metal presses could print on an enormous scale. Thus, while he clearly had advice, it is to Robert Ogle that credit is largely due for creation of *The Presbyterian's Armoury* for benefit of the church and for rescuing the works of Gillespie from obscurity at that time.

With the passing of 175 years since the *Armoury's* publication, several things are clear. First, while the texts were serviceable at the time, they are clearly deficient and need correcting and improving. Second, the works of Gillespie need augmenting with pieces that were omitted, and with some new-found manuscript materials. Thirdly, we seem to be in a similar if not worse day than Ogle's, where even Christendom in general is in decline in this post-Christian age; and at the same time, Bible believing "Presbyterians" once again seem more attracted to the unsound tenets of other communions than their own solid scriptural principles purchased in two Reformations. Thus, with the *English Popish Ceremonies* already in print in a critical edition, and *Aaron's Rod Blossoming* sufficient for its own large project for some other day, a collection of all the rest or "shorter writings" of Gillespie would seem to be in order to remind this day and age of these sound and dearly-bought principles.

Herewith, as part of the Naphtali Press Special Editions series, is the first of a projected three volumes of *The Shorter Writings of George Gillespie*, containing his *Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland*, and his known anonymously published tracts that were omitted from the old collected works. The texts have been revised as far as possible without marring the author's work to reflect contemporary spelling, punctuation, and usage, including paragraph breaks and correction or addition of numbering where needed. Words and notes supplied by the editor are in [square brackets]. Bracketed words or phrases that are italicized define the preceding archaic or Scottish words or phrases. Greater bibliographical information has been provided in notes. Any editing specific to the various writings of Gillespie are given in the separate introductions or in notes.

---

15. *A Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, etc. A Sermon Preached before the Right Honourable the House of Lords, etc.* Same imprints as *Brotherly Examination*.

16. *The Presbyterian's Armoury*. In Three Volumes. Vol. I. *Works of Mr. George Gillespie, etc.* (same imprint as *Armoury* v. II). *The Works, etc.* Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: same imprint as vol 2).

17. See *The Presbyterian Review and Religious Journal*, v. 19, No. LXXIII (July 1846), p. 416.

## INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS

---

MEMOIR OF GEORGE GILLESPIE BY W. M. HETHERINGTON

---

GEORGE GILLESPIE was one of the most remarkable men of the period in which he lived,<sup>1</sup> singularly fertile as that period was in men of great abilities. He seems to have been almost unknown, till the publication of his first work, which dazzled and astonished his countrymen by the rare combination it displayed of learning and genius of the highest order. From that time forward, he held an undisputed position among the foremost of the distinguished men by whose talents and energy the Church of Scotland was delivered from prelatric despotism. Yet, although greatly admired by all his compeers during his brilliant career, so very little has been recorded respecting him, that

---

1. [William M. Hetherington's *Memoir* remains the most significant biography of George Gillespie. However, it was written before many resources were available. For this volume, it has been augmented with material and references and corrections where possible in [editorial footnotes] and additional essays following the extracts given from Wodrow's *Analec̄ta*. Other biographical notices include Hew Scott, *Faṣti Ecclesiae Scoticae: the Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, volume 1 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1915), pp. 58–59; John Livingstone, “Memorable Characteristics, and Remarkable Passages of Divine Providence, exemplified in the Lives of some of the most eminent Ministers and Professors in the Church of Scotland,” in *Select Biographies*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Printed for the Wodrow Society, [1845–1847]), 1.330–331; the entry by Louis Igou Hodges in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 359–360; Robert Chambers, ed., *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen*, New Edition revised by Thomas Thomson, Volume 2 (London: 1875), pp. 109–110; John Howie, *Biographia Scoticana: or, a brief historical account of the lives, characters, and memorable transactions of the most eminent Scots worthies* (1775; Edinburgh, 1796), pp. 175–179; revised by William McGavin (1858); repr., (Greenville, SC: A Press, 1981), pp. 189–193; Thomas Smith, *Select Memoirs of the lives, labours, and sufferings of those pious and learned English and Scottish divines who greatly distinguished themselves in promoting the Reformation from popery* (1827), pp. 630–636; William M. Campbell, “George Gillespie,” in *Records of Scottish Church History Society*, vol. 10 (Edinburgh, 1949), pp. 107–123; W. D. J. McKay, *An Ecclesiastical Republic: Church Government in the Writings of George Gillespie*, Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology (Published by Paternoster for Rutherford House, 1997). See also John MacLeod, *Scottish Theology* (1943); second edition (1946); repr., (Knox Press and Banner of Truth Trust, 1974); and James Walker, *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 1560–1750* (1872); revised second edition (1888), repr., with additional notes (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1982).

we can but glean a scanty supply of materials, from a variety of sources, out of which to construct a brief memoir of his life.

We have not met with any particular reference to the family from which George Gillespie was descended, except a very brief notice of his father, the Rev. John Gillespie, in Livingston's "Memorable Characteristics."<sup>2</sup> From this we learn that he was minister at Kirkcaldy, and that he was, to use Livingston's language, "a thundering preacher."<sup>3</sup> In that town George Gillespie was born; but, as the earlier volumes of the Session Register of Births and Baptisms have been lost, the precise year of his birth cannot be ascertained from that source. It could not, however, have been earlier than 1612, in which year his father was chosen to the second charge in Kirkcaldy, as appears from the town records, nor later than 1613, as the existing Register commences January, 1614, and, in the end of that year, the birth of a daughter of Mr. John Gillespie is registered, and again in 1616, of a son, baptized Patrick. It may be assumed, therefore, with tolerable certainty, that George Gillespie was born early in the year 1613, a date which agrees with that engraven on his tombstone.<sup>4</sup> Wodrow, indeed, states, on the authority of Mr. Simpson, that Gillespie was born on the 21st of January, 1613.<sup>5</sup>

Nothing has been recorded respecting the youthful period of Gillespie's life. The earliest notice of him which appears, is merely sufficient to intimate that his mind must have been carefully cultivated from his boyhood, as it relates to the time of his being sent to the University of St Andrews, to prosecute his studies, in 1629, when he was, of course, in his 16th year. It appears to have been the custom of the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, as of many others at that time, to support young men of merit at the University, as Presbytery Bursars, by means of the contributions of the parishes within its bounds. In the Session Record of Kirkcaldy the following statement occurs, dated November, 1629:—"The Session are content that Mr. George Gillespie shall have as much money of our Session, for his interteynment [*entertainment*], as Dysart gives,<sup>6</sup> viz., 20 merks, being our Presbytery Bursar:"

2. [Livingstone, "Memorable Characteristics," p. 304. See "Ancestry of George Gillespie" starting on page 53.]

3. ["1612. Kirkcaldy resolves to have two ministers, and John Gillespie from Alva is appointed to Second Charge." L. MacBean, *The Kirkcaldy Records with the Annals of Kirkcaldy, the Town's Charter, extracts from original documents, and a description of the ancient burgh* (Kirkcaldy: "the Fifeshire Advertiser" office, 1908), p. 38. "1620. John Gillespie, minister of Kirkcaldy, called before the Commission for disregarding the Articles of Perth." Ibid. "1625. Mr. John Gillespie transferred to First Charge." "1627. Death of Mr. John Gillespie." Ibid., p. 39.]

4. [See the history of this stone later in the *Memoir*, pp. 39ff.]

5. [Robert Wodrow, *Analec̄ta, or, Materials for a history of remarkable providences mostly relating to Scotch ministers and Christians*, four volumes ([Edinburgh]: Printed for the Maitland Club, 1842-1843), 1.159.]

6. [This is referring to the burgh and parish of Dysart in the county of Fife. The town of Dysart is two miles northeast of Kirkcaldy.]



In some of the brief biographical notices of him which have been given, we are informed that during the course of his attendance at the University, he gave ample evidence of both genius and industry, by the rapid growth and development of mental power, and the equally rapid acquirement of extensive learning, in both of which respects he surpassed his fellow-students. That this must have been the case, his future eminence, so early achieved, sufficiently proves; but nothing of a very definite nature, relating to that period, has been preserved.<sup>7</sup>

When he had completed his academic career, and was ready to enter into the office of the ministry, his progress was obstructed by a difficulty which, for a time, proved insurmountable. Being conscientiously convinced that the prelatial system of church government is of human invention, and not of Divine institution, and having seen the bitter fruits it bore in Scotland, he would not submit to receive ordination from a bishop, and could not, at that juncture, obtain admission into the ministerial office without it.<sup>8</sup> Though thus excluded from the object of his pursuit, he found congenial employment for his pious and active mind in the household of Lord Kenmure, where he resided as domestic chaplain, till the death of that nobleman in September, 1634. Soon afterwards we find him discharging a similar duty in the family of the Earl of Cassilis, and, at the same time, acting as tutor to Lord Kennedy, the Earl's eldest son. This latter employment furnished him with both leisure and inducement to prosecute his studies, and that, too, in the very direction to which his mind had been already predisposed. But, in order to obtain an intelligible view of the state of matters in Scotland at that period, we must take a brief survey of the events which had been molding the aspect of both church and kingdom for some time before.

It may be assumed as a point which no person of competent knowledge and candid mind will deny or dispute that the Reformed Church of Scotland was, from its very origin, Presbyterian; equally opposed to the prelatial superiority of one minister over others, and to the authority of the civil power in spiritual matters. This point, therefore, we need not occupy space in proving; but we may suggest that there is a much closer and more important connection between the two elements here specified, than is generally remarked. For, as a little reflection will show, without the preeminence of some small number of ministers over the rest, the civil power cannot obtain the means of directly exercising an authoritative control in spiritual matters. Even the indirect methods of corruption which may be employed can be but partially successful, and may at any time be defeated, whenever the general body shall be restored to purity and put forth its inherent power. A truly presbyterian church, therefore, never can be thoroughly depended on

---

7. [See the essay, "University Studies and Ordination to the Ministry of George Gillespie," starting on page 61.]

8. [Again, see the essay, "University Studies and Ordination to the Ministry of George Gillespie," starting on page 61.]

by civil rulers who wish to use it as a mere engine of state for political purposes; consequently, a truly presbyterian church has never found much favor in the estimation of the civil power,—and, it may be added, never will, till the civil power itself become truly Christian. Thus viewed, it was not strange that the civil power in Scotland, whether wielded by a regent such as Morton, or a king like James VI, should strenuously and perseveringly seek the subversion of the Presbyterian Church. In the earlier stage of the struggle, first Morton, and then James, attempted force, but found the attempt to be in vain. At length the King seemed inclined to leave off the hopeless and pernicious contest; and, in the year 1592, an Act of Parliament was passed, ratifying all the essential elements of the Presbyterian Church, in doctrine, government, discipline, and worship. But this proved to be merely a cessation of hostilities on the part of the King, preparatory to their resumption in a more insidious and dangerous manner, and by the dark instrumentality of his boasted “king-craft.”

The first indication of the crafty monarch’s designs was in the year 1597, when he, “of his great zeal and singular affection which he always has to the advancement of the true religion, presently professed within this realm,” to use his own words, enacted that all who should be appointed to the prelatial dignity, should enjoy the privilege of sitting and voting in Parliament. The pretence was that these persons would attend better to the interests of the Church than could be done by laymen; the intention was, to introduce the prelatial order and subvert the Presbyterian Church. And, that this might be done quietly and imperceptibly, the question respecting the influence which these parliamentary representatives of the Church should have in the government of the Church itself was left to be determined by the King and the General Assembly. Many of the most judicious and clear-sighted of the ministers perceived the dangerous tendency of this measure, and gave it their decided and strenuous opposition; but others, wearied out by their conflict with the avaricious and tyrannical conduct of the nobility, which they hoped thus more effectually to resist, or gained over by the persuasions of the King and the court party, supported the proposal. The result was, that the measure was carried in the Assembly of 1598, by a majority of ten, and that majority formed chiefly by the votes of the elders, whom the King had induced to support his views. Scarcely had even this step been taken, when the Church became alarmed at the possible consequences; and, in order to avoid increasing that alarm, all further consideration of the measure, with reference to its subordinate details, was postponed till the meeting of the next Assembly. Nor was this enough. As the time for the next Assembly drew near, the King felt so uncertain of success, that he prorogued the appointed meeting, and betook himself to those private artifices by which his previous conquest had been gained.

When the Assembly of 1600 met, the most intense interest was felt by the whole kingdom in its proceedings, all men perceiving that upon its decision would depend the continuation or the overthrow of the presbyterian form of

church government in Scotland. The King's first step was the arbitrary exclusion from the Assembly of the celebrated Andrew Melville. The discussion commenced respecting the propriety of ministers voting in Parliament. But when those who favored the measure could not meet the argument of its opponents, the King again interposed, and authoritatively declared that the preceding General Assembly had already decided the general question in the affirmative; and that they had now only to determine subordinate arrangements. The measure was thus saved from defeat. The next question, whether the parliamentary ministers should hold their place for life, or be annually elected, was decided in favor of annual election. Yet James prevailed upon the cleric to frame an ambiguous statement in the minute of proceedings, virtually granting what the Assembly had rejected. Even then, though thus both overborne and tricked by the King, the Church framed a number of carefully expressed "caveats," or cautions, for protecting her liberties, and guarding against the introduction of Prelacy. It was not, however, the intention of the King to pay any regard to these "caveats," so soon as he might think it convenient to set them aside; and, accordingly, within a few months he appointed three bishops to the vacant sees of Ross, Aberdeen, and Caithness, directly in violation of all the "caveats" by which he had agreed that the appointment of ecclesiastical commissioners to Parliament should be regulated.

That mysterious event, the Gowry conspiracy, and the views taken of it by some of the best and most influential of the ministers, tended to alter the aspect of the struggle between the King and the Church; and though the King twice interposed to change the Assembly's time and place of meeting by his own authority, contrary to the provisions of the act, 1592, yet the church succeeded in maintaining a large measure of its primitive freedom and purity, against the encroachments of the crafty and perfidious monarch and his "creatures," to use their own phrase, the bishops.

The Assembly of 1602, however, was the last that retained anything like presbyterian liberty, and ventured to act on its own convictions of duty. But, the death of Queen Elizabeth, and the accession of James to the English throne, directed his main attention for a time to other matters, and gave occasion to a temporary pause in his violations of all the laws which he had repeatedly sworn to maintain. The pause was brief. The flattering servility of the English bishops inflated his vanity to an extravagant degree, and rendered him the more determined to subvert wholly the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and to erect Prelacy on its ruins. He had already presumed more than once to postpone meetings of the General Assembly, by his own arbitrary authority; he resumed this course, postponed the Assembly for one year, naming another,—then prorogued it again, without naming another day of meeting, which was nearly equivalent to an intimation, that it should entirely depend upon his pleasure whether it should ever meet again,—directly contrary to the act, 1592, in which it was expressly stipulated that the Assembly should meet at least once a year. The most zealous and faithful of the ministers were now fully aware of the imminent peril to which spiritual

liberty was exposed. On the second of July, 1605, the day on which the General Assembly had been appointed to meet at Aberdeen, nineteen ministers met, constituted the Assembly in the usual form, and while engaged in reading a letter presented by the King's Commissioner, a messenger-at-arms entered, and in the King's name, charged them to dismiss, on pain of being held guilty of rebellion. The moderator appointed another day of meeting, and dissolved the Assembly in the usual manner. This bold and independent (though perfectly legal and constitutional) conduct roused the wrath of the King to fury. Six of the most eminent of the ministers, one of whom was John Welsh of Ayr, son-in-law of Knox, were confined in a miserable dungeon in the castle of Blackness, for a period of fourteen months, and then banished to France. Eight others were imprisoned for a time, and banished to the remotest parts of Scotland. The severity of Robert Bruce's treatment was increased; and six other ministers, who had not been directly involved in the resistance to the King's authority, by the suppressed Assembly of Aberdeen, were called to London, and engaged in captious disputations by the crafty monarch, and his sycophantic prelates, in order to find occasion against them also. The result was the confinement in the Tower of Andrew Melville, and his subsequent banishment to France, and the prohibition of his nephew, James Melville, to return to Scotland.

Having thus succeeded, by fraud and force, in cutting off the leading ministers, James next summoned an Assembly to meet at Linlithgow, in December 1606, naming the persons who were to be sent by the presbyteries. In this packed Assembly he succeeded in his design of introducing more generally the prelatie element, by the appointment of constant moderators in each presbytery. Advancing now with greater rapidity, he instituted, in 1610, the Court of High Commission, which may be well termed the Scottish Inquisition; and in the same year, in an Assembly held at Glasgow, both nominated by the King, and corrupted by lavish bribery, the whole prelatie system of church government was introduced; the right of calling and dismissing Assemblies was declared to belong to the royal prerogative, the bishops were declared moderators of diocesan synods, and the power of excommunicating and absolving offenders was conferred on them.

The government of the Church was thus completely subverted in its external aspect. Its forms indeed remained. There were still presbyteries and synods, and there might be a General Assembly, if the King pleased; but the power of presbyteries or synods was vested in the Prelates, and the King could prevent any Assembly from being held, as long as he thought proper. But the Presbyterian Church, though overborne, was not destroyed, nor was its free spirit wholly subdued. When, in 1617, the King attempted to arrogate to himself and his prelatie council the power of enacting ecclesiastical laws, he was immediately met by a protestation against a measure so despotic. By an arbitrary stretch of power, he banished the historian Calderwood, the person who presented to him the protestation; but he felt it necessary to have recourse once more to his previously employed scheme of a packed

and bribed Assembly, in which to enact his innovations. This was accordingly done in the Assembly of 1618, held in Perth, in which, by the joint influence of bribery and intimidation, he succeeded in obtaining a majority of votes in favor of *the five articles of Perth*, as they are usually called. These five articles were,—*kneeling at the communion*,—*the observance of holidays*,—*episcopal confirmation*,—*private baptism*,—*and the private dispensation of the Lord's Supper*.<sup>9</sup> It will at once be seen that these innovations were directly contrary to the presbyterian principle, which holds that human inventions ought not to be added to divine institutions.

This was the last attempt made by King James for the overthrow of the Presbyterian Church. It was but partially successful. Not less than forty-five, even of the ministers summoned to Perth by the King, voted against the five articles; and in defiance of the authority of the King, and the Prelates, and the terrors of the Court of High Commission, a large proportion of the ministers, and a much larger proportion of the people throughout the kingdom, never conformed to these articles.<sup>10</sup> Various attempts were made by the prelatist faction to suppress the resistance of the faithful ministers and people. At one time a minister who would not yield was suspended from his ministry; at another, he was banished from his flock, and confined to some remote district of the country. But all was ineffectual, although much suffering and distress of mind was caused by these harassing persecutions. Very gladly would the ministers and people have abandoned the prelatized church, and maintained the government and ritual of the Church of their fathers by their own unaided exertions, had they been permitted. But no such permission could be obtained. They were compelled either to abstain from preaching altogether, or to remain in connection with the Church. And even this alternative was not always left to their choice. They were frequently kept in a species of imprisonment in their own houses, not permitted to leave the Church, and yet forbidden to preach, or even to expound the Word of God to the members of their own households. Such was the monstrous and intolerable tyranny

9. ["The Five Articles of Perth comprised a set of alterations to Scottish church worship first proposed by King James VI and I in 1616. They were initially rejected by a general assembly held in the wake of a controversial royal visit to Scotland in 1617. Ruthless management of another assembly, held at Perth in August 1618, secured the Articles and they were later ratified by a parliament convened at Edinburgh in July 1621." Laura A. M. Stewart, "The Political Repercussions of the Five Articles of Perth: A Reassessment of James VI and I's Religious Policies in Scotland." *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 38, no. 4, (2007), p. 1013.]

10. [George Gillespie's father John, and his grandfather Patrick Simson, ardently opposed the innovations and *Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies* was his rebuttal to those impositions on the Scottish Kirk. See Roy Middleton, Historical Introduction, *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies* (1637; Naphtali Press, 2013), p. xxvi. George Gillespie's grandfather Patrick Simson did not live to see this despotic imposition on the church, dying on March 31, 1618.]

exercised by Prelacy in Scotland, in its desperate attempts to destroy the Presbyterian Church.

But the Presbyterian Church has always proved to be not easily destroyed. At the very time when Prelacy and king-craft were uniting for its destruction, its Divine Head was graciously supporting it under its trials, giving it life to endure them, and preparing for its deliverance. The sufferings endured by the faithful ministers in many parts of the country, tended to make them objects of admiration, love, and respect to the people, who could not but draw a very striking contrast between their conduct, and that of the haughty and irreligious prelates. But mighty as was this influence in the hearts of the people, one infinitely more mighty began to be felt in many districts of the kingdom. God was pleased to grant a time of religious revival. The power of vital godliness aroused the land, shining in its strength, like living fire. At Stewarton, at Shotts, and in many others quarters, great numbers were converted, and the faith of still greater numbers was increased. A time of refreshing from the presence of God had evidently come; and it soon became equally evident, that the enemies of spiritual freedom were under the blinding influence of infatuation.

The younger bishops, inflated with vanity, acted towards the Scottish nobility in a manner so insolent, as to rouse the pride of these stern and haughty barons. But the prelates had learned from Laud, what measures would be agreeable to Charles I., who, to all his father's despotic ideas of royal prerogative, and love of Prelacy, and to at least equal dissimulation, added the formidable elements of a temper dark and relentless, and a proud and inflexible will. The consequences soon appeared. Charles resolved that the Church of Scotland should not only be episcopalian in its form of government, but also in all its discipline, and in its form of worship. In order to accomplish this long wished for purpose, it was resolved that a Book of Canons, and a Liturgy, should be prepared by the Scottish bishops, and transmitted to those of England, for their revision and approval. The Book of Canons appeared in 1635, and was regarded by the nation with the utmost abhorrence, both on its own account, and as intended to introduce innovations still more detested. What was dreaded soon took place. The Liturgy was prepared, sent to England, and revised, several of the corrections being written by Laud himself, all tending to give it a decidedly popish character. Some copies of this production appeared early in the year 1637, and were immediately subjected to the examination of acute and powerful minds, well able to detect and expose their errors, and to resist this tyrannical attempt to do violence to the conscience of a free and religious people.

The crisis came. A letter from his Majesty was procured, requiring the Liturgy to be used in all the churches of Edinburgh, and an act of the Privy Council was passed to enforce obedience to the royal mandate. Archbishop Spotswood summoned the ministers together, announced to them the King's pleasure, and commanded them to give intimation from their pulpits, that on the following Sabbath the public use of the Liturgy was to be commenced.

The 23rd day of July, 1637, was that on which the perilous attempt was to be made. In the cathedral church of St. Giles, the Dean of Edinburgh, attired in his surplice, began to read the service of the day. At that moment, an old woman, named Jenny Geddes, unable longer to restrain her indignation, exclaimed, "Villain, dost thou say mass at my lug!" and seizing the stool on which she had been sitting, threw it at the Dean's head. Instantly all was uproar and confusion. Threatened or assailed on all sides, the Dean, terrified by this sudden outburst of popular fury, tore himself out of their hands and fled, glad to escape, though with the loss of his priestly vestments. In vain did the magistracy interfere. It was impossible to restore sufficient quiet to allow the service to be resumed, and the defeated prelatic party were compelled to abandon the Liturgy, thus dashed out of their trembling grasp by a woman's hand.<sup>11</sup>

Such was the state of affairs in both church and kingdom, when George Gillespie first appeared in public life. He had already refused to receive ordination at the hands of a bishop; he had marked well the pernicious effects of their conduct on the most sacred interests of the community; and his strong and active intellect was directed to the prosecution of such studies as might the better enable him to assail the wrong and defend the right. His residence in the household of the Earl of Cassilis, while it furnished the means of continuing his learned researches, was not likely to change their direction; for the Earl was one of those high-hearted and independent noblemen, who could not brook prelatic insolence, even when supported by the Sovereign's favor. The first production from the pen of Gillespie, the fruit, doubtless, of his previous studies, was a work entitled *A Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies obtruded upon the Church of Scotland*. Its publication was remarkably well timed, being in the summer of 1637, at the very time when the whole kingdom was in a state of intense excitement, in the immediate expectation that the Liturgy would be forced upon the Church. Nothing could have been more suited to the emergency. It encountered

---

11. [Whether Jenny Geddes was a real woman (Barbara Hamilton as Wodrow records) or a composite person made to represent the events, these protests had been in the planning by the well organized resistance to Stuart religious policy. The nonconformists had already organized during the early 1620s when James had tried to enforce the Perth articles. When Charles I attempted to impose far worse with Laud's liturgy, the opposition was prepared. Wodrow reports David Calderwood was present taking notes. "The Five Articles controversy fed into the Pray Book crisis by popularizing opposition to Crown policies.... King James's personal and relentless determination to force Edinburgh onto its knees reinforced the capital's role as the hub of a wider nonconformist network." Laura A. M. Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637–1651* (Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 38–39. On Jenny Geddes, see P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, volume II (Cambridge, 1911), p. 236 and n1. Stewart, *ibid.*, pp. 56, 58; James King Hewison, *The Covenanters*, 2 volumes (1913), I.243, 2.12, n1; Wodrow, *Analaċta*, I.64; Elizabeth L. Ewen, et al., *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 133–134.]

every kind of argument employed by the prelatie party; and, as the defenders of the ceremonies argued that they were either necessary, or expedient, or lawful, or indifferent, so Gillespie divided his work into four parts, arguing against their *necessity*, their *expediency*, their *lawfulness*, and their *indifferency*, with such extensiveness of learning and acuteness and power of reasoning, as completely to demolish all the arguments of all his prelatie antagonists. The effect produced by this singularly able work may be conjectured from the fact, that within a few months after its publication, a proclamation was issued by the Privy Council, at the instigation of the bishops, commanding all the copies of it that could be found to be called in and burned. Such was the only answer that all the learned Scottish prelates could give to a treatise, written by a youth who was only in his twenty-fifth year when it appeared. The language of Baillie shows the estimation in which that learned, but timid and cautious man, held Gillespie's youthful work. "This same youth is now given out also, by those that should know, for the author of the 'English Popish Ceremonies,' whereof we all do marvel; for, though he had gotten the papers, and help of the chief of that side, yet the very composition would seem to be far above such an age. But, if that book be truly of his making, I admire the man, though I mislike much of his matter; yea, I think he may prove amongst the best wits of this isle."<sup>12</sup>

So far as argument was concerned, the controversy was ended by Gillespie's work, as no answer was ever attempted by the prelates. But the contest, which began as one of power against principle, ere long became one of power against power. In vain did the King attempt to overawe the firm minds of the Presbyterians. In vain did the bishops issue their commands to the ministers to use the Liturgy. These commands were universally disobeyed; for the spirit of Scotland was now fairly roused—a spirit which has often learned to conquer, but never to yield. It was to be expected that Gillespie would not be allowed to remain much longer in comparative obscurity, after his remarkable abilities had become known. The church and parish of Wemyss being at that time vacant, the congregation, to whom he had been known from his infancy, "made supplication" that he might be their

---

12. ["Ye have here also some Reasons against the Service in print. Our presse at Edinburgh is now patent: we hope not to trouble yow so much there as we were wont. I took the author to be Mr. Henderson; bot I am informed since, that they came from Mr. George Gillespie, a youth who waited on my Lord Kennedy, and is now admitted to the kirk of Weems, maugre St. Andrewes baird, by the presbyterie. This same youth is now given out also, by these that should know, for the author of the English Popish Ceremonies: whereof we all doe marvell; for though he had gotten the papers, and help of the chief of that syde, yet the very composition would seem to be farre above such ane age: bot if that book be truly of his making, I admire the man, though I mislyke much of his matter; yea, I think, he may prove amongst the best witts of this Isle." To Mr. William Spang, July 22 [1638], *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, 1637–1662*, ed. David Laing, three volumes (Edinburgh: [Bannatyne Club], 1841–1842), 1.90.]



minister. This request was granted, “maugre St Andrew’s beard,” as Baillie says; that is, in spite of the opposition made by Spotswood, Archbishop of St Andrews, who knew enough of the young man to regard him with equal fear and hatred. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy on the 26th of April, 1638, the celebrated Robert Douglas, at that time minister of Kirkcaldy, presiding at the ordination; and was the first who was admitted by a presbytery, at that period, without regard to the authority of the bishops.<sup>13</sup> This, indeed, soon ceased to be a singularity; but, it must be remembered, that though the attempt to impose the Liturgy upon the Church had been successfully resisted, the ostensible government of the Church was still held by the prelates, and continued to be held by them, till they were all deposed by the famous General Assembly which met in Glasgow on the 21st day of November, 1638. But their power had received a fatal blow, and it could not fail to be highly gratifying to George Gillespie, that the first free act of the Presbyterian Church, to the recovery of whose liberty he had so signally contributed, should be his own ordination to the ministerial office.

From that time forward, the life of George Gillespie was devoted to the public service of the Church; and he was incessantly engaged in all the great measures of that momentous period. He, however, was not the man of the age. That man was Alexander Henderson, the acknowledged leader of the Church of Scotland’s Second Reformation. And, as it is not our purpose to write a history of that period, we must confine ourselves chiefly to those events in which Gillespie acted a prominent part.

The next intimation that we receive of Gillespie is in Baillie’s account of the Glasgow Assembly. “After a sermon of Mr. Gillespie,” says Baillie, “wherein the youth very learnedly and judiciously, as they say, handled the words, ‘The King’s heart is in the hand of the Lord,’ yet did too much encroach on the King’s actions: he (Argyle) gave us a grave admonition, to let authority alone, which the Moderator seconded, and we all religiously observed, so long as the Assembly lasted.” This proves, at least, that Gillespie was highly esteemed by his brethren, who had selected him as one to preach before that important Assembly, notwithstanding his youth. It should be added, that on consulting the records of that Assembly’s proceedings, we do indeed find Argyle’s grave admonition not to interfere with the authority due to the King in his own province, and the Moderator’s answer; but nothing to lead us to think that it had any reference to Gillespie’s sermon. Baillie had not, at that time, learned to know and appreciate Gillespie, as he did afterwards and, as he had been somewhat startled by the point and power of the “English Popish Ceremonies,” he might not unnaturally conclude, that Argyle’s caution against what might be, had been caused by what had already been beginning to appear in the language of the youthful preacher.

The course of public affairs swept rapidly onward, though certainly not

---

13. [Gillespie was actually the second so ordained. See the essay, *University Studies and Ordination to the Ministry of George Gillespie*, starting on page 61.]

in such a channel as to gratify the lovers of arbitrary power and superstition. The King, enraged to find his beloved Prelacy overthrown at once and entirely, prepared to force it upon the Scottish Covenanted Church and people by force of arms. The Covenanters stood on the defensive, and met the invading host on the Border, prepared to die rather than submit to the loss of religious liberty. But the English army was little inclined to fight in such a cause. They had felt the king's tyranny and the oppression of their own prelates, and were not disposed to destroy that liberty, so nobly won by Scotland, for which they were themselves most earnestly longing. A peace ensued. The King granted that spiritual liberty which he was unable to withhold; and the ministers who had accompanied the Scottish army, returned to the discharge of their more peaceful duties. But this peace proved of short duration. The King levied a new and more powerful army, and again declared war against his Scottish subjects. Again the Covenanters resumed their weapons of defense, and marched towards the Border, a number of the most eminent ministers, among whom was Gillespie, being required to accompany the army, and empowered to act as a presbytery. It was, however, judged necessary to anticipate the approach of the English by entering England. This bold movement changed the nature of the contest for the time, because the English parliament felt the utmost jealousy of the King's despotic designs, and would not grant him the necessary support. Negotiations for peace were begun at Ripon, and transferred to London. This rendered it necessary for the Scottish Commissioners for the peace to reside at London. Henderson, Blair, Baillie and Gillespie accompanied the Commissioners to London, resided with them there in the capacity of chaplains, and availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded, for proving to the people of England that presbyterian ministers were not such rude and ignorant men as their prelatial calumniators had asserted. The effect of their preaching was astonishing, as even Clarendon, their prejudiced and bitter reviler, admits. Wherever they preached, the people flocked in crowds to hear them, and even clustered round the doors and windows of the churches in which they were proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. It soon became apparent that both the cause, and the men by whom it was defended, were too mighty to be despised. Courtly parasites might scoff, but the heart of England was compelled to know that living faith and true eloquence are equally powerful to move and guide the minds of men, whether on the bleak waste of a Scottish moor, or in the midst of a mighty city.

Soon after the return of the Scottish Commissioners and ministers, in the Assembly of 1641, the town of Aberdeen gave a call to George Gillespie to be one of their pastors. This call, however, he strenuously and successfully resisted, and was permitted to remain at Wemyss. But next year, the town of Edinburgh applied to the General Assembly, to have him translated to one of the charges there, and this application was successful, so that he became one of the ministers of Edinburgh in the year 1642, and continued so during the remainder of his life.

But although Edinburgh had succeeded in obtaining Gillespie, the citizens were not long permitted to enjoy the benefit of his ministry. Another class of duties awaited him, in a still more public and important sphere of action. It is impossible here to do more than refer to the great events which at that time agitated not only Scotland, but also England. The superstition, bigotry, and intolerance of Archbishop Laud and his followers, combining with and urging on the despotism of the King, had at length completely exhausted the patience of the English people and parliament. Every pacific effort had proved fruitless; and it had become undeniably evident, to every English patriot, that Prelacy must be abolished and the royal prerogative limited, unless they were prepared to yield up every vestige of civil and religious liberty. They made the nobler choice, passed an act abolishing Prelacy, and summoned an Assembly of Divines to deliberate respecting the formation of such a Confession of Faith, Catechism, and Directory, as might lead to uniformity between the Churches of the two kingdoms, and thereby tend to secure the religious liberty of both. The Assembly of Divines met at Westminster, on the 1st day of July, 1643. Soon afterwards Commissioners from the English Parliament, and from the Westminster Assembly, were appointed to proceed to Edinburgh, to be present at the meeting of the General Assembly in August, and to seek a conference, respecting the best method of forming the basis of a religious and civil confederacy between the two kingdoms, in their time of mutual danger. These Commissioners, accordingly, attended the meeting of the Assembly in Edinburgh, and the result of their conferences was the framing of that well-known bond of union between the two countries, the Solemn League And Covenant—"a document which we may be pardoned for terming the noblest, in its essential nature and principles, of all that are recorded among the international transactions of the world."<sup>14</sup>

As the main object for which the Solemn League and Covenant was framed, was to secure the utmost practicable degree of uniformity in the religious worship of both countries; and, as the English Divines had already met at Westminster to take the whole subject into consideration, and had requested the assistance of Commissioners from the Church of Scotland, the General Assembly named some of the most eminent of their ministers and elders as Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly. These were, Alexander Henderson, Robert Douglas, Robert Baillie, Samuel Rutherford, and George Gillespie, ministers; and the Earl of Cassilis, Lord Maitland, and Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston, elders; but neither the Earl of Cassilis nor Robert Douglas went. Three of these, Lord Maitland, Henderson, and Gillespie, set off for London, along with the English Commissioners, immediately after the rising of the General Assembly; the other three, Warriston, Rutherford, and Baillie, followed about a month afterwards. On the 15th of September the Scottish Commissioners were received into the Westminster Assembly

14. [Hetherington is quoting himself from his *History of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Johnstone, 1842), pp. 333-334.]

with great kindness and courtesy; and, on the 25th of the same month, the Solemn League and Covenant was publicly sworn and subscribed by both Parliament and Assembly, after addresses by Nye and Henderson. It was not, however, till the 12th of October, that the Westminster Assembly commenced its serious deliberations concerning Church Government, Discipline, and a Directory of Worship, in the hope of arriving at such conclusions as might produce religious uniformity in the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland, if not also with the Reformed Churches of the Continent.

Scarcely had the Westminster Assembly begun its deliberations, when it became abundantly apparent, that, however sincere its members might all be in the desire to promote the religious welfare of the community, they were, nevertheless, divided in their views as to how that could be best accomplished. There were three parties in the Assembly, the Presbyterians, the Independents, and the Erastians. Of these the Presbyterians<sup>15</sup> formed by far the most numerous, comprising at least nine-tenths of the entire body. There were at first only five Independent divines, commonly termed “the Five Dissenting Brethren;” but their number finally amounted to ten or eleven. Only two ministers were decided Erastians, but a considerable number of the parliamentary members, chiefly those who were professionally lawyers, advocated that secular policy. The Scottish Commissioners refused to exercise the right of voting, but were continually present in the Assembly, and took a very prominent part in all its deliberations and debates, supporting, as might be expected, the views of the Presbyterians. The chief strength of the Independents consisted in the tenacity with which they adhered to their own opinions, disputing every proposition brought forward by others, but cautiously abstaining from giving any definite statement of their own; and in the close intercourse which they contrived to keep with Cromwell and the military Independents. And the Erastian party, though few in numbers within the Assembly itself, possessed, nevertheless, considerable influence, arising out of their reputation for learning, having as their ornament and support, that distinguished man, emphatically called “the learned Selden.” But the true source of their power was the Parliament, which, having deprived the King of that ecclesiastical supremacy which he had so grievously abused, wished to retain it in its own possession, and therefore, supported the Erastian party in the Assembly.

Numerous and protracted were the debates which arose in the Westminster Assembly, during the discussion of the various topics on which these three parties differed in opinion; and in all those debates no person took a more active part, or gained more distinction than George Gillespie. His previous course of studies had rendered him perfectly familiar with all that had been written on the subjects under discussion; his originally acute and powerful

---

15. It is right to state that a large proportion of those who ultimately formed the presbyterian party, had been brought up in the Church of England, and had received episcopal ordination.

intellect had been thoroughly trained and exercised to its highest degree of clearness and vigor; and to a natural, perspicuous, and flowing readiness of language, the warmth and earnestness of his heart added the energy and elevation which form the very essence of true eloquence. We have already referred to the high expectations which Baillie entertained of his future career. But high as these had been, they were far surpassed by the reality, as he himself declares. "None in all the company did reason more, and more pertinently than Mr. Gillespie. That is an excellent youth; my heart blesses God in his behalf!"—"Very learned and acute Mr. Gillespie, a singular ornament of our church, than whom not one in the whole Assembly speaks to better purpose, and with better acceptance by all the hearers."—"Mr. George Gillespie, however I had a good opinion of his gifts, yet I profess he has much deceived me: Of a truth there is no man whose parts in a public dispute I do so admire. He has studied so accurately all the points that ever yet came to our Assembly, he has got so ready, so assured, so solid a way of public debating, that however there be in the Assembly divers very excellent men, yet, in my poor judgment, there is not one who speaks more rationally, and to the point, than that brave youth has done ever."<sup>16</sup>

We cannot here follow the course of the prolonged deliberations in which Gillespie so greatly distinguished himself; but there is one instance of his eminence which has so often been related, and not always very accurately, that it would be unpardonable not to give it here,—especially as some pains have been taken to obtain as full and correct a version of it as is now practicable. After the Westminster Divines had agreed respecting the office-bearers whose permanent continuation in the church can be proved from scriptural authority, they proceeded to inquire concerning the subject of Church Discipline. In this the Presbyterians were constrained to encounter both the Independents and the Erastians; for the Independents, on the one hand, denied any authoritative excommunication or suspension, and the Erastians, on the other, admitted such a power, but placed it in the hands of the civil magistracy. For a considerable time the discussion was between the Presbyterians and the Independents; but when the arguments of the latter party had been conclusively met and answered by their antagonists, the Erastians hastened to the rescue, and their champion, "the learned Selden," came to the Assembly, when the discussion drew near its close, prepared to pour forth all his learning for the discomfiture of the hitherto triumphant Presbyterians. His intention had been made known extensively, and even before the debate began, the house was crowded by all who could claim or obtain admission. Gillespie, who had been probably engaged in some Committee business as usual, was rather late in coming, and upon his arrival, not being recognized as a member by those who were standing about the door and in the passages, was told that it was impossible for him to get in, the throng was so dense. "Can ye not admit a *pinning*?" said he, using a word employed by masons, to indicate the

16. [Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, 2.117, 129, 160.]

thin slips of stone with which they pin, or fill up the chinks and inequalities that occur in the building of a plain wall. He did, however, work his way to the seat allotted to the Scottish Commissioners, and took his place beside his brethren. The subject under discussion was the text, Matthew 18:15–17, as bearing upon the question respecting excommunication. Selden arose, and in a long and elaborate speech, and with a great display of minute rabbinical lore, strove to demonstrate that the passage contained no warrant for ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but that it related to the ordinary practice of the Jews in their common civil courts, by whom, as he asserted, one sentence was excommunication, pronounced by their own authority. Somewhat confused, if not appalled, by the vast erudition displayed, even the most learned and able of the divines seemed in no haste to encounter their formidable opponent. At length both Herle and Marshall, two very distinguished men, attempted answers, but failed to counteract the effect of Selden's speech. Gillespie had been observed by his Scottish brethren writing occasionally in his note-book, as if marking the heads of Selden's argument; and one of them, some accounts say Rutherford, turning to him in this emergency, said, "Rise, George, rise up, man, and defend the right of the Lord Jesus Christ to govern, by his own laws, the church which he hath purchased with his blood." Thus urged, Gillespie arose, gave first a summary of Selden's argument, divesting it of all the confusion of that cumbrous learning in which it had been wrapped, and reducing it to its simple elements; then in a speech of singular acuteness and power, completely refuted it, proving that the passage could not be interpreted or explained away to mean a mere reference to a civil court. By seven distinct arguments he proved, that the whole subject was of a spiritual nature, not within the cognizance of civil courts; and he proved also, that the church of the Jews both possessed and exercised the power of spiritual censures. The effect of Gillespie's speech was so great, as not only to convince the Assembly, but also to astonish and confound Selden himself, who is reported to have exclaimed in a tone of bitter mortification, "That young man, by this single speech, has swept away the learning and labor of ten years of my life!" Those who were clustered together in the passage near the door, remembering Gillespie's expression when he was attempting to enter, said one to another, "It was well that we admitted the *pinning*, otherwise the building would have fallen." Even his Scottish brethren, although well acquainted with his great abilities, were surprised with his masterly analysis of Selden's argument, and looked into his note-book, expecting there to find the outline of the summary which he had given. Their surprise was certainly not diminished when they found that he had written nothing but, *Da lucem, Domine*, Lord give light,—and similar brief petitions for the direction of that divine Head and King of the church, whose crown-rights he was about to defend.<sup>17</sup>

---

17. [Hetherington has fixed on one encounter in Gillespie's notes and woven it into the tale, much of which may be embellished on few facts. See "George Gillespie versus John Selden" starting on page 80, and pp. 93 and 94.]

Various other anecdotes have been recorded respecting Gillespie's singular skill and ability in debate; but the preceding is at once the most striking and the best authenticated, and may suffice to prove his eminence, both in learning and in power of argument, among the Westminster Divines.<sup>18</sup>

The first part of the task in which the Westminster Assembly was engaged, was the framing of a Directory for Public Worship. This having been completed about the close of the year 1644, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met on the 23rd of January, 1645, to take this Directory into consideration, and to give it their sanction, should it be found satisfactory. Baillie and Gillespie were sent to Scotland, to be present at the Assembly, that they might introduce the subject, and give any explanation that might appear necessary, and to do everything in their power to procure for it the desired approbation. In this they were completely successful, and the Assembly passed an act sanctioning the Directory,—that act having been written, as Baillie informs us, by Gillespie.<sup>19</sup> Having accomplished the object of their mission, they returned to London, where Gillespie was speedily engaged in the Erastian Controversy, during which he produced his greatest work.

We have already referred to the distinguished ability with which Gillespie encountered and defeated Selden, in the discussion which arose within the Westminster Assembly itself. But the principles of Erastianism were entertained by many who were not members of that Assembly, and were advocated in other quarters, so as to lead to a literary controversy. The Rev. Thomas Coleman, one of the Erastians [*sic*] divines, the other being Lightfoot, preached a sermon before the House of Commons, on the 30th of July, 1645, in which there was a peculiar display of Erastianism of the very strongest kind. This sermon was printed, as were all sermons preached before either House, and excited at once the disapprobation of all the friends of religious liberty.<sup>20</sup>

---

18. There is another anecdote commonly repeated respecting a signal defeat which Gillespie is said to have given to one of the Independent divines, when recent from his travel to London. That he did repeatedly refute their arguments is quite certain, of which both Lightfoot's notes and his own record many instances, but no such event could have occurred as that with which the anecdote is commonly introduced; for both Henderson and Gillespie arrived at the same time, and were received formally, and with great respect into the Assembly, before any of the controverted points had begun to be discussed at all. It is easy to conceive how imaginary incidents may be added by tradition, to an anecdote essentially true; and our endeavor has been to restore the anecdote to its true position and character. We may add that Gillespie's expression, "Can ye not admit a pinning?" is one which tradition has preserved; but we find the same word used in his *Aaron's Rod*, in a similar sense, which confirms the tradition.

19. [Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, 2.260.]

20. [Thomas Coleman, *Hopes deferred and dashed: observed in a sermon to the Honourable House of Commons, in Margarets Westminster. July 30. 1645. Being the monethly fast: by Thomas Coleman preacher of the Gospel at Peters Cornhill London. Published by order* (London: Printed for Christopher Meredith at the Crane in Pauls Church-yard, MDCXLVI [*sic*] 1645). The old

It did not remain long unanswered. On the 27th of August, the same year, Gillespie preached before the House of Lords; and when his sermon was also published, he added to it an appendix entitled, *A Brotherly Examination of some passages of Mr. Coleman's late printed sermon*.<sup>21</sup> In this appendix Gillespie not only answered and refuted Coleman, but turned his arguments completely against himself. Coleman soon afterwards published a pamphlet entitled, *A Brotherly Examination Re-examined*.<sup>22</sup> To this Gillespie replied in another bearing the title, *Nihil Respondes*,<sup>23</sup> in which he somewhat sharply exposed the weak and inconclusive character of his opponent's argument. Irritated by the castigation he had received, Coleman published a bitter reply, to which he gave the somewhat unintelligible title of *Male Dicis Maledicis*,<sup>24</sup>—intending, probably, to insinuate that Gillespie's answer was of a railing character. This roused Gillespie, and induced him to put forth his controversial power in a singularly vigorous pamphlet, entitled, *Male Audis*,<sup>25</sup> in which

---

Thomason catalog dates Thomason's copy as purchased on July 30, and dates Gillespie's as also available on the day delivered. The House did thank Coleman and order the sermon printed on July 30. But it hardly seems possible to have printed them the same day. After checking these and several others of the same timeframe, it appears the old catalog wrongly dated these. The sermons do not have handwritten dates on them. The modern cataloging has corrected this and does not indicate that either of these are dated by Thomason. George Thomason, *Catalogue of the pamphlets, books, newspapers, and manuscripts relating to the civil war, the commonwealth, and restoration*, volume 1 (British Museum, 1908), p. 388.

21. George Gillespie, *A sermon preached before the Right Honourable the House of Lords, in the Abbey church at Westminster, upon the 27th of August, 1645. being the day appointed for solempne and publique humiliation: Whereunto is added A brotherly examination of some passages of Mr Colemans late printed sermon upon upon Job 11. 20. In which hee hath endeavoured to strike at the root of all Church-Government* (London: Printed for Robert Bostock dwelling in Pauls Church-yard at the sign of the Kings head, 1645). Just the sermon portion is published in the collection, *Sermons Preached before the English Houses of Parliament by the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1643–1645* (Naphtali Press, 2011).

22. Thomas Coleman, *A brotherly examination re-examined: or, A clear justification of those passages in a sermon against which the reverend and learned commissioner, Mr. Gillespy, first in two severall sermons, and then in print, did preach and write, And a short discovery of some tenets and principles which intrench upon both the honour and power of the Parliament* (London: Printed for J. Clark, 1646). Thomason's copy is dated November 1, 1645. *Ibid.*, 404.

23. George Gillespie, *Nihil respondes: or, A discovery of the extream unsatisfactorinesse of Master Colemans peece, published last weeke under the title of A brotherly examination re-examined* (Printed at London: For Robert Bostock dwelling in Pauls Church-yard, at the signe of the Kings head, 1645). Thomason dates his copy as November 13, 1645. *Ibid.*, p. 406.

24. Thomas Coleman, *Male dicis maledicis, or, A brief reply to Nihil respondens: also, the brief view, briefly viewed: being animadversions upon a namelesse authour in a book, called, A brief view of Mr. Coleman his new model* (London: Printed for John Clark, 1646). Thomason purchased his copy on January 8, 1645/46. *Ibid.*, p. 413.

25. George Gillespie, *Male audis: or, An answer to Mr. Coleman his Male dicis: Wherein the*



he took a rapid survey of the whole Erastian controversy, so far as Coleman and some of his friends had brought it forward, convicted him and them of numerous self-contradictions, of unsoundness in theology, of violating the covenant which they had sworn, and of inculcating opinions fatal to both civil and religious liberty. To this powerful production Coleman attempted no reply; nor have its arguments ever been answered by any subsequent advocate of Erastianism.

But however able and well-timed these controversial pamphlets were, they were not enough to occupy even the few spare hours that Gillespie was able to snatch from his attendance on the business of the Assembly. He had planned, and was all the while prosecuting, a much larger work. That work appeared about the close of the year 1646, under the title of *Aaron's Rod Blossoming; or, the Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated*. In this remarkably able and elaborate production, Gillespie took up the Erastian controversy as stated and defended by its ablest advocates, fairly encountering their strongest arguments, and assailing their most formidable positions, in the frank and fearless manner of a man thoroughly sincere, and thoroughly convinced of the truth and goodness of his cause. As it may be presumed that the readers of this memoir are also in possession of *Aaron's Rod*, we need not occupy space in giving even a brief outline of that admirable work;<sup>26</sup> but as we are convinced that the Erastian conflict, which has been recently resumed, must still be fought, and will be ultimately won, we strenuously recommend the studious perusal of Gillespie's masterly production to all who wish fully to comprehend the subject.<sup>27</sup> One or two points of general information, however, it may be expedient to give. In the *Aaron's Rod*, while Gillespie intentionally traversed the whole ground of the Erastian controversy, he directed also special attention to the productions of the day. This he could not avoid; but this has tended unfortunately, to give to his work the appearance of being to some extent an ephemeral production, suited to the period when it appeared, but not so well suited to the present times. It addresses itself to answer the arguments of Selden, and Coleman, and Hussey, and Prynne; and as the writings of these men have sunk into oblivion, we are liable to regard the work which answered them as one which has done its deed, and may also be allowed

---

*repugnancy of his Erastian doctrine to the word of God, to the solemn league and covenant, and to the ordinances of Parliament: also his contradictions, tergiversations, heterodoxies, calumnies, and perverting of testimonies, are made more apparent than formerly. Together with some animadversions upon Master Hussey his Plea for Christian magistracy: shewing, that in divers of the afore mentioned particulars he hath miscarried as much, and in some particulars more than Mr. Coleman* (London: Robert Bostocke, 1646). Thomason records a copy purchased on January 24, 1645/1646. Ibid., p. 416. The sermons and anti-Erastian tracts will appear in *The Shorter Writings*, volume 2, D.V. 26. See *The Works of Mr. George Gillespie* (1844–1846).

27. The present Erastian Establishment in Scotland might do well to consider whether theirs be the church of which Gillespie was a distinguished minister. [Hetherington writes in 1846.]

to disappear. Let it be observed, that Eraſtianism never had abler advocates than the above-named men. Selden was ſo pre-eminent for learning that his diſtinguiſhing designation was “the learned Selden.” Coleman was ſo thoroughly converſant with Hebrew literature, that he was commonly termed “Rabbi Coleman.” Huſſey, miniſter at Cheſilhurſt in Kent, was a man of great eloquence, both as a ſpeaker and a writer, and poſſeſſed no ſmall influence among the ſtrong-minded men of that period. And Prynne had a double claim on public attention both then and ſtill; for he had been ſo formidable an antagoniſt of the Laudean Prelacy, as to have been marked out by Laud as a ſpecial victim,—had been condemned to the pillory, and ſuffered the loſs of both his ears by the ſentence of that cruel prelate,—and had been reſcued from his ſufferings, and reſtored to political life and influence, by the Long Parliament. He was, moreover, both a learned man, an acute lawyer, and an able and ſubtle controversialiſt, and his writings exerciſed at the time no mean influence. When ſuch men undertook the advocacy of the Eraſtian argument, encouraged as they were by the Engliſh Parliament, it may well be conceived that they would preſent it both in its ableſt, and in its moſt plauſible form. And it is doing no diſcredit to Eraſtians of the preſent day [c. 1846], to ſay that they are not likely to produce anything either more profound in learning, or more able and acute in reaſoning than was done by their predeceſſors of the Long Parliament, and the Weſtmiſter Aſſembly. If, therefore, Gillespie’s *Aaron’s Rod* completely defeated the acute and able men of that day, we may well recommend it to the peruſal of thoſe whoſe duty it may be to engage in a ſimilar controversy in the preſent age.<sup>28</sup>

But while ſuch were Gillespie’s labors in the field of controversy, the value of which could not be eaſily over-eſtimated, his memory would be grievouſly wronged were we to regard him only as a controversialiſt. For although the topics which firſt engaged the attention of the Weſtmiſter Aſſembly were thoſe on which the greateſt difference of opinion exiſted, and to which, almoſt of neceſſity, the public mind, both then and ever ſince, has been moſt ſtrongly directed, there was a very large portion of their duty, and that, too, of the higheſt importance, and demanding the utmoſt care, in which a much greater degree of unanimity prevailed. For a conſiderable time after the Aſſembly commenced its deliberations, its attention was almoſt excluſively occupied with the framing of Directories for public worſhip and ordination, and with diſcuſſions reſpecting the form of Church government, including the power of Church cenſure. Theſe topics involved both the Independent and the Eraſtian controversies; and till ſome ſatisfactory concluſions had been reached on theſe points, the Aſſembly abſtained from entering upon the leſs agitating, but not leſs important work of framing a Confession of Faith. But having completed their taſk, ſo far as depended upon themſelves, they then turned their attention to their doctriſnal labors.

---

28. [Hetherington is writing right after The Diſruption and formation of the Free Church.]

The manner in which the Assembly entered upon this solemn duty deserves the utmost attention, as intimating the earnest and prudent spirit by which their whole deliberations were pervaded. They appointed a committee to prepare and arrange the main propositions which were to be examined and digested into a system by the Assembly. The members of this committee were, Dr Hoyle, Dr Gouge, Messrs Herle, Gataker, Tuckney, Reynolds, and Vines, with the Scottish Commissioners Henderson, Baillie, Rutherford, and Gillespie. Those learned and able divines began their labors by arranging, in the most systematic order, the various great and sacred truths which God has revealed to man; and then reduced these to thirty-two distinct heads or chapters, each having a title expressive of its subject.<sup>29</sup> These were again subdivided into sections, and the committee formed themselves into several subcommittees, each of which took a specific topic for the sake of exact and concentrated deliberation. When these sub-committees had completed their respective tasks, the whole results were laid before the entire committee, and any alterations suggested and debated till all were of one mind. And when any title, or chapter, had been thus fully prepared by the committee, it was reported to the Assembly, and again subjected to the most minute and careful investigation, in every paragraph, sentence, and even word. All that learning the most profound, intellect the most searching, and piety the most sincere could accomplish, was thus concentrated in the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith, which may be safely termed the most perfect statement of systematic Theology ever framed by the Christian Church.

In the preliminary deliberations of the Committee the Scottish divines took a leading part, and none more than Gillespie. But no report of these deliberations either was or could be made public. The results alone appeared when the Committee, from time to time, laid its matured propositions before the Assembly. And it is gratifying to be able to add, that throughout the deliberations of the Assembly itself, when composing, or rather, formally sanctioning the Confession of Faith, there prevailed almost an entire and perfect harmony. There appears, indeed, to have been only *two* subjects on which any difference of opinion existed among them. The one of these was the doctrine of Election, concerning which Baillie informs us they had "long and tough debates;" the other was concerning that which heads the chapter entitled "Of Church Censures," as its fundamental proposition, viz. "The Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head of his Church, has therein appointed a government in the hand of church-officers distinct from the civil magistrate."

---

29. [For greater detail on how the work on the Confession of Faith was done by the Westminster assembly, see Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Making of the Westminster Confession, and especially of its chapter on The Decree of God," in *The Westminster Assembly and its Work*, in *Works*, 10 volumes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931); and see Chad Van Dixhoorn, *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly 1643–1652*, 5 volumes (Oxford University Press, 2012), volume one.]

This proposition the Assembly manifestly intended and understood to contain a principle directly and necessarily opposed to the very essence of Erastianism, and it was regarded in the same light by the Erastians themselves; hence it had to encounter their most strenuous opposition. It was, however, somewhat beyond the grasp of the lay-members of the Assembly, especially since their champion Selden had in a great measure withdrawn from the debates after his signal discomfiture by Gillespie, and consequently it was triumphantly carried, the single dissentient voice being that of Lightfoot, the other Erastian divine, Coleman, having died before the conclusion of the debate. The framing of the Confession occupied the Assembly nearly a year. After having been carefully transcribed, it was presented to the parliament on the 3rd of December, 1646.

A plan similar to that already described was also employed in preparing that admirable digest of Christian doctrine, the Shorter Catechism, and so far as can be ascertained, by the same Committee. For a time, indeed, they attempted to prosecute the framing of both Confession and Catechism at once; but after some progress had been made with both, the Assembly resolved to finish the Confession first, and then to construct the Catechism upon its model, so far at least as to have no proposition in the one which was not in the other. By this arrangement they wisely avoided the danger of subsequent debate and delay. Various obstacles, however, interposed, and so greatly impeded the progress of the Assembly, that the Catechism was not so speedily completed as had been expected. It was, however, presented to the House of Commons on the 5th of November 1647, and the Larger, in the spring of the following year.

There is one anecdote connected with the formation of the Shorter Catechism both full of interest and so very beautiful, that it must not be omitted. In one of the earliest meetings of the Committee, the subject of deliberation was to frame an answer to the question "*What is God?*" Each man felt the unapproachable sublimity of the divine idea suggested by these words; but who could venture to give it expression in human language! All shrunk from the too sacred task in awe-struck reverential fear. At length it was resolved, as an expression of the Committee's deep humility, that the youngest member should first make the attempt. He consented; but begged that the brethren would first unite with him in prayer for divine enlightenment. Then in slow and solemn accents he thus began his prayer:—"O God, Thou art a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in Thy being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth."—When he ceased, the first sentence of his prayer was immediately written down and adopted, as the most perfect answer that could be conceived, as, indeed, in a very sacred sense, God's own answer, descriptive of Himself.<sup>30</sup>

30. The above anecdote is sometimes given with this variation:—that when the youngest member consented, he requested the rest to engage in prayer, while he retired to make the attempt. They did so, and in a short time he returned with the answer exactly as it now

Who, then, was the youngest member of the Committee? When we compare the birth-dates of the respective members of the Committee, we find that George Gillespie was the youngest by more than a dozen years. We may, therefore, safely conclude, that George Gillespie was the man who was thus guided to frame this marvelous answer.<sup>31</sup>

Without further enlarging on these points, we may, without hazard, affirm, that however eminent Gillespie was in the department of controversy, he was scarcely, if at all, less so in that of systematic theology, while his personal piety was of the most elevated and spiritual character. Rarely, indeed, have such qualities met in any one man, as were united in him; but when God requires such a man, He creates, endows, and trains him, so as to meet the necessity.

When the public labors of the Westminster Assembly drew near a close, the Scottish commissioners returned to their native country. Henderson had previously found the repose of the grave. Rutherford remained a short time behind. Baillie and Gillespie appeared at the General Assembly which met in August, 1647, and laid before that supreme ecclesiastical court the result of their protracted labors. The Confession of Faith was ratified by that Assembly. The same Assembly caused to be printed a series of propositions, or *Theses against Erastianism*, as Baillie terms them, amounting to one hundred and eleven [*Letters & Journals*, 3.21], drawn up by George Gillespie, embodying eight of them in the act which authorized their publication. The perusal of these propositions would enable any person of unprejudiced and intelligent mind to master and refute the whole Erastian theory; and could not fail, at the same time, to draw forth sentiments of admiration towards the clear and strong mind by which they were framed.

But the incessant toils in which Gillespie's life had been spent had shattered his constitution beyond the power of recovery; and the state in which he found Scotland on his return was such as to permit no relaxation of these toils. The danger in which the obstinacy and duplicity of Charles I had placed

---

appears. We prefer the anecdote as given in the text, both as equally likely, and as much more beautiful.

31. [Whether this anecdote is true or not, Gillespie could not have been the person who prayed because he had left the Assembly before the work on the catechism began. This is another legend that later historical accuracy must dispel. See William Carruthers, *The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines: Being a facsimile of the First Edition, which was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons, 25th November, 1647. With Historical Account and Bibliography* (London: Publication Office of the Presbyterian Church of England, 1897), p. 34; *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, by Philip Schaff, in three volumes, sixth ed. Revised and enlarged (1919), p. 787; Charles A. Briggs, ed., *The Presbyterian Review* 4 (1883): 865–866; and at length in Alexander F. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards* ([1883]), 429–431; or similarly in Mitchell, *Catechisms of the Second Reformation: With Historical Introduction and Biographical Notices* (1886), Introduction and pp. xxvii, xxxv.]

that unhappy monarch's life, drew forth towards him the strong compassion of all who cherished sentiments of loyalty to the sovereign and pity for the man. But in many instances these generous feelings were allowed to bias the dictates of religious principle and sound judgment, and a party began to be formed for the purpose of attempting to save the King even at the hazard of entering into a war with England. This was, of course, eagerly encouraged by all who had previously adhered to the King's party in the contest between him and the Covenanters, and a series of intrigues began and were carried on, breaking the harmony which had previously existed, and preparing for the disastrous consequences which soon afterwards ensued. Gillespie exerted himself to the utmost of his power to avert the coming calamities which he anticipated, by striving to prevent the commission of crimes which provoke judgment. His influence was sufficient to restrain the Church from consenting to countenance the weak and wicked movements of politicians. But his health continued to sink under these incessant toils and anxieties. He was chosen moderator of the General Assembly of 1648, though, as Baillie states [*Letters & Journals*, 3, 53], "he did much deprecate the burden, as he had great reason, both for his health's sake, and other great causes."

This Assembly met on the 12th of July, 1648, and so arduous and difficult were the duties which it had to discharge, that it did not end its labors till the 12th of August. Although Gillespie was then rapidly sinking under the disease of which he died, which, from its symptoms, must have been consumption, he continued to take an active part in all its deliberations, and drew up the last public paper which it directed to be framed, in answer to a document, issued by the State, respecting the engagement that had been formed for the support of the King. The arduous labors of the Assembly being thus ended, Gillespie left Edinburgh and retired to Kirkcaldy, with the view of seeking, by change of scene and air, some renovation to his health. But the disease had taken too firm a hold of his enfeebled constitution, and he continued to suffer from increasing weakness. Still the cares of the distracted Church and country pressed heavily on his mind. He was now unable to attend the public meetings of Church courts; but on the 8th of September he addressed a letter to the Commission of Assembly, in which he stated clearly and strongly his opinion concerning the duties and the dangers of the time. Continuing to sink, and feeling death at hand, he partly wrote and partly dictated what may be termed his dying *Testimony against association with malignant enemies of the truth and godliness*.<sup>32</sup> At length, on the 17th day of December, 1648, his toils and sorrows ceased, and he fell asleep in Jesus.

So passed away from this world one of those bright and powerful spirits which are sent in troublous times to carry forward God's work among

---

32. These interesting documents are printed in this Series at the conclusion of the Part containing his "Sermons and Controversial Pieces." [See *The Works of Mr. George Gillespie* (1844-1846). These will appear in subsequent volumes of *The Shorter Writings*, D.V.]

mankind. Incessant toil is the destiny of such highly-gifted men while here below, and not infrequently is their memory assailed by those mean and little minds who shrunk with instinctive fear and hatred before the energetic movements which they could neither comprehend nor encounter. But their recompense is in heaven, when their work is done, and future generations delight to rescue their reputation from the feeble obloquy with which malevolence and folly had endeavored to hide or defame it. Thus has it been with George Gillespie to a considerable extent already, and we entertain not the slightest shadow of doubt that his transcendent merit is but beginning to be known and appreciated as it deserves, and that ere very long his well-earned fame will shine too clearly and too strong to be approached by detractors.

\* \* \* \* \*

WE HAVE BUT little more to relate respecting George Gillespie. His death was deeply lamented by all who loved their church and country at the time, and such was the feeling generally entertained of his great merit, that the Committee of Estates, or government of the kingdom, by an Act dated 20th December, 1648, did, "as an acknowledgment for his faithfulness in all the public employments entrusted to him by this Church, both at home and abroad, his faithful labors, and indefatigable diligence in all the exercises of his ministerial calling, for his Master's service, and his learned writings, published to the world, in which rare and profitable employments, both for Church and State, he truly spent himself and closed his days, ordain, That the sum of one thousand pounds sterling be given to his widow and children." And though the Parliament did, by their Act, dated June 8th, 1650, unanimously ratify the preceding Act, and recommended to their Committee to make the same effectual, yet in consequence of Cromwell's invasion, and the confusion into which the whole kingdom was thereby thrown, this benevolent design was frustrated, as his grandson, the Rev. George Gillespie, minister at Strathmiglo, afterwards declared.<sup>33</sup> So much for the trust to be placed in national gratitude and the promises of statesmen.

George Gillespie was buried at Kirkcaldy, his birth-place, and the place also where he died. A tombstone, erected to his memory by his relatives and friends, bore an inscription in Latin, recording the chief actions of his life, and stating the leading elements of his character. But when Prelacy was re-imposed on Scotland, after the restoration of Charles II, the mean malice of the Prelatists gratified itself by breaking the tombstone. This petty and spiteful act is thus recorded in the *Mercurius Caledonius*, one of the small quarto newspapers or periodicals of the time, of date January 16th to 25th 1661. "The late Committee of Estates ordered the tombstone of Mr. George Gillespie,

---

33. Preface to Stevenson's History. [Andrew Stevenson, *The History Of The Church And State Of Scotland: From The Accession of K. Charles I. To The Restoration of K. Charles II. In Four Volumes* (1753), volume 1, preface, p. {xiii}].

whereon was engraven a scandalous inscription, should be fetched from the burial place, and upon a market-day, at the cross of Kirkcaldy, where he had formerly been minister, and there solemnly broken by the hands of the hangman; which was accordingly done,—a just indignity upon the memory of so dangerous a person.”

The Committee of Estates by which this paltry deed was done was that of Middleton’s parliament, frequently called the “drunken parliament,” from the excesses of its leading men, and which on the following year signalized itself by the Glasgow act,—that act which emptied nearly four hundred pulpits in one day. The inaccuracy of the statement made by the prelatie newspaper, asserting that he had formerly been minister at Kirkcaldy, will not surprise any person who is acquainted with the writings of the Prelatists of that period, who seem not to have been able to write the truth when relating the most common and well-known facts. But one is somewhat surprised to find statements equally inaccurate made respecting George Gillespie, by reverend and learned historians. In Dr Cook’s *History of the Church of Scotland*,<sup>34</sup> we find in one passage George Gillespie’s character and conduct completely misunderstood and misrepresented (vol. iii. pages 160–162), and in a subsequent passage an assertion that the proceedings of that party in the church called the Protestors were, in the year 1650, “directed by Gillespie, a factious minister, whose name has been frequently mentioned,” (page 196). George Gillespie was the only person of whom mention was made, or could be made, in the previous portion of the history, as his brother had not then began to take any active part in public affairs; but he was dead nearly two years before the date to which the latter passage refers. It is plain that Dr Cook confounded George Gillespie with his brother Patrick, and ascribed to the former the actions of the latter, regarding them both as but one and the same person. He further asserts, that Gillespie was “suspected of corresponding with the Sectaries.” That Patrick Gillespie corresponded with the Sectaries, and was much trusted and countenanced by Cromwell, is perfectly true; but before that time George Gillespie had joined the One Church and family in heaven. In every period of his life, and in every transaction in which he was engaged, George Gillespie was far above all private or discreditable intriguing, which is the vice of weak, cunning, and selfish minds. And while we do not think it necessary further to prosecute this vindication of his memory, we yet think it our duty, when writing a memoir of him, thus briefly to set aside the groundless accusation, whether it be adduced by prelatie or Eraſtian writers,—his baffled antagonists when living, his impotent calumniators when dead.

The tombstone, as has been related, was broken in 1661, but the inscription was preserved. A plain tablet was erected in 1745, by his grandson, the Rev. George Gillespie, minister of Strathmiglo, on which the inscription

---

34. [George Cook, *The History of the Church of Scotland from the establishment of the Reformation to the Revolution: illustrating a most interesting period of the political history of Britain*, four volumes (1815).]



was reproduced, with a slight addition, mentioning both events. It is still to be seen in the southeast porch of the present church.<sup>35</sup> The inscription is as follows:—

MAGISTER GEORGIUS GILLESPIE, PASTOR EDINBURGENSIS, JUVENILIBUS ANNIS RITUUM ANGLORUM PONTIFICIORUM TURBAM PROSTRAVIT: GLISCENTE AETATE, DELEGATUS CUM MANDATIS IN SYNODO ANGLICANA, PRÆSULEM E ANGLIA ERADICANDUM, SINCERUM DEI CULTUM UNIFORMEM PROMOVENDUM, CURAVIT; ERASTUM AARONIS GERMINANTE VIRGA CASTIGAVIT. IN PATRIAM REVERSUS FOEDIFRAGOS ANGLIAM BELLO LACESSENTES LABEFACIT: SYNODI NATIONALIS ANNO 1648, EDINBURGI HABITÆ PRÆSES ELECTUS, EXTREMAM PATIRÆ SUÆ OPERAM CUM LAUDE NAVAVIT: CUMQUE OCVLATIS TESTIS VIDISSET MALIGNANTIUM QUAM PRÆDIXERAT RUINAM, EODEM QUO FOEDUS TRIUM GENTIUM SOLENNE RENOVATUM TUIT DIE DECEDENS IN PACE, ANNO ÆTATIS 36, IN GAUDIUM DOMINI INTRAVIT: INGENIO PROFUNDUS, GENIO MITIS, DISPUTATIONE ACUTUS, ELOQUIO FACUNDUS, ANIMO INVICTUS, BONOS IN AMOREM, MALOS IN INVIDIAM, OMNES IN SUI ADMIRATIONEM, RAPUIT: PATLÆ SUÆ ORNAMENTUM; TANTO PATRE DIGNA SOBOLES.

THIS TOMB BEING PULLED DOWN BY THE MALIGNANT INFLUENCE OF ARCHBISHOP SHARP, AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF PRELACY, MR GEORGE GILLESPIE, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT STRATHMIGLO, CAUSED IT TO BE RE-ERECTED, IN HONOUR OF HIS SAID WORTHY GRANDFATHER, AND AS A STANDING MONUMENT OF DUTIFUL REGARD TO HIS BLESSED MEMORY; ANNO DOMINI, 1746.

It may be expedient to give a translation:—

Master George Gillespie, minister at Edinburgh, in his youthful years overthrew a host of *English popish ceremonies*; as he approached full manhood, having been sent as commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, his attention was directed to the task of extirpating Prelacy from England, and promoting purity and uniformity in the worship of God. He chastised Erastianism

---

35. [Hetherington is speaking of the 1806/7 structure. The present church was acquired from the Church of Scotland in 2010 by the Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Trust, which maintains the building. The memorial stone is still present, and there is an ongoing Gillespie exhibition that features various items. The well-known Gillespie portrait is now owned by the National Portrait Gallery, though it has also been loaned back to the church for the original exhibition which ran in 2013. Gillespie's burial plot can no longer be seen however. "The part of today's Old Kirk familiar to Rev. George Gillespie is the 15th century tower. The main body of the Old Kirk was constructed in 1807 on the remains of the older church building but following a slightly different outline. This means that Rev. George Gillespie's grave is now underneath the floor of the church rather than being outside." Correspondence with Rosemary Potter, Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Trust, December 13, 2011. According to the old grave map, next to Gillespie is buried "I. G." This is likely the grave of his father John. Correspondence, *ibid.*, April 23, 2021.]

in his *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*. Having returned to his native country he weakened the violators of the covenant, who were bent on provoking a war with England.<sup>36</sup> Having been chosen moderator of the General Assembly which met at Edinburgh in the year 1648, he devoted his last exertions to the service of his country so as to draw forth public approbation: and having, as an eye-witness, seen that ruin of the malignants which he had foretold, departing in peace on the same day on which the League of the three kingdoms was solemnly renewed, in the 36th year of his age, he entered into the joy of the Lord. He was a man profound in genius, mild in disposition, acute in argument, flowing in eloquence, unconquered in mind. He drew to himself the love of the good, the envy of the bad, and the admiration of all. He was an ornament of his country,—a son worthy of such a father.

Such was the “scandalous inscription” which the peevish spleen, yet bitter malice of Scottish Prelacy, found gratification in attempting to destroy. But there is a righteous retribution even in this world. Men rear their own monuments, and write inscriptions on them which time cannot obliterate. Gillespie's enduring monument is in his actions and his writings, which latest ages will admire. The monuments of Scottish Prelacy are equally imperishable, whether in the wantonly defaced tombstones of piety and patriotism, or in the moss-grown martyr-stones that stud the moors and glens of our native land; and the inscriptions thereupon are fearfully legible with records of indelible infamy.

It remains but to offer a few remarks respecting Gillespie's various works. The first production of his pen was his remarkable *Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies*. It was published in 1637, when its author was only in the 25th year of his age, and it must have been completed sometime previous to its publication, as it appears to have been printed abroad, most probably in Holland. This gives countenance to one statement which affirms it to have been written when Gillespie had scarcely passed his 22nd year.

His next work was published in London, in the year 1641, where he was during the progress of the treaty with the King. It is referred to by Baillie in the following terms [*Letters & Journals*, I, 303]: —“Think not we live any of us here to be idle; Mr. Henderson has ready now a short treatise, much called for, of our church discipline; Mr. Gillespie has the grounds of Presbyterian Government well Asserted;<sup>37</sup> Mr. Blair, a pertinent answer to Hall's Remonstrance: all these are ready for the press.” The valuable treatise here referred to has not been so much noticed as several other of Gillespie's writings, but is included in this collective edition.

36. This refers to his opposition to the intrigues of the Engagers, and their invasion of England under Hamilton.

37. [The *Assertion of the Government* appears in this [present volume]. For a scholarly and valuable assessment and survey of Gillespie's writings on church government, see W. D. J. McKay, *An Ecclesiastical Republic: Church Government in the Writings of George Gillespie*, Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1997).]

His Sermons and Controversial [i.e., the anti-Eraſtian] Pamphlets were produced in the years 1641–45–46, during the ſittings of the Weſtminſter Aſſembly.

*Aaron's Rod Blossoming* was published at London alſo, about the cloſe of the year 1646 [*sic* ſee p. 341, n54]. This is his greateſt work.

The celebrated *Hundred and Eleven Propositions* were prepared before he left London, and laid before the General Aſſembly on his return to Scotland in the ſummer of 1647. Perhaps it is not poſſible to obtain a clear conception of Eraſtianism better than by the ſtudy of theſe propoſitions. They have been reprinted ſeveral times, yet were rarely to be obtained.

The ſhort, yet very able and high-principled papers which he prepared for the Aſſembly and its Commiſſion in 1648, were his lateſt writings.

A ſhort time after his death, and during the year 1649, his brother Patrick published in one volume, entitled a *Treatiſe of Miſcellany Queſtions*, a ſeries of papers, twenty-two in number, on a variety of important topics, which appeared to be in a condition fit for the preſs. Though this is a poſthumous production, and conſequently without its author's finiſhing corrections, it diſplays the ſame clearneſs, preciſion, and logical power, which characterize his other works. We are inclined to conjecture that theſe Eſſays, as we would now term them, were written at different times during the courſe of ſeveral years, and while he was ſtudying the various topics to which they relate. Several of them are on ſubjects which were debated in the Weſtminſter Aſſembly; and it is very probable that Gilleſpie wrote them while maturing his views on theſe points preparatory for thoſe diſcuſſions in which he ſo greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf. This conjecture is ſtrengthened by the curious and intereſting fact, that a paper, which will be found beginning at page 109 of the part now printed for the firſt time from the MS., is almoſt identical, both in argument and language, though ſomewhat different in arrangement, with chapter viii. pages 115 to 120, of *Aaron's Rod*.<sup>38</sup> The arrangement in the *Aaron's Rod* is more ſuccinct than in the paper referred to, but its principles, and very much of the language, are altogether the ſame. May not this indicate Gilleſpie's mode of ſtudy and compoſition? May he not have been in the habit of concentrating his mind on the leading topics of the ſubjects which he was ſtudying, writing out pretty fully and carefully his thoughts on theſe topics, and afterwards connecting and arranging them ſo as to form one complete work? If ſo, then we may conclude that the *Miſcellany Queſtions* contain ſuch of theſe maſſes of ſeparate thinking as Gilleſpie found no opportunity of uſing in any other manner, and, therefore, conſented to their publication in their preſent form.

In Wodrow's *Analecſta* it is ſtated that Gilleſpie had a manuſcript volume of ſermons prepared for the preſs, which were bought from the printer by the Sectaries, and probably deſtroyed. It is alſo ſtated, that there were ſix octavo volumes of notes written by Gilleſpie at the Weſtminſter Aſſembly then extant,

38. [See in *The Works of Mr. George Gilleſpie* (1844–1846), at the pages given.]

containing an abstract of its deliberations. Of these manuscript volumes there are two copies in the Wodrow MSS., Advocates' Library, but neither of them appears to be Gillespie's own hand-writing; the quarto certainly is not, and the octavo seems to be an accurate copy of *two* of the original volumes. These have been collated and transcribed by Mr. Meek, with his well-known care and fidelity, and the result is now, for the first time, given to the public. What has become of the missing volumes is not known, and it is to be feared the loss is irrecoverable. There is one consideration,<sup>39</sup> however, which mitigates our regret for the loss of these volumes. The one which has been preserved begins February 2, 1644, and ends January 3, 1645.<sup>40</sup> Lightfoot's Journal continues till the end of 1644, and then terminates abruptly, as if he had not felt it necessary any longer to continue noting down the outline of the debates. Yet Lightfoot continued to attend the Assembly throughout the whole of its protracted deliberations. From other sources also, we learn that the whole of the points on which there existed any considerable difference of opinion in the Assembly, had been largely debated during the year 1644, so that little remained to be said on either side. The differences, indeed, continued; but they assumed the form of written controversy, the essence of which we have in the volume entitled, *The Grand Debate*.<sup>41</sup> It is probable, therefore, that the lost volumes of Gillespie's manuscript contained chiefly his own remarks on the writings of the Independents, and, not unlikely, the outlines of the answers returned by the Assembly. Supposing this to be the case, it would doubtless have been very interesting to have had Gillespie's remarks and arguments, but they could not have given much information which we do not at present possess.

A few brief notices respecting the papers now first published may both be interesting,<sup>42</sup> and may conduce to rendering them intelligible to the general reader.

There is *first*, an extract attested by the scribes, or clerks, of the Westminster Assembly, copied from the original, by Wodrow, and giving a statement of the Votes on Discipline and Government, from session 76, to session 186.

*Second*, Notes of Proceedings from February 2, to May 14, 1644, to p. 64.

*Third*, Notes of Proceedings from September 4, 1644, to January 3, 1645, to p. 100. (By consulting Lightfoot, we learn that the time between May and September was occupied chiefly in debates respecting Ordination, the mode of dispensing the Lord's Supper, Excommunication, and Baptism, with some minor points.)

*Fourth*, Debates in the Sub-committee respecting the Directory, 4th March, to 10th June, p. 101–2.

39. [Hetherington was not aware that the actual minutes of the assembly had survived.]

40. Gillespie must have left London at that time to attend the General Assembly which was summoned to meet at Edinburgh on the 22nd of January, 1645.

41. [*The Grand Debate* (1648; repr., 1652). See *The Grand Debate*, edited by Chris Coldwell, with Introduction & Analysis by Rowland S. Ward (Naphtali Press, 2014).]

42. [See Gillespie's *Works* (1844–46). The *Notes* will appear in *The Shorter Writings*, v3, D.V.]

*Fifth*, Notes of Proceedings in the Grand Committee, from September 20, to October 25, 1644, p. 103–7. This part of the manuscript, though short, is of very considerable importance, as giving us a specimen of the manner in which the Grand Committee acted. The Grand Committee was composed of some of the most influential persons of the Lords, of the Commons, and of the Assembly, together with the Scottish Commissioners. The duty of that Committee was to consult together respecting the subjects to be brought before the Assembly, and to prepare a formal statement of those subjects for the purpose of regular deliberation. By this process a large amount of debate was precluded, and the leading men were enabled to understand each other's sentiments before the more public discussions began. And as the Scottish Commissioners were necessarily constituent members of this Committee, their influence in directing the whole proceedings was both very great, and in constant operation. Lightfoot's journal gives no account of the proceedings of this Committee.

*Sixth*, A paper on excommunication, &c. It has already been mentioned that this paper is nearly identical with part of a chapter in the *Aaron's Rod*.

*Seventh*, A short note on some discussions which took place in the Committee of the General Assembly at Edinburgh, on the 7th and 8th of February, 1645, at the time when Baillie and Gillespie laid before the Assembly the Directory which had been recently completed.

*Eighth*, The Ordinance of the two Houses of the English Parliament, 12th June, 1643, summoning the Assembly of Divines. This is added chiefly for the purpose of shewing the intention of the Parliament in calling the Assembly.

It has been already stated that there are two MS. volumes, purporting to be copies of Gillespie's Notes. The one of these is in octavo, and seems to have been carefully taken; the other is in quarto, and appears to be partly a copy, partly an abstract. In it Gillespie is always spoken of in the third person, which has caused many variations. The transcriber has also made many omissions, not only of one, but of several paragraphs at a time, frequently passing over the remarks of the several speakers. It appears to have been his object to copy chiefly the argumentative part of the manuscript. This defective transcription had belonged to Mr. William Veitch, as appears from his name written on the cover and first page, with the addition "minister at Peebles, 1691." In the copy transcribed for the press, the octavo manuscript has been followed. The quarto, however, along with Lightfoot, has been found useful in correcting the Scripture references, which had all to be carefully examined and verified; but sometimes all three failed to give satisfaction, and a conjectural substitute has been given, enclosed in brackets, and with a point of interrogation. In concluding these remarks, we cannot help expressing great gratification to see for the first time a complete edition of the works of George Gillespie; and in order also to complete the memoir, we add, as an appendix, some very interesting extracts from the Maitland Club edition of Wodrow's *Analeceta*, chiefly relative to his last illness and death.