Wm. Symington Churchman and Theologian, 1795-1862

by

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Thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Edinburgh in the Faculty of Divinity, 25 April, 1963.
Preface

It has been the object of this research to uncover the facts connected with Dr. Symington's work as a Churchman, to find reasons for it as these appeared in his theological writings, and to make an evaluation of his contribution to the life and thought of the Church.

As the research progressed, the need for an introductory chapter dealing with the origin and doctrine of the Reformed Presbyterian Church became apparent, not only because of the influence the Church was found to have had on the man and vice versa, but also because histories of the Reformed Presbyterian Church were found to be inadequate in various ways at these points.

His work is dealt with in terms of the pattern of his life which was naturally divided into three periods of almost equal length: "Early Influences" 1795-1819, "The Stranraer Pastorate" 1819-1839, and "The Glasgow Ministry" 1839-1862.

His theology is taken up in the sequence in which he wrote—a sequence having definite theological significance: "On Atonement", "On Dominion", "On Dominion applied to Church", and "On Dominion applied to State". Dr. Symington's oft-repeated "attachment" to Reformation "Principles" rendered it desirable to examine his writings in the light of trends and developments in Reformation Theology. For his doctrine of Atonement, Turretin and Hodge, as representatives of a particular trend in Atonement theology, were chosen to provide a theological perspective which would help to identify and explain Symington's contribution. For his doctrine of Dominion the theological development in the writings of Wyclif (fourteenth century) and Bucer (sixteenth century) provide a perspective which was useful in evaluating Symington's (nineteenth century) Scottish contribution. Attention has been paid to the sources of his doctrine of Dominion—and in particular to those "discussions" which went on within the United Societies and the Reformed Presbytery and which were, at least in their earlier stages, an important phase of Scottish national history.

I wish to acknowledge with grateful appreciation the helpful criticism, wise counsel, and kind encouragement of Principal Burleigh and Professor Tindal, both of whom in spite of busy schedules, made time to supervise
this research and writing. Not long after it had been begun all work was necessarily suspended for a number of years and in that interim the responsibilities of the Principalship were added to Professor Burleigh's work but from beginning to end his advice and encouragement have been of inestimable value. Professor William S. Tindal who is closely related to the Symington family, was himself ordained in one of the Glasgow Churches which came out of Dr. Symington's Great Hamilton Street ministry, and has in his home the bust of Dr. Symington. He continues to carry his kinsman's interests on into the twentieth century life and work of the Church in Scotland and throughout the world.

Many of Dr. Symington's notes and other personal possessions have been burned or lost and those which remain are to be found in homes, libraries, and museums throughout the country. I am indebted to many members of his family and to librarians who have helped me to locate these and made it possible to study them.

Messrs Courtney and Alexander McLeod Symington of Symington Ltd., in London were extremely helpful in allowing me to study at leisure Dr. Symington's Journal.

The late Miss Marion Symington of Edinburgh was both kind and generous in making her family letters and other possessions available for study in her home. She remembered seeing the burning of many of the family papers and notes. Her death, since this research began precluded further help but her nephew and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. J. Struthers Symington of Edinburgh who received her family heirlooms, have been equally kind.

Lord and Lady Maclay, Duchal, Kilmacolm, have been gracious and helpful in answering questions concerning family relationships and in supplying the copy of the family tree from which the reproduction in the appendix was made.

Dr. Lamb and the Library Staff at New College in Edinburgh, Rev. James Mackintosh, Librarian at Trinity College Library in Glasgow, the Staff at Mitchell Library in Glasgow, the National Library in Edinburgh, Broughton House Museum in Kirkcudbright, and the late Mr. Henry Paton of the General Registry House in Edinburgh, have also been of inestimable help. The pastors and custodians of the records of the Paisley Reformed Presbyterian Church (now the Oakshaw West Church of Scotland), the Stranraer Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Great Hamilton Street Reformed Presbyterian Church, have
kindly made their records available for study. The books and records listed in the Bibliography are, with few exceptions, limited to those to which some reference has been made in the body of the material.

I am also indebted to Principal Emeritus Hugh Watt for the earliest recommendations concerning the subject, to Professor T. F. Torrance for suggestions having to do with the study on Atonement, and to Dr. Hugh Blair Ballymoney, Ireland, for his help with the translation of parts of Bucer's work.

When Professor Watt first recommended this subject as one worthy of research, he undoubtedly had in mind the writer's relationship to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America and while this has provided a special interest and brought a sense of urgency to the study, every effort has also been made to avoid bias detrimental to an evaluation of the facts concerning the history of the Scottish Church. It is for this reason that all reference to the American branch of the Church has been avoided, but it may be right to point out in this connection that the study has been found appropriate because there are circumstances within the American Church in the twentieth century which are similar in many ways to those with which Dr. Symington contended in the nineteenth century Scottish Church.

Dr. Symington's thoughts and work, however, were never limited to the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the study of his churchmanship and theology has applications far beyond that Church and period. One of the more important observations from the entire study is to be found in the area of those efforts or methods which he used to establish and to maintain a close working relationship between Doctrine and Practice in every area of Christian life: Theology and Churchmanship, Moral and Civil Government, Church and State, "Conclusions" and convictions. Three factors were found to have been of fundamental importance in the development of his doctrine; they appeared in the historical development of the doctrine and in the practice of his own life: the use of the whole Bible, the practice of covenanting which included the 'spirit' and 'intent' of the Covenants, and the "discussions" of the Societies. It is within these three areas that suggestions are to be found for the re-application, or rediscovery, of Symington's doctrine under vastly different twentieth century circumstances.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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O.D.: Symington, Wm., Messiah the Prince or the Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ, London 1881.
CHAPTER I

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Nec Tamen Consumebatur
CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland into which William Symington was born and through which he served as an ordained minister for forty-three years has an origin which was intended to be described by her name, but the significance of that name has almost been forgotten today. According to Professor Goold, history professor and faculty colleague of Symington at the theological hall from 1854 to 1862, the church "... as a distinct organization dates from the period between the Restoration of Charles II and the Revolution Settlement of 1688".¹ The "Societies" to which he was referring here were recognized by him elsewhere "... as the germ of our separate organization as a church, after the ecclesiastical fabric erected by the Reformers between 1638 and 1649, had been altogether destroyed".² These Societies had held their first General Meeting in 1681; they identified their origin and made certain claims:

These meetings, as they are neither Civil nor ecclesiastick Judicatures, so they are of the same nature with particular Christian Societies, in the time of this extreme persecution, gathered together in their general Correspondence ... for our preservation, & the propogation of our Testimony, according to the word of God, the Law of Nature, the fundamental Constitutions & laudable practices of our antient Covenanted Church & Nation, acting joyntly & harmoniously, by way of consultation, deliberation, & admonitory determination.³

¹Goold, W. H., "Statement (for) The Ferguson Bequest Fund", p. 1, Goold's personal copy of this "Statement" is to be found in the Trinity College Library, Glasgow.


³An Informatory Vindication of a Poor, wasted, misrepresented remnant, of the Suffering, Anti-popish, Anti-prelatic, Anti-erastian, Anti-sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, United together in a General Correspondence, (1687) (Hereinafter referred to as Informatory Vindication), Head 1, subdivision 3, p. 47; James Walker believed that the Informatory Vindication had been written "by Renwick the Cameronian", in Scottish Theology and Theologians, p. 105. See also Faithful Contendings Displayed, etc., being the Minutes of the General Meetings of the Societies from 1681 to 1691, kept by M. Shields and edited by JohnHowie (1780) (Hereinafter referred to as Faithful Contendings Displayed), pp 10-114. Goold reported to Synod in 1844 that "There is no evidence that the Minutes of the General Meetings are now in existence", and based his statement on the fact that the General Meetings had authorised copies of the "conclusions" to be made by each "Correspondence". He was aware of three of these copies: the "most complete of the three" belonged to
Elsewhere they emphatically denounced and denied that "heinous, hateful and hurtful sin" of schism, and carefully defined their own position with respect to existing churches:

We distinguish between a Separation negative, whether actively or passively considered; and a Separation positive: ... a negative passive separation is, when the better part of a Church standing still & refusing to follow & concur with the backsliding part of the same church, after they have become obstinate in their declinings from former sound principles & practices, holds closely by & adheres unto what parts of Reformation were graciously attained among them: ... Hence, as for us, we absolutely deny a positive separation from the Scottish Covenanted Church, yea, also separation Negative, if it be considered Actively, at the furthest; herein we acknowledge a Separation Negative Passively considered, in our being left alone (at first, in the time of our greatest straights) & forsaken by the rest; for we are endeavouring to our utmost (with many failings & much weakness to retain & maintain, according to our station and capacity, with Covenanted work of Reformation of the Church of Scotland, against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, and Sectarianism, both more refined and more gross, together with schism & defection. So we deny & altogether disown a Separation from communion with this Church, in her Doctrine, worship, discipline & Government, as she was in her best & purest dayes: For we only oppose the transgressions & defections of this Church & endeavour to separate from these: while we chuse to stand still, & not to go alongst with others in declining & offensive courses ... untill defections be condemned & offensses removed. 1

In one direct appeal to scripture, indicating at once their self-assurance and determination, they quoted Jeremiah 15:19, "Let them return unto thee but return not thou unto them".

From 1681 to 1743, 2 the Societies, thus organized and defined, claimed

John Bowie and is now in Trinity College Library, Glasgow; the "next in value" belonged at that time to Mr. Dalziel, Holm of Drumlanrig; and the third copy belonged to the Synod and "exceeds the others in the beauty of its penmanship as much as it is inferior to them in accuracy". The Synod copy however covered a longer period than did the other two. The Synod approved a handwritten collation of the three, in Extracts from the Minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod (Hereinafter referred to as Extracts of Synod Minutes), July 1644, Session II.

1 Ibid., Head IV, subdivision 8, p. 63.

2 The last meeting recorded by Shields was on 3rd December 1690 but the various Societies continued to function and Bowie presented an abstract of the Tinwald Paper, written "in order to gather them together again into a General Correspondence", in Faithful Contendings Displayed, pp 463ff; W. J. Couper pointed out that after the Presbytery was organized in 1743, "... it gradually assumed the powers held by the General Meeting, although the latter continued to meet for some time longer ... for deliberative purposes only ...", in The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 9.
to be the only body to maintain a continuous public testimony for a faithful adherence to the attainments of the Second Reformation. The very reason for their existence as a non-ecclesiastical organization was based on the fact that they thought of themselves as being a remnant of the true Presbyterian Church of Scotland, a living link with the old church, waiting and working and suffering if need be, in order that she might be recognized again and restored to her old position. Had it not been for their steadfastness of purpose, the Revolution Settlement might have been quite different. It was typical of their interest in the affairs of both Church and State to find that they sought to influence the selections of those who were to make up the Estates, and addressed "Petitions" to the Prince of Orange, the Estates of Parliament, and the General Assembly. They also sent their own representatives, men selected from the various shires, to present their case to both the Estates and the General Assembly, and furnished a guard to help to protect the deliberating assemblies in Edinburgh against the planned attempts of the Jacobite Claverhouse. But direct and helpful as the claims of the Societies with respect to the Reformation Church may have been, William of Orange was interested in leaving the door open to a later admission of Episcopacy or some other form of church government that would be acceptable in all three nations. The people of Scotland were tired of warfare and the Revolution Settlement, far from being the realization of the hopes of the Society Folk, actually became a factor in the formation of their own church court. The petitions of the Societies were refused the honour even of being read on the floor of the Assembly and an insight into the historical depth of the smouldering animosity towards the Established Church, still lurking in the Ecclesiastical shadows of Symington's day, is to be found in the following statement of the affair by Dr. Goold:

Curates were not only heard, but received into the Establishment confessedly on the 'easiest terms', but godly men were refused a hearing for the exoneration of the conscience, and for admission into communion on grounds that would have saved their consistency as the friends and followers of the martyrs. Men, red and reeking with the blood of martyrs, received the right hand of fellowship. The sufferers whom their malice had driven to the caves and dens

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1 Faithful Contendings Displayed, pp 378, 388.
2 Ibid., pp 369, 373, 380, 390, and p. 386, it was never delivered.
3 Ibid., pp 427ff, and pp 408ff.
4 Ibid., pp 447ff.
5 Ibid., pp 387ff, and p. 388.
6 Ibid., p. 388.
of the earth were virtually expelled from the pale of the Establishment, and a rash and unceremonious repulse was given to all their overtures for Reconciliation.  

The Revolution Settlement was the precipitating factor in the formation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Many of those things for which the Societies had borne a public testimony were realised; viz., a change of dynasty or the right of the people to judge the rights of a monarch to rule, a kind of civil and religious liberty, and a Presbyterian form of church government. But their best hopes were disappointed and relief, though cause for much thanksgiving, had long been for these people a poor substitute for principle. Their objections to the Settlement were manifold and basic: (1) the personnel of both church and state were not possessed of the proper scriptural qualifications, (2) the constitutions of both church and state were "inconsistent with our covenanted establishment", (3) the settlement of religion had been of an Erastian nature, according to "the inclinations of the people" and retrogressive rather than progressive (based on the acts of 1592 instead of 1648) with the "infamous Acts Recissoyr" unrepealed, and (4) the covenants had been ignored or broken. In spite of these objections some of the people and the three remaining ministers deemed it their duty to ignore the "unceremonious repulse" and unite with a tabled protest. Without ministerial leadership and with sharp differences of opinion regarding the proper course to pursue, the Societies would probably have become completely disorganized and died a lingering death with no distinctive contribution to further generations had not Sir Robert Hamilton supplied the lay leadership, and by means of the Tinwald Paper requiring strict denial of both Establishment and government, provided the formula for dispelling differences of opinion.

The Revolution Settlement might also be said to have brought the Rev.

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2 Vide, "Declarations" issued by the Societies in 1692, 1695, 1703, 1707, in "Appendix", in Informatory Vindication, pp 315-362; and also, Act, Declaration and Testimony, for the whole of our covenanted Reformation, as attained to, and established in Britain and Ireland; particularly, betwixt the years 1638 and 1649 inclusive ..., (1777, the Third Edition with several additions) (Hereinafter referred to as Act, Declaration and Testimony), pp 57-75.
John M'Millan to the Societies for it was in his list of grievances against the establishment that they saw a kindred mind and called him to be their pastor. He began his work among them in 1707, was joined by licentiate M'Neile who dissented from the Established Church in 1706 for similar reasons, and finally in 1743 by Rev. Thomas Nairn who dissented from the Associate Presbytery because they insisted upon testifying against "... the dangerous extreme that some (meaning the Societies and M'Millan) have gone into ... on account of the want of those qualifications which magistrates ought to have, according to the Word of God and our Covenants ...". By this time the subsequent acts of Parliament and Assembly, the continued refusal of petitions, and the Testimonies of the Seccession Churches had substantially changed the position of the Societies. No longer was a strictly passive separation without an "ecclesiastic" judicatory sufficient. Up to the time of the establishment they had made claim almost without competition to the then dangerous and even treasonable honour of being a remnant of the true Presbyterian Church of Scotland, waiting only until the defections be healed and the church re-established, to unite in full fellowship. But now two churches claimed by right of Revolution Settlement and civil recognition on the one hand, and secession testimony on the other, that these "faults" and "breaches" had already been healed as far as was necessary. Schism was still a "heinous, hateful and hurtful" sin, and these others were promptly branded "schismatics", but that was not sufficient. Only by a separate continued existence could the "false" claims of the others be disproved and the principles of "the whole of our Covenanted Reformation" be passed on to posterity. The courts of the Reformation Presbytery, the auld Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland from

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1Hutchison, M., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 152, wherein Hutchison indicated that M'Millan began his work with them in 1706; cf., A letter by M'Millan's son using "information from the original papers, mostly all wrote with Mr. M'Millan's own hands", in which he said it was 1707, in a letter addressed to John Thorburn from John M'Millan and printed at the end of Vindiciae Magistratus: or the Divine Institution and Right of the Civil Magistrate Vindicated, etc., by John Thorburn (1773), p. 235. See also Reid, H. M. B., A Cameronian Apostle Being Some Account of John Macmillan of Balmaghtie (1896), pp 138, 143ff, wherein he indicates that MacMillan began negotiations with the Societies in 1704, their "call" to him was drawn up and signed in October of 1706, and "about the end of 1706" M'Millan began his work with them.

2Ibid., p. 134; See also Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 78.
1638 to 1649 must be formed again for the sake of the orderly existence of that testimony, and while they had long been ready for such a move, the first opportunity came with the accession of Rev. Thomas Nairn. After making direct reference to "... the Minute of the date August 1, 1743, bearing the constitution of the Reformed Presbytery", the writer of a tract in 1753 added the following pertinent information:

... the Reverend Mr. John MacMillan and the Reverend Mr. Thomas Nairn ... with their respective elders did, by solemn Prayer, constitute themselves into a Presbytery, immediately under Christ their Head, under the Name of The Reformed Presbytery. By which Title they understood ... a Presbytery professing to adhere and bear Testimony to our covenanted Reformation, as it was carried on in the Nations betwixt the years 1638 and 1649.

The significance of the name, REFORMED PRESBYTERY, was later pointed out by John M'Millan II in a letter, "containing information from the original papers ..." of John M'Millan Senior:

... designation of the Reformed Presbytery, a title properly expressive of their principles and ground of constitution, namely, a presbytery, the first since the Revolution, properly erected upon the footing of an approbation of, and adherence to the whole of our covenanted reformation, from which the nations have revolted, both in their civil and ecclesiastic capacities; a presbytery not standing merely upon a testimony against some mal-administrations in the revolution church, which is the foundation of all the seceding judicatories in the land; but founded on a testimony against the revolution constitution of the church, itself, as that includes a falling from and opposition to the reformation constitution of the church of Scotland; and a presbytery constituted in an immediate dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as God's anointed King In Zion, the hill of his Holiness, and without any dependence upon the revolution constitution, civil or ecclesiastic.

In 1806 the Church issued another statement, re-emphasizing the importance of the name:

This title (THE REFORMED PRESBYTERY) it still bears, not that

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1 Hutchison noted the loss of this minute and it is still missing from among the "Minutes of the Societies" in Trinity College Library, Glasgow; Vide, Hutchison, op. cit., p. 187.

2 A Serious Examination and Impartial Survey of a Print Designed The True State, etc., by a Pretended Presbytery at Edinburgh ... Published in the Name, and by the Authority of the Reformed Presbytery, (1754), pp 42, 43.

3 "Appendix", in Vindiciae Magistratus, by John Thorburn (1773), pp 222, 235, 236.
they consider themselves as any better than other men, or as having in their own persons, arrived at higher degrees of perfection; Such thoughts they never entertained; but purely for this reason, that it is at least their honest intention, faithfully to adhere to the whole of our reformation attainments, in both church and state, without knowingly dropping any of these. On this account, it is presumed, they may justly enough be called the REFORMED or REFORMATION-PRESBYTERY ...1

This was still the opinion in William Symington's day. His brother Andrew in a lecture "Delivered at the request of the Glasgow Society for promoting the Scriptural principles of the Second Reformation" in 1841 said:

The persons first constituting it regarded themselves as a continuation of the Covenanted Church of Scotland; not dissenters from it, but dissenters from what they considered to be defections from it at the Revolution, but they adhered strictly to the principles of the Second Reformation.2

The name was, in effect, a challenge to the establishment. There were in Symington's day two ecclesiastical bodies in Scotland which were Presbyterian in form of government but had never separated from any other Presbyterian body. One was the established Church and the other the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Neither could trace a continuous ecclesiastical organization back to the Church of the Second Reformation because the established church was by law Episcopalian from the Restoration to the Revolution, and the Reformed Presbytery grew out of the "non ecclesiastic" Societies as we have seen. It was by virtue of her close and jealously guarded relationship to the non-ecclesiastical organization of these societies, born of them and including them in her own fellowship, as the organizations that constituted a living link of consistent adherence to the whole of the Second Reformation attainments, that the Reformed Presbytery claimed to have a slight advantage in the contest for primacy of ecclesiastical

1A Short Account of the Old Presbyterian Dissenters in Scotland ... Intended as an introduction to the perusal of their Judicial Testimony ..., Published by authority of the Reformed Presbytery in Scotland 1806, (Second Edition, 1824), p. 8.

succession. But the real strength of their claim was not to be found in continuity of organization, nor could it be decided on "the standard of numbers", or civil recognition. It could best be tried on the grounds of identity of principles and the first testimony issued by the Reformed Presbytery in 1761 and entitled an Act, Declaration and Testimony for the whole of our covenanted Reformation as attained to and established in Britain and Ireland; particularly between the years 1638 and 1649 inclusive..., rested its case on this basis. It was written to prove in detail that the Reformed Presbytery was, and the Established Church was not, the legitimate successor to the Second Reformation Church of Scotland.

This first testimony of the Reformed Presbytery contained, in substance, the principle of the church and her reasons for a separate existence as they were throughout the lifetime of William Symington. It was to this "Ploughlandhead Testimony" of 1761 that he promised adherence when he became a member of the church in 1812, and it was through it that he witnessed as a minister. It was re-written in 1837-39 with many changes of form and emphasis, but little if any change of doctrine. In the introduction are to be seen, among the reasons for printing the testimony, further proof of the nature and extent of their claims by origin and name to be the Second Reformation Church of Scotland, and several external reasons for their separate existence: viz., (1) "... this duty of bearing witness for truth and transmitting the same uncorrupted to posterity ..." is commanded by God; (2) testimony bearing "... had been the constant practice of the church ...

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1 Some Reformed Presbyterians of that day, apparently by virtue of the closeness of their ecclesiastical relationship to the "Societies", and perhaps because of the presbytery-like methods of the Societies, even though they denied being a church judicatory, could claim to be "... the oldest Presbyterian body in the country", Vide, Commemoration of the Bi-Centenary of the Westminster Assembly of Divines and of the Centenary of the Reformed Presbytery, p. 203.

2 Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland: Historical and Doctrinal, Glasgow 1844, p. 190.

3 The facts that the Acts of 1648 had been deliberately and in the face of repeated petitions, left "buried under the infamous Act Recissory", and that there were obvious differences between the Church of Scotland in 1592 and the Church of Scotland in 1648, gave validity to this claim. Whether or not the Revolution Church was a more perfect church than that of the Second Reformation was a debatable question, but that it was not the same church was clear from the outset. Indeed, its constitutional documents do not make such a direct claim.
and particularly the honourable practice of the once famous church of Scotland ... whose posterity we are and therefore are in duty bound to homologate and approve her scriptural forms and order, by a judicial asserting of her attainments ..."; (3) "... never, since the national overthrow of the glorious structure of reformation, has any church judicatory, constituted purely on the footing of our covenanted establishment, appeared in a judicial vindication of our Redeemer's interest and injured rights."; (4) "The unspeakable loss sustained by the present generation through the want of a full and faithful declaration of the covenanted principles of the church of Scotland ..."; (5) "To wipe off the reproach of that odium cast on the presbytery by some ... than which nothing can be more unjust; seeing a body distinct from all others, they have still stood upon the footing of the covenanted establishment ..."; (6) "... for gathering again the scattered flock of Christ ...". They sum up their intent as "... of very great importance ... no less than the right stating of the testimony of the covenanted interest of Christ in these lands ... after such a long and universal apostacy therefrom."

DOCTRINE

The Distinctive Doctrines of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as found at the very heart of their Testimony, may be summarized under three main heads: (1) the doctrine of Covenanting, including the perpetual obligation of the national Covenants, (2) the doctrine of the Sole Headship of Christ over the Church, and (3) the doctrine of Christian Civil Government. These three doctrines were controlling factors in the life and thought of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in general and William Symington in particular. They were the basic internal reasons for her formation and separate existence and it was only natural that they should be controlling factors governing attitudes and reactions to rising circumstances. Thus summarized, they also provide a convenient basis for a brief consideration of the position

1 Act, Declaration and Testimony, (The Third Edition, with several additions, 1777), pp 1-6.
and progress of the church throughout the first sixty-two years of the 19th century.

1. The Doctrine of Covenanting, including the descending obligations of the Covenants, might well be said to have had its origin with Knox and the Gentlemen of Mearns in the "Band" of 1556, and all the other Bands and Covenants of the first reformation, for frequent reference is made in the Testimony and literature of Societies and Presbytery to "the whole of our covenanted Reformation". The primary reference, however, was intended to be to the National Covenant as revised and sworn in 1638 and to the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. These were considered to be the formal documents of the Second Reformation and for that reason they said, "Adherence to the grand objects of these covenants, the scriptural reformation of the two great moral associations of Church and State, and to the moral obligations lying upon these lands, from these deeds, which were repeatedly renewed, forms a chief ground of our distinct ecclesiastical standing".

The restoration of Charles II in 1660 marked the end of the established church as a covenanted church and the beginning of Covenanting as a doctrine of "the dissenters". Testimonies such as Argyle's, sermons such as James Guthrie's, and proclamations such as Cameron's and Renwick's, maintained the principle in persecuting times. The Societies as an organization adopted the principle when no parish or indulged minister could proclaim it and from 1690 to 1743 they were the only body with a continuous public testimony for the Covenants. They renewed them at what they considered to be critical points in their nation's history, viz., in 1689 before the first General Assembly and in 1712 at Auchinsaugh, following the "unceremonious repulse" they had received in connection with the Revolution Settlement, the Union, and Acts of Patronage. They renewed the Covenants for the last time, again at Auchinsaugh, as the Reformed Presbytery in 1745.

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1 Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland: Historical and Doctrinal, Glasgow 1844, pp 330 to 342 and pp 304f.
2 Ibid., p. 342.
3 Professor Hugh Watt does not claim that the "Bond" signed by the Evangelical group in 1774 could make covenanting a principle of the Established Church, in Recalling the Scottish Covenants, pp 88f; Wm. Symington had said substantially the same thing in his day, in The Nature and Obligation of Public Vows, p. 44.
in his comprehensive view of the "Covenants in XVIII Century Scotland", has termed these Auchinsaugh renewals as, "... something that can legitimately be called a 'renewal of the Covenants'", by way of distinguishing them from the other two types of renewal or 'bond adherence' in practice in other denominations at the time.¹ One of the terms of communion and membership, bearing a distinct resemblance to a similar requirement of the Societies for membership, was accepted by William Symington in becoming a member of the Church; "The acknowledgement of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League, and in consistence with this, acknowledging the renovation of these Covenants at Auchinsaugh, 1712, to be agreeable to the Word of God".²

There was, however, an almost imperceptible change of attitude towards this principle during Symington's lifetime. Indications of dissatisfaction with the "IV Term of Communion" as stated above, are to be found in Presbyterian records shortly after the turn of the century. The reference to the Auchinsaugh renewals was deleted in 1622. Frequent appeals for covenant renewal from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America and Ireland appeared in Synod minutes. They were cordially received and a "Draught of Covenant Renovation" was prepared for final approval,³ but the movement failed in Scotland while succeeding in the other two countries. Eight years after William Symington's death, Synod under pressure from the union movement, removed the reference to Covenanting from the formula "... to be used in the ordination of ministers and ruling elders, and in the licensure of probationers".⁴ Two years later the fourth term of Communion had been completely removed and in 1873 the Original Secession magazine could say:

It is not altogether unnoticeable here that the Reformed Presbyterian Synod's committee, though representatives of

¹Watt, H., Recalling the Scottish Covenants, p. 76.

²Terms of Communion for the Reformed Presbyterian Church, (1762); See also Hutchison, op. cit., p. 213.

³This paper was filed with the "minutes" of the Reformed Presbytery and Synod, in Trinity College Library, Glasgow. See also Extracts of Synod Minutes for October 1840, Session V, November 1842, Sessions II and V, July 1844, Session IV, and others.

⁴Extracts of Synod Minutes for May 1870, Session IV.
those who so long claimed to be Covenanters par excellence, has entirely ignored the Covenants and the doctrine of covenant obligation, in the statement of principles given in to the Joint-Committee.

The trend was towards Hutchison's view of the covenants as being "... a somewhat extravagant conception of the literal obligation of a deed which, though it served a good purpose in its day, was after all an expedient to meet a particular emergency". But the trend did not produce any important changes until after Symington's death. Had he lived ten years longer, the issue might have been different for we find him applying the principle of the covenants to the circumstances and events of the 19th century in a very practical way. He wrote of them spoke for them, and practised them in private.

The application of the principle of the covenants produced some very interesting and important influences in the 19th century. Symington and his colleagues believed that the significance of the covenants was to be seen in their relationship to the Reformation. They were the high-water mark of the two Reformations, the evidence indicating that the Reformation had already taken place. They were a national, corporate profession of faith in Christ, and in them Scotland had acknowledged her "Christianizing" and recognized the claims that Christ had upon her. It made a difference, not only externally, between Scotland and other countries which had not yet heard the full proclamation of the Gospel and made such a profession of faith; it also made a difference internally, to her individual citizens, to her Churches and particularly to her civil government. The national Covenants had set Scotland apart - for Christ - and therefore all signs of sin were somehow worse and all signs of revival and Christian development were more appropriate and welcome. There was for example, in this principle of the covenants, an added reason for welcoming the waves of revival that swept across the nation, both from the work of the Haldanes and Andrew Thomson,³

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¹As quoted by J. C. Johnston in Treasurey of the Scottish Covenant, p. 220.
²Hutchison, op. cit., p. 119.
³Ibid., p. 249; Hutchison defended the attitude of the church towards the Haldanes and he might have quoted from the Minutes of Synod, May 1827 and April 1828 wherein the Synod sent to Mr. Robert Haldane and Mr. Andrew Thomson letters expressing appreciation for what they had done for reform in their nation, to which both men replied the following year.
and in connection with the work of Rowland Hill whose words were sometimes quoted by Symington. To some extent it was the influence of the covenants that made William Symington, dissenter, happy to lend the use of his church building in Stranraer to Thomas Chalmers, established Churchman, when Chalmers was pressing his church extension programme in South West Scotland. They also help to explain the interest of the Reformed Presbyterians in the growth of evangelical spirit and power leading up to the Disruption, and following it, their words and deeds of encouragement in the period of reconstruction. But the interest the covenants produced in the field of church reform was no greater than the interest they engendered in the field of political reform. These men were almost as much concerned with what Cockburn referred to as "the regeneration of Scotland," the passing of the two reform bills and the resultant use of the franchise, as they were with the Disruption. The Covenants also furnished one basis for their activities in the field of social reform. They provided another incentive, sending Symington and other members of his Church forth with their widespread testimony from platform and pamphlet in protest against the encroachments of a rapidly growing industrial economy which threatened the rights and duties of the citizens of a "covenanted" nation. With the covenants in their hands they opposed the Sabbath Railway, Sabbath Mails, industrial slavery, poor schooling, and they worked to overcome the widespread industrial-produced poverty and even more widespread intemperance. All of these social problems became moral evils that were particularly serious in a "covenanted" nation. Nor did the influence of the covenants leave these men with a more provincial or sectarian outlook. The Solemn League furnished them with a basis for whole-hearted co-operation with the Evangelical Alliance; and the presence of William Symington and his brother Andrew, along with other Reformed Presbyterian ministers, at the first meetings of the Alliance in London in 1846, is an interesting application of that covenant. Symington insisted that it had been the "explicit design" of the Solemn League and Covenant

... to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity, and to encourage other Christian churches to join in the same or like association and covenant, to the enlargement of the kingdom.

1 Cockburn, Memoriale, p. 5.
of Jesus Christ, and the peace and tranquility of Christ's kingdoms and Commonwealths.¹

To these men, Scotland with her citizens, her land, her government, and her Church - in all their capacities - had already been sworn away to Christ as their appointed King, and that covenant oath was no ordinary agreement. It was a perpetual bond of a scriptural and moral content which could not be broken without incurring the sin of perjury. But the principle of the covenants also forbade the idea of an unwilling or slavish obedience. Covenanting was a privilege and Symington once described the attitude it produced within the minds of 19th century Covenanters, in this case in connection with the work and unity of the Church in Scotland:

Eager to do our part, as honest men, as sincere christians, and soundhearted patriots, in advancing a consummation so devoutly to be wished, we venture to give forth as the watchword to be sent universally round, the death cry of the martyred Guthrie 'The Covenants, The Covenants, shall yet be Scotland's Reviving!'²

2. The doctrine of the Sole Headship of Christ over the Church was, in the eyes of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of the 19th century, "... the grand and leading principle of the Second Reformation, into which all its other principles may be resolved".³ The struggle with Popery and Prelacy developed the doctrine. Opposition to all forms of Erastianism was clearly traceable after the Second Reformation in the objections of the Covenanters to Cromwell's 'high-handed' methods.⁴ It was behind their objection to the supremacy of the king "in causes ecclesiastical" after the restoration. It caused them to object to the Indulgences, and finally to the method by which the Revolution Settlement was made, as well as to the nature of the settlement itself.

This doctrine might well be said to be the most important reason for

⁴ Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland: Historical and Doctrinal, Glasgow 1844, pp 7, 110, 111.
the refusal of the Societies to join in the Revolution Settlement and the reason for continued and increasing criticism of the established church in the troublous times preceding 1843. The patronage controversy, Secession and Relief movements along with some of their later divisions, and the Disruption itself have shown, as only history can show, that they were correct in alleging that the Revolution Settlement, for which they had so long contended, was Erastian in nature and that the new Establishment was to some extent, in bondage to the State. The Secessions, however, were not protests against the pure principle of Erastianism so much as a protest against practices arising from the Erastian establishment of the Church, and here we find one basic difference between William Symington's Church and the other major dissenting bodies of the land - the Seceders. The Reformed Presbytery objected not merely to the abuses and practical evils when these occurred, but to the principle of Erastianism as well. Even if there had been no state interference, or patronage controversy, or "Strathbogie tangle", or other reasons for dissenting, seceding, and disrupting, the Reformed Presbytery would still have opposed the principle of Erastianism which she saw in the constitution document of the Revolution Church. Nor can we condemn them too severely for this. If Erastianism in practice justified the Secessions and the Disruption, then Erastianism in principle justified their refusal to unite in 1690 and 1743.

It was this doctrine primarily that determined the Reformed Presbyterian position with respect to the Voluntary controversy for while it did imply to them the spiritual independence of the church, it did not imply opposition to the principle of Establishment which they found presupposed in the Solemn League and Covenant. They were very strongly in favour of a "properly" established church. Erastianism was not any connection between State and Church (or religion), but the claim of the State to be supreme over the Church. William Symington pressed the point of the necessity of a properly established church so successfully in his book entitled, The Mediatorial Dominion of the Messiah the Prince, that an edition printed in Philadelphia

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1 A. P. Stanley surely missed this distinction, misunderstood their description of the State's ratification of Church legislation during the Second Reformation, and neglected the fact that a Christian civil government was a basic requirement and contention, in Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland, pp 77, 78, and others.
in 1848 made the following warning in the preface: "At two points the American publishers ... would dissent from the conclusions in the ninth chapter as to the relations of church and state. These points are the adoption by the state of the creed of the church, and the bestowal upon the church, by the state, of direct pecuniary support". This doctrine, as borne out in the spiritual independence of the Church, was one of twin basic prerequisites for all proper Church-State relationships. The other requirement was a Christian Civil Government.

Their conception of the proper Church-State relationship, as found in substance in the Second Book of Discipline, the Solemn League, and their own Testimony,\(^1\) was to have each institution founded upon a profession of the Word of God, independent and supreme in its own sphere, but united in an alliance of mutual support and helpfulness for the purpose of building Christ's kingdom on earth. The Church was to teach the Christian doctrine of the civil magistrate and the State was to acknowledge and to ratify the position of the church by appropriate legislation. The Church was to be subject only to Christ, even though established as the national church.\(^2\)

It was this doctrine that furnished the Reformed Presbyterian Church with the historically high ground of objection on the basis of principle, from which to look on with great interest at the struggles and controversies of the established church, centered as they were in this period around this doctrine, and, with an attitude akin to fatherly concern, to encourage the Evangelicals to action by lecture series and printed page; all the while setting the example by their own free practices of choosing and installing their own pastors. Their sentiments and attitudes were represented by Andrew Symington when he said, "My heart revolts at the thought of the church of Christ being tolerated in a kingdom!"\(^3\) In speaking to the other churches of that day they said:

As the supremacy of the Redeemer is the grand principle of the Second Reformation, so consent to the regal resumption

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\(^1\)Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland: Historical and Doctrinal, Glasgow 1844, pp 331ff.

\(^2\)Chalmers called down criticism on his explanation of the establishment as being "A certain legal provision for the ministrations of Christianity". It was denounced as "... a partial and inferior view of the subject", in Lectures on the Principles of the Second Reformation, p. 26.

\(^3\)Symington, Andrew, Lecture VI, in Lectures on the Principles of the Second Reformation, p. 21.
of the prerogative was the source of all the evils at the Revolution ... With what unspeakable advantage would the present arguments for the church's independence be helped, if an appeal could be made to the unequivocal acts of the Second Reformation, when supremacy over the church had no place in the prerogatives of royalty ... the church would stand, and consistently profess to stand, in her liberty ...

Professor Watt has indicated in his revealing study of Chalmers and the Disruption, that the Reformed Presbyterian Synod was a "salient feature" of the ecclesiastical scene of the day; and such statement of this principle, repeated in series of lectures by capable and respected ministers and later published, would be bound to have a telling if unrecordable effect on the common churchman at that critical period just prior to the Disruption. They did not cause the Disruption any more than did M'Crie's works, but both were encouraging factors. Symington himself evinced so much interest in the Disruption that he was once invited to join the Free Church. His reply was significant, "Nay, for with a great sum you have purchased this freedom, but we were free-born!"

3. The Doctrine of a Christian Civil Government (i.e. a Civil Government with a definite Christian influence) was based on the Reformed Presbyterian conception of the Mediatorial Dominion of Christ in its relationship to nations. According to this, God the Father has appointed his Son, not merely in his divine nature as God, but in his Mediatorial office as God-man to rule over the nations and universe throughout this present age and to the end of the world in order to work out his will. It too had evolved from the Reformation

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1Ibid., pp 27, 28.

2Watt, H., Chalmers and the Disruption, p. 8.

3The quotation is an oral tradition in the Symington family and substantially the same as that in the "Memoir of the Author", which was written by his sons Wm. and A.M. Symington, and added as a preface to the last edition, 1881, of Messiah the Prince. It was stated by Miss Marion Symington in an interview with Roy Blackwood at her home in Edinburgh; see "Memoir of the Author" p. lxxviii.

4The important place this doctrine occupied in the first Testimony of 1761 is to be seen in the necessity for the warning in the introduction against anyone's thinking the testimony was intended as a manual of Civil Magistracy, Vide, Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland: Historical and Doctrinal, Glasgow 1844, pp 283, 284, 331.
and, as will be seen more clearly later, was closely related to the view that Kings, Nobles and all the machinery of civil government could be useful to Christ in the establishment of His Kingdom and had been given in covenant to Him as Lord of Nations.

One major development of the doctrine came to be commonly accepted during the persecuting times, namely the distinction between God's preceptive will and his providential will. A dictatorial monarch who ignored the precepts of Scripture might exist by the providential will of God but for God to command obedience to such tyranny would make him the author of sin, which was not possible. At that time there seems to have been no distinction made between moral and civil rights, and the Covenanters led by Cameron had completely disowned the Stuart government, not simply as a non-Christian government, but as a perjured usurpation of Christ's crown. They believed that their action had been made necessary by a covenant-breaking king who was working against the progress of Christ's kingdom. This doctrine too was a major reason for dissent at the time of the Revolution Settlement and in the post-revolution period, coupled as it necessarily was with the ignoring of the covenants. Two other distinctions were later defined. The first was a distinction made between nations not favoured with the light of divine revelation, (co-operation according to the dictates of conscience being enjoined as a means of winning them), and nations so favoured. The second distinction was made between obeying a previously enlightened nation now rejecting Christ, and "Homologating" or incorporating with such a nation. To them it was the duty of every Christian to live peaceably and to obey "the powers that be" by God's providential will, (e.g. paying taxes for the protection and convenience afforded), so long as it did not involve things contrary to the law of God. But this 'duty of submitting' or becoming a part of and thereby responsible for, a government which

1 vide, "The Queensferry Paper" and "Sanquhar Declaration", in History of the Church of Scotland, by Robert Wodrow (edited by Robert Burns), vol. III, pp 207-212; the same tendency toward complete separation can be seen in the Tinwald Paper and other Declarations made at Sanquhar, Lanark, etc. See also Faithful Contending Displayed, pp 464-485; and Informatory Vindication, pp 287-334.

2 Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church In Scotland: Historical and Doctrinal, Glasgow 1844, pp 332f.

3 Ibid., p. 337.
was not following God's preceptive will, and was in general working contrary to His revealed will as found in the Scriptures. As with all their doctrines, they regarded the scriptures as the very foundation of the principle and while not regarding them as a civil text-book, they did insist that the principles found there be applied to the affairs of the nation. To them this required a public national recognition of the scriptures and of the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ, to be proclaimed in covenant vow. It also required scriptural qualifications for office bearers.¹

Their position was in effect, a challenge to the right of the "secular" or "non-Christian" state to exist in God's world.² There were two possible relationships between the individual citizen and his government as they saw it; The first was that of a subject who was in duty bound to obey all lawful commands of his ruler. The second was that of any member of a political body who had rights to be exercised or not, at discretion. In this second relationship, the member is not the ruled but the ruler, and as such he becomes an integral and responsible part of that government. The Reformed Presbyterians of Symington's day were in agreement as to the propriety of the first relationship. This did not imply their approval of the existing constitution, but was simply a recognition of the fact that by God's providential will it did exist and therefore ought to be obeyed in all things lawful so long as it continued to exist. They were not, however, in agreement about the second relationship and a "thirty years conflict" arose within the church over the question of what involved "incorporation". The conflict began in 1833, the year following the passing of the reform bill and the right to exercise the franchise. It was further developed during the years of political tension preceding the passing of the new reform bill in 1853, and ended in division the year after Symington's death, 1863. The long stifled pressure of the whole political reform movement³ was brought to bear

¹Ibid., pp 331, 340, 341.

²To the objection that this was unfair to the rights of the individual man, their reply was that in a theocratic or Christocratic system, the rights of man did not exist when found to be in opposition to the will of God.

³Cockburn, Memorials, p. 5, 17th March 1831, "It is impossible to exaggerate the ecstasy of Scotland ... There have been meetings everywhere, and a universal burst of popular feeling"; p. 16, 4th May, "The people of Scotland have probably never been in a state of greater excitement ..."; p. 18, 21st August, "If the Reform Bill should be rejected by the Lords, we are not very far from a revolution".
with overwhelming force on this one distinctive doctrine of the Church. It was the value of the franchise, the right of influence, that had to be weighed against the danger of "incorporating" and thereby approving of the sins and evils of the government. The majority decided in 1863 that the exercise of the franchise did not involve incorporation with the evils of the government. In fact, many looked upon the exercise of the franchise as their Christian covenanted duty. This principle exercised a very great influence on the thinking and ministry of William Symington, as is illustrated by the fact that nearly one-third of his book on "the Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ", is taken up with a discussion of "the Mediatorial Dominion Over the Nations".

The first two doctrines, Covenanting, and the Sole Headship of Christ over the church, were not, strictly speaking, distinctive of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; although from 1681 to 1743 those Covenanters, Cameronians or M'Millanites, whose organization later became the Reformed Presbyterian, were the only ones to hold a public testimony for them. This third doctrine of a Christian Civil Government was the distinctive characteristic of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the strictest sense. No other church maintained a testimony for it. Thus Andrew Symington could say:

The peculiarity of the dissent to which we adhere, distinguishing it from that of others who seceded at a subsequent period, lay in the views which our forefathers were constrained to take of the state; for as the ecclesiastical evils originated there, they not only dissented from ecclesiastical deeds and fellowship, they protested against the state for enacting a constitution and laws subversive, in their views, of righteousness, and of the reformation ...

In relating these three doctrines, it could be said that because they were Covenanters they found an added obligation-of-oath to proclaim the spiritual independence of the Church, and the necessity for a Christian Civil Government. But it would be better said that because they earnestly desired to see the Mediatorial Dominion of Christ recognized and carried out, in fact as well as in theory, by state as well as by church, they saw in the covenants an added means of accomplishing this. It was a privilege given by God, a privilege to which they had already been bound by the actions of their forefathers. Either way, it was the Mediatorial rights of Christ for which they were contending. The free sovereign grace of God, the authority of

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1 Symington, Andrew, Lecture I, in Lectures on the Second Reformation, p. 28.
Scripture, and the right of each person to read and interpret scripture, were important elements in all three of these principles but the three doctrines in themselves were held to be important elements in Reformation Theology, directly related to that which had been found to be of absolute divine right during the years of the Reformation.

NINETEENTH CENTURY PROGRESS

It was through these doctrines that the church carried on her witness from 1795 to 1862. She is usually listed with "Dissenting Churches" of the period, and the designation is correct if we remember that she was strongly advocating a 'properly' established church (i.e. one whose existence had been properly ratified by a Christian civil government), and just as strongly dissenting from the currently existing establishment because it could not meet these requirements. However, it would be very wrong to assume that her dissent was only negative. William Symington was helping to temper that dissent when he said:

"We must be on our guard against the meanness of interposing a dissent merely for the purpose of showing our independence or asserting our liberty ... Let us then, crucify and repress the spirit of party strife ... let us stand prepared to take to our hearts, in fraternal embrace all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity."

The growth of the church throughout this period was rapid but not phenomenal compared with others then in existence. From one Presbytery and two ministers in 1743 they increased to three Presbyteries, eleven congregations, and thirteen ministers at the formation of a Synod in 1811; to six Presbyteries, forty-three Congregations, and thirty-six ministers at the time of Symington's death in 1862. The foreign mission movement aroused great interest from the time of its beginning in 1829, the same year that Dr. Duff sailed for India. A mission was started in Canada in 1834, in New Zealand in 1842, in the New Hebrides in 1844 (where John G. Paton

\[1\] "Love One Another", in Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 203f; these same words appear in the same sermon which was also printed in the memorial volume of the Commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster (1843), p. 12. See also "The Rebuilding of Jerusalem", in Discourses on Public Occasions by William Symington, p. 134, wherein he emphasized the same point in a sermon preached as Moderator of his own Church at the opening of Synod in 1835.
laboured so effectively after 1858), and a mission to the Jews was begun in London in 1845. Ruptures in the American Church in 1833 and the Irish Church in 1840 attracted attention and concern. The first church paper was issued in 1834 bearing the name, "The Scottish Advocate". It was later known as "The Scottish Presbyterian" and still later, in 1855, as "The Reformed Presbyterian Magazine". John M'Millan III had been appointed the first professor of the theological hall in 1802 and Andrew Symington succeeded him in 1820, holding the position until his death in 1853 when two professors, Dr. Goold and Dr. William Symington, were elected to meet the rapidly increasing needs. Serious talk of union and a definite union movement are apparent from 1843 to 1876 when a majority of the ministers and congregations united with the Free Church. A successful campaign to remove church debt began in 1844, and a ministerial support scheme was started in 1846.

The influence of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on existing conditions in Scotland was probably greater during William Symington's lifetime than at any other period in her history. A number of things account for this. Hume Brown has indicated that, "Political reform and ecclesiastical conflict were the two dominant public questions in Scotland during the first half of the 19th century ..." and in view of that alone we can see how this particular church testimony embodying the covenants with their politico-ecclesiastical origin and nature, would be likely to become involved in the current events of those years. Lord Cockburn recognized something of the similarity between the actions of the "Covenanters" and the actions of the "Disrupters" when, after describing the scene at the Disruption itself he said, "No spectacle since the Revolution reminded one so forcibly of the Covenanters ...". The leaders in the Reformed Presbyterian Church were not slow to identify many points of similarity between their own struggles in the past and the current struggles of the Established Church and later of the Free Church. They literally threw themselves into the work of

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1 The Rev. John Thorburn was chosen for the office in 1785 but died before serving, Vide, Hutchison, op. cit., p. 245.


Testimony Bearing in order that the three basic principles of the Reformation might be brought to bear upon the people of Scotland at this particular time. A new edition of the Testimony was completed in 1839 in the midst of "The Ten Years Conflict". Lectures on Second Reformation Principles were delivered and printed early in 1841. Congratulatory addressed were exchanged with the new "Free" Church in 1843. Participation in the nation-wide commemoration of the Tercentenary of the Scottish Reformation was arranged, and a further special meeting of the Synod was called in August of that same year for the planning and delivery of more lectures on Reformation Principles. It was also true that in Scotland as a whole dissent in general was stronger. The union movement had not as yet produced any very great results and therefore each denominational voice was proportionately louder. The most important reasons, however, for the influence of this church at this time are to be seen in the principles inherent in her own testimony and relevant to the existing controversies, and in the extraordinary effort made to influence men and churches. To the church and the nation in 19th Century Scotland, these men were saying:

With your Bibles in your hands, declare your ecclesiastical and political position, vindicate it from misrepresentation and aspersion, assert the obligations and true interests and honours of the land, testify against ecclesiastical defection and national sin, and from the long suffering of God ... call to repentance.

The conception of the church as a witnessing agent has been developed in Scottish Church history in a particular way. Principles have been made to live by far-sighted men of every generation, often working, Athanasius-like, as a separate minority until they saw that for which they contended accepted and proclaimed, or in more familiar words, "until defections be condemned and offences removed". The testimony of this church rose out of the depths of the Second Reformation, through one of the most glorious chapters of Scotland's ecclesiastical history, to new heights of usefulness, just preceding the Disruption, and then continued with almost unabated force

1 Extracts of Synod Minutes for November 1842, Session VII. See also July 1843, Session II.

until the ranks were decimated by the division of 1863. She brought to the troubled ecclesiastical scene of the 19th century, a fresh and practical reminder of the experiences and accomplishments of the Reformation, and it was in this "golden age" of the Reformed Presbyterian Church Testimony that William Symington served his church, his nation, and his King. It is in the light of this origin and history, with the significance of this name and the history of these principles and testimonies before us, that we must understand his thought and actions.
CHAPTER II

EARLY INFLUENCES

Name To These Days
CHAPTER II

EARLY INFLUENCES

The name of Symington is an abbreviation of the words, Symon's town, and can be traced with reasonable accuracy to the fourteenth Century when, sometime between 1306 and 1329, Robert the Bruce gave,

Thome filio Ricardi, delecto et fidelis nostro, pro homa homaggio et servicio suo, totam baroniam de Symundstoun, cum pertinenciis, infra vicecomitatum de Lanark: Tenendam et habendam eadem Thome et heredibus suis ...

This Thomas Dickson was also made keeper of the Castle of Douglas probably for helping to recover it from the English, took the name of his lands and became "the progenitor of the Symington family." The first "William" appeared in 1419 as Captain of the Castle of Douglas and the family tree is traceable with little question from the 19th Century back to Dr. William Symington's ninth grandfather in 1476. From that year down through twelve generations, none of whom were ministers, the name "William" appears five times before it was given to the boy born in 1795 who was to become the object of this research, and who in turn gave it to his oldest son.

The location of the ancestral home is of some significance, for centred as it was in Lanarkshire near the base of the Hills of Tinto, in the very heart of the Covenanting Country, it meant that the families living there could hardly help becoming involved in the persecutions which led to the Revolution Settlement. Privy Council Records and Wodrow's lists of Refugees show where the sympathies of the Symington family lay during the

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1 Registrum Magni Sigilli, Vol. 1, p. 15; (To be found in the Registry House in Edinburgh). See also, "Genealogy of the Symington Family, by Henry Paton, Edinburgh 1908, p. 5.

2 Paton, H., Genealogy of the Symington Family, p. 6.

3 Ibid., p. 7; Vide, Appendix C.

persecuting years and lend credence to the family traditions which even
today speak almost with reverence of the "troubous times", and hold as
a long treasured family heirloom one of the old banners, "For Christ and
the Covenants" - perhaps carried at the battle of Rullion Green.  

William Symington's father, William Senior, was born on this farm in
1761, the seventh of eight children and he himself was no stranger to the
catechising visits of the ministers of the Society Folk.  
It was not the
fortune or the fate of William Junior to be born and reared on this farm.
William Senior was one of thousands swept from farm to city by the irre-
sistable and often ruthless currents of the industrial revolution. It not
only determined the birth-place of his son, but continued with growing
force to play an important role in all the events of the period. He moved
to Paisley at a time when textiles were Scotland's most important industry
and Paisley Shawls were beginning to become well known. As one of the
"philosophical weavers", an influential class of respectable, generally
intelligent and often well-read craftsmen who grew up around this industry,
his son, who would have earned good wages; for around the turn of the century they
were in great demand. Whether due to poor health, or the acquisition of
capital coupled with a shrewd foresight of the distress about to be caused
by the introduction of power machinery, he left the loom to become a linen

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1 Now in possession of Miss Marion Symington, granddaughter of Dr. Andrew
Symington, who is living at 9 Plewlands Terrace, in Edinburgh.

2 Vide, "Memoir of the Author", being a preface written by William
Symington's sons in the last edition of his book, Messiah the Prince (1881)
(Hereinafter referred to as Memoir), p. xviii, wherein Dr. Symington's son
tells how his grandfather, as a boy, was embarrassed by the catechising of
one of the older ministers, "probably" John Fairley.

3 Grant, I. F., The Economic History of Scotland, pp 242, 243, 251, "Times
were propitious for a man of the right type to start in a small way and to
enlarge his activities".

4 Lockhart, J. G., Peter's Letters to His Kinsfolk, in letter 79 Lockhart
describes in a very complimentary way a discussion he enjoyed with a Paisley
weaver; See also, Brown, H., History of Scotland, vol. III, p. 396; And Galt,

5 Grant, I. F., The Economic History of Scotland, pp 242, 243, "A four days'
working week maintained them in considerable comfort"; See also, Mackintosh,

6 Memoir, p. xix.

7 Grant, I. F., The Economic History of Scotland, p. 244, wages fell from
thirty shillings in 1800 to seven shillings, sixpence in 1840.
and woollen merchant. It was into this home of a middle class, independent merchant, in the midst of the rapidly growing town of Paisley, that William Symington was born on the second day of June, 1795.\footnote{MSS Journal written by William Symington (Hereinafter referred to as Journal), for 2 June 1845, "This day fifty years old"; This Journal is now to be found in the office of Mr. A. M. Symington, London.} His boyhood was shadowed by the horrors and disturbances of the French Revolution.\footnote{Lord Cockburn's statement is vivid, "Everything rung, and was connected, with the Revolution in France; which, for above 20 years was, or was made, the all in all. Everything, not this or that thing, but literally everything, was soaked in this one event", in Memorials of His Time, pp 86, 279; See also, Brown, H., History of Scotland, vol. III, p. 378; And John Parkhill described Paisley as a centre of disturbance and reform during these years, in The History of Paisley, p. 34.} The Industrial Revolution brought with it the virtues of convenience, good markets, high wages and comparative luxury; but it also brought counterbalancing vices of epidemics, political oppression, and near revolt. These were the social and economic "growing pains"\footnote{The expression is taken from Professor Watt's Chalmers and the Disruption, p. 20.} of the country, and William Symington grew with them.

That it was a godly home there can be little doubt. The influence of the paternal homestead had been passed on, almost anxiously, by means of a brotherly correspondence\footnote{Vide, e.g., a letter dated 23 July 1792 from Andrew, one of the Uncles, to his brother William Senior. "God's promise standeth shure, realising that the LORD may bless our former correspondence Brother, I enjoihe and wish you to go to the throne of grace and plead for Straitness of hart and maind to wait on GOD and his promise", Miss Marion Symington, Edinburgh.} and in 1784 William Senior chose a wife of whom her grandsons could later say she was "... a helpmeet of strong natural good sense and sterling Christian worth, and the member of a family distinguished for godliness".\footnote{Memoir, p. xix.} Evidence of William Senior's character, ability and continuing interest in the work and welfare of the church is to be found in the frequent appearance of his name in the church records. He was active among the "Societies",\footnote{Vide, Appendix A.} "one of the principal pillars" of the newly formed Paisley Reformed Presbyterian Congregation,\footnote{Macfee, Robert; The Cameronians ... With Special Reference to the Paisley Congregation, p. 61.} an able and respected member of the Old
Reformed Presbyterian, one of the ruling elders constituting the first meeting of Synod in 1811, and for many years an active member of it. One of the most interesting indications of his ability, interests, and success in the work of the church is to be seen in his appearance and subsequent acceptance of an "honourary" position in the court of the Southern Presbytery on the day of William Junior's ordination. He was described as a "... pious merchant in Paisley... shrewd, genial, and yet deeply religious", one who "evinced in his religion much of the 'joy unspeakable'". In a letter of consolation sent to his mother shortly after his father's death, Andrew wrote of the family love and faith, "... your must have a constant remembrance of your loss. But we have hope that he is with Christ. 0 to be enabled to follow. All things shall work together for good to them that love God. I pray that you may be sustained in your trial and that when you mourn over a departed husband, and we over a dear parent, that we may have grounds to comfort one another with these words, so shall he be ever with the Lord." It was also said that these godly parents taught their family "... as they had themselves been trained in intelligent attachment to the principles of the Scottish Covenanted Reformation, and in the love and practice of holiness." Such evidences of godliness in the midst of surrounding turbulence had their source in those scenes from which "old Scotia's grandeur springs"; scenes which have already been vividly described by one who was almost a contemporary. William was the sixth of a family of three girls and five boys. Of

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1J. Sprott said, "If any member of presbytery wandered from the question before the house, he was sharply put to right by William Symington, Elder from Paisley, who told them that the best order was kept in Church Courts by the Kirk of Scotland", in Memorials of the Rev. John Sprott, pp 203, 204.

2MSS Minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod for May 1811, to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.

3MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery for 13th August 1819, to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.

4Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, March 1862, "Memorial" of Wm. Symington.

5MSS letter from Andrew Symington to his mother dated 26th June, no year, Miss Marion Symington, Edinburgh.

6Memoir, p. xix. 7Vide, Robert Burns' "The Cottar's Saturday Night".

8Vide, Appendix, A.
all these it was Andrew, the oldest and ten years his senior, a man of outstanding ability, who was destined to exercise the greatest influence in William's life. His was a mind of keen analytical qualities, perhaps more profound but not less practical than William's. His native ability, early scholastic attainments at the University of Glasgow, wide range of theological knowledge, and early reputation for genuine personal piety, combined to make him the unanimous choice of the church for the recently vacated chair of professor of the theological hall in 1820. At the time of his death thirty-three years later it was said that he had been responsible for the early theological instruction of five-sixths of the ministers of the church. His name appeared often in Presbyterial and Synod Minutes when he was assigned the difficult tasks and positions on important committees dealing with delicate matters, or was entrusted, almost alone, with responsibilities such as the writing of the Doctrinal Part of the new Testimony, or the Book of Discipline. His entire life was one of service to the church and unlike William he was content to allow his time and pen to be almost completely occupied with duties thrust upon him by Synod. His abilities and accomplishments were recognized when the degrees of Doctor of Divinity were conferred upon him by the University of Philadelphia in 1831 and the University of Glasgow in 1840. Another indication of the opinions of others came from the Paisley Journal, "Among all the men who, in any capacity, have been wont to appear before the public of Paisley in our day, no one has commended such universal respect, or been regarded with such profound veneration and sincere affection as Dr. Andrew Symington ...". The Theological Hall committee paid tribute by saying, "... it is a simple fact, which needs neither proof nor comment, that since the Revolution, the

1 He received prizes in Logic, Ethic, Natural Philosophy, and Greek Classes, See Addison, W. I., Prize Lists of the University of Glasgow, pp 90, 94, 98, 99.
3 Vide, e.g., Extracts from the Minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, for May 1834, Sessions IV, V, and May 1837, Session XIV.
4 Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 95.
5 Paisley Journal, September 24, 1853, p. 4; See also Paisley Herald, 26th September 1853; And Glasgow Herald, 23rd September 1853; And Brown, Robert, History of the Paisley Grammar School, p. 211.
grave never closed over a man to whom our church is under deeper obligations."

The two men, William and Andrew, have often been referred to by later historians as the ecclesiastical representatives of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of that period. The early fraternal fellowship of the home was developed and deepened by the later ministerial fellowship of the church. Andrew from the very first looked on with timely words of encouragement and advice and William responded with a confidence and willingness to accept valuable counsel that made their relationship a truly remarkable feature of both lives. No name appears in William’s Journal more often than does that of his brother Andrew. On the day of Andrew’s death we find the following entry: "May I have grace to improve it by following the dear departed in his faith, holiness, humility and devotedness — by occupying till Christ come — and by standing ready for the call of my D. Master. 'Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his!'" Near the conclusion of a remarkable funeral sermon delivered on that occasion to the sorrowing Paisley congregation he addressed himself in one very moving passage, directly to his brother with the words, "... I shall seek to think less of earth that thou hast left us, and more of heaven, that thou hast entered it. And should I, worthy I, — through that atoning blood of God's own Son, which is able to cleanse from all sin and save to the uttermost — should I ever be permitted to enter those happy mansions, after having saluted the blessed Saviour, I shall look round for thee and rush into thy fraternal embrace!"

It has been correctly stated that Andrew was to William a second father. No one person wielded a greater influence over his life and thought. There were few, if any, important points of difference in their theological thought or practices.

1Hutchison, M., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 310.
2J. R. Fleming, in describing the personnel of the Church in Scotland around 1843, pointed out that "The brothers Symington lent distinction to the Reformed Presbyterian body ...", in The Church in Scotland 1843–1874, p. 14; John Macleod listed "THE SYMINGTONS" as the "names of mark" in their denomination, in Scottish Theology, p. 292; And Hutcheson paid tribute with the words, "par nobile fraterna", in The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 269, see also p. 310.

3Journal, 22 September, 1853.
4Symington, Wm., Departed Worth and Greatness Lamented, pp 27f.
5Memoir, p. lxxii.
The first eight years of William Symington's formal education are not as important for their direct educational influences as they are for their indirect or reactionary influences. There is no information as to which of the three Paisley English Schools he attended from 1801 to 1803 and there are no records extant to show how many scholars, what books, class routines or courses there were for those first years; but a few years later, in "The Gramar Scuil", he began the study of the Ars Grammatica under the tutorage of Mr. John Peddie. The hours were long and the curriculum consisted largely of the grammar, composition, and versification of Latin. We know nothing of his early scholastic accomplishments but the fact that he was never enrolled in the "Humanity" class at Glasgow College indicates that he had acquired knowledge of Latin at the Paisley school.

1 R. Brown reported that "In May, 1810, the three English teachers applied for permission to raise the school fees ...", in The History of the Paisley Grammar School, p. 288.

2 Ibid., p. 297.

3 Ibid., pp 164, 165; The old inscription, dated 1586, was placed over the entrance to the new building erected in 1802 and the motto, "Disce Puer aut abi", would have been known to Symington. The "Academy" referred to in the sketch of Wm. Symington's life in the Reformed Presbyterian Magazine for March 1862, was not completed until later; see Brown, R., History of the Paisley Grammar School, p. 259; and Grant, James, History of the Burgh Schools of Scotland, pp 125, 126.


5 Brown thought highly of Peddie. He was once offered the Mastership of the Glasgow Grammar School, presided at the general meeting of Burgh and Parochial schoolmasters in 1831, and it was said of him, "Knowing how much future success depends on the manner in which the foundation is laid, it was his particular study to make the young committed to his charge well acquainted with the elements and to form in them those habits of accuracy in which he himself been trained", in The History of the Paisley Grammar School, p. 179.

6 Ibid., p. 174; See also Grant, J., op. cit., pp 330, 336, 338.

7 The statement of Wm. Symington's son is unverified, in Memoir, p. xx, because there were no prize lists in the Paisley schools prior to 1821; Vide, Brown, op. cit., pp 167, 493.

8 Murray, David, Memories of the Old University of Glasgow, p. 208, "the term 'Humanity' as the equivalent of 'Latin'".
Outside the classroom he seems to have played a leading role in the school-boy activities of his classmates and his physical stature and strength, general temperament and willingness to lead, remind one not a little of MacEwen's biographical picture of Cairns. An old family servant bore evidence at once of his early parental dedication to the ministry and of the 'school-boy normality' of these years when he once provoked her into making the dire prediction that, "They'll be scant o' wood for the tabernacle, if they take thee to make a pin o't." In his biographical description of another at this age and position in life, there was more than a trace of autobiography as Wm. Symington described him as having been, "... the Triton of the minnows ... He excelled in all youthful sports ... To his friends and relatives, he was affectionate and kind to a high degree; and, to speak without disguise, belonged to that large number of people whom it is easy to lead, but impossible to drive." These traits in William Symington perhaps mellowed but were not lost in later years.

It is in the few remaining portions of a brief autobiography covering these years, that we find him later analysing the moral influences of the Grammar School and speaking with deep sorrow of their affects upon his life: "I plunged into all the frivolities of thoughtless childhood. The wicked practices of my associates, in which I too readily joined, shall always be remembered with pungent grief ... the bad example of all around was too powerful to be counteracted by the pious instruction and sober walk of the domestic circle in which I lived." Later he said in tracing the evils of

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1 Vide, Memoir, p. xx; And also Ormond, D. D., A Kirk and a College in the Craigs of Stirling, p. 74.

2 MacEwen, Alex. R., Life and Letters of John Cairns, p. 22, Cairns' early gravity and maturity of judgment were not present to the same remarkable extent in Wm. Symington.

3 The incident and quotation are family traditions which I first heard from Miss Marion Symington, Edinburgh, and later found verified in substantially the same form in the Memoir, p. xx.

4 Symington, Wm., Select Remains of John Williamson ... with an account of his life, p. ix.

5 Memoir, pp xxiii, xxiv; It was of a similar school only a few years earlier that Lord Cockburn said, "The hereditary evils of the system and the place were too great for correction ... the general tone of the school was harsh. Among the boys, coarseness of language and manners was the fashion ... No lady could be seen within the walls. Nothing evidently civilized was safe. Two of the masters, in particular, were so savage, that any master doing now what they did every hour would certainly be transported", in Memorials of His Time, pp 10, 11.
the system to the roots of their cause, "Public schools, whatever advantages they may possess in other respects, are certainly not the most favourable, even under the best management, to religion and morality. Nor are the elements of a classical education, much fitted to mend the evil. On the contrary, it is a grievous defect in the system of modern education, that the Greek and Roman classics, which are taught in our seminaries, have a tendency, instead of promoting the spiritual welfare of the pupils, to injure and pollute their minds in no small degree. Besides containing many passages which, if not concealed under the veil of a dead language, no Christian father would ever permit his sons to peruse, the fascinations which they throw around vice, and the low standard of morals they assume, render their power of contamination truly fearful. Nor can it be looked upon in any other light than that of a deep and crying enormity that the manners and sentiments of barbarous and superstitious nations, should be judged the fittest models on which to form the minds of the young of a civilized and Christian country."^1 With characteristic consistency, we find him much later in life, showing his dislike of other schools by teaching his own children in his home^2 and urging other Christian parents to do likewise.^3

We do not know exactly why William Symington asked to be sent to college at the end of his last year in the Grammar School but that a personal desire and request for further education were involved, there can be little doubt for the father could easily have afforded to send more than three of his five sons for further education.^4 A number of factors were involved. Reference has already been made to the fact that he was aware of an early parental dedication to the ministry. His brother Andrew's recent scholastic records and graduations from College and Theological Hall, together with his call to the Paisley Church and his installation as their first pastor, involving a return to the family circle after an absence of seven or eight years, would have loomed as

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^1 Symington, Wm., Select Remains of John Williamson, pp 19, 20.
^2 Memoir, p. xlix.
^3 "The Evil of Ignorance", being a sermon in Discourses on Public Occasions by Wm. Symington, pp 25, 26.
^4 Vide, Appendix, A.
very important reasons in William's eyes for going on to his own College training. The building of a new church and manse and the anticipated formation of a Synod in which both father and elder brother were greatly interested, and even the unsettled state of political affairs may have been factors in the decision, but above all else in importance would have been the advice of an able father and an admired elder brother.

He entered the College of Glasgow in the autumn of 1810 at the age of fifteen and the temptations of the city were extremely real to the boy who was away from home discipline for the first time. He described himself as "... a thoughtless youth of fifteen in the heart of a great and licentious city ... not a parent's eye to watch over my youthful steps, or to awe into the external observance of moral and religious duty." To the problems of that moment were addressed some excellent specimens of those letters typical of the paternal and fraternal advice to which Wm. Symington then and later owed much.

The name, "Gullielmus Symington" appears only "In Classe Graeca" for the year 1810-11, indicating as has been suggested that his knowledge of

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1"... such had been the great demand for soldiers, and number of enlistments, that one could almost have known by sight all the young men that were left in Paisley", in Historical Notes on Paisley by J. W. Craig.

2Addison, W. I., Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow 1728-1858, for the year 1810, No. 8067.

3David Murray pointed out that "Students at this period entered the university at an early age", in Memories of the Old University of Glasgow, p. 285.

4Memoir, p. xxiv; Murray admitted the dangers of which Symington was writing when he described "the laxity of discipline on the part of the University authorities and the loose life of the places" but he chose English schools to illustrate the point and added, "It is really cruel to let any boy of fifteen be precipitated into drunkenness and debauchery", in op. cit., p. 285.

5Ibid., p. xxiii.

6Catalogues Togatorum in Academia Glasguensi, (1794-1838) (Hereinafter referred to as Class Catalogues), p. 12 (p. 211 in red numerals).
Latin was better than average, enabling him to pass directly into the
Greek Class.¹ His Greek professor was the Professor John Young, an
outstanding Greek Scholar,² an excellent teacher and a gripping orator —
even in his classes.³ He was sometimes accused of partiality in class,
but that Symington was not one of those who looked on "in blank astonish-
ment"⁴ is evident from the fact that his fourth year brought him the Greek
Prize, "For the best Essay on the use of the Infinitive Mood of the Greek
Verb for the Imperative".⁵ To this early training can be traced not only

¹Murray explained that "An intrant student was not examined prior to
the Humanity class, but he could not move on to the Greek Class until he had
submitted himself to an examination, or as it was termed made 'A Profession',
in Latin and passed satisfactorily, and in like manner he could not remove
from the Greek class to the Logic class until he had duly passed an examination
in Greek, and again he could not move into the Ethic class until he had passed
an examination in Logic", in op. cit., p. 81.

²J. H. Gray said of Young, he was "probably the best Greek Scholar that
Scotland has produced in modern times", in Autobiography of a Scotch Country
Gentleman, p. 68.

³J. G. Lockhart’s description of Young was vivid; "I was quite thunder-
struck to find him passing from a transport of sheer verbal ecstasy about the
particle into an ecstasy quite vehement and a thousand times more noble
about the deep pathetic beauty of one of Homer’s conceptions ... I dropped
for a moment all my notions of the sharp philologer ... the feelings of the
man seemed rapt up to a pitch I never beheld exemplified in any orator of
the chair. The tears gushed from his eyes amidst their fervid sparklings ...",
in Peter’s Letters to His Kinsfolk, Letter Sixty-eight, vol. III (second
edition 1819), p. 186; Captain Thomas Hamilton said that of all his professors,
"... he made the strongest and most vivid impression ... no master ever ruled
with more despotic sway the minds of his pupils". He had "the art of
communicating his knowledge beautifully and gracefully", in The Youth and
Manhood of Cyril Thornton, vol. 1, p. 95.

⁴George Gilfillan said, "... he was partial; indeed, he was only
professor to a small and superior section of his class, leaving the rest
to gaze in blank astonishment, souring often into disgust with the entire
study", in The History of a Man, p. 55. See also Gray, J. H., Autobiography
of a Scotch Country Gentleman, p. 69.

⁵Addison, W. I., Prize Lists of the University of Glasgow, p. 159.
an understanding and use of the Greek language which played an important part in his sermons, lectures, writings and teaching, but also an incentive to the development of those powers of oratory for which he was later known.

His name appears the following year "In Olasse Logica" under the instruction of Professor George Jardine, an excellent teacher whose "... great aim and object was to make his pupils think for themselves". He was criticised for not advancing the science of true logic, but J. G. Lockhart, John Wilson and others pronounced him successful in his avowed purpose. It was his ability to clarify the central issues of any discussion and to present them in a clear, well-ordered manner that later lent value to William Symington's comments in Church courts and on public platforms. His impassioned desire for orderliness of thought and statement, a feature of both his theological publications, would at least have been encouraged and developed by this teaching and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the awakening of mind ascribed by others to this instruction, but which Symington described as coming in the following year, was actually begun here. It is also possible that this class provided a mental background helpful to the events of the following summer, to which point in time he ascribed an experience of the greatest importance.

I cannot do better in describing William Symington's conversion than to summarize and finally to quote from his personal account of those influences and experiences which reached their turning point in the summer of 1812. He wrote first of the pious instruction of godly parents and of the injurious moral affects of the Grammar School; then of certain childish contemplations.

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1. Class Catalogues, p. 9 (p. 231 in red numerals).
3. James McCosh believed that "he did not advance the science of Logic or help to promote the study of it", in The Scottish Philosophy, p. 317.
5. The reference is to Symington's "Autobiography", to which reference has already been made. With the exception of those parts quoted in the "Memoir" it has been thoughtlessly destroyed.
on the "eternity of misery" and a short-lived "religious fit"; of the
temptations of Glasgow College life which had been providentially overcome
and of "the influence of a natural conscience" formed by "a regular system
of instruction". The summer communion seasons had left lasting and valuable
impressions, and further thoughts concerning Christ following a severe attack
of scarlet fever in the early summer of 1811. He described the desire to
join certain young friends at the communion table at Wishawtown later that
same summer, and shortly thereafter he questioned his mother concerning the
"nature" of the ordinance and "the pre-requisites of those to whom it was
dispensed". The following summer, at the age of seventeen, he went with a
friend to another summer communion at Laurieston near Falkirk:

From this time I think may date the commencement of my serious
impressions about divine things. The circumstances were
favourable for thought. I was hearing sermons every day; and
when I returned to my chamber there was no companion but my good
friend 1 whose mind was too much occupied about the solemn work
in which he was engaged to entertain me with trifles; and in his
absence, my Bible ... I meditated. I conversed. My mind was
in some degree impressed ... I retired in the evening to an
adjoining forest for the purpose of secret devotion ... My
meditations and reflections were overpowering. I fell upon my
knees and poured forth to God a fervent prayer that he would open
my eyes to see the spiritual import of the sacred ordinance I
was soon to witness, give me a personal interest in the glories
which it represents, and prepare me in due time for sitting down
at his table. After returning to my lodging I talked of it to
my friend, who expressed a hope that I would see it my duty soon
to join myself to the church by an open and voluntary profession,
to which I made some indistinct, evasive reply. Upon my return
home, these feelings in some measure passed away, with the
immediate cause by which they were excited. But they were keenly
revived when, not long after, an elder of the church with which my
parents are connected waited upon me and talked of the propriety
of making a public accession to the Church. 2 I mentioned several
things which had weight with me as motives to postpone so serious
a step in life. In the course of several conferences which

1 Symington's friend was Mr. Dugald Campbell who was ordained as an elder
in the Great Hamilton Street Congregation in 1812 and was still serving when
Dr. Symington went there as pastor in 1839. Thomas Binnie wrote, "He was
honoured of God to be the means of bringing to decision, a young man destined
in after years to become a prince in the Reformed Presbyterian Church", and
quoted from parts of Symington's Autobiography not included in the "Memoir",
in Sketch of the History of The First Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, pp 147f.

2 Wm. Symington's father was one of the ruling elders who approved and
helped to put into practice, "... a Memorial concerning the duty ... of church
Rulers toward young members at proper seasons", in Session Records of the
Oakshaw St. Reformed Presbyterian Church for 26th April 1812, now to be found
In the Oakshaw Street East Church of Scotland, Paisley.
followed, these were overcome, and after carefully examining
the history and testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church,
and seriously considering the nature of the sacred ordinance
to which actual church-membership gave me access, I gave myself
away to the Lord in a solemn personal covenant,¹ and thus became
a public member of the visible church by openly participating of
the Lord's Supper.² This step of my life shall never be for¬
gotten, and as I have had reason to reflect upon it with feelings
of satisfaction and delight, I earnestly hope they may continue
through eternity.³

It is both interesting and significant to find that during these same years
Thomas Chalmers was undergoing strikingly similar experiences in the manse in
Kilmarny⁴ because the two men later became good friends co-operating as leaders
of their respective Churches in the work of the Evangelical cause of the
Church in Scotland. For Chalmers it meant the changing of study habits and
attitudes. Symington was, physically, fifteen years younger and for him it
meant the beginning of a lifetime of study, work and service.

The third winter in Glasgow he enrolled "In Classe Ethica"⁵ under the
instruction of the controversial Professor Mylne⁶ and later wrote:

¹ This covenant was renewed with appropriate changes at different times
throughout his life, e.g., Vide, Journal for 30th June 1818, and 26th August
1819.

² Vide, Session Records of the Oakshaw St. Reformed Presbyterian Church
for 11th September 1812, now to be found in the Oakshaw East Church of Scot¬
land, Paisley, wherein "William Symington Junior" and others were examined
and received into membership of the church.

³ Memoir, pp xxvii, xxviii.

⁴ On February 23rd, 1811 Chalmers wrote, "I feel myself upon the eve of
some decisive transformation in point of religious sentiment" and on August
28th, 1811 he wrote, "Viewed as an experimental Christian, I am still in my
infancy", as quoted by H. Watt, in Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption, p. 36.

⁵ Class Catalogues, p. 6 (p. 252 in red numerals).

⁶ A. C. Fraser referred to him as "a remarkable personage with an air of
philosophic abstraction ... probably the most independent thinker in the
Scottish philosophical professoriate ...", in Biographia Philosophia, p. 41; Others do not deny George Gilfillan's charges that he was "... a sceptic; and
indeed, he set himself in a quiet but effectual way, to shake the belief of his
students. He openly denied and argued against eternal punishment, and sneered
at some of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity besides. Few came away from
his class without sharing more or less, in the infection, if not of his spiritual
doubts, at least of his cold, sceptical, materialistic spirit. The Moral
Philosophy Class was a kind of ice bath ... I have heard eminent Doctors of
Divinity confessing that ... the recollection of some of Mylne's half-hinted
doubts, sly suggestions, words where more was meant than the ear ... threat¬
ened to darken their faith and paralyse their exertions", in The History
of a Man, pp 90, 288, 289.
It was during this session that I began to study. And though the grave metaphysical questions of moral science were too much for my untutored mind, nevertheless a relish for philosophical inquiry was begotten which, with the ardent pursuit and final success which attended my studies, combined to render my third year at college neither unpleasant nor unprofitable.\(^1\)

Just what the trends and quirks of mental growth and reaction that could cause the "ice bath" of Professor Mylne's Moral Philosophy Class to become the stimulus awakening hitherto unknown mental powers in the Cameronian trained mind of William Symington were, we can never know. But we cannot doubt that they were stirred, for his efforts that year brought him one of the prizes, "For the best specimens of Composition on various subjects in Moral Philosophy ... and for distinguished eminence in the business of the Class".\(^2\) That intellectual curiosity was never lost but continued to grow to the year of his death.

During the fourth and final winter spent in Glasgow as a student, he was enrolled "In Classe Physica"\(^3\) which involved the study of natural philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and geography,\(^4\) we know nothing of his accomplishments.\(^5\) His name does not appear on the graduation rolls of the College,\(^6\) but that he was eligible to "sit" the examination for a degree, and that he had every reason to expect success from sitting it, is obvious from his known academic record.\(^7\)

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1. Memoir, p. xxiv.
2. Addison, W. I., Prize Lists of the University of Glasgow, p. 151.
3. Class Catalogues, p. 4 (p. 276 in red numerals).
4. "... the four subjects which qualified for a degree in Arts were Greek, Logic, Moral Philosophy or Ethic, and Natural Philosophy or Physics, which in old days included Mathematics, Astronomy and Geography", in Memories of the Old University of Glasgow by David Murray, p. 80.
5. There is no record in either the University Prize lists or in Addison's prize lists of any Mathematical Prize for William Symington. The Moral Philosophy prize was awarded him at the end of his third year, Cf., Memoir, p. xxv.
6. Murray explained that "Students of my time generally followed the curriculum required for graduation, although comparatively few sat for a degree ... A degree of Arts was of little use in advancing the graduate in the world ... no preference was given to a graduate", in Memories of the Old University of Glasgow, p. 466. See also pp 306, 307; and Coutts, James, A History of the University of Glasgow, p. 345.
7. The University of Glasgow had also decided to bestow upon Wm. Symington the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1838 but their announcement was preceded by the announcement of the same award from the University of Edinburgh and the Glasgow degree was never granted, See Memoir, p. lxv.
The summer following the completion of the prescribed college course and the inter-sessional periods of the next four years of theological hall training were very profitably spent as a tutor in the Tennant family, a special student in Glasgow, and a welcome member of his brother Andrew's newly established household in Paisley — with ready access to his library and valuable counsel. 1

He enrolled in September 1814 in the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Hall at Stirling and the four eight-week sessions 2 spent there every autumn from 1814 to 1817, "attending on the instructions of the very learned and pious Professor M'Millan", are described by him as happy busy seasons of preparation "for a station of public usefulness in the Church of Christ". 3 Those four sessions, and the inter-sessional periods which were almost as important, witnessed the further preparation of the man. He wrestled with the problem of moving to America, 5 chose a life motto, 6 and wrote the "Autobiography" which was the beginning of a record that continued to be carefully kept to the month of his death fifty years later, and was used for the purpose of evaluating or "improving" all the experiences of life in terms of

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1 Memoir, p. xxix.

2 Matriculation Book of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Hall, for September 1814; This book is now to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.

3 Ormond, D. D., A. Kirk and a College in the Craigs of Stirling, pp 50-54; Students met, from 1803 to 1819, in the session house of the Stirling Church to be taught by John M'Millan III. Hutchison found that "details as to the time and the work are wanting", and in spite of the title of his book, Ormond only manages to tell us that M'Millan's lectures were "an extemporaneous or, at least, unread comment on the Christian doctrines in the order in which they are presented in the Confession of Faith" but "from the notes of the lectures made by some of his students, it is evident that they were not mere loose impromptu effusions, but the result of much thought and study". M'Millan, it was said, "possessed a singular accuracy of thought and statement"; Vide, Hutchison, op, cit., p. 246; And Memoir, pp xxix, xxx; And Macfee, Robert, The Cameronians, p. 65.

4 Memoir, p. xxxii.

5 Letter dated Largs, 26th August 1815, addressed to Mr. Wm. Symington Junr. and signed by Mrs. C. Tennant, "I find you are still thinking of the Atlantic. You have a great deal to do before you cross it, and tho' you should, it would neither separate you from the afflictions of your friends, or prevent the manifestations of it by letters ...", Miss Marion Symington, Edinburgh; See also Memoir, p. xxxiv.

6 Journal, 19th September 1816.
his growth in grace. These records were closely related to an exegetical study of the Scriptures and a systematic course of reading with particular emphasis on the field of theology. They were closely related to resolutions concerning habits of self discipline and orderliness - all of which augured well for the development of the Theologian. As a "Probationer" he travelled on horseback throughout the length and breadth of the Church "from Perthshire to Galloway, and from Berwick to the Western Highlands" preaching to "Society" groups; and his warm Christ-centred message, high standard of scholarship, and refined style of preaching, soon placed him in great demand. His name appeared frequently in the requests made by the various Societies for "sermon supply". It was also during these years that he began to reveal a sense of responsibility for the work of the Church in Scotland. He attended meetings outside his own Church, and at least twice contributed articles to a Church paper - all of which bespoke the development of the Churchman. Perhaps the most significant accomplishment of these years in so far as his Churchmanship is concerned, is to be seen in the record of his trials for license before the Presbytery. They furnish an interesting commentary on the high standards that continued to be required by the Cameronians, as well as providing another indication of the abilities of the man. The congregations at Airdrie and Stranraer made out calls to him and at the Synod meeting in May 1819, he accepted the Call from the Stranraer congregation. On the 18th of August, 1819 in the presence of a

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1Memoir, p. xxxvii.

2Journal, January 27th, 1818, wherein he recorded attending the first meeting of the Stranraer and Kinns of Galloway Bible Society.

3In the Memoir, p. xxxiii, there is a record of two articles sent to the "Christian Instructor"; Vide, the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, vol. XIII, July 1816, pp 13-15 being an article entitled, "On the application of the name Sunday to the first day of the week", and pp 15-17 being an article entitled, "On the neglect of Christians with respect to the Holy Spirit".

4Vide, Appendix B.

5Vide, MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery, vol. I, for 9th March 1819, 11th May 1819; See also MSS Minutes of Synod (vol. for 1811-1822) pp 248, 249 for 12th May 1819; These Minutes are to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.
congregation estimated at between four and five thousand, in Stranraer, "The Revd. Andrew Symington did as the mouth of the Court with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, set apart the said Mr. William Symington to the whole work of the ministry, and then tendered an address to the minister and people".¹

The results of all these early influences can best be summarized by pointing to the life motto, chosen during this period. He continued to refer to it in determining the aim of his efforts and influence as a Churchman and Theologian, and it provided a standard of evaluation for his accomplishments. He sought to live, Mono To Theo Doxa.²

¹ Vide, MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery, vol. I, for "Stranraer 18th August 1819; See also Memoir, p. xl.

² Journal for 19th September 1816.
...the stedfast hope, that He
Would look upon His Church's misery,
And send His sinking Remnant such relief,
As would make joy succeed in place of grief,
The fainting spirits of His folk revive,
And cause poor Israel's dry bones to live,
When each disjointed bone shall come to bone,
And His poor people be unite in one:

(From An Elegy by Rev. John M'Millan)
CHAPTER III

THE STRANRAER PASTORATE

The Royal Burgh of Stranraer was, in many ways an excellent place for the young Reformed Presbyterian theologian to begin his pastoral labours and writings. It was the centre for commercial interests and social activities in that area. Situated at the head of Lochryan, the only natural harbour on Scotland's South-Western coastline, it was in constant demand as the Scottish port nearest English and Irish markets and was also the most used gateway through which the main roads from the South and East of Scotland passed on their way into the strip of land called the Rhinns of Galloway.

The population of Stranraer in 1819 numbered around 2,500 and the total population of the county of Wigtown was approximately 33,000. The people were described as being "of Celtic descent" and the minister writing the Statistical Account could say, "... the feudal feeling predominates in Wigtownshire to a greater extent than in any other county in the south of Scotland ... superstitious observances and traditionary legends abound". The "crowds" of poor-Irish "vagrants" who overran the whole county, constituting by 1839 one-fifth of the county's total population, increased these tendencies towards superstition, contributed to the appalling misery of the natives, and helped to lower the standard of living and working conditions. Stranraer, as the port of call nearest Ireland, was particularly oppressed by these immigrants who "... locate themselves in hovels erected in the lanes and outskirts of the town, and depend, in a great measure, for subsistence, on the charity of the inhabitants". Another detrimental influence of the day was described by the Stranraer minister who complained that there were "... too many retailers of whiskey, both licensed and unlicensed. The effects of it

1 In 1617, James VI, "being of deliberate mind" that the town deserved to grow because it was "very convenient for the frequent trade which will be there in buying and selling of all sort of victuals, merchandise, and other things necessary for the commodie and sustentation of our leidges in the country about ..." declared it "ane Free Burgh Royal", as quoted by Sir Andrew Agnew, in Wigtownshire (1908), p. 129.


3 Ibid., pp 96f, 219, 228.
are ... idleness, and the ruin of the health and morals of the lower sort of people".¹ The newspapers of the day for that county were filled with lurid details of "child-murder" by "unnatural mothers", "melancholy deaths" by "drowning", "starving", "drunken riot" and "suicide". These local notices appear to have been replaced in importance only by the rising interest surrounding the reform bill of 1832 and the ensuing elections.

The condition of the church in Wigtownshire from 1619 to 1639 is of more significance. The County had contributed more than her share of martyrs and loyal preachers during the era of the Covenants² but by 1619, "... evangelical preaching, at least in the Establishment was greatly wanting in and around Stranraer as well as generally throughout Galloway".³ The situation revealed itself after the Disruption when only nine of the forty-one ministers in the entire Synod of Galloway were found to belong to the Free Church. It was an era of great church leaders and they were well scattered throughout Scotland but William Symington, whether by design or otherwise, had chosen to settle in the population and trade centre of one of the few large areas which were without any great church champion, Evangelical or Moderate, Dissenter or member of the Established Church. Here he began his life work, comparatively unhindered by the denominational controversies which became so keen in other parts of the country.

The "Societies" comprising the Reformed Presbytery had always been relatively numerous and well-organized in the South-Western part of Scotland. The Galloway Societies had been among the first to deem themselves strong enough and important enough to petition Presbytery for a disjunction from

²Vide, e.g., Galloway and the Covenanters by A. S. Morton (1917).
³"Life of Major-General McDouall, C.B."

⁴"Life of Major-General McDouall, C.B.", in Monthly Series of Tracts, No. XVIII, to be found in Pamphlet Room, Trinity College Library, Glasgow; See also Cunningham, J., Church History of Scotland (second edition) vol. II, p. 413, "It is singular that they (i.e. Moderate clergy) were to be found chiefly in the west - the old seat of the Covenant", and in a footnote to this statement he added, "The assertions made in regard to this matter are very contradictory".
the "Southern Congregation", which included all the Societies south of an imaginary line drawn east and west through the Lead Hills. Their request was granted in 1782 and the Rev. James Reid was elected and ordained pastor of the new "Galloway Congregation" in 1783.\footnote{Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, pp 88, 10; Couper referred to this as the "Western division of the Southern Presbytery".} It was for this congregation only a few miles from Castle Douglas, that the four Johns; McMillan II, Courtas, Fairly, and Thorburn, held the first "Galloway" communion. A military officer estimated the number in attendance to be between ten and fifteen thousand people,\footnote{Ibid., p. 28; See also Hutchison, The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland 1690-1876, p. 228.} and in view of such numbers it is not surprising to find the "pastor" complaining of overwork. In 1796, shortly after his complaint, the Stranraer and Stoneykirk Societies were granted the right, as a separate congregation, to call a pastor. They called Robert Douglas the same year.\footnote{Ibid., pp 28, 31f.} Douglas died in 1800 and Cowan was the second Stranraer pastor, serving till his death in 1817.\footnote{Ibid., pp 93, 31f.} William Symington was "harmoniously" called to be their third pastor in 1819, only twenty-three years after their disjunction and formation as a separate congregation. The numerical strength of the "Societies" in this area may help to explain why it was that the Evangelical cause within the Church of Scotland was weak in the same area. That is, those who might have been "Evangelicals" in the Established Church, had continued to meet with the Societies which had remained outside the pale of the Establishment at the time of the Settlement, and later had formed the Reformed Presbytery.\footnote{The minister making the report for the Statistical Account for 1845 wrote "There are no chapels of ease attached to the Established Church, nor missionaries or catechists ... of the population (in 1835) 1729 belonged to the Established Church; 1033 to the Protestant Dissenting congregations ...", See Statistical Account, vol. IV, p. 97.}

Symington stepped into a highly respected pulpit with heavy and widespread responsibilities. Here again, the numbers estimated in attendance at his ordination (4 to 5,000)\footnote{"Memoir of the Author", being a preface written by William Symington's sons in the last edition of his book, Messiah the Prince (1861) (Hereinafter referred to as Memoir), p. xl; Notwithstanding the custom of travelling long distances for communions and ordinations, this would have provided some indication of Society strength in the area.} compared with the total population of Stranraer (2,500) and the county (33,000), provide one indication of the extent of...
Reformed Presbyterian influence. The very nature of the origin of the congregation was another factor. The scarcity of Society ministers implied that he had been elected pastor of an area. It was not merely a town or even a county parish as we commonly think of the terms. He was not only unrestricted by parochial boundaries, he was responsible for the spiritual welfare of all the Societies in that part of Scotland and dependent on them as well, for his stipend and the other church expenses and contributions were largely paid from the annual subscriptions levied by the twenty or more Societies making up the Stranraer Congregation. This had the very practical effect of sending him as pastor and preacher, Cameronian successor to the four Johns, into the homes and preaching stations throughout the length and breadth of the County, from the Mull of Galloway and Corsewall lighthouse on the west, to the River Bladnoch, Wigtown, and even Whithorn on the east. It was a strenuous responsibility but it resulted in an immediate and thorough introduction to the entire South-west of Scotland, which was to prove very useful.

A Covenanter Evangelical

In the midst of these circumstances William Symington established his home and began his life ministry. The records of his personal habits and family life immediately set him apart as being an Evangelical, and other 19th Century Evangelicals have left records of their spiritual life and growth similar to his, but there are in Symington's writings and actions something more of what might be called the "attitude" or "spirit" of covenanting. For example a few days before his ordination he renewed his "solemn personal covenant" with God:

I am now settled in the place where God has appointed me to labour. I have professed to dedicate my all to his service - and that I may the better employ my time and talents to his glory I propose to myself the following plan, to which it shall be my study under grace as far as possible to adhere:

1 Vide, Manager's Minute Book in custody of Mr. James Wither, Stranraer Reformed Presbyterian Congregation; Seat rents were another means of raising money, but they too were collected by representatives of each Society.
1. Rise at six - read a portion of the Scriptures both in the Old and the New Test. - pray - and apply to study till breakfast.
2. From 10 to 11 Meditate ... pray for myself - congregation and intended partner in life.
3. From 11 till 2 apply myself to the study of Theology relieving it with the languages and Biblical Criticism ...
4. From 2 to 3 receive visitors or make calls.
5. After dinner - read works not so immediately connected with Theology; history, newspapers ...
6. After tea resume studies - or continue to read ...
7. Go early to bed if possible.

The above plan shall be as closely kept as circumstances will permit till I see cause to change it. Perhaps Monday may claim exemptions from strict adherence ... May grace be imparted without wh. I can never act up to the above plan.¹

The unpredictable demands of pastoral work were allowed to break in upon this schedule, and the covenant itself was frequently changed; but to the end of his life it was not abandoned, and there is to be seen in it one illustration of the practical nature of his personal covenant life.

During his first year at Stranraer he lived in lodgings in the home of Mrs. Cowan, widow of the late pastor. His Journal, letters, and frequent trips to Paisley, however, gave interesting indications of his intentions toward the one to whom he referred in private records as "My D. Agnes". On 27th June 1820 he was united in marriage to Miss Agnes Speirs of Paisley, of whom it was later said, "a help more 'meet' in every way could not have been given".² The seven³ children were born in the Stranraer home and the sons have described their father's character and habits as "eminently domestic".⁴ One son, Robert, is buried in the Stranraer Churchyard.⁵ His tragic death, the result of an accident in the manse garden, left its mark on the mind of William Symington to the year of his death. Two other sons, William II and Alexander M., became ministers in the Reformed Presbyterian

¹MSS Journal written by Wm. Symington (hereinafter referred to as Journal), 8th August, 1819.
³Cf. Genealogy of the Symington Family by Henry Paton, pp 18, 19, wherein he failed to list Robert Symington, Dr. Symington's third son.
⁴Memoir, p. lxviii.
⁵The stone can be seen (1962) in the Reformed Presbyterian Churchyard, Stranraer.
As a father he always showed the greatest interest in the activities and welfare of the members of his household. He taught the children himself in the home when they came to school age and his continuing concern for their spiritual welfare, their intellectual development, their health, their final establishment in homes of their own, and later, the even greater interest he evidenced in "children's children", furnishes material for an important chapter in his life. That chapter has already been admirably written by two of the sons in their "Memoir of the Author", and does not require to be treated further in this work. To attempt, however, to understand William Symington apart from these family relationships is to shut out a very important source of interest and incentive and there will be reason to refer frequently to the "Memoir". In all of his family relationships, the attitude or spirit of covenanting was an important factor. Each one of his children had been dedicated to God's service on the day of birth and this covenant-type dedication was renewed from year to year on the birthday. It meant that he and his family belonged to God in so far as he could 'will' it and then, in his last will and testament, he wrote first of his continuing desires for them, that is of his prayers and blessing for their continuing spiritual growth, and then of his provision for their physical needs.

The affairs of the home, however, were never allowed to eclipse in importance the business of the study. Symington once wrote of "the remoteness of his situation at a distance from those stores of learning to which he might otherwise have had access" and in a way that reminds us of Thomas Boston, who had the same problem deep in the Ettrick forest, he set about

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1 William II was pastor of Castle Douglas congregation, then of the Great Hamilton Street congregation in Glasgow, died in 1879. Andrew M. after serving as pastor of the Dumfries congregation, accepted a call from the Birkenhead Presbyterian Church; Vide, Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, pp 122f, 132; A third son became a Glasgow business man, one daughter married Dr. Goold, pastor of the Edinburgh congregation. See also, Paton, E., op. cit., pp 18, 19.

2 Memoir, op. cit.

3 Ibid., p. xlix; The Will is to be found in the Registry House, Edinburgh, Registry of Deeds, vol. 1145, pp 663-668.

4 "James Walker has drawn a vivid picture of Thomas Boston with few books, "There, in the Ettrick Forest, without fame or other expected reward to stimulate him ..."", in Scottish Theology and Theologians (1872), pp 27-30.

correcting the situation by the strictly budgeted purchasing of books. Each trip to Glasgow or Edinburgh found him spending part of the day "at the bookstores". Each new book was received with delight and first perused in brief, then studied in detail. The works of McCrie, Trench, D'Aubigne, Wardlaw, Foster, Kitto, Edwards, and Hill, along with occasional "bundles" of pamphlets or periodicals from friends in America, were eagerly received and "digested" with care. He sometimes listed the books read during the past year as one means of reviewing the study progress for that year, and in a letter to a young co-presbyter he once wrote in a humble and somewhat humorous way of his desires and needs:

The love of books is with me a perfect mania. When I see anything particular advertised, I immediately conceive a wish to have it - I persuade myself that really I ought to have it - and between the desire to have it and the reluctance to pay for it I am on the fidgets day and night. Then some demon or other whispers, "Your credit is good, it is a good while to the month of May, before then you will have had your purse replenished with next half year's stipend" - the temptation succeeds; and off goes a post letter for the desired article, all objections, financial as well as others, being unceremoniously sent about their business. In this way I have nearly ruined myself - and the worst of it is that I am nearly incorrigible. Unlike other sinners, misery does not lead me to repent - or if I do repent, I do not at all events reform. Can you tell me what is to become of me? The jail I suppose.1

Books however, were far from being an end in themselves. In his advice to another young minister just beginning his life work, he stated his own ideals concerning the habits of the study. "You must dig deep, if you would be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed ... The very figures by which your office is described convey the idea of laborious exertion ... a shepherd, a workman, a watchman, a nurse. Considering these things, you will not content yourself with a scanty stock of ideas to be turned over and over, with scarce any perceptible variety; but you will, by habits of vigorous mental applications, study to provide your hearers from time to time with a rich and varied repast. Boast not how easily you can prepare for the pulpit, in

1MSS Letter dated 13 Fe. 1829 from Wm. Symington to Rev. Gavin Rowat, Whithorn, in Broughton House Museum, Dumfries.
how short a time you can despatch your preparation, but let your preparations bear the stamp of thought ..."¹ In answer to the problem that had tormented Chalmers and others in the nineteenth century, concerning the "proper" place of art, science or philosophy, Symington advised, "Keep pace, as far as possible, with the progress of literature and science, properly so called, but let these be always in a state of subserviency to the proper business of your profession ... handmaids to assist, not masters to command ... You are to look on yourself as a 'devoted thing'; and to labour with the assiduity of a servant whose ear has been 'bored' to the door of the tabernacle, in token that he loves the master and the house ...".²

His own study habits at Stranraer settled down into a fairly well defined weekly routine. Monday was occupied with "calling", Tuesday with reading and calling, Wednesday was devoted to "close study", Thursday to writing the sermon, Friday to the preparation and writing of the Lecture, and Saturday was usually described by the three words "Preparations all day", which came to be explained later as "committing discourses". The Tuesday and Wednesday study hours were occupied with a varied but carefully planned diet of study including theology, Biblical criticism, and history in that order of importance.³ The last three days of the week were occupied with the demands of the Services for that particular week, but even here there was a well-defined order in his sermon topics - often a sermon series covering some phase of theology - so that it might be said that at least three days of the week were devoted to a progressive study, an amassing of facts and knowledge relating to the system of divine truth and revelation. In 1821 he began a particular course of study embracing the entire system of theology and the book on Atonement was begun shortly thereafter.⁴

¹ CHARGES delivered at the ordination of the Rev. James McGill, July 21, 1829, on occasion of his being invested with the pastoral care of the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, Hightae, Dumfries-shire, By Wm. Symington, (Hereinafter referred to as Charges at McGill’s Ordination), pp 19, 20; In the Preface to this sermon Symington referred to it as a "mutual remembrancer" for himself and his own congregation.

² Ibid., p. 20.

³ In later years he tended to spend more time with history than "Greek text", the works of T. McCrie, Tytler and D'Aubigne were favorites.

⁴ His sons have referred to this in the Memoir, pp l, lxv; See also O.A., Preface p. vii.
The cultivation of personal piety was "above all", the most important duty of the study and it was to this purpose that he directed every course of study, examined every affliction and analysed every success and every failure. "Piety and holiness" he once said, "will be found the best incentives to duty ... the best qualifications, as they will enable to speak with judgment as well as with feeling, having had experience of the thing 'whereof you affirm' ... You can scarcely look for others to believe you, if you ... show that you do not believe yourself."¹ That he was "least alone" during those hours in the study at Stranraer and later at Glasgow, is obvious to anyone examining the pages of his Journal.² Four quotations, taken from the same year must suffice to illustrate the point.

In the evening began a course of reading the scriptures after wh. had more freedom in secret devotion than some time past. O that the spirit of all grace may enable me to cherish the spirit of prayer habitually ...³

After a comparatively quiet week:

The leisure for reading which I at present enjoy is delightful and I trust will turn out to be profitable. O for more spirituality and holiness! and more disposition habitually to realise eternity! God grant grace for these ends ...⁴

On his birthday:

I am this day 40 years of age and feel solemnised at the thought of having reached such a period ... The good Lord pardon my short-comings; and make the remainder of my days more useful to others and profitable to myself.⁵

New Year's Day:

Gracious God! to thee I anew dedicate myself and all my family. Help us to live to thy glory here; and when thou art pleased to remove us from this world of sin, take us to thy immediate presence for ever.⁶

¹Charges at McGill's Ordination, pp 23f.
²In the Journal for Sept. 25th 1835, Symington wrote, "I am always happy to be allowed to retire to my study and resume my solitary employment, however agreeable may have been the company of friends. O that when alone I may be 'least alone!'".
³Journal, Jan. 15th, 1835. ⁴Ibid., May 19th, 1835.
⁵Ibid., June 2nd, 1835. ⁶Ibid., Jan. 1st, 1836.
He never lost this subjective interest in his own personal covenant relationship with God. A few years after moving to Glasgow he wrote:

I find it difficult amid the toil of incessant occupation, to keep alive the flame of inward devotion. It is not the secular business of the world only, but the more sacred business of a minister's life, which is apt to trample down, or trample out, the fire of personal religion.  

A separate, remarkably detailed record of his personal devotions was begun. "Page after page" wrote his son, "to the end of his life, reveals how earnestly and prayerfully he strove to counteract these influences by courses of devotional reading, by noting the hand of God in providence, and by a solemn exercise of personal consecration once each month ...". In spite of the demands of a rapidly expanding ministry, such words as "Spent forenoon in devotion - engaged in renewal of covenant with God" appeared more frequently in later years and they were often accompanied by a prayer, such as the one on his fifty-eighth birthday, "Thou divine Spirit! work in me according to thy mighty power! Mono Theo Timae Kai Doxa". It was within this study that the decisions of his churchmanship were made and the statements of his theology were formulated, and it was from here that he stepped out into the pulpit, the community, and the work of the Church in Scotland. Dr. Binnie, in listing the "deeper causes" of his success as a preacher wrote, "He was a man of prayer ... reticent about himself almost to a fault. But secret emotion cannot be hidden. If when he entered the pulpit, his garments often smelled of myrrh, the reason, I do not doubt, was that he had just come from the presence of the King." Beyond all question Dr. Symington belonged in the Evangelical Camp in nineteenth century Scotland.

There were also to be seen here the marks of Scottish Covenanter Evangelical. The influence of the Covenant idea - the spirit of the Scottish Covenanter - is to be seen in every facet of his life from beginning to end:

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1Journal for 10th Jan. 1648.
2Memoir, p. lxxxv; In the Journal for 18th Dec. 1849 and 27th March 1858 he expressed particular "delight" with Chalmers' "Horae" and for a time patterned his own exercises after Chalmers' example.
3Journal for 2nd April 1850.
4Ibid., 2nd June 1853.
5As quoted by his sons in the Memoir, p. lxxxv; Dr. Binnie was professor of Church History in the Free Church College, Aberdeen.
in his practice of private personal covenanting; in the family covenant-dedication; and in the regular critical or subjective examination of his own systematic study of God, of the experiences of his life, and of his growth in grace. G. C. M'Crie described Federalism and Subjectivism as counterbalancing streams of influence in Scottish Theology which had helped to keep Scottish mysticism from degenerating into "the mysticism of the Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit";¹ and G. D. Henderson, in tracing "The Idea of the Covenant in Scotland" discussed the development of both the theology and the practice of social and private covenanting, and then pointed out "... the value of an ideal, social and individual, which is so prominent in the Scriptures, which gives due place to the Sovereignty of God and to the responsibility of man, to revelation and reason, grace and faith, power and love, and which declares that life in community of itself is not enough but requires to be hallowed by recognition of the active presence of God and of his glory as its chief end."² These same, counter-balancing influences were to be seen in the private records of Symington's practice of covenanting and it left him with a remarkable awareness of the sovereignty of God as made real through the person and unlimited powers of Christ in the exercise of His "Mediatorial" Kingship. At the end of a defence of the National Covenants, he once spoke of the relationship between this practice of private personal covenanting and the public social covenanting:

All other covenants, be it remembered, are founded on the covenant of grace, and can neither be acceptably entered into, nor steadfastly maintained, nor successfully prosecuted, without faith in the mediator of that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure ... no zeal, no profession, can compensate for deficiency here.³

**Pulpit Ministry**

Symington owed much of his success as a Churchman to his power as a preacher and in the opinion of the author of Our Scottish Clergy he had "no

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¹M'Crie, G. C. The Confessions of the Church of Scotland, pp 64-84, esp. pp 82f.

²Henderson, G. D., The Burning Bush, (1956) p. 74, See also pp 64, 72f; See also Hastie, Wm., The Theology of the Reformed Church in its Fundamental Principles, (1904) pp 182-203.

rival in the body to which he belongs". Beyond that, "His fame is by no means limited by denominational restriction ... he appears to no disadvantage among the most popular ministers of other sects" and "whenever he preaches - and he has preached in churches of not a few denominations - eager crowds assemble, and, enraptured, listen to his eloquent prelections". Many years later, Wm. Taylor, in the Lyman-Beecher Lectures at Yale, said of Symington's later work at Glasgow, "In a day when the pulpits of Glasgow were filled by some of the ablest men of their time, he was the equal, and in one or two respects perhaps the superior of them all. He was remarkable above most for the combination of manliness and grace which appeared both in his thinking and in his manner ...". In view of this it is well that we consider the manner and matter of his pulpit ministry.

At the hour of eleven on Sabbath morning in the Stranraer Church, William Symington could have been seen to climb the winding steps and enter the large, specially constructed pulpit with its rounded wings and over-hanging halo-like sounding board. He presented a commanding appearance to his audience. A large man, tall, well proportioned, and erect, with a large head and a habitually grave expression, he seemed never to have failed to leave the impression of great strength, power and unlimited energy, carefully held in check and used by an equally powerful and agile intellect. His face and forehead were early lined with furrows of thought which sometimes left the false impression of irritableness, causing one man to say that the "... only thing disagreeable in his appearance when speaking, is the contortion of his face, which to a stranger, has the appearance of irritation and displeasure".

His manner was described by all who heard him to be that of an "orator". His sermons were written in full, then reduced to notes which were studied "... until his mind was familiar with the whole process of thought; by prayer his soul was brought up to the level of the divine message he was charged to utter; and thus were secured the pellucid clearness, the obvious mastery, the unaffected unction, which made his preaching so attractive and useful".

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1Smith, John, Our Scottish Clergy, 1848, p. 84.
2Taylor, Wm., M., The Scottish Pulpit from the Reformation to the Present Day, being the Lyman-Beecher Lectures for 1886, p. 224.
3Smith, Our Scottish Clergy, pp 84f.
4Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, March 1862, p. 82; See also Memoir, pp xxxviii, lxxv.
5Memoir, p. lxxv.
never seems to have lost the feeling of being ill at ease for the first few minutes, but as he sensed the quickening interest of his congregation, his own earnestness revealed a growing conviction of the importance of his divinely commissioned message. Thought grew upon thought until at the point of application, as one man put it, his congregation was thrilling "as with an electric shock". On one hand he did not object to showing the "inward emotion of the soul" and insisted that a "cold phlegmatic manner but ill harmonises with the burning truth of inspiration" while a "melting tenderness of heart best becomes the servant of him who wept over Jerusalem". On the other hand he also expressed his own "decided predilection for the intellectual rather than for what has been appropriately styled the baby school of preaching", and has left us a vivid description of a particular problem within the Evangelical circle in nineteenth century Scotland:

The great doctrines of evangelical truth both admit of and require a great amount of close and accurate thinking. There are persons, we know, and persons too making no small pretensions to spirituality, who have no taste for an intellectual ministry, and who give a preference to that style of puling inanity which makes large use of exclamation, interjections, whines, shrugs, and grimaces, over that in which reason and argument predominate; who really accept such miserable expedients as the above for proofs of extraordinary piety; and who, unable to discriminate between evangelical doctrine and evangelical cant, and not over-gifted themselves with mental power, or too indolent to exert what they have, are most pleased with that which costs them the least effort to understand ... We have sometimes thought that had such worthies been alive in his day, the Apostle of the Gentiles, himself would scarcely have escaped censure, seeing he was rather addicted, in common with the preachers of the primitive age, to 'reasoning out of the scriptures'.

His own sermons were as carefully reasoned as they were intensely earnest. The morning sermon was usually topical and doctrinal in nature while the afternoon Lecture ordinarily dealt with the exposition of some book of the

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1 Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, March 1862, pp 82f.
2 Charges at McGill’s Ordination, pp 12f.
3 "Review: Lectures delivered at Broadmead Chapel, Bristol: by John Foster", in Scottish Presbyterian, March 1845, p. 69; In his Journal, 23rd Jan. 1845, Symington recorded writing this review.
4 Ibid., pp 69ff.
Bible, a Bible character, or a period of Church History from the Old or New Testament.

In matter, Symington's expressed "predilection for the intellectual" is at once apparent, and yet with all his reasoning he did not lose himself in misty attempts at thinking. The first distinctive feature in his message was his deference to "the preaching of the Gospel". He sought to make the doctrine of the atonement of Christ the "central theme" in every message. He spoke of it as the "landmark" or "meridian line" for each point in every message and it was not so much one of the doctrines which he taught as an "essential ingredient" in everything he said.¹ The second distinctive feature in his message was his profound and implicit deference to the authority of God's Word.² Every point seems to grow out of a passage from the Bible and a series of thoughts are held together by quotations of scripture in such a way that if the Scripture were to be removed, the whole point would fall to pieces without even grammatical continuity. The application of the message was usually tied so closely to the passage being studied that hearers or readers were made to feel they must evaluate their own responses in terms of that particular chapter and verse. "God speaks in his Word", Symington once wrote, "as really as if he addresses us with an audible voice from Heaven ... nor are his sayings less authoritative or interesting when they are written than when they are spoken ... Our object should not be to have Scripture on our side but to be on the side of Scripture; and however dear any sentiment may have become by being long entertained, so soon as it is seen to be contrary to the Bible, we must be prepared to abandon it without hesitation".³ The third distinctive feature of Symington's message was described by Goold as "... the unrivalled lucidity with which he could unfold

¹Charges at McGill's Ordination, pp 10f; See also O.A., p. 340, "the sacrifice of Christ as the chief article of his message, the burden of his doctrine, the central orb of the christian system which gives to every part its living energy, and binds the whole together in sweet and indissoluble union".

²Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, March 1862, wherein a friend commented on this same point, "I have sometimes tried to discover what gave the quotation such power from his lips, and the conclusion reached was simply that it was its authority ... the habit of so quoting the Word that his hearers feel that the quotation is likely to be relevant, and if relevant, will decide the question".

³"Introductory Essay" by Wm. Symington in a "New Edition" of The Holy Bible with Explanatory Notes, etc., by Thomas Scott, Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks, pp 17f; See also Memoir, p. lxxv.
momentous truth". His sermons were too long and closely reasoned to be acceptable in the twentieth century, but he tried to be plain and his explanations of the great doctrines of the Christian faith, in their relationship to the whole system of Christian faith on the one hand and their practical relationship to the lives of his hearers on the other, must also be described as a feature of his message. With few exceptions his messages dealt first with man's duty to God, second with his duty to his fellow man, and third with the scriptural means of carrying out God's will.

Symington's first published sermon preached "in aid of the Stranraer Sabbath School Society", was a typical example of his pulpit ministry in that area. For the Cameronian trained scholar, ignorance or mental indolence of any kind was oppressive and religious ignorance was anathema. His interest in the Bible School was an almost instinctive reaction to the ignorance, superstition and religious apathy of the masses surrounding his study there in Stranraer. His subject was "The Evil of Ignorance" and his text came from the words of Solomon, "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good". The first half of the sermon was an expose of conditions in the Stranraer area showing, by means of contrast with scriptural ideals, how the current want of knowledge, particularly religious knowledge, was harmful to man; intellectually, morally, socially, and religiously; and how his over-all happiness was impaired because of it. The latter half of the sermon dealt with "motives to its removal" and first among these came "respect for the divine glory". This was the end which the Diety designed in giving existence to the creatures of his land:

A being infinitely wise must always pursue the highest possible end; but no end terminating without himself can equal that which terminates in himself; whence it necessarily follows that the end of all the Almighty's works must ... respect the manifestation of his intrinsic

1 "Introductory Address at the Opening of the Reformed Presbyterian Hall, August 5th, 1862" by Dr. W. Goold, in Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, p. 338, see also pp 333, 335.

2 Charges at McGill's Ordination, pp 11ff.


4 Proverbs 19:2.
excellence ... every individual possessed of a true pious feeling, must have it as his chief desire ... to promote ... the design of God in giving existence...

The doctrine applied because "... in nothing is the glory of the Great supreme so fully displayed as in that which is the grand end of religious instruction, the salvation of sinners". The second motive for the removal of ignorance was "a benevolent regard for the best interests of the young themselves". The third motive was "an enlarged zeal for the prosperity of the Church of Christ" and the final motive in the battle against ignorance was "a patriotic concern for the good of civil society". Here the distinctive testimony of his Church asserted itself in a logical way:

... the christian religion is hostile neither to civil society nor to civil government, but on the contrary ... lays additional obligations on all who embrace it to seek the welfare of both. Every sincere Christian is a true patriot ...

Religion is essential to the good of civil society because it is essential to the good of the individual ... If these premises be admitted, it cannot be denied that religious legislators alone can be good legislators, religious magistrates alone good magistrates, and religious subjects alone good subjects ... The true secret of radical reform lies in bringing the minds of the community under the influence of religious principle.

Teachers in the school were charged to open to their students "... the Divine Revelation and produce from it convincing proofs of everything you say; and when their little hearts are agitated with grief and their eyes moistened with the starting tear at a view of their natural condition as sinners, O then seize the happy opportunity of leading them to Christ, of unfolding to them his excellency and suitableness and willingness as a Saviour, and teaching them to rely implicitly on his merits for their everlasting welfare". They were also warned that they could not hope to do this unless they had first "experienced the benefit of religion" on their own hearts. From well stated

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1"The Evil of Ignorance", in Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 15f.
2The thought was timely. Of the first purely political public meeting for Scottish Reform, held in December 1820, only four months before this sermon was published, Cockburn said, "A new day dawned on the seat of Scotch intolerance ... the eyes of all Scotland were upon it, and all Scotland tell the result", in Memorials of his Time, pp 377f.
3"The Evil of Ignorance", in Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 22f.
theological proposition to pertinent practical application he advanced thought by thought in logical order to the request for personal support of this particular work. The cross is the central theme, his first thought is for the glory of God, his second is for the duty to the individual man, the Church and the State, and his third concern is for the "proper" scriptural motives for all that is done.

Symington's pulpit ministry might be summarized by saying that the refined style or manner was that usually attributed to the Moderate, but the message was the message of an Evangelical - and it produced Evangelical results. In so far as Sabbath Schools were concerned, there had been a school in Stranraer prior to Symington's arrival, but the Stranraer Society was organized with Symington as secretary the year after his arrival. Three years later the local press reported 327 students with 35 teachers and added, "Such exertion in behalf of the rising generation must in time come to tell on the moral aspect of society." One year later at their annual meeting there were several outside speakers in addition to the Secretary, Symington. The press reported that the school had 445 pupils, provided for the weekday instruction of 40 children, was supported "by Christians of all religious denominations", and had a library of 306 volumes. As long as Symington remained in Stranraer he continued to preach for this work and to support it by other means.

McGill, who later became a highly respected minister in the Church, remembered how the members of the Church appreciated those messages; how on the evenings as they walked home, "by refreshing each other's memories with the precious truths they had been hearing, they easily beguiled the length of the journey"; and then he added, "Those discourses were to myself, as they were to many others, the chief source of mental stimulus at that

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1. *Journal*, Sabbath, Oct. 10th, 1819, he visited the Bible School, the visit was repeated on October 17th, and on Nov. 21st he recorded, "officiated at Sabbath School".

2. The *Dumfries and Galloway Courier* for Feb. 18th, 1823, no other ministers were present at this meeting.


4. In his *Journal* for Feb. 9th, 1840, during a visit to Stranraer from Glasgow, he recorded "Preached for the Sabbath School in the Relief Church to an overflowing audience; and to satisfy the crowd who could not get in repeated the sermon immediately after in the Burgher Church".
important period in life when the character is being formed". Another who was not a member of the Church wrote of the impact of the message on the area:

... the darkness of spiritual ignorance which prevailed in Wigtownshire and in parts of Kirkcudbrightshire and Dumfries-shire, was a darkness that might be felt. With a few bright exceptions, vital religion was rare, and principally existed amongst the humbler classes of society. At that time he stood almost alone in his views, aims, and efforts, and curiosity was excited. One person after another went to hear for themselves the eloquent and promising young man. Numerous objections were brought forward to deter people... But his bold, uncompromising, and lucid statements of Gospel truths were proclaimed in such attractive language, with so much earnestness, good feeling, and refinement of mind and manner, that few, I may say, none, that went once, could resist the desire and opportunity to go again. Prejudice gave way... It was interesting to observe that the topics (of conversation in the Stranraer area) were generally politics, the landlord's past and present rent-rolls, the best and wisest plan to adopt to meet the farmer's difficulties, the dangers of the coast, the Portpatrick harbour, and Mr. Symington. All admitted his pulpit abilities... his store of information, his refined taste, his intelligent eye, his beaming countenance, his power to attract, to instruct, and win; yet with all this, it was the glorious subject in hand, not himself, that was presently before the mind and powerfully fixed in it. From my father's public post he mingled amongst all classes of the community, and heard alike the comments of the county families, town residents, and naval officers as well as those of farmers, labourers, sailors and fishermen. Their remarks showed the depth and extent to which scripture truths had penetrated.

During 1619 to 1639, many whom we knew in circles all around believed, for the Gospel was powerfully sent home to the hearers of Mr. Symington by the powers of the Holy Ghost. Thus permanent friendships began, - new societies were formed - new lives began.

1. *He Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, being a sermon delivered to the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, Great Hamilton Street, Glasgow, on the Sabbath after the funeral of their late Senior Pastor, Rev. W. Symington, by Rev. James McGill, p. 17.

2. Letter written by Miss Gordon and Mrs. Mackinlay, daughters of the nephew of Sir John Dalrymple Hay, to be found in the MSS Biography of Miss Gordon, in custody of Mr. C. W. Symington, London.
There are no figures to indicate the growth of that particular part of his "congregation" which met in Stranraer but four years after his ordination "... the committee of the Reformed Presbyterian congregation ... agreed and adopted that a subscription paper should be opened for the purpose of rebuilding the meeting house, and which was duly proceeded in". The county newspapers referred to the "new meeting house for Mr. Symington's congregation" as "a measure rendered very necessary by the smallness and inconvenience of their present place of worship". The new church, which stands yet today with few changes, was opened a year later and it too continued to be filled to capacity with would-be hearers turned away at the door. His Journal often reported "house crowded", "house oppressively crowded", or "immensely crowded audience, many strangers present"; and on October 6th, 1836 he mentioned that there were "upwards of 400 members" in the congregation. There is every reason to believe that the congregation itself continued to grow throughout these years and another minister has described further results of this pulpit ministry:

"An impulse was given to the cause of religion in the whole district. A relish for evangelical preaching was widely and rapidly diffused, which not only caused his own church to be densely crowded, but which led to the erection of new churches, and the settlement of additional ministers, in other denominations as well as our own".

1 It is highly probable, judging from the contributions of the various Societies, that there could have been more than 100 active members in 1819 in the Stranraer Society, see Manager's Minute Book in custody of Mr. James Wither Stranraer Reformed Presbyterian Congregation; See also Couper, op. cit., p. 31, "About this time it is noted that in Stranraer there were 'two sectaries, Smeatonites and M'Millanites, but they were not numerous'".

2 Manager's Minute Book for 17th December 1823, see also March 1824.

3 Dumfries and Galloway Courier for January 6th, 1824.

4 The pastor is the Rev. Samuel Reid, B.A., moderator elect of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland for 1863.

5 The fact that the congregation is listed first among the dissenting churches in Stranraer in the Statistical Account for 1839-1840, is possible an indication of relative size; In a letter to Gavin Rowatt dated June 8th, 1830 Symington mentioned that "... upwards of 400 professed friends of the Redeemer had an opportunity of putting honour on their King at his table", in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright; And Journal for October 6th, 1836, "upward of 400 members"; And Extracts from the Minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod (Hereinafter referred to as Extracts from Synod Minutes) for May 1839, Session IV where in "356 members" signed a petition opposing Symington's translation; See Statistical Account vol. IV, (1845) p. 100 "The communicants on the roll last year were 447" in the Established Church.

6 McGill, J., op. cit., p. 17.
Visitation

Symington's Evangelical emphasis was also carried throughout the length and breadth of the Galloway area by means of his visitation programme. "You are to inspect the flock" he once advised a young minister, "your office is an Episcopate ... an Overseer": In the same way that a Shepherd must know every sheep, and a physician each patient, so he set himself to have knowledge "of the degree of information, the habitual conduct, the state of religion of every soul under his charge. He must know every man and teach every man!" It was not only because this was a means whereby a pastor endeared himself to his people and thereby found his ministry becoming more acceptable to them, but it was also because families were "the nurseries of the Church" and because the "domestic constitution" supplied a secret to the essential renovation of "both the Church and the Commonwealth".

S. R. Crockett, in his "Foreword" to Hay Fleming's edition of Patrick Walker's Six Saints of the Covenant, has left a vivid word picture of Symington engaged in this work:

I could recall the man so absolutely - his broad blue bonnet, his grey checked plaid, his coat deep-skirted, with flaps pinned back to the waist, his corduroy knee-breeches, his blue rig-and-fur stockings, and shoes latched with a leather tag, being as clear to me as my own kilt and bare legs paddling to school over the heather. He came on a white pony, and doffed his bonnet at our hallan door to call down a blessing on the dwelling into which he was entering.

Symington's Journal reveals a regular yearly programme of "visitation" and "examination" that took him away from home many days at a time in all kinds of weather, and covered every corner of the nine or more parishes in his

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1Charges at McGill's Ordination, by Wm. Symington, p. 15.
2Ibid.
3Ibid.
5e.g., Journal for Jan. 24th, 1835, "Since this year commenced, have been variously occupied: began it with visitation, which has been continued since in parishes of Stoneykirk, Newluce and Portpatrick".
6In the Journal for October 6th, 1836 he referred to "nine parishes" but it had been larger; Vide, Couper's statement re the New Luce congregation which had been part of the Stranraer group, in op. cit., p. 32; and Extracts of Synod Minutes for May 1839, Session IV, wherein Symington's work is described as "scattered over thirty parishes".
district. By every twentieth century standard, it would be considered exhausting. Following one long period of illness he wrote, "My complaints I ascribe to cold and fatigue ... The week before Presby. I rode ... through bogs and moors visiting in upper Leswalt, and exposed to a keen east wind. The effects of this exertion I had not thrown off when I set off for Castle Douglas." He was particularly concerned about the welfare of the members and families of the Society-folk but he obdurately refused to allow his ministry to be "limited" in any way and he once said to another minister:

As a pastor, you owe them (i.e., the people over whom you are placed) much; but, as a Minister you have a commission which knows no local limits but those of the earth... Other congregations have a right to your occasional ministrations. May 'the field is the world', in which you are sent to labour; and you must be a cosmopolite, a denizen of the world. Wherever you meet with a human soul, there you have an object of your ministry, and if you can only be instrumental in guiding a soul into the path of duty or the region of bliss, you will count yourself happy, although for this end you may have had to step beyond the boundary of your pastoral charge or of your ecclesiastical connection. The restriction of official labour within such limits, of which there has been far too much, is not more a direct injury to the community itself, than a flagrant disregard of the nature of the ministerial commission.

He called on the Society-folk, Dissenters, and members of the Established Church, rich and poor, landed gentry and merchants, with equal frequency and apparent acceptance. The Lighthouse Keeper at Corsewall Point, the young lady who knew she had not long to live, the "poor old Irish woman" not far from his home, Sir James Hay shortly after the death of his wife, and Sir Andrew and Lady Agnew were among those who received him in their homes and

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1 In the Journal for Oct. 6th, 1836, Symington listed the "large and scattered congregation" as one reason for leaving Stranraer.

2 MSS Letter dated Stranraer, 23rd February, 1830, addressed to G. Rowatt, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

3 Charges at McGill's Ordination, p. 19.


5 Ibid., 10th May 1836.

6 Ibid., 17th Jan. 1830.

7 Ibid., 17th July 1838, "Poor Sir James! May the Lord sanctify the event to him and keep him from evil".

8 Ibid., 21st May 1838, "Sir A.A. sent carriage for us ... dined and spent a very pleasant evening. May 22 spent day at Lochnaw Castle. Expounded Matt. XVII. May 23. Returned from Lochnaw."
he considered them all to be under his care. On the anniversary of his ordination he wrote, "Sixteen years have I been spared in the work of the ministry. The size and scattered state of the Congregation distresses me, as rendering it well nigh impossible to do my duties as they ought to be done. But the worldliness and unconcern of many about salvation distresses me more. There is much formality but little appearance of lively piety. The Lord send his spirit to revive!" 1

The results and importance of this aspect of Symington's work can best be seen in terms of the new congregations or preaching stations that were organized throughout his area during those years: at Whithorn, Gatehouse of Fleet, and Maishirrle in 1822, at Kilbirnie in 1824, Dumfries in 1826, Hightae in 1829, Dunsec in 1830, Sanquhar in 1832, and Eskdall-Etrick in 1835. 2 The Newton-Stewart Presbytery was formed in 1834 3 and the Dumfries Presbytery in 1836. 4 At no time in its history, before or since, has that part of Scotland shown such an increase in numbers of Reformed Presbyterian congregations and no other one Presbytery showed as much growth during those same years. The importance of Symington's actions during those particular years comes to light in the further explanation of it. Since the days when there had been a price fixed upon the head of any minister who preached at a Conviction, there had been a scarcity of ministers among the Society-folk. Up until 1763 every minister was "called" by the entire church and ordained as a pastor to the whole undivided community. Each minister lived and worked in a particular area but he was known to belong to the entire congregation. Gradually however, as there came to be more ministers and as some groups of Societies grew stronger they would request "disjunction" and permission to call a pastor of their own. If they could prove that they were able to support him, the request was granted.

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1 Ibid., 18th August, 1835.
2 These are by no means a complete list of places at which Symington preached or held other meetings, as recorded in his Journal, but it includes those places recognized in the Minutes of Presbytery and Synod and those referred to by Couper in The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland; Vide, e.g., Symington's appointments to preach in the MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery for March, April, August, 1822; 15th Sept. 1823; 7th Dec. 1824; 13th Feb. 1827; 11th March 1828; 17th March 1829; 17th June 1829; 30th March 1830; 12th Oct. 1831; 14th July 1834; 15th April 1835, and others.
3 There was in this action an indication of growth but it was in the main a renaming of the Southern Reformed Presbytery; see Extracts of Synod Minutes, for May 1834, Session IV.
4 Ibid., for May 1837, Session VIII.
but all the requests for "sermon supply", "sacrament", and for pastors could not be fulfilled and many of the widely scattered groups were rapidly disappearing. It was the people from these groups upon whom Symington was calling. He was gathering them together, reorganizing them as Societies, encouraging them to form congregations or preaching stations and to request "sermon supply" or permission to call a pastor of their own. Had that work not been done at that particular time, these people would have been lost in so far as service through Symington's church was concerned. Other men in the Presbytery were also involved in this work but it is a significant fact that of the five ministers who were in the Presbytery in 1619 when Symington was ordained, one withdrew, two were deposed and one died, before 1832.

Interdenominational Activities

Symington's ministry, however, was never limited to the work of his own denomination, and a minister in the Established Church once pointed out that Symington's position in the Reformed Presbytery opened the door to many other opportunities for Evangelical influence:

In consequence of his not being restricted, by the nature and terms of his commission within parochial limits, he not unfrequently - nay, he very often - volunteered to preach for the attainment of Christian missionary objects; and on such occasions his fame as an eloquent orator for Christian ends attracted large congregations, formed of all grades of society, and of all ecclesiastical denominations, assured as they all came to be, that nothing merely sectarian in church government would be the theme dwelt on, but chiefly 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified' as the ground and object of the Christian's faith, and the aim of the Christian's exertions.

Bible Societies were beginning to be formed throughout Scotland and Symington's co-operation in that work provides one example of his contribution to such programmes. In their history of that work in Scotland Dr. F. Knight

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1The minister was Dr. Thomas Liddell (or Liddle) who attended Symington's church while serving as a tutor for Sir A. Agnew's children. He was licensed by Stranraer Presbytery in 1827, ordained to the Chapel-of-Ease at Montrose in 1829; went to Lady Glenorchy's Church in Edinburgh in 1831; was appointed the first Principal of Queen's College, Kingston, Canada in 1841, and became pastor of Lochmaben parish in 1850. See Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae (New Edition, 1917) vol. II, p. 215; See also Centenary Retrospect of Lady Glenorchy's North Church Edinburgh (1946), pp 17, 38; And Memoir, p. lxi.
and W. C. Sommerville pointed out that "a principal cause of the early success ... was the skill by which a network of contributing auxiliaries was set up all over the land. By local committees ... with the hearty cooperation of Churchmen of all denominations, the newly formed Bible Society rapidly expanded, and its financial resources steadily increased". It was during those critical first years that Symington became involved in organizing these auxiliaries in South-Western Scotland. He attended a meeting of the Stranraer and Rhinns of Galloway Society while still a probationer at Stranraer and his first public appeal on a platform outside the bounds of his own church, two months after his ordination, was on behalf of the newly formed Society at Garliston. The county press, although often uninterested in such things, frequently noted his appearances; at Whithorn where he delivered "a very suitable and impressive sermon" to a large audience, at Gatehouse "on Sabbath", at Lochranza where he carried through the formation of a new Society, at Stranraer where a new "Ladies Bible Association" was formed, and many others. To another minister in his own Presbytery he wrote, "Most sincerely do I rejoice in the good news communicated in your very welcome letter, regarding the Bible Society. I don't think I could have rejoiced more had I been able to say, 'Gorum Magna pars tui'! I trust it is the harbinger of better times, while it illustrates forcibly how much good one spirited person can do in the way of infusing life into an institution or even a district. Our Bible Society held its annual meeting on Tuesday last, on the morning of which I rec'd your letter ... you must know I told the meeting all the good news so far as fit for their ears, and urged them to

1Typewritten MSS of the History of the National Bible Society of Scotland by Drs. Knight and Sommerville, p. 17, to be found in the Edinburgh office of the Bible Society.

2In the Journal for 27th Jan. 1818 Symington recorded attending the meeting; And in a letter to Gavin Rowatt dated 24th Dec. 1829 he referred to the Bible Society as "an institution which was the first for which I appeared as public advocate", to be found in Broughton House Museum in Kirkcudbright.

3Dumfries and Galloway Courier for 25th April, 1820.


5Ibid., 12th Nov. 1822.

6Ibid., 5th July 1825; See also 19th April 1825; 5th July 1825; 28th March 1826; 5th Feb. 1828, and others.
exertion lest the good folk of Whithorn should outstrip them in the race of pious benevolence."¹

In a speech at the anniversary meeting of the Bible Society in Edinburgh², he outlined the reasons for his own support of that work. He pointed to the "want" of Bibles in the world, so many years after "the canon of revelation was completed", as having come directly from "a want of the spirit of the Bible" and then defined that "spirit" as being one: of a submission to the will of God which would obey the command to give the Scriptures; of a faith which would teach men to believe the Word of truth; of a holiness and heavensliness which would inspire and instruct others in the practice of love and purity; and of a benevolence which would seek the "greatest good" for mankind in every way. The second half of his message was a development of this last point wherein he explained how men upon receiving the Scriptures were benefited: intellectually, morally, eternally, and socially. In connection with man's "social" benefits he referred in passing to the thought that the Bible "... instructs in the constitutional principles, official qualifications, and best administration of political government" and that it "furnishes mankind with a rational, holy, meek, practical system of religion". For these reasons it was "the proper instrument of the religious reformation of our world". His particular application for the officers of the Bible Society lay in the thought that it was not so much money, eloquence, or zeal that was needed as "a more plentiful effusion of the pure spirit of the Bible" simply because the object was not just the giving of Bibles but the glory of God through the conversion of the world to Christ. The motive must be right if this end was to be accomplished. Through it all can be seen the same three points: first, man's duty to God in fulfilling the spirit of His law; second, the benevolent duty to fellow man; and third, the concern for scriptural motives and means. The message of the cross lay behind everything else in his explanation of the ultimate object of giving Bibles and it became quite clear that his own support of this, or any, work hinged upon the scriptural test of its methods and motives. The particular teaching of his

¹MSS Letter dated Stranraer, 13th Feb. 1829, addressed to G. Rowatt, pastor at Whithorn; See also other letters to Rowatt from Symington, of the same nature, dated 20th Jan. 1829, and 24th Dec. 1829, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

²To be found in the Twenty-fifth Report of the Edinburgh Bible Society, 1834, pp 55ff.
own church concerning Christ's Lordship over nations was another reason for his interest in Bible Society work, but he did not dwell on it here. The message was a typical example of one aspect of his Evangelical ministry and it illustrates the particular contribution he was making to such interdenominational movements.

The Temperance Movement also found in Symington a willing supporter and a capable organizer. Scott and Burns have left vivid descriptions of the drinking habits of their generation and of "the national beverage" Lord Cockburn said, "Whiskey is certainly one of the curses of Scotland." More recently Professor Stewart Mechie has described the critical conditions in those years as drinking habits descended from the upper to the lower classes, with the year 1822, when the duty on spirits was reduced from seven shillings to two shillings, ten pence, being described as "the fatal year". The Stranraer area was no exception to the rule and Symington expressed particular concern about the situation in a letter dated 8 Sept. 1828. The first Temperance Society was formed by a Mr. Dunlop, Greenock advocate and member of the Church of Scotland, in 1829. Wm. Collins, founder of the publishing firm and elder under Macgill and Chalmers in the Tron Church was another recognized leader in that work and at one of the first public meetings in 1830 a Professor Edgar from Belfast urged the formation of a nationwide Temperance Union. Within six months of Edgar's meeting Symington announced plans for a private planning meeting in Stranraer, and shortly thereafter the county newspaper reported the "First Public Meeting of the Stranraer Temperance Society" and added, "the laurels of the evening were more especially engrossed by the Rev. Mr. Symington." Other Societies were quickly organized at Port

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2 Mechie, Stewart, The Church and Scottish Social Development 1780-1870, being the Cunningham Lectures for 1957, pp 81-99 being the lecture on "John Dunlop and the Scottish Temperance Reformation".

3 e.g., Vide The Old Statistical Account (1791) vol. I, p. 361 wherein the minister making the report described the intemperance and referred to "the pernicious habit of dram drinking" in Stranraer; And MSS Letter dated 8 Sept. 1828 addressed to G. Rowatt, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

4 MacGregor, M.B., Towards Scotland's Social Good - A Hundred Years of Temperance Work in the Church of Scotland, p. 30; See also Winskill, P.T., The Comprehensive History of the Rise and Progress of the Temperance Reformation (1881), pp 15, 18, 19, wherein he referred Edgar's contribution; And Mechie, op. cit., p. 87.

5 Dumfries and Galloway Courier, for 18th Jan. 1831.
Patrick, Gatehouse, Kirkcudbright, Kirmaiden, Leswalt, Wigtown, Whithorn, Glenluce, and Lochnaw. Here again Symington's letters and Journal indicate that he was working in close co-operation with the leaders of the movement and that he was encouraging the other ministers of his church to do the same. For example, in one letter to the pastor of the Whithorn Reformed Presbyterian congregation he wrote:

In event of Collins we have written to Prof. Edgar asking him to come here ... and also to visit other places in Wigtownshire. As soon as I receive his answer I shall write to you, that you may arrange your meeting. The committee are desirous to having your services also, at the annual meeting ... I hope you will if you at all can.¹

Dunlop was a guest in Symington's home while working the Galloway area and Symington also worked with him and with Dr. Welsh and a Mr. Tennant at "Temperance Soirees" in Greenock, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Paisley.² Mechie has quoted Dunlop's criticism of the "social concern" of ministers of that time: They study Witsius and Mosheim (which is right) but as to present States of Society or our principal social dangers, some reflective coal porters know more than they",³ and it serves to emphasize the importance of this particular aspect of Symington's contribution to the work of social reform in South West Scotland during these years.

Mission work, for one whose ministerial commission knew "no local limits but those of the earth",⁴ was little different from any other ordinary activity and responsibility of the Christian. Cunningham has pointed out that around the beginning of the century "Scotland regarded foreign missions as Utopian and absurd" but "before the first quarter of the century had run its course,

¹MSS Letter dated Stranraer, 19th Oct. 1831, addressed to G. Rowatt. In other letters dated 21st Sept. 1830 and 7th Feb. 1831, Symington is encouraging Rowatt to action, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

²In the Journal for 23rd Feb., 1835 he reported speaking at a temperance meeting in Greenock with Mr. Dunlop, on Tuesday at a Church Society Meeting in Glasgow, and on Wednesday at a Paisley Church, "after wh brother Andrew signed the constitution; The Journal for 27 Oct. and 31 Dec. (1835) reveals the same activity in behalf of "Temperance Associations" for those months and on 10 Jan. 1836, after Dunlop had been in his home he wrote, "I have found him a most intelligent, learned, & pious man".

³Mechie, op. cit., p. 93.

⁴Charges at McGill's Ordination, p. 7, see also p. 19.
almost every church had made up its mind that foreign missions were obligatory and right". These dates coincide closely with Symington's years at Stranraer and he made no small contribution to that reformation in thinking. His own denomination had formed very early a committee for giving aid to destitute corners of the church, but they did not establish a Mission Committee until 1830. From that point on Symington supported their programme faithfully and the contributions of the Stranraer congregation frequently exceeded those of any other congregation in the church, but the first "missionaries" went to America and the real work of foreign missions within Symington's church did not begin until after he went to Glasgow. Symington however did not wait for the programme of his own Church and for that reason his first contributions in this field took on the aspects of an interdenominational activity.

His first public appearance was made in 1822 just three years after his ordination, on behalf of an Interdenominational Mission to the Jews. He believed that the conversion of the Jews provided a key to the whole subject of missions, the conversion of the rest of the world to Christ. The point was illustrated by his reasoning in that first sermon on missions. The same three-point pattern can be seen in it, but the order is different. Beginning first with motives having to do with a benevolent duty to our fellow man - in this case our responsibility to the Jews - he rises second through a description of the prophesied conversion of the Jews which is one means of the conversion of the world to, third, the ultimate end which is the glory of God. Both the glory of God and the best interests of mankind were directly

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1 Cunningham, John, Church History of Scotland, vol. II, p. 443; See also Fleming, J. R., The Church in Scotland 1843-1874, p. 16, "The missionary movement in Scottish Christianity had barely got under weigh in 1843 ...".

2 MSS Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church for 23rd April 1830, to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow; See also Hutchison, The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, pp 274ff.

3 "The Salvation of Israel", being pp 29-72 in Discourses on Public Occasions; The Jewish Expositor described the sermon as "one of the most sensible and comprehensive summaries of the whole subject that we have hitherto met with", and the Dumfries and Galloway Courier referred to other work by Symington for the Jewish Mission on 22nd July 1822 and 28th Nov. 1826.
involved in the conversion of the Jews. This did not mean that Symington neglected other mission work, but it does help to explain, as will be seen more fully in the next chapter, his unusual lifelong interest in Jewish Missions, and it does establish the guiding principals for all his mission work, home and foreign. Missions were an excellent means, first of bringing glory to God and second of benefiting his fellow man. Perhaps it was because of the unusually heavy responsibilities incurred by the home mission work, that is the rapid formation of a number of new congregations and Presbyteries; perhaps it was because of an initial lag in the programme of foreign missions in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, but whatever the cause, aside from Symington's personal activities, there was relatively little done in his Church until 1837 when he recorded an important stimulus from another source:

Had this day the inexpressible satisfaction and delight of hearing Dr. Duff advocate the Gen. Assy. Scheme for christianising India. His statements are calm, his reasoning sound ... and his eloquence surpassing anything I ever heard. Notwithstanding a weak frame & a bad voice his appeals are most impassioned and thrilling. He touches the springs of emotion ... lays down the path of duty with unceremonious fidelity ... and rebukes the apathy & niggardliness of professing Xtians with fearless independence. I reckon it a great privilege to have heard and met with this great and good man. May it be blessed for increasing my zeal for the conversion of the heathen.¹

Less than three months later, on old New Year's Day, he organized the first distinctly foreign mission Society within the bounds of his own Church with the prayer that this might be "... the commencement of a mission to the heathen from the Ref'd. Presby'n. Church in Scotland".² As will be seen in the next chapter, there is a direct relationship between Duff's message, Symington's response and the rather remarkable Foreign Mission Programme that developed within his Church after 1839.

¹Journal for 27th Oct. 1837.
²Ibid., for 12th Jan. 1838, "Being old New Years Day wh. is foolishly observed as an idle day in this quarter, I called together the youth of the congregation ... read some miss'y intelligence & delivered an address on the obligations of Xtians to diffuse the gospel among the heathen ... nearly 20 appended their names ... about 10 pounds was subscribed on the spot. May this be the commencement of a mission to the heathen from the Ref'd. Presby'n. Church in Scotland".
Another side to Symington's concern for the mission work of the Church in Scotland is to be seen in his support of Chalmers' work of church extension. In 1837 the county press reported that a very successful meeting "... to promote the Extension Scheme of the Church of Scotland, took place in Mr. Symington's Church, Stranraer..." and a year later Symington recorded joining Dr. Chalmers in that work at Lochryan House. There are no details of Symington's contribution but the very fact of his presence and interest at these meetings provide an interesting commentary on the degree of co-operation and goodwill that prevailed between the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Evangelical Cause within the Established Church.

Authorship

Symington's contribution to the literature of the church could be seen as another type of interdenominational activity. Notwithstanding a pastoral visitation programme which at least equalled in miles travelled each year that of other pastors in Scotland, the majority of his published works were issued during the years at Stranraer and his reputation as an author was established while there. The titles of these sermons, pamphlets and books provide a running commentary or review of the varied interests of the man throughout this period. The sermon on The Evil of Ignorance was preached and printed "in aid of the Stranraer Sabbath School Society" in 1821, two years after his ordination. Charity to the Poor Explained and Enforced was preached at Paisley and then published on behalf of the Widow and Orphan Society there. In 1825 The Salvation of Israel was preached and published on behalf of the Annandale Jewish Society. A second edition was printed in 1830 and a third in 1831. In 1827 he wrote or edited, The Select Remains of John Williamson, a small book of 164 pages containing the life story of a boy who had lived a rather notorious life in the Dumfries area. He had died after an extended

1Vide, Dumfries and Galloway Courier for 20th Sept. 1837, "Mr. Lamb moved the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Symington and the managers of the church for the very handsome manner in which they had accommodated the meeting. This was seconded by Col. McDowall. The utmost enthusiasm prevails on the subject", 1,000 was subscribed and a full list of those attending from other parts of Scotland with details of the meeting were included in the report.

2Journal for 1st Sept. 1858, Symington referred to hearing him the week before and added here, "Was much pleased with him in private. His manners exceedingly simple". 
illness and during the last months had shown remarkable signs of a new Christian life. In the preface Symington stated the desire "to make this small work such as might be useful to the rising generation". The book was apparently well received in the Dumfries area and saw several editions before being printed by the Scottish Tract Society. The same year he published a pamphlet on The Profane Use of the Lot. The substance of it came from an article published by a friend in a New York magazine and it was called forth by the prevalence of gambling in the Stranraer area. Symington added an introduction and an appendix. Another edition, published in 1838 was entitled, Games of Chance.

According to his sons¹ the plan of work on "The State and Prospect of the Jews in ten chapters" was begun in 1828 but never completed. In 1829 all Scotland was aroused by the Catholic Emancipation controversy, the Reformed Presbyterian Synod issued a special "Warning" and Symington published a bulky pamphlet entitled Popery the Mystery of Iniquity. The pamphlet contained the substance of a series of sermons preached in 1824, "in consequence of the opening of a place of popish worship" in Stranraer. It was reissued three times and then printed with some additions in 1851. The same year he published Charges Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. James McGill. The reasons for that publication were, first the "urgent and repeated request" of the Minister and People to whom they were addressed and second that they might be a "mutual remembrancer" for his own congregation on the tenth anniversary of his own ordination and installation. A sermon entitled Salvation by Grace was called forth in 1831 in consequence of the deposition of a minister of the Southern Reformed Presbytery who had expressed loose views regarding atonement. It was reprinted in 1851. The Character and Claims of the Scottish Martyrs, to which reference will be made in a moment, was also published in 1831 and his first major treatise On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ was begun the same year. Family illness delayed the writing and it was not until after the death of his son Robert, in 1833 that the work was resumed.² It was completed in May 1834 and a second

¹Memoir, p. lxiv; The Journal for the years 1821 to 1835 has not been found since the sons used it in writing the Memoir.

²Vide, Memoir, p. lxv, "The death of his son probably moved him to fresh labour as both the best medicine for sorrow and the most fit response to the Master's chastening ...".
edition was printed in 1835. Several other editions were published in the United States.¹ In 1835 as retiring moderator of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod he preached the sermon entitled The Rebuilding of Jerusalem and published it at the request of the Synod. The sequel to the work on Atonement, Messiah the Prince: or The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ, was begun in 1836. Long periods of severe family illness during the Typhus epidemic of 1837 and 1838 delayed the writing, and that book, which was to be his most important contribution to theology, was not completed until early in 1839.² The Scottish Advocate of Scriptural Principles in Religion, Morals and Politics, edited by a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, was first published in 1834 and Symington made numerous contributions but unfortunately they were usually anonymous and were often not mentioned in his Journal. In 1851 seven of these sermons or pamphlets were reprinted along with a few others which had been written later in a volume entitled, Discourses on Public Occasions.³

Compared with the writings of other churchmen of the same period Symington’s publications are few and many have wished they were more, but his words of praise for another author who published little are applicable to himself, "... what he actually has done cannot without manifest injustice be estimated by the number of volumes he has put forth, for a few such pages often contain more solid and useful matter than is to be found spread over a much larger surface in the works of other writers. Foster’s pages are to be weighed, not numbered".⁴ This type of writing was Symington’s ideal, and his published sermons, as has been seen, were carefully designed to meet

¹See the Introduction to Chapter V of this work.

²The Journal record indicates severe family illness from Dec. of 1836 to Dec. 1837. On 6th May 1837 he recorded preaching for "the first time for 13 or 14 weeks" and on 22nd Dec. 1837 he wrote, "this week have resumed writing for the press". It was during this same epidemic that his brother, Dr. Andrew Symington, lost a wife and three children within two months.

³Included in that volume are "The Evil of Ignorance", "The Salvation of Israel", "The Character and Claims of the Scottish Martyrs", "Salvation by Grace", "The Rebuilding of Jerusalem", "Charity to the Poor Explained and Enforced", and "Popery the Mystery of Iniquity".

⁴"Review of Lectures by John Foster", in Scottish Presbyterian for March 1845, p. 68; in the Journal for 23rd Jan. 1845 Symington recorded writing this review.
specific needs in an area beyond the range of their immediate pulpit delivery.
His letters frequently carried messages of encouragement, advice, and congratu-
lations for other young Reformed Presbyterian Ministers who were "in the press", as he referred to it, and it is obvious from Journal comments that the writing was not considered by him to be a laborious duty. Nor was it a commercial project, but an obligatory privilege and labour of love - the opportunity to bring to the whole Church of Christ in Scotland the beneficial influence of that particular message which had been entrusted to him for delivery. The inscription on the last page of Messiah the Prince might well have been the prayer offered for each publication, "Mono To Theo Doxo".

John Macpherson has pointed out that those who could not conscientiously unite with the Church of Scotland at the time of the Revoltun Settlement, the "Cameronian, Macmillanites, and the Society men generally ... were vehemently denounced as sectaries and charged with schismatical division, with recklessly, or at least needlessly rending the unity of the Church". He believed that it "really was not in theory but in practice that these high-principled, self denying men came short of the full maintenance of the doctrine of the unity of the Church". Others have complained about the attitude or practice of the Reformed Presbytery in so far as full co-operation in the work of the church was concerned and while, as will be seen later, there were those within his church of whom this complaint could be made justly,

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1 Vide, e.g. In the letter dated 13th Feb. 1829, addressed to G. Rowatt, he is encouraging Rowatt to write a review of a recent publication; And in another letter dated 29th Aug. 1831 he is encouraging Rowatt to make a "reply to Marshall" who had recently written on Establishments, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

2 Macpherson, John, The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology, p. 115.

3 Ibid., pp 123f.

4 Vide, e.g. Boston's comparison of the Reformed Presbyterians and the Hepburnites as quoted without comment by Walker in Scottish Theology and Theologians, p. 110, The Hepburnites were "... endowed with a good measure of Christian charity and love, and of a very different temper from that of Mr. Macmillan's followers"; See also p. 105 where he concludes that for the Cameronians "schism is, at least in expression, made out to be as bad as ever"; See also Fleming's description of how the Reformed Presbyterians had been hampered by their "Cameronian tradition", in The Church in Scotland 1843-1874, p. 175; And Macgregor, G., Corpus Christi, p. 86; But Cf H.M.B. Reid's accurate report of the life and practice of "John Macmillan" whom he identified as A Cameronian Apostle, esp. pp 212f, 216f.
these facts concerning Symington's actions indicate that such criticism is too sweeping in so far as the church as whole was concerned. It was the early formation as well as the maintenance of the organizations, which were an important part of the machinery of the Evangelical Revival, with which Symington was concerned, and his contributions to the Evangelical literature of the Church appeared at the same critical period in its history.

It was undoubtedly in recognition of the outstanding contribution made by these services that the Senatus Academicus of the University of Edinburgh in 1839 conferred upon Symington the honourary degree of Doctor of Divinity. Chalmers had moved that action, Welsh seconded it, and Symington's son later described how Edinburgh "had by a few days anticipated his own Alma Mater, which had a diploma filled up and waiting the signatures of some members of its Senatus". Couper later pointed out that the honour was all the more notable because "the authorities were not then very liberal in recognising merit in dissenters". The specimens of his public ministry which have been examined revealed work of a superior quality and his private records bespeak the highest motives, the glory of God and the best interest of men. Quotations from residents throughout the area, the county press, members of the Established Church, his own Church, writers of more recent times, and the actions of two Scottish universities, have emphasized the importance of his contributions. In view of these facts, and in the absence of any other churchman of similar accomplishments in that area at that time, it cannot be wrong to state that from 1819 to 1839 Dr. Symington exercised the most powerful evangelical influence in the South-Western part of Scotland, and to add approval to the evaluation of an eye witness who said, "... what in

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1 The Journal for 14th Nov. Symington wrote, "This day finished MS of Prince Messiah & on Monday last corrected first proof sheet"; in the next entry, 22nd Nov. he wrote, "Was surprised this morning by a letter from Dr. Chalmers announcing the Senatus Academicus of the University of Edin. had on the 20th unanimously conferred on me the degree of Doctor in Divinity. This is a most unexpected honour from man, wh. will require new grace to keep me humble & to enable me to act consistently"; The diploma bearing the signatures of Chalmers and Welsh is in custody of Mr. A. M. Symington in London.

2 Memoir, p. Ixvi.

those days Dr. Chalmers was to Glasgow and Dr. Andrew Thompson to the West End of Edinburgh, that, in many ways, was William Symington in Wigtownshire and Galloway."

**Martyr Preacher**

Of all Symington's public appearances his martyr sermons are most interesting. There is a singular appropriateness in the picture of this sturdy Cameronian-reared pastor of the nineteenth century Societies standing forward in the land that Renwick once described as having been "flowered with martyrs" to defend their actions and to readvocate their principles. The records concerning those sermons and the sermons themselves indicate that they called forth his deepest interests and were a favourite means of serving his "Master". Throughout the entire Galloway-Wigtown area, — at a lonely spot called Craigmodie in the parish of Kirkcovan, for an overflowing church in the centre of Dumfries, in the churchyard of the Wigtown Church not far from where the two Margarets were drowned, near "Cameron's Stane" on Ayromoss, and other such places, Symington delivered these messages, and the stone itself in some instances still records the fact that the offering received on that occasion had been used to erect it. The messages were long appreciated. Todd, in his *Covenanting Pilgrimages and Studies* remembered as a boy having heard Symington's martyr sermon at Ayromoss and said, "I have attended upon a good many religious gatherings at 'Cameron's Stone' since then, and have heard ministers of all shades of opinion speak of the days of danger, persecution, and blood, but none of them ever impressed me half so much as Dr. Symington." Johnston in *The Treasury of the Scottish Covenant* referred to the sermon preached at Dumfries as "A masterly pleading for the fathers of Scotland's covenanted work by a master in the Reformed Presbyterian Israel of his day", and then added, "There were giants in those

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1M'GILL, James, *He Being Dead, Yet Speaketh*, being a sermon delivered to the Great Hamilton Street Congregation in Glasgow on the Sabbath following the death of William Symington, p. 18; Hutchison described his powerful evangelical preaching as having exercised "throughout the whole of Galloway, an influence which it is perhaps impossible in these later days for any one minister to attain", in *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland*, p. 270.

2Todd, A. B., *Covenanting Pilgrimages and Studies* (1911), pp 50f, See also p. 157.
days." Anderson in The Ladies of the Covenant used Symington's Wigtown sermon and words to emphasize the point that "Our object is to draw attention to the principles, rather than to the persons, of the martyrs." The Dumfries Courier described the scene in May of 1827 at the grave of Alexander Linn:

The preacher and his audience, which could not be under 1,000 souls, had to travel through bogs for many a weary mile, and when the voice of the Psalms rose in the wilderness, and matrons, maids, and reverential men were seen streaming from every neighbouring height, the spectators had a living example before them of a conventicle held in the days of persecution. We need not eulogise the talents of the preacher. As a divine he has very few equals, whether among Dissenters or in the Established Church; and although he spoke for four hours, a more attentive and enthusiastic congregation never assembled on a hill-side. The inscription on the humble tomb of Linn furnished the Rev. Gentleman with a text, "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints", and never was a text more interestingly illustrated. The remoteness of the spot - the tent planted in the open wild - the monotonous aspect of external nature as contrasted with the pious worshippers around - the burn stealing through the heathery waste, and the curlew complaining that her wilderness had been invaded - all contributed to subdue the mind to a holy calm, to banish for a time every worldly feeling, and produce impressions which only the poet could have adequately described.

Two years later the same newspaper reported that in St. Michael's churchyard in Dumfries, even though hundreds had stayed away because of "the dread of a wetting" and more than fifteen hundred had been turned away for want of standing room, "nearly three thousand persons" had listened to "the voice of the Psalms" and had noted "the appearance of the preacher and the deep conviction that his heart was in his words." The requests for publication were in this case complied with and the first edition of The Character and Claims of the Scottish Martyrs appeared a few weeks later. In it are

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2 Anderson, James, The Ladies of the Covenant (1851), pp 443f; See also Tombstones of the Covenanters or Inscriptions on the Tombstones and Monuments Erected in Memory of the Covenanters with Historical Introduction and Notes, by James Gibson (1875), pp 213, 279.
3 Dumfries and Galloway Courier for 29th May 1827.
4 Ibid., for 21st June 1831.
5 Also to be found in Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 72-101; See also pp 205-240, being "The Souls Under the Altar: or, the Opening of the Fifth Seal" which was the sermon preached at Wigtown.
to be seen Symington's understanding of the men and the accomplishments of the "Scottish Reformation" along with reasons for bringing the reformation principles forward and applying them to nineteenth century circumstances.

His object in that sermon was to manifest "attachment to the Scottish Reformation", to instruct in "the history and principles of that magnificent struggle for religion and liberty", and thereby to awaken the hearts of his hearers "to some proper concern in what stands so closely connected to our dearest hopes". In other words he was more interested in the principles than in the people of the Reformation, but in order to recommend the former he had to rescue the latter from the cloud of aspersions or superstitious traditions under which they were being hidden in those years. The "Character" of the martyrs he deduced from what they were, what they did, what they suffered, the spirit they manifested, and the cause of their sufferings. They were "not visionary fanatics but men of varied information, sound understanding ... correct scriptural knowledge" and "zeal according to knowledge". It had not been because of a "doubtful faith" but because they "firmly believed" that they went on to profess, testify, and die. They could not have been "canting hypocrites" but were "men of stirling piety" because they were accustomed to wrestle with God in secret", "regularly practised" family worship, "partook of the communion symbols at the risk of having their own

1Ibid., pp 72ff.

2It was not only such distorted records as those of an English Buckle, but also such caricatures as those of the patriot Scott which were helping to disguise the true character of the Scottish martyrs as Symington saw them; Vide, e.g., D. H. Fleming's criticism of Scott's complaints about Patrick Walker's "narrow minded and disgusting bigotry". Fleming indicated that Scott was deeply indebted to Walker and added, "No doubt there was a connection between Patrick's lifelong study of the Scriptures and his power of expression," in the "Introduction" to Fleming's edition of Six Saints of the Covenant by Patrick Walker, vol. I, p. xxi; See also James King Hewison's refutation of Buckle's conclusion concerning Scottish Civilization, in The Covenanters A History of the Church in Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution, vol. II, pp 100f, "Aliens, ill-informed and inclined to bias, should have a care when they emerge from their own cave to find themselves in light that confuses the untried eye"; See also Macpherson, H., Scotland's Battles for Spiritual Independence (1900), pp 117, 178, 179 wherein he describes the contrasting influences of Scott and T. M'Crie.

3"The Character and Claims of the Scottish Martyrs", in Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 76-91.
blood mingled with the wine which represented that of the Saviour", and were "known" to the dragoons by their having a Bible in their hands, being at prayer, or attending a conventicle. The charges of "precision in morals" which had been brought against them was in itself some indication that they were "holy men as well as devout". They had "emancipated their country" from the galling yoke of popish and episcopal domination", "delivered the church" from "debasing superstition" and a "wicked hierarchy which sought to enslave minds and conscience", "rescued the holy scriptures from the iron grasp of a profligate and designing priesthood", and "secured for themselves and others freedom to think, to speak and to act without being shackled with fetters of mental and corporeal slavery". The "nation at large" had added their sanction to these deeds and accomplishments "at the memorable Revolution". Symington defended their use of the sword by pointing out that the words "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" were spoken as "a dissuasive from personal revenge". He insisted that to interpret them otherwise would be "to throw open our country to the powers of every ambitious invader" and added, "we are much of the opinion that the man who would refuse, in similar circumstances, to fight for his religion or liberty, deserved to enjoy the benefits of neither."¹ They had suffered "reproachful mockery", wanton barbarities, privations, and tortures for their principles. They had maintained a spirit of faith or trust in God, Christ, and the promises of Scripture.

Their spirit of patriotic attachment to the good of their country had been illustrated by the words "God and our country" on their blue banner battle flags and "piety and patriotism were kindred feelings" and "governing sentiments" in their patriotic hearts. Their "enlightened and inextinguishable zeal" and the "valour" with which they had met death but had refused to be repressed, was not fanaticism because their coolness of purpose, correctness of aim, and suitableness of selected manner bespoke the "intrinsic excellence" of their cause. The "cause" or principles of the Reformation martyrs can be summarised in seven phrases:

1. "Salvation by the free Sovereign grace of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the first of their principles the article of a standing or falling church"

¹Ibid., pp. 79f.
2. "The sole authority of the Holy Scriptures in matters of religion, and the right of all men to peruse them"

3. "The right of men to form their religious opinions from the word of God"

4. "The sole Headship of Christ over the Church, and its consequent independence of all political control"

5. "The Headship of Christ over the nations, and the consequent duty of conducting civil affairs on religious principles, and subordinating them to the interests of the church"

6. "The right of resisting such civil rulers as usurp the prerogatives of Christ, oppress the Church, tyrannise over the people, and lend the weight of their authority and example to the subversion of equity"

7. "The importance and obligation of public covenanting as a means of professing, advancing, and maintaining the cause of reformation; and of comforting and fortifying the church in troublous times"1

The "Claims" that these Scottish Martyrs made upon the people of nineteenth century Scotland were not claims of any undue respect; the martyrs were in no sense "perfect characters" but they had been "honoured by God to break the spell of superstition and to crush the rod of tyranny" throughout the land, and therefore they were worthy of a properly respectful study, commemoration and "imitation".2

From all this it is obvious that Symington was not thinking only of those people who had died between the years of 1660 and 1690 but that he was using these opportunities, the very tombstones themselves in fact, to remind the people of nineteenth century Scotland of the accomplishments or principles of the entire Scottish Reformation, and that he believed the Reformation to have been an essentially Evangelical movement carried through by Evangelically minded men. Their lives and ideals provided far more than an example, or the reason for a momentary sense of gratitude; they also constituted a very real "Claim" upon the best interests and continuing efforts of every Christian citizen. The reformation had seen the laying of the foundations for progress in both Church and State. To go backward from that

1Ibid., pp 27ff.

2Ibid., pp 91ff.
which had already been attained by forsaking or neglecting to continue to adapt and build upon these reformation principles would be both dishonouring to the Christ who had led State and Church through bitter experiences to these attainments, and dangerous to men. As will be seen in later chapters, Symington also made it his own purpose, particularly in the book on Dominion of Christ, to explain these principles in further detail. Those views of the men of the Reformation and their accomplishments were an important influence in determining the particular contribution made by Symington's churchmanship and theology. There was something more to it than the voice of an individual minister. This was the voice and the influence of the Reformation Church speaking again through him in the nineteenth century.

**Presbyterial Activity**

"Right hand extremes and left hand defections"¹ had provided problems for the Reformation Presbytery since the days of the General Meetings of the Societies, and they continued to provide problems throughout Symington's lifetime. At a meeting of the Southern Presbytery in 1823 the venerable Rev. James Reid who had for many years been pastor of the whole Galloway area, registered his complaint because the Synod at an earlier meeting that year had recognized only the perpetual obligations of "the original Deeds", without also requiring "an oath of adherence to the National Covenants".² Symington was one of a committee of three appointed to reason with him and negotiations went on with great patience for many years but Reid also became dissatisfied with being "understood to be perfectly consistent" with the position of the Church, listed other objections having to do with "singing without reading the line", and finally withdrew from official participation.

¹The phrase was frequently used by Patrick Walker who had himself been delivered from "the snare" of the Gibbites by Cargill and Renwick, Vide, Hay Fleming's "Introduction" to Patrick Walker's *Six Saints of the Covenant* (1901), pp xxxii, xxxiv, xxx.

²MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery for 19th August 1832; Reid was 72 years old, the pastor of Newton Stewart, and the Synod in its final tribute described "the excellent Christian character, the manifold labours, and extensive usefulness of this venerable servant of Christ", as quoted by Couper, in *op. cit.*, p. 88.
in the business of the Church courts. From 1826 to the end of his life the Church found it necessary to regard him as "a member acting irregularly" but there was no move made to depose him and he continued to minister to his own congregation until he retired at which time his people returned to the Church. His case illustrates the ultra-conservative nature of one section, the ability and willingness of the church as a whole to deal tolerantly with the conscientious convictions of such members, and the tendency to adapt the principles of the Church to the circumstances of the times in spite of the reluctance of some. From the beginning to the end of that case, Symington's counsel was on the side of leniency and tolerance.

The cases of Jeffrey and Osborne were of an entirely different nature. Two years after Symington's ordination Jeffrey and Osborne were involved in a public brawl and the Presbytery, with two-fifths of her ministerial membership involved in a trial, wisely called for the help of Synod. A partial confession was wrung from Jeffrey; he was suspended, rebuked and finally restored, only to have another incident arise four years later at which time he "resigned all connection with the church" and eventually emigrated to America. Osborne had been excused of guilt in the encounter in 1822 but was charged with both drunkenness and immorality in 1824. He was eventually "reinstated" but in 1827 new charges of the same nature were brought against him and he was again suspended for a time. In 1830 a third fama olamosa was reported. Symington had objected to the leniency shown to Osborne on former occasions and in the trial of 1831 he pressed hard for deposition. Osborne declined the authority of the Church and then secured an interdict from the civil court prohibiting the meeting of the Presbytery.  

1 Ibid., for 8th March 1824.

2 Vide, MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery for 5th March 1822, 12th April 1826, 13th Sept. 1826, and others; See also Couper, op. cit., p. 98; And MSS Minutes of Synod for 10th May 1826.

3 Ibid., for 5th March 1822, 5th Oct. 1824, 7th Dec. 1824, 21st Aug. 1827, 27th Aug. 1828, 27th Oct. 1830, 11th May 1831 wherein Symington and Armstrong write the libel, 23rd May 1831 wherein Osborne attempted to suspend the meeting and Symington, as Moderator, left the chair in order to avoid "hearing" the "Bill of Suspension and Interdict" in official capacity; See also MSS Letters dated 16th March 1831, 12th May 1831, 29th Aug. 1831, 11th Oct. 1831, addressed to G. Rowatt, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.
had a major part in preparing the polite but firm reply that the Presbytery made to the Court of Session. In it they declared all "respect" for the other court but insisted that it was also their duty "firmly and conscientiously to resist every attempt to encroach upon their ecclesiastical rights or jurisdiction". They acknowledged a responsibility to reply to the interdict but went on to explain that in so far as the prohibited meeting was concerned, "the Presbytery held the meeting previously appointed and found themselves shut up to the painful duty of being obliged to depose him from the office of holy ministry". They offered their own "imperious sense of duty" as an answer to all "threats of civil persecution" and insisted that they were "willing to abide by all the circumstances". They refused to discuss particulars of the case in order to justify their conduct and added in closing:

For such conduct, they humbly presume to maintain, they cannot be called to give an account before any temporal tribunal. They are responsible to their ecclesiastical superiors, and to the King and Head of the Church, for the exercise of the powers with which they are entrusted, but they cannot be called to give an account of these matters to any temporal Judge, nor can they be controlled by such Judge in their exercise of their ecclesiastical powers.

The decision of the civil court, signed by J. W. Moncrieff is cautiously worded but "finds it incompetent for this court to stop proceedings of the Respondents in the matters alleged, which are partly of an ecclesiastical nature", and on 18th July 1831 Lord Alexander Irving concurred in that decision. Subsequent events leading up to the disruption in the Established Church of Scotland indicated the significance in these actions of the Reformation Church of Scotland. She was proving to the Evangelicals in the Established Church that reliance on the reformation principle, "the sole Headship of Christ over the Church, and the consequent independence of all political

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1 The "Reply" of the Presbytery to the Court of Session is to be found among the records of the Southern Reformed Presbytery in Trinity College Library, Glasgow; See also MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery for 29th April, 11th, 12th, 23rd, 24th May 1831; And MSS Letter dated Castle Douglas 12th May 1831, addressed to G. Rowatt.

control,\(^1\) was the only safe basis for a "Free" Church. Aside from the significance of this Church-State conflict, these last two cases illustrate the problem of excesses within the Reformed Presbyterian Church at that particular time and unlike the leniency he had counselled in Reid's case, Symington drove hard, particularly in Osborne's case, for firm decisive action that would be well "advertised.\(^2\)

The three cases illustrate the "extremes" and "defections" within the Reformed Presbytery in the nineteenth century. On one hand there were those who might be described as a particular type of "Moderate". Symington once referred to them as "the strenuous supporters of things as they are"\(^3\) and while they were generally good reliable men, their eyes were focused upon the past and they were still thinking in terms of waiting "untill deflections be condemned & offences be removed".\(^4\) Some, unlike Reid, were almost belligerent in their opposition to change and as will be seen more fully later they did not hesitate to complain about Symington's conduct in such matters as "occasional hearing", participation in interdenominational activities, and the "translation" of pastors. They appeared to think of the Testimony and "Terms" of the church primarily as a means of testing loyalty or of controlling the members and ministers and on the whole they could not be said to have been within the Evangelical Camp in so far as the progress in the nineteenth century Church in Scotland was concerned. On the other hand there were those who were very keenly aware that the church was in a transition period, adapting the old testimony to new circumstances, and they were willing to take unwarranted advantage of the necessity for change. By so doing they threatened, in these extreme cases of gross excess, to bring disgrace upon the name of the church and discredit upon the Evangelical cause with which she was becoming

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\(^1\)As stated by Symington in Discourses on Public Occasions, p. 88; See also O.D., pp 127, 128, 190.

\(^2\)In a letter to Rowatt dated 11th October 1831 Symington said with reference to the county newspaper, "You will have to consider the propriety of inserting some advertisement, vindicatory of the Presbytery's procedure in the case of Osborne. When I say vindicatory I refer more to the effect than to the form of the document. As to the form, it wd be advisable to have it rather affirmative than justicatory ..."; See also Letters dated 1st Dec., 27th Dec. 1831 and 29th June 1832 wherein he repeated this concern, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

\(^3\)Discourses on Public Occasions, p. 142, and listed them with "infidels and heretics" who opposed the building of the Church in Scotland in the same way that Sanballat and Tobiah had opposed the work of Nehemiah.

\(^4\)As quoted in the first chapter, from Informatory Vindication, p. 63.
connected. In other cases it was merely a tendency to base decisions concerning doctrine, discipline, government, and fellowship upon the circumstances of the times without "due regard" for the past. The numerous splinter groups that had sprung up throughout Scotland in earlier and later years made such action a constant real possibility. The practical effect of either the extreme opposition to all change or the interest in excessive change would have been to isolate and separate the Reformed Presbyterian Church so far as the work of the Church in Scotland was concerned.

Symington's home and study habits as well as his influence through the Pulpit, and the various Interdenominational Activities meant that he was deeply involved and directly identified with others who were known as "Evangelicals" because of their participation in the same type of work. The practical effect was to make it seem to have been with him not so much a case of denomination versus denomination, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland versus the Established Church of Scotland, as it was a case of the Moderate Camp versus the Evangelical Camp within the Church in Scotland. The object of his influence as an individual minister of Christ's Church in Scotland was to support the Evangelical Cause, and the object of his influence in his own Presbytery was to see it united, growing and supporting that same Cause. Toward that end he continued, as was noted, to encourage the other ministers.

1 In his sermon on "The Rebuilding of Jerusalem" Symington emphasized this point, "Much of this inconsistency, there is reason to fear, exists both among ministers and people ... The cultivation of personal godliness is essential to the church's reformation ...", in Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 137f.

2 Ibid., pp 127-129, this was his first point of concern when analysing the condition of the church.

3 D. H. Fleming in the "Introduction" to Patrick Walker's Six Saints of the Covenant, p. xxxv, wrote "In such a work as Hutchison's 'Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland its Origin and History', one may look in vain for the names of the small sections whom Patrick calls Adamites, Harlites, Howdenites, and Russelites; or for 'the Cot-moor folk'; See also Records of the Scottish Church History Society, vol. III, pp 81ff, being an article entitled "Historical Origin of Religious Divisions in Scotland", and vol. I, pp 1-28, entitled "A Breach in the Reformed Presbytery".
in his presbytery by letter,¹ sermon,² and personal example to join him in all aspects of that work; and his success was such that the members of the board of the theological hall later said that during his years at Stranraer he had "... exercised an influence second only to that of the professor in moulding the sentiments and forming the style of the theological students and younger ministers of the church".³ Toward that end he also encouraged the work of visitation and the organization of Societies into congregations. The potential influence of his church in South-West Scotland was indicated by the figures at the beginning of this chapter, of the way in which his own pulpit ministry was received, and in the rapid increase in numbers of new congregations; and it meant that many if not a majority of the Scottish families throughout that area remembered and appreciated the sufferings and accomplishments of the Society-folk. Here again his success was such that the records of a particular Sabbath School, Bible Society, Temperance Society, or Jewish Mission Meeting make it appear at times to have been a programme of the Reformed Presbytery instead of an interdenominational programme. It would be a partial summarization of Dr. Symington's churchmanship to say that he sought to conserve the fruits of earlier Evangelical labours by drawing the people of South-West Scotland together again, reorganizing them in the form of congregations, and then directing the stream of their influence through a Reformed Presbyterian Church which was solidly aligned with the Evangelical Cause of the Church in Scotland.

This was not the whole summary however, because Symington was a Covenanter

¹The letters addressed to G. Howatt in the Broughton House Museum are the best extant example of that influence. James McGill, in a pamphlet entitled A Memorial of the Late Rev. James Brown (1838), has referred to a similar influence Symington had in the life of Brown who, like Howatt, died quite young.

²The sermon, "The Rebuilding of Jerusalem", in Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 124-157, is an excellent example; see esp. p. 133, "Union is strength ... not every diversity of sentiment ... will warrant us in refusing to co-operate with others in promoting a common object. Our reforming forefathers knew how to avail themselves of the principle of unity: the National Covenant, the Solemn League, and the productions of the Assembly at Westminster, are noble proofs of the value they attached to united exertion ... there must be more of this ..."; See also pp 184-204 being a sermon entitled "Love One Another"; And Charges Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. James McGill.

³Reformed Presbyterian Magazine for May 1862, p. 205.
Evangelical and the particular contribution of his Churchmanship is to be seen in that point. That is, it was the object of his Churchmanship, not only to see his own Church moved into the Evangelical Camp, but also to see the whole Evangelical Cause based firmly upon the principles which had been gleaned from the reformation experiences and summarized in the covenants. He shared a concern with other Evangelicals from many churches for the immediate needs of souls in Scotland, and co-operated with them in various programmes designed to meet those needs; but Symington was also constantly evaluating those needs and programmes in terms of their relationship to the experiences through which the Church in Scotland had been led in the past. He appeared to be as much concerned about the churches not being separated or split off from her own past history as he was concerned about her not being separated or split by divisions in the nineteenth century. He was as much concerned about schism in a chronological dimension as with schism in a denominational dimension. His concept of the perpetual obligation of the covenants, binding together the work of fathers and children, seemed to contribute to this keen sense of the "perpetuity" of the church.¹ His concept of Christ’s Headship over the Church also emphasized its perpetuity. It was because there was only one Head of the Church that there could be only one visible Church, and the experiences through which Christ had already led that Church in Scotland did have a bearing upon His continuing work through it.² Thus it was, for example, that he kept finding reasons in the reformation principles for supporting various aspects of the Evangelical programme: encouraging people to support Sabbath Schools, Bible Societies, and Mission Work as a means to securing Christian magistrates and a Civil Government that would be as useful to the work of Christ’s Kingdom as the nobles had been in the days of Knox; or, encouraging people to oppose drunkenness, gambling, or the encroachments of "Popery" because they were particularly inappropriate in a land which had given itself to Christ in solemn covenant vow. Thus it was too that the object of his influence within his own church was to teach her the importance of bringing this

¹ O.D., p. 137; See also pp 120f and 341 wherein he referred to an "express ecclesiastical covenant" which was perpetual.

² O.D., p 131ff.
reformation influence into the Evangelical movement. He appeared to see his church as a kind of bridge church; on one hand it was in the evangelical camp of the nineteenth century Church in Scotland and on the other hand it was maintaining a particular "attachment" to the experiences and principles of the church that had been formed in Scotland at the time of the Reformation. It was a particular purpose of his church to communicate the principles of the Reformation to the Evangelical Movement in such a way as to provide an anchoring or stabilizing influence, to help to make the changes and adaptations necessary for the nineteenth century work; but to present these as an outgrowth or further development of the reformation church and not as an "independent" development.

A good example of Symington's churchmanship, and one that summarizes many of these points, is to be found in the sermon which he preached as Moderator of the Reformed Presbyterian Church at the opening of Synod in 1835. At the direction of Synod it was later published for further distribution. The "Church of Christ in Scotland" was compared to the "dilapidated city of Jerusalem" at the time when Nehemiah had begun to work with it. Her towers of doctrine had been damaged, her bulwarks of government and discipline were impaired, her palaces of ecclesiastical fellowship were being invaded, and therefore "A desperate struggle remains to be made before she regains her former influence and dignity." "Persons of all classes"; -- priests, rulers, and private individuals, as well as the various churches and other organizations involved, were exhorted to exert themselves "unitedly" as did "our reforming forefathers" who "knew how to avail themselves of the principle of union" and used the Covenants as one means to their "united exertion". The "opposition" to the rebuilding of their Church came from those who were actuated by motives of "religious
jealousy" and "selfishness", and included infidels, heretics, those who refused to allow any adjustment to be made to "the existing order of things", and those willing to compromise. In spite of the unpleasantness of this view of the pre-Disruption Church there was not the slightest thought of building a "new" church and Symington went on to emphasize the importance of their own position and the responsibility under these conditions:

Yet we must not think of erecting a new church; our business is to repair not to destroy ... the times in which our lot is cast are reforming times. A spirit has sprung up to correct abuses, theoretical and practical, political, moral, and religious. Some of these reforms may not be of the decided character we would wish. But still there is a leaning toward reform ... favourable indications of the spirit of the age ... to which, surely, they cannot be indifferent on whose ecclesiastical banner the word REFORM holds so conspicuous a place ... The sign that the Lord is about to arise and have mercy upon Zion, is, that his servants take pleasure in her stones and favour the dust thereof ... Be it yours, then, to abide by the church even in her desolations. Value more the remains of Scotland's Covenanted Reformation, for which you are permitted to contend in your present state, than all the gorgeous forms or tempting emoluments of corrupt established systems.1

Such influence in the church at large could be seen to have had the immediate practical effect of encouraging the Disruption and the subsequent formation of a new church that would be free in principle as well as practice, but the long range purpose of Symington's Churchmanship was the re-formation and union of the entire Church in Scotland. The "remains of Scotland's Covenanted Reformation", the principles of the reformation, provided a point of common origin and a basis of fundamental policies around which they might all gather to begin negotiations. This "Rebuilding of the (Scottish) Jerusalem" was one of the objects of Symington's Churchmanship and one that was further developed during his Glasgow Ministry.

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1"The Rebuilding of Jerusalem", being pp 124-157 in Discourses on Public Occasions, esp. pp 153ff; This same general attitude and purpose with respect to the church in Scotland is to be found in Lectures on the Principles of the Second Reformation by various ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, delivered and published in 1841; And in Lectures in Commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Westminster Assembly of Divines and of the Reformed Presbytery by ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, delivered and published in 1843; See also Extracts of Synod Minutes for Nov. 1842, Session VII, wherein "Professor" Andrew Symington brought in the Overture which resulted in the bicentenary commemoration of the Westminster Assembly.
Translation

It was one thing however, to gather, together, organize, and instruct the people of the Galloway-Wigtown areas in an intelligent attachment to the principles of the Scottish Reformation, and it was quite another to see those same principles actually applied in the work of meeting the needs of the men, women and children who were caught up in the new industrial economy. Galloway was, in many ways, more nearly like the 18th century than the 19th and all roads were leading into the Firth-Clyde industrial area. Glasgow was the centre of influence for the Reformed Presbyterian Church and it was there that the question, as to whether or not reformation principles could be adapted to nineteenth century needs, was to be met and answered. Symington had been reared and educated in the Glasgow area and he was the best known preacher and theologian in his denomination. For all these reasons it might have been expected that sooner or later he would move to Glasgow, but "translations" were a very unusual thing in those days in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. 1 Ministers lived and died in the same congregation and there was a real tendency to equate "the call of the people" with "the ordination of the minister" simply because ministers were ordained only after being "called". Symington had received a call from the Dumfries Congregation in 1829 but he stopped action on it by signifying his intention to decline to accept even though Presbytery and Synod might decide to "sustain" it. 2 In 1836 however the West Campbell Street Congregation in Glasgow made out a call which Symington considered very seriously in his private records, 3 but Synod refused to sustain it; 4 in 1837 they renewed their call

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1 Hutchison in The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 278, pointed out that, "Before the year 1837, there had been no instance of translation from one ministerial charge to another"; See also Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 77.

2 MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery for 22nd April 1829.

3 Journal for 24th July 1836, "There are many inducements to go - & many to remain where I am. May the Lord the Spirit lead me in a plain path. I wd put my hand in his to be wholly guided by whatever shall appear most for his glory"; 25th August "The subject is very perplexing; but there is an infallible Leader"; 6th October, "Have set apart this day for religious & devotional exercises in connection with the call to Glasgow" and there follows a long list of the pros and cons of going or remaining.

4 Extracts of Synod Minutes, for Oct. 1836, Sessions IV, V, VI, VII.
and again he declined to accept it;¹ but in 1839 the Great Hamilton Street Congregation in Glasgow made out a call, which was duly forwarded to Synod and Symington made no move to stop procedures. The Stranraer congregation and many of the ministers of Synod objected and three sessions of Synod were taken up with the debate concerning the principle of "translations"; but in the end the call was sustained by a vote of 13 to 20 with 7 not voting.² Symington, after noting his acceptance of the call in the Journal record for that day added:

It was not without much painful agitation of mind that I came to the decision to change the scene of my labours: but I felt called to make a sacrifice of my feelings to what appeared a clear call of duty. May the Lord order it so that it may be for the good of the church, & may he watch over my poor people at Stranraer!³

Synod for a time refused to consider other calls made out for men already settled as pastors. The Stranraer congregation continued to contest the decision bitterly and actually withdrew from the Church for some months because of it.⁴

The practical effect of Symington's acceptance of the call and subsequent "translation" was to direct attention to the point that the commission of a minister did not come from either Presbytery or the call of the people in a given congregation. The commission came through the Presbytery and while the call of the people was necessary to establish the pastoral relationship, the ministerial commission came from Christ and was, in one sense, outside either the Presbytery or the congregation. The whole affair was a very practical and timely illustration of the way in which the reformation principles were being applied to the rapidly changing circumstances in the

¹Journal for Jan. 1838, "I have been called again to the pastoral charge of West Campbell St. Congn. Glasgow. This I am sorry for as there is little prospect of its being sustained, & altho it were, I do not feel inclined to accept of it".

²Extracts of Synod Minutes for May 1839, Sessions III, IV, and V; The record of the voting is to be found in Symington's Journal for 16th May 1839.

³Journal for 16th May 1839.

⁴Vide, Extracts of Synod Minutes for May 1840, Sessions IV, V, VI; October 1840, Sessions IV, VIII; May 1841, Sessions IV, V; See also Couper, The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 32.
church and nation. In this case again it was the principle of "The Sole Headship of Christ over the Church"\(^1\) which had cut through these customs and traditions which were threatening to grow up within the church in such a way as to limit or restrict the ministry of man and church. It released Symington for the work in Glasgow.

The distinctive mark of Symington's work at Stranraer was the gathering together, organizing, instructing and caring for the needs of the scattered Society-Folk. It was *pastoral* work in the best sense. The work at Glasgow involved the serving of immediate needs in an outgoing ministry that produced world-wide results. Two-thirds of his life, the first twenty-four years at home and at school and the last twenty-three as a minister in Glasgow, were lived within the Glasgow-Paisley industrial area; and within this larger perspective the Stranraer Pastorate appears as an interlude to the Glasgow Ministry. That same subjection to the will of the "Master", which had sent him out into the counties where the Covenanting movement had been strongest, was putting him into the mainstream of that current of humanity which was now being swept from those same counties into the industrial areas.

\(^1\)"The Character and Claims of the Scottish Martyrs", in *Discourses on Public Occasions*, p. 88; See also O.D., pp 127, 128, 172.
CHAPTER IV

THE GLASGOW MINISTRY

"...the times in which our lot is cast are reforming times."

(Wm. Symington)
CHAPTER IV

THE GLASGOW MINISTRY

William Symington moved to Glasgow at a time, in 1839, when that city was establishing herself as the population centre and the industrial capital for Scotland. Only a century before it had been described as "a neat picturesque little town nestling on the banks of a humble stream, navigable only by boats of a small draft" but by 1839 the mass migration had nearly quadrupled the population of the Forth-Clyde area and had established Glasgow as the largest city in Scotland. In 1821 the population had been 147,000 but by 1862 the year of his death, it was over 395,000. 

Industrially speaking, intense, revolutionary activity was the order of the day. Agriculture was still the primary industry and a basic factor in the nation's economy, but the agricultural revolution was nearly completed, even in such outlying areas as Wigtownshire, and the decline in relative importance is astonishing. The Corn Law subsidies from 1840 to 1846 helped to maintain a balance for farm prices during the depression that followed the French Revolution, and 1846 marked the real beginning of the potato famine, but there was a general rise in prices of farm products and a resultant lifting of the standard of living for the rural population. These trends did not bring a similar improvement for thousands in the new urban population. The Industrial Revolution was little more than well begun in 1839, but the metal and textile industries were progressing at such a phenomenal pace that by 1887 it could be said, "the industrial revolution had been completed in Scotland." Transportation improvements were both a cause and a result of all the other activity. Telford and McAdam were finishing their work; the Forth-

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2 Grant, I. F., Economic History of Scotland, p. 215. See also Pryde, G. S., Scotland from 1603 to the present day, pp 249, 257.
3 Ibid., p. 215; J. A. Bowie pointed out that "For the last 150 years the numbers engaged in agriculture in Scotland have declined both absolutely and relatively to the rest of the population", in The Future of Scotland, p. 25.
4 Ibid., p. 203.
Clyde Canal was carrying up to capacity loads and the railroad boom was in full swing; in 1830 there were less than 100 miles of railway but by 1886 there were 2,224 miles. Craik said that the railways "brought the spirit of modern times by one quick bound into the midst of medievalism ... the contrast between 1800 and 1850 (was) far greater than that between 1850 and the closing years of the century. So it was with the development of her natural wealth," and Cockburn said, "This passion for accessibility is only one of the thousand signs of the universal activity of the popular mind. It is not the mere commercial demand ... The intellectual fermentation is astonishing ... the dawn of a new day." In terms of Symington's lifetime it meant that while he began his ministry as a probationer and a pastor at Stranraer, travelling to church meetings on horseback, he finished it in the comparative ease and luxury of nineteenth century railways and canal boats, and in spite of the weaknesses of old age he was able to attend the meetings of the church through the last year of his life. There are also some facts to indicate that he profited in a financial way. Many others were profiting from these developments and one description has been given us of a social gathering with

Our literary and fashionable gentlemen predominating with their side curls, and frills, and ruffles, and silver buckles; and our stately matrons stiffened in their hoops, and gorgeous satin; and our beauties with high heeled shoes, powdered and pomatoned hair, and lofty and composite hairdresses.

But unfortunately neither society nor industry had made any systematic preparation for the mass migration of factory workers from the highlands and farm lands, to the Forth-Clyde industrial belt and in spite of all the other

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1Craik, op. cit., vol. II, p. 346; John Mackintosh wrote, "The great revolution in the means of communication which took place in the second quarter of the (19th) century ... does not seem to have been anticipated", The History of Civilization in Scotland, vol. IV, pp 355, 356.

2Cockburn, Henry, Journal of Henry Cockburn, (Hereinafter referred to as Journal), vol. I, p. 7; see also "a railway speculation fever spread over the country which reached its height in 1845 and 1846", The Industries of Scotland, by David Bremner, p. 91.

3Cockburn, H., Memorials of Henry Cockburn, (Hereinafter referred to as Memorials), p. 25.
improvements and advantages, the urban population suffered. School systems were hopelessly overcrowded and outmoded, child labour came to be carried on under "terrible" conditions, factory wages continued to decrease, the old parish poor law system was helplessly broken down, housing was deplorable, epidemics of disease were frequent and misery reigned supreme in the stinking wynds and closes of the city. One immediate result of these contrasting conditions of the industrial revolution appeared in labour unrest. The Chartists began their work the same year Symington moved to Glasgow and no decade throughout this period was without its strikes or riots. In his Journal in 1848 he wrote,

The unemployed rioting in town & doing immense mischief, but happily all quiet & undisturbed in our neighbourhood ... Town still much excited & one person killed & several wounded by the military. Business is suspended & no one seems to know how this is to end. One thing is manifest, that the police force of the city is insufficient, else the tumult might have been quelled at the first.

The condition of the church throughout Scotland becomes of increasing importance in evaluating Symington's work. While at Stranraer his contacts with Church leaders were more limited but in Glasgow he was brought into immediate personal contact with the churchmen who were making some of the

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2 Grant, op. cit., p. 277. See also Crain's description of "a vast system of degrading toil, which crushed the life out of women and young children was still permitted to stain that civilisation which cloaked its hideousness by the boast of expanding wealth.", in op. cit., vol. II, p. 437.


4 Brown, P. H., op. cit., p. 360; Cockburn, Journal, vol. II, p. 120.

5 Grant, op. cit., p. 274, viz. "half of all children born there (Glasgow) died before they were five years old".


7 Mackintosh, John, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 462. See also, Mechie, op. cit., pp 100-116.

most important decisions in Scottish Church History, and he frequently attended the courts of the other churches. Pressed from without by a scepticism stemming from the free-thought of the previous generation, and overwhelmed by the rapidly increasing, shifting population; torn from within by reactions to Reformation practices and theology, and the conflicts still echoing between a dying Moderatism and a growing Evangelicalism; and faced with an increasing disinterest caused by the growing respect paid in money, time and thought to material prosperity and progress, the Church in Scotland in 1839 was only beginning to recognize her responsibility to improve herself and the state of society in general. In so far as church harmony and union were concerned, these were years remarkable for their lack of harmony and the most important development of the century is to be seen in the increasing control of the "Evangelical Party" which resulted in the Disruption in 1843, four years after Symington had moved to Glasgow. Among other factors contributing to this have been listed:

A quiet, though real, revival of evangelical religion, the fruit of much faithful preaching ... fostered by the uncertainties of the Napoleonic Wars, (and) the emergence of great minded and great-souled leaders, who, by voice and pen, upheld with power the Evangelical case.\(^1\)

William Symington has been listed among these leaders and following his review of the "personnel of religious Scotland at this epoch making time," J. R. Fleming wrote, "Altogether, both in pulpit and on platform, Scotland had never so strong a phalanx of able and earnest men, and they were all needed when the crisis came to rebuild the broken walls of Zion, as well as to guide the nation into wider paths of faith and service."\(^2\)

The church in the city of Glasgow was no exception to the rule. Chalmers found in 1817 that, "during a period of nearly one hundred years while the population had more than quadrupled, only two new city churches had been built in Glasgow."\(^3\) He estimated that even then twenty were needed and in a later survey of the Tron Parish, he found that out of 11,120 souls, not more

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\(^1\)Watt, H., Chalmers and the Disruption, p. 12.


than 3,500 "had seats", and "in some districts, two thirds of the adult population had wholly cast off the very form and profession of Christianity." There were at least fifteen other denominations in Glasgow by the year 1860 and another pastor wrote, in describing this area of Glasgow, "dissent had done ... twice as much, as in its hampered and ill-administered condition, the Established Church had done to arrest the evil", but such was the awful magnitude of "evil" that, "it was growing in a much more rapid ratio than did the general increase of the population".

The particular congregation to which Dr. Symington was called helped to place him in a position of unusual importance in the Reformed Presbyterian Church and a position of respectable influence among other churches. The west of Scotland had always been the stronghold for those Cameronians who later made up the Reformed Presbyterian Church and as Glasgow became the population magnet of the nation, the sons and daughters of the Society Folk, who flocked with others into the city, came to look upon the Great Hamilton Street congregation, "McMillan's Church", as their church home; and both Hutchison and Couper in their histories of the denominations agree that it was "the largest and most influential in the denomination", "the natural centre of the Reformed Presbyterian Church", the "focus of its official life". The Societies which constituted the core of the congregation were among the oldest and strongest in the entire church and they continued to exert an important influence during Symington's ministry. One of the congregational historians traced their existence back to a group which met in the "Goosedubs" of Glasgow.

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1 Ibid., vol. I, p. 455.
3 Couper, W., A Century of Congregational Life, p. 45, "The various branches of the Secession do not appear to have done much for the growing populations in the Calton. On its outskirts two congregations had built churches ..."; See also Mechie, op. cit., pp 41, 159.
4 Hutchison, M., The History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 224; Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 15, "During the nineteenth century it was the most influential (congregation) in the denomination".
6 Ibid., p. 40.
between 1638 and 1649 and in one sense they helped to provide another link with the Reformation. Presbytery withdrew from them the right to admit people to church membership in 1792, but long after that they continued to exert a powerful influence by making "recommendations" concerning new members, elders, and pastors. For many years the general congregational meeting was made up of representatives or "commissioners" from the Societies and later these Society commissioners, along with others became known as "The Managers", an organization which continued to function down to 1877 and was concerned with the work of both the Session and Deacon's Board. One of the last references in the Session Minutes to the Societies, appeared in 1853 in the form of an objection filed against an elder elect who did not consider Societies "necessary in the present age". He was not ordained!

Symington's Journal bears the record of a careful weekly visitation of those meetings and in later years he assigned "Fellowship Meetings" as subject for research and report by his students at the Theological Hall. One of Symington's elders once indicated the importance of those meetings when he exclaimed, "Twenty-four fellowship meetings in one congregation! No wonder the Congregation prospered, and that among the office-bearers there were found not a few men of eminent piety ..." and in words that remind one of G. D. Henderson's description of the Reformation "Exercise" the same elder

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1 Binnie, Thos., Sketch of the First Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, p. 10; Binnie was an elder when Symington was pastor. In the same book (p. 153) another man wrote for Binnie the record of his, i.e. Binnie's relationship with the church and it was typical of many of the others; "Soon after connecting himself with the Congregation he (i.e. Binnie) became a member of the Tuesday evening Fellowship Meeting, a meeting which had met weekly from the second reformation days. It was the same society which met in the Goosedubs, during the times of persecution. For many years he was chairman of that meeting and permitted no other engagement to interfere with his regular attendance. He owed much to it, and many of its members owed much to him".

2 MSS Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery, 1792, to be found in Trinity College Library.

3 Couper, W. J., A Century of Congregational Life, p. 44.

4 MSS Minutes of Managers of Great Hamilton Street Congregation, to be found in the Great Hamilton Street Church, Glasgow. (Hereinafter referred to as Managers' Minutes), for 1877.

5 MSS Minutes of the Session of the Great Hamilton Street Reformed Presbyterian Church (Hereinafter referred to as Session Minutes), for 19th Dec. 1853.

6 Binnie, op. cit., pp 28f.
described these meetings and their particular contribution:

The fellowship meetings were admirable schools for training men to study and discriminate regarding divine truth ... The exercises seem to have been very similar to those in fellowship meetings still. The members in turn conducted the service, which began with singing, reading the scripture and prayer. A text or subject previously appointed was then discussed by all present ... the chairman for the day made some concluding remarks, and the meeting was closed by singing and prayer.¹

As they had served in the absence of ministerial leadership, in the face of physical persecution and revolution, during the seventeenth century, to keep alive the spark of vital religion, and to develop lay leadership, so they continued to function in the face of other kinds of encroachment during the Industrial Revolution. They provided an important stimulus for spiritual growth, and helped to account for the lay leadership found in this congregation and the numbers of ministers coming from it. It was not just the receiving and the holding of the Society Folk as they moved into the city, it was training them in the fine art of adapting and applying the Reformation Principles that was the important thing; and the "discussions" in the Society Meetings found their place in that work.

A third factor contributing to Symington's position and influence is to be found in the names and work of his pastoral predecessors. In spite of the fact that the congregation was known as "the oldest" or "the first"² there had been only two other pastors prior to Symington. When the Societies divided themselves into two "Congregations" in 1762, John M'Millan II, as the duly elected and appointed pastor of the "northern Congregation", "became the first minister to be definitely associated with the Great Hamilton Street Congregation";³ but at that time he preferred to live at Pentland. A second disjunction a quarter of a century later drew M'Millan


²Couper, W. J., A Century of Congregational Life, p. 141, "the oldest dissenting congregation in the Lower Ward of Lanarkshire ... the oldest of all the congregations in the East End of Glasgow". See also Binnie, op. cit., p. 5.

³Ibid., p. 12. See also The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland by Couper, p. 13.
to Sandhills and the Glasgow members worshipped there\(^1\) until 1790 when they purchased a church on Kirk Street in the Calton. M'Millan died in 1808\(^2\) and the congregation was without any pastor until 1815 when Mr. David Armstrong was ordained and installed.\(^3\) Armstrong's ministry was at first quite successful. The Burgh of Calton was growing rapidly and in 1819 the congregation erected a building containing "1100 sittings all in pews" in Great Hamilton Street.\(^4\) Church debt, years of depression, the pastor's long periods of illness, and a tactfully worded note from The Managers to their pastor stating that "the increase of the congregation ... and the cheerful co-operation of its members ... are much impeded by the unusual length of the public services",\(^5\) were indications of hard times and at one time the church was almost sold because of discouragement.\(^6\) The membership was rapidly decreasing. One section of the congregation left to form the West Campbell Street Congregation and it was to this congregation that William Symington was twice called while he was still at Stranraer.\(^7\) Armstrong died very unexpectedly in 1838 and Symington was installed as pastor of the Great Hamilton Street Congregation fifteen months later. M'Millan's name was probably the most respected in the entire denomination,

\(^{1}\) The church building was near Shettleston. See Ibid., p. 13.

\(^{2}\) Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, pp 80, 95; Andrew Symington had been called in 1809 but had declined to accept.

\(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 97.

\(^{4}\) Binnie, Thos., op. cit., p. 95.

\(^{5}\) Couper, W. J., A Century of Congregational Life, pp 51-58.

\(^{6}\) Ibid., p. 52.

\(^{7}\) Symington listed in his Journal as the two most important reasons for refusing their calls: "first. Dread of collision with the other congregation, wh might mar peace and usefulness. Second. The injury Mr. Armstrong & his family might sustain from the success of West Campbell Street interest", in Journal, 6th October 1836.
and while Armstrong was also respected, the unfortunate circumstances of his later years caused results that provided marked contrast to the earlier history of the congregation.

The conditions in the City, the Church at large, and the Congregation presented both a threat and an opportunity. If the Reformation Testimony, and even the organization produced by the Societies was to avoid a lingering death and be brought into a position of practical influence in the industrialized world of the 19th Century, then the sons and daughters of the Hill Folk would need to be taught to adapt and to develop the Reformation Testimony to meet the new conditions of the City Folk; and if it could be done in the Great Hamilton Street Congregation in Glasgow, there was reason to believe that it could be done elsewhere.

In tracing the development of "The Evangelical Revival", Hector Macpherson compared the influences of "Rationalism" and "Industry":

Intellectually the masses were living in the seventeenth century, the century of theologic and theocratic ideas.

The effect of the Industrial Revolution in producing the religious reaction is not sufficiently noticed by historians of the period. Through neglect of this factor we are apt to over-estimate the extent of the rationalistic movement of the eighteenth century. The movement never reached the masses; consequently when the people, attracted by rising industries, began to congregate in large centres, they were so much inflammable material for any religious enthusiast ...

Symington was aware of many of the industrial, sociological, political and ecclesiastical trends which have been noted, and in many ways he had been admirably trained to understand the needs of souls caught up in these circumstances. By virtue of having been born and reared in the Paisley-Glasgow area he had received a first-hand knowledge of the industrial influences; by virtue of his college training he had learned of the influence of rationalism; and by virtue of his home and church training and the years of experience as a pastor at Stranraer, he had come to know the mind of those who might still be living in the seventeenth century of

1 Macpherson, H., Scotland's Battles for Spiritual Independence (1905), pp 17ff.

2 Machie believed that this was a handicap of Chalmers', in The Church and Scottish Social Development 1780-1870, pp 57ff.
"theologic and theocratic ideas". He summarized his third reason for moving to Glasgow as being "The sphere of usefulness wh the population and institutions of such a place as Glasgow lay open", and the Synod listed, among other reasons for approving of his "translation", that it would give him "... a station in Glasgow, in which city there is a University attended by the greater part of those youths who study for the Ministry in our Church ... Members of country congregations are frequently moving to Glasgow ... the cause of the Covenanter Reformation there ought to have the benefit of being advocated by men of ... experience and accomplishments ... and he has peculiar opportunities of promoting Missionary undertakings ...". These words were an almost prophetic description of parts of his Glasgow Ministry. In the words addressed to the whole church in 1835, Symington had revealed his own attitude toward the nineteenth century challenge:

The times in which our lot is cast are reforming times.
A spirit has sprung up to correct abuses, theoretical and practical, moral and religious ... These are favourable indications ... to which, surely they cannot be indifferent on whose banner the word REFORM holds so conspicuous a place.

The Work in the Congregation

All records are unanimous in attesting the success of Symington's work in the Great Hamilton Street Church. When he was installed in 1839 the membership did not greatly exceed 300 and the trend in past years had shown substantial decreases, but beginning in October of 1839 when sixty-five names were added, the "Abstract of Admissions" in The Communicants Roll Book showed 

1 Journal, for 6th October 1836.

2 Extracts of the Minutes of Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (hereinafter referred to as Extracts of Synod Minutes), for May 1839, Session IV.

3 "The Rebuilding of Jerusalem", in Discourses on Public Occasions, p. 155, being the sermon preached as Moderator at the opening of Synod in 1835.

4 This book, in Symington's handwriting, remains in the Great Hamilton Street Church of Scotland, Glasgow.
rapid congregational growth. Entries were made twice each year, at the October and April communion seasons, and they seldom fell below forty in the years from 1839 to 1862. Of these, by far the majority were listed as "New Members", those having certificates from other congregations being more on only four entries, indicating that the congregational growth was coming not so much from those who had already been members of the Reformed Presbytery and were now moving to the city, as it came from those who were being reached through mission work. In April of 1853 a note in Symington's handwriting totalled the membership at 993 and that year, with the pastor's encouragement, a new congregation was formed because "... the church is insufficient for the accommodation of the members and their families". Later that same year, Symington wrote to the Managers requesting an assistant and stating among other reasons the fact that "during the sixteen years of my incumbency there have been upwards of 1500 admissions and after all the deductions occasioned by immigration, the erection of a new congregation, and death, there are still more than 900 on the roll". Nor was it a loose membership, for Symington had divided the entire membership into certain well defined geographical areas. An elder was assigned to each of these areas and was made responsible for calling on the members in it. Record books containing the names and addresses of the members were carefully prepared, given to the elder in each district, and then just as carefully collected. The record of visitations made was reviewed twice each year prior to the communion seasons. Reference such as the following were frequent:

The Session this evening completed the purging of the Communicants' Roll and find that the Congregation consists at this date of nine hundred and fifteen members, including a few about whom inquiry is to be made. There were decreases in membership during the pastorates that followed and preceded Symington's, but while he was pastor, three new congregations were

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1 *Reformed Presbyterian Magazine* (Hereinafter referred to as *R.P. Magazine*), October 1853; *Session Minutes*, for 6th Dec. 1852 and 7th Feb., 6th June, 4th July 1853; and *Managers' Minutes*, 11th July 1853. The new congregation later became known as the Renwick United Free Church.

2 *Managers' Minutes*, 13th August 1853.

3 *Session Minutes*, 30th Nov. 1858.
formed, and it was said that the membership "at the time of his death had trebled itself".\textsuperscript{1} Few if any other congregations in the denomination could have mustered even 500 members during these years and the Synod once said,

Under his (i.e. Symington's) ministrations, which extended in Glasgow over the space of twenty-three years, large additions were made to the membership of the congregation which, by its members, wealth, and enterprise, speedily assumed a leading place in the Church ... we have reason to believe that not only did the congregation grow in numbers but that many were by his instrumentality brought to the knowledge of the truth and savingly converted.\textsuperscript{2}

Among those who have borne testimony to the importance of Symington's influence in the development of Church leadership, William Binnie provides an example. His father had moved to Glasgow from the west of Scotland in 1815 and young Binnie was preparing for college when Symington became his pastor. Following his college course he enrolled in the Theological Hall; from there he went on to study in Germany, followed Symington as Professor of Theology in the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Hall, and later, under the Mutual Eligibility Act, became Professor of History at the Free Church College in Aberdeen. He described one of the more unseen aspects of Symington's ministry:

I can never forget a parting visit I paid him in his study one day in the autumn of 1845. I was going off to spend a winter on the continent. He made me kneel along with him, and commended me to God in a prayer which affected me far more than any public prayer of his had ever done: it was so simple, so warm, so clearly an outpouring of the heart.\textsuperscript{3}

Symington's sons said, "It was our father's custom to pray thus with his children at turning points in the journey of life, and on other special occasions",\textsuperscript{4} and the Journal record reveals through the years an increasing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Couper, W. J., \textit{A Century of Congregational Life}, p. 67.
\item \textsuperscript{2}\textit{Extracts of Synod Minutes}, for 6th May 1862, Session I.
\item \textsuperscript{3}\textit{Memoir of the Author"}, in O.D. (Hereinafter referred to as Memoir), p. lxxxix.
\item \textsuperscript{4}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
number of such callers: "Young men at tea", "students", ministers, missionaries, relatives and others. Such scenes as these help to account for the statement of the congregational historian, "that thirty names of ministers can be adduced as having been members of, or connected with, our congregation, two of these professors and three missionaries".¹ Dr. John G. Paton and Rev. Joseph Copeland who later became missionaries to the New Hebrides, and Dr. John Cunningham who later became missionary to the Jews in London, were among those who profited from the counsel and prayer in Symington's study and later made decisions that affected their life service. The same was true of the laymen of whom it was said, "It was in no small measure owing to the labours of some of them that the Church extended so rapidly in the west of Scotland ...".² The treasurer of the Synod, the Director of the Church Sustentation Fund (which not only cleared the church of debt but assisted with the erection of a number of new churches),³ the architectural advisor for new church building, the publisher, and for a time the editor of the church paper, were all members or elders of this congregation who were working in close co-operation with their pastor. These men were a tribute to his pastoral leadership and they help to explain the rapidly expanding influence of their pastor and of their congregation.

Symington's pulpit ministry was as successful in Glasgow as it had been in Wigtownshire and it continued to be an important influence in the denomination and the community. Four months after his arrival in Glasgow he began a series of lectures on the book of Daniel at the Sabbath evening service. Their titles would suggest that they were intended to be a partial fulfillment of his first reason for moving to Glasgow, i.e. "receiving youth in from every part of the church" and after the first few lectures the church was filled to capacity. Members of the congregation complained of their seats being taken and following the sixth lecture it became necessary to deliver them twice, once in the afternoon and again at the hour of the evening worship.⁴

¹Couper, W. J., A Century of Congregational Life, p. 94.
²Ibid., p. 103. He quoted from an article by Wm. Binnie in the Free Church of Scotland Record, 1898.
³Symington was given the credit for suggesting the entire programme and contributing to its continued success. He was the convener of the Committee. See R. P. Magazine for 2nd June 1862, pp 240f.
⁴Managers' Minutes, 25th March 1840.
The crowds of people waiting impatiently in the street outside the church for the afternoon service to be dismissed in order to be assured a seat for the evening service would have presented an extraordinary sight in any generation. The Journal for these years continued to record "house crowded" or "house oppressively crowded", and on 1st March, 1840, Symington made the following entry with regrets, "The crowd at evening lecture most overwhelming: many hurt in getting in: hundreds not able to find admission: house filled in five minutes after door opened."  

The series on Daniel was completed in 1842, another on Joseph continued to 1845, and a third series on the Apocalypse was finished in 1850. The increased demands made on him in later years as Professor of Theology required him to give them up, but as long as they continued their popularity never waned. In an unusual statement, one of the Glasgow newspapers said of them:

We are happy that this instructive course of lectures continues and the interest still increases. To the youth of our town they offer an excellent opportunity of acquiring a correct and concise system of religion and morals.

The Great Hamilton Street School System

But the proclamation of the Gospel from the pulpit could not be considered adequate to meet the needs of the community immediately surrounding the Great Hamilton Street Church and six months after moving to Glasgow, Symington opened a rather remarkable School in conjunction with the other work of the congregation. He said with reference to an initial survey:

It was found that from indifference, inability, or unwillingness of many parents - regardless alike of the welfare of their own souls and the spiritual conditions of their offspring - the sanctification of the Sabbath and the religious instruction of the rising generation were sadly neglected by thousands. Hence Sabbath evening schools were reckoned but only highly desirable, but in many cases absolutely necessary.

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1 Journal, 1st March 1840.
2 The Glasgow Examiner, Saturday, 25th January 1845.
3 Symington, Wm., "The History and Importance of Sabbath Schools," in A Course of Lectures on Sabbath Schools, p. 5.
At first, classes were held on Sabbath evenings from "% past 5 o'clock till % till 7 o'clock" in rented rooms in Risk Street. Before the end of the year the attendance amounted to 260 and some of the classes were being held in the church. The work was expanded by the addition of week-day schools because it was found that the children could not read their Bibles, and Symington insisted that since the "communicating to children of the ability to read is not a religious exercise it ought therefore to have no place among our Sabbatical arrangements". The first Day School was opened on September 22nd, 1840, but again it was found that the long hours of child labour made it necessary to open Evening Schools for those who worked during the day. By January of 1842, 100 were enrolled in the Day Schools and 60 in the Evening Schools. At the annual meeting of the Societies of the congregation in 1849, the superintendent reported the following progress:

The number of Teachers at present employed in the Sabbath School is 30, and the number of children receiving instruction is 591; being an increase, compared with the previous year of 2 teachers and 117 children ... what is still better, we are not without the cheering conviction that they are growing not only in knowledge, but also in grace. My heart is gladdened from time to time in seeing some of those who were lately pupils in some of the classes, taking their part as Teachers in the School. Still more, at every communion season, several of them have taken their places at the table of the Lord, and thus given testimony to their desire to honour and obey their Saviour.

Two other schools were described in the same report: a Free School with a day attendance of 113 and an evening attendance between 50 and 60, where reading and writing were taught for the purpose of "providing the neglected youth in its neighbourhood with an education which will prepare them for being useful in society and improving their condition in life"; and a School

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1 Couper, W. J., A Century of Congregational Life, p. 80.

2 Symington, Wm., "The History and Importance of Sabbath Schools", in op. cit., pp 10, 11.

3 "Reports of the Different societies Connected with the First Reformed Presbyterian Congregation", Glasgow, found in vol. II of the Scottish Presbyterian 1849-50.
of Industry, consisting of about 60 children wherein,

Miss Robertson and twelve other ladies who attend in succession five nights in the week, give instruction to 72 female children in sewing, knitting, etc., being an increase of 40 since the period last report. The formation of this institution was an important addition to our educational labours, and the success which has attended it, we trust will prove sufficient reward to those ladies of the congregation by whose labours and attention it has already attained a position so encouraging.

One other class had been formed that year by the precentor "who kindly offered his services one night in the week for instructing the children in sacred music ... to engage in a becoming manner, in praising God".\(^1\)

The minute books of the Managers and of the Session reveal an anxious, prayerful interest in the whole project. In 1850 the Managers began discussing the need for a single building to replace the many rented quarters. In January 1852, a Methodist Church in Green Street was purchased and renovated, and the £900 cost was cheerfully raised. At a time when many members were complaining that they could not find seats, the following announcement was made by the Managers:

> Any Sabbath School Children not attending another Church, and desirous to go to Church, are to be allowed to sit in the front pews in centre of the Church.\(^2\)

The Session appointed certain elders to visit the schools at regular intervals. The Moderator was convener of a special committee "to consider the best means of being useful to the school and of responding to the requests of the Teachers". Four members of the Session were appointed a standing committee to work with "the Sabbath School Society" and Moderator and elders pledged themselves "to do all in their power" to procure properly qualified teachers.

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1. Ibid; The Miss Robertson referred to was the mother of Dr. Clarence E. McCartney, one of the best known Presbyterian ministers in the United States. He referred to his mother's work in this "Friday-night Bible class for mill girls", and to her memories of Dr. Symington's ministry, in *The Making of a Minister*, (1961), pp 38f.

The Moderator promised an annual sermon to teachers and children on the first day of each year, and his Journal reveals many hours spent each week of the school year in "examining classes", "instructing teachers", "my own class", or just "classes". His heart was in that work and to him it was important because:

The young form a class ... to whom religion looks for upholding its truths, vindicating its rights, and perpetuating its institutions, on whom society depends for its future welfare, and for whose instruction the Great Mediator himself did not reckon it beneath him to provide in his direction to his apostles.

The work of the schools continued to prosper long after Symington's death, and was transferred to the proper authorities a short time after the Education Act came into operation in 1872. At the time of transfer, the staff included a head master, five certificated teachers, several pupil teachers and around nine hundred students. It became what was later known as the Tureen Street Public School and Couper said, "In point of attendance the school was excelled by only one other in the whole of Glasgow."

Symington's leadership in that work was recognized, not only in his own denomination where according to his Journal record he lectured in almost every congregation on the subject of "Schools", but also in other denominations. Before he left Stranraer he had addressed various groups throughout that area and in Glasgow he was invited by the Glasgow Sabbath School Union to deliver the first of A Course of Lectures on Sabbath Schools, "by Ministers of Various Denominations". In that lecture entitled, "The History and Importance of Sabbath Schools", Symington explained his interest in that particular aspect of social reform. Only one third of the lecture is taken up with the "History" of Sabbath Schools but it is a world survey which revealed a vision that refused to be limited to the provinces of western Scotland, and as will be

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1Session Minutes, 4th July 1853; 5th Sept. 1853, and others.
2The History and Importance of Sabbath Schools" in A Course of Lectures on Sabbath Schools, p. 12.
3Couper, W. J., A Century of Congregational Life, pp 91f. See also Binnie, op. cit., p. 114.
4J. R. Fleming referred to it as an organization which "ultimately absorbed all other local unions, and became national in character", in The Church in Scotland 1875-1929, p. 219
seen later, his words reflected the development of school systems similar to his own in the islands of the South Pacific:

What Christian heart does not glow at the thought of the weekly assemblage of so many thousands, in every quarter of the earth; met ... to be instructed in the sacred Book which, while it commands us to love the Lord with all our heart, requires us also to love our neighbours as ourselves ...  

In the second part of the lecture, "The Importance of Sabbath Schools", was derived: first, from their Object and second, from their Tendency. Their Object was "the religious education of the neglected young" and in drawing a careful distinction between "instruction" and "education", he revealed the immediate objectives of his own Industry and Day Schools. Education could not be satisfied with anything less than:

... cultivation of the dispositions and feelings - feelings of reverence, integrity, prudence, humanity, generosity, piety, and devotion; and there is the formation of right habits, of subordination, order, harmony, industry, economy, purity, observation and dutiful attention to personal, social and religious obligations.  

In drawing a second distinction between "education" and "religious education", he went behind the habits of life to the motivating factors in life, and his teachers were instructed:

... to teach the simple elements of that pure and undefiled religion, whose direct tendency is to enlarge the understanding ... to dethrone oppression, to abolish slavery, to exclude war, to extirpate fraud, to banish violence, and to revive the withered blossoms of Paradise.  

In drawing his third distinction between "the young" and "the neglected young", he seemed to be keenly aware of the danger of a conflict with other churchmen arising out of his own convictions concerning the covenant family relationship, and yet he stated his own beliefs quite clearly:

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1."The History and Importance of Sabbath Schools", being Lecture I, in A Course of Lectures on Sabbath Schools, p. 8.  

2 Ibid., p. 9.  

3 Ibid., p. 11.
Parents are the natural and authorized guardians of their own children in matters of religion. The domestic constitution, as an institution of Divine appointment, is not only designed but fully adequate to accomplish this object. Both the law of God and a right knowledge of the principles of human nature protest against all interference with the untransferrable obligations of parents... Every Christian family should be a Sabbath School. Sabbath Schools are looked upon in their true light only when regarded as temporary schemes, occasioned by an existing evil... which as it appears to us, they are qualified but in part to remove. The root of the evil lies in parental unfitness. It is not then because children are neglected by their parents that Sabbath Schools become necessary, so much as because negligent parents are neglected by those who ought to take them up...1

He frankly admitted that many would disagree with him on this point, but then, passing rapidly from controversial principle to practical application, he urged that they work together in order to make sure that "the children of today" who would become "the parents of tomorrow" would be qualified and able to teach their own children. It was his policy thus to turn such principles containing the seeds of potential controversy, to the advantage of interdenominational co-operation, rather than to allow them to prohibit such work. This was a very practical problem in the Reformed Presbyterian Church and in advocating the same policy for the whole church, Symington said, "there ought to be no division or separation which the interests of truth do not peremptorily demand: and certainly it is not every diversity of sentiment that will warrant us in refusing to co-operate with others in promoting a common object."2

"The tendency" of his schools was first to benefit the individual soul, spiritually, intellectually, morally, and eternally. Second, they benefited the "church of Christ" by training those members and leaders who would assure her continued establishment and welfare:

Dismal indeed were the prospects had we not reason to hope that, when our Wardlaws, and our Heughs and our Chalmerses shall have been gathered to their fathers, other sons shall arise to soothe the heart of sorrow with their sweet and tender counsel, to shame infidelity with their reasoning, and to pour over the field of sacred truth the splendour of their eloquence and the fervour of their sanctified imagination.3

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1 Ibid., pp 13f.
3 "The History and Importance of Sabbath Schools", op. cit., p. 25.
Third, they promoted the good of civil society by training those who, in a short time, were "to fill the respective stations of magistrates and subjects in the body politic ... hastening forward that blissful period when Messiah ... shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from rivers unto the ends of the earth".1 Behind each of these points is to be seen Symington's concern for the Dominion of Christ, in its relationship: to the individual soul, to the perpetuity and unity of the church, and to the State and Magistracy. He summarized his whole interest in the work of these schools by saying:

Everything else that we have mentioned ... the good of the young ... the interests of the church - the welfare of society at large - all contribute to promote the glory of God.2

And these statements concerning the "object" and "tendency" of his schools could also be seen as having been the object and tendency for every other phase of the programme whereby the Great Hamilton Street Congregation, under Symington's leadership, sought to meet the social and spiritual needs of the citizens of Glasgow. In other words social reform, as Symington saw it, was directly related to the glory of God; it was one aspect of the development of the Dominion or Kingdom of Christ, in Scotland and throughout the world.

Home Missions

Closely related to the work of the schools belonging to the Great Hamilton Street congregation was the work of their city mission. The session first "took up the consideration of the propriety of having a local missionary in connection with our congregation", in 1847.3 The moderator and four others formed a committee "to endeavour to provide the means of bringing about that object", and shortly afterwards a Mr. Cochran was appointed 'missionary'. His salary was to be paid by another rather remarkable organization within the congregation called "The Bible And

1Ibid., p. 25.
2Ibid., p. 25.
3Session Minutes, 4th October 1847.
Missionary Society". They assisted with the work of the Schools but were most active in the Home and Foreign Mission programme, and seem to have functioned as an underwriter's group to guarantee salaries and otherwise administer the programme until such time as the congregation or the denomination chose to carry on the responsibility. In this case, the services of Cochran were not satisfactory and he was dismissed; but in their annual report in 1849, The Bible and Missionary Society re-emphasized the need:

To none of the other objects (to which they had given money) do we attach more importance than to this. It is possible that in the outgoings of a wide and extended benevolence, our efforts may be too exclusively directed to distant objects, and too little occupied with our own neighbourhood. Have we not heathenism around us in its aspect unmitigated, and in its results as fearful as that which exists in more remote lands? The dark places of our own city are full of the habitations of wickedness. Might we not without injury to our other institutions support a missionary in the more neglected parts of our own neighbourhood, whose labours might aid in presenting a barrier to the further progress of declension amongst our home population? ... we leave the suggestion to your minds.

On the 27th of March, 1850, a young teacher by the name of John G. Paton who had moved to Glasgow from Dumfriesshire, was appointed as Missionary to the Green Street area. At first half his salary was paid by the congregation and half by the Glasgow City Mission. He became an elder in the Great Hamilton Street Congregation in 1853 and the record of his work in Green Street up to the year 1857, when he left to carry on similar work in the New Hebrides, forms one of the most interesting chapters of an autobiography that has been called "something of a classic in this form of literature".

1. Symington had formed the organization not long after his arrival in Glasgow. At first the elders seem to have acted as a committee of directors and Symington officiated at the meetings with the title of "president". They were reorganized in 1860. See Managers' Minutes, 9th Jan. 1850; Cockburn said, "Everything is done on the principle of a public meeting ... Society is all spotted and bubbling with these little senates ...", in Cockburn's Journal, vol. I, p. 212.

2. Reports of the Organizations of the Great Hamilton Street Congregation found in the Scottish Presbyterian for 1849. See also Managers' Minutes, 14th Jan. 1850.


4. Session Minutes, 7th Nov. 1853; 25th Dec. 1853.

At first his meetings were held in a hay loft, but later Paton described how after Dr. Symington's congregation had purchased the Green Street Church and buildings:

... the church was given to me in which to conduct all my meetings, while the other halls were adapted as schools ... The purchasing and using of these buildings for an evangelistic and educational Mission became a blessing - a very conspicuous blessing - to that district in the Calton of Glasgow; and the blessing still perpetuates itself ... in that poor and crowded and clamant portion of the city.

His programme was a miniature of the Great Hamilton Street congregational programme, and Paton said, 'the work, was among the purest joys in all my life, and the results were amongst the most certain and precious of all my ministry.' Elsewhere he cited an example of the close working relationship existing between the mission and the church. It related to the conversion of a young medical student who had attempted to take his own life:

After delightful conversation, he promised to go with me to Dr. Symington's church on Sabbath Day: there he took sittings beside me; at next half-yearly communion he and his wife were received into membership, and their children were baptized; and from that day till his death he led a devoted and most useful Christian life.

When Paton left Glasgow to begin the same kind of work in the New Hebrides, his brother Walter, who was also a member of the congregation, was persuaded to give up a promising career in business to continue the work in Green Street. He also entered the theological hall and upon completion of the three-year course, resigned from the mission to become a regularly licensed and ordained minister. Mr. John Edgar, who was then a student under Symington's instruction at "The Hall", was next persuaded to take up the mission work and he in turn became an outstanding minister-missionary in the Glasgow area.

2 Ibid., p. 60, see also pp 59-62.
3 Ibid., p. 74, see also pp 72-75.
5 Couper referred particularly to his influence "in the East End of Glasgow ... he was peculiarly successful among the young, several of whom became ministers of the Church, and three occupied College chairs", in *The Reformed Presbyterian Church*, p. 144.
Throughout these years, Symington had been trying to create interest in the Reformed Presbyterian Church at large in this type of programme. In addition to the full reports of the congregational meetings, which were usually bound with the Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, there was an almost annual report or statement from the Great Hamilton Street congregation laid before the Home Mission Committee of the Synod. The statement which was prepared and duly forwarded in 1860 was in the form of a proposition concerning a new mission church:

If it lies within the sphere of your Committee to establish such a church as we speak of, we have no doubt that the chapel in Green Street, belonging to our congregation, would at once be placed at your service.  

Synod's Committee responded by expressing hearty approval of the project, but declined to make any annual grant. Two years later Synod's Committee made the following acknowledgement:

The Great Hamilton Street Congregation which has now a missionary supported entirely by itself, and under its own direction, sends the following valuable information: In connection with the labours of Mr. Edgar, ten prayer meetings have been established in different courts and closes of the district. These are taken charge of and conducted by about thirty members of the congregation ... are intended for those who do not go to church, and are attended, in all, by about 125 persons each Sabbath ... Mr. Edgar devotes his whole time to the work of the missions, and has met with an encouraging amount of success.

The following year the session "cordially approved" a petition signed by sixty-six people who were prepared to become members of a new congregation, and fifty-three who would become adherents, and requested Presbytery to grant permission to form a new congregation. The Managers agreed to contribute £60 for the first year, £55 for the second year, £50 for the third year and £40 for the fourth year towards the support of a pastor, and the use of the Chapel in Green Street free of charge. Edgar was elected their first pastor, the congregation soon built their own church, the Barrowfield Church, in

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1 Session Minutes, 6th Feb. 1860. See also Managers' Minutes, 9th Jan. 1860.
3 Ibid., 2nd June 1862, pp 232f.
4 Managers' Minutes, 12th Jan. 1863.
Landressy Street and it in turn "was known for its social and evangelistic work". When Edgar's congregation moved out of the Green Street Chapel, the Great Hamilton Street congregation immediately began new work there which has carried on into the 20th century. Many years later, another pastor said of that mission:

The rescue work achieved did much to prevent the whole district from lapsing into barbarism, and many of those secured are represented in the churches of this and other lands. It is astonishing how the very name of "Green Street" acquired a fame and affection in the East End of Glasgow.

In the sermon entitled Charity to the Poor Explained and Enforced, Symington explained his goals and motives in this work of social reform. At the very outset he revealed something of his understanding of the external causes of the poverty of the Industrial Revolution when he compared the nineteenth century poor with Job, "a truly pious man suddenly precipitated from the very summit of prosperity into the lowest depths of misery and ruin; on which account he is exposed to the unjust suspicions and bitter reproaches of his mistaken friends". He traced the cause of the poverty behind this, however, to "the wise arrangements of the Almighty Ruler of the world" who has "so appointed, that in every age there should exist among men a great diversity of external conditions - some wallowing in pampered affluence, and others oppressed with pinching want", and from the very fact of this diversity of conditions he derived one indication of "the duties which the higher classes owe to the lower" in Christ's Kingdom. The wealthy were

1 Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 73. It was later known as The Barrowfield United Free Church.

2 Thos. Binnie, writing in 1881 said, "not fewer than 1200 persons, young and old, have occupied the various halls and classrooms every Sabbath," in Sketch of the First Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, p. 138. See also, Couper, W. J., A Century of Congregational Life, pp 131f.

3 Couper, W. J., A Century of Congregational Life, p. 92.

4 Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 241-267.

5 Ibid., p. 242, see also p. 244.

6 Ibid., pp 242f; Professor J. S. McEwen said, "Both our prosperity and our adversity come directly from His hand: that is Knox's firm conviction", in The Faith of John Knox, p. 88.

7 Ibid., p. 246.
compared to the clouds of heaven which had been designed to collect moisture which would fall as rain "on the just and the unjust". God's example in the case of the physical rain indicated that for man "... charity ought not to be limited by blood, neighbourhood, christian fellowship, or even national relationship".¹ Nor could "Charity" be limited to providing the "necessities" of a bare existence which would only prolong misery, but must be extended to provide the "comforts" of life: it meant meeting the "incipient desires" of the poor. Charity for the able-bodied consisted "in providing them with the means of supporting themselves"² but Symington's emphasis fell on the careful understanding of each life, and whether the recipient was able-bodied or not, the giver was to visit the home, actually encounter the poverty and disease, and enhance the value of each gift "by the counsels, the cares, the looks, and the tears of genuine sympathy with which it is accompanied". "Improper motives" for social reform included conformity to custom, the example of others, a wish not to be troubled, a regard to reputation, a love of flattery, and mistaken views of merit, i.e. attempting to fly to heaven on the wings of good works. "Natural feelings" of humanity and the benevolent spirit of the christian religion were "good" motives, but "not enough" for the Christian. The former could prompt an ungodly person whose heart had never known the Grace of God which alone could "refine" constitutional feelings and "impart to them a proper direction"; and the latter was neither "blameworthy" nor "best". The most important motive in the work of social reform was "respect to the will of God" who had so planned the economy of things that in every age there would be both rich and poor: "one design which God has in conferring his bounty on man is, that he may distribute it to others".³ In other words God made the rich man rich, not as a reward for his piety, but in order that he might provide for the poor. The second motive for social reform was to be found in the Golden Rule which required us "... in imagination to strip ourselves of our luxuries and comforts" and so to understand the "desires" of the poor as to be able to meet their needs. The examples of Job, of Christ, His incarnation as well

¹Ibid., p. 252.
²Ibid., p. 249.
³Ibid., p. 258.
as His use of "the bag" during his earthly ministry, and of Paul in his exhortations to the Corinthians concerning liberality, were other motives to social reform. In it all he pointed out that "charity ought not to be confined to temporal things" but would include "the wants of the soul. Let our care of the body's outward wants be mingled with a proper anxiety for those of the never-dying spirit". Here again it was the extension of Christ's Kingdom, "respect to the will of God", which was more important as a motive in Symington's extensive work of social reform, than were "natural feelings" of benevolent interest in his fellow man, and there was that about it which caused young men and women around him to respond to the challenge to carry on the same work in other generations, throughout the world.

Public and Political Activity

Another aspect of Symington's work in the field of social reform is to be seen in his public political activity, and his concern for the "reform" or "Christianizing" of the influence of the State itself. This contribution also involved his example, and then his explanations and actions in the courts of the church. Political criticisms were not encouraged in those years for as one well-informed contemporary has described the situation:

There was no popular representation ... no free and consequently no discussing press ... nor was the absence ... compensated by any freedom of public speech. Public political meetings could not arise for the elements did not exist. I doubt if there was one during the twenty-five years that succeeded the year 1795. Nothing was viewed with such horror as any political congregation not friendly to existing power ... As a body to be deferred to, no public existed. But Symington's Cameronian activities did not conform to the general description. We have seen how he emphasized the relationship between civil government and family life, Sabbath Schools, Bible Societies, Temperance Reform, and the political accomplishments of the martyrs. His

1Ibid., p. 266.

2Cockburn, H., Memorials, pp 190f.
interests in the trends and influences of civil government were apparent in all the records of his private life. In one letter to a fellow presbyter two years before the passing of the first Reform Bill, he wrote:

The British Parl't. never appeared so contemptible in my eyes as this Session ... The upshot of all this debauchery will be the upsetting of the Wellington administration. O what a disregard of God - his authority - and his law in Xtian statesmen! Unless the spirit of God is poured out, it is vain to expect reform. ¹

Another time:

What think you of the affairs of the continent and how do you feel in the prospect of the next parliament? Will the Wellington ministers stand? At all events it will be found that the French Revolution will have the effect of causing more respect to be paid to the wishes of the people. ²

A few weeks later with reference to the legislation for Catholic emancipation:

It is an eventful crisis for Britain. One cannot help praying that they who have so much in their power may be wisely directed. The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord ... let us wait in believing trust in 'the Governor of the nations'. ³

Throughout life he showed an interest which resembled John Knox’s in the events of his times, and in his book of private devotional exercises, usually on the first of January, he reviewed the political events of the past year and prayed for the future. For example, he wrote in the last year of his life:

Jan. 1, 1861. The state of affairs in Italy, Syria, and the Southern States of America, is pregnant with interest; well calculated to arrest the attention of all who would observe the doings of the Lord, and fitted to keep the eye of faith directed to the reigning Governor of the nations, and Prince

1 MSS Letter dated Stranraer, 23rd Feb. 1830, addressed to G. Rowatt, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

2 MSS Letter, dated Stranraer, 20th Jan. 1829, addressed to G. Rowatt, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

3 MSS Letter, dated Stranraer, 13th Feb. 1829, addressed to G. Rowatt, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.
of the Kings of the earth. Thy kingdom come, O Lord; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, Amen.1

Other indications of these interests are to be seen in the friendships which he developed with such people as Sir Andrew Agnew, who later became a champion of Sabbath Reform in parliament, The Earl of Galloway, Sir James Hay, General Andrew M'Dowell whose conversion was ascribed under God to the preaching of Dr. Symington, and others in Galloway and later in Glasgow, who were men of some public and political influence. When in London he called on them and he seemed to consider it a particular personal responsibility to minister to their spiritual needs although they were not members of his church. Apparently his services were welcomed for they attended his meetings and often requested his presence in their homes.

After his "translation" to Glasgow more direct influence is to be seen. His Journal shows that at least twelve times during the first year of residence in the city he appeared on platforms outside his own church, speaking on subjects of some political significance. The years that followed show no decrease in either the number or the variety of these activities. They included such occasions as the two great Sabbath Railway Meetings, held at the City Hall in an effort to halt the plans for running trains on the Sabbath,2 the Protestant meetings held at City Hall to oppose government legislation favouring "Roman Catholic Encroachment",3 the Anti-Maynooth Meetings held in City Hall to petition Parliament to repeal endowment of the Maynooth Roman Catholic College,4 a meeting to oppose a Parliamentary Marriage Affinity Bill,5 Meetings to oppose position of the Government with

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1 As quoted by Dr. Goold in R. P. Magazine, 1st Sept. 1862, p. 339; McEwen's "portrait" of Knox included "a profound sense of the meaningfulness of the events of his times. God's Providence is to be seen not merely in the ordering of the life of the individual: much more is it to be seen in the ordering of great events, even political events, and of the individual's life in relation to those events", in The Faith of John Knox, p. 96.

2 Journal, 2nd Feb. 1842; 20th Jan. 1847; This (1842) speech was printed in Scottish Guardian and later reprinted in pamphlet form.

3 Journal, 15th April 1845; "Moved the first resolution on wh spoke an hour. Dr. Hough too obtrusive with Voluntaryism".

4 Ibid., 9th Dec. 1851; "Moved first resolution," see also Pamphlet entitled "Co-operation for the Immediate Repeal of the Maynooth Endowment ...", printed by Bell and Bain, 1852.

5 Ibid., 16th April 1850. See also Scottish Presbyterian, June 1850.
respect to the Slave Trade, a meeting in the City Hall to oppose American Slavery, meetings to oppose Sabbath Mail, to support Government Education, to protest the handling of the Cardross Case, to support Gaelic Schools, on behalf of a Public Female Benevolent Society, and frequent meetings in support of petitions to parliament on the subject of Temperance. Others could be cited but these serve to illustrate the variety of interests. His Journal also shows that he frequently took the first resolution or the main address of the meeting, and that he had an important part in the original planning. For example:

14 Nov. 1850. Private meeting for consultation as to a Public Meeting on Papal Aggression ... 27 Great Protestant Meeting in the evening in City Hall. Enthusiastic.

Symington made a real distinction between his preaching and his platform speaking. He used humour, popular phrases, something at times bordering upon ridicule, and a remarkable simplicity of outline that helps to account for the recorded popularity. Apparently he knew how to reach the mind and feelings of large unruly, public gatherings in order to lead them into a sense of public and moral responsibility that would issue at the conclusion in the action he was urging upon them. There is an interesting similarity in the arrangement of material in his speeches. He would, first, urge individual responsibility to God and to God's law as being, second, the basis for all man's beneficial social relationships in government, in

1Journal, "Speech on slavery wh delivered in City Hall in the evening at a meeting to oppose the slave trade treaties with Spain & Brazil".


3Ibid., 5th Dec. 1840.


5Ibid., 29th Nov. 1860.

6Ibid., 3rd Sept. 1840.

7Ibid., 7th Oct. 1840.

8Mechie pointed to the Forbes Mackenzie Act (1854) as "the most important landmark" in Temperance Reform work of this period, in op. cit., pp 97f.

9Journal, 14th Nov. 1850.

10Our Scottish Clergy, edited by John Smith, p. 83, "on the platforms of our city he is equally popular. Few speakers command more general attention, and elicit more rapturous applause".
society, or in industry. In each case in which he appeared on a public platform, Symington equated the moral and civil issues concerned in such a way as to find in the civil issue a case of moral right or wrong which was to be dealt with by the proper application of scripture. Thus in the speech, "Protesting Against the Desecration of the Sabbath", his outline is described under three headings: 1. Sorrow at the dishonour done to God; 2. Pity for those who had forgotten their obligations to religion; and 3. Shame at the disgrace that had been cast upon Scotland. These were also his reasons for appearing on that platform desiring political influence. He began and ended the speech with scripture and in between referred to the social and then to the mental and physical benefits resulting from obedience to the moral law.¹

In three statements which were designed to call attention to the 'inconsistency' of the Roman Catholic Endowments, he spoke of his desire for government and revealed something of his understanding of the responsibility of the individual citizen in his influence in the government:

A Government and a country calling themselves Christian cannot consistently uphold what is an appalling corruption of Christianity.
A Country ... whose monarch - in the coronation oath - swears to abjure Popery ... as being 'impious and idolatrous', cannot, without inconsistency, uphold a religion which substitutes an idolatrous ritual for simple spiritual worship.
A people whose constitution is regarded as being the very embodiment of civil and religious liberty ... and who, as far as freedom is concerned, are themselves spoken of as standing in the capacity of the federal representatives of the human race - such a people cannot consistently maintain a system which inspires terror, practices extortion, and tramples the liberties of mankind remorselessly under the feet of its priesthood ... Such inconsistency he compared to "passing a law for burning witches, and at the same time endowing chairs for teaching witchcraft", and then added that the whole issue:

... is to be looked at in the light of principle, not expediency ... thus we hold the endowment of Maynooth to be morally wrong; and what is morally wrong can never be politically right.

¹Pamphlet entitled, Speech of Rev. Dr. Symington at the Great Meeting for protesting against the desecration of the Sabbath.
His denunciation of the system of Catholicism was vigorous, but his concluding recommendation to the citizens of Britain was without the note of bitter animosity so common in those days.¹

Following the same general outline he criticized both the British and the American Governments for their positions on the subject of Slavery, and in describing the single point, "which lies at the foundation of the whole", he provided another example of this equating or moral and political law:

All Slavery is sinful ... even when they are treated gently and kindly. It is still slavery, and wears the character of moral turpitude ... not impolitic merely, not inexpedient, but sinful - necessarily and essentially sinful - or, as they say, malum in se ... the palpable infraction of what is the natural and inalienable right of every human being ... man having property in man. Slavery is a violation, not only of the relation in which man stands to man, but of that in which man stands to God. Man I grant you is property; but whose? The property of his Maker, and of his Maker alone. And for man to claim property in man, amounts to a sacrilegious invasion of the rights of Diety - a daring robbery of heaven.

In that speech he also faced the problem of the supreme allegiance of the Christian, by supposing that the laws of the land threatened him with punishment, even death:

Let the law do its worst. I can suffer, I can die, but I must not sin. It is not at all necessary that I should live, but it is necessary that when I die I should go before my Judge, void of offense toward God and toward man.²

Patriotism was often in evidence in his speeches as a reason for response, and at times he used means of drawing out this sense of individual responsibility to the nation into an exercise or demonstration of popular power. For example, in the speech concerning the use of trains on the Sabbath he said:

¹ Pamphlet entitled, Co-operation for the Immediate Repeal of the Maynooth Endowment ... "We must make aggressions on Popery in our turn. Not certainly in the way of retaliation or revenge; not in the way of persecuting or denying Romanists any liberty which they may legitimately claim. No. But in using positive ... efforts to bring Gospel truth on their understandings and hearts".

A resolution such as that on which I have been animadverting surely calls upon us to do every thing in our power to have it repealed; and let me tell you you have it in your power to effect this, by a distinct and unequivocal expression of the will of the inhabitants of Scotland. If this expression of public opinion is given, the individuals who passed the obnoxious measure are in some sort pledged ... to rescind it. I ask then such a demonstration from this audience, and shall pause till I receive it. (Tremendous cheering, the audience rising simultaneously from their seats and waving ...) That demonstration will, with the help of the post and the press, be echoed to-morrow from Arthur's Seat - it will be re-echoed - I trust from every part of the kingdom, and lead to the holding of similar meetings throughout the length and breadth of the land. (Cheers)1

And yet, Symington could not be classed among the extreme Chartists or professional agitators of whom there were many in that day, for all his appeals were not only motivated by scripture; they were also limited in means and purposes to the principles of the laws of Scripture. In another context he insisted that while God's Word "... instructs in the constitutional principles, official qualifications, and best administration of political government", it also "... softens the rigour of despotism - tames the insolence of conquest, and restrains the madness of popular anarchy".2

Lord Cockburn pointed with pride to such meetings as a sign of progress toward further political reform in Scotland:

This habit, which the people are acquiring, of holding large and orderly meetings, is one of the most impressive marks of their state ... men arise and take the lead in every section, who evince talents and power of speaking ... All this is gratifying as it marks an intelligent population, but it is fearful by disclosing the formidableness of organized popular power. All attempts to suppress or despise it must fail; and the true result is so to govern that the strength of the people may be on the side of Government, which I see no reason to doubt it may be, and to an extent far beyond what it ever could be with a population ignorant and without political rights or desire of them.3

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1 Pamphlet entitled, Speech of the Rev. Dr. Symington at the Great Meeting for Protesting against the desecration of the Sabbath, pp 11f.


He also said, "We owe much to the Covenanters and to their class, because it so happened that they could not maintain their Presbyterian principles without advancing principles of civil liberty."¹ Men have, in general, been quick to see and to admit a relationship between the practices of Cameron and other early Covenanters and these later political liberties; but few have traced the spirit and the purpose of the early Covenanters down into such nineteenth century applications as those of William Symington. In his activities are to be seen the efforts of a Covenanter who desired a Civil Government which would have a definitely Christian influence. He saw political policies and decisions in terms of the moral, right or wrong, influence they would have on individual souls, and government personnel in terms of scriptural qualifications for office-holders. Hume Brown in tracing "the radicalism of the Scottish people", came close to this point. He referred to the century and a half which followed the Reformation as being a time of conflict between rulers and people on the question of national religion and then added:

The principles at stake were not those of modern liberalism ... but the long conflict necessarily evoked democratic tendencies which might naturally be transferred into the sphere of secular politics ... in the Church her people had an institution which kept alive an interest in questions of national concern ...²

As we have seen, Symington was using his church as an institution to keep alive an interest in questions of national concern, but he was transferring something more than the "democratic tendencies" of the Reformation founded church to the politics of the nineteenth century. There is something in Symington's appeal to the popular power of the people which reminds us of Knox's appeal to "the congregation" and of Cameron's Sanquhar appeal to the citizens of the nation; but there is far more that reminds us of the way in which Knox and Cameron also equated moral and civil issues. In other words, Symington was not only carrying on the practices of Knox and Cameron in appealing to the power of the people in the nineteenth century, he was also carrying on the purposes of Knox and Cameron in order that there might be a Civil Government with a distinctly Christian influence. After describing

Knox's doctrine of the Sovereignty of God in Providence and its relationship to the state, Professor McEwen said, "For such a man, of course, there can never be a rigid boundary line between religion and politics for the same divine purpose runs and develops through both." Furthermore, by this teaching Knox gave to his Scottish followers a standpoint from which they could criticize and evaluate the doings of their rulers.  

1 Cameron had denied the right of the king to be king outside of, and in continuing denial of, the principles of scripture.  Symington's nineteenth century adaptation of that principle was to deny that there was any such thing as "secular politics" *per se*, with an inherent right to exist outside of, or independently of, the principles of scripture. Here again, as in the work of Temperance, Schools and Missions, Dr. Symington saw the decisions of politics and the total influence of the State, as being directly related to the development of the Kingdom of Christ.

**The Thirty Years Controversy**

But the members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church were not agreed as to the extent to which their members should go in working through government in order to bring about the reform of government on the basis of Christian principle, and it would seem that William Symington too was confused for a time on this issue. The Societies at first had maintained as rigid a separation from the State as from the Church. But just as they had refused to form a separate Church so they refused to form a separate State-within-a-state, claiming to be "neither as civil nor ecclesiastic judicatories".

The Conclusions to the General Meetings of the Societies reveal something of the intensity and depth with which they studied the very practical questions concerning what constituted an acknowledgement or approval, "a homologation", of the existing state. Decisions were made concerning the extent to which they would become involved in the sins of the Government if they paid cess, the pontages exacted at markets, or rents when these were known to go in

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2 *Informatory Vindication*, as quoted in chapter I of this work.
part into the stipends of the indulged clergy; the extent to which they might submit themselves to the orders of a non-covenanted officer if called upon to fight a common enemy in defence of their beloved nation; and the extent to which they might go in welcoming William of Orange. In all of these discussions, the Society men continued to trace the source of much of their misery and, more serious, their temptations to compromise, to the influence of the 'corrupt' state on the Church. The pattern of a period of persecution followed by a period of Indulgence, repeated, and motivated by purely political expediency, tended to cause these men to identify the State as a potential tool of Satan, to be avoided and condemned as a cause of sin. The Revolution Settlement was welcomed, but abstained from, as much for reasons of its non-Christian state as for reasons of its non-Covenanted Church, and the influence of the Government in England with respect to the decisions of the Westminster Assembly was noted with regret. M'Millan was required to satisfy the Societies about his convictions concerning the State and it was a favourable feature of Mairn's dissent from the Seceder Church. The extent to which they might participate in the affairs of Government without becoming responsible for the sins of the government continued to be a subject for close examination in the Reformed Presbytery, involving such questions as Jury duty and private litigation.

From the time of the formation of the Presbytery to the year 1832, there was little opportunity for anyone in Scotland to have much influence in the affairs of Government, but in 1832 the franchise was granted to all males who could meet the £10 per year rental requirement, and that same year one of the first references to an obvious problem came from Symington's Presbytery:

The Presbytery should take under consideration the propriety or impropriety of the members of our church exercising the Elective Franchise, lest an election of Members of Parliament should take place before next meeting of Synod.

The Presbytery "unanimously declared" that such a decision must be made by synod "but in meantime strongly recommend to the members of the church not to make use of the Elective Franchise". At the next meeting, in February of 1833, the synod:

1MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery, 22nd June 1832, to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.
After reasoning on the subject without coming to a decision... agreed to appoint Rev. Peter M'Indoe and William Symington, a Committee to prepare an Overture, embodying the Spirit of the sentiments expressed by the Court on the important subject under consideration...

Apparently that "Overture" was expected immediately for it appears in the Minutes as having been completed and approved that same evening:

That as the British constitution is, in many important particulars, inconsistent with the Word of God, and has been declared to be so in the Testimony of this Church (all) (the) (the word "all" appears in the printed minutes but has been deleted and "the" written in over) recognition of it is at variance with a faithful adherence to said Testimony. That the late Reform Act, while it confers an important political right on a large body of the people, has not removed the principal evils of the constitution, and, of course, has not materially affected the grounds on which this church has exhibited a testimony against them. That the exercise of the elective franchise conferred by this Act, is a direct recognition of the constitution, in virtue of the Political identity subsisting between the Representative and his constituents, and is therefore inconsistent with the enjoyment of the privileges of this church.

It is significant that while the action is called an "overture" and is couched in the form of an overture, it was never sent down to the sessions for approval. M'Indoe was appointed "to prepare and publish a further illustration of the views of Synod on that subject"; but he reported the next year "that circumstances had prevented him from fulfilling the appointment", and the first of a long series of Memorials praying the Synod "to review the Overture of last meeting, anent the exercise of the Elective Franchise, and either delete or alter that Overture", was received, discussed, and refused approval. No year, from 1832 to 1863 when the church was finally split by a new decision on the subject, was free of some reference to this problem. Sessions, Presbyteries, and the Synod were regularly involved in discipline problems caused by many who voted and some who held office. The full brunt of the almost unbelievable public tension built up during the previous attempts to pass the Reform Bill had finally burst upon

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1 MSS and Printed Minutes of Synod for Feb. 1833, to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.

2 Extracts of Synod Minutes, 14th May 1834, Sessions IV, IX.
the people in 1832. It was hailed as "the regeneration of Scotland", and the full impact of its influence was brought to bear upon this particular decision of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The Synod tried repeatedly to find some statement that would clarify the issues and make it possible so to instruct the consciences of men that they could believe it to be wrong to avail themselves of the rights of the franchise, but no such statement ever appeared. There was a storm of pamphlets and the battle was first fought on the grounds of using discipline to bring the practices into conformity with the principle. Eventually there was a return to an examination of the principle, and an attempt to explain and enforce the position in terms of the "reduplication" of the oaths required of all who took office:

But the oaths of Allegiance and of Abjuration and the Declaration of Assurance HOMOLOGATE THE CORONATION OATH IN ALL ITS PARTS. Blackstone accordingly says, that the terms of the original contract between King and People are couched in the Coronation Oath, and that while the King takes this oath in the presence of all the people, THEY ON THEIR PARTS DO RECIPROCALLY TAKE THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE CROWN.¹

But this issue too was beclouded by the fact that only two centuries separated these Covenanters from the days when an "Abjuration" Oath, and an oath of loyalty to the king had been used as a "test" by Judges and dragoons: to "take" it then meant compromise of conscience.² In 1857 a petition from a congregation at Airdrie asked that,

Synod should use diligence in ascertaining what is the practice of the Church in relation to this matter and ... that steps should be taken to bring into close uniformity the Church's law and the Church's practice.

Dr. Symington was appointed one of a committee of thirteen "who shall consider it with a view to the solution to the practical difficulties brought up therein".³

¹Gilmour, Andrew, Our Political Oaths, p. 7.
²Hector Macpherson described in detail the sorrow of Shields after he had taken a modified form of the loyalty oath, and his later confession before the Societies, in The Cameronion Philosopher, pp 31, 38, 64.
³Extracts of Synod Minutes, 7th May 1857, Session VI.
The next year the committee brought in a three-point report which was approved. The first two points were a reiteration of the position of the church. The third point dealt with the discipline required:

That in the case of contrariety being found in any instance to exist between the Testimony of the Church, and the practices that are followed in this particular, this contrariety should be obviated, not by accommodating the testimony to the practice, or by allowing the testimony to fall into abeyance, but by an endeavour to bring the practice into agreement with the testimony.¹

The next Synod, in 1859, was a busy one. Two congregations petitioned Synod requesting clarification of the words, "an endeavour to bring the practice into agreement with the testimony" and an elder from another congregation secured evidence against the session of the Dumfries congregation, whose pastor was Alexander Symington, the youngest son of Dr. Symington. The evidence directly involved many members of that congregation in the exercise of the franchise, wherein apparently there had been no "endeavour" to enforce discipline. In still another action some members of the Glasgow Presbytery called the session of the Great Hamilton Street Congregation, whose colleagues pastors were Dr. Wm. Symington and his son William Symington II, to account to Synod for the fact that a Mr. David M'Cubbin, who was a member of their congregation, had been elected and sworn in as town councillor, and yet was not barred from church privileges. The charges against the Dumfries Congregation were never admitted, and of the problem of the action of the Great Hamilton Street Congregation it was decided a year later:

That the Synod approve of the proceedings of the Session so far as they have yet gone, and instruct them to proceed in the matter until they bring it to an issue, and that we dismiss the dissent and complaint.²

Dissents, Answers, Accusations and Counter Accusations were the order of the day. In 1859 Dr. Cunningham, formerly missionary to the Jews in London, withdrew from further fellowship with the church; the London congregation followed him, and others threatened to do the same.

¹ Extracts of Synod Minutes, 6th May 1858, Session VI.
² Ibid., 10th May 1860, Sessions VI, VII.
In 1861 the whole issue was renewed by an overture from the aroused Dumfries Congregation, presented in part by Alexander Symington, which openly admitted facts concerning members and office bearers using the franchise and oaths of office, and covered every possibility by requesting:

1. a committee of inquiry to ask the law authorities of the crown for an interpretation of the suspected oaths;
2. an immediate decision to approve of both voting and office holding;
3. an overture to the same end to be sent down to Presbyteries and Sessions. The Committee of inquiry was appointed with Dr. Symington a member, but at the next meeting of Synod there were no less than fourteen petitions from various congregations, and the Synod by a vote of 42 to 11 agreed to send an overture down to sessions. In the interim all questions of discipline were to be held in abeyance.¹

The following year, the reports of action on the overture were found to be so indefinite as to require another motion to interpret them; and by a vote of 46 to 11, 7 abstaining, the Synod, "in accordance with these Reports" declared that all discipline in such cases should cease.² At that point, two members of Synod offered their official dissents. Unofficially, they left the court to return later with legal counsel and the following year, four ministers were reported as having separated themselves for the purpose of establishing another Reformed Presbyterian Church.³

Symington had an important part in the controversy. He helped to write the original 'overture' very hastily between sederunts during the Synod of 1833, declaring the exercise of the franchise to be "inconsistent with the enjoyment of the privileges of this church", but there were at least three extenuating circumstances involved at that particular time.

1. He was under instructions to embody in that overture the sentiments of the Synod as already expressed in an earlier sederunt of Synod. 2. It occurred as he was in the act of justifying his interdenominational activities in the Bible Societies and Temperance Work, in the eyes of these same men.
3. The pressure from the past in the form of the Testimonies of the Martyrs, warning against beguiling indulgences that could be offered by a state that

¹ Extracts of Synod Minutes, 8th May 1862, Sessions VI, VII.
² Ibid., 7th May 1863, Session VII.
³ Ibid., 2nd May 1864, Session I.
was still admittedly non-Christian in many ways, would have had a heavy influence on Symington. His interests, as a young "martyr preacher", would have helped to make him more concerned about the extent of complicity than about the extent of the new political opportunity. In the debate, the basis of objection to the 'Overture' lay in the assumption that "the exercise of the elective franchise ... is a direct recognition of the constitution in virtue of the political identity subsisting between the representative and his constituents", and the problem was caused by the fact that the exercise of the franchise was declared to be "inconsistent with the enjoyment of the privileges of this church". With reference to the assumption, Symington, in the debate in later years, stated his doubts as to its validity when he said:

None of us doubt that there is a breach of our principles in incorporation with the British Constitution; but the question is, is voting an incorporation with the British Constitution?

In answer to the charge that the responsibility for the oath of office taken by the one elected did 'reduplicate' upon those electing him, Symington said, "I don't ask him to take an oath, and I am free from taking of it. It is an accessory and accidental fact that does not reduplicate upon the individual." With reference to the problem caused by the attempted exercise of discipline, it is remarkable to find that the statement, "inconsistent with the privileges of the Church", does not demand immediate exclusion from the privileges of the church; nor do any of the succeeding statements which Symington helped to frame, including the declaration of 1858 which urged "an endeavour to bring the practice into agreement with the testimony". Indeed, the whole trend seemed to be toward "forbearance" and that is all the more important in view of the seemingly endless petitions which at times almost amounted to threats, brought in by two or three members.

1 Pamphlet entitled, Our Testimony Compromised, being "A full report of the discussion in the Reformed Presbyterian Synod ...", p. 31.

2 Ibid., p. 31. At another time he said, "If the oath merely binds the one who takes it to the adoption of no unconstitutional means for changing the constitution, then the question is forever settled."
of the minority group, any one of which could have bound the church to immediate disciplinary action. After the debate in 1858, Symington made the following comment in his Journal: "Spoke my mind openly on the side of forbearance." At one point in the debate, following a quotation from Dr. Andrew Symington which seemed to prove that he had favoured disciplinary action in such cases, his son who was then a member of the court as an elder said:

Dr. Andrew Symington's views upon this subject underwent much modification before his death, and on being told of a number of people who had voted in Paisley, he said he would be glad if nothing was done in the matter, and, accordingly, the session never took it up.

And it would seem clear from his words and his actions, that William Symington's views had also changed through the years. It was rather obvious in view of the reluctance of the session of the Great Hamilton Street Church to refuse church privileges to Mr. David M'Cubbin, a man who had 'tried' for two years for the office of town councillor before finally being elected. As we have seen in Symington's lectures on Sabbath Schools, one of the main purposes of his teaching ministry was so to instruct in those principles of morality that men would be equipped to become scripturally qualified officials. His platform appearances featured the development and exercise of popular political influence, and were 'another' means for persuading and instructing towards 'Scriptural' Reform of the Government. His preaching ministry sought to exhort citizens to a sense of responsibility and patriotic concern based not only upon civil and religious accomplishments of their martyr forefathers, but also upon their own understanding of God's laws in their application to 19th Century political

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1 J. R. Fleming's statements concerning "excommunication" are surely extreme. The word did not even occur in most heated debate and the whole trend was in the opposite direction. In The Church in Scotland, 1843-1874, p. 136, and The Story of Church Union in Scotland by the same author, p. 31.

2 Journal, 5th June 1858.

circumstances. This governing, teaching, speaking and preaching influence of a lifetime went far to account for the fact that the Stranraer Congre-
gation, the Great Hamilton Street Congregation, the actions of both his
sons as pastors, and all but two of the students whom he had taught in
the Hall, were found throughout the controversy to be increasingly out-
spoken in favour of the same "forbearance".

It is also true that not all the change was with Symington. Political
circumstances were continuing to change very rapidly throughout these years.
Hume Brown said:

At the beginning of the 19th Century, Scotland could be
described as 'a cottage at a great man's gate'; at its
close she was an enfranchised nation, with a voice in the
making and unmaking of governments, and in the deter-
mination of imperial councils.\footnote{Brown, P. H., \textit{op. cit.}, (1911 Edition containing Chapter XII), vol. III, p. 376; of the year 1789 Brown said, "Political life was hardly existent", but of the year 1831 he said, "... the great majority of the middle classes and of the artisans showed the same perfervid zeal for parliamentary reform as their ancestors had shown for the Covenants", in \textit{op. cit.}, (1911 edition without Chapter XII), vol. III, p. 376 and p. 418.}

The executive branch of the government had changed; beginning with the
unfortunate activities of George IV and Caroline, it carried through the
short reign of William IV to the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign in
1837. Politically it had begun with Henry Dundas who was described as
"the absolute dictator of Scotland".\footnote{Cockburn, \textit{Memorials}, p.76; Hume Brown believed that, "no Scottish King nor even Cromwell had the Scottish nation so completely in his hand.", in \textit{History of Scotland}, vol. III, p. 391.}

The Judicial branch had changed. In 1800 Cockburn said of it, "It will remain true that, in order to find
a match for the judicial spirit of this court at this period, we must go
back to the days of Lauderdale and Dalziel",\footnote{Cockburn, \textit{Memorials, op. cit.}, p. 88.} and in spite of changes,
court decisions made during the Ten Years Conflict did not lend to the
idea of 'improvement'. The greatest change undoubtedly came in the
legislative branch because of the Reform movement, but it was a period
of transition described at the time as "the same national dilemma as had
occurred at the Reformation ... and not since the days of Knox or of the
Covenants was less regard paid than now to the sanctities of private life
and social intercourse".\(^1\) When the franchise was first introduced, it
was hailed even by its Whig constructors as a gracious boon bestowed either
out of pity or fear by a distant Parliament.\(^2\) No branch of the government
in the early years of the 19th Century would have inspired the confidence
of men who were concerned about a Christian civil influence. But as the
franchise began to be used, men began to realize that it was far more than
a privilege bestowed by an unsympathetic government. Christian men began
to recognize it as a very practical acknowledgement made by the State of
a right which had actually been bestowed upon individual citizens by a
Sovereign God, in order to allow them to exercise a Christian influence
in the affairs of their government, according to the dictates of a script-
urally enlightened conscience, and for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom
on earth. The attitudes towards oaths were also continuing to change.
First the Jews and then the Quakers had been accepted as members of Parlia-
ment with certain adaptations of oath.

Perhaps it was because of the closeness of his relationships with the
martyrs of the past and the rapidity of these political changes in the
present, that William Symington failed to understand the significance of
the franchise as another means of bringing about that Christian civil State
for which Cameron and others had died, and for which he himself had taught
and preached and spoken. Perhaps it was the very bloodlessness of the
political reform that kept him from seeing that the franchise had "materially
affected"\(^3\) the circumstances surrounding their church testimony; and whereas
before it had been a point of primary concern to guard the extent to which
the individual citizen would allow his government to involve him in its sins,
now the tide had turned, and the point of primary concern was to fathom the
extent to which the individual might go in influencing his government by full
use of the franchise in order to make of it a Christian civil Government.

\(^1\) Brown, op. cit., vol. III, p. 408.

\(^2\) Cockburn said, "It is like liberty given to slaves", and he described
the way in which the Reform Bill was drawn up in "secret" and then suddenly
"disclosed" to the people, but predicted that several particulars would not
stand simply because they were "not English", in Journal, vol. I, p. 5.

\(^3\) The reference is to the wording of the original overture, "The late
reform bill ... has not materially affected the grounds on which this church
has exhibited a testimony against them."
Symington did not live to see the peace that prospered the church following the withdrawal of the dissentients; he died in 1862, the year before the final decision was made. But his last recorded comment, following the crucial debate in 1861 which overturned the original statement that he had written in 1853, was one of approval: "a right conclusion carried by a large majority." ¹

In so far as these public and political activities are concerned, there are three possible areas of influence: his own church, his nation, and the Church in Scotland. In the material covered here, his greatest influence, is to be seen in the churchmanship he exercised within his own church. He held them together until their decision was nearly unanimous; and in spite of having helped to write the original 'Overture', his example, as reviewed here, and his books which have yet to be considered, were the major factors from within the church which produced the final decision. It is true that the Sabbath trains were stopped, the Sabbath mails were hindered, the "Ecclesiastical Titles Law" of 1851 delayed the "encroachments" of Roman Catholicism for a time, and many individual citizens learned to look for moral issues in political controversies, but the total effect on the British Parliament was undoubtedly small. It is also true that he had some influence on the Church in Scotland through the other church leaders who were persuaded to join him on public platforms; but he intended the main thrust of his influences among the other churches and churchmen to come through the theology of his book on the "Dominion" of Christ. The reason for his interest in these political activities is to be found stated in it:

The Mediator will ultimately bring about an entire change in the character and constitution of the nations of the world ... The basis of their organization will then be the Word of God, and the aim of their administration, the glory of Christ: their officers shall be peace and their exactors righteousness; and the spirit which shall pervade all their actions, shall be the pure spirit of the Gospel ... to purify, sanctify, revolutionize, may, Christianize, the nations of the world, is what none but he could perform; and were it not that he is Head of the nations, as well as Head of the Church, we should have to despair of all these glorious anticipations being ever realized. ²

¹Journal, 7th May 1861.
²O.D., pp 228f.
The Contribution

In evaluating the contribution Dr. Symington made through the work of his schools, mission, and political activities, it must be remembered that such work at that time was almost an innovation. Chalmers had begun work in the Tron Parish in Glasgow in 1815, but at first he actually avoided one type of social ministry, and no young person was received in his schools who could not read the Bible "with considerable distinctness and accuracy". It was said of his work in St. John's, "... his scheme remained a solitary and incomplete experiment and the Disruption removed the last hope of making it general", and he himself referred to the later work in the West Port of Edinburgh as "a territorial experiment". His poor relief plan for Glasgow "came to an end" in 1837. Symington's work began in 1839, produced two other congregations, and carried through the year of his death, 1862, and on into the twentieth century. In 1847 the convener of the Free Church Home Mission Committee said:

The proper and peculiar duty of the Church had not yet been entered upon ... More than eighty thousand in Glasgow ... and hundreds of thousands all over Scotland had not yet been sought out.

So late as 1851 only about 10.1 per cent of the population were in Sabbath Schools. J. R. Fleming said of the year 1853, "Not as yet was the social conscience generally aroused," and suggested that when it did awaken, one of John G. Paton's brothers, James Paton, who had also been trained by Symington, "had much to do with starting the great Social effort of the Church of Scotland". More recently Professor Mechie said, "Looking back

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1 Hanna, Wm., Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers, vol. I, p. 443, see also p. 441.
3 As quoted by Fleming in Ibid., p. 67.
4 Mechie, op. cit., p. 54.
6 Ibid., p. 52; G. S. Pryde believed that "Sabbath Schools were for long regarded with distrust as being alien and therefore vaguely threatening to the traditional order", in Scotland from 1603 to the present day (1962), p. 183.
over the survey of ninety years (1780-1870) one is bound to confess that social concern was neither so intense nor so widespread among Scottish churchmen as could be wished. In particular there was a notable lack of official ecclesiastical action regarding the social problems of the early decades of the nineteenth century...;¹ and he hailed another Paisley minister, "a man decidedly in advance of his time", as being "... a modern representative of a tradition which was strong in the immediate post-reformation era and has never died out in the Church of Scotland - the tradition which asserted the right of the Christian minister to comment on public affairs and apply the law of God as he learned it from Scripture to the laws of the land and customs in every sphere of the national life".² Symington was not a Chartist, but those words could also have been applied to his public political activities. In view of all this it becomes apparent that the church, under his leadership, was making a very real contribution to the work of social reform during a period which has been described as the "Dawn of Scottish Social Welfare".³

Nor was the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church conducive to any type of innovation. According to their earliest documents the Societies and the Reformed Presbytery considered themselves to be a Repository for holding safe the principles of the Reformation. Outreach or Mission were largely limited to gathering together "the remnants of that poor wasted, misrepresented lot" who already knew and believed those same principles, or to making a Sabbath School out of every family worship and a theological seminar of each Society Meeting. Symington did not neglect these other things, but he added to them the concept of the mission of the Church; and the opposition which he faced in every aspect of the church programme, from the "strenuous supporters of things as they are", was in itself one indication of the importance and necessity for the change. It is also significant, however, that Symington never set himself to develop an educational or social rescue programme solely for the benefit of mankind; nor did he

¹Mechie, op. cit., pp 166ff. ²Ibid., p. 118.
³G. S. Pride has pointed out that "The leading modern authority on this field of study, Professor T. Ferguson, takes the year 1865 for the 'break' between his two volumes, The Dawn of Scottish Social Welfare (1948) and Scottish Social Welfare 1864-1914 (1958)", in Scotland from 1603 to the present day (1962), p. 248.
suggest building new congregations as part of a church extension scheme for ensuring the continued existence of the Reformed Presbyterian Church *per se*. These activities and programmes he looked upon at times almost with surprise, and even the growth in his own church appears to have been a result of efforts to reach a far more important goal. These other things were the necessary means to a much more noble purpose, and the Home Mission Committee once quoted from Symington's summarization of that purpose:

There are no principles so essentially evangelistic in their nature, and that urgently demand diffusion, as those for which we conceive ourselves to be distinguished. The grand distinctive point for which we have long been testifying is the royalty of Jesus Christ as the heaven-ordained ruler of men, and we cannot but think that we are in the most practical manner working out that testimony when, in our different spheres, we labour to bring everyone around us under the government of Him whose enthronement in the minds of men will make righteousness and praise spring forth before all nations.¹

Those words were indicative of the change that had taken place. A hundred or more years before this, the ministers of the Presbytery had been primarily concerned with "waiting" until these same Reformation Principles would be acknowledged by others, perhaps in a new covenant or after another war; but once again circumstances had changed and now the main concern was to find "the most practical manner" for "working out" that Reformation Testimony. In the schools and the mission especially, we have examples of the way in which Symington used his congregation as a training ground to teach the sons and daughters of the Society Folk to make this necessary change, to "work out" these Principles in their nineteenth-century circumstances in Scotland and around the world. One elder said, "There was work suitable for every one, and there are comparatively few members of the Congregation who have not in some way or other taken part in the work in Green Street ... now they are scattered far and wide in every quarter of the globe, earnest Christian workers, who received their early training in that mission field."²

There were those in his own denomination, as in other denominations who were unaware of the changed circumstances and needs, or unwilling for other reasons to make necessary changes and therefore we find Symington, in addition to this individual training influence, working


²Binnie, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
to influence his whole denomination towards this policy of adaptability, encouraging them to take appropriate "official ecclesiastical action". He experimented, set an example, described the results in lectures and written reports, and then raised necessary action in the Courts of the Church. When the denomination continued to be reluctant to respond, as in the case of the mission that later became the Barrowfield Church, he used his own congregation to accomplish the same end, at the same time setting another example. It is difficult to evaluate the extent of this influence within his own church, but it is significant that from 1839 to 1849, the first ten years of his ministry in Glasgow, twelve new congregations were added to the church, twice as many as were added in any two decades from the founding of the church to the union in 1876. In his efforts in the field of political reform, Symington himself did not at first sense the significance of the changed circumstances, and his church remained aloof, or "separate" from the State, as the Societies had been at first; but even here there were irresistible forces from within the church itself which were precipitating the change; and in spite of his earlier statement on the subject, Symington also made a major contribution to that change. The men of the Reformed Presbytery were no longer waiting "untill defections be condemned and offences be removed", but were working as a mission minded church.

Behind these indications and methods of change lay the reasons for the change. While the history of the church had not been particularly conducive to rapid change, the theology contained within the Testimony of the Church had demanded it; and in Symington's explanation of that theology, we find the source of the convictions which produced his work. It was not a new doctrine. Professor Mechie, in tracing the social concern of the Church in Scotland from the days of Knox and the Covenants, quoted from a sermon on True Patriotism by an Auld Licht Anti-Burgher. The minister asserted that "... that sort of Christianity, and those devotional exercises and experiences, which exclude attention to the state of Christ's kingdom without a man, and confine it entirely to a kingdom of God within him, must flow from another spirit than that of Christ." Symington would have agreed

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1 Mechie, op. cit., "Introduction", p. x.
whole heartedly, and as will be seen more fully in later chapters, this doctrine of "Christ's kingdom without a man" including Christ's authority over "ALL" men, families, churches, governments and other organizations, His immediate control of the most minute details of life, and His ultimate purpose of building a kingdom on earth which would gradually come to conform to the Kingdom of Heaven, provided a pattern and motives not only for his work of social reform but for his entire ministry. The motives for social work which he described in the sermon on "Charity", in particular his respect for the sovereign will or purposes of God, and the objectives which he described in the lecture on Sabbath Schools, the best interests of the State, the Church, and the individual soul, must all be seen in their relationship to that Kingdom or "Dominion" which Christ was building. It was because "Christ's kingdom without a man" also included the State that Symington, unlike Chalmers, insisted that the State should not be denied the privilege of contributing to reform work. The "universality" of Christ's Kingdom, including as it necessarily did, the non-elect as well as the elect, implied that the unjust as well as the just should receive help. It also implied, for Symington as for Knox, Christ's immediate providential control of such things as the poverty and the wealth, the men and the means, by which all things were made to work together for the glory of God and the "best interests" of man through the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. Symington never lost sight of this concept of that kingdom which Christ was gradually establishing in Scotland and throughout the world, and everything he did in the field of social reform could be seen to have been evaluated in terms of its contribution to the development of that kingdom.

1 O.D., pp 95-98.

2 Ibid., pp 303f wherein Symington explained the principle behind the State's support of the work of the Church, see also pp 308f, 312; Mechie explained Chalmers' views on the subject, in op. cit., pp 49-56.

3 Ibid., pp 95f, "there can be no greater mistake than to limit the Mediator's power to the members of the church, or to exclude any class of men whatever from his authority".

4 Ibid., pp 98f; J. S. McEwen has explained Knox's doctrine of Providence in The Faith of John Knox, pp 83-97, esp. p. 88, "To his (i.e. Knox's) mind the Sovereignty of God means that God rules in all things and all events. In all things that come to pass, the Divine Hand is directly and immediately at work".
Coupled closely to this view of the Kingdom of Christ, was an equally keen sense of the Sovereignty of God made real to man through the Kingship of Christ. It involved the unlimited powers of that same King Jesus who had triumphed in South-West Scotland during the years of persecution, and who was now moving ahead with the same unlimited powers in the face of opposition and circumstances surrounding the Industrial Revolution. Symington's point of personal contact with that doctrine of the Kingship of Christ appeared to lie within his covenant relationship with the One to whom he referred in private records as "My D. Master". It refused to tolerate denominational restrictions and it also caused him to insist that humanitarian interests terminating in the social welfare of men were inferior motives for this type of work. To fail to support this work, or even to prove reluctant to support it, or to support it for any reasons other than those directly related to the glory of God through the work of Christ, would be dishonouring and disloyal to Christ, as well as detrimental to the establishment of His Kingdom. The Kingdom of Christ was the Ideal, and the Kingship of Christ was the thing that guaranteed its ultimate establishment. It was this conviction concerning Christ's Kingdom, this confidence in the unlimited powers of Christ's Kingship, and this zeal for the honour and glory of the King, that lay behind Symington's work in the schools, the mission and on the political platforms. It was also an important factor in that change of attitude which left the Reformed Presbyterian Church thinking in terms of being a "Mission" Force instead of a "waiting" Repository. Symington's emphasis might be summarized by pointing out that it was not so much Social welfare work, as it was Kingdom welfare work that was most important. He sought to equate Social welfare work, including political reform, with Kingdom welfare work. There were undoubtedly many other influences such as those from Duff, Dunlop, and Chalmers, stirring the Reformed Presbyterian Church to action and outreach; but in so far as Symington's influence was concerned, and in so far as the influence of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on other churches and programmes was concerned, this emphasis on the relationship between Social work and the Kingship and Kingdom of Christ was their distinctive contribution.

Professor McEwen said of Knox's teachings concerning this aspect of Providence, "... it is to be doubted whether they were making any impression at all in the Scotland of the Industrial Revolution", but he also pointed

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out that where men learned the lesson Knox taught, "... to think and judge on political and social matters, sooner or later they will consider it right that they should intervene in those matters and take a share in their management. Thus Calvinism, by an inner logic, tended towards participation by the people ...".¹ Those last words could be seen to have been a description of the progress being made by the Societies of the Reformed Presbytery in both the social and political matters of the nation during the first half of the nineteenth century. It would also appear, from the similarities in statements of motives and objectives, as well as from Symington's avowed efforts to maintain an "attachment" between the activities of his own Church and the Reformation theology and Church which Knox had helped to raise up, that Knox's teachings were, through Symington's leadership in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, continuing to make some impression on later Scottish life.

Dr. Symington's policies or methods of social work were unlike those of Chalmers at those points wherein Symington insisted: that one reason for the wealth of the wealthy was to enable them to give to the poor; that the state should also be allowed to contribute to this work; and that there must be an emphasis on meeting those "incipient desires" of the poor which would provide far more than the "necessaries" of existence. He was not influenced by the Malthusian theory as Chalmers apparently was, and undoubtedly because he had been born into the home of a Paisley weaver, and had lived close to the "failures" and "successes" of the industrial world, he had a keen appreciation of those "external" economic factors which could precipitate truly pious nineteenth century Jobs, from the heights of prosperity to the depths of poverty through no fault of their own. Many of his policies in the field of social reform were more like those of W. P. Alison than those of Chalmers.² It was not only his love for his fellow man, but it was particularly his confidence in Christ's control of "the wheels of Providence"; it was Christ's control of all the affairs of the

¹Ibid., p. 97.
²Mechie, op. cit., pp 47-63, being the chapter entitled "The Social Policy of Thomas Chalmers" wherein he pointed out (p. 59) that "The Malthusian cloud overshadowed Chalmers all the way" and showed (p. 60) how W. P. Alison had insisted in criticism of Chalmers that "while it might be possible to excite religious feelings in the lowest members of society, experience proved that such religion could not be expected to regulate their characters while they had to struggle for their existence".
rich and the poor in His Universal Kingdom which was of most immediate and important influence in Symington's social work. Symington was like Chalmers however in his insistence on the personal contact and care of the individual in a family setting. From his own congregation, men such as Paton and ladies such as Miss Robertson were trained in that work, and they endeavoured, as in the case of Paton's record of the young medical doctor and his family, to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the family as a unit. What Professor Mechie has quoted from another recent evaluation of Chalmers' methods on this subject could also be said of Symington:

'He insisted on the need for careful selection and training of social workers: on always working on a small scale, on the personal level: on making a careful study of each individual case: on keeping the family together. These are now the basic principles of modern social and family welfare.'

Foreign Missions

Foreign missions were as important to Dr. Symington as Home missions. His fifth reason for moving to Glasgow had been "The need to do more in behalf of missions in connexion with our church", and at times the work in the areas immediately adjacent to the Great Hamilton Street Church resembled a recruiting, training programme for the support of the foreign work. We have seen something of his interests in interdenominational Jewish and foreign missions while he was still at Stranraer, but there seems to have been comparatively little activity in his own church. Professor Andrew Symington had been appointed convener of Synod's first Foreign Missions Committee in 1830, pastoral addresses had been circulated, and three ministers were sent to America; but one died, two left the church, and Hutchison said, "It may be doubted whether this colonial mission ... ever evoked much interest or enthusiasm in the Church at home."

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1 Ibid., p. 62; he was quoting from an article by John A. Mack, Stevenson lecturer in Citizenship in Glasgow University, to be found in The Glasgow Herald, 4th May 1937.
2 Journal, for 6th October 1836: The reasoning he had done in 1836 was used as a basis for his decision to accept the call in 1839; see also Memoir, p. lxix.
During the same meetings of Synod at which he accepted the call from the Glasgow Congregation, Symington was appointed a member of the Foreign Mission Committee and shortly afterward elected Secretary.\(^1\) The Rev. John Inglis, in tracing the "Origin of the New Hebrides Mission", pointed back to the meeting of Synod in 1839 when Dr. W. Symington "brought forward a motion, which was cordially agreed to, to the effect that the Synod should not be satisfied with a mission to the Colonies, it should also undertake a mission to the heathen".\(^2\) For two years prior to 1839 the committee had reported no significant progress, but in 1840 they reported that a Mr. James Duncan, with whom Symington had made previous personal contact, had "offered himself as a foreign missionary", and requested that since "there is a prospect that the Synod may be called on at no distant period, to send out one or more missionaries to the heathen", they should make immediate plea for liberal contributions and that "henceforth there shall be a distinct fund for home and another for foreign missions".\(^3\) Synod approved their recommendations and the following year gave their "general and decided approbation" to a plan suggested by Symington to send a second man to the proposed mission, "a pious young mechanic, who, besides fulfilling the office of a catechist, might promote the objects of the mission ... by teaching the natives the useful arts".\(^4\) Symington assisted with the passage arrangements, preached the ordination sermon from the text, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory", and in November 1842, saw James Duncan off to the Maoris in New Zealand as "the first Reformed Presbyterian Missionary to the heathen". His report to Synod in 1842 fairly breathed with a spirit of optimism and encouragement, and the

\(^1\) Extracts of Synod Minutes, for 13th May 1839, Session XVI.

\(^2\) Inglis, John, In the New Hebrides, p. 43.

\(^3\) Extracts of Synod Minutes, for 12th October 1840, Session V. See also Foreign Mission Committee, vol. I, 15th April 1840, to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.

\(^4\) Ibid., 10th May 1841, Session VII. The "mechanic" was a member of Symington's congregation. See also Minutes of the Foreign Mission Committee, vol. I, 5th April, 26th July, 14th October 1842.
Synod expressed their entire approbation of what the Committee has done in sending Mr. Duncan to New Zealand - and further that the Synod desire humbley to record their gratitude to the Great Head of the Church, for enabling this Court to send a missionary to a heathen country, and for the encouragement which in various ways, has been granted in connection with this very important and deeply interesting undertaking.¹

In October of that same year, 1842, Symington was appointed to "confer" with another minister who was interested in mission work, and four months later Mr. Inglis offered himself as a missionary and was immediately accepted.² Again it was Symington who conducted the ordination services on September 26, 1843, completed arrangements for his passage, and presented him with "a handsome" gift; and the second Reformed Presbyterian Missionary family sailed to join Mr. and Mrs. Duncan in the work in New Zealand in July, 1844.³ The Synod ordered the Secretary's report for that year to be printed and circulated and expressed more appreciation.⁴

Throughout these years Symington had continued his earlier interests in a mission to the Jews. Another Juvenile Jewish Mission Society had been organized in the Glasgow Congregation; the congregational Bible and Missionary Society had become interested; contributions to the Interdenominational work continued; and in 1844, a memorial from a number of the members of the Congregation,⁵ requested Synod to form a Jewish Mission. Synod agreed "that no scheme of missionary enterprise can be said to be complete in which this object is not embraced", and a separate Jewish Mission Committee was appointed with William Symington as convener.⁶

¹Ibid., 21st Nov. 1842, Session V. See also Minutes of Foreign Mission Committee, vol. I, 5th April, 26th July, 14th October 1842.
²Minutes of the Foreign Mission Committee, vol. I, 14th October and 1st November, 1842 and 14th February 1843.
³Ibid., 8th August and 26th Sept., 1843, and 10th Sept. 1844.
⁴Extracts of Synod Minutes, for 1st July 1844, Session III.
⁵It was signed "in name of the memorialists" by John Finlay who was treasurer of Synod and an elder in the Great Hamilton Street Church, and William Symington II. See Session Minutes of the Great Hamilton Street Reformed Presbyterian Church, for 30th June 1844.
⁶Extracts of Synod Minutes, for 1st July 1844, Session VII.
pastoral address was circulated, funds collected, and finally after repeated interviews a brilliant young instructor at Glasgow University, Mr. John Cunningham,\(^1\) was persuaded to take up the work in London. First reports from his work were encouraging, but there continued to be no converts. He returned to Scotland to report in 1852, became involved in the franchise controversy which was then disturbing the whole church, and upon his return to London began ministering to a group of Reformed Presbyterians who had formed a congregation there. He resigned his position as "Missionary to the Jews" in 1859 and at the same time "withdrew from all connection with the church".\(^2\) Couper said, "all through life he was a student or the consecrated kind ... During his whole service he continued his investigations and was considered a great teacher", but then added, "he adopted views that ultimately prevented his holding ministerial fellowship with any church."\(^3\) The whole project is illustrative of the importance Symington attached to the conversion of the Jews as one of the Scripturally authorized means to the conversion of the world. Every mission programme with a proper eye to the development of the Kingdom of "Messiah the Prince", must include such a mission to this particular nation.\(^4\)

Happier results are to be seen in his contributions to the later developments of the more distinctively foreign work. He had taken an active part in a Continental Mission Society which had been organized in Glasgow, and in August 1848, the Reformed Presbyterian Foreign Mission Committee first discussed "the spread of the Gospel on the continent of Europe".\(^5\)

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1 Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, pp 123f. "In 1855-56 he conducted the class in Natural Philosophy, and in the following year received the degree of LL.D." He was a member of Great Hamilton Street Congregation and was ordained there by Symington.

2 Extracts of Synod Minutes, for 3rd May 1859, Session IV; 6th May 1859, Session VIII.


4 Vide, e.g. Symington's further explanation of the words, "Salvation is of the Jews", his thoughts concerning "the divine mystery respecting this people", and his recommendation of the cause of Jewish mission, "it has the foremost claim of all on the liberal encouragement of the christian public", in "The Salvation of Israel", in Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 61, 68f.

In 1849 a plan drawn up by Symington and supported by an address from Professor LaHarpe of Geneva was approved by Synod and four colporteurs were sent, one each to Belgium, Paris, Lyons and Geneva.

For the next five years the church was busy maintaining her mission commitments and developing her home mission fields; but apparently the members of the Foreign Mission Committee were never satisfied for repeated efforts were made to find more missionaries; and in October 1855, Symington was appointed to "communicate" with a Mr. Paton, one of the elders of his own session who "was talked of and was thought to possess most of the qualifications" necessary for a missionary. Symington's Journal reveals a number of interviews with Paton, and two months later he told the committee of his interest in the work and placed himself at their disposal. In his autobiography, Paton tells of talking with his roommate, Mr. Joseph Copeland, about this decision to go into foreign mission work. Copeland was also a mission worker in Glasgow and a member of the Great Hamilton Street Congregation, and he responded by volunteering for the same work. Paton and Copeland were both taken under supervision of the Committee at their next meeting and after two years of intensive training under Symington's direct tutoring at "The Hall" and in the congre-

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2 Extracts of Synod Minutes, 7th May 1849, Sessions III, VI; In his Journal, August 1846, Symington reported meeting LaHarpe at the Evangelical Alliance Meetings in London.


4 J. R. Fleming referred to their "quaint return to primitive practice" of "casting lots" for a foreign missionary, in A History of the Church in Scotland, 1843-1874, p. 148, but there is no evidence in the official records to support the use of those words; vide, Minutes of the Foreign Mission Committee, vol. I, 1852-1858. See also Extracts of Synod Minutes for 7th May 1856, Sessions IV, VI and 5th May 1857, Session III, wherein Synod requested each member of the Court to recommend the names of the three best qualified in his opinion for foreign mission work; John G. Paton referred to this as "resolving to cast lots", in his Autobiography (fourth edition, 1889), p. 86. Results were inconclusive.


6 Ibid., vol. I, 12th March 1856.

gational work, Paton described how, "on the 23rd March, 1858, in Dr. Symington's Church, in presence of a mighty crowd, and after a magnificent sermon on "Come over and help us", we were solemnly ordained as Ministers of the Gospel and set apart as Missionaries to the New Hebrides".\(^1\) Inglis meanwhile had been transferred from New Zealand to the New Hebrides where he began work in 1852,\(^2\) and Paton and Copeland joined him in that area.

Results of these activities have been many and far reaching. One interesting incident occurred in 1860 when Dr. Symington was requested by the Synod to "introduce" Mr. Inglis as the first Reformed Presbyterian Missionary to return to Scotland. At the same session he had the unique honour of introducing "Williamu", a native of the island of Aneityum, who had been baptized and given the Christian name of William in honour of Dr. William Symington.\(^3\) Williamu, as an elder of the church of Aneityum, had come to Scotland with Inglis to help with the translation of the New Testament. Of the work of Rev. James Duncan among the Maoris in New Zealand, it was said, "He achieved great influence ... a native church was erected, and a school was established where both old and young were taught to read and write, and to use figures, weights and measures. These classes were well attended and highly appreciated."\(^4\) He later became a member of the Northern Presbyterian Church, was twice moderator of the Northern Assembly, was for many years convener of their Missions Committee, and died as minister of the Foxton Presbyterian Church.\(^5\)

Of all those who went out, the Rev. John Inglis did the most remarkable work on the island of Aneityum. It was described as a "heathen" island when he went there. Shortly before he left he reported, "We have nearly sixty native teachers; every native is within fifteen minutes' walk of a school and within about an hour's walk

\(^1\text{Ibid., pp 101f.}\)
\(^2\text{Minutes of the Foreign Mission Committee, vol. I, 27th Dec. 1849; 1st August 1851; 11th Jan. 1853.}\)
\(^3\text{Memoir, p. lxviii.}\)
\(^4\text{Elder, J. R., The History of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1840-1940, pp 245f; see also pp 308, 176-8.}\)
\(^5\text{Ibid., p. 33, 307.}\)
of a place of public worship on the Sabbath."¹ Later he added, "The whole population are professedly Christian, are supplied with books, and attend church and school... One island after another has been won over to Christianity. We have churches organised on six islands, and we occupy stations on as many others. We have printed the whole Bible in one language and we have printed portions of it in eight languages more."² More recently another said, "Aneityum became not only a Christian island, but a source of light to all the others in the Mission Field".³ Paton was eventually adopted by the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and became their Foreign Missions agent. He was given the credit for first arousing the interest of the Christians of Victoria in what eventually became a world wide foreign missions programme. Copeland did valuable work in translation in the New Hebrides and later became editor of the organ of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales.⁴ These were among the lasting world-wide results of Dr. Symington's mission emphasis and training.

The reflex action of Symington's interests in foreign missions produced marked results in his own congregation and in the denomination. His Journal reveals many hours spent reading and studying reports from those in the field; writing letters of inquiry, instruction, and encouragement; preparing the Annual Report, and making arrangements for the financing, equipping, and delivery of the "launches" and other boats so essential to the work among the islands. Both he and Mrs. Symington helped with the boxing of such special items as a printing press which had been given by one of his elders, the photographic apparatus, books which he usually selected and purchased, and items of clothing and household use. He was

¹Inglis, John, In The New Hebrides, pp 113f.
²Ibid., pp 340, 346.
³Balfour, R. Gordon, Presbyterianism in the Colonies, The Chalmers Lectures for 1899, pp 74f; see also Elder, J. R., The History of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1840-1940, p. 58.
⁴Cameron, James, Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales, (1905) pp 188, 106. See also Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 137.
careful to communicate this interest to the congregation and frequently read the mission letters to them, particularly those containing specific requests, and results were gratifying. For example, at an annual meeting in 1855:

The children of the Sabbath and Industrial schools met in the mission chapel, Green Street, to distribute the contents of their own missionary boxes ... gathered entirely in copper coin. The Rev. Dr. Symington presided, and ... the children resolved to distribute their funds thus; to the fund for Chinese Bibles, \( ^1 \); to the London Missionary Society, \( ^2 \); to the London Tract Society, \( ^3 \); and following out the suggestion of our missionary in one of his letters, to purchase of Jews harps for the children of Aneityum, New Hebrides, 12s. Five hundred happy faces, beaming with the pleasure of giving, formed a most pleasing and hopeful sight.\(^1\)

The financial statistics of the congregations reflected the same interest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For strictly congregational purposes</td>
<td>£760 : 9: 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For missionary and educational</td>
<td>£166 : 12: 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At public collections appointed by Synod</td>
<td>£71 : 12: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For debt on Mission Premises</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Missionary Boxes</td>
<td>£200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( £1448 : 15: 4 \)

Quite apart from the fact that part of the Synod offerings also went for mission work, the congregation was putting 8s. 7d. out of each pound into mission work, and the editor of the church paper, in drawing the attention of the other congregations to this report, said, "our friends in Great Hamilton Street continue to give annually at the rate of fully £1 12s. a member ...".\(^2\) But the most important results are to be seen in the lives offered in missionary service. At least eight members of the Great Hamilton Street congregation offered themselves for foreign mission service at one time or another during these years; and while only three were accepted,\(^3\)

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\(^1\) **R. P. Magazine**, March 1855, pp 96f.

\(^2\) Ibid., May 1859, p. 166. The following year the total was again substantially increased and he added, "How much congregations can do, when they have a mind to do it."

\(^3\) This does not include three others who were ordained in the Great Hamilton Street Church just three years after Symington's death. Two of these had been in the congregation while attending the University and were taught by him at The Hall. They all went to the New Hebrides. See Couper, **A Century of Congregational Life**, p. 80.
it indicates the degree of interest throughout the congregation, and the influence on the church at large can perhaps best be evaluated in terms of a proportion. After 1844 the Reformed Presbyterian Church had from one to four missionaries in the field for every ten ministers at home! From the year 1839 when Symington presented the motion requesting a distinctly 'foreign' mission work, to the year of union in 1876, eleven missionaries were sent to the New Hebrides Mission alone. The first four, who had received training directly from Symington, developed or helped to develop an educational and training programme on the foreign field that bore a marked resemblance to the system of schools and missions in the Great Hamilton Street Congregation. Through his initial motion and his practical management as a member of the Foreign Mission Committee, the programme was taken out of the Overture Stage and put into the Operational Stage. Through his personal influence other men were led into the work, and through his work as a pastor, he furnished a congregation that was an example of mission zeal, a source of men and money for the work, and a training ground for successful overseas service. The Synod said of his work in foreign missions: "He continued till the close of his earthly career to manifest unabated attachment to a cause which has for its object the extension of the Kingdom of 'Messiah the Prince'."

It also becomes clear that following Dr. Symington's appointment to the Foreign Mission Committee in 1839, the Reformed Presbyterian Church was making an important contribution to the rapidly developing foreign missions programme. The first statement by the Reformed Presbytery approving of foreign missions had been made in 1796, but that statement had actually been part of a protest and warning issued by the Presbytery to certain members of the Great Hamilton Street congregation who were attending meetings of a Glasgow interdenominational missionary Society which were being conducted in other churches by other ministers. Presbytery warned them that the "occasional hearing" was "sinful and offensive", but then added that

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1Ibid., p. 103. See also, Inglis, John, In the New Hebrides, p. 44.

2"Report of the Committee on Foreign Missions", in R. P. Witness, for 2nd June 1862, pp 213f.
they were "unanimous in an approbation of the object of the Society".  

Forty-one years later, William Symington, after "hearing" Alexander Duff in another church in Stranraer, determined to see foreign mission work begun by his own church. From that beginning, he continued to be a vital link between his own denomination and other foreign mission programmes both denominational and interdenominational. Duff, Laharpe, David Livingstone, and other such men were his personal friends. During the difficult days leading to Inglis' move from New Zealand to the New Hebrides, a very close working relationship developed between the directors of the London Missionary Society and the Reformed Presbyterian Foreign Mission Committee. Results of the co-operation at home were to be seen on the field. Inglis described in detail the Interdenominational "Synod" he formed in the New Hebrides, and it is interesting to note that three of the first four missionaries became directly involved in working with other churches on the field and were very influential in the development of "new" foreign programmes in those churches. Professor Watt selected a missionary, David Livingstone, as the "Representative Churchman" of the nineteenth century and then predicted for the twentieth century one who would lead in co-ordinating the work of denominations; and Principal Burleigh has suggested that such "natural co-operation" in mission labours "did much to make union possible and inevitable" in the following generation. Here again in Symington's description of "the mediatorial dominion of Messiah the Prince" we find the conviction which explains his interest in the mission work, and also links the developments in the missions which he

1 MSS Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery, August 1796.

2 Journal, 25th Dec. 1857, "Met Dr. & Mrs. Livingstone in the evening at the Youngs & had a long conversation with the great African Traveller."


4 Inglis, John, op. cit., pp 155-163.

5 Watt, Hugh, Representative Churchmen of Twenty Centuries, pp 245, 254.

6 Burleigh, J.H.S., A Church History of Scotland, p. 417.
helped to found with these later observations and predictions concerning a more united church:

The field of Messiah's operation is the world ... By spiritual conversion or judicial subjection, he shall effect the entire subjugation of the globe. And at the last there shall not be a spot on the face of the habitable earth where the true church of Jesus Christ shall not have effected a footing, nor a single tribe of the vast family of man which shall not have felt the meliorating and blissful influence of Christian laws and institutions. Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, shall be united in one vast brotherhood, - ranged under one standard: the bond of their union, the holy cement of the Gospel, the emblem of their banner, the Cross.¹

**Interdenominational Activity and the Church-at-Large**

Through his interdenominational activities Dr. Symington made another important contribution to the life of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and other churches, and his work in this field provides one practical illustration of his doctrine of the Church. Something of the extent of his identification with the work of other churches throughout the Galloway area can perhaps be illustrated by a half humorous comment in a letter to another member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church:

When in Dumfries I was congratulated by more than one ... on the prospect of being called to Maxwelton Chapel of Ease! Truly I have much need of some "Ease" for I have not known what it is these ten years. But I fear it is as far from me as ever.²

The Journal record of a visit to London in 1839 bore evidence of continuing development throughout these years:

14. Sabbath ... I have heard the English Service for the first time and thought it anything but impressive. Quite Popish.
21. The English Church Service read. I was thoroughly disgusted with it in the morning at the whole, part of the service performed in one place & part in another - part in one dress & part in another - bowing at the name "Jesus"!

¹O.D., p. 184.
²MSS Letter, dated Stranraer 20th Jan. 1829, addressed to G. Rowatt, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.
23. Dined with the Earl of Galloway; a party in which the Duchess of Beaufort, Lady Louisa Finch, The Bishop of Vermont, Lord Lombardy, Sir Geo. Sinclair ... At family worship the Bishop read the scripture and expounded, & I prayed, an odd combination! The Bishop, an able learned man and if I may judge from his exposition, of sound Theological sentiments.¹

From the very beginning of his ministry he had a keen understanding of his position and responsibility as a minister of the "Church of Christ" in Scotland and he continued to the end of his life to insist that his ministerial commission knew "no local limits but those of the earth",² but along with that emphasis there was this increasing respect for the divinely ordained ministry of churchmen from other denominations who were, as he put it here, "of sound Theological sentiments".

After his "translation" to Glasgow the "strangers" who filled his church were still sometimes frowned upon by some of the members of his own congregation as being "occasional hearers"³ but they were not refused admittance and their very numbers helped to trample down objections. The schools provided another 'bridge' between the people of the city and membership in the church. Reports of Dr. Symington's accomplishments brought him to the favourable attention of other ministers in Glasgow and he frequently worked with them in special phases of their pastoral work. His lectures on "Sabbath Schools", "Amusements For Young Men", "Covenants", and "The Rule of Faith" were repeated in Dr. Wardlaw's Congregationalist Church, in Dr. Buchanan's Tron Parish Church, in Dr. Smyth's St. Georges Church, in a Glasgow Relief Church, in Edinburgh in Lady Lawson's Wynd Church in the

¹Journal, 14th 21st, 23rd April 1839; The following week (28th April) Symington recorded preaching in "the Scotch Church, Swallow St."

²As quoted earlier from Charges Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. James McGill, 21st July 1829, by Wm. Symington.

³Gage, who was pastor from 1889 to 1892 tells how one of these 'occasionals' in Symington's day irritated the beadle. The church officer submitted quietly to the recurrent annoyance; but one day as the young man entered a stray dog followed closely into the lobby. The beadle's efforts to eject the dog produced more than the usual levity on the part of the 'occasional'. Finally, Robert, "Looking the occasional full in the face, while engaged at the same time in pushing out the dog, rather sharply said, - 'We don't like occasional hearing of this kind in this place.'" See Gage, James, Historical Sketch of the Great Hamilton Street (Free) Congregation, pp 37f.
forenoon and in Lady Glenorchy’s Church in the evening, in St. Stephen’s Church, in the Calton Relief Chapel, in Free St. Anderson’s Church, in the Free Middle Church in Paisley, in Greyfriars Church, in Dr. King’s Church, on a visit to Stranraer in the Relief Church in the morning and in the Burgher Church in the afternoon; and these are only a few chosen at random to illustrate the extraordinary variety of Dr. Symington’s interdenominational opportunities. His personal interests are even better indicated by the fact that whenever he was on “holiday” or away from his own pulpit for other reasons over a week end, unless physically ill, he would attend one and sometimes two local churches in the same day. He was often recognized and invited to take the pulpit the following week, and frequently did so. These years just before and after the Disruption were years of closed pulpits for many ministers but apparently Symington’s position as a Reformed Presbyterian gave him a particular advantage in working among the denominations in Scotland.

He was always interested in the policies and pronouncements of the other church courts but he avoided denominational controversy, preferring instead a statement of principle or a study of principle that would help to clarify conflicting issues and thus tend to contribute to a “scriptural” solution of the differences involved. With reference to the Voluntary controversy in 1829 he wrote in response to the questions of a younger minister:

Really I know not what should be done in the case of the Original Seceder. But I should like to see something done. Go on to wade through Gib – most expressive is such language in reference to this controversy ... and may the result be a clear, & fine overture to Synod on this momentous topic.

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2. E.g., *Journal* for 19th June 1859, "The alliance Church and the Free Church".

3. One observer, after describing the bitterness of the Voluntary Controversy said, "A plague on both your Houses! When will either of you cease to speak of toleration and begin to practice it ... the reason and moral principle even of men otherwise sensible and good ... (is) extinguished by religious bigotry", Cockburn, *Journal*, vol. I, pp 273f.

4. MSS Letter dated Stranraer, 13th Feb. 1829, addressed to G. Rowatt, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.
It was one of the purposes of his own book on the "Mediatorial Dominion" of Jesus Christ to provide such a statement of principle. Another practical example of this interest in the study of principle as a means to union is to be seen in his part as a member of the committee studying the possibilities of union with the Original Secession Church. His Journal revealed many encouraging meetings:

7. Mr. McCrie & Mr. Goold with us all night. 8. A very pleasant meeting with Original Seceders. Conferences conducted in best spirit. Forenoon spent in devotion & talking over the state of matters in our respective churches. In the evening talked over the points on which supposed to differ. Found substantial agreement on extent of Mediatorial Dominion, & on the evils of Rev'n. Settlement. Differences on recognition of British Gov't. explained on both sides. Several of the brethren dined with me between meetings. All parted in harmony.

9. Mr. McCrie left us after breakfast.

At one time, 1850, the two Synods prepared to meet at the same time and place, but apparently through some misunderstanding the meeting was not held and negotiations broke down shortly afterward.

In May of 1840 he made a special trip to Edinburgh to hear three days of debate in the General Assembly on the Strathbogie Case, "Breakfasted with the Moderator" and then returned to "Lecture on Patronage" to his own congregation. He frequently called on Welsh and Chalmers during these years and then on May 16, 1843 went to Edinburgh and recorded the following description of the next three days:


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1 Extracts of Synod Minutes, for 12th May 1834, Session II; 7th July 1845, Session II; 6th May 1850, Sessions III and IV; 28th April 1851, Sessions II, III; 8th May 1854, Session II, and others. The Committee was discharged in 1854 but the O. S. Committee had not met with them for three years.

2 Journal, for 7-9 Jan. 1846.

3 Extracts of Synod Minutes, for 6th May 1850, Session IV; 28th April 1851, Session III; 8th May 1854, Session II.

4 Journal, for 25-28 May 1840; and 7th June 1840.

5 Ibid., for 16-19 May 1843.
His own congregation assisted with the organization and early accommodation of the new Free Congregation in Great Hamilton Street, and Symington "sent off books to the Theological Library of Free Church", a few days after the Disruption. He had shown so much interest in the new church that he was invited to join it, but his reply indicated that he saw differences between the two churches and a reason for delaying the union. Shortly after the Disruption he preached on "some distinctions betwixt the R. P. Church & Free Church", to his own congregation.

Many things indicate that for some time prior to the Disruption, Dr. Symington had been interested in something which he considered to be more important than an immediate union between the Reformed Presbyterian and the new Free Church. In May 1840 his Journal recorded a meeting held in Paisley for the purpose of planning a Bicentenary observance of the Westminster Assembly and then, beginning with the 11th of June he recorded the following events:

11. To Edinburgh. Preached in Canonmills Hall, the opening sermon of the Commemoration of the West. Assembly. Large Audience. 12. Presided at a Public Breakfast in Royal Hotel. 13. Two days of highly delightful (____) great satisfaction in meeting so many of diff't. denominations who harmonize on the grand doctrines of Xt. May blessed fruits result from these meetings.

In a section entitled "A Larger Unity In View", J. R. Fleming has traced from these meetings the first post-Disruption influences "aimed at unifying British evangelical Christianity", and has described the events that led from them to

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1Managers' Minutes, 19th May 1843 and 29th May 1843.
2Journal, for 22nd May 1843.
3As quoted in Chapter I, p. 17, "Nay, for with a great sum you have purchased this freedom, but we were free-born!"
4Journal, for 13th July 1843.
5Ibid., 11-13 June 1843: At the breakfast he compared these meetings with the Disruption meetings; "this present meeting is to me a more interesting meeting than the former, because I here see a meeting of people sound in the leading doctrines of the Gospel, and in order and discipline, though differing in other matters ... When we speak of a Protestant union, let us remember that there must be a centre ... even He who is Head over all things", in the commemoration pamphlet entitled, Bicentenary of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster ... With Introductory Sermon by Rev. Dr. Symington, p. 50.
6Fleming, J. R., A History of the Church in Scotland 1843-1874, pp 72f; See also The Story of Church Union in Scotland, by the same author, pp 29f.
the formation of the World Evangelical Alliance three years later. He suggested that Dr. Balmer dealt with the question of the union of all Christians and that his words made quite an impression and asked, "Was it that even then men felt the rending of the Church in twain to be a tragedy, and that something ought to be done to build up a new and larger unity?" The fact is that William Symington, as the first speaker at those meetings, struck that note concerning the uniting of British Evangelical Christianity and those who had planned those meetings as well as those who made his sermon part of the introductory preface to the memorial volume issued on that occasion, recognized the significance of his message at that critical juncture in the history of the Church in Scotland. His sermon, subject and text, was "Love One Another", and he not only answered Fleming's question by saying very plainly that the current rending of the church was something far worse than a tragedy, he went on to describe the "evangelical" love of Christ as being the necessary ingredient in further discussions leading to "alliance" and "union". He strongly advocated an alliance and his message set the tone for the remainder of the meetings. That sermon, as one of Symington's most direct pronouncements concerning Church union and as an example of the influence the Reformed Presbyterian Church was exerting on that troubled nineteenth century ecclesiastical scene is worthy of a brief review.

The various denominations represented in those meetings were described as having been gathered together "not to strike our respective banners, but, instead of lifting them in hostile opposition to one another, to range them all in peaceful display around one glorious standard, to which we all feel under lasting obligation". That central "standard" on this particular occasion, had to do with the objects and accomplishments of the Westminster Divines, but before dealing with them, and perhaps because of difficult experiences in his own denomination with something akin to what was later termed "Disruption Pride", Symington emphasized the paramount necessity for a *continuing* love for one another. Such a

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2 "Love One Another", being a sermon in the pamphlet entitled, *Bicentenary of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, pp 1-12; See also the same sermon reprinted in *Discourses on Public Occasions*, pp 184-204.
love would be an "active principle" which was evangelical in its origin, the authority of Christ ... evangelical in its rule, the example of Christ ... and evangelical in its end, the glory of Christ". He admitted that there might be important differences in "profession" or "sentiment", "resting too on well-grounded distinctions", and having to do with the "... maintenance of truth, the support of discipline, the preservation of ecclesiastical order", but he insisted that there was nothing in any of these to prevent "the fullest reciprocation of kindly feeling".

The greater principle must not be overborne by the less. Too long have persons of different denominations regarded one another with unfriendly jealousy; too long have they engaged in the language of bitter invective; too long have they stood aloof in the attitude of dark suspicion or supercilious disdain. These things ought not to be ...

The ideal would be realized when:

... the whole family of Christ, seeing eye to eye in the principles of truth, shall feel heart to heart in the sympathies of love ... when love to God and love to man ... shall pervade every bosom, and unite in one hallowed bond of brotherhood the universal family of the redeemed.

He pointed out that the Westminster Divines had already anticipated such a union and this became another reason for taking certain steps in their own nineteenth century church "to unite on a basis of truth."

They contemplated, besides a religious uniformity in the three kingdoms, a great Protestant union among the nations of Christendom ... Their sympathies were universal as man ... They opened correspondence with foreign churches and ... formed schemes of cooperation and intercourse, which in Providence they were not permitted to see realized.

Admitting them to have been premature, may they not yet be carried out? Who can tell but that the period of their realisation has arrived? Minds of kindred mold have at length arisen - times remarkably coincident have arrived ...

Let us mark the inclinations ... Rising above the little jealousies of sectarian rivalry, laying aside all personal asperities, let us show a willingness to meet on the arena of frank and friendly consultation, brethren of other churches, and to discuss with them our points of difference in a spirit of Christian candour and charity. The friends of the Redeemer are surely not always to be separated and divided ... Surely it is more to be desired that the churches of the Reformation ... should take steps to unite on a basis of truth, by the scriptural use of consultation, explanation, advice, discussion, and prayer, than that, like insensate masses, they should wait to be melted by the fire, and welded together by the hammer of divine judgments. May the present
commemorative services be blessed of God for leading to movements that shall issue in putting an end to existing dissensions and divisions! And may each one of us, feel himself under obligation, in order to this, to crucify and repress the spirit of party strife ... to take to his heart in fraternal embrace all who love the Lord Jesus ... May the Lord the Spirit give to the scattered churches of the Reformation one heart and one way ... When 'the people are gathered together', then shall 'the kingdoms serve the Lord'!

Adverse criticism^2 has been so prevalent that many would be inclined to say these were strange or exceptional words to hear from a Cameronian descendant of the Society Folk who had objected to "hearing" the indulged clergy. But again the facts are that whole paragraphs from the beginning and the closing of this sermon came from another lecture entitled Historical Sketch of the Westminster Assembly of Divines which Symington had delivered earlier the same year as one of a series of thirteen addresses and lectures, presented and later published by various ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and still later re-published "by appointment of Synod" in a volume entitled Commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Westminster Assembly of Divines and of the Centenary of the Reformed Presbytery.\(^3\) Very similar thoughts are to be found in another of Symington's lectures entitled The Nature and Obligation of Public Vows which was one of a series of seven lectures delivered by various ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1840-1841 in churches throughout Scotland. It too was first published separately and then later bound together with the others, pagination retained, in a volume entitled Lectures on the Principles of the Second Reformation, "Delivered at the request of the Glasgow Society for promoting the scriptural principles of the second reformation". \(^4\) In it Symington

\(^1\)Ibid., pp 1-12, esp. pp 11f.

\(^2\)e.g., Geddes MacGreggor pointed out how the Cameronians were "carrying their old animosities to the point of standing out from the National Church", in Corpus Christi, p. 86.

\(^3\)Symington referred to the unanticipated printing of the sermon, "Love One Another" in explaining this; i.e. he had used paragraphs of his own material from the earlier lecture, "on account of their appropriateness, not only to the occasion, but to the subject he was then led to discuss", in a footnote to "Historical Sketch of the Westminster Assembly of Divines", in Commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and of the Centenary of the Reformed Presbytery, p. 31.

\(^4\)See title page in op. cit., Lecture VII.
revealed something of how the principle of covenanting had influenced his thinking concerning the perpetuity and unity of the Church in Scotland:

As the stream of time flows onward, the identity or oneness of God's covenant society is thus preserved and recognised; a wider range is given to the exercises, and feelings, and prospects of the Christian's heart; more generous and enlarged emotions are awakened, and ground is laid for confidently anticipating the period when the men of successive generations shall all meet on the illimitable field of eternity, clustering around the same covenant God, partakers of the same covenant blessings, fellow-heirs of the same land of covenanted rest, as the result of the high and efficient advocacy of the same covenant mediator ...

In other words, Symington's emphasis on the absolute necessity and certainty of ultimate union was more of a specimen of the influence the Reformed Presbyterian Church was desiring to exert than an exception to it. They had indeed anticipated the Disruption, and to them it was an inevitable tragedy; inevitable because of the unbearable violations of the principle of Christ's Lordship over the Church, and yet a tragedy because it was another violation of the ideal of One Established Reformation Church in Scotland. From 1840 to the year of the Disruption the "Reformation Society" had re-exhibited the principles of the First and Second Reformation, hoping thereby to provide a basis for the Re-formation of the church in Scotland. After the Disruption, the Reformed Presbyterian Church held a special meeting of Synod, appointed a union Committee, and sent a deputation to the new Free Church with words of significant congratulation:

We congratulate you cordially on the position of Christian liberty which you now occupy ... and from our own experience, we are prepared in some measure to sympathize with you in the sacrifice and trial to which you may yet be subjected in maintaining this position, and in prosecuting the hallowed objects for which it has been assumed.

At an informal breakfast gathering during the special synod in 1843, Mr. Keith, bookseller, reported that "considerably more than a hundred thousand" publications had been issued by ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod on the "great public questions" of the last ten years and adduced it as proof that they were

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1 Lectures on the Principles of the Second Reformation, Lecture VII, p. 28.

2 Journal, for Nov. 1840; On 18th Jan. 1841, "Brother introduced Lecture on Second Ref. House Full".

3 Extracts of Synod Minutes, for 3rd July 1843, Session V; See also Hutcheson, op. cit., p. 298.
"not behind the age". Symington said he had long thought "that they were before the age, and the reason why their number had always been so small was that they could not get the age brought up ...".\(^1\)

Nor were their efforts to provide an acceptable basis for union limited to the churches in Scotland. In the volume of sermons written for the purpose of developing the union movement just following the Bicentenary Commemoration of the Westminster Assembly, Andrew Symington\(^2\) was equally outspoken in advocating the contemplated union; and William and Andrew, along with five other Reformed Presbyterian ministers, were among those who signed the invitation addressed to "the evangelical churches of England, Wales, and Ireland" requesting them to meet for an exploratory conference in Liverpool on the first day of October 1845.\(^3\) William Symington prepared to attend those meetings, but severe illness prevented him and his brother brought back reports of their work. The following year, 1846, William attended the meetings in London and sent back reports of progress being made:

We have had another session of the Aggregate Committee & a motion of mine to have introduced into the Basis a recognition of the Universal Mediatorial Dominion of Christ occasioned a discussion of nearly three hours, resulted in its being virtually carried unanimously. It was a fine discussion.\(^5\)

That particular contribution is to be seen in the last six words added to the fourth (later the fifth) point in the doctrinal statement of the Credal Basis as it was later adopted by the whole Alliance:

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1. Scottish Presbyterian, Sept. 1843, p. 232; Keith included the Synodical and periodical publications along with "ten shilling octavos, done up in the first style of the art" and "two penny pamphlets for general circulation".

2. Not as Fleming suggests, Alexander Symington, who was William's son; See Fleming, J. R., A History of the Church in Scotland 1843-1874, p. 73.

3. "Historical Sketch of the Evangelical Alliance", in The Religious Condition of Christendom, being the report of papers presented at the Alliance meetings in 1851, p. 40.


5. MSS Letter, dated London, 18th Aug. 1846, addressed to his wife, to be found in possession of Miss Marion Symington, Edinburgh, see Bibliography; See also Journal, for 18th Aug. 1846, "Aggregate Committee Discussion on Med'l. Dominion in the forenoon - on Eternal Punishment afternoon".
The incarnation of the Son of God, His work of Atone ment for sinners of mankind, and His Mediatorial Intercession and Reign. 1

In moving its adoption by the Alliance, Rev. Bickersteth emphasized the importance of Symington's contribution:

I felt at first some hesitation in making the addition; but in this I soon found I was short-sighted. I did not look at the largeness of our work - at the wide field which was gradually opening before us. My Scotch Brethren and my American Brethren, have helped me here. When my beloved brother, Dr. Symington, proposed ... the addition ... I was afraid to consent, till I saw how the other brethren gradually came forward, and concurred in the alteration ... Dr. Keith is going on an important mission to Germany ... he told me that he felt comfort and assurance in going as a Member ... with that Amendment subjoined.

In another letter Symington said of an evening meeting:

It was a fine sight - about a thousand men of Xt'n. character met from all quarters of the world - to greet one another in the Lord, & to pray & sing praises with one voice & heart. There is a strong muster of our own ministers, & I dare say no other denomination is so largely represented ... I have sometimes wished that William had been here ... But he may live to see other & greater meetings of this kind. 2

Two days later he reported participating in a discussion on "a knotty point of theology" having to do with atonement and added, "We make slow progress but this is inevitable seeing there are so many different denominations who have so much to explain." 3 He was entrusted with the presentation of a difficult resolution dealing with forbearance 4 and in supporting it spoke of his own desires for their work:

1 Evangelical Alliance, Being the report of the proceedings of the Conference in 1846, pp 77, 122-125; See also the original statement as written by Candlish, in The Religious Condition of Christendom, op. cit., p 46.
2 Ibid., p 79.
3 MSS Letter dated London, 20th Aug. 1846, addressed to his wife, to be found among possessions of Miss Marion Symington, Edinburgh, see Bibliography; The "William" referred to was Dr. Symington's son who was then a pastor at Castle Douglas and it is an interesting reference in view of the fact that a twentieth century kinsman, Professor William S. Tindal, was representative from the Church of Scotland to the 1961 meetings of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi.
5 Evangelical Alliance (1846), pp 195-199; See also pp 126f. for report of the discussion on Atonement.
There may be some danger of individuals going away with the impression, that they are to keep up their differences of opinion for ever. Now, one of the things which, from the very commencement, has commended this movement to my mind, has been, that it holds out to me a prospect - I grant, but a very distant one - that our differences of opinion will be got over. It is one of the means, and it appears to me one of the most likely means, of bringing us to be of one mind. There is, indeed, a mode of speaking on this subject, which, I confess, I do not like. There is a talking of forgetting our differences, and banishing our differences: and, as some express it, merging our differences. I go further than all these: I want the differences to be done away with altogether ... and I have very great confidence in the moral influence of this Alliance, in finally disposing our differences altogether.\(^1\)

He referred to the 'moral influence' of the Bicentenary meetings in Edinburgh and to their own experiences in prayer at the meetings they were then attending in London and added, "This shows, that there is something in the Association which is calculated to bring about Communion; - to confirm and strengthen: and to prepare for the Latter Day, when 'they shall see eye to eye'.\(^2\)

While his letters do not reveal the same emotional exuberance some other members reported,\(^3\) they do reveal, as written without reserve to his wife, a strong sense of personal responsibility and a variety of experiences which were destined to have an important effect on his own ministry and his continuing influence in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. One other letter summarized his views of the ends and accomplishments of those meetings. It was written to Dr. Liddell, minister of the Established Church, who had just returned after a period of service as Principal of Queen's College in Canada, and provides another example of the type of personal influence Symington sought to bring into the lives of other ministers in the Church in Scotland:

The Alliance was formed last evening amid deep solemnity & will thro God's blessing, I hope prove an efficient means of repelling the common Enemy & bringing Xtians to a better

\(^1\)Ibid., pp 196f.  
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 197.  
\(^3\)Cairns said, "It is more like heaven than anything I have experienced on earth," as quoted by Fleming, in A History of the Church in Scotland 1843-1874, p. 76.
agreement among themselves ... The centre of the Union is 
Xt. The principle, love, love to Xt. & the cement, prayer. 
I only wish you had been here. Men from all quarters of 
Christendom met to hail one another as brethren & pledge 
themselves to united action in the cause of their common 
Lord. We adhere to the title "Evangelical" in preference 
to "Protestant" ... your friend Dr. Buchanan moved the 
resolution regarding the formation, & gave expressions to 
his protestant feelings, but Free Church peculiarities there 
were none. They wd. not be tolerated - nor the peculiarities 
of any section of the church. The movement has no connexion 
with what is technically styled Voluntaryism & of those 
engaged, there are hundreds who are sound to the backbone on 
the subject of National religion. We have many church of 
England men, who I fear may be exposed to much theology from 
their brethren, & perhaps to meet suffering, should their 
Bishops take it into their heads to denounce the Alliance, 
after the example of Archbishop Whateley.¹

Symington preached to members of the Alliance on August 23rd² and presided 
at the devotional exercises on the 29th, at which time he made two more 
statements concerning the end and means of their Alliance: "If we wish 
(the Alliance) to subserve the great end that we have contemplated in 
bringing it into existence, we must not bring the displeasure of God on 
it, by making too much of it - by erecting it into a substitute for His 
Church, or by relying too much on its principles. We must glory only in 
the Lord"; and "... the centre of union to one another is union to the 
Lord Jesus Christ ... the more implicitly we depend upon Him, the more we 
shall be drawn to one another."³ There were eleven ministers, one 
missionary, and one elder from the Reformed Presbyterian Church present at 
the meetings, and in explaining this remarkable interest, the reporter for 
the Scottish Presbyterian said, "... we know none that are under greater 
obligations to hail and further the cause of union than the followers of

¹MSS Letter, dated London 21st Aug. 1846, addressed to Dr. Liddell, to 
be found in possession of Miss Marion Symington, Edinburgh, see Bibliography.

²Evangelical Alliance, op. cit., (1846), p. 158; In another letter he 
wrote, "Yesterday I preached ... I gave them a sermon on the opening of the 
heart of Lydia, wh gave me an opportunity of bearing testimony in favour of 
Calvinistic doctrine on the subject of man's conversion, a point on wh I fear 
many of our dear brethren of the Alliance are unsound."; in MSS Letter dated 
London 24th Aug. 1846, addressed to his wife, to be found in possession of 
Miss Marion Symington, Edinburgh, See Bibliography.

³Ibid., pp 161f.
the Scottish Reformers, and the professed friends of the Solemn League and Covenant ..."¹ and Symington himself continued to show interest in the affairs of the Alliance to the end of his life.²

In spite of the later decline of the Alliance, three things were accomplished: it provided a common meeting ground for those who cared to take part in the work of reunion in that critical period just after the Disruption;³ it resulted in a widening of ecclesiastical horizons for many churchmen, helping "to deliver Scottish Christianity from self absorption; and to give it the consciousness of world fellowship";⁴ and it established a precedent as the oldest of those organizations which since then have done much to promote unions.⁵ In a lecture intended as much for his own denomination as for the Church in Scotland William Symington presented two reasons, direct from reformation days, for his own interest in this work, and they help to explain why there was such a "strong muster" of Reformed Presbyterians at the formation of the Alliance. They have to do with that Kingdom-concept of the Church which was an important characteristic of Scottish reformation theology, and Symington's words appear almost in the form of a prayer for their re-application in the nineteenth century church:

May the Lord the Spirit give the ministers and members of the divided Churches of the Reformation one heart and one way ... Then and not till then - shall be fulfilled the great, the bright, the glorious conceptions of the Solemn League and of the Westminster Assembly; it being the explicit design of the latter 'to bring the church at home into NEARER AGREEMENT WITH OTHER REFORMED CHURCHES ABROAD' and of the former, 'to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms TO THE NEAREST

¹Scottish Presbyterian, September 1846, p. 518, See also Nov. 1845, pp 255f.
²e.g. Journal for 22nd June 1856, "Ministers present at lectures. Attended Alliance. Dined at Dr. Henderson's where met Baptist Noel, Dr. Harwick, Mr. Cairns of Berwick, etc. Speaking inferior."
³Burleigh, J. H. S., A Church History of Scotland, p. 394.
⁵Burleigh, op. cit., p. 362.
CONJUNCTION AND UNIFORMITY, AND TO ENCOURAGE OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TO JOIN IN THE SAME OR LIKE ASSOCIATION AND COVENANT, TO THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF JESUS CHRIST, AND THE PEACE AND TRANQUILITY OF CHRIST'S KINGDOMS AND COMMONWEALTHS.

The Scottish national Covenants and the teachings of the Westminster Divines are not often proposed as grounds for unity and union among churches, but it is to be noted here that Dr. Symington's emphasis had fallen on the spirit or principle of covenanting; he referred to the intentions of both the Covenants and the Westminster Divines, and behind his whole proposal there could be seen a doctrine of the "perpetuity" of the Church which emphasized the continuing development of the unity of Christ's one Church in Scotland.

Interdenominational Activity and the Reformed Presbyterian Church

Symington's Interdenominational Activities, however, were a new application or at least a forgotten application of this Reformation Testimony, and they did not go unnoticed or unchallenged by one group within his own church. Shortly after he became active in Bible Society work in the Stranraer area, one of the Society groups for which he was responsible forwarded the following question to Presbytery:

Is attendance on sermon preached on behalf of Bible Societies and such like institutions by Ministers of other denominations but of Evangelical Principles, an offence which should be subject to the discipline of the Church?

A few years later three petitions appeared from Symington's own Stranraer Congregation. The first, from some members of session, complained about "a diversity both of sentiment and practice" which existed in their department of the Church "on the subject of what is usually called occasional hearing", and asked Synod to relieve them of "a difficulty in the discharge of their official duty". The second petition, from some members of the

1 Symington, Wm., Historical Sketch of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, p. 74. The marks of emphasis are Symington's and his quotations are from the Covenants.

2 MSS Minutes of the Southern Reformed Presbytery, for 13th Sept. 1826, to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.
congregation, was more explicit:

Entreat the Synod to adhere to the Testimony, Judicial Decisions and former practice of the Church in this important particular; confirming these by their present decision; make these attainments to be observed by both ministers and people under their inspection, and deal with those who may act in opposition to these, as the circumstances of their case and truth may require.

The third paper was presented by the pastor and signed by many of those who had signed the former petition. It declared that they had done so "without due deliberation", were "sorry for having done it" and wished that their names could be "erased" from it. Synod ruled with reference to the original complaint:

That the Court recommend to all members of the Church full manifestation of steadfast adherence to the principles of the Reformation ... but the Court decidedly refuse the prayer of the petition ...  

In spite of progress manifest here, the question lay just beneath the surface and erupted in a slightly different form twenty-eight years later in a petition from a few members of the session of the West Campbell Street Congregation in Glasgow. It asked of Synod:

That this Court enjoin both ministers and sessions under their charge to adhere to the practice of the church in bygone times, in regard to the interchange of pulpits with ministers of other denominations ...  

Again Synod's ruling was prompt:

The Court, while deprecating any indiscriminate interchange of the kind referred to in the petition, do not feel that any sufficient reason has been given why they should legislate upon the subject.  

The action was designed, at least by inference, to call attention to Symington's interdenominational activities, and in the debate he acknowledged this and went on to state the reasons for his conduct and to suggest the motion, stated

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1 MSS Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, for 29th April 1631, to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.

2 Ibid.

3 Extracts of Synod Minutes, for 6th May 1859, Session VIII.
above, that was later passed by a large majority. In support of their overture the petitioners had referred to the actions of the Societies in refusing to attend services conducted by the indulged ministers, and to the original position of the Reformed Presbytery in refusing to allow "occasional hearing". Some ministers spoke in criticism of the more recent exclusive actions of the Established and Free Churches in barring their pulpits to each other, and at least one man spoke of conscientious scruples about cooperating in the Evangelical Alliance. Symington admitted that the practice referred to in the memorial required to be "very cautiously guarded". If it were wrong to hear a man in one pulpit it would be wrong to hear him in another, but it was also true that they were all responsible for "waiting upon the ministry". He also insisted that there was an important difference between the "dispensation of the ministry of preaching" and "ecclesiastical fellowship ... the fellowship of the communion to which an enlightened understanding of the terms of communion is necessary". The reflex influences, of the mission on the church, became apparent in his explanation of the point concerning the preacher not being in ecclesiastical fellowship with his hearers. If he were, this would involve the best, strictest, and most orthodox of preachers being in ecclesiastical fellowship with the most immoral people "because such are invited into our churches". He admitted that a Mr. Gordon from Nova Scotia had preached at an evening service in his church but insisted that it was right and then added on the other hand:

The Free Church would stultify themselves by asking ministers of the Established Church to preach in their pulpits; and I quite vindicate our forefathers in keeping up their fellowship Societies rather than hear the indulged curates that constituted the Assembly at that time; and I think that they were quite right in refusing them, and I would not have heard them in the circumstances. They could not have made out their position of dissent from the Revolution Settlement had they not done so. I still think there is no case made out to-day to show us that the practice is now such as to call for interference.

He cited the actions of "our Reformer"s in sending James Renwick to Holland, pointing out that he had been "... ordained by a Church not in fellowship with the Assembly ..."

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1 Pamphlet entitled, Our Testimony Compromised ..., Glasgow 1859, p. 60.  
2 Ibid.
with us, and he came back to us and administered the ordinances, which shows that they were not so strict."\(^1\)

The Societies which later became the Reformed Presbytery have often been accused of producing the most irascible of extreme Scottish separatists and at times the Covenants have been blamed for this;\(^2\) but the facts from the life of William Symington would appear to deny these opinions. On one hand he was a Covenanter \textit{par excellence}, in private practice as well as in public profession; on the other hand he was involved from the beginning to the end of his ministry in Stranraer and in Glasgow, in interdenominational activities. He had an important role in founding the only nineteenth century international interdenominational organization in existence. He helped to enlarge the ecumenical vision of the members of it, and he adduced the Covenants as one reason for his interest. He insisted that "the visible church must have a visible unity" and that "this visible unity springs from its having one Head."\(^3\)

The majority in the Reformed Presbyterian Church followed Symington's leadership in this interdenominational ministry. They recognized the necessity for change and were prepared to adapt their practices in order to bring the principles to bear on the new circumstances in the most practical way. It is true that there was one small group within the church which saw in the old practices a way of maintaining the separate existence of the Church Organization within which their forefathers had given their lives and so they sought to protect the Organization by building a wall of negative legislation around the entire denomination. That was the purpose of the petitions just considered and in making them their authors did the very thing their forefathers had given their lives to avoid doing; that is, they put loyalty to the Organization before loyalty to the Principles which were its reason for existence. They became guilty of what their forefathers had described as that "heinous, hateful, and hurtful sin of schism". But the success of Symington's influence may be estimated by the fact that upon this particular

\(^1\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^2\text{Macpherson, John, The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology, p. 115;}\)

\(^3\text{Pryde, G. S., Scotland from 1603 to the present day, (1962), pp 45, 92, 100.}\)

\(^3\text{O.D., p. 131.}\)
occasion, only five voted for another amendment. In his Journal for that day Symington wrote, "Petition about interchange of pulpits satisfactorily disposed of."¹

This same pattern of influence can be found in Symington's treatment of the three major principles of his church as summarized in the first chapter: the doctrine of the State, the doctrine of the Church, and the doctrine of the Covenants. There was an equally remarkable unanimity of action in the necessary adaptations made in the doctrine of covenanting and in spite of earlier confusion and the later separation over the exercise of the franchise, the same could be said of the decisions concerning the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ over nations. It was no small tribute to his Churchmanship and to his doctrine of the unity of the Church that the church was held together (brought closer together) in the face of all these necessary adaptations and changes, and this in turn was destined to have an influence on the Church at large.

Unless it be assumed that organizational affiliation is the best or the only way of promoting unity; unless union be deemed of greater importance than unity in the work of Christ's Kingdom; then, the Societies and the Reformed Presbytery under Symington's leadership must be seen as having made an important contribution towards the re-union of the Church in Scotland. They did not unite with the new Free Church immediately but they did bring into the nineteenth century ecclesiastical scene that same conviction concerning the visible unity - and perpetuity - of the whole visible church, which has been acknowledged to have been one of the most important characteristics of the doctrine of the Church in Scottish theology,² and they were advocating those methods of consultation and study undergirded by a determination not to desist until differences had been "got over altogether", which are also acknowledged to have been a source of unity in the Scottish

¹Journal, for 6th May 1859.

Church since the days of Knox.  

In reviewing the influence of Dr. Symington's interdenominational work in both the Church-at-large and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, it is his doctrine of the Kingdom and Kingship of Christ in its relationship to the Church that overshadows everything else and holds it all in perspective. While still a student at the Hall he had looked forward to being commissioned as a minister in "Christ's Church in Scotland", and once that commission had been granted it "knew no local limits but those of the earth"; it refused to be limited either by restrictions and traditions building up within his own church, or by parish boundaries and membership claims laid down by other churches. It authorized his release from Stranraer, his entrance into other churches throughout the kingdom, his ordaining of missionaries to unseen parts of the world, and his participation in the meetings with other churches in Edinburgh and London. His churchmanship within his own denomination, among the other denominations in Scotland, and at the Evangelical Alliance meetings, might be summarized by saying 'it had been the effort to lift the eyes of men in each group above the level of their own activities and organizations to the "Dominion" of Christ and to show them the practical relationships between Kingdom and Church. His doctrine of the "universality" of Christ's Kingdom overshadowed and prompted the extension of the work of his own church, in Green Street and on out into the islands of the South Pacific; it provided one basis for his interest in union and later served to enlarge the vision of the members of the World Alliance. His doctrine of the "unity" of Christ's Kingdom formed a basis for his evaluation of the discussions concerning union with the Secession Church and caused him to insist at the Alliance meetings that as they came closer to Christ the Head through such prayer, study, and consultation, they would not be satisfied with "banishing", "merging" or "forgetting" differences" but would be drawn by Him to the point of getting

1 Professor J. S. McEwen after describing Knox's Bible study groups added, "I should say that it is largely to them, and to Knox's insistence on fighting through to an agreed understanding of Scripture, that Scotland owed its remarkable freedom from the early schisms that broke up the unity of the Reformed Church in other lands. And here also one might see the glimmering of a way towards Protestant reunion ..., in The Faith of John Knox, p. 37.
rid of the differences "altogether". His doctrine of the "perpetuity" of Christ's kingdom linked the Scottish Church of 1560, 1638 and 1843 in his thinking and caused him to insist that the experiences through which Christ had already led His Church, must provide a basis for any further development in the same Church. His great concern was that no denominational bias, tradition or unwillingness, and no interdenominational misunderstandings should be allowed to "limit" the "Dominion" of His Lord.¹ He believed that a clear understanding and agreement concerning the Kingdom and Kingship of Christ was an essential factor in any proper, lasting union of the visible Church, and his thoughts were based upon the lessons learned through his study of the "testimony" of the Reformation as well as observations during the Ten Years Conflict:

Christians are apt to feel discouraged when they reflect on the extensive prevalence of error compared with the limited success of the true religion ... But if they can only have faith in the mediatorial dominion, they may dismiss their fears, and confidently rely in, not merely the preservation, but the triumphant success and universal establishment, of the church.²

Professor of Theology

Through his work as Professor of Theology at the Hall, Dr. Symington summarized and emphasized the experiences and lessons of a lifetime of service, and the opportunities and prestige of that position also help to account for the unusual influence he came to wield in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. John M'Millan was the first Professor of the Hall and when he died in 1820, Andrew Symington was elected to that office. William had been involved in the business of the Hall from the year of his ordination,

¹Wide, e.g., O.D., pp 190f, "It is truly appalling to think, in how many instances the crown rights and royal prerogatives of Sion's King have been invaded by men, taking upon them to legislate in and for the church; to model her government and worship, in order to meet the ends of a pitiful expediency; to settle articles of faith; and even to brandish the sword of civil power over the heads of such as refused to submit to an arbitrary and unrighteous dictation. Nor is it greatly less grieving to reflect, that so many should tamely submit to these sinful encroachments, and show so little regard for the honour of the Redeemer, as not to stand up at all hazards for his inalienable rights."

²Ibid., p. 187.
was for many years Convener of the Hall Committee, and after moving to Glasgow he frequently assisted his brother with lectures and the examination of students. His interest in that particular work is perhaps best reflected by the fact that while at Stranraer, no less than four young men from that congregation entered the seminary, and while he was in Glasgow, no less than twelve from that congregation entered the seminary. When Professor Andrew Symington died in 1853 the Hall Committee strongly recommended the election of two professors and at a pro re nata meeting of Synod held that same year, Dr. Symington was elected Professor of Systematic Theology and Dr. Goold Professor of Church History.

The Great Hamilton Street Congregation looked upon his election with something akin to pride for they cheerfully agreed to give up the services of their beloved pastor for eight weeks or more each year while the Hall was in session, and set about making alterations in the church building in order that "the Hall" could meet there. Six months later Symington wrote:


Thus it went for eight weeks. Symington added to the curriculum; lectures in homiletics, instruction in public speaking, written examinations, and inter-sessional assignments which involved practical work in congregations as well as written research and reports. During the session the Journal shows that there were two or three lectures each day, followed by the "examination" of individual students, the "hearing of discourses" or the "reading of assigned essays". Occasionally he noted an "Excursion wt students to Bothwell & Bothwell Bridge" or to some other place of historical

1. Journal for 10th Jan. 1854, "The Chair of Systematic Theology was assigned to me, & that of Biblical Literature & Ch. History to Dr. Goold by the cordial & unanimous voice of the Court. Quite overwhelmed ... Spent a very restless night ... With much fear and trembling agreed to accept the office. God grant qualification, support & success, in training young aspirants to the ministry."


or current interest. The Hall Committee pointed to the report in 1855 as being "ample proof that the maximum of work in the minimum of time was the rule in this seminary". The Journal also frequently reported the presence of students and ministers from other churches and in addressing students a member of the Hall Committee pointed out "... how strangers, including professors of theology and doctors of divinity, have been riveted to your benches, being anxious to spend every hour in the Hall that their engagements would permit ...".

As to his method of lecture there is comparatively little information. Of Doddridge he once wrote:

He was a Holy man - but much mistaken in his plan of teaching Theology. Error received as much respect from him as Truth; wh. to say the least, is surely being candid overmuch ... (His plan) was to state the arguments for and against any disputed point as fairly as possible, & leave the students to judge for themselves. I believe he did this even with respect to the Deity of Christ - and the consequences were that many of his students became Socinians.

We may conclude that this was not Symington's method, and Dr. Goold gave some further suggestion concerning Symington's work as a Professor when he described the two aspects of his character and attainments that were of particular value as an example for students. The first was "his devotion to theology as a science" and the second was "his eminence as a preacher". In elaborating on the first he described Symington's "... patient and masterly exposition of the old truths of the gospel not as the dry sentences of scholastic theology, but the living seed caught in the good and honest soil of faith, to germinate into all the beauty of holiness, and the fruit of public usefulness"; his "profound and implicit deference to the authority of the Word"; and his ability "to fix the true

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3. MSS Letter dated Stranraer 20th Jan. 1829, addressed to G. Rowatt, he referred to a similar point in another letter to Rowatt dated 13th Feb. 1829, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

meaning of a doctrine, its relations to other doctrines, its bearing on
duty, its effect on character, its value as an element in religious ex-
perience" along with a "singular readiness in stating the evidence for a
truth, and ... great tact in bringing it to bear" on men. Goold also
reminded the students of "the vigour amounting almost to sternness, with
which as you well know, he insisted on your perfect command of the discourses
which you deliver from memory in the Hall" and his "ever growing sense of
the practical urgency of his message". 1

As to the content of his courses, only the subject headings of the
three year programme are available. The "introductory part of the system
of divinity" Symington described as including "among other topics the
Evidences, the Trinity, the Person of Christ, and Original Sin", in twenty-
nine lectures. 2 For the second year "the lectures covered "Election, the
Covenant of Grace, the Person of Christ, the Incarnation, the Offices of
Christ, including his Kingly office, in connection with which the attention
of students was specially called to the principles of our Church", and there
were thirty lectures "of considerably more than usual length". 3 The third
year "The subjects of lecture were the Benefits of Redemption, and the
Application of them to God's elect by the Holy Spirit". 4 His Journal makes
it possible to verify the estimate suggested by his sons that more than
3,000 pages of finely written notes covered the total system of theology
within the outline of these headings. 5 For the first three years that he
was Professor, no week and few days passed without some reference to "pre-
paration of lectures", and after the first three years it became "revision
of lectures" or "further lectures". The fact that these notes were burned
forbids further comment concerning them, but the forty-three men, or more, 6
who came from those classes between 1853 and 1862 are perhaps the best
commentary that could be desired. Among them were eight missionaries,

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., for Sept. 1857, pp 363f.
3 Ibid., for Nov. 1858, pp 355f. 4 Ibid., for Nov. 1859, pp 356f.
5 Memoir, p. xci.
6 There are frequent references in the annual reports of the Hall
Committee to men from America, Ireland, and from other churches in Scotland,
whose names never appear in the matriculation book.
including John G. Paton and Joseph Copeland who pioneered in the work in the New Hebrides; two men who later became well known Glasgow Missionaries, John Edgar and James Paton; J. H. Thompson who is known for his *Martyr Graves of Scotland* and other books about the Covenanters; Matthew Hutchison who wrote the standard history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland; Robert Naismith, Alexander Symington, and Walter Paton who were also known as authors; James Cosh who became Moderator of the First General Assembly of the Federated Churches of Australia; John Hamilton who was the first minister to make use of the mutual eligibility act by responding to a call from a Free Church congregation in 1874; John Laidlaw, later Professor at New College in Edinburgh; and many others who became pastors of Presbyterian Churches in Canada, England, Australia, Ireland, and in the Established, Free, and United Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. One of the best known Presbyterian ministers in America, in an Autobiography entitled *The Making of a Minister*, described how his father had gone to Scotland as a young bachelor minister to study in Dr. Symington's classes, and then returned to America bringing with him a helpmeet who had also been trained in the Great Hamilton Street Schools.¹ Chalmers had been interested in training a man to succeed himself in his work, and here too Symington excelled. Robert M'Kenna was one of Symington's students who succeeded him in his interest in the Bible Society, being Secretary of the National Bible Society for over forty years. Professor Wm. Binnie succeeded him as Professor of Theology at the Hall, and his own son, William Symington II, succeeded him as pastor of the Great Hamilton Street Congregation. All but two of those who had been students of the Symingtons went with the majority in the decision concerning the use of the franchise in 1863 and all but one of those who lived to constitute the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, *Quoad Civilia*, went into the union with the Free Church in 1876.

For William Symington, the last eight years of his life as Professor, came as a climax to years of study and experience. He welcomed them as an

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¹ *The Making of a Minister*, being "The Autobiography of Clarence E. Macartney" (edited by J. Clyde Henry, 1961), pp 35-39; In the "Report of the Hall Committee" in the *R. P. Magazine*, for Nov. 1859, pp 349, they refer to "... an excellent student of the American Reformed Presbyterian Synod, Mr. Macartney, who not only gave full attendance, but performed all the prescribed exercises" and both professors expressed the hope that "he might be long spared to be another bond of union between the Synods on either side of the Atlantic".
opportunity to explain the reasons for his work in Bible Schools, foreign missions, interdenominational relationships and political reform, and as an opportunity to train others in carrying on that same work. For forty-two years the theological instruction of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland had been in the hands of the Symington brothers; by 1862 there were not more than five ministers in the entire church who had not received training in their classes and that fact alone went far to account for the remarkable unanimity of action in the final decisions in 1863 and 1876. The Hall committee said, "The brothers Andrew and William Symington will be ever remembered in our community as the most distinguished ministers who have been raised up to us since the martyrdom of James Renwick."\(^1\)

The years of added responsibility however, took a heavy toll. After almost every session of the Hall there was a period of illness and enforced rest. In 1855 Dr. Symington petitioned the congregation to elect a "colleague and successor", but they were very reluctant to part with his services to that extent and it was not until 1857 that William Symington II, then pastor at Castle Douglas, was called. He declined the call but two years later the call was renewed and he accepted. In spite of the relief brought about by an additional pastor, more illness followed. In December of 1861 William II was sent away for rest following a long period of illness, and his father took the work of the congregation. He preached twice on the 12th of January, 1862, died on the 28th, and was buried in the Necroplis in Glasgow.

Dr. Symington's portrait leaves an impression of unfriendliness or disagreeableness which demands explanation, for every extant record denies this conclusion. The facts are that he studied to create an impression of dignity befitting a minister, and such gravity was the fashion for ministers and photographers a hundred years ago. Many of his letters and private writings show sparks of humour and in his family letters he often included playful notes to his grandchildren. His son said:

The look of gravity which might be caught when his features were at rest, changed instantly when one spoke to him into the sunniest of smiles. He told a story admirably, and laughed heartily at the wit of others if it was anything genuine. Every inch a gentleman in the best sense of the word, his distinguished courtesy appeared quite as much at home as in general society: it was his nature.\(^2\)

\(^1\)R. P. Magazine for 2nd June 1862, p. 204. \(^2\)Memoir, p. xcvii.
His son-in-law said, "The youngest of his grandchildren hailed him as a companion, while they revered him as a patriarch," and Dr. Liddell added:

I soon found that he was the polite affable gentleman out of the pulpit as I had previously found him to be the diligent and ripe student, the sagacious and judicious expositor of Scripture and fearless ambassador of Christ, in his place of accredited teacher of the congregation.\(^1\)

Two impressions of William Symington stand out beyond others in importance. The first is to be found in the tenderness of his love for the members of his congregation and for other souls appearing before him with a particular need. Every record of his parting from the people at Stranraer is strained with emotion and a similar attachment developed between himself and the members of the Glasgow Congregation. One of those who was asked to leave Great Hamilton Street in 1853 to assist with the founding of a new congregation wrote of resisting the idea at first:

Gradually, however, our minds got accustomed to the thought of separation from him, and claiming as we did, to be the descendents of martyrs, we came to regard it as some evidence that we partook of their spirit in thus sacrificing our own feelings for the good of the noble cause for which they had suffered so much.\(^2\)

His many public commitments were not allowed to eclipse this interest in the needs of individual souls. In one typical Journal entry he barely mentioned a large city hall meeting but then recorded hurrying to the home of a sick member who had left a message with her sister just before she died:

'Tell the Dr. that he has been a precious minister of Xt. to my soul.' Felt please yet humbled that I had done so little, & disposed wt my whole heart to say, To thee Lord be the glory.\(^3\)

This same note in his letters brings to mind the letters of Rutherford and his relationship with the congregation at Anwoth. His was the heart of a pastor.

\(^1\) Ibid., p. xcii. 
\(^2\) Ibid., p. ix. 
\(^3\) Couper, W. J., A Century of Congregational Life, p. 69. 
\(^4\) Journal, for Nov. 1853.
The other, and more obvious impression from this study of his life and churchmanship, is of the powerful grip the three principles from the Reformation Testimony of his Church had upon his life and ministry. Principal Burleigh in describing the attitude men had towards the Scottish Reformation (1560) one hundred years after it had taken place, has pointed out after reviewing Spottiswoode's History that "the Restoration Church resembled in many respects that which Spottiswoode laboured to defend". In describing men's attitudes towards the Reformation two hundred years afterward, he pointed to "the mildly patronizing view" of Principal Robertson's History as being representative of the times. From its very origin it had been a primary purpose of the Reformed Presbytery to protest against just such attitudes as these but that was being changed rapidly and radically. Merely "protesting" against "defections" and gathering together remnants of the scattered flock to "wait" until those defections had been removed and the "attainments" recognized by others could not meet the needs of people caught up in nineteenth century circumstances. Important as were these human social needs however, it was not these but the theology from within the church, having to do with the glory of God, the honour of King Jesus, and the extension of His Kingdom by the use of His means, that really prompted the change. As will be seen more fully later, Symington helped to resolve the reformation "attainments" contained within the testimony of his church, into a doctrine of the Kingdom of Christ. This theology from within the church even more than the needs from without, was the primary motivating factor in the change, although the two could not be completely separated because Christ's "mediatorial" Kingdom came between man's needs and God's glory; and the extension of Christ's Kingdom necessarily involved meeting the spiritual and social needs of men. In many ways the change was symbolized by the difference between Symington's Stranraer Pastorate and his Glasgow Ministry. In the former, one of his most time consuming activities had been the gathering together of members of the scattered Societies, whereas in the latter he was even more actively involved in training them - emphasizing in a more positive way the Principles of the Reformation and teaching his

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people to re-apply them by "working out" their nineteenth century adaptations. Everything was viewed in terms of its relationship to the "Dominion" of Christ. It was not so much Temperance Reform, Educational Reform, Political Reform, or Social Welfare as it was Kingdom Welfare; not so much Church or Missions extension as it was Kingdom extension; not so much Church unity as it was Kingdom unity, that mattered. All these other programmes and activities were means, warranted by scripture and used by Christ for bringing about the establishment of His Kingdom in Scotland and throughout the world. Conversely, every new programme, activity, or proposed union was evaluated and held in perspective, in terms of its contribution to the Kingdom of Christ. The results of his emphasis would help to cause man to look, and to look more favourably, upon the "attainments" of the reformation. In his work with society in general, with the state, and with the church, Dr. Symington's methods would be considered commendable by twentieth century standards. His statements of motives and his objectives would also be considered to be highly commendable in so far as church work in the twentieth century was concerned, but his motives and objectives in social welfare and political reform would be considered by many to be unusual, unnecessary, or in some cases (e.g. his identification of moral and civil issues) objectionable today. For Symington however, motives, methods, and objectives were all related to the Kingdom of Christ. The centrality of this doctrine was as apparent in his private life and unseen devotional writings as it was in his public statements and published material. For all these reasons his book on The Mediatorial Dominion of Messiah the Prince could justly be called a labour of love and his sons affixed to their edition of the book the motto of his life, Mono To Theo Doxa.

The question as to whether or not Dr. Symington was right in identifying this doctrine of "Dominion" with reformation theology has yet to be dealt with, but there can be no doubt about its being a dominant, compelling, and distinctive influence in his life and in the decisions of his churchmanship.
ON ATONEMENT

"Vera theologia non theoretica et speculativa, sed activa et practica est. Finis siquidem ejus agere est, hoc est vitam vivere deiformem."

(Martin Bucer)
CHAPTER V

ON ATONEMENT

Professor H. R. Mackintosh has pointed out that one of the defects of German academic theology has been its "lack of vital contact with the life of the worshipping church". That "vital contact was an essential feature of the Scottish Reformation and of its theology, but it is one of the facts of history that those who "lived praying and preaching, and died praying and fighting" did not have opportunity to do the writing which would have preserved, in the form of theological statements, the lessons learned during those experiences. It would also appear that between 1690 and the early part of the 19th Century, the national church, for one reason or another, had lost her "vital contact" with the people of Scotland. The policies of moderation or 'Moderatism' which some have

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1 Mackintosh, H. R., Types of Modern Theology, p. 3.

2 James Walker, in process of reviewing Scottish theological literature, said with particular reference to the lives of the martyrs, "If we would judge the Church of those days, we must do so in the light of another literature than that which is about us at present", in Scottish Theology and Theologians, p. 24; See also Macpherson, H., The Covenanters Under Persecution, p. 57; And Henderson, G. D., The Burning Bush, p. 120, wherein he describes the importance of Knox's work with the people and points out that after all other factors had been considered, this was the important element, "The people were in it".


4 Commenting upon the statistics brought to light in the Voluntary Controversy, Lord Cockburn pointed out "... the apparent indifference, as evinced by the extraordinary number of unlet sittings ... it is always the cheapest sittings that are most empty ... The friends of the Establishment maintain ... that the emptiness of the existing churches is temporary and accidental, and that it arises partly from that indifference about religion which the continued want of church accommodation has a tendency to produce", in Journal of Henry Cockburn, vol. I, p. 95; See also p. 343 and p. 147, "The Church of Scotland is ceasing to be the people's church".


traced back to the Revolution Settlement\(^1\) had tended to turn theology into a system which was to be used in the interests of the dominant party in the church, for the purposes of enforcing discipline or testing loyalty or orthodoxy, instead of making of it a willing confession of personal and corporate faith.\(^2\) In the meantime, as was noted in the first chapter, that particular branch of the Church in Scotland of which William Symington was a member, had existed for sixteen years following the Revolution Settlement as a laymen's group, and then it arose almost phoenix-like out of the "non-ecclesiastic" organization called the "Societies", to claim the name of the Reformation Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Even after acquiring ministers and becoming organized as a church, the "discussions" within the Fellowship Societies had continued to be an important factor in maintaining a living relationship between the faith of the people and the Reformation Testimony of the church. Her history had been in many ways, a preview of the post-disruption Free Church for throughout the years she had been closely dependent upon the Scots peasantry. The very appearance of the new Free Church, joining her as it were, outside the pale of the Establishment, as well as the fact that a majority of the Reformed Presbyterian Church later joined the Free Church, were further indications of the relevance of the reformation theology contained within her standards and of the importance of retaining it in its living relationship to the lives of the individual members of the worshipping Church.

Dr. Symington was qualified in many ways for gathering together those lessons of Scottish Reformation theology which had been kept alive in his church and for presenting them in the form of theological statements which would also include the emphasis and tones of the reformation theologians and preachers. He was writing as a direct descendent of those who had

\(^1\) Geddes MacGregor referred to A. J. Campbell as an authority for asserting that "The Moderates took their name from the words addressed by William of Orange to the Kirk after the Revolution Settlement ... 'Moderation is what religion enjoins, neighbouring Churches expect from you, and we recommend to you.'", in Corpus Christi, p. 84; See Campbell, A. J., Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland 1707-1929, p. 35.

\(^2\) Principal Burleigh quotes Walmer's description of Principal Hill's lectures in theology, "his orthodoxy was formed in conformity to the Standards rather than as the truth most surely to be believed", in A Church History of Scotland, pp 307f.
suffered and died during the years of persecution for these principles. His work as a pastor in the Reformation Presbyterian Church sent him throughout the length and breadth of the covenanting country and his reputation as a "martyr preacher" revealed that he was keenly aware of the significance of that history. By virtue of electing him to the position of professor at the Theological Hall, the members of his Church also recognized him as a direct 'theological' descendent of their founding fathers. As a boy he had heard these teachings, as a young man he had received them and learned to live by them, as a student and pastor he had learned to explain and to apply them, and as a theologian he expounded them. It was no mere coincidence that caused Professor James Walker to choose to discuss the same three doctrines as an outline for his study of Scottish Theology and Theologians, that Symington had chosen for his major contributions to theology. The history of Scottish reformed theology had itself dictated the subjects. Both men began with the Atonement, then went on to the doctrine of the Church, the State, and Church-State relationships.¹

William Symington's first book, On Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ, was published in Scotland in May 1834 and one other Scottish edition was issued, later the same year. In America however, it was destined for wider circulation. Mr. Robert Carter, who later became one of New York's best known publishers, considered the book to have been "a sort of cornerstone to all his publications", and between 1836 and 1858 he produced at least four editions.² The Presbyterian Church of North America formed a Publication Board in 1838 and during their first full year of operations they published twenty-one tracts, three of which were sections taken from

¹Walker, J., The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, (Being the Chalmers lectures for 1870-1871); Walker also included a chapter on Predestination and Providence and two other chapters of survey material. The second edition contained additional material on the Church.

²Robert Carter: His Life and Work (edited by his sons), p. 47.
Symington's book.\(^1\) In 1842, in response to popular demand, they reprinted the same three sections in a book entitled, *A Series of Tracts on the Doctrine, Order, and Polity of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.*\(^2\) In 1859 the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church formed a Board of Publication and one of their publications was *Symington on Atonement.*\(^3\) By 1864 they had printed their fifth thousand and again in 1868 they reported another edition of the book.\(^4\) Another organization, known as the "Presbyterian Tract and Sunday School Society", also reproduced sections from the book in tract form.\(^5\) The fact that this book became an important factor in the early publications operations for one independent publisher, two churches, and one Interdenominational Society, could be adduced as a reason for saying that in America it was considered for many years to be a standard work in its field.

The book as a whole is not just another treatise on Atonement theology; in fact, it was not so much written for theologians as it was written in order to meet the needs of "the serious and anxious inquirer".\(^6\) At the outset he charged his readers,

To view the subject as one, not of speculative research, but of practical and awful importance; affecting the very foundations of a sinner's hopes; the bond of Christian doctrine; the heart and life blood of the religion of Jesus.\(^7\)

At the end he reminded them again:

\(^1\)Annual Reports of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, vol. I, 1838-1858, pt. 1ff, Dr. Andrew Symington had been made a Vice President of this Board; To be found in the library of the Presbyterian Church Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.


\(^3\)Minutes of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church (meeting in Zonia Orío), July 1859, p. 107; To be found in the library of the Presbyterian Church Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

\(^4\)Ibid., 1868 vol. II, No. 5, p. 537.

\(^5\)Minutes of the Presbyterian Tract and Sunday School Society for Feb. 6th, 1838; To be found in the library of the Presbyterian Church Historical Society, Philadelphia.

\(^6\)Symington, Wm., *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (second edition), (Hereinafter referred to as O. A.), Preface p. ix.

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 17.
... of the necessity of making a personal application of
the glorious truths which have occupied their attention,
before turning their thoughts to anything else. Let
them not regard them as matters of curious speculation,
or content themselves with mere doctrinal belief. To
their being rightly appreciated, and properly improved,
they must become subjects of a saving faith.1

Few chapters are without some reference to personal application and through¬
out the book he leaves the impression that he was speaking from his own
experience. The cold orthodoxy of that day would have found rebuke in the
warmth and evangelical tones of his subjective emphasis.

There was more to it, however, than just putting orthodox theology into
evangelical tones. Philosophical speculation was in vogue in those days
and so Symington warns that it is not so much his intention to treat his
subjects practically as "to explain, establish and vindicate them, as grand
leading TRUTHS of the Gospel".2 He proposes and answers many "objections",
"at best the specious cavils of a cold and speculative philosophy",3 in a
way that recalls his own experiences in the "ice bath" of Professor Mylne's
Class in Moral Philosophy, but from his first sentence, "How can a man be
justified with God?"4 to his last sentence, "How shall we escape if we
neglect SO GREAT SALVATION?"5 he does not lose sight of the "anxious in¬
quirer". It could well be said of him as was said of P. T. Forsyth, "the
Christian has triumphed over the philosopher and then served himself of his
adversary's weapons".6 Logic was also popular and Symington's book shows
as much logical persuasion as of exegesis, but the logic always seemed
designed to lead the mind back to seeking the answer concerning God's
intentions as it was to be found in Scripture. Literary finesse was another
trademark of the days of Sir Walter Scott and Symington's book bears the
stamp of one who was the master of his language. Especially in those

1A., p. 413.  
2Ibid., Preface p. vii.  
3Ibid., pp 18ff.  
4Ibid., p. 3.  
5Ibid., p. 346.  
6Mozley, J. K., The Doctrine of the Atonement, p. 182.
chapters dealing with the description of the sufferings of Christ and the results of Atonement are there many sentences of singular beauty - expected perhaps from a 19th Century Moderate, but not expected from a Cameronian Evangelical 'hillman', writing from the seclusion of a remote Stranraer study. "Lucid statements, persuasive tone, and deference to Scripture were strong points of his writing and the book itself was another interesting product of "Christianity forming an alliance with modern culture". It was this combination of "orthodox" theology, evangelical tone, and a method of presentation that made use of the tools of modern culture, that sets the book apart in its field of theology.

The book did have its theological significance. Atonement theology can be separated into three very general groupings or types: (1) The Moral Influence Theory, with roots as far back as Abelard, considers Christ to be our Example or Inspirer, with the effects of the Atonement terminating upon man, acting on man for God. Horace Bushnell's name was closely related to the development of this theory. Dr. Symington tended to equate it with Socinianism. (2) The Governmental Theory, proposed by Hugo Grotius whose forte was constitutional law, was adopted and developed by the Edwardian School. It placed much emphasis upon God's Moral Law and Government, and upon God's acceptance (acceptatio) of Christ's satisfaction.

1 James Walker said of M'Laurin, In him, "we see Christianity forming an alliance with modern culture, yet in such a way as to promise hopeful results.", in Scottish Theology and Theologians, p. 32; Symington quoted from M'Laurin, in O. A., p. 249.

2 Mozley, advocating penal substitution (p. 220) and Stevens, advocating moral influence (p. 531) disagree as to whether or not penal substitution theologians should be put together into one group. Stevens makes four general groupings. See Mozley, J. K., The Doctrine of the Atonement, (1915), pp 173 ff; Stevens, G. B., The Christian Doctrine of Salvation, pp 137, 239, 240; Mozley, op. cit., p. 165 also quotes Ritschl with approval, "The work that has been devoted, since Schleiermacher, to the doctrine of reconciliation displays an incredible want of co-operation on the part of theologians; so much so that memory is unequal to the task of mastering all the variations, even of views which follow only one type". This outline does not consider seriously either the "Military" theory whereby Christ paid a ransom to Satan, or the "Mystical" theory, involving a particular kind of "union" with Christ, both of which were safely beyond the scope of Symington's thinking.

3 O. A., p. 10.
At first sight it seems to be, though unintentionally so, a compromise between the Moral Influence Theory and (3) The Penal Substitution Theory which has roots as far back as Anselm and the earlier Reformers. It considers Christ to be our Substitute, with the atonement acting on God for man. The scholastics including Melancthon, Gerhard, Quenstedt and Turretin, made changes and additions to this theory and in later years there were at least two branches with innumerable variations: (a) Those who were concerned to retain the idea of penal substitution in its most rigid forms, including Hengstenberg and Philippi in the German school, Owen in the English School, and Shedd, Hodge and Strong in the American school, (b) Those who were concerned to present it - at least to some degree - ethically, including Dale, Denny, Forsyth and Mozley. Scottish reformation Theology was mainly concerned with the last of three general groupings, and charges of heresy or orthodoxy were usually confined to questions of the extent, the nature, or the substance of atonement within this context. Symington's professor at the theological Hall was said to have been of the School of John Owen's theology and for that reason it would be supposed that Symington belonged to the extremely conservative branch of this third general grouping in Scottish theology, but this must remain to be determined.

When Symington wrote in 1834 there had been relatively little writing done by Scottish theologians on the specific doctrine of Atonement. There had been many 'trials' and charges and counter charges of heresy and error on the subject, not least important of which were the trials involving Fraser of Brea's Justifying Faith which resulted in the first breach in the Reformed Presbytery, and the 'trials' of the Marrow controversy. The theologians of the first and second reformation had of course taken up the atonement in connection with other subjects, but there had been very little systematic writing limited to the subject of Atonement itself. Archbishop Magee, to whom Symington referred frequently, had written on the particular subject of the reality of atonement and Pye Smith had dealt with the philosophy of atonement; others had dealt with various elements of the doctrine but none had treated the whole subject in a single book. Moderate had long had

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1 Sometimes spelled Turretine or Turretin.
a dominating influence in Scottish theology and in many ways it had reached the zenith of its influence in Principal Hill's Lectures in Divinity, which were considered to be a standard work. Evangelicalism however, was asserting itself, not least of all theologically, and Scotland was very soon to see the writings of Haldane, Wardlaw, McLeod Campbell, and many others who wrote on Atonement. It is important to note, however, that Symington wrote before their books appeared. He was very keenly aware of what he referred to as the "New Views" and later, when these other books began to appear, as will be seen, he became embroiled in the atonement controversy involving their views of the nature and extent of atonement. He quoted with approval from Hill's lectures and it would appear from the outset that he had anticipated the rapidly developing reaction to that particular brand of Calvinism which was generally associated with Hill's influence, and had addressed himself in this book to the task of encouraging the Evangelical spirit without losing any of the Moderate orthodoxy. His primary interest in meeting the needs of the "serious and anxious inquirer" did not detract from the theological significance of the book, but rather illustrated and enforced it.

The comprehensiveness with which he treated the subject helps to account for its reception in early American theology, and it also presents one reason for its relatively limited circulation in Scotland. In covering the whole field, he did not enter into the specific detail which would have drawn comment from later writers, and perhaps made further editions necessary. There was that here which revealed the work of an independent theological mind, with an emphasis of its own, and that too which prepared the groundwork for his magnum opus, The Mediatorial Dominion of the Messiah, which was published five years later.

The Nature of Atonement

The Nature of Atonement, as Symington saw it, was stated in his definition of the subject:

The atonement means, THAT PERFECT SATISFACTION GIVEN TO THE LAW AND JUSTICE OF GOD, BY THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST, ON BEHALF OF ELECT SINNERS OF MANKIND, ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH THEY ARE DELIVERED FROM CONDEMNATION.1

Sin was a 'violation of God's honour', an 'insult to his Majesty', 'a thing to be abhorred', a 'debt' to be paid, 'an invasion made against the stability and authority of the moral constitution and government of the Great Lawgiver' and as such, 'a threat to the good of all his moral subjects'.

God, prompted by love, had resolved to save men, and as the Governor of the moral universe, in the 'covenant of peace' made by the Trinity in eternity, He had issued those decrees, made those appointments, and established those terms on the basis of which He might make the necessary adjustments to 'dispense' with the letter of the law in such a way as to be able to accept a 'commutative satisfaction' of it while at the same time making sure that His justice was in no way violated. 'The grand design' of the atonement however, 'was not simply to secure a mere commutative satisfaction to the justice of God, but to glorify all the divine perfections, and to make an illustrious manifestation of the principles of his government before the whole universe of moral creatures' through the salvation of the souls of sinners. Christ had 'willingly' taken 'the place of' offending sinners, 'bearing their guilt and suffering their punishment', 'in their stead', by means of a ('vicarious') 'substitution'. His 'sufferings' had been accepted as being 'not the identical punishment required by the law, but a proper equivalent with which the great moral governor was pleased to be satisfied in its place'. Men were made to be 'at-one' with God, or rather, 'God was brought to be at-one with his people' - the two parties were 'reconciled' or brought into 'a state of good agreement' - through this work of Christ.

In all of this Symington assumed the position common to Scottish

1Ibid., pp 7, 51ff, 58, 186, 323.  2Ibid., pp 20, 21, 319, 405.
5Ibid., p. 281.  6Ibid., p. 325.
7Ibid., p. 236ff.  8Ibid., pp 13, 14, 39.
9Ibid., p. 12f., Symington appealed to Tertullian's definition of "satisfaction", See also p. 211; And Mozley, op. cit., p. 118.
10Ibid., p. 10.
theologians concerning covenant theology\(^1\) and later made a concise statement of it:

The scriptures represent the divine persons as entering into a federal agreement for the salvation of men. In this covenant of peace, the Father is the representative of the godhead, and the Son representative of those who are to be redeemed. He is on this account called the Mediator or Surety, of the covenant. Whatever he did as Mediator or Surety, must, therefore have been done in connexion with the covenant. His death was the condition of the covenant.\(^2\)

There was another covenant which indicated something of the close relationship Symington saw between the Redeemer and redeemed. He referred to it as "an express ecclesiastical covenant" which Christ had made with His own people. It was "everlasting" but was "not merely founded on the covenant of grace"\(^3\) and from this we conclude that his doctrine did not resemble that of Boston and Gib who denied the existence of such a secondary covenant, so much as it did resemble that of Dickson and Rutherford who described two covenants, the first between Father and Son called a "covenant of grace" and the second between Christ and His people which they called a "covenant of redemption".\(^4\)

Symington also made an important distinction between "Atonement" and "Redemption" - one that was somewhat unusual and far reaching in its influences. There were two reasons for it. The first had to do with the nineteenth century controversy over the extent of atonement and the con-

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1 Walker, J., op. cit., p. 40; Henderson, G. D., The Burning Bush, pp 69-74; M'Crie believed that the writers of the Westminster documents, by including covenant theology in their work had "... made a departure from, if not an advance upon, all the previous creeds of Christendom", and that Dickson and Durham, around 1650, had written the catechism entitled "The Sum of Saving Knowledge" which presented Federalism "in the most developed form", in The Confessions of the Church of Scotland, pp 66, 72; Herman Witsius published The Economy of the Covenants in 1693, it was later translated by Bell, and Symington read it early in his seminary training.

2 O. A., p. 257.

3 O. D., p. 121, See also p. 341, "In the day of grace, a vital union is formed on the part of the renewed soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, which is essential to the privileges and duties of the Christian life and character. In consequence of this, Christ becomes, to the believer, at once a Head of merit - conferring on him a right to all new covenant benefits, and a Head of influence - communicating to him all needed supplies of strength and enjoyment ... this union is indissoluble".

4 Walker, J., op. cit., p. 44.
fusion arising out of the use of the words "limited atonement", "universal atonement", "universal redemption", and "Christ died for all men". ¹ The second reason had to do with the relationship Symington saw between the doctrine of Atonement and the doctrine of Dominion.

Atonement as he saw it, was a much more restricted term than was Redemption. In involved the sufferings of Christ. By means of them Christ had removed the legal and moral obstacles to the exercise of God's mercy and dealt with those particular "Penal" obligations to the law which had been incurred as a result of man's breaking the law. Atonement was the point at which man was introduced to the whole process of sanctification, the "particular department" of Redemption in which the emphasis was on Christ's "procuring".²

Redemption included all of this and much more.³ It involved the obedience which Christ had rendered to the preceptive will of God, as well as His sufferings. By means of this obedience, Christ had dealt with those "Federal" obligations to the law which were the direct result of man's failure to fulfill the covenant agreements and He had secured the "title to life", including faith and other "means" to salvation or sanctification of the elect. These dealt with those "Natural" relationships to the law that were the direct result of man's being the creature of the Creator.⁴ The emphasis in Redemption went beyond Christ's procuring to centre in His work of applying or bestowing those benefits which He had already procured. Thus it was that "Redemption" not only involved Christ's work of Atonement on the cross, but also involved the continuing work of His "Dominion", that is, His Kingship and Kingdom and all His relationships with His people. It was for the express purpose of "fulfilling God's gracious purposes concerning the elect"⁵ that Christ had been made a King and given unlimited powers in a Universal Kingdom, and He exercised that authority over the

¹ O. A., p. 200, "Indeed the whole controversy, on this point, depends on the extent of meaning which is attached to the word atonement"; See also M'Crie, The Confessions of the Church of Scotland, p. 144.
² O. A., pp 199-203.
³ Ibid., pp 11, 199-203.
⁴ Ibid., pp 202, 203.
⁵ O. D., pp 5, see also pp 6-8.
"Powers" of the Universe, the "Wheels of Providence", the Church and the State, in applying the benefits of His work on the cross - in carrying out the work of Redemption within the hearts of men.\(^1\) Even the creation of the world had been "... with a view of its being a theatre on which to exhibit the work of man's redemption by the eternal Son ... the chosen spot on which the mystery of redemption was to be displayed; and all the scenes of the mediatorial economy were here exhibited".\(^2\) The "scheme of redemption" was the centre around which everything else revolved, and literally everything, except of course God who had originated it, was made to contribute to it in some way. This then was the first indication of the relationship Symington saw between "Atonement", "Redemption", and "Dominion".

That same distinction, pinpointing Symington's doctrine of the Nature of Atonement can also be seen from another angle in his doctrine of Satanic Powers. God permitted Satan to have a certain dominion over man because of man's sins and in one sense Satan's authority sprang from man's transgressions. It was not that Satan was an "authorized executioner" of divine vengeance because he had no inherent regal right to torment man, but it was that God in his righteous Sovereignty permitted Satan to exist and then so overruled his acts of rebellion that they became the punishment for the violators of His holy law and were actually made to praise God. But after Christ, by His life and death had given legal satisfaction to the claims made by the divine law for the sins of men, then, all legal ground for permitting Satan to exercise his lawless usurpation having been cut out from under him (and this was precisely what was effected by the death of Christ), a triumphant Christ moved out from that point of "Atonement" as King Mediator to destroy the works of the devil, invading his territories of darkness, overthrowing his dominion in the hearts of men and in the institutions of society, rescuing "His own" people and otherwise binding and loosing Satan as He pleased.\(^3\) "Redemption" included the whole

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\(^1\) O. A., p. 338, e.g. "Redemption is the grand central point of providence, and atonement is the central point of redemption ... every movement of the complicated wheels of providence derives its impulse from redemption"; See also O. D., pp 71-98.

\(^2\) O. A., p. 336.

\(^3\) O. D., pp 92-95.
work whereas "Atonement" was concerned with the first part. This indicates something of the "intimate connexion" Symington saw between Christ's sacerdotal and regal offices and it also emphasized the theological significance of his dealing in his first book with the subject of "Atonement" and then going on in his second book to the subject of "Dominion". He referred to "Dominion" as being "the sequel" to "Atonement".

By his definitions Symington identified himself in general with those who followed Anselm, Calvin, Turretin and other reformed theologians into the Penal Substitution doctrine of atonement. Even in his Atonement-Redemption distinction, Symington was following a general course laid down by reformed theologians who were particularly concerned about "the application of Christ's work to men". Hodge attributed the concept of man's "Penal, Federal, Natural" relationships to the law to Turretin, who has been described as a typical representative of the post-reformation scholastics. That concept was an essential element in Symington's distinction and therefore his was not a unique doctrine, but it would also be a mistake to identify the theology of Symington and Hodge as being "the same" on this subject because Hodge, after complaining that the meaning of the term "atonement" was too "ambiguous", went on to equate it with "satisfaction", and this same Atonement-Redemption distinction also lay at the root of his

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1 Ibid., pp 94, 1-3.
2 Ibid., "Author's Preface", p. cvii.
3 Mozley believed that "The penal view of the Reformers ... can be seen in its completest form in the Institutes of Turretin", in op. cit., p. 146, See also p. 119, where he describes traces of a similar view in Tertullian's writings, and p. 177 where he links Turretin and Hodge.
4 Mozley, op. cit., p. 141, See also his description of "the tendency of Protestant theology" on p. 142; Stevens went so far as to say that the reformers "... appear to have narrowed the question regarding the saving benefits of Christ's death by considering not so much its general necessity and grounds, as its specific relation to forgiveness" in The Christian Doctrine of Salvation, (1905), p. 152.
6 Mozley, op. cit., p. 156; See also Stevens, op. cit., pp 154f.
7 Hodge, op. cit., p. 32; Stevens complained about Hodge's habit of making definitions to suit his own purposes, in op. cit., p. 185; Mozley made a similar criticism, in op. cit., p. 177.
criticism of Symington's whole doctrine. In other words, while Symington was following the general course of reformed theology, and was making use of scholastic distinctions in such a way as to restrict the meaning of the word "Atonement", Hodge's criticisms provide one strong indication that Symington was not following it through in such a way as to be identified with Hodge's doctrine of "limited atonement". "Restricting" the definition of the term was not the same as "limiting" the doctrine of the saving benefits of Christ's death. In fact, the opposite could be said to be true because, as was noted above, this distinction was one indication of the development of the doctrine of Dominion in Symington's thinking, and in it the benefits of Christ's life and death were projected far beyond the work of atonement into the whole work of Redemption.

It was at this point that Symington's doctrine of the Nature of Atonement became involved in his part in the controversy over the Extent of Atonement. For him it was more than a problem of semantics because nature and extent were intimately related and whatever affected the one must affect the other. In the same way that there could not be a shape, "Round" without having some object to be round, so it was part of the very nature of atonement that there could not be an "Atonement" without a knowledge (on the part of God only) of the persons to be atoned. Any uncertainty or ambiguity concerning extent of atonement meant either that God had been uncertain or that Christ had been unable to "apply" that which He had already procured. The former meant that the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God had been limited and the latter meant that the doctrine of Christ's Dominion had been limited, and whether they came from Moderates or Evangelicals, Symington disliked all such limitations.

1Ibid., p. 231: "The great defect of Symington's otherwise orthodox and excellent work on the Atonement is, that while he admits Christ's obedience to be vicarious, and to have merited for us the rewards of the Covenant of life, he yet insists that the work of expiation, under the title of "Atonement" ought to be discussed separately ..."; Everything that Hodge has gone on to say here about the necessity for considering both the sufferings and obedience of Christ, Symington has said with at least equal emphasis. See O. A., pp 203-205, 207; See also the editor's preface to the British edition of Hodge's book, p. iii, Goold, the editor, was Symington's son-in-law!
3O. A., p. 270.
4Ibid., p. 315: See also Symington's "Review" of Wardlaw's pamphlet, in Scottish Presbyterian, May 1844, p. 421. "we contend that the divine prerogative (Sovereignty) is exercised in both" the "application" and the "destination" of the atonement.
The Necessity for Atonement

The necessity for atonement was a "relative" or "moral" necessity and not an "absolute" or "natural" necessity and by his explanation of that position Symington identified himself with the earlier reformers. The "perfections of God's nature" had not made an atonement necessary because "such a supposition goes to divest him entirely of grace or sovereignty in the exercise of forgiveness". The whole necessity was one "springing from God's antecedent purpose to save sinners from the wrath to come, arising solely out of his own free purpose, determination, or promise", and this was the thing that had made it not a "natural" but a "moral" necessity. The primum mobile of this "antecedent purpose" was love:

This distinction is consistent with scripture, where the whole scheme of human salvation is referred to divine love as its origin; and it is as clearly implied in the doctrine (atonement) under consideration, namely, that the work of Christ gives satisfaction to God for the sins of his people, for this necessarily supposes a previous willingness on the part of God to accept of satisfaction; and what is this previous good will but love, or mercy, or grace? ... The true view of the matter is this, that divine love is the cause of atonement ...

And all such views of the doctrine as are inconsistent with Jehovah's original disposition to be merciful, or which represent him as changed, by the Saviour's sacrifice, from wrath and fury to kindness and grace, are either the misconceptions of friends or the misrepresentations of enemies, which are to be viewed with unmingled disapprobation and regret.

This view of God's love, mercy, grace, and free Sovereignty was an important element view in all Symington's theology.

After God had resolved to save men, then the four things that rendered an atonement "necessary" were: (1) the perfections of God, including His

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1Ibid., p. 56.  
2Ibid.  
3Ibid., p. 57; See also "Salvation by Grace" in Discourses on Public Occasions by William Symington, pp 102ff.  
4Ibid., pp 20, 21; See also pp 319, 320, 405, 406, And "Salvation by Grace" in Discourses on Public Occasions by William Symington, pp 104ff.
majesty, truth, holiness, justice, and goodness, (2) the nature of God's moral government, including the letter and nature of the law, and the purposes of moral government; (3) the inefficacy of every other thing, such as repentance or good works to procure pardon of sin, and (4) the assertions of Holy Writ. ¹

Symington's evangelical emphasis was particularly apparent on this subject. At the very outset the appeal to his readers had been on the basis of "the universal consciousness of sin" ² and now in response to the influence of this doctrine of God's free Sovereignty and love, he continued to maintain the attitude of finding God's answer to man's problem. Thus it was that the "perfections of God" and the laws or principles of His moral government, instead of being presented as obstacles to man's redemption, are presented as being the very forces of friendliness and good which made his redemption both possible and enjoyable. God's majesty, truth, and holiness became that guarantee of God's hatred of sin which necessitated a plan of salvation for the sinner. ³ His "distributive justice" demanded "an infinite punishment" for the "infinite evil" of sin, but since punishment which was infinite in duration would be exclusive of all possible pardon, it followed that an atonement was "necessary" in order that the sinner might be saved. Even the "vindicative justice" of God was directed against sin:

The opposition of God's law to sin is just the opposition of his nature to sin; his nature not his will, is the ultimate standard of morality. His determination to punish sin is not voluntary but necessary. He does not annex a punishment to sin because he wills to do so, but because his nature requires it. ⁴

This too was for the good of the sinner:

¹O. A., pp 58-82. ²Ibid., pp 3, 4.
³Ibid., pp 58-63. See also p. 28, "What does God hate? It is sin and not the sinner; he cannot hate his creatures as such, but only as violators of his just and holy will".
⁴Ibid., p. 61; Vide, the words of Samuel Rutherfurd whom James Walker quoted as an exception to the rule of Scottish theologians, "God punishes sin by no necessity of nature, nay if He chose, He might leave it altogether unpunished", in op. cit., p. 36; It is essential to remember that this "necessity" in Symington's thinking was contingent upon God's original decision to save men and in view of that the doctrine of Symington and Rutherfurd was not in conflict at this point.
Sin, to be put down requires to be punished. It is not by 
pardoning it without satisfaction that it is ever to be 
prevented from spreading wretchedness, and woe among every 
rank of God's moral creation. Mercy, not less than justice, 
demands, in order to pardon, that someone shall 'drink the 
cup of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.' 

JUSTICE IS BUT GOODNESS DIRECTED BY WISDOM.

Similarly, sin is explained as being the enemy of the moral law and govern-
ment "on which repose all the order and happiness of the universe;" and so, for the sake of the sinner not the law, an atonement must be arranged 
whereby sin can be pardoned without violating either law or government. 
Symington saw the problem developed by others who set the claims of mercy 
and justice in opposition to each other but this was not treated as a 
reason for the "necessity" of atonement. In other words it was not so 
much the necessity for the punishment of sin, the vindication of God's 
 honour, the exercise of justice, or the maintenance of the principles of 
moral government, as it was a necessity for that salvation of the sinner 
which had already been decreed by God's "antecedent purpose", that was 
most important in Symington's thinking. He nowhere leaves the impression 
that the satisfaction of the law is of greater importance than the redemption 
of the soul.

There were significant differences between this doctrine and that of 
Turretin and those who followed his school of atonement theology, both 
before and after Symington. Turretin insisted upon "the doctrine of 
absolute necessity" and he classified all other Divines as being either 
those who believed no atonement necessary, or those who affirmed "a hypo-
thetical necessity", wherein "God has decreed that an Attonement is to be 
made, therefore it is necessary". He undoubtedly would have put Symington

10. A., p. 64; Cf. Hodge, "... these false theories of the Atonement 
resolve justice into benevolence", "... every sane man ... distinguishes between 
benevolence and justice, as things generically distinct", in op. cit., pp 282, 283

2Ibid., p. 68.

3Ibid., pp 11, 22, 30, 64; Cf. A. H. Strong's development of the may or 
must struggle between mercy and justice which results in a reconciliation 
taking place within the Godhead, in Systematic Theology (1947), pp 297ff; 
See also Stevens, op. cit., pp 178-181.

4"Turrettin on The Atonement" in A Historical Sketch of Opinions on the 
Atonement ... With Translations from Francis Turrettin on The Atonement, by 
James R. Willeon (1827), pp 133, 134.
into this last class. Hodge demanded one of two alternatives; either
the actions of God are determined by motives and principles originating
wholly in the divine nature, or to considerations originating in the
creation.\footnote{Hodge, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 42, "God's immutable nature demands the punishment
of sin, and therefore Christ, when made to occupy the place of sinners,
suffered that punishment. The advocates of every other view of the nature
of the Atonement must maintain the latter alternative, and refer the sacrifice
of Christ to motives originating in the moral condition and necessities either
of the individual sinners or of the moral universe in general"; The underlining
is mine, these words seemed to illustrate an underlying emphasis in Hodge that
was not in Symington whose emphasis could be said to have been, 'God's
Sovereign will has decreed the salvation of sinners, and therefore Christ'.}
Symington had denied that anything in God's nature could
demand the sacrifice of Christ, on the basis of its being an infringement
of the Sovereignty of God. In so far as God's actions subsequent to his
original resolve were concerned, he believed that the moral conditions
and "necessities" of the individual sinners were factors in the case.
This difference in emphasis can also be seen in a comparison of their
reasons for the necessity of atonement. Turretin named the same reasons
Symington named but developed four in the following order: (1) the
vindicative justice of God, ("This justice is the constant will of punishing
sinners, which, in deity cannot be inefficient, as his majesty is supreme,
and his power infinite."), (2) the nature of sin, (3) the law ("which
threatens death to the sinner"), and (4) the preaching of the Gospel which
"announces the violent and painful death" of the Mediator.\footnote{Turretin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp 143ff; Cf. O. A., p. 28, God "cannot hate his
creatures as such, but only as violators of his just and holy will".}
His emphasis was on the punishment of the sinner, the "threat" to man. Symington put
the claims of law and justice second and made them subject to the amelior¬
ative influences of the perfections of God. God's justice was included
among those perfections, but it was as a means and not as an end to atone¬
ment. His emphasis was on the explanation of God's pardon for the sinner
and the "promise" for man.

By this insistence upon God's free sovereign "antecedent purpose"
and by his appeal to love as the motivating factor, Symington denied that
the necessity to punish is heaven's first law, and deliberately\footnote{Symington knew Turretin's work, See O. A., p. 247.} chose to
go behind those scholastics who tended "to deduce the absolute unavoidable necessity of Christ's satisfaction from that moral order of the universe which is solidaire with the essential will of God". He must be identified at this point with Anselm and with Calvin who quoted Augustine as saying, "In a manner wondrous and divine He loved even when He hated us". By adducing the attributes of God as his first reason for the relative "necessity" Symington also resembled Anselm, Calvin and the earlier reformers who tended to emphasize sin more as an affront to the person of God than as an impersonal conflict involving law and justice. By adducing the moral government, however, as his second major reason for the "necessity" and by referring frequently to God as 'the Great moral Lawgiver', 'the supreme moral Governor', 'the Legislator'; by referring to sin as 'an infringement of the moral constitution'; and to the general good of law and order which needed to be preserved by upholding the moral constitution; Symington has also introduced notes which bear some resemblance to Grotius and his Governmental Theory of Atonement, or to Edwards and the New England School which had adopted many Grotian principles. It is his emphasis on the Sovereignty and the love of God that is most important at this point however, and because of it his theology is more like that of Calvin than it is like that of Turretin.

The Reality (Proof) of Atonement

Symington found the evidence for the reality of the whole idea of atonement in the records of Ancient Sacrifices, Levitical Sacrifices, Prophecy, the Sufferings of Christ, and New Testament Writings. Within

1Mozley criticized this description of "the Reformers" which he quoted from Ritschl. He pointed out that while it may have been true of "Gerhard, Quenstedt, and Turretin", it is too sweeping an assertion "when applied to the earlier Reformers", and showed a very real difference between this attitude and that of Calvin who founded his doctrine upon "the thought of the sovereign will of God", in op. cit., p. 142.

2Mozley, correctly, quotes this as the point of origin for Calvin's whole doctrine, in op. cit., pp 144ff.

3Poster, F. H., A Genetic History of the New England Theology, p. 114; See also Stevens, op. cit., p. 200; and Mozley, op. cit., p. 159.

4O. A., pp 83-196.
this outline, which could be seen as being the history of sacrifice, he made an exegetical study of statements from all parts of the Scriptures but it was not limited to scripture proof:

The infliction of death on a living creature, in the way of religious worship, did not originate, as many suppose, with the Jews.¹

In a manner that bore no little resemblance to Grotius² Symington referred to the writings of Homer, Hesiod, and Plutarch among the Greeks, and to Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Cesar, Ovid, and Livy among the Latins, in order to prove the existence and vicarious intentions of the "ancient sacrifices", He found fault however with "Grotius, and such as have adopted his views"³ because they did not believe in "the divine origin" of these primitive sacrifices. He believed that a pre-Jewish manifestation of God's will on this subject was necessary in order to explain either the scriptural or the 'heathen' sacrifices.⁴ Beginning from this premise, the very existence of all these sacrifices became one more proof for the necessity or "Reality" of Christ's atonement. He reasoned that without the doctrine of atonement, as it had been seen perfectly completed in Christ's sacrifice, we would be driven to the conclusion that a God who would cause such suffering and death to be inflicted upon innocent creatures was unjust and unholy. The Bible itself would be "reduced to a mass of unintelligible, meaningless, contradictory assertions".⁵ With the sacrifice of Christ clearly in view however, these sacrifices and the statements of scripture were held together

¹Ibid., p. 84.
²Stevens complained about Grotius' use of a "long list of heathen moralists", in op. cit., p. 163.
³0. A., p. 103.
⁴Symington referred to Grotius and explained this point in detail in a sermon entitled "The First Pious Youth", in Discourses on Public Occasions, pp 163-168, esp. p. 166.
⁵0. A., pp 196, 197, See also pp 38, 196.
and took on their proper meaning, and atonement was taken out of the realm of "theory" to be established as "fact".

The Matter or Substance of Atonement

It was the sufferings of Christ, all the sufferings of his lifetime, but particularly those sufferings of his soul which had taken place during the concluding hours of his life, that enabled Christ to give satisfaction to the law and justice of God. This included all those sufferings which Christ had incurred as a result of the "obedience" of his whole lifetime - 'from his birth he was a slaying' - but because of his definition of Atonement, Symington made the distinction referred to earlier, between those sufferings "by which he fulfilled the penal obligation of the law, and procured the pardon of sin or deliverance from guilt", and that formal obedience "by which he complied with the positive demands of the law and in virtue of which his people are regarded as righteous and entitled to glory". The same sovereign decisions that had determined the Nature of Atonement had also determined the Substance of Atonement.

There was one significant qualification:

It is not necessary to suppose that the sufferings which Christ entered into on our behalf were precisely the same in kind and degree which are experienced by the wicked in the place of final woe.

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1 Ibid.; See also "The First Pious Youth", in Discourses on Public Occasions, by Wm. Symington, p. 168, "Short of being a prefigurative memorial of the way in which God had determined to save the life of man which had been forfeited by sin, no explanation can be given of the institution of the sacrificial rite at all consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God"; Mosley said, "If Christianity, as a religion of atonement is not true, then there is no true religion of atonement, at the best there are only floating conceptions", in op. cit., p. 2; And Harnack said, "History has decided in favour of the idea of Christ's death as an expiatory sacrifice, since it was shown that the blood sacrifices, which responded to a religious need, were ended by the Christian message of the death of Christ; this could have resulted only from His death having the value of an expiatory sacrifice", in what is Christianity?, pp 159ff.

2 Ibid., p. 83.

3 Ibid., pp 199ff.

4 Ibid., pp 204f.

5 Ibid., p. 211.
They were neither the "identical punishment" nor the "precise penalty" required by the law, 
1 but a "proper equivalent" which provided a "perfect satisfaction". 
2 At this point Symington parted company with many of the earlier reformed theologians. Turretin demanded that Christ satisfy "to the uttermost farthing". 
3 John Owen demanded the "idem" and "tantundum" of sufferings. 
4 James Walker added his own approval to the point that "... the old Scotch divines cling to the view that Christ not merely suffered, but bore the same sufferings in kind which were due to his people". 
5 There was also some difference between Symington's position and the "strictly equivalent" requirement laid down by Cunningham and Hodge in later years. It was not the doctrine of Grotius who had suggested that Christ's sufferings should be substituted for punishment. 
7 Symington insisted that they were punishment; sin and guilt were actually laid upon Christ or imputed to him and "... he was in law reckoning regarded as if he had sinned, treated as if he had been accursed". 
8 His death had been a sacrifice "in no figurative or inferior sense" but had provided a full "penal, substitutionary, expiatory satisfaction" for the sins of all those whom He had come to redeem. 
9 There was no thought of minimizing the seriousness of sin, the penalty of the law, or the degree of Christ's sufferings. This point was another strong indication of Symington's respect for the Sovereignty of God. Only the Sovereign God who had made the law could so

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1 Ibid., p. 12.  
2 Ibid., pp 12, 211, 242.  
3 Turretin, op. cit., p. 181.  
5 Walker, J., op. cit., p. 46, He quoted Brown of Wamphray who wrote, "There is necessity to hold that Christ suffered the same in substance that the elect were liable to suffer; the same curse and death, the same punishment in its essential ingredients".  
6 Cunningham, Wm., The Works of William Cunningham, vol. III, "Historical Theology vol. II" (third edition), p. 306, He thought Owen had required more than was necessary; See also Hodge, op. cit., p. 63, Christ's sufferings were "precisely the very same when considered as penalty", See also p. 61 where Hodge said with reference to Owen's position, "The motive for this apparently excessive precision of expression was commendable"; Cf. O. A., p. 16, it "was not the precise penalty".  
8 O. A., p. 186, See also pp 40, 59.  
9 Ibid., p. 188, See also p. 318.
dispense with the letter of the law as to accept a "substitution". Only He could know when it was "... wise and proper to put forth so high an exertion of the dispensing power", and the fact that He had done it was further proof of His free Sovereignty. What Mozley said of Calvin in contrasting his doctrine with Turretin and other post-reformation scholastics might also be said of Dr. Symington:

Merit dependent on God's good pleasure is a very different conception from satisfaction demanded by justice, and Calvin's anxiety for the complete revelation of God's sovereignty at every point has undoubtedly led him back to Duns Scotus and the doctrine of acceptatio.

Again at this point, Symington's confidence in the free Sovereignty of God has left an evangelical emphasis because the over-all impression is that the atonement consisted in a penal substitution which would command full respect for moral government and law, but that it had never been intended merely to satisfy the demands of the law, as it were, over the heads of the people. It always retained a definite eye to those particular needs of the "anxious enquirer" which God had already recognized in His "antecedent purpose" and it continued to be subject to His sovereign will at each point.

The Value of Atonement

The three things about Christ that related Him to God and to man, and gave to His sacrifice its "infinite intrinsic value" were His "supreme dignity", His "perfect humanity", and His "divine appointment". Of these, the Son's being "perfectly voluntary" and the Father's being absolutely free in His decision to accept Christ's sacrifice were points of greatest

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1 Ibid., pp 242, 243, See also pp 28, 47, 48. 2 Mozley, op. cit., p. 145.
5 Ibid., p. 242, "To the offended sovereign does it belong to determine whether the proposed substitution shall serve all the ends of justice. Of this He is the only judge. And, supposing him satisfied on this point, it is still a part of his sovereign prerogative to determine whether he shall be pleased to accept of this, or shall insist that the penalty be inflicted on the person offending. To say otherwise, is to hold the monstrous opinion, that the Almighty could be compelled to adopt a line of procedure pointed out by another".
importance in Symington's thinking and they brought the same doctrine of God's free Sovereignty into clear focus again. These were essential elements in the covenant of peace for it was there that the Son had "voluntarily" agreed to become the sacrifice and the Father had made "the appointment" which meant that He was willing to accept Christ's sacrifice as the substitute.

Symington's theology at this point was intimately bound up with the doctrine of physicus concursus which had been a typical trademark of Scottish theology for two hundred years. He introduced it by means of a brief philosophical essay on the law of relationship between cause and effect. According to this:

The real immediate cause of every effect is the will of the Supreme Intelligence; and those invariable antecedents and consequences in events, which we denominate causes and effects, are nothing but the order of that perfect harmonious system which the Almighty has established in the universe.

The "economy of human salvation" did not present any exception to this law of God's universal government; the desired effect in this case was salvation and the only adequate cause was to be found in the vicarious sufferings of the Son of God. When God had launched this particular 'cause' He had so designed it (providing such 'dignity', 'humanity', and 'appointment') that it would produce the necessary atonement as the exact 'effect'. Beyond the point of Atonement, this was also the 'cause' that qualified Christ for making intercession for us, and for holding 'the sceptre of universal empire' in his hand.

The Extent of Atonement

Theologically speaking, Symington's book was designed to have its greatest impact on the particular subject of the extent of atonement. He referred directly to Turretin's history of "agitation" on that subject,

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1 Walker, J., op. cit., p. 81, "... one of the most generally accepted doctrines of other days, and one which has a great place in Scottish theology for more than two hundred years".


3 Ibid., pp 245, 336.

4 O. A., pp 247ff; See Turretin, op. cit., pp 217-220, where he uses the term "agitation" in introducing the subject.
traced it from "Faustus, the leader of the Pelagians" down through the
synod of Dort to their own current controversy and added, "... nor has
the side of what we conceive to be truth, been always espoused by those
who are otherwise evangelical in their doctrinal opinions." He denied
that the problem centred either in the "intrinsic worth" or the "appli-
cation" of atonement and narrowed it down to the following question which
contained a statement of the nineteenth century atonement controversy, as
well as the statement of his own position:

The present question, then, hinges solely on the divine
intention regarding the subjects of atonement, or what
is called the destination of Christ's death ... the
advocates of universal or indefinite atonement seem to
mean by Christ's dying for all men, that his death was
a moral satisfaction to the divine law in general which,
without a designed reference to anyone in particular,
was capable of being applied to all. Now this is the
sentiment we mean to oppose, by proving and vindicating
... that it was the design or intention of God that his
Son should make atonement for ALL the sins of SOME
men only.2

He consistently used the words "definite atonement"3 to describe this
position and everything else about his doctrine; the Value, Substance,
Nature, and Reality of atonement supported it. The "speciality and
immutability" of God's purposes had reference to the 'cause and effect'
reasoning involved in establishing the Value of Atonement, and implied that
a Sovereign, all-knowing, all-wise God worked according to a definite "design"
which would not be frustrated. In view of the fact that there would be
some in hell he concluded that, therefore, it could not have been the original
intention that Christ should die 'for' them. To assume anything else meant
either that God had such limited knowledge that He could not foresee, or
that He had such limited wisdom that He was unable to do anything about it.
"The fact is the best interpreter of the divine intention".4 The "rectitude"

\[1\] Ibid., p. 247.  \[2\] Ibid., pp 251f; See Turretin, op. cit., pp 224-226.

\[3\] Ibid., "the atonement is definite or limited as to its extent" and on
p. 315 he refers to "a definite atonement" in summarizing his position;
Turretin used the word "definite" but he also reasoned in favour of "limited
atonement", in op. cit., pp 224, 256.

of God's nature referred back to the doctrine concerning the Substance of Atonement and meant that a perfectly just God would not fail to pardon those for whom punishment had already been borne and, conversely, that it had evidently not been the divine intention that Christ give satisfaction for the sins of all men. The "terms" of the covenant of Grace had not left such things to be decided by accident, but had defined "the designed extent of the objects of his death". The very Nature of Atonement meant that it was a "contradiction in terms" to speak of Christ's making an "Atonement" for those who would not (ultimately) be saved. The direct evidence of Scripture involved: those passages which speak of Christ's "special saving cognizence" of those who belong to Him (Matt. 7:21-23; Amos 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:19); the fact that there is an "awful privation" implied in the statement concerning things to be "hid" from the "wise and prudent" (Matt. 11:25); the distinction implied by the separation of "sheep and goats" (John 10:11-28); the thought that there will be those who are not, as well as those who are, "made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21), and that Christ's people are a "peculiar people" in so far as the world at large is concerned (Eph. 5:25; Tit. 2:14). These passages from scripture indicated that there were distinctions made among people in so far as the "destination" of the atonement was concerned. Symington insisted that there were three possibilities: (1) either God had intended that His Son should make atonement for SOME of the sins of ALL men, which would provide salvation for none and therefore be inconsistent with these known facts concerning many being in Heaven; or (2) God had intended that His Son should make atonement for ALL of the sins of ALL men, which would mean a universal redemption and therefore be inconsistent with these known facts concerning some being in Hell; or, and this was Symington's conclusion, God had intended that His Son should make atonement for ALL of the sins of SOME men only. He was reasoning from post-destination back to pre-

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1. A., pp 255, 256; See Turretin, op. cit., pp 244-249.
2. Ibid., pp 251f; See Turretin, op. cit., pp 235-243.
3. Ibid., pp 251, 258-260; See Turretin, op. cit., pp 249, 256f.
4. Ibid., pp 271-276; See Turretin, op. cit., pp 226-235; Both Symington (pp 267-270) and Turretin (pp 257ff) refer to the "absurdity" of "other positions".
destination, and it was the "Dominion" of Christ that helped to hold the two together in his thinking.

Christ's resurrection and ascension and his continuing work as Mediator in the "Dispensation of Grace" was another important factor in Symington's doctrine of "definite" atonement, and in his statement of that point, there is to be seen another link between "Atonement" and "Dominion" in his thinking:

In whatever character he died, in the same character he rose from the dead. If he laid down his life as Head of the Church and Surety of his people, and Mediator of the covenant, in the same capacities did he take it up again. The persons interested in the one event and in the other, are the same ... He died for none for whose sake he did not rise again.1

In other words, definite Atonement also implied definite Dominion. Those 'for' whom Christ died were also those 'for' whom He ruled as Mediator-King and from this it becomes clear that Symington's thinking concerning Extent of Atonement was not only reflecting back to the free Sovereignty and love of God which had been involved in the "antecedent purpose", the "cause and effect" reasoning, and the "decree" of the covenant of peace, but that it was also being projected forward into that continuing exercise of God's free Sovereignty and love which keeps on being made real to man through Christ's administration of the affairs of His "mediatory" dominion. It involved the application of those benefits of Redemption which Christ had already procured. God's free Sovereignty was just as important in the applying of Atonement as it had been in the decreeing of Atonement and at both points it guaranteed a "definite" atonement. Symington's whole position then could be seen to rest upon three things: (i) the facts of the final judgment or those distinctions in destination which are made known to us in Scripture revelation; (ii) the dispensations of grace, and in particular the continuing relationship between Christ and His own people; and (iii) the attributes of God,2 particularly his love, mercy, knowledge, and wisdom as they are combined in his Sovereignty.

1 Ibid., pp 260ff; See Turretin, op. cit., pp 235-243, esp. p. 238 "Since he dies as surety, he must rise as head, as the reasons for his death and resurrection are the same ... Hence it cannot be said, that he died for any others than those for whom he rose ...".

2 These are summarized in the sermon "Salvation by Grace" in Discourses on Public Occasions by Wm. Symington, p. 107.
It is also to be noted that from beginning to end his emphasis was not on God's "limiting" of atonement, but on the "definiteness" of God's intentions concerning the "destination" of atonement, and in particular, on the explanation of those means of application of atonement which would guarantee the extent of atonement which God in His Sovereignty had "designed". This was perhaps best illustrated by the fact that he refused\(^1\) to discuss the subject of the decree of election in connection with the determination of the extent of atonement but then later took up the subject in connection with answering objections to the doctrine of an unlimited Gospel Cal\(^2\).

The importance of this point can be seen by comparing Symington's doctrine with that of other theologians who were following Calvin in his emphasis on the Sovereignty of God - but in a very different way.

One of the most interesting things about Symington's whole doctrine of atonement is the close similarity, indicated in part by the footnotes above, between his teaching concerning extent of atonement and that of Turretin. Turretin's first reason for supporting a "definite" atonement was based upon an appeal to scripture and Symington has used at least five of the same references that Turretin used and frequently their line of reasoning is the same.\(^3\) Turretin's second reason was based upon "the destination of Christ to the Mediatorial office".\(^4\) The content of his material is included in Symington's thinking and at times there is a noticeable similarity in phraseology as well as thought. Symington quoted twice from Turretin's works in Latin\(^5\) and J. R. Willson, another Reformed Presbyterian minister living in New York had made a partial translation of Turretin's writings on atonement at the time of the "Hopkinsian"\(^6\) atonement controversy in the United States. His book had been reprinted in Paisley in 1827 just seven years before Symington's book was published and for all

\(^{10}\) A., p. 253.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 283, Beginning with the words "With these views, we beg to submit, with all deference, the following considerations", etc.

\(^3\) Turretin, op. cit., pp 227-234; See O. A., pp 274-276; e.g. see the similarity in reasoning on the subject of the analogy of Christ's special love for the Church and a husband's special love for his wife wherein both men use Eph. 5:25 and Tit. 2:14, in O. A., p. 276, Turretin, op. cit., p. 233ff.

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 235.

\(^5\) O. A., pp 128, 247.

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 248, where Symington referred to the controversy.
these reasons, Turretin's theology would have been well known to Symington. The significance of his use of Turretin's material becomes apparent in view of the fact that Wm. Cunningham was teaching his students many years later that Turretin, in debating with Cameron and Amyraldus in the seventeenth century, had written the best available answers to the atonement theology which had been propounded by Ralph Wardlaw, a nineteenth century Scottish evangelical. He described Wardlaw as being an almost perfect representative of the school of Amyraldus and Cameron and the point becomes even more significant when we find that Symington himself became involved in debate with Wardlaw on the subject of extent of atonement nine years after his (i.e. Symington's) book had been written. It indicates that Symington had understood the trends of the nineteenth century enough to anticipate the writings of Wardlaw and those who followed him, and that he was sufficiently acquainted with the field of atonement theology to find in the writings of the seventeenth century scholastics that which could be of use in meeting what he considered to be a dangerous trend in Scottish theology. It does not however mean that their theology was the same.

In spite of all these similarities there was a very basic difference between Symington's doctrine and that of Turretin, and of Hodge who followed Turretin on this point. They all three agreed that there would be a "definite" number of "the elect", known to both the Father and the Son, who would finally receive the benefits of redemption, but they did not agree as to how this number was to be made definite. Turretin insisted that Father and Son had elected some to salvation, but in so far as the "reprobates" were concerned, God had also "decreed that they should not be saved", and he described Christ as being subject to "the law of contraries" in such a way that He could not "will to die absolutely for the elect" without also willing "not to die for the reprobates". Hodge followed him in this when he described "... the same mind that sovereignty predestinated the elect to salvation, and the rest of mankind to the punishment of their sins", and then

2Turretin, op. cit., p. 252.
3Ibid., p. 229.
went on to refer to the utter impossibility of Christ's "... removing legal obstacles out of the way of those from whose path it is decreed other obstacles shall not be removed". This was "limited Atonement" and there was a very important difference between it and Symington's doctrine of "definite atonement". Symington believed that God had elected a definite number, but in sharp contrast to Turretin and Hodge, he insisted that God had merely "passed over" the non-elect. In view of the all-sufficiency of Christ's atonement, there was "... no natural impossibility in the salvation of any man. The secret design of God, by which the application is restricted, has no causal influence in producing unbelief. The obstacles to salvation are moral ... such only as arise from the native rebellion and hardness of man's own heart". The "sole reason" for the fact that some men perish in their sins "... is not in any sense, because Christ did not die for them, but because they would not avail themselves of the merits of his death". Thus it was that the character of God was "... vindicated from every aspersion, and the blame of eternal misery is seen to rest with the unbelieving themselves".

Here again Symington has gone behind the scholastics and must be identified with Calvin. Professor Torrance, after explaining Calvin's doctrine of election in terms of his (i.e Calvin's) explanation of the words in the Lord's Prayer, the preaching of the Gospel which is accompanied by the hardening of hearts, and the fact that there is no reference to reprobation in the Creed, drew the following conclusion: "Calvin makes it clear, therefore, that he will not regard election and reprobation on the same level in making a double decree". And here again, the reason for the Calvin-Symington similarity is to be found in their respect for the free Sovereignty of God. That is, the similarity between the material of

1 Hodge, op. cit., p. 382.
2 Turretin, op. cit., pp 224, 256.
3 "Salvation by Grace", in Discourses on Public Occasions, p. 105, "God in his eternal purpose fixed upon those who are finally saved, and passed over others ...".
4 O. A., p. 287, See also p. 281.
5 Ibid., p. 288.
Symington and Turretin makes it clear that they had begun reasoning from the same known facts about post destination and from them they had both concluded that there had been a definite pre-destination or selection of "the elect", but at this point Turretin and Symington had parted company. Turretin, and Hodge, went on to draw further conclusions concerning a second decree of reprobation which would actually prevent men from believing or cause them not to believe and, incidentally, reduce Christ to the position of obeying "the law of contraries". This meant forcing the whole subject back up into the realm of those inscrutable decrees of Sovereignty which had been made in the councils of the Trinity. It was this very thing that Symington, and Calvin, were refusing to do. They insisted that these other conclusions violated such known facts about the attributes or character of God as His mercy, love, and wisdom. They also overlooked the significance of the dispensation of Grace, the unlimited Powers of Christ as a Mediator-King, and the importance of simply withholding or "hiding" the means of grace. In one sense the doctrine of Turretin and Hodge made it a "salvation of (i.e. the result of) justice" instead of "salvation by grace". But whether it was a limiting of the attributes of God, or a minimizing of the power and importance of the means provided by the dispensation of grace, it was a violation of the free Sovereignty of God.

This was the area of Symington's particular contribution to atonement theology. Calvin had moved very cautiously at this point. In so far as the decrees were concerned he had said:

We fully believe that God's will is simple and one; but as our minds do not fathom the deep abyss of secret election, in accommodation to the capacity of our own weakness, the will of God is exhibited to us in two ways.

Symington also moved cautiously into what he too described as being "the profound abyss of the divine decrees", but if there is a distinction to be made between the doctrine of Symington and Calvin, it lies in the point

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1 Calvin, "Commentary on Matt. 23:37" as quoted by Torrance, in op. cit., p. 107. Torrance went on to complete Calvin's thought by adding, "The advent of Christ will reveal however the impropriety of this language and that throughout God has one will of grace to save mankind".

2 O. A., p. 283.
that Calvin moved into it from the angle of the attributes of God and he specialized in the application of God's free sovereignty to the decreeing, electing, or selecting of predestination; whereas Symington moved into it from the angle of the dispensation of grace and he specialized in showing how God's free Sovereignty was brought to bear upon the work of applying and bestowing the benefits of redemption, as the Mediator gave effect to that which He had already procured. There was a practical Scottish twist to his doctrine which emphasized the "speciality" of the relationship between the Redeemer and the redeemed. It tended to bring the whole subject of the Sovereignty of God as it applied to the determination of the extent of atonement, down out of the realm of the councils of the Trinity, and to explain how it applied to the life of the worshipping Church, and in particular, how it could become a reassuring, instead of a disturbing influence for the "anxious inquirier". The importance of the point can be seen more clearly in connection with its application to the relationship between the universal Gospel Call and the "definite" atonement, and this involved a point that was not new in Scottish theology.

Symington might have been speaking for Rutherfurd, Brown of Wamphray, Durham, Dickson, Gillespie or any of the older Scottish theologians when he said, "In the fullest sense of the terms then, we regard the atonement of Christ as **sufficient for all**.¹ By this neither he nor they meant that Christ had died 'for' all men, in such a way as to require a doctrine of universal redemption. Symington went beyond this however, to insist that "This all-sufficiency is what lays the foundation for the unrestricted universality of the Gospel call. And from every view of the atonement as would imply that it was not sufficient for all, or that there was not only ample warrant in the invitation of the Gospel for all to look to it for salvation, we utterly dissent".² He denounced in the most solemn terms every conceivable limitation or restriction to the Gospel call as being both dishonouring to Christ and entirely unwarranted by Scripture. The unlimited Gospel call, as was noted in earlier chapters, was a remarkable feature of his whole evangelical life ministry, and yet he was just as insistent about

²Ibid., p. 250, See also pp 281, 282, 287.
the very definiteness of atonement. This was not the first time these concepts had been combined in Scottish Church history and because of it, Symington becomes identified with a particular stream of influence in Scottish theology. Walker has identified Thomas Boston and the Marrow Men as "particular redemptionists", and he traced the source of influence for their theology back to Davidson and to Rollock of the first reformation. Rollock had written:

We do affirm and defend the certainty of special grace ... The Spirit of Christ, when any general promise or sentence touching Christ and His mercy is alleged, doth no less particularly apply the same to every man, by speaking inwards to the very heart of every one, than of old Christ did by his holy voice apply these particular promises to certain persons ...

Many have identified the important role that the Marrow Men, and their attitude toward the universal Gospel Call, played in the awakening home and foreign mission programme of the Church in Scotland. Symington was more cautious about the way in which he expressed assurance of salvation than they were, but when we compare their thoughts with his demands for a definite atonement that included a universal call, and with his own record of home and foreign mission work, we find a point of striking similarity between Dr. Symington and the Marrow men, in both doctrine and influence. It was this emphasis on the special work of "the Spirit of Christ" within the hearts of His own people, that was carried over into Symington's doctrine.

The key to his thinking concerning the relationship between a definite atonement and a universal call is to be found in his explanation of the Powers and work of King Jesus in "the dispensation of Grace". It emphasized the "special" relationship between Redeemer and redeemed in such a way as to retain Rollock's views of "special grace" but it also developed them within the context of Christ's whole Kingdom or "Dominion". Christ had

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1 Walker, J., op. cit., p. 54.  
2 Ibid.; See also O. A., pp 262ff.

3 Ibid., p. 60; See also M'Crie, The Confessions of the Church of Scotland, pp 120-125, wherein he traces an original stimulus to "Evangelicalism" from "The Marrow".
been appointed "... not only to purchase and to offer redemption through his blood, but to apply it, to give it effect, to bestow the benefits of grace on the destined subjects of salvation." Again he wrote in emphasizing the importance of this work of Christ's:

Without regal authority, the sacrifice, however meritorious, has no power; the intercession, however powerful, has no efficacy; the doctrine, however clear, has no saving influence; and the Son of God must be content to see the whole human race perish for ever in their sins, as if his blood had never been shed on Calvary or carried within the veil.

In view, however, of the powers and authority by means of which Christ as the anointed King over all flesh so ruled in the heart of elect sinners as to carry the benefits of his purchased redemption to their successful completion, there was no need for anything vague or indefinite about the results. When Symington added this work of particular redemption within the hearts of the elect, to the universal commission to evangelize the world, ordered by the same Lord in the administration of the same kingdom, the two doctrines of "definite atonement" and "universal call", instead of being in conflict, became reasons for mission emphasis. The ends as well as the means had been guaranteed. There might still be some doubt as to our ability to explain in detail just how they fitted together, and he frankly admitted this, but there could never be anything indefinite about the final outcome and therefore there was no reason for abandoning either.

This subjective work of Christ was developed within the more objective context of Christ's whole dominion. Symington was not a pessimist concerning the numbers of the elect; he insisted that they were a definite number, known to Christ and planned for in detail by Him, but they were also "a multitude which no man can number". The world had been created as the "theatre" on which God had chosen to exhibit the work of their Redemption. It was with their Redemptive needs in view that Christ had

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1. O. D., p. 6, See also pp 179-183.  
2. Ibid., p. 8.  
3. O. A., p. 283f, "That we are incapable of reconciling them does not prove them irreconcilable ... Their perfect consistency with one another, is not the ground on which we are required to believe either the one or the other".  
4. Ibid., p. 316.
been given control of all the wheels of Providence and of all the affairs of the Church and the State. Angel Powers and even the non-elect had been made subject to Him and it was also through His control of these that Christ was enabled to "bestow" that which He had procured. Conversely, everything else was seen to revolve around this scheme of Redemption and to serve the needs of this community of the elect. On one hand "definite atonement" was a necessary consequence of such a Kingship and Kingdom, and on the other hand it was through "the universal call" and the foolishness of that preaching which proclaimed the all-sufficiency of His sacrifice, that He had chosen to work within the hearts of His own people. Both doctrines were the direct products of Symington's respect for the free Sovereignty of God. His was not a limited call because it was not a limited atonement; it was a universal call because it was a definite atonement.

The Results of Atonement

In the most beautiful and expressive language in the book, Symington brought the full moral influence of the doctrine of atonement to bear upon his readers at each successive stage in their Christian life. The atonement gave men their best reasons for loving God, because it illustrated the "Character" or divine perfections of His nature. It provided the most powerful of all motives for the hatred of sin and for confidence in the scheme of salvation. It affected all of God's dealings with the world, provided the means of salvation, continued to provide motives for

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1 O. D., pp 71-100; See also O. A., pp 336ff.  
3 Ibid., p. 327, "The moral influence of the cross is great and direct, through the accompanying power of the Spirit. It restores to the favour of God; lays restraints on the springs of moral corruption; weakens the power of temptation; dissuades from the practice of sin; and furnishes the most powerful motives to sincere, constant and universal obedience ... It is even the grand instrument in bringing about a moral regeneration of nature; it being by the influence of this doctrine, that the divine Spirit melts and subdues the adamantine heart of the sinner, and transforms it into the image of Christ".

4 Ibid., pp 317-320, esp. p. 319, the "gracious" character of God.

5 Ibid., pp 323-325.  
6 Ibid., pp 325-330.  
7 Ibid., pp 336-343.  
8 Ibid., pp 331-336.
sanctification,\textsuperscript{1} and finally became the theme of praise for saints and angels throughout eternity.\textsuperscript{2} In at least one sense Christ's work of "Intercession" and everything that He did as King in a "Mediatorial Dominion" were the results, the "consequence"\textsuperscript{3} of Atonement. His achievements as King:

... not only manifest his majesty and his power, but serve to publish the clemency of his grace, and to recognize the merit of his atoning sacrifice as the ground on which they proceed.\textsuperscript{4}

**In Controversy**

Symington's other writings on the subject of atonement do not reveal important changes or developments in his thinking, but they do indicate the areas of his contribution to the theology of the Church.

The sermon, *Salvation by Grace*\textsuperscript{5} was first preached and then circulated in pamphlet form throughout that part of the country in which the Rev. John Osborne had been preaching at the time of his trial and deposition on charges of immorality in 1831.\textsuperscript{6} Osborne had apparently been preaching salvation by Grace in such a way as to be identified as an "Evangelical" and he was a man "of considerable ability" and great popularity,\textsuperscript{7} but he had combined these talents and accomplishments with an erratic career of drunkenness and immorality, and was apparently adducing the doctrine of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}\textit{Ibid.}, pp 333ff.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}\textit{Ibid.}, pp 343-346.
  \item \textsuperscript{3}"Salvation by Grace" in \textit{Discourses on Public Occasions} by Wm. Symington, p. 112, "The mediation of Christ is the consequence not the cause of the divine favour to sinners".
  \item \textsuperscript{4}O. D., p. 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{5}\textit{Discourses on Public Occasions} by Wm. Symington, pp 101-123.
  \item \textsuperscript{6}Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 98f; Reference was made to this in Chapter III, supra, p. 93.
  \item \textsuperscript{7}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 99, "He was deservedly popular, but was also peculiar"; He died in 1850 in Canada "... as a minister of an independent Congregational Church there".
\end{itemize}
Grace as an excuse for "indolence and even licentiousness".1 "Evangelicalism" as well as the name of the Reformed Presbytery in South Western Scotland was, to some extent, at stake and Symington's sermon is an example of his concern for both. From beginning to end it emphasized the free sovereignty of God as that which lay at the root of the evangelical message and at the same time exposed the utter inconsistency of this kind of licentiousness. It was evangelical theology that would have been as disconcerting to the deadness of moderate orthodoxy as it was discouraging to the excesses of those "high fliers" who were "reacting" to it in a very different way. It indicates that Symington was not only interested in seeing this doctrine of the Sovereignty of God applied to the theology of nineteenth century Scotland in such a way as to break it free from the static controls usually associated with the "system" of the Moderate Party, but that he was also interested in seeing it brought into direct contact with the life of the members of the worshipping church in such a way that it could exercise its own immediate controls in their lives.

His second published statements on the subject of Atonement appeared in 1843-1844, in the form of a pamphlet controversy with Ralph Wardlaw, a voluminous writer and a recognized evangelical leader in Scotland. His position as professor of theology and a senior Churchman in the Independent Congregational Church, was, in many ways, the counter-part to Symington's position in the Reformed Presbyterian Church2 and in the exchange it is possible to see something of the difference in the evangelical influences of the two churches.

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1 "Salvation by Grace" in Discourses on Public Occasions, p. 122; Symington does not, of course, refer to Osborne in the sermon by name but the very fact that he preached it on April 3, 1831 at Springholm in Kirkcudbrightshire only a few miles from where Osborne lived, would have given such statements as these unmistakable significance. See also p. 101 where date and place of preaching are given; Couper points out that in order to escape the charges of Presbytery, Osborne "... announced his declinature on the ground of divergence of doctrine, but the Presbytery proceeded with the trial, found him guilty and deposed him on May 24, 1831"; They could not press the charges of unsound doctrine because Osborne would not make himself available, but Symington was in that area at that time because of Osborne's trial, See also Chapter III, supra, p. 83.

2 E.g., J. R. Fleming in reviewing "Personal Factors" in the Church in Scotland around the time of the Disruption wrote, "The brothers Symington lent distinction to the Reformed Presbyterian body. Ralph Wardlaw was the representative Congregationalist ...", in A History of the Church in Scotland 1843-1874, p. 14.
In his own book on Atonement, Symington had quoted with warm approval from Wardlaw's earlier writings and after Symington had moved to Glasgow, the two men became good friends in the work there, but in 1843 Wardlaw published *Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ*. Symington's very unfavourable review first appeared in the *Scottish Presbyterian* and was soon after reprinted in pamphlet form. Wardlaw replied to these criticisms, and in his second pamphlet, written as a direct answer to Wardlaw, Symington made it quite clear that he wanted Wardlaw to make a retraction. Wardlaw very effectively countered and concluded the exchange by issuing a second edition of his book, to which was added as a second preface, his reply to Symington's first pamphlet. Wardlaw's biographer claimed that the whole issue was too abstruse and of no practical importance, but A. H. Strong quoted Wardlaw in defence of his views concerning the application of atonement and Symington as opposed to them.

Without entering into the relative merits or demerits of the actual handling of the points in debate, the fact is clear that Symington believed that the issue was sufficiently important to be defended at the risk of losing the friendship of another evangelical leader. Their friendship was strained for some time but the two men later appeared working together at the meetings of the World Evangelical Alliance in London.

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5. Ibid., p. 434.
8. O. D., "Memoir of the Author", written by Dr. Symington's sons, p. lxxx.
There can be no question about Wardlaw's belonging to the same penal-substitutionary grouping of atonement theologians to which Symington belonged. The problem had to do with the determination of the extent of atonement at that point where the application of atonement was involved. Wardlaw was looking at it from the viewpoint of the will of man and in defending his position he made a fine distinction between God's will and God's purpose. He favoured an extremely "hypothetic" or "conditional" idea concerning the predestinating purposes of God which he believed was more merciful and loving, and would give more confidence and freedom in making an evangelical universal call to repentance. Symington was looking at it from the viewpoint of the facts known about the attributes of God and the Powers and Kingdom of Christ, and he identified Wardlaw's doctrine as being a form of "indefinite atonement" which could in reality be more deceiving to man, and dishonouring to Christ. The very idea of "conditional grace" was to Symington a "contradiction in terms" which must eventually lead back to an "election of justice", to an election which had in some sense been dependent upon God's evaluation of man's good works, and in that case, what had appeared to be more merciful would actually become more legalistic. He insisted on the basis of his own (Evangelical) experiences that Wardlaw's proposal was not necessary in order to make an unlimited or universal Gospel Call. A thorough review of the pamphlets leaves the impression that two things stood between the two men. First was Symington's doctrine of the work of Christ as Mediator-King in the dispensation of Grace. It gathered up the gist of Turretin's scholastic precision, and in many ways the whole controversy could be seen to have been a case of Symington's offering the precision of Turretin's Calvinism as a dissuasive to a trend toward vagueness that was typified by Wardlaw's Calvinism. There was more to it than that, because the doctrine

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2 This was the point of Cunningham's comments concerning Turretin's being the best answer to Wardlaw's theology, in *The Works of William Cunningham*, vol. III, "Historical Theology, vol. II" (third edition), pp 364, 365. The fact that Cunningham does not refer to Symington's book may indicate that he saw the difference between Symington and Turretin, and between Symington and himself.
of Symington and Turretin was not the same. The note of precision appeared in Symington's doctrine of predestination at that point where he insisted that Christ had known in a definite way precisely who it was for whom He had died in procuring Redemption benefits. It appeared even more obviously in his teaching concerning the wisdom, power, and authority by means of which Christ worked as a Mediator-King in applying those same benefits. In view of all this, there was absolutely no need for any indefiniteness concerning either the original knowledge or the final outcome of the extent of atonement. Christ's Kingdom guaranteed that everything that had been decreed in pre-destination would be perfectly accomplished in post-destination. To say anything else was to challenge the authority of Christ, and through it the free Sovereignty of God, and this was one of the things that made the issue so important to Symington.  

The extent of Atonement must not in any sense be limited, controlled, or conditioned by man; it was in the hands of King Jesus and no elect sinner could escape. Plainly Wardlaw had an important point in bringing up the whole subject from the angle of man's free will, but Symington's view of Christ's Kingdom meant that man's will was "free" only in the sense of responding agreeably to Christ's will. Man was not "free" in the sense of being "independent" of Christ's "Dominion"; he could not have a license to continue to rebel within Christ's (universal) Kingdom. Symington saw this doctrine of the Kingship and Kingdom of Christ in a way that Wardlaw did not.

The second difference standing between the two men had to do with their attitudes toward the ecclesiological and ecumenical implications that were involved. It helps to account for the tendency, that at first sight seems to be unfair on the part of Symington, to carry Wardlaw's thinking beyond what he (i.e Wardlaw) intended. Several times Symington made a direct reference to the relationship between the Church in Scotland

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1 "Reviewers Reviewed", in Scottish Presbyterian, May 1844, p. 421, wherein Symington objects to any plan that would mean the "limiting" of the "sovereign prerogative" in so far as either the "application" or the "destination" of atonement is concerned and adds, "... we contend that the divine prerogative is exercised in both".
and the Professions of the different denominations. He seemed to see dangers here that Wardlaw did not see, and his concern was undoubtedly influenced by the history of atonement theology within the Reformed Presbytery. In 1753, just ten years after the Presbytery had been organized, the atonement debate had boiled down to the following question which involved issues quite similar to those in the nineteenth century controversy:

Whether Mr. Fraser's maintaining that the Lord Jesus Christ satisfied for the sins of all mankind, so that his satisfaction may be competent to be proposed to them in the Gospel, and pleaded by them for their justification; and that this satisfaction is the Ground and Formal Reason upon which faith is founded, be a dangerous doctrine. Two ministers and three elders declared that it was a dangerous doctrine whereupon the minority, including the Moderator and Clerk, declared the vote null and absconded the Minutes. The subsequent record of the minority group had not been reassuring and would have been well known to Symington, not only because the results of that experience had been written into the Church Testimony, but also because one branch of the dissentients upon disbanding had sold their property to Symington's Glasgow Congregation; a second branch had sold their property to the Edinburgh Reformed Presbyterian Congregation whose pastor was Dr. Wm. Goold, Symington's son-in-law.

1 "Review: Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement of Christ by Ralph Wardlaw, D.D.", in Scottish Presbyterian, Nov. 1843, p. 260, "It is known we presume to most of our readers, that there has arisen of late in this country what has been styled 'a new school of theology'... The body with which Dr. Wardlaw is connected have given pretty distinct indication of late of a leaning towards the doctrine of an indefinite atonement. They seem even not unwilling that it should be understood to be a doctrinal peculiarity... Should, however, the Congregational Churches become deeply tainted with the error in question, there will be ground for lamentation..."; See also "Reviewers Reviewed", in Scottish Presbyterian, May 1844, p. 434; And Symington's Journal for 10th April 1844, "Attended Secession Synod all day, & heard wt pain & much grief discussion respecting the extent of atonement. The "New Views" seem to have influenced a large majority of the members of that Court".


3 Ibid., pp 198f; See also Chapter I, supra, p. 6.

4 Dr. W. H. Goold was the son of Rev. Wm. Goold, ordained and installed as colleague to his father in 1840 in the Edinburgh Congregation, See Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 117.
and a third branch continued the development of their theology in such a way as to become the first Unitarian Church in Edinburgh.\(^1\) These things had happened before Wardlaw's Congregation came into existence, but they would have had great significance for Symington. Subsequent events in the history of the Congregationalist Churches seemed to warrant this concern. Wardlaw himself a few years later tried to halt any further trends toward indefiniteness by limiting the discussion to the subject of the application of atonement,\(^2\) but there was "a suspension of fraternal intercourse" within the bounds of their congregations, and the five ministers and nine students who broke off to join the Evangelical Union, "... being less tied to Presbyterian tradition than Morison and his brethren, went further and further in the direction of Arminianism".\(^3\) Symington had apparently feared just such a recurrence of the same things that had happened a hundred years earlier in the Reformed Presbytery. More positively, he believed that there was a close relationship between the Profession of the Church and the Unity of the Church. The Profession of the Church was to him "... a visible thing ... fitted to form a bond of visible unity".\(^4\) It was one of the means which Christ, as the Head of the whole visible Church, had provided for the purpose of drawing the Church more closely to Himself, and thereby making her one. Experience had taught him to be wary of the implications of such changes in atonement doctrine and he was more concerned about the visible unity of the Church in Scotland than was Wardlaw.

The influence of the Reformed Presbyterian Church as represented in the writings of Symington was that of a stabilizing elder brother reaching out to warn a younger church, out of her own painful experiences, about the


\(^2\) M'Crie described the theology of the Evangelical Union after the Congregationalists had joined it as being "... the blend of Pelagianism and Arminianism ... propounded in room of the diluted Calvinism which marked their first divergence from Westminster theology", in The Confessions of the Church of Scotland p. 137; John Macleod believed that it was "... in defence of what was virtually his last ditch as an Evangelical Calvinist that Wardlaw wrote his important circular correspondence on behalf of the Glasgow Congregational Churches of their neighbourhood", in Scottish Theology, p. 293.

\(^3\) Fleming, J. R., A History of the Church in Scotland 1843-1874, pp 48, 49.

\(^4\) O. D., p. 131.
dangerous, far reaching influences of such changes, and to encourage her, as it were, to draw closer to the reformed evangelical fold. "Evangelical" influences in Scotland prior to 1843 had been with few exceptions toward Evangelical Independency, Secession, or Voluntaryism, but Symington's influence was in direct opposition to the view that there was necessarily some relationship between "Independency" and "Evangelicalism".

Symington's third published statement on the subject of Atonement appeared in 1846 in the form of a reprinting of a pamphlet entitled, *The Orthodox Doctrine Regarding the Extent of the Atonement*, by Charles ¹ Hodge. It contained no direct reference to his controversy with Wardlaw but in those earlier pamphlets Symington had referred to "other Doctors" ² who stood opposed to Wardlaw's views and at least once he quoted anonymously from one of them. Doctors Cunningham, M'Crie, and Candlish joined him in a "Recommendatory Preface" to Hodge's pamphlet:

"...We are persuaded that the nature and the extent of the atonement are so intimately related, that whatever affects the former ... This is not a difference in degree merely, but of kind. According to the one, Christ, by his death, rendered salvation possible; according to the other, Christ, by his death rendered salvation certain ... the indefinite view, instead of providing a better basis for the gospel offer, has rather the effect of changing the character of the thing offered, that is to say, of introducing virtually ANOTHER GOSPEL. This is what has given to the point at issue a feature of overwhelming moment ..."

Hodge's original purpose in writing had been to refute errors being pronounced by Beman of Troy, in the United States, ⁴ and Symington's actions here would place him in the position of marshalling the evangelical theological forces of Scotland and America in order to prevent the trend toward "indefinite Atonement".

¹Not to be confused with A. A. Hodge who wrote the book on Atonement referred to earlier.

²"Reviewers Reviewed", in *Scottish Presbyterian*, May 1844, pp ⁴13, ⁴31, ⁴34.

³Hodge, Charles, *The Orthodox Doctrine Regarding the Extent of the Atonement Vindicated* (edited by Wm. Symington), preface pp vi, vii; Vide, the words of H. R. Mackintosh, "There can be no more superficial blunder than to suppose that these major doctrinal conflicts centred on points devoid of real importance, and might reasonably have been compromised by a little give-and-take. Over and over again the Gospel has been in the balance", in *Types of Modern Theology*, p. ⁵.

Summary

The similarity between Symington's doctrine and that of Calvin, Turretin, and Hodge leaves no doubt about Symington's belonging to the penal substitutionary grouping of atonement theologians. Within that grouping however, a particular trend had been introduced by Turretin and other Scholastics who wrote in the immediate post-reformation years. It was later adopted and developed by Hodge who wrote nearly a generation (34 years) after Symington's book appeared. The further evaluation of Symington's doctrine, in the light of the theological perspective thus established by the writings of Turretin and Hodge, has also made it clear that he was not following their trend towards a more rigid doctrine of penal substitution. In at least three of the essential elements of a doctrine of atonement there were important differences between Symington's doctrines and that of Turretin and Hodge. The reasons for the necessity of atonement were different. Symington had emphasized the free sovereign will and love of God whereas they had emphasized the demands and threats of law, justice and sin. Their doctrine of the extent of atonement was the same at that point where its definiteness was concerned, but Symington had taught that God had 'elected' some to salvation and merely 'passed over' others, whereas they insisted upon another decree involving the 'reprobation' of man. Their doctrines of the substance of atonement were different because Symington had developed the idea of God's dispensing with the letter of the law in order to be able to accept a "substitution" which he described as a "comutative satisfaction", whereas they insisted upon the precise penalty of the law. It was at these same three points that Symington's doctrine was like that of John Calvin who had pointed to God's love as a primary motive in the sovereign decision that lay behind the necessity for atonement, indicated that God had decreed the salvation of some but not necessarily the damnation of others, and taught that it had been God's good pleasure to accept the 'merit' of Christ's sacrifice.

1This does not include Hodge's criticism of Symington's Atonement-Redemption distinction, Symington's use of heathen sacrifices as one "Proof" of Atonement, or the fact that he uses the language of the Governmental and Moral Influence Theories of Atonement more freely than does either Turretin or Hodge.
The fact that Symington chose to use Turretin's preciseness of thought and even his phraseology, in particular in connection with his doctrine of extent of atonement, but then deliberately rejected these other elements in his thinking, refusing to continue their development as other theologians were doing, only serves to underline the importance of the differences. He had not just 'borrowed' from Turretin, he had 'changed' the whole emphasis of his doctrine. He had used the preciseness of Turretin, but it was not the more rigid or mechanical "limited Atonement" school of penal substitutionary theologians to which he belonged.

The difference between their doctrine of "limited atonement" and Symington's doctrine of "definite atonement" can best be seen by tracing it back to the single basic reason which had to do with the doctrine of God and his Sovereignty. As Turretin and Hodge saw it the justice in God's nature was a primary factor in establishing the necessity for atonement. His Sovereignty (therefore) required him to decree the damnation of some as well as the salvation of others in determining the extent of atonement and to demand, as the substance of atonement, an exact equivalent, the "last farthing" of the law, in the sufferings of Christ. As Calvin and Symington saw it there was a note of perfect freedom in God's Sovereignty which lay behind everything else, making Him able to love us even while He hated us, to "elect" some while "passing over" others, and to accept a "commutative satisfaction" ("merit dependent on God's good pleasure") of the law. Symington underlined the radical importance of this element of freedom in the Sovereignty of God in his sermon on "Salvation by Grace":

Every conception of the supreme Being which excludes the notion of volition is not only defective but absurd. Blind fatality, or involuntary operation, can with no propriety be ascribed to an agent or a cause, in as much as to act necessarily, is, properly speaking, not to act at all, but to be acted upon ... the great First Cause cannot, in matter of man's salvation, be said to have acted from necessity ... it originated in the exercise of his will.¹

¹ Turretin seems anxious to preserve this element of freedom in his doctrine of Sovereignty, but even in his statement of it he falls short, "Finally, our opinion relative to the necessity of an Atonement does not, in the least, derogate from any of the Divine perfections ... Not from the freedom of his will, because he can will nothing contrary to his justice and holiness, which would be injured should sin go unpunished", in op. cit., p. 147.

² "Salvation by Grace", in Discourses on Public Occasions by Wm. Symington, p. 103.
The Supreme Being "... is altogether self-moved. This is what we understand by the sovereignty of God in the salvation of man. This is what we mean by the origin of salvation being of grace".\(^1\) This was the very thing, as Symington put it, that kept it from being the "election of justice" and caused it to be as Paul had said, "the election of grace".\(^2\) Calvin's "arbitrium" came to be translated "sovereignty", but probably because of the interpretation put upon that term by the theology of "Calvinists" such as Turretin and Hodge, this note of genuine (i.e. not capricious or despotic) freedom, which is an essential part of "arbitrium", was neglected. Symington was bringing back something of the reformation meaning to the word "Sovereignty" and it was an important contribution because as Hastie pointed out "... the principle of the sovereignty of God is the ruling conception of the Theology of the Reformed Church."\(^3\)

It was this doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, applied to each element of his doctrine of Atonement that produced Symington's "definite Atonement". The Father, of his own free will, had devised in perfect detail the whole scheme of redemption. Christ had freely entered into contract with the Father and every "relative" or "moral" necessity that might be involved in atonement arose directly out of the Nature of that agreement. The Reality or Proof of atonement was to be seen in particular in Christ's sacrifice, but here again, God was the single originating "First Great Cause" and therefore Symington also included the evidence of the "other" sacrifices as further proof of the necessity and nature of Christ's atonement. The Value of Christ's atonement was as definite as those laws of cause and effect which were launched and controlled by God's will, ("the real immediate cause") - the doctrine of \textit{physicus concursus} - could make it. The Results of atonement were as definite as the original "Atonement" agreement. On one hand

\(^1\)\textit{Ibid.}, pp 105f. \(^2\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 108. \(^3\)Hastie, W., \textit{The Theology of the Reformed Church in its Fundamental Principles}, (Ed. by W. Fulton, 1904), p. 159; See also p. 160 "The great strength of the Reformed Theology lies, in truth, in its deep apprehension of the sovereignty of God ...", And p. 166 "whoever understands the word, grace, in its connection with God's universal manifestation and revelation of Himself in the world ... comprehends in principle the whole system of the Reformed Theology".
it was not "universal redemption". On the other hand, it was not "limited atonement" because man's decisions could not limit it, and God had not been limited to acting only in strictest obedience to the attributes of His nature, as these were interpreted by man, in determining either the "destination" or the "application" of atonement. It was "of grace" and therefore there was no room for pride in man in so far as either the application or the explanation of atonement was concerned. The only conceivable limitations were those which were to be found in the original intentions of that same free sovereign will which had devised the whole scheme of redemption. This did not mean however that there was anything vague or indefinite about it, because the dispensation of Grace, as it was administered by King Jesus, refused to be "limited" but required to be "definite". The Kingdom of Christ had provided the link between pre-destination and post-destination, and Symington had well named his doctrine "definite atonement".

These were not original influences in so far as Scottish theology was concerned but they were an original combination of older influences. The similarity to the influence of the Marrow Men was noted earlier. Calvin's influence had been known in Scotland since the days of Knox. It was a similar doctrine of the sovereignty of God that had caused Rutherfurd to insist so persistently that God was under absolutely no necessity, at least in so far as His nature was concerned, to punish sin. It was also involved in Fraser of Brea's Justifying Faith. Walker believed that their theology was somewhat unusual in so far as the general course of Scottish theology was concerned, but the point here is that it was not 'original' in so far as Symington was concerned. This doctrine of the Sovereignty of God was closely linked, at least in Symington's case, with the doctrine of the Lordship or Kingship of Christ. Further reference will be made to this later and it must suffice to say here that it was during the latter part of the seventeenth century that there had been a

1 Walker, op. cit., pp 35ff, 38, "In a modified form, Patrick Gillespie, in his Ark of the Covenant, seems disposed to agree with Rutherfurd; and there is little doubt that his view had once considerable prevalence in Scotland. It gradually passed away. Almost the last faint gleam of it we have in the universalism of good Fraser of Brea".
particular development or rediscovery of the reformation doctrine of the Kingship of Christ in the Church in Scotland. Symington's Church especially had found in the strong right arm of King Jesus that which could bring political peace out of persecution, and presbyterian order out of ecclesiastical chaos. His powers were completely unlimited and could not be controlled either by the usurped authority of tyrants or the well ordered theological "systems" of churchmen and it was from their knowledge of the Kingship of Christ that they tended to derive their doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. It was during these same years that the Church on the Continent had been battling with the theological problems which had produced the preciseness of Turretin's scholasticism and Symington was combining the results of the two struggles. Hector Macpherson quoted from McGiffert's study of Protestant Thought Before Kant in order to show that scholasticism had made important contributions to Scottish theology, and that the Scottish adaptations of scholastic theology had emphasized "... God's dealings with men in time, as recorded or hinted at in scripture, rather than probing too deeply into the mysteries of eternal decrees". Symington's use of Turretin is an example of that theory. He had used the precision of Turretin's continental scholasticism to explain that doctrine of the free Sovereignty of God which had been made very real to the Scottish Church through her experiences with the Kingship of Christ. King Jesus worked with unlimited power and infinite detail, in such a way as to meet the needs of the "anxious inquirer". These were not original influences, they were reformation influences which were being reintroduced into Scottish theology toward the close of a long period of cold orthodoxy, at an early period in the evangelical revival, during a time of ecumenical division and theological instability.

Contribution To Nineteenth Century Theology

All of Dr. Symington's writings, including his book on Atonement, were both a cause and a result of the Evangelical Revival. Notwithstanding all

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1 Macpherson, H., The Covenanters Under Persecution, p. 57; See also McGiffert, A. C., Protestant Thought Before Kant, pp 153ff. And on p. 153 he described Scholasticism as "... a dogmatic of the narrowest type, without relation to the thought of the world at large and without effect upon the religious and moral life of Christian people".
that he and the others had to say about the point at issue, it was not so much a controversy involving Calvinism versus Arminianism as it was Evangelicalism versus Moderatism. To be sure the issues were not clear-cut because on one hand there were those Evangelicals who claimed to deny some things connected with "Calvinism", and there were also those Moderates who had, in effect, denied that Sovereignty of God which was an essential feature of Calvin's theology. On the other hand Evangelicals were not united among themselves. There were those who were willing to sacrifice the spirit of the law in order to preserve peace, who "stood up as one man (with the moderates) to smite the innovators". Some were strangely silent. Others who claimed the name of "Evangelical" misused it as did Osborne. Some believed they must leave the old church in order to be free of the restrictions of Moderatism and others did not even leave the Church in 1843. But after all these differences have been taken into consideration, the dominant movement in the Church throughout this period, and the influence that lay behind others, was the movement away from that brand of moderate Calvinism which had emphasized "limited atonement" and tended to frown on "universal atonement" as something akin to "universal salvation". Small wonder then that many men began to think again about who it was for whom Christ had died, and how these things could be known; and it was at this point that Evangelicals were united. In spite of the fact that there were important differences in their theology, McLeod Campbell's explanation of his reason for writing on Atonement might also have been Symington's:

What I thus laboured to impress on the mind of my reader is, that the necessity for the atonement which we are contemplating was moral and spiritual, arising out of our relation to God as the Father of our spirits, and not merely legal, arising out of our being under the law.

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1 Campbell, A. J., Two Centuries of the Church in Scotland, p. 187. See also p. 185 where he describes other evangelicals who were reacting to "... an increasing severity of manners and a steady hardening of doctrine".

2 Ibid., p. 196, "But Chalmers said not a word".

Both men had seen sickness in what another has described as "the complacent, unillumined dogmatism of the Church".¹ They were labouring to contribute to the progress that James Orr, looking back in later years, perceived as being:

... the endeavour to give a spiritual interpretation to the great fact which lies at the heart of our redemption, — not necessarily to deny its judicial aspect, for that, I take it will be found impossible, — but to remove from it the hard, legal aspect it is apt to assume when treated as a purely external fact, without regard to its inner, spiritual content; and, further, to bring it into harmony with the spiritual laws and analogies which obtain in other spheres.²

This was the general nature of the contribution William Symington made to the atonement theology of the nineteenth century and the source of it is to be found in his doctrine of the Free Sovereignty of God. It refused to be "limited" and it rebelled at the very idea of God's being subject to a man made "system" of moderation. This was the point that tended to break the back out of the formal orthodoxy of that period, but Symington also went on to emphasize the Sovereignty of God in the person of King Jesus, the whole Redeemer-redeemed relationship, in such a way that the Sovereignty of God became the very real source of comfort and encouragement, the guarantee of God's answer to man's problem, for the "anxious inquirer". It was the reformation doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, brought close to the life of the worshipping Church, that accounts for Symington's general contribution to the Evangelicalism of that period.

The specific issues involved in the theological progress being made by Evangelicals boiled down to a series of distinctions which had occupied the attention of the scholastics in the seventeenth century. The question was whether Christ had died pro omnibus or pro ecclesia specialiter; whether it had been sufficienter pro omnibus or only efficaciter pro electis. Morison, Kirk and John Guthrie were interested in making an adjustment in doctrine at that point where the decrees of God in election had determined the extent of atonement. Campbell worked with the extent of Atonement at


that point where it involved Christ's representation of man to God, His perfect confession of man's sins. Wardlaw, as noted, was interested in the extent of the application of atonement from the standpoint of the part that man's will had to do with it. Each one was interested in finding the doctrine that would break loose from the deadening influences of moderation and bring the Gospel home to the hearts of the man and women who made up the life of the Church in Scotland, and it is undoubtedly true, as is usually the case,¹ that there were those who would have carried the ideas of freedom and change too far. Symington was dealing with the matter in true reformation form when he went behind these other "elements" in the doctrine to take up the whole subject from the standpoint of God's sovereignty and his intentions and means. This not only provided him with an Evangelical emphasis, it also provided him with a deterrent to too much change. It was at this point that Calvin's doctrine of free Sovereignty had been superimposed upon Turretin's preciseness, and both were interpreted in terms of Christ who worked in His Kingdom in a perfectly unlimited and yet infinitely detailed way to apply that which He had already procured. This was Symington's particular contribution to nineteenth century atonement theology. He insisted that Christ's death had been sufficient for all, but that it had been efficient for the elect only, and it was this doctrine of the Kingdom, the work of Christ in "the dispensation of Grace", that made it perfectly efficient. The very Nature of "Atonement" forbade the idea of even trying to think about Atonement per se, that is without thinking in terms of Atonement for whom, but there was far more to it than God's just "knowing" or "decreeing" the elect because Christ had obeyed and suffered not only to remove the obstacles to God's mercy, but also to establish the medium and means of salvation; not only 'for' Atonement, but also 'for' Redemption. In dying Christ had procured the faith and the authority to send the Spirit, and all

¹ e.g., Mozley, describing the development of atonement theology at the beginning of the Reformation wrote about "... that critical spirit which, though it did but rear its head in days when men rejected the authority of the medieval Church in favour of the mightier authority of the Bible, was destined to put to the most rigorous tests of inquiry, both scriptural and rational, a doctrine which had not, like others, won its way to precise form by a series of triumphs over dangerous oppositions", in op. cit., p. 142.
the powers and authority of that Kingdom and Kingship which also came out of His life and His sufferings on the cross. It was here that the doctrine of the Kingship and Kingdom of Christ, which had been worked out in seventeenth Century Scottish National History and written into the Testimony of Symington's Church, was brought to bear upon the doctrine of atonement. The Kingdom of Christ provided the infallible link between predestination and postdestination and therefore there could be nothing "indefinite" about it.

Behind it all lay his doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. It had refused to be bound by "systems" of dead orthodoxy and when it was interpreted in terms of the Mediator and his work of "Redemption" it became a source of comfort and encouragement for the "anxious inquirer". Combined with Turretin's precision and interpreted in terms of the Kingship of Christ, it also provided a deterrent to keep the pendulum of Evangelical "freedom" from swinging too far into the indefiniteness of Independency.

The Intercession of Christ

Calvin devoted the last of a series of sermons on the Prophecies of Isaiah\(^1\) to a description of Christ's work of Intercession:

For first He offered the sacrifice of His body, and shed His blood, that He might bear the punishment due to us; and secondly, that the atonement might be powerful, He performed the office of an advocate and interceded for all who embraced this sacrifice by faith \(\ldots^2\)

Symington followed that same order in his book for the same reasons. The Intercession of Christ was, for him, "... the correlate of atonement ... the continued efficacy of his expiatory merit".\(^3\) The nature of Christ's intercession was bound up in those appearances before God wherein He exhibited His sacrifice and intimated His will.\(^4\) The matter of that intercession necessitated its being for the elect only because Christ had

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\(^1\) Calvin, J., Sermons on Isaiah's Prophecy of the Death and Passion of Christ (Translated by T.H.L. Parker, 1956), pp 135-152, See also p. 7, "These seven sermons ... presenting Calvin's thought at its profoundest".

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 136.

\(^3\) O. A., pp 349, 350.

\(^4\) Ibid., pp 358-366.
said that he did not pray for the whole world, and it was by means of His intercession that some men, but not all, were brought into a state of grace, daily pardoned, protected from Satan, progressively sanctified, and maintained in that peaceful intercourse with God whereby their services were acceptable to Him and they themselves were finally brought into his presence to enjoy eternal salvation. It was the earnestness, promptness, authoritativeness, and holiness of Christ's intercession that secured these results, and in it all men saw Christ's continuing love, his Divinity, and the efficacy of His death. This was the basis of "security" or the assurance of salvation, for His people. It was sin to neglect Christ's intercession, and the duty of every Christian to seek an interest in it daily. Behind Symington's description of an interceding Christ are to be seen his own attitudes and ideals as the pastor and shepherd of a scattered Covenanter flock and there was much in it that would have reminded many people throughout South-West Scotland of those ministerial services which, as he said in the preface, had been "... based upon the principles of Atonement and Intercession".

This was the doctrine of the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ that laid the foundation for the principle of the priesthood of every believer. As taught by Calvin and others, it had been one of the most important factors in the reformation. It had a profound influence on the Church simply because it short-circuited the whole idea of approaching God through a priest, a saint or a virgin, and many have pointed out that it had an equally profound influence on men's attitudes toward the State. Symington's doctrine of "Dominion", "Church" and "State" were based upon this same reformation foundation.

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1 Ibid., pp 367-387.  
2 Ibid., pp 388-404.  
3 Ibid., pp 405-408.  
4 Ibid., pp 408-412.  
5 Ibid., Preface, pp ix, x.  
6 Figgis, J. N., "Political Thought in the 16th Century"; in The Cambridge Modern History, vol. III, p. 739, "... it was natural that a party should arise to take the Reformers at their word, and assert that all Christians were equal, not only as priests but as kings", See pp 768, 769; See also Wyclif, John, The English Works of Wyclif (Ed. by F. D. Matthew), Preface by the editor, p. xxxiv, where he describes Wyclif's teaching; And Poole, R. L., Mediaeval Thought and Learning, p. 255.
"...other churches have asserted and contended for his priestly and prophetical offices, the lot seemeth to have fallen upon Scotland to assert and wrestle more eminently than many others for the crown and kingdom of Jesus Christ."

(Naphtali)
CHAPTER VI.

DOCTRINE OF DOMINION.

William Symington's book, Messiah the Prince or The Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ was first published in Edinburgh in 1839. A second edition was issued the following year and forty-two years later a third edition, containing a "Memoir of the Author" was printed by T. Nelson in London. Symington had used the book in his lecture series while Professor at the seminary, and a few notes from these lectures and other editorial comments by his sons are included in the form of footnotes in this 1881 edition. It is this particular book that will be used throughout the body of this material.¹

In the United States Robert Carter published the book in 1839 and a second edition containing the "Memoir of the Author" appeared in 1881. In 1884 the Rev. T. P. Stevenson as agent for an organization known as the National Reform Association republished an "American Edition" with a third introductory preface.²

The book contains an accurate explanation of Symington's whole ministry and it is here that his particular contribution to Scottish theology is to be found. At the time that he wrote he could say he was "not aware of any work on the exact plan of that now offered to the public".³ Each one of the later editions cited the nonexistence of any other book dealing with the subject "systematically and comprehensively, as a matter of theology", as a reason for its being reprinted.⁴

Others have agreed that this is an area of theology needing further attention. It is noticeable that James Walker in his masterly study of Scottish

¹Ibid. (Hereinafter referred to as O.D.).


³O.D., "Author's Preface", p. cvii.

⁴Ibid., pp. 259, 269; "Editor's Preface" pp. v, vi; The Preface to the American Edition indicated that the thoroughness of Symington's work was a reason for other books not being written on the same subject.
Theology and Theologians does not actually deal with the subject of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom in terms of Scottish theologians, but refers to it as a "subject of dispute" and quotes from Hooker, Cartwright, and Apollonius.\(^1\) Wm. Cunningham also avoids the issue with respect to the extent of Christ's Kingdom. In his lecture concerning "The Erastian Controversy", he referred to "those principles that ought to regulate the provinces, functions and duties of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and of their relations to each other", but taught his students that ". . . we cannot appeal with the same confidence to what may be called the testimony of the Reformers on this subject, as upon other topics" and "the question" as to what their views actually were was one wherein there "is room for an honest difference of opinion".\(^2\) Writing more recently and with a wider theological view in mind, Visser't Hooft said:

Protestantism stands in a theological tradition in which the priestly and prophetic ministries of Christ have been strongly worked out but in which the kingly office has been obscured ... The Reformers are more reserved in their teaching concerning the Kingship of Christ than they are about his other offices.

There were those, however, who would have challenged this last statement. Whatever may have been the case with Protestantism in general - whether the doctrine of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom and Kingship had not been worked out, or worked out and then obscured - the writer of the introduction to Napthali, in process of describing "the wrestlings" of the Church in Scotland believed that whereas:

... other churches have asserted and contended for his (i.e., Christ's) priestly and prophetical offices, the lot seemeth to have fallen upon

\(^1\)Walker, J., Scottish Theology and Theologians, pp. 152-156, esp. III, p. 155.

\(^2\)Cunningham, Wm., "Historical Theology, vol. II" in The Works of William Cunningham (edited) Vol. III, (third edition), pp. 558, 559, He too refers his students to the writings of continental theologians on this subject, pp. 580, 581; See also Fleming, J. R., A History of the Church in Scotland 1543-1874, p. 94, "The humblest Scottish peasant regarded himself as an authority on "The Headship of Christ", but no one attempted a worthy theological treatment of the theme".

\(^3\)Hooft, Visser't, The Kingship of Christ, p. 14; See also Berkhof, L., The Kingdom of God, p. 24 "... the Reformers discussed the idea of the Kingdom of God in an incidental and fragmentary way, rather than in a systematic manner ...".
Scotland to assert and wrestle more eminently than many others for the crown and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

In other words, the people who formed the community known as the United Societies, representing at one time a substantial proportion of the population of South West Scotland, believed that the working out of this doctrine, having to do with the particular domain and rule of Christ as King, might well have been a divinely appointed reason for the sufferings they endured between 1660 and 1689.1

Symington's book, as will be seen, is a systematic and detailed theological explanation of the words, "the Crown Rights and Royal Prerogatives of King Jesus" which appeared in such prominence on the blood stained banners and in the writings and teachings of the men and martyrs who "wrestled" during this particular period, sometimes called the "Revolution" in Scottish history.2

Two other theologians had written on this subject in Britain. John of Wyclif, nearly four centuries earlier, at the beginning of the struggle with the supremacy of the Roman Church, developed his doctrine of dominion around the distinctions made by feudal lawyers between dominium eminens and dominium utile.3

1Naphtali, p. 15; See also Walker, Jas., op. cit., pp. 23, 24, wherein he identifies Sir James Stewart as the writer.

2Another example of this appears in Vindiciæ Magistratus, (1773) pp. 147, 148, "The primitive martyrs sealed the prophethical office of Christ with their heart's blood, in opposition to Pagan idolatry; The reforming martyrs sealed his priestly office with their blood .... But the last of our martyrs, have sealed his Kingly office with their best blood ...." (cited from a letter written by Mr. John Dickson), minister ejected from Rutherglen 1660 --- died 1700; That many of the "Covenanter" 1660-1690 were thinking in terms of "Kingdom", might also be illustrated by the frequent appearance of that word on their battle flags; See e.g. the two flags carried at Bothwell Bridge, now to be found in the Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, and the reproduction in the front of vol. I of King Hewison's The Covenanter.

3Brown, P. H., History of Scotland, vol. II, p. 438; Vide Campbell, A. J., Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland 1707-1929, p. 17, He saw the Revolution Settlement as being the conclusion to "The stormy process which commenced in 1560 ...".

4Wyclif, John, The English Works of Wyclif, (Ed. by F. D. Matthew), p. xxxv, "There are two titles by which a man holds temporal goods; the title of original justice and that of earthly justice. By the title of original justice Christ possessed all worldly goods, as Augustine often says; by that title --- the title of grace --- all things belong to the just; but civil possession has little to do with that title. Wherefore Christ and his disciples despised civil rule and possessions and contented themselves with holding according to the first title". See also pp. xxxv, xxxvi; De Dominio Divino was written around 1366 and De Civili Dominio around 1371, Poole, R. L., Medieval Thought and Learning, pp. 253, 257, 266; Manning, Bernard, "Wyclif" in The Cambridge Medieval History, vol. vii, p. 497; Both Manning (pp. 498, 499) and Workman in Christian Thought to the Reformation, p. 241, point out that Wyclif was indebted to Fitzralph, Archbishop of Armagh, for his material, but Poole, op. cit., p. 247 said of his doctrine of dominion, "he may be fairly considered its author".
Symington made use of a similar distinction between the word 'power' and the word 'authority', and he sometimes used the word 'dominion' as meaning 'power', sometimes as 'authority', but his doctrine as a whole is developed around a more objective concept of dominion as being the kingdom --- the particular domain and government --- of Christ as Mediator. It was Christ's power and His rights and titles even more than those of the people with which Symington was concerned.

In this respect, Symington's doctrine of dominion is very much like that of Martin Bucer as it appeared in his De Regno Christi which was written in England in 1550. For at least three reasons some further comparisons between the teaching of Bucer and that of Symington will be both interesting and profitable.

1. Both men owed much to their work in communities that had interesting similarities; Symington's relationship to those 'United Societies' which had claimed to be neither "civil nor ecclesiastick judicatories" has been noted, and Bucer's work had been with 'Respublica' or 'societas communitas' in the City-State of Strasbourg.

2. Both men wrote books designed to promote the establishment of Christ's Kingdom in Britain.

3. Both men approached the subject from the same general plan, taking up first the doctrine of the Kingdom and then its application to church and state. It is outwith the scope of this research to make any detailed comparisons of the doctrines of the two men, but in so far as their doctrine of

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1 O.D., pp. 254-256.

2 Ibid., p. 108, "In virtue of his universal dominion he can break them with a rod of iron ...", and p. 188 "the meditorial dominion over the church".

3 The English spelling of the name is used by C. Hopf in Martin Bucer and the English Reformation and by H. Eels in Martin Bucer. W. Pauck in The Heritage of the Reformation and T. Torrance in Kingdom and Church have used "Butzer" which Eels in op. cit., p. 1 admits was the proper spelling for one born in "the beautiful valley of Alsace".

4 Hopf, Constantin, Martin Bucer and the English Reformation, pp. 99ff, "the De Regno Christi is Bucer's final word, summing up all his life work for the advancement of the Reformation ..."; See also Eels, Hastings, Martin Bucer, (1931), p. 409, Bucer's book was first printed in Basel in 1537.

5 Collier, Jeremy, An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain, vol. V, (1840), p. 418, "This book of 'The Kingdom of Christ' was dedicated to the king, and presented for a new year's gift. The young prince, it seems, was pleased with the performance, began to draw a plan from some part of it, and project a reformation of the government".
the Kingdom was concerned, and because of the important influence Bucer had on Calvin on this subject,\(^1\) a few comparisons will provide a convenient and accurate basis for evaluating Symington's theology in the light of reformation theology in general.

From the very outset, Symington's treatment of the subject is more Christological than was Bucer's, for while Bucer begins by defining the differences among *regnum caelorum*, *Regnum Christi*, and *regna mundi*, and his great concern is to show "...how salutary it is for all men that the kingdom of Christ should be solidly restored among them",\(^2\) Symington's constantly recurring concern is for the honour, the rights, the titles, and royal prerogatives of King Jesus. More exactly:

The subject of our present inquiry is, the MEDIATORIAL DOMINION of the Son; not that which essentially belongs to him as God, but that with which, by the authoritative act of the Father, he has been officially invested as the Messiah. It is that government, in short, which has been laid upon his shoulders;--- that power which was given unto him in heaven and in earth.\(^3\)

Both men were concerned about the establishment of Christ's Kingdom in Britain but of the two, Symington was more interested in the prerogatives and the work of the King.

The exact distinction that Symington noted in the quotation above between Christ's "essential" or "necessary" authority and His "official" or "invested" authority was a very important element in all his thinking. It was on the basis of this distinction, for example, that he decided whether a passage of scripture was referring to Christ's "essential" dominion or to his "mediatorial" dominion.\(^4\)

**NECESSITY**

The necessity for such a government or kingdom and for Christ's having these powers as its undisputed Lord and King arose out of God's Sovereign will

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\(^1\)Pauck, W., *The Heritage of the Reformation*, p. 67, "... there seems to be proof enough that Butzer was Calvin's foremost teacher"; See also Torrance, T. F., *Kingdom and Church*, pp. 73, 100.

\(^2\)Bucer, Martin, *De Regno Christi*, (Martini Buccheri Opera Latina, Ed. by Francois Wendel) vol. XV, p. 90, See also pp. 4-6.

\(^3\)O.D., p. 5.

\(^4\)Infra, p. 257.
and centred in man's need for redemption but actually involved an extent of
dominion that went far beyond the elect. Three examples from Symington's
reasoning will illustrate these points. 1. After God had made His decision
"to rescue a number of the human family", then it became "necessary" to
establish a "mediatory" kingdom.¹ This was the kingdom that "must" come
between a holy God and sinful man but it was not primarily for the purpose of
separating the two; on the contrary, this kingdom contained the means whereby
"God's gracious purposes concerning the elect" might be "honourably and success-
fully" carried out.² The salvation of men's souls for the glory of God thus
becomes the primary end of Christ's kingdom,³ and everything that comes within
its bounds must, or must be made to, contribute toward this particular end.
This was also why the Father had committed the government of the elect and "of
others on their account"⁴ into the hands of Him who was to be the Saviour.

2. Christ, by virtue of His essential control as God, already had dominion
over the material and moral worlds but God's sovereign decision to "rescue" some
had introduced another "gracious" dimension into the affairs of the universe.⁵
As one part of an "adequate reward" for his obedience unto death it was right
and therefore "necessary" that Christ should be made the Lord of this mediatorial
dominion.⁶ In view of the humiliation He had suffered at the hands of nations
it was particularly appropriate that he be given control not only over those
nations which willingly submitted to Him, but also over those "heathen" nations
which were yet in rebellion.⁷ These powers were "essential"⁸ to the very com-
pletion of Christ's "mediatory character" because without them he would not have
been able to "apply"⁹ those redemptive benefits which he had already purchased
on the cross. Without them there could have been no such thing as "salvation"¹⁰
and thus it were as though the Father had said to the Son after the resurrection
and ascension:

¹O.D., p. 6. ²Ibid., pp. 5f. ³Ibid., pp. 6, 10. ⁴Ibid., pp. 6, 107. ⁵Ibid., p. 1.
⁶Ibid., pp. 6, 7; "requisite", "indispensable". ⁷Ibid., pp. 6, 7; "give effect to", "bestow".
⁸Ibid., p. 7.
Thou hast established thy right to that rebel world: I surrender the government of it into thy hands: go through it and find out thy redeemed: gather them from the four winds of heaven: for this purpose institute ordinances, promulgate laws, issue commands, subordinate whatever exists to the gracious and magnificent ends of thine appointment.

3. It was by means of His regal powers and authority that Christ was able "to counteract the opposition" made to the work of man's salvation by such outside forces as heretical delusions or "civil misrule", to hold in reserve the destructive tendencies released on earth by sin and the curse in order to give men further opportunity to repent, and to organize and otherwise to conserve the resources of the world in such a way that they would actually be caused to contribute to man's redemptive needs. He was also enabled by these powers to meet the "needy circumstances within the lives of his own people, overruling their rebellions by bringing down their imaginations and making them a willing people, granting them royal pardon, and providing the strength necessary for Christian life and growth.

The history of its origin and a general statement of its purpose thus became practical reasons for the necessity for Christ's Kingdom and throughout it all Symington retained the Christological emphasis. It was God's Kingdom in the sense that God had originated it, commissioned Christ to rule over it, and was finally to receive it from the hands of Christ but in the meantime it belonged to Christ and as part of His "adequate reward" He had been provided with the "requisite" powers for its administration.

It is in the paraphrased delegation of powers that Symington has indicated most clearly one of the relationships he saw between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Christ, and there is that here which identifies him with Calvin. Such a commissioning as he described lies at the root of the relationship the reformers saw between the Sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ. That is, Christ came not only to reveal God's love and mercy, but also to communicate to men God's Sovereignty and it is through His active administration of the business of His mediatorial kingdom that God's Sovereignty is made real to men.

1 O.D., p. 9.  
2 Ibid., pp. 13f.  
3 Ibid., pp. 78, 79, 99; especially p. 78, "When the earth and the inhabitants thereof are about to be dissolved, the divine Mediator steps forth, grasps it with a mighty hand, and 'bears up the pillars of it'."  
5 Ibid., pp. 1-16.
Symington has shown here how that doctrine of God's free Sovereignty which came to light in his doctrine of Atonement, stands behind Christ's Kingship and presses into the whole world through it. In the later sections of his book he shows how individuals and organizations, by responding to Christ's Lordship, are gradually brought into conformity to the kingdom of heaven. The very necessity for such a dominion implied that it be as unlimited as is God's Sovereignty.

Luther was more content to write in terms of the contrast between "the invisible kingdom" of God, which is "utterly incomprehensible" to us, and "the revealed kingdom in which Christ as King and Lord rules". Bucer is more specific when, in his first chapter, he describes the Kingdom of Christ as being the revelation of the Kingdom of God, but it is Calvin who writes in more detail of how the Father "has given all power to the Son that He may by the Son's hand govern, nourish, and sustain us, keep us in his care and help us", and then adds, "Scripture usually calls Christ 'Lord' because the Father set Christ over us to exercise his dominion through His Son." In other words it is not just a sovereignty of God that elects and decrees, as it were, from a distant, timeless heaven --- it is a sovereignty which operates for us and among us in the person and kingdom of Christ and this was part of the lesson Calvin had learned from Bucer. Symington is as specific about the relationship between the Regnum Dei and the Regnum Christi as is Calvin and it is their mutual emphasis on that Lordship of Christ which is the revelation to man of the free Sovereignty of God which helps to account for this similarity in their doctrine.

REALITY

Symington's confidence in the reality or actual existence of Christ's kingdom did not rest, however, on reasonableness so much as it rested on the evidence of scripture. His arrangement of that scripture may be summarized under three main headings. 1. Christ's Lordship had been acknowledged by others in the prefigurations, prophecies, and titles of Scripture, and claimed by Christ Himself.

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1 Torrance, T. F., Kingdom and Church, pp. 22f.

2 Bucer, op. cit., pp. 4-6.

3 Calvin, J., The Institutes, 2.15.5 (Library of Christian Classics, SCM, vol. xx, pp. 500f); See also Torrance, op. cit., pp. 76, 89, "Christology occupied a firmer and more central place" with Calvin.
God, the angels, New Testament writers, Pilate, and many others had acknowledged that Lordship and such royal appendages as a crown, sceptre, laws, and provisions for revenue further indicated that He was a King. 1 2. Christ had been described in scripture as being fully qualified for this office of King, with "personal dignity", "human nature", "knowledge and wisdom", "power", "moral excellence", "compassion", and "authority". 2 3. Christ had actually been appointed to this office. It had been accomplished in three stages. (i) The formal appointment "flowed from God absolutely considered in the first instance" and was an essential part of the covenant of grace. 3 (ii) The intimation of that appointment had been seen in God's anointing Christ in the fulness of time with the Holy Ghost and with power. 4 (iii) The actual investiture came "at and after the resurrection". 5 This did not mean, however, that there had ever been a time when Christ had not been King because there was no more inconsistency between an "appointment" from eternity and an "investiture" in time, than there was inconsistency between the way in which the Holy Spirit had always existed, but had made more copious manifestation of His existence after the resurrection. 6 Neither did this mean on the one hand that Christ, by virtue of this appointment had ever surrendered any of those divine rights or powers which he had as God, 7 nor, on the other hand that God had surrendered any of His rights or powers by virtue of delegating them to be used through Christ's mediatorial offices:

Deity is unchangeable .... His moral authority (as God) over all creatures could never be laid aside. The mode of its exercise only was changed; It was now administered in an economical instead of

1O.D., pp. 17-26. 2Ibid., pp. 28-38.
3Ibid., pp. 40, 41. 4Ibid., pp. 41, 42.
5Ibid., pp. 43, 44. 6Ibid., pp. 43, 44, "In like manner, at his resurrection, there was a more ample display, a more extensive exercise of Christ's regal power ...." See also pp. 1, 2, "... we cannot suppose him to have existed for a moment without any one of them (i.e. offices of prophet, priest, and king) as this would suppose him to have been for the time at least, no Saviour .... This doctrine of inseparable union ....".

7Ibid., p. 47, "The delegation of power does not suppose the surrender of it, on the part of him from whom the delegation proceeds" - God's dominion was not subverted by the mediatorial appointment but "confirmed and established by it ....".
an absolute character, for the good and salvation of the church.\footnote{O.D., pp. 46, 47.}

In other words, Symington's confidence in the very existence of a mediatorial dominion was closely related to those facts which he knew to be true about the King. Such a king must have a kingdom and our best access to knowledge about it is to be through our knowledge about Christ. This is another indication of his Christological emphasis.

In his discussion concerning the delegation of powers we find a second indication of the relationship he saw between the Regnum Dei and the Regnum Christi. That is, it was no new power that Christ had by virtue of his ascension and investiture; it was the same power which He possessed as God but which was now to be used in "an economical instead of an absolute character".\footnote{Ibid., pp. 46, 47; See also p. 74, "His investiture with mediatorial authority thus means his having had conferred on him a right to employ the power which he always possessed as God, for the specific objects of his mediatorial work." Also p. 101 where Things "are invested with a new power and directed to a new end" when they come under Christ's official reign.} There was also in this another implication concerning the extent of Christ's dominion because such powers gave Him "... a rightful claim to the implicit and conscientious obedience of every moral creature .... Great must be the guilt of refusing Him submission; it is to resist lawful authority, to reject the appointment of God".\footnote{Ibid., p. 49.}

The most distinctive feature of Symington's doctrine at this point however, is the close practical relationship he saw between the regne mundi and the Regnum Christi. It appears best in his description of Christ's qualifications for office. He moves back and forth between the two kingdoms, at one time explaining theological fact in terms of political analogy, at another time comparing political circumstances with theological ideals, but always with the end in view of so thinking the one into the other that citizens would be instructed in the development of a "normative" standard for Christian statesmen and churchmen.\footnote{Vidler, A. R., The Orb and the Cross, Preface, p. vii, The development of a standard of evaluation was one of Gladstone's reasons for writing on Church-State relationships and accordingly, Vidler, in his reviving of Gladstone's theories states this as being the purpose of his book. See also Gladstone, W. E., The State in its Relations with the Church (second edition) 1839, pp. 23, 224, 225, 309, 322, 323.} His attitude here at times resembled that of Bucer, Calvin, Knox, and George Buchanan in their adresses to reigning monarchs. Three examples will illustrate the point.
After describing Christ's "personal dignity" he added:

If the land be pronounced blessed whose king is 'the son of nobles', how greatly blessed must that kingdom be whose ruler is 'the Son of God'.

After describing Christ's "human nature" as that which made possible His near relationship to man:

Reason revolts at the idea ... of an angel ruling over men; and it is the same general principle which dictates the impolicy and improbity of appointing a foreigner to the supreme government in a nation.

In process of describing Christ's "moral excellence", several sharp contrasts between the 'ideal' and 'current' political conditions appear. Christ's "rectitude of intention" sought only "the good of the people and the glory of the Godhead" whereas:

Other kings may have sinister ends to serve: even when doing what is right in itself they may have an ultimate respect for their own personal aggrandisement, or to the advancement of some favourite courtier: or supposing them solely moved by a regard to the good of their subjects, they may be seeking this at the expense of some neighbouring state.

Christ's "justice of administration" made sure that "no one is wronged that another may be benefitted". Christ's "exemplary conduct" recommended and helped to enforce the laws of His kingdom and thereby established another principle for office bearers:

Laws however wise, acts however equitable, intentions however pure, cannot have the same influence on others when they proceed from persons who are themselves destitute of moral character. No

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1 O.D., p. 30.
2 Ibid., pp. 30, 31.
3 Ibid., p. 35; The reign known as "Dundas Despotism" came to an end shortly after 1805 with the action to impeach Henry Dundas: Brown P., op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 390, 414; The slave trade was becoming an issue with neighbouring states.
4 Ibid., p. 36; Lord Cockburn said, "It will remain true that, in order to find a match for the judicial spirit of this court at this period, we must go back to the days of Lauderdale and Dalzell.", Cockburn, H., Memorials, p. 88.
government, however good in itself, can be expected to be successful, which is administered by a known profligate ...

In effect all this implied that Christ was a King who, qualified to rule, not only over spiritual things but also over worldly things, and it helped to establish a certain (scriptural) standard of administration, justice and legislation for the political world. On the basis of his qualifications alone, Christ could stand as mediator between the regna mundi and the Regnum Christi and it was as men acknowledged His Lordship in such practical ways that the spiritual became real and the real or physical kingdom began to take on aspects of the spiritual —— the Regnum Christi.

Here again we find a slight difference between Symington and Bucer. Both men saw the office of a magistrate as involving the work of a 'minister of God' and there was something more to it than there was to the work of a nurse, a doctor or a tradesman. Both found in Christ's incarnation that which helped to make the mediatory kingdom real to man but Symington also found in it that which told men what they were to do because that kingdom was now here. In this case it provided a standard for qualifications for office bearers and his very comparison of earthly kings with Christ tended to raise the standards of magistracy.

It is an interesting fact, and one to which further reference will be made, that each one of these points of comparison between civil magistrates and Christ had been the subject of intense debate in the United Societies in South Western Scotland between the years 1681 and 1690. The problem then concerned King Charles' qualifications for office and the propriety or impropriety of acknowledging such a "stranger" as Wm. of Orange. Even then there was more to it than nationality, however. They were concerned that their ruler should not be a "stranger" to their faith. On the eve of the first meeting of the Estates,

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1 O.D., p. 36; Vide, Gladstone, W. E., The State and the Church, p. 224f, where he complains about the trend (1839) towards a "false philosophy of liberalism (which) professes, that men of different religious creeds, whatever be that difference, are equally well fitted for the discharge of civil office".

2 Bucer, op. cit., p. 14; See also Torrance, op. cit., p. 77.

3 Gladstone, op. cit., p. 309, "One of the effects of attaching religious sanctions to an office is, to render more glaring and offensive any irreligious conduct in it, but upon the whole also to render that conduct rarer. The removal of those sanctions will give a lower tone to governors, in common with society at large".

4 Howie, John, Faithful Contendings Displayed (being the minutes of the United Societies, "collected and transcribed" by John Howie) (1780), pp. 10, 23, 364, 366, 369.
they drew up lists of the names of men who were 'qualified' in their opinion to sit in it and sent representatives to influence the electors in their choices.¹

Figgis has complained about how "... the value attached to the Bible was a stumbling-block in the development of "pure politics"² and no doubt this was a serious fault of the Anabaptists and others, but unless one is prepared to reject categorically all scriptural statements concerning relationships between heavenly and earthly kingdoms, then Dr. Symington's arrangements of these statements from scripture must continue to command respect. The acknowledgments of Christ's Kingship established a divinely authorised precedent. The qualifications for office are based upon an entirely different use of Scripture --- having to do with the historical record of the life of Christ. The detailed description of His actual appointment takes it out of the realm of example and ethical option, and into the realm of moral obligation. Men were to respond in the most practical ways to the fact that Christ was King and it was by this means that Christ would establish His Kingdom in Scotland. No one part of scripture is belaboured and the over-all impression is that these are the findings resulting from an exhaustive survey of the whole Bible, submitted to his readers for the purpose of stimulating their own further study.

**NATURE**

Symington was extremely careful to insist throughout his book that Christ's Dominion was by nature a Spiritual Dominion, but this did not mean that it could therefore have "no sort of connexion with the world or with things secular"³. Its origin lay in the Father's appointment, not in a coronation or an election by men.⁴ Its "grand end" was to save the soul,⁵ not merely to administer public justice, preserve peace, advance morals, and establish social order.⁶ Its

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¹Ibid., pp. 378ff.

²The Cambridge Modern History, vol. III, p. 740, "The deference paid to the letter of scripture .... This enslavement to the letter of Scripture ...".

³O.D., p. 59. ⁴Ibid., pp. 51f.

⁵Ibid., p. 53; Bucer, writing of the relationship between Kingdom and Church in De Regno Christi (p. 54) said "... whatever things are done in the Church should have as their object and contribute to the accomplishing of the salvation of men".

⁶Ibid., p. 53; Vide, De Regno Christi, p. 7, where Bucer makes a similar comparison between the work of a physical king and the work of Christ.
administration involved the use of "the Bible", the preaching of "the cross", and "the example" of Him who came to work with the consciences of men, and all these means stood in the sharpest and most marked contrast to the use of fire, sword, and physical violence. ¹ Its principles of operation were scriptural and righteous and not merely ethical and legal. ² "Almost everything" related to it was spiritual; its King was from heaven, its citizens were born again, its homage was of the soul, and its service was according to the will of God. ³ By means of this series of contrasts between the Regnum Christi on one hand and the regna mundi on the other, Symington established quite conclusively the essentially spiritual nature of Christ's Kingdom. ⁴

Christ's Kingdom is in no sense to be 'taken' by force and as one proof of the essential spirituality of it, Symington points out that Christ during his life in the flesh "... steadfastly resisted every attempt to invest him with the attributes of an earthly sovereign". ⁵ This was an anticipation of the reasoning recently brought forward by Oscar Cullman whereby he shows that Christ avoided the title of "Messiah" because of the misinterpretation put on that term by the Zealots and the conflict which would have resulted with the Roman State if He had permitted an unrestrained use of the term at that time. ⁶ Symington saw no inconsistency between the fact that Christ in His incarnation had established

¹O.D., pp. 54-56; Vide, De Regno Christi, pp. 14, 56, Bucer maintains this distinction in means; esp. p. 9, "In the kingdom of heaven and of Christ evildoers are to be brought back into the way of salvation only by the Word and Spirit".

²Ibid., pp. 56f; Vide, De Regno Christi, pp. 5f., Christ "exercised that power (which He had received from the Father) and administered it only by the Word and Spirit, entirely without supports (adminiculis), tools or weapons of the world".

³Ibid., p. 57; Vide, De Regno Christi, pp. 14, 51, 59, Bucer emphasises incorporation "with Him in holy baptism" as means of access to the Kingdom.

⁴Bucer in De Regno Christi, pp. 6-20, uses a very similar process to establish a similar point, i.e., p. 20, "What the Regnum Christi and the regna mundi have in common, and also what is peculiar to the Kingdom of Christ ...", See also pp. 54-59.

⁵O.D., p.58.

standards of qualification for office bearers, and the fact that he had at the same time refused efforts to make him a Zealot King. He probably would have pointed to his own reasoning as being one of those attitudes "based on principle" by means of which Cullman has said that the Gospel is able to equip Christians for their work in the world today.¹

But once the essential spirituality of Christ's Kingdom had been clearly and boldly asserted, then Dr. Symington bent every effort toward showing the necessary close practical relationships between the Regnum Christi and the regna mundi. The distinctions did not necessitate further separation. If the efforts of others could be described as being 'keep them separate because they are different', then Symington's emphasis could be said to be 'bring them together because they are different'. He reasoned that they were already together in point of fact: 1. so long as saints have bodies which must be involved in civil and ecclesiastical society it means that the spiritual has, to that extent, already entered the physical; 2. so long as God maintains a visible church as a "form" of the kingdom of Christ, it involves the physical being an important part of the spiritual, and 3. since Christ has claimed to have "ALL power" (Matt. 28:18) and has been made Head over "ALL things" (Eph. 1:22), then the conclusion is warranted that among the 'things' connected with the spiritual kingdom, there may be "some things which are in themselves strictly and literally worldly or secular".²

He also showed that it was to the advantage of the regna mundi to compare them in a practical way with the Regnum Christi.³ In so far as the State was concerned it would: 1. expose the fallacy of the idea that "personal virtues are not necessary in public men", by exhibiting the maxim (of Christ's kingdom) that 'he that ruleth over men must be just'; 2. bring to light the differences between the supposition that a good knowledge of civil law and personal obedience to it was all that could be required of magistrates, and the principle (of Christ's Kingdom) that made it a requirement for civil rulers to have a copy of the moral law and to read it continually; and 3. reveal the danger of indifference toward that "private wickedness" which did not actually offend public tranquility or violate the laws of the land but which was in sharp contrast to the principle (of Christ's Kingdom) which asserted that 'righteousness exalteth a nation'.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 2. ²O.D., pp. 59-61.
³This was one of the practical results of Bucer's series of comparisons, De Regno Christi, pp. 6-20.
⁴O.D., pp. 56, 57, 350.
far as the Church was concerned, the Regnum Christi provided a basis for evaluation --- a standard for testing. It warned us at one extreme to beware of the error of the Jews and others who would so underspiritualize Christ's current reign as to insist upon the necessity of waiting for a literal advent or a millenial appearance. At the other extreme, it warned both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches to avoid the error of so overspiritualizing Christ's dominion as to find that it had no practical influences in the services of the church. That church which paid most respect to the spiritual principles and best served the spiritual ends of Christ's Kingdom was most deserving of our best support.¹ Both church and state, as two important parts of the regna mundi, thus benefited by being compared closely to the Regnum Christi.

Other contrasts in the work of the two kingdoms having to do with differences between lives and property, and hearts and consciences; between making men good subjects and making men good saints; between purposes ending in time and purposes ending in eternity, did not necessarily demand any further separation between the two kingdoms. They could be accounted for on the basis of differences between the immediate and direct ends of the one kingdom as compared to the indirect or collateral ends of the other, ² and it is at this point that Symington seems to join Bucer in his doctrine of the mutual subserviency of the two kingdoms:

... earthly dominion may be so conducted as to subserve the interests of the soul and of eternity, just as the dominion of the Mediator cannot but produce the temporal interests and social advantages of mankind.³

Bucer said:

Just as the Kingdom of Christ subjected itself to the kingdoms and powers of the world, so on the other hand, every true kingdom of the world (I say 'kingdom' not 'tyranny') subjects itself to the Kingdom of Christ.⁴

John Knox had referred to this doctrine of Bucer's in his debate with Lethington, and probably because of such experience as Knox was facing at that particular moment, Symington as a Scottish theologian is more cautious than was Bucer

¹O.D., pp. 64-69. ²Ibid., pp. 53f.
³Ibid., p. 53.
⁴Bucer, De Regno Christi, p. 14, See also p. 20.
in his statement of the equality of that subserviency. ¹

When Christ had said, "My kingdom is not of this world", He had no more thought of excluding all physical possessions and political and social relationships than he had thought of forbidding all ownership of physical property or all participation in political and social activities when he said to his disciples, "ye are not of this world". ²

In response to the question ("how?") that must inevitably arise at that point where a spiritual kingdom is involved in the control or use of secular or worldly things --- where 'things' must take on a 'spiritual' nature, Symington insisted that the situation had arisen because of the statements of scripture and that it could be resolved:

All that is required for this purpose is that whatever is connected with Christ's kingdom be understood to be somehow or other subservient to spiritual objects, --- objects not terminating with, but superior to, and outliving in duration, the present world ... ³

Again he explained in more detail:

Things natural are subordinate to things moral, and things moral to things gracious; but those things which are gracious necessarily suppose the subordination both of those that are natural and of those that are moral. Thus the two latter classes, which are under the Son essentially considered, must, for the sake of the former class, which is under him officially, be placed under him officially too. The result of the whole, then, is that the essential and the mediatorial dominion of Christ, so far from being subversive the one of the other, are absolutely commensurate and perfectly harmonious; yet not so blended as to destroy the distinctive character of either. ⁴

In effect this included everything in the regna mundi. In so far as 'things physical' were concerned, they came to have a spiritual purpose by virtue of their contribution to the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. It was the function of the church to direct and instruct in this establishment, and this became a partial reason for the fact that Christ had been made "head over all things TO

²O.D., p. 63.
³Ibid., p. 62.
⁴Ibid., p. 101.
THE CHURCH. In so far as 'things organizational' were concerned, it was true of them as it was of the individuals who made them up, that their nature was determined by their profession. Thus, it was an "enlightened and virtuous" kingdom (church or state) whose constitution and administration were written and carried on in such a way as to achieve these "spiritual objects", notwithstanding the presence of wicked, ignorant, or even insane people within it. The next two sections of the book dealing with the Church and the State are further explanation of the "somehow or other" by which physical means are made to serve spiritual ends.

Out of all this there emerged an important element in Symington's doctrine of dominion, and one which continues to identify him with Calvin and Bucer. All the reformers insisted upon the "Spirituality" of Christ's Kingdom but they did not all mean the same thing by it. Augustine had made a moral distinction between the civitas Dei and the civitas terrena which eventually came to be interpreted, or misinterpreted, as identifying God, saints and good with "the church"; and identifying the Devil, damned and bad with "the world". The Reformation, as is illustrated in John Wyclif's books on Dominion, began by urging the church to cut loose from her entangling alliances with benefices and to get back to her spiritual purposes. It tended to define "spiritual" in terms of a distinction between the "physical" or "worldly" and the "invisible" or "celestial". Luther tended to maintain this distinction between the Regnum Christi and the regna mundi and to insist on their separation because of it, although as has been shown by Professor Torrance, he did not see the actual conflict between the two kingdoms.

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1 O.D., pp. 62, 110, esp. p. 266, "It is for the sake of the Church that he is invested with universal regal authority: in other words, the end of Christ's ... dominion is the good of the Church".

2 Ibid., p. 63, See also p. 64, "It will now be understood that when we speak of the dominion of the Mediator as spiritual, we mean that its nature and design are wholly celestial, that it is of a character different from the kingdoms of this world, and destined to higher and more glorious purposes".

3 Workman, H. B., Christian Thought to the Reformation (1911), p. 112, "The opposition which Augustine constantly posits between the civitas Dei and the civitas terrena or civil society was reproduced in the edicts of Hildebrand, Innocent, and Boniface".
that Pauck and others would lead us to believe was there. This confusion was
carried over into Scottish theology because while we find Rutherford keenly
opposing the Anglican Erastians and those ideas which would make Christ's Kingdom
so altogether 'spiritual' and invisible as to eliminate the necessity for any
church government (which they termed an imperium in imperio), we also find Gillespie
reacting to their position by denying that magistracy could be part of Christ's
Mediatorial Kingdom, lest it be a "spiritualizing of the civil power". Syming-
ton did not have these objections to the spiritualizing of secular things. His
distinction was based upon a different dimension --- one that cut across these
other lines to fix upon the "ultimate end or aim" of a thing as being that which
determined its "spirituality". If its "nature and design are wholly celestial, then, ipse facto, it is 'spiritual' whether it be physical or whether it be
invisible; part of the civitas Dei or part of the civitas terrena. Its purpose,
not its structure or visibility, determined its nature. Thus it was, for example,
that civil authority might originate in nature and yet have definite spiritual
ends which made it part of Christ's 'spiritual' dominion. It might have certain
other intermediate ends to fulfill but because of its ultimate spiritual influence
it belonged to Christ's Kingdom.

The church became a key factor in all this, not because the dominion of
Christ and the church were the same (the dominion included more than the church)
but because the subserviency of a thing to spiritual or "celestial" purposes came
to light in its relationship to the life and work of the church. More than this,
the Church, as the body of Christ moving throughout the world and by use of its
own limited and distinctive means, drew "all things" into this service. Thus it
was that Symington could speak of the church as "the great conservative element

1 Pauck, W., The Heritage of the Reformation, p. 72, "Luther separated com-
pletely the sphere of the Kingdom of God from the sphere of secular order, State
and Kingdom of God stand in strict contrast with each other". Pauck prefers
this to Bucer's doctrine. See also pp. 73, 75. Cf. Torrance, op. cit., p. 24,
"Luther does not think of these two regiments (caelorum-mundanum) as ... excluding
each other or competing with each other."

2 Gillespie, Geo., "Aaron's Rod Blossoming", Bk. II, Chapter V in The Presby-
terian's Armoury (Ed. by Hetherington) vol. II, p. 96, "The Scripture holdeth
forth the civil and ecclesiastical power as most distinct; insomuch that it con-
demneth the spiritualising of the civil power, as well as the secularising of the
ecclesiastical power; state papacy, as well as papal state."

3 O.D., p. 63, "Every system derives its character and designation from that
which constitutes its ultimate end or aim, and not from any inferior or subordinate
appendage".
of the world and all that is in it". There was actually nothing in the world that was not capable of being rendered "... subservient to the interests of God's covenant society", nothing which cannot be made to be "spiritual". There is here a third indication of Symington's view of the extent of Christ's dominion.

Calvin thought of it as the Regnum Christi pressing into the whole world through the church. Bucer, in his De Regno Christi, and Symington in his Messiah the Prince thought of it as a gathering together, an organizing and conserving of the resources of the world in terms of their ultimate purposes --- Christ working through men, nations, and all organizations to draw or direct them to His own purposes through the Church that they might be useful in the establishment of His Kingdom. This is the tenor of the fourteen laws whereby Bucer hoped to instruct the young Prince Edward in "the ways and means by which Christian Kings and princes and all the governors of public affairs both can and ought solidly to restore the reign of the Son of God and our only Saviour to their peoples ... to confirm the administration both of religion and also of all the rest of government according to the purpose of Christ our Saviour and Supreme King ...". And this is also the tenor of the church and state sections of Symington's book. Calvin certainly did not neglect the thought of God's working throughout the world to draw his kingdom to himself through the church, but if a distinction can be made it is to be seen in the fact that he preferred to think in terms of the Kingdom pressing down into the world through the church whereas Bucer and Symington emphasized the work of Christ in bringing the resources of the whole world upward through the church into the service of God's Kingdom. Viewed from either side, the doctrine is substantially the same and it formed "a very important element" in the thinking of all three men.

James Orr, toward the close of his study of The Progress of Dogma said, "No conviction, probably, is more deeply ingrained into the modern mind than that of the unity of the physical and moral worlds. Kant gave the age one of its most

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1O.D., p. 62

2Ibid., p. 62.

3Torrance, op. cit., p. 161, "The Regnum Christi presses through the Church, in its obedience to the command of the risen Christ, to bring all mankind under its sway in the Gospel".

4Bucer, De Regno Christi, p. 293, See also pp. 113-291.

5Torrance, op. cit., pp. 79, 161.
fruitful thoughts when he affirmed that nature is not a self-sufficing system, but has a moral end. The effect on theology is that Christianity comes itself to be regarded as part of a larger whole. God's purpose for His world is one and all-comprehensive .... The new apologetic must adapt itself to this altered stand-point if it is to be really influential." Symington, in view of this doctrine of the 'spirituality' of Christ's Kingdom, probably would have agreed with much of this; he had already gone on to point out that God's purpose for the world and 'Christianity' were one and the same and that together they made up the larger comprehensive whole to which everything else must make some contribution.

**EXTENT.**

The outstanding feature of Dr. Symington's doctrine of Dominion is to be found in his unflagging insistence upon its universality:

It embraces every thing animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, moral and immoral, individual and social; - every thing, in short, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. All things are put under his feet. He only is excepted who did put all things under Him.

As has been noted, the "necessity" for a dominion implied an extent that went beyond the "elect". Christ's "qualifications for office" implied that His Kingdom would extend beyond the bounds of the church, and there was provision within the doctrine of the 'spirituality' of Christ's Kingdom which made possible its universality. Symington's doctrine of universality, however, was founded upon six passages of scripture. Each of them was an example of the sharp distinction which he made between the "mediatorial" power which is said to have been given to Christ, and His "essential authority" which "can in no sense be said to be given". Symington arranged them for cumulative effect. 1. Christ's words to his disciples, "all things are delivered unto me of my Father". (Matt. 11:27) 2. His more specific apostolical commission, "ALL power is given unto me in heaven and in earth". (Matt. 28:18) 3. Peter's sermon at Caesarea, "He is Lord of ALL". (Acts 10:36) 4. Paul's words, "And hath put ALL things under his feet, and gave him to be head over ALL things to the church". (Eph. 1:22)

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1 Orr, James, *The Progress of Dogma*, p. 319.
2 O.D., p. 100.
3 Supra., p. 241.
5. Paul's words, "And ye are complete in him which is head of ALL principality and power". (Col. 2:10) 6. The one exception which strengthens the point, "For he hath put ALL things under his feet. But ... it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him". (1 Cor. 15:27) 7. The passage used by Calvin for the same purpose from Psalm 8, as quoted in both Heb. 2:6-8 and Matt. 21:15, 16, "... thou hast put ALL things in sujection under his feet. For in that he put all in sujection under him, HE LEFT NOTHING THAT IS NOT PUT UNDER HIM". 

There were five classifications of the "all things" which could be shown by scripture evidence to have been put into Christ's dominion. 1. **Inanimate and irrational life**, such as sun, moon, stars, animals, fish, and birds which had been known to respond to Christ's mediatorial control. 2. **Angels**, both holy and fallen hosts, who had been made to serve Christ's mediatorial purposes. 3. **Men**, "All flesh", elect and non-elect, alive and dead, in their official and in their private capacities, came under Christ's direct control: 

There can be no greater mistake than to limit the Mediator's power to the members of the church ....  
Persons in their civil not less than their ecclesiastic capacity .... Among the human family not one is exempted from the government of Messiah ...

4. **Associations** of every kind, domestic, civil, and ecclesiastical had been included in Christ's dominion because "individuals, by forming themselves into societies, may make themselves powerful for good or evil .... Bodies politic or corporations are to be regarded as large moral subjects". The negative alternative to this conclusion was to agree that those who wished to be free from the restraints of moral obligation had "only to band themselves together to have the proud wish of independence gratified". The positive side to it lay in the point that all organizations, but particularly the church and the state, by virtue of their sujection to Christ's dominion, may therefore have some part to play in

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1O.D., pp. 74-76.  
2Ibid., p. 96. Cf. Gillespie in Presbyterian's Armoury, op. cit., p. 95, "Christ is head over every man in the church, not of every man in the world".  
3Ibid., p. 97.  
4Ibid., p. 97.
His redemptive purposes.  

5. Even the wheels of providence were controlled by Christ. Everything that existed (except the Father) had been put into the hands of Christ as Mediatorial King. Had it not been for that fact the world never would have been able to withstand the terrible destructive tendency of the curse, but because of that fact, He is able to direct the conservation and use of everything in the world and the universe. Men, angels, and the affairs of providence are caused to protect and to propagate His spiritual kingdom.

The Universality of Christ's Dominion was a key factor in William Symington's doctrine of the Lordship of Christ. It dominated every aspect of his whole doctrine of dominion and no other one element was of more importance when it came to the formulation of his doctrine of the Church and of the State.

This doctrine of the Universality of Christ's Kingdom also determined Symington's conclusion concerning the relationship between the Regnum Dei and the Regnum Christi, and there was far more to it than a partial overlapping of the two kingdoms. As has been noted, it was by the express "appointment" of the Father that the "powers" of the former have been put at the disposal of the latter, for time and perhaps for eternity. Now, in view of the scripture evidence concerning universality of dominion, Symington concluded that the ... essential and the mediatorial kingdoms of Christ may therefore be co-extensive. Any continuing differences were to be found in formal distinctions:

They may in reality be the same in substance, and of course equal in extent; the difference consisting in this, that the kingdom over which he, as the Son of God, rules by inherent and original right, he as Mediator, is authorized to manage and direct for a new end, namely, the salvation of men, and the best interests of the church.

This point became particularly important in his doctrine of the State because it meant that the State was not so much subject to what is generally known as the "law of nature" as it was subject to the law of the Gospel.

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1O.D., p. 98, "No species of society can exist whose proceedings do not bear more or less directly on the interests of the Redeemer, so that without such under his control, he could not fully accomplish the ends for which he is invested with the mediatorial character".

2Ibid., pp. 98f.

3Ibid., pp. 319, 333, Symington believed that Christ would continue to hold a particular relationship to the redeemed after "surrendering" the kingdom to the Father.

4Ibid., p. 74.

5Ibid., pp. 73f.
The fact that there were clear bold differences between the Regnum Christi and the regna mundi was also dwarfed in importance by this doctrine of the universality of Christ's Kingdom and Kingship. Other differences were relatively unimportant when viewed in the light of the point that everything belonged to King Jesus. This was the thing that made it not only possible but necessary to bring the two kingdoms together in our thinking — that is, to think of one in terms of the other, and to think of both in terms of Christ's single purpose. Symington was not only establishing a basis for the doctrine of the universality of Christ's Kingdom, he was also illustrating the practical influences of that doctrine in his own thinking when he: (1) described Christ's "qualifications for office" in terms of earthly magistrates; (2) explained the spiritual nature of Christ's Kingdom in terms of current political conditions; and (3) showed how the "things" of the regna mundi became part of Christ's Kingdom through subjection to a common ultimate purpose. It was his belief that magistrates, government, and "things" of the world were now part of Christ's Kingdom which made this reasoning possible. Other Scottish theologians generally disagreed about the extent of the Kingdom of Christ. Some excluded the state and included both the visible and invisible churches. Others included only the invisible church and still others seemed to include those overlapping parts of the visible church and other things which might be directly involved in the work of the church. But Symington's view of it put ""every thing animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, moral and immoral, individual and social", into Christ's Kingdom.

The same thing might be said of the overlapping differences between the more immediate worldly ends contemplated by the state and her more distant moral and spiritual ends, and of the differences between the primary and secondary purposes of the state when compared to the primary and secondary purposes of the church. Symington freely admitted these differences and defined them carefully, but they did not seem to be nearly as important to him as they were for instance, to Brown of Wamphray. To Symington these differences were almost accidental and could be important only in so far as they indicated areas of peculiar contribution to the common redemptive purpose. Once their particular role in that work had been determined, then there was no more 'development' or 'use' made of the differences — no further marking out of careful boundaries of authority and lines of distinction. Even the most important distinctions which he rigidly enforced, having to do with the differences in methods or means to be used by the Church as compared

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1 Brown, John, as quoted by Walker, op. cit., p. 144.
with those to be used by the State, were dwarfed into relative insignificance by virtue of the requirement that both, and all, must contribute in their own way to the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. Conversely, Christ's Kingdom then became a kind of pattern for the \textit{regna mundi}.

In so far as the dimension of time was concerned, Symington had not learned to write just as twentieth century men have done about the two conditions of the Church, the differences or tensions between that which now is as compared to that which is to come, but he understood that difference and he applied it --- not only to the Church, but also to the State. From that point following the resurrection wherein the Father actually committed the kingdoms of the world into the hands of Christ, throughout His work in organizing and using the Church and the State and other organizations, to that point following the end of time wherein Christ will "surrender" the completed kingdom to the Father, Symington sees tension and progress.

It is in this context, for example, that he explains how Christ must have power over the world at large, in order to bring men into the visible and hence into the invisible church.\(^1\) This alone could explain the apparent contradiction between the statement on one hand, that "The subjects (of Christ's Kingdom) are a spiritual community, consisting of persons who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit as an essential and indispensable qualification to their admission",\(^2\) and the statements on the other hand that the universality of Christ's kingdom required the non-elect to be part of that kingdom. As did Calvin\(^3\) so did Symington see the church and its individual members struggling in a world of opposition but "while the head is above water the body is safe".\(^4\) He frequently referred to the delay in time as "Divine forbearance". It was neither an artificial stimulant to haste, nor an excuse for lethargic delay\(^5\) but a further demonstration of God's Sovereign Grace wherein men were given opportunity to repent and church and state were developed in their service.

It was also in this context of progress through time that Symington made one answer to the objection that nations could not be considered to be within the \textit{Regnum Christi} simply because many of them did "not yet" appear to be under Christ's control. He replied that "his right and his title are unaffected by this

\(^1\)O.D., pp. 161, 162, 95.  
\(^2\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 57.  
\(^3\)\textit{De Scandalis}, as quoted by Torrance, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 124f.  
\(^4\)O.D., pp. 137ff.  
\(^5\)Therefore he criticized both Millenialists and Jews on the same grounds, \textit{i.e.} that they had overspiritualized Christ's kingdom by waiting for a literal advent; See O.D., pp. 65f.
circumstance", for the same objection could be levelled against the church over which all agreed that He had the rule.  

He did not discount the importance of the state simply because it was limited to service in time. He believed that there would be not only a change in the church but also "an entire change in the character and constitution of the nations of the world".  

Progress in both church and state was gradual:  

The reign of Messiah the Prince is progressive, both as respects the hearts of men and the world at large. Neither his visible nor his invisible kingdom is complete at once. By the use of those special and also of those common means, which he employs, he carries forward with irresistible energy, his work of grace and his work of judgment, at once gradually subjugating his enemies and gathering in those given him by the Father. This work embraces a period of several thousand years, during which his kingdom is making steady advancement.  

By various means, particularly through his emphasis on Christ's Kingship, Symington sought to show the close practical relationship between the regna mundi and a Regnum Christi "coextensive" with the Regnum Dei. There was that here which could have been very misleading but by preserving these other distinctions in the dimension of time between the "now" and the "then", and by emphasizing the gradual progress being made through time and the reason for the delay, he avoided the charge that he was trying to impose heaven on earth. The influence of this doctrine in his own life, making him one of the most successful Evangelical ministers in nineteenth century Scotland, is a further positive evidence that there was nothing Anabaptistic or monastic in it. His own evangelical ministry was perhaps the best commentary on the importance of the doctrine.  

Through it all runs the element of universality. Applied to the dimension of "things" it had caused Symington to deprecate the importance of 'differences' and to emphasize the importance of common subserviency and purpose in Christ. Applied to the dimension of time it led him to be less concerned about the actual state of the differences and more interested in the reason for the delay --- the "Divine forbearance". In so far as the Church was concerned, it led him, as will be seen, to emphasize in theology, as he did in his life ministry, the mission, unity, and irresistible powers of a conquering kingdom. In so far as the State was concerned, he was not so much concerned about De Jure Regni or Lex Rex as he was concerned about De Regno Christi and in particular, the role of Messiah Rex.  

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1 O.D., pp. 105, 106, 212.  

2 Ibid., p. 228, See also p. 185.  

3 Ibid., p. 318; Vide, Bucer, De Regno Christi, pp. 302f.
in the establishment of that kingdom. It was not the law control of magistrates, nor even the minimum possibilities concerning those contributions which a magistrate might make as a "physician" to society; but it was the maximum possibility open to Christian magistracy and to Christian citizens who were finding, through the use of the franchise, new opportunities for Christian influence, in which Symington was interested.

There were no points of significant disagreement between William Symington and Martin Bucer, who taught John Calvin concerning "the Kingdom of Christ". The most important and distinctive feature of that which they held in common is to be seen in their agreement concerning the universality of Christ's Kingdom. Professor Torrance said of Bucer's thought on this subject:

"This then is one of the great characteristics of Butzer's teaching, that the Kingdom of Christ stretches both over those who believe ... and over those who are without the Church, for it concerns salvation temporal and eternal, spans the whole life and activity of men and society and involves their reorganisation as a regnum externum in the service of the Regnum Christi."

Of Calvin he said:

"That is a very important element in Calvin's view: the fact that the whole world belongs to the Kingdom of Christ and has come under His redemption, and that the triumph of Christ will soon be manifest everywhere among all nations."

There was however, some difference in emphasis and it is here that Symington's development of reformation theology is to be found. Luther apparently did not make much effort to resolve the differences between the regna mundi and the Regnum Christi. Bucer insisted that the regna mundi must be brought into the Regnum Christi and he brought some emphasis to bear upon that idea by insisting upon the individual's service to Christ in all things through the church, but his main

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1 Pauck, W. The Heritage of the Reformation, p. 67, "there seems to be proof enough that Butzer was Calvin's foremost teacher." See also Torrance, op. cit., pp. 75, 100, "From Butzer Calvin learned much about election, the Kingdom of Christ, the ministry of the Church, and the place and function of discipline ...".

2 Torrance, op. cit., p. 79.

3 Ibid., p. 161.

4 It is at this point that Luther falls back on his doctrine of the Larva Dei, the 'mask' of God which comes between the geistliche kingdom and the weltliche kingdom. Galatians (Watson's ed.), pp. 104ff.

5 Bucer, De Regno Christi, pp. 113, 239, These are his first and eighth laws, having to do with the education of youth.
emphasis here is to be seen in the fact that he addressed his remarks to the young Prince and gave him those fourteen laws which could be considered to be illustrations of the application that should be made of the relationship that existed between these two kingdoms. Through such laws as these the Kingdom of Christ would be established in England. Calvin too addressed his remarks to monarchs and worked in the community at Geneva to illustrate these principles to the world.

Symington on the other hand, addressed his remarks to no one person or magistrate and thereby gave them to the recently enfranchised Christian citizenry --- for the purpose of instructing them in their new responsibilities and their bearing on the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. Thus it is that Symington's primary contribution is not to be found in his statements concerning the relationships within Christ's Kingdom nor is it to be found in his statements concerning the differences between Christ's Kingdom and the kingdoms of this world, but in his explanation of the significance of those relationships and differences. Instead of writing laws which illustrated these relationships and differences --- for a king to enact and administer, Symington explained them in such a way that they provided a policy or basis of principle whereby Christian citizens (statesmen and churchmen) might see in Christ's Kingdom itself an absolute standard: for their own evaluation of the qualifications of office bearers; for their own basis of judgment concerning policies of administration, legislation and justice; and for their own evaluation of the 'success' or 'failure' of a government. He wanted them to look behind the experience of history and beyond the visions of human intellect to find this standard of action for church and state in that Kingdom of Christ which was bound to come. This helps to explain why Bucer's later sections (at least those parts dealing with the state) resemble a code of laws, while Symington's sections on Church and State resemble a handbook for churchmen and statesmen --- and even here it is such a mirroring of the relationships within the doctrine of dominion as will provide principles for deciding internal affairs and balancing external relationships between church and state. While Bucer found in Christ's incarnation the doctrine of the "mutual subserviency" of the two kingdoms, Symington also found in it a means for evaluating spiritual qualifications of civil magistrates. While Bucer insisted upon a scriptural basis for civil laws, Symington explained

1Ibid., pp. 113-291.
3Bucer, De Regno Christi, p. 266, "No law or regulation made for governing the life and morals of men can bear the name of law unless it is derived and taken from the chief law, namely, the mind of the God who sees and rules all things ..."
the point in detail by showing how both tables of the law were involved in the enactment of civil legislation. While Bucer suggests that it is necessary to "yoke" things physical into the service of the spiritual kingdom, Symington is careful to explain "how" this can be done through the subjection of the natural and the moral to the gracious, and their acquiescence in one ultimate 'spiritual' end.

Symington's doctrine of the dominion of Christ was the same in substance as the doctrine of Bucer and Calvin. It was by means such as these that he sought to bring that theology into vital contact with the life of the worshipping church in the nineteenth century. Half a century later another Scottish theologian emphasized the importance of that particular contribution when he described the great need of the twentieth century:

But the Church has another and yet more difficult task before it, if it is to retain its ascendancy over the minds of men. That task is to bring Christianity to bear as an applied power on the life and conditions of society ... into the whole practical life of the age --- into laws, institutions, commerce, literature, art; into domestic, civil, social, and political relations; into national and international doings --- in this sense to bring in the Kingdom of God among men.

There were however points of real disagreement between Symington and other Scottish theologians. Andrew Melville with his "twa kings and twa Kingdoms" probably would have excluded the State and Magistracy in so far as Christ's Mediatorial dominion was concerned. James Melville believed that "the king hath his power and authority from God the Creator to discharge his office in all things civil and temporal, just as church men have theirs from Christ their Mediator, to do their office in things heavenly and spiritual". George Buchanan explained to King James that the state was founded in "nature" and he frequently referred to the magistrate as being a "physician" to society, but he did not relate that to

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1O.D., pp. 234-241.  
2Bucer, De Regno Christi, p. 20.  
3Orr, Jas., The Progress of Dogma, p. 353.  
4James Melville's Diary (Ed. by Bannatyne Club) pp. 245f.; See also Walker, op. cit., pp. 143f.  
Christ's work as Mediator.¹

George Gillespie said, "I could enlarge myself further against that most dangerous principle, that all government, even that which is civil is given to Christ, and to him as Mediator." He insisted upon "a two fold headship of Jesus Christ". One as God-Creator in which He is "head of all principality and power", and all creatures, is to continue forever. The other as Mediator, in which He is "head of the church only", will not continue forever. He later made a sharp distinction between Christ's Headship and His Kingship.² He quoted Mr. David Dickson in support of the proposition that Christ is head over every man in the church, but not in the world, and in process of refuting the position of Hussey and Coleman (Anglicans) he even suggested the possibility of a universal mediatorial dominion and then rejected it.³ The explanation of his whole position lay in the distinctions he made among three words, 'kingdom', 'power', and 'glory'. He believed that these, once understood, "will discover the great mistake of that supposed Universal kingdom of Christ as mediator".⁴ He also warned that if it could be proved "that Christ, as Mediator, hath placed the Christian magistrate under him", it would "go far in the decision of the Erastian controversy".⁵

Rutherfurd, in 1644 after considering the point "more exactly" believed that since "kings received their wisdom and power from Christ, they must also serve Him not only as Men but also as Kings, as Augustine saith... Therefore are they ordained as Means by Christ the Mediator to promote his Kingly Throne".⁶ Symington would have agreed with him at this time, but after the Westminster debates, Rutherfurd contradicted himself and insisted that "The Magistrate, as the Magistrate (should wee speake accurately in such an intricate debate) doth not serve Christ as

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¹ Buchanan, Geo., "De Jure Regni", bound with Lex, Rex, etc., by Samuel Rutherford (1873), pp. 244, 273.


³ Gillespie, "Aaron's Rod Blossoming", in Ibid., vol. II, p. 94.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 90-96, esp. p. 95.

⁵ Ibid., p. 96, See also the "concessions" made to the Erastians, p. 85. It is the seventh "concession" from which Cunningham quotes in The Works of William Cunningham (edited) vol. II, "Historical Theology, vol. I", p. 581.

⁶ Rutherfurd, S., Due Right of Presbytery, (1644), p. 403.
Mediator". Christ as Mediator did not "promote his Mediator Kingdom in, and through the Christian Prince, as his instrument ...". Walker called attention to this change in Rutherfurd's theology "after he had passed through the Erastian conflicts".

MoWard and Brown appear to agree that magistrates did not serve under Christ as Mediator. Alexander Shields agreed with them; "Christ as Mediator is king and head of the church, and as God is universal king of the world". The writers of Naphtali were not as definite on this subject; "... civil and ecclesiastic powers are neither from the same immediate fountain (if one be from Jehovah, essentially considered, and as great Lord, Creator, and Governor of the world; the other from the Lord, Redeemer, Head and King of his Church) nor yet are they of the same, but different natures ...". Thomas Boston, however, taught that Christ had a "two fold kingdom", but the mediatory kingdom as he described it, was co-extensive with the essential kingdom and it thereby became a universal mediatorial dominion. Ralph Erskine also believed in the universality of Christ's mediatorial power.

From all this it cannot be said that the early theologians of Scotland distinguished a two fold kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that "as Mediator He

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1 Rutherfurd, S., A Free Disputation Against Pretended Liberty of Conscience, (1679), pp. 223, 224; See also Lex, Rex, (1644), pp. 210, 211 wherein he avoids the issue; In The Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication, written in 1646, Rutherfurd admits the change.

2 Walker, op. cit., p. 146.

3 MoWard, R., The True Non Conformist, (1671) pp. 139-144.

4 Brown, John, An Apologetickall Relation, (1665) "The Epistle to the Reader", p. 15th, Art. 4, See also p. 17th, and p. 189.

5 Shields, A., Hind Let Loose, pp. 260, 261; See also Macpherson, H., The Cameronian Philosopher: A. Shields, p. 176, "This is an elaboration of Melville's doctrine of the two kingdoms ...".

6 Naphtali, ("With a preface and notes by the Rev. William Wilson, Carmylie. 1845) p. 36.


is Head of His own people in His own Church only."  

It is possible, however, to detect a tendency to resist Roman and Anglican influences by excluding the powers and authority of the state in so far as Christ's mediatiorial dominion was concerned --- a tendency to limit the extent of that dominion to the members of the church only, in order to avoid having to make any further "concessions" to the opponents who were misusing the doctrine. The Roman Church was misusing the doctrine in order to authorize churchmen to control the state and the Anglican Church was misusing it in such a way as to authorize the civil magistrate to act in sacris. There may be some question as to whether or not the Roman Church based its claim to supremacy over the state on the universality of Christ's dominion but there can be little doubt that they used that concept in a practical way to support their actions, and the men of the First Reformation in Scotland took up the experiences and statements of those on the continent in defending themselves against such actions. It is noticeable, however, that Knox in his Confession did not say anything that would deny the universality of Christ's Kingdom.

The Anglicans did use this doctrine in defending their position and it was during the heat of the Westminster debates that the most specific denials of the universality of Christ's dominion were made in Scottish theology. It is to be feared, as would seem particularly evident in Rutherford's case, that the controversy determined the statement of doctrine, instead of the doctrine determining the statements in the controversy.

Throughout these writings, however, there are also to be found the essential

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1 Macpherson, John, The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology, p. 189; Cf. e.g., Baillie, R. Dissuasive From the Error of the Time, p. 224, "The word of God doth not make the kingdoms of the Mediator of two kinds, and of a different nature, but one". Macpherson's thoughts appear to have been influenced largely by Gillespie's distinctions among kingdom, power, and glory.

2 Belarmin, lib. V, Cap. IV, "That Christ as he did not execute any temporal dominion, so neither had nor received such power and authority". It would appear that their claims insofar as supremacy over the state was concerned were based upon the work of the canon lawyers more than upon the systems of the theologians. See McGiffert, A. C., A History of Christian Thought, p. 341.

3 Wide, e.g., Pope Pius V in the Bull directed against Queen Elizabeth, "He that reigns on high, to whom is given all power in heaven and earth, hath ... constituted the Roman Pontife successor of Peter, prince of all nations, and all kingdoms ... by this plenitude of power he deprives the queen of her pretended right to the kingdom, of all dominion, dignity, and privilege whatsoever".


5 Ibid., p. 347, Cap. XI; p. 352, Cap. XVI; pp. 360f., Cap. XXIV.
ingredients of a doctrine of Universal Dominion. Following the time when Knox had made his appeal for support and protection from the nobles of the realm, there had been increasing support for the idea that there were many things that the state could do to help the church in establishing Christ's Kingdom on earth, without actually "meddling" in sacris. Ever since the days when Knox had sounded his "blasts of the Trumpet" and prayed for Mary's conversion in order that the whole realm might be blessed, and Buchanan had addressed King James, De Jure Regni, the people of Scotland had shown an increasing interest in the qualification of their rulers, moral and "gracious" as well as "natural". They might continue to claim as did Brown in An Apologetical Relation, that "a heathen Magistrate is a Magistrate, as essentially as a Christian Magistrate", but they also went on to add, as he did, that his Christianity "qualifieth and enableth him for the right administration, or execution of the power ...". Much of the legislation enacted by the Scottish Parliament, particularly between the years 1638 and 1649, would have passed for actions of a church judicatory and one of their points of particular concern had to do with qualifications of office bearers. Perhaps more important than these other ingredients in a doctrine of universality was the continuing development of an amazing confidence in the unlimited strength and power of Christ, and of His intention of establishing His kingdom in their land. Knox's confession is filled with this thought as are his actions and words before the Queen and before Lethington. Brown wrote back to those in Scotland during the "killing times":

Christ alone is more than match and party against all Kings, princes, potentates, Parliaments, popes, prelats, Kingdomes, and armies; Yea and all the Posses of devils and men; Therefore they may be assured that he and his cause shall be victorious; For he must reigne untill all his enemies be made his footstool.³

All this contributed to the thought that King Jesus could, and therefore would, use the State and her rightly qualified magistrates as part of the means for establishing His Kingdom in Scotland. It contributed, in spite of the specific denials of the Westminster commissioners, toward the development of the idea that the State too belonged to Christ's Dominion. Symington quoted from

1 Brown, John, An Apologetical Relation, p. 189.

2 "Eschol Grapes, or some of the ancient Boundaries, and Covenanted March Stones, Set up by the Kirk and State, in the days when they acted for the Lord, and he was eminently seen to be with them, betwixt the years 1638 and 1649", being pages 335-464 in Testimony Bearing Exemplified (1791).

Calvin who had learned from Bucer on the subject of dominion, but these quotations have little to do with extent of dominion. He had been indebted to John Owen and Francis Turretin in other matters, but they did not support him in this. Richard Baxter and Fraser of Brea in his much controverted Justifying Faith defended a doctrine of Universal Dominion but there are no direct indications of Symington's relying upon any of these men.

Symington's doctrine was the direct product of the testimony of the Reformed Presbytery. His book is little more than a systematizing and popularizing of the distinctive parts of the Ploughlandhead Testimony, which was later called the first "Act, Declaration and Testimony" by the Reformed Presbytery. As has been pointed out in the first chapter, that Testimony was the direct product of the discussions and "Conclusions" of the General Meetings of the United Societies. In it they make Christ's dominion so inclusive, with state and magistracy settled so close to Christ's authority that in spite of their specific denials, the Secession Testimony accused them of founding magistracy in grace instead of nature. Actually they had good reason to be cautious about the use of the word 'Universal', but there can be no doubt about the doctrine of a universal dominion

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1. O.D., p. 328.

2. Owen, John, The Person of Christ, p. 162, "God hath given unto the Lord Christ all power in his name to require obedience from all that receive the gospel, others are left under the original authority of the law"; Turretin, F. loc. 14, quest. 16.2. "We must distinguish a twofold kingdom which belong to Christ, the one essential, the other mediatorial, That is alike extended to all creatures, this specially terminates on the church".

3. Baxter, R., Infant Baptism, pp. 239, 277; See also Methodus Theologie Par. Tert., pp. 16, 47, 65.

4. Fraser, James (Brea), Justifying Faith, p. 213.

5. Fairly, John, An Humble Attempt in Defence of Reformation Principles; Particularly on the Head of the Civil Magistrate (1770), p. 103, "The Reformed Presbytery say, That the institution of the civil magistrate is (in) the preceptive will of God, declared or revealed in his word. The Associate Presbytery they say, That the institution of the civil magistrate is (by) the preceptive will of God, revealed, nobody knows where". Fairly was one of the Four Johns of the Reformed Presbytery and in this pamphlet he defends their testimony against attacks from both Secession and Associate Presbytery; See also Macleod, John, Scottish Theology, p. 233.

6. Act, Declaration and Testimony, etc., by the Reformed Presbytery (Third Edition) "Introduction", p. 1; They explain how, several years earlier the men appointed to write the Testimony became embroiled in the dispute that arose out of Fraser of Brea's doctrine and left the Presbytery.
for Christ. The Father had given Christ all power.¹ Magistracy must have its foundation in "the moral preceptive law of God", not just in "the subjective light of nature", and "Jehovah" had revealed those laws and standards by means of which the activities of states were to be governed.² These people who had been close to the sufferings inflicted by King Charles flatly rejected the position defended by Gillespie and the other Westminster commissioners in the Confession of Faith wherein, "infidelity, or difference in religion doth not make void magistrates just and legal authority".³

Whatever the first testimony lacked in clarity on the subject of universality, the second testimony which Symington helped to write, more than made up. It appeared the same year in which his book was published and the words in a special section dealing with "Dominion of Christ" are as specific as those in his book:

Jesus is King of saints .... He has also dominion over all things ... angels, principalities and powers ... all mankind ... the kingdoms of the world and their rulers ... the whole residue of creation.⁴ Beyond this even, "the Mediator" possesses a power not only of universal providential government, but of unlimited moral dominion. It extends over angels and men, "as individuals, and in all relations of life, to communities and their representatives and office bearers ..., and to the whole family of the nations of the world". God alone was excepted.⁵

They disclaimed any undue reliance upon "the opinion of our fathers",⁶ but there is a clear unbroken line of influence down through the "Conclusions" of the United Societies to the testimony approved by the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in 1639.⁷ The organizational relationship between The Societies and the Reformed

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¹Ibid., pp. 180, 181, 189.
²Ibid., p. 198.
³Ibid., p. 205; Vide, Confession of Faith, Chapter 23, Par. 4.
⁴Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, pp. 197-199; See also pp. 232 (Par. 8), 235, 253.
⁵Ibid., pp. 232 (Par. 8), 235, 252, 253.
⁶Ibid., p. 237.
⁷Vide, e.g., Rules and directions drawn up by Walter Smith, martyr minister, to be used by all the Society Meetings. They were "to pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom ... long and pray for the out-working of the gospel promises to his church in the latter days, that King Christ would go out upon the white horse of the gospel conquering and to conquer ... that it may be sounded that the kingdoms of the world are become his and his name called upon from the rising of the sun to its going down", Quoted in Six Saints of the Covenants by Patrick Walker (edited by D. H. Fleiming), pp. 93f.
Presbytery has already been noted.

The key to the doctrinal relationship between the experiences of the people of South West Scotland and Symington's doctrine of a universal mediatorial dominion is to be found in their personal confidence in the strength and power of King Jesus, the Lordship of Christ. When Margaret Wilson was asked what she saw in the death struggles of her older friend on the day of the Wigtown martyrdoms, she said, "I see Christ struggling there", and that was the theology of the worshipping church at that time. Whether it came from a mere girl or a Cargill, it carried the same thought:

As to the cause of my suffering, the main is not, acknowledging the present authority as it is now established --- This is the magistracy I have rejected that was invested with CHRIST'S power; and seeing that power taken from Christ, which is his glory, and made the essential of the crown, I thought it was, as if I had seen one wearing my husband's cloathing after he had killed him .... And seeing they are so express, we must be plain; for otherwise, it is to deny our testimony, and consent to his robbery.

It was Christ's struggles in which they were involved. He was struggling through them, and it was His prerogatives, powers and plans that were more important than even their lives. Out of a painful and prolonged awareness of their own physical-military-economic helplessness, and their habit of making consistent reference to the Word of God, there came to be an amazing confidence in His unlimited power, His universality.

If anyone had reason to believe that the State was not and could not be, part of Christ's Kingdom, the people of South West Scotland had it. If anyone had reason to revolt against all government and in favour of anarchy, they had; and if anyone had cause to "limit" the extent of Christ's dominion by excluding a state which they feared or which was too cruel and "evil" to belong to it, they had. But because of this unbounded confidence in the powers and plans of Christ their King, they shrank from limiting any prerogative or eliminating any ordinance that might prove useful to His plans for His Kingdom. Instead of pushing the State away, they sought to find means of drawing it closer to King Jesus in order that He might have a more immediate control, a more direct influence through it. The very fact of King Charles' profligacy and cruelty seemed to cause them to

\[\text{Cargill, D., "Last speech and testimony" as quoted in Act, Declaration and Testimony, p. 132; Vide., Fairly, J., An Humble Attempt ..., p. 105, where he describes the "... crucifying of Christ, in the persecuting and slaying of his members ...".} \]
think through the qualifications for all magistrates in terms of King Christ. The very fact that they found, as did Bucer, that the state was having a "soul killing" influence in their lives, seemed to alert them to the possibility that with properly qualified rulers a properly constituted government could have an equal and opposite influence — that it was not just an ordinance of God, but that it was a particular "moral ordinance" which had been intended as a means which Christ could use in the establishment of His Kingdom. Instead of becoming more limited, their sense of the extent of Christ's dominion was actually extended until they came to insist upon its Universality.

It was a strong doctrine, born of adversity, worked out in the crucible of a strong personal faith in Christ and then tried in the fires of persecution. It needed to be read off the pages of history in order to be transcribed into theological statement. The same might be said of the doctrine of Calvin who learned of these things while an exile from his plans and work at Geneva, and of Bucer who wrote of them, as a summary of his whole life's work, while a refugee in a strange land, banished from the plans he had made for a beloved Strassburg. Fraser of Brea found it while a prisoner on Bass Rock, and then read it backward into the doctrine of Atonement. It required handling by men of strong faith and understanding, but as has been seen in the record of Symington's ministry, it produced world wide results.

It was no mere coincidence that could account for the similarity between the development of this doctrine of dominion in the United Societies and the development of the doctrine as it appears in Symington's book. They were led from the severity of their circumstances and the study of God's Word to the conclusion that King Jesus had unlimited powers. Symington was led from an understanding of the "Necessity" for a Kingdom which would govern and control all things which might 'come between' man and God, through a scriptural study of the Kingship of Christ, to the conclusion that such a King must have a "Universal" mediatorial Kingdom.

The whole doctrine may be summarized briefly in terms of the four essential elements in the Kingdom: 1. that "necessity" which related it all in origin and purpose to God's sovereign will and provided Christ with the necessary unlimited power and authority for the establishment of His Kingdom; 2. that "reality"

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1 Howie points out that they substituted the term 'Civil Magistrate' for the term 'King' at the renewing of the covenants at Lesmahagow, 1689, in Faithful Contendings Displayed, (1780), p. 381.

2 Eels, H., Martin Bucer, pp. 393-400, wherein he described Bucer's struggle with the authorities of Strassburg prior to his banishment.
which meant that Christ's Kingdom and Kingship was now the most important and practical factor in all world affairs; 2. that doctrine of "spirituality" which provided the means or explained "how" things, organizations and individuals could become useful in the establishment of Christ's 'spiritual' Kingdom; and 4. that "universality" which tied everything else together, assuring us of what to expect and determining the gradual progress through time towards the Regnum Christi totum.

It was the fourth of these which provided the grounds for sharpest disagreement between Symington and many other Scottish theologians, and it is this same point which identified his doctrine with a very important element in the reformation teachings of Bucer and Calvin. His doctrine was an expression of the Testimony of his church, and this identification would indicate the correctness of their claim to be the "Reformation" Presbyterian Church. Far more important is the fact that this doctrine, which had been neglected, denied or obscured by other churches, and by some within the Reformed Presbyterian Church, was being reintroduced into the church in Scotland. This was a significant contribution to Scottish theology.

It is in Symington's applications of this doctrine to the life of the worshipping Church and to the State that we find his development of the theology of the earlier reformers.

There is that about Ptolemy's view of the relationship between heaven and earth which also helps to illustrate the general relationship Dr. Symington saw between this doctrine of dominion and the kingdoms of the earth. As Ptolemy saw the heavens to be an overarching dome of reality which earth was intended to reflect or imitate, so Symington seemed to see the Regnum Christi ("coextensive" with the Regnum Dei) forming an overarching dome of theological fact or reality, and the regna mundi being brought gradually into full conformity to it. They had been created with this end in view. To begin with, Christ bestowed upon them those characteristics which made it possible for them to be brought into

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1 Professor Torrance has referred to this analogy, in Kingdom and Church, p. 1; Symington would have been acquainted with a somewhat similar concept, Vide, Vindiciæ Magistratus: or the Divine Institution and Right of the Civil Magistrate Vindicated: by John Thorburn, (1773), p. 171, "... all the different kingdoms of the world are just so many parts or provinces of the divine monarchy or empire, and bear the same relation to it, that the several cities, provinces or counties, belonging to the dominions of any earthly prince, do to the whole"; He referred to "An Essay upon the Origin of Civil Power", in Essays upon Several Subjects by Sir Richard Blackmore, 1706; Vide, pp. 428, 433, 436, in Blackmore's Essay.
conformity to the pattern of his own Kingdom, but it was not as though He had built their own norms into them. There was no thought of reading the pattern for the Kingdom off the church and the state; it was the other way round. There was nothing static about it because Messiah the Prince continued to press through the church and to work throughout the world drawing and directing the kingdoms of the world toward His own ends. This kingdom pattern provided not only those essential characteristics of the church which made possible a balanced relationship between church and state, it also indicated the principles for the proper internal administration of each of them.
CHAPTER VII

DOMINION APPLIED TO THE CHURCH

"Let us learn to begin with the Kingdom and Priesthood when we speak of the state and government of the Church."

(John Calvin)
CHAPTER VII.

DOCTRINE OF DOMINION APPLIED TO THE CHURCH.

John Calvin said, "Let us learn to begin with the Kingdom and Priesthood when we speak of the state and government of the Church", and John MacPherson said it was the particular concern of the early Scottish theologians "for the glory of Christ and for the preserving inviolate all His prerogatives that made them expend their strength and give their days to the unwearied vindication of that conception of the Church, in which alone, as they thought, Christ had scope to exercise His rights as their Head, their King." Whether or not the early Scottish theologians limited Christ's Kingship to the scope of the church may be open to question, but that they approached the doctrine of the church from a Christological rather than an ecclesiological standpoint is true and, as he went on to say, "It is this that gives lasting interest and importance" to their writing. William Symington, as has been seen by his earlier writing on Atonement and the Kingdom, had learned John Calvin's lesson. He was also a typical example of this Scottish Christologically-centred ecclesiology. His doctrine of the Church could be cited as one of the most concise and yet thorough commentaries on the phrase that figured large in Scottish theological writing for 300 years, viz., "Christ's Headship in matters ecclesiastical".

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1 Calvin, John, Commentary on Jer. 33:17f, as quoted by Torrance, T., Kingdom and Church, p. 153; See also p. 154, "For where the Kingdom and Priesthood of Christ are found, there, no doubt, is the Church. But where Christ is not owned as a King and a Priest, there is nothing but chaos as under the Papacy".

2 MacPherson, John, The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology, p. 2; Vide, MacGregor, Geddes, Corpus Christi, p. 22.

3 O.D., pp. 188, 190.

4 Walker, James, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, pp. 129f, and Brown, Thos., Church and State in Scotland, p. 1.
The difference between his doctrine and that of other Scottish theologians could be accounted for in general by the fact that he began with "the kingdom". The whole subject is of current interest because as MacGregor has pointed out: "... there have been in recent years sharp differences of opinion among theologians in this (Reformed) tradition on the relation between Church and Kingdom".¹

1. **The origin** of the visible church² had been determined by the direct act of Christ as Mediator. Whether, historically speaking, it be fixed at the time of the Edenic conversations (which seemed most probable),³ the Covenant with Abraham, or the communication of laws on Mt. Sinai, it was Christ acting in each case in his Mediatorial capacity, who had actually brought the church into existence by His express appointment.⁴ It was "improper" to speak of a "Patriarchal", "Levitical" and "Christian" Church because the three were "different states" of the same church. There was but one bride of Christ.⁵

Beyond this, the Church was dependent upon Christ for her continuing existence because the *notae verae ecclesiae*, viz., (1) soundness of doctrine, (2) a lawful and regular ministry, and (3) the due administration of Gospel ordinances,⁶ could not be maintained without the full exercise of His Power. Christ alone could teach the truth as it is in Jesus; provide men qualified for the Gospel ministry; send them forth properly commissioned for the work

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¹MacGregor, op. cit., p. 237.
²"consisting of all, who, in every age and in every place, make a credible profession of true religion, together with their children ... we would not be understood as overlooking that invisible church, for the promotion of whose interests alone, it is that this was ever brought into being or ordained". O.D., p. 113; Vide Knox's Confession in, Knox, J., The History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland (edited by C. Lennox, 1905), pp. 352, 354.
³O.D., p. 115
⁴Ibid., p. 117.
⁵Ibid., p. 115; Vide Walker, op. cit., p. 131, Scottish theologians "usually regarded the Christian Church as the Old Testament Church in a new manifestation". Symington did not refer to the return from captivity as Calvin did. Cf. Calvin, as quoted by Torrance, op. cit., p. 116.
⁶Ibid., p. 117; Cf. "Knox's Confession", in Knox, op. cit., p. 353, (1) "the true preaching of the Word of God", (2) "the right administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus", (3) "ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered".
of preaching the Word, administering the sacraments and providing for discipline.¹

A church would cease to be a part of the One, Holy, Catholic Apostolic Church if it failed in any one of these. Conversely, wherever you found men ("in every age and every place"):² being taught the truth as it is in Jesus and making distinctions through profession of faith between truth and heresy; living not merely as a voluntarily assembled group associated for mutual benefit, but organized according to scripturally authorised ecclesiastical offices; and showing due concern for all the gospel ordinances — there was the Church of Christ.

It was also by virtue of His Mediatorial power that Christ overruled the basically unruly nature of men in order to organize³ the church; to incorporate⁴ it by covenant, and to purchase⁵ it. It was the covenant which helped to provide the continuity between the church of the Old and New Testaments and it was the "purchasing" which had actually "secured" His Headship over the church.

2. THE ENDS of the Church had been assigned by Christ as her Lord and here everything else came to an ultimate end in the glory of God. Other things might display other attributes of the Godhead, but it was the peculiar privilege of the Church to display God's Sovereign Grace as it appeared in the Father's electing, the Son's redeeming, and the Holy Spirit's renewing and sanctifying.⁶ Towards this end (of God's glory) Christ used the church: as a repository responsible for the continuing preservation, display and diffusion of the living truth throughout the world;⁷ to provide for public worship which would also instruct and make possible a more glorifying kind

¹O.D., pp. 117ff; Vide Walker, op. cit., p. 123, "Christ Himself was the real source of life and of blessing. The visible Church was rather an instrument by which He wrought His gracious work, than a community for mutual spiritual help ...".

²Ibid., p. 113.

³Ibid., p. 120.

⁴Ibid., p. 121.

⁵Ibid., p. 123.

⁶Ibid., p. 139.

⁷Ibid., pp. 140f.
of family and private worship,¹ and to save souls —- that is, to be "a refuge for sinners and a nursery for saints".²

In all this we find one important indication of the relationship Symington saw between the Kingdom of Christ and the Church. A comparison of his "reasons" for the "Necessity" for the Dominion, with this statement of the origin and ends of the Church, reveals that it was the need for the former that determined the origin and work of the latter. Both Kingdom and Church had arisen out of God's sovereign will —- the same antecedent purpose to save souls that had made even the atonement a "relative moral" necessity.³ Once that decision had been made, then Christ had been appointed Lord and He in turn had brought the church into existence and organized it as the most important part of His Kingdom. As it had been the primary and ultimate purpose of the Kingdom to glorify God, to honour Christ, and to make it possible for Him to "apply" the benefits of redemption to His people and otherwise to meet their continuing needs, so these became the primary and ultimate ends of the church. Both Kingdom and Church were controlled and empowered by Christ and both were directly concerned with the application of that redemption which He had wrought out on the cross. The Kingdom, as has been seen, was not limited to the church but in these respects they were the same.

There is also to be seen in this doctrine of the origin and ends of the church one of the fundamental differences between Reformed and Separatist teaching. The church, as Symington saw it, was in no sense the product of a voluntary, spontaneous association of men who came to recognize the importance and value of Christian 'social' fellowship. In fact it was not so much for man's benefit as it was for God's glory, and it had a visible continuity that forbade its being limited either to the concept of the invisible church triumphant or to the particular meeting of an individual

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1 O.D., pp. 142ff.
2 Ibid., pp. 144ff.
3 Ibid., p. 115, "Without the work of Christ, agreed upon in the eternal counsels, the church could never have had a being. Its entire structure, privileges, and ends, rest on what he did. But for his engagement from eternity, it is impossible to see how such a society as the church of God could ever have existed".
On the other hand there is an indication here of similarity to Anglican doctrine. The differences noticeable between Symington's statement of the notae verae ecclesiae and the 18th chapter of the Scots Confession concerning the "notis be the quilk the Trewe Kirk is Decernit fra the false" are not significant insofar as content is concerned. Symington included the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments and the exercise of discipline as part of the "due administration of Gospel Ordinances" and the Scots Confession made ample provision in other sections for soundness of doctrine and a qualified ministry in the Church. The difference is significant however insofar as order and emphasis are concerned. That is, when the doctrine of the Church is viewed from the standpoint of the Kingdom, then the marks of the church tend to become something more than the means by which the true is to be distinguished from the false; they become, as Symington used them here, the very reasons for her existence and the statement of her purpose. As was shown above, he listed the 'marks' in terms of the end or function of the church and discussed the function in terms of the 'marks'; it was as the church accomplished these ends that she contributed to the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. There was less emphasis on drawing distinctions and more emphasis on identification of ultimate purpose; less emphasis on what this church 'had' that another did not have, and more emphasis on what the church 'did', and one of the interesting results is to be seen in the similarity between Symington's statements concerning the notae and the description of the church approved in the Anglican Articles of Religion:

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

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1O.D., p. 113, Where he refers to some "whose peculiar views of ecclesiastical government require them to understand it, either in the sense of the whole chosen of God, or in that of a particular congregation assembling for worship in one place"; Cf. Luther's view, "It is a fellowship or communion of love rather than a historical structure sacramentally impregnated with grace", as summarized by Torrance, op. cit., p. 57.

2Ibid., p. 119.

3"Article xix" in The XXXIX Articles of Religion.
Symington saw the whole church as a kingdom, a covenant society reaching from earliest Old Testament ages straight through to the end times, a single instrument of Christ which formed a moving force in the world of sin. It was the vividness of this concept that led him to a position somewhat unusual in Scottish ecclesiology; viz., that Christ as Mediator was head of the whole visible church and that "with proper explanation" it would be right to say that the visible church had been purchased with the Redeemer's blood. This was one measure of the strength and reality of the kingdom-concept in his thinking.

3. **THE NATURE** of the church had also been determined by the Dominion of Christ. It was not only because Christ as her Lord had "conferred" upon her six distinguishing characteristics: (1) spirituality, (2) independence (insofar as human wisdom and power or control by such organizations as the state are concerned), (3) subjection to Himself, (4) unity, (5) universality, and (6) perpetuity, but it was also because these essential properties of the church were direct reflections of the distinctive features of the Dominion itself. The first three were directly related to the "Spirituality" of Christ's Dominion and the last three to the "Universality" of Christ's Dominion.

This is the second important indication of the relationship Symington saw between the Kingdom of Christ and the Church. He used it in somewhat the same way that John Calvin used the "analogy" between the history of Christ's physical body and the history of the church. That is, Christ had identified Himself with the church not only by bringing her into existence,

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1 O.D., pp. 123ff., i.e., (1) ecclesiastical overseers are enjoined in the same verse (Acts 20: 28) to feed that same "visible" church of which it was said that Christ had "Purchased" it with his own blood, (2) all who belong to the visible church profess to believe that Christ has "purchased" their salvation, (3) the privileges of the church which come to us not on the basis of the law of nature but "on the footing of the covenant of grace" are to be bestowed upon all members of the visible church; Cf. MacPherson, J., op. cit., pp. 59, 60, Where he describes how Boyd in controversy with Bellarmine, reacted to carrying the kingdom concept to this extent.

2 Ibid., pp. 126-139.

3 Torrance summarized that analogy in these words, "What happened to Christ the Head of the Church happens also to the Church as His body ..." in Kingdom and Church, p. 139; Symington tended to think of it from the other side, i.e., what ever is done to the Church is done to Christ and in this respect he may have been more like Bucer than Calvin. See Torrance, op. cit., pp. 77, 83, but Cf. p. 89 where Calvin "laid greater stress than Butzer upon the abiding relation here and now to the new creation in Christ, because Christology occupied a firmer and more central place. But their positions are not essentially different".
organizing her, purchasing her, ruling her as King, and otherwise empowering her by working through her. He had also bestowed upon her these particular characteristics of His own Dominion and any violation or neglect of any one of them became, ipso facto, a violation and neglect of His own personal honour and authority. Thus it was that in the description of these properties (the very nature of the church) Symington found the boundaries and the basis for the relationships between the church and the state and between the church and every other organization or individual either inside or outside her own organization. It was also here that he found the basis for the order and programme of the church as she made progress through time, eventually to bring the world into conformity to the Regnum Christi totum.

(i) When Christ made the visible church into a "spiritual society" by giving it a spiritual head, ordinances and institutions of a spiritual character, and purposes that are properly spiritual, He had thereby provided the basis for the solution of those controversies that continually arise in overlapping areas between Church and State.

Behind this definition of the "spirituality" of the church lay the principle of "Spirituality" which Symington had described as being a mark of Christ's Kingdom and so he continues to insist here that while this Spirituality does apply to the whole visible church, it does not mean that each member necessarily "possesses an essentially spiritual character". "The character of any society as distinguished from another must be taken from its object and bearing, and from what those who compose it profess themselves to be".

The spirituality of the church implied two things: 1. the power of the church was limited to spiritual power over men, involving jurisdiction over their consciences but not "their persons or their property which belong to the jurisdiction of the magistrate", and 2. men had no claim on the church solely by virtue of their relationship to the particular civil society involved. The significance of Symington's suggestion for the solution of Church-State controversy becomes more clear when viewed in terms of the history of the problem.

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1 O.D., pp. 128, 129, 190, 191.
2 Ibid., p. 126
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., pp. 126, 127, 177.
His first application involved the basic problem of protecting the state against the encroachments of the church. It was the point of Wyclif's book on Dominion to call the church back to her spiritual purposes and it explains his appearances in court in defence of the rights of King Edward against the encroachments of the Pope.\(^1\) In Scotland the problem was apparent in the church conscriptions of the pre-reformation days. It was a factor in the passing of the Patronage Act by an English Parliament in 1712, and it appeared in a somewhat altered form in Symington's day at that point where the church became embroiled (at least through the unapproved demands of individual ministers) in that kind of conflict with the state over physical property which eventually resulted in partially severed Church-State relations. During the latter stages of the struggle one effort at compromise suggested that one 'minister' be ordained and receive the benefits, while another actually administered the spiritual affairs --- a situation very similar to the one against which Wyclif protested.\(^2\)

The second of these applications involved the basic problem of protecting the church against the encroachments of the state. Wyclif's defence of kings once learned was not soon forgotten, and they were soon claiming to rule by divine right --- even in matters ecclesiastical. The problem was brought to light in Scotland when \(^3\) Olville insisted upon being tried in matters ecclesiastical in the first instance by an ecclesiastical court.\(^3\) It was a major factor in the Westminster debates when the Anglicans wished to prove the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate in sacris and it was brought home to the people of Scotland by the 'encroachments' of the kings during the persecutions. Property wise the problem can be seen in the unsatisfactory settlements involving the Tulchan bishops but it too came to light with the passing of the Patronage Act and the troubles which arose in the 19th century in the form of those patrons who demanded, by virtue of their property or


\(^2\)Cockburn, H., Journal, pp. 60f., wherein Cockburn recommends that "the spiritual cure go to one presentee and temporal benefice to another", and p. 229 wherein he refers to similar proposal by Chalmers in the 1839 Gen. Assembly, and p. 249; See also G. D. Henderson's description in The Burning Bush, p. 129.

\(^3\)MacPherson, J., op. cit., p. 167.
civil status, the right to "present" a minister to a congregation. In effect this made patrons very privileged members of the visible church.

These are the problems that must always be involved at that point where physical resources and means become necessary for spiritual progress. It involves that overlapping area: between making necessary "claims" and resisting unnecessary "encroachments"; between the work of the churchman and the work of the statesman; and between the decisions of the session and the decisions of the trustees. To emphasize the spiritual nature of the church on one hand and the rights of the state on the other hand, as it would seem that Wyclif had done, tended to encourage the development of that idea of civil rule by divine right which eventually made the church the prey of the state. To fail to emphasize the spiritual nature of the church or to minimize the powers and importance of the state, as the popes had done, made the state the prey of the church. By appealing to that "spirituality" with which Christ, as Lord of both Church and State, had endowed the Church, as a basis for the resolution of all such conflicts, Symington was appealing to higher ground for both churchmen and statesmen. It was not to be by the development of one at the expense of the other, which had been the problem of the early reformation; nor was it to be by comparing "powers" and laying down careful "laws" for boundaries between church and state as though the two must always be jealous rival powers, which might be described as a characteristic of the polemical writings around the time of the Westminster Assembly; nor was it to be by any such agreement of mutual forbearance as was being proposed by the Independents and Voluntaries; but, it was by the development of a common understanding of the Dominion of Christ, and by a mutual respect

1Cockburn, H., Journal, p. 234, he predicted that the Church deputation which sought to reason with Melbourne in 1639 was doomed to failure "because Government won't open an English sluice, and patrons won't abandon their property"; See also Campbell, A. J., Two Centuries of the Church of Scotland 1707-1922, pp. 235f., wherein he points out that both Moderates and Evangelicals agreed about the independent spiritual jurisdiction of the church, but the latter insisted that the Church should determine what was "spiritual", the former submitted to civil courts and "the most prominent" non-intrusion lawyer advised them to award the benefice to whoever was "legally qualified".

2Figgis, J. N., "Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century", in The Cambridge Modern History, vol. III, p. 738, "To transfer the allegiance of the human spirit from clerical to civil authority was roughly speaking the effect of the movement of the sixteenth century, alike in Catholic and Protestant countries. It was less successful in those lands or cities where Calvinism, manipulated by a highly trained ministry, obtained predominant or exclusive control".
for the royal prerogatives of King Jesus, that churchmen and statesmen were to resolve their differences. No other influence was strong enough to ensure a properly balanced relationship between church and state at those points where their work overlapped and controversy arose.

This was the application of that particular definition of "Spirituality" which Symington had worked out in connection with the doctrine of dominion. So long as churchmen did not forget or neglect that "Spirituality" and their primary responsibility to Christ as Lord of all, there would be no danger of their making unnecessary claims on the state or misusing physical property. Likewise, so long as statesmen understood and respected this "Spirituality" as it applied to the church, they would neither encroach upon her rights nor hinder her work by refusing physical aid, but could contribute in many ways. For either churchmen or statesmen to violate this property of the church became something far more serious than a friendly tilt between two traditional rivals; it violated the honour and prerogative of Christ as Lord of both. For Symington, it was not a case of statesmen making decisions for churchmen, nor of churchmen making decisions for statesmen, but of both looking together beyond themselves to resolve their differences on the basis of the "Spirituality" of Christ's Kingdom --- a Kingdom which must ultimately be established.

(ii) When Christ made the church "strictly independent" by nature, He thereby provided a basis for Church-State co-operation. Its "spirituality" had provided the basis for the solution of controversy, but its "strict independence" provided for more. "It is independent alike of human wisdom, human power, and human control," wrote Symington, "the Lord Jesus Christ alone is its lawgiver and king."\(^1\)

Behind this property of the church stood that long series of contrasts by means of which he had established the essentially spiritual nature of the Regnum Christi. It was these "differences", projected into the church in such a way as to determine her nature, which resulted in her being completely independent insofar as other organizations were concerned.

This was the property of the church which made "establishment" possible but it also made it impossible for any such alliance to be essential to the existence of the church --- an idea which he denounced as "... pure and undisguised Erastianism ... degrading to the honour of the church and subversive of the very ends of its existence ... a monstrous usurpation of the inalienable

\(^1\)O.D., p. 127.
rights and prerogatives of the church's glorious Head". There were other requirements of a proper Church-State establishment but from first to last it all had to be "perfectly consistent with the spiritual independence of the church".

The author of the *Annals of the Disruption*, in the third series of the Chalmers Lectures has used three hundred years of Scottish Church History to prove her spiritual independence, but then in conclusion he added:

I hold the view which has been so generally held in the Free Church, that national religion in the form of an Establishment in certain circumstances is right and expedient, but all experience has shown how little likelihood there is of such circumstances arising in the present state of the country.

His attitude is in marked contrast with that of Wm. Symington:

... a union between Church and State, of an unexceptionable kind, is capable of being formed, and, moreover, that the formation of such a union is not only lawful in itself, but dutiful and obligatory...

In the preservation of the principle, we see involved the glory of the Messiah, the good of His Church, and the best interests of civil society itself.

To fail to have such a union would produce "injurious consequences of the most frightful kind" for both Church and State and because of the "powerful principles of the religion of Jesus" there must ultimately be a coming to terms between Church and State.

In other words, Symington not only believed that the principle of spiritual independence had been proven in Scottish Church history, he also believed that

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1 O.D., p. 128.  
2 Ibid., pp. 262-312.  
3 Ibid., p. 314, Leaving her in the "free unfettered enjoyment and exercise of all the privileges and immunities that belong to her by the grant of her glorious and divine Head".

4 Brown, T., *Church and State in Scotland 1560-1843*, p. 239; Vida, "The theory of the secular State, as in principle it was expounded by Locke and was maintained and developed by the Whigs and Liberals, depended on the view that the State was properly concerned with temporal welfare and material interests only. Religion was concerned with spiritual and other-worldly interests, and Churches were voluntary societies for the promotion of those interests. It might or might not be expedient for the State to enter relations with a Church; that depended on circumstances and on the State's convenience", Vidler, Alec R., *The Orb and the Cross*, p. 21.

5 O.D., p. 263  
6 Ibid., pp. 308f.  
7 Ibid., p. 310.
it was part of Christ's Dominion pattern and for that reason (reading from the pattern back to the church) the union that it provided for was far more than a possibility or even an option; it was "obligatory" and as certain as the universality of Christ's Kingdom and the unlimitedness of His power. The nature and the extent of the Church-State co-operation will be considered in more detail in connection with the discussion of his doctrine of the State; at this point we are only concerned with the fact that Symington found one basis for Church-State co-operation in the Nature of the Church.

(iii) When Christ made the Church "subject to Himself", He had provided it with the basis for protecting itself against its own organization or members and for ensuring His own exclusive and immediate control and use of it. It was as completely dependent upon Christ as it was independent of men. Ministers as individuals and as duly organized groups had no more right to encroach upon Christ's prerogatives from their favoured position within the church than the State had to encroach upon them from outside the Church. It was as a King that Christ, through the medium of the Old and New Testaments, issued those royal decrees which determined or "sanctioned" "matter of truth", "form of worship", and "line of conduct". Everything that was done in and through the church was by the power of Christ. For the church to acknowledge any other power or authority, or for any other to claim it, "were daringly to invade the prerogatives of Jesus".

This was the active Lordship of Christ in matters ecclesiastical and it meant that Christ not only controlled the Church exclusive of all other controls, but that He worked through the Church with that power exclusive of all other powers in order to establish the Universal Regnum Christi. Behind this property

1O.D., pp. 128f; It was also Calvin's complaint that men "arrogate to themselves the power of Christ which He Himself while in the world refrained from using" as quoted by Torrance, op. cit., p. 135.

2Ibid., p. 147 "Some of them (i.e. church regulations) may be viewed as proceeding originally from God, as the moral governor of the Universe; others as issuing immediately and directly from Christ. ... But as regards their administration ... both classes must be looked upon as emanating from the Mediator. While not without law to God, we are under law to Christ".

3Ibid., p. 128; On pp. 142f. and 149, Symington explained that the form of worship was "sanctioned", either by his express institution or his administrative example".

4Ibid., pp. 128f.

5Ibid., p. 129.
of the church stood Symington's doctrine of the delegation of powers as it had taken place within the Godhead. Christ had all authority and since His moral and spiritual responsibility could never be laid down, it followed that the authority of human ministers "is wholly ministerial and is subordinate to that of Christ".1

Here we find a fundamental principle of Symington's doctrine of the relationships between Church and State. On the one hand these three essential properties of the Church - her 'spirituality', 'independence', and 'subjection to Christ alone', show the relationship between Kingdom and Church. They are the elements of the 'spirituality' of Christ's Kingdom projected into the Church in such a way as to determine the Nature of the Church. On the other hand they determine the relationship between the Church and the State. The Church is thus seen to come between the Kingdom and the State; rather, the state is related to the Kingdom of Christ through the church. The Church contains the properties of the Kingdom and it becomes the central factor in the work of that Kingdom on earth. The Kingdom, of course, included more than the church (the very fact that Christ had made such provision for a Church-State relationship within His Kingdom also implied that); but the church was the important instrument in it all. It was not the nature, programme, and expansion of the State to which the church must adapt herself, but it was the spirituality, independence, and the subjection to Christ of the Church, to which the State must adjust. Neither was dictating to the other; this was merely Christ's means for bringing both into conformity to His Kingdom. They were mutually subject to the Regnum Christi.

(iv) When Christ bestowed upon the church the property of "visible unity", He thereby provided the means for holding the whole organization together. There was no more thought in Symington's mind of poly-denominationalism becoming mono-denominationalism than there was of polytheism becoming monotheism. The church had been one to begin with and because of her growth it had become necessary for people in various parts of the world to meet "in separate congregations and form particular associations"2 but they were still "integral parts of a great whole ... members of one body ... one grand society; and so far as they have opportunities of meeting together, holding free and delightful fellowship with

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1O.D., pp. 128f.
2Ibid., p. 130.
one another". 1 "Separate organizations" did not necessarily violate the principle of visible unity 2 but "jealousies of rivals, and each claiming for itself the exclusive name and privileges of the church" 3 did violate it. An "invisible unity", however, based upon a unity of interest in Christ the Head, and love, sympathy and duty among members was not sufficient; "The visible church must have a visible unity". 4

In the light of this principle, many of the things about the church which men are still using to split and divide her became the very means by which Christ proved the existing unity and drew His Church more closely to Himself as one. For example, "the profession of faith" had never been intended to separate men in one denomination from men in another, but had been intended to unite the whole body of believers as those of "one faith" and to separate them from the non-Christian world. 5 The same was true of the "ordinances of ecclesiastical fellowship". For example, communion was for the purpose of enabling him to hold fellowship "with all, who in every place, by eating of the same bread and drinking of the same cup, unite in showing forth the Lord's death until he come". 6 The "nature of the government of the church", providing for redress of grievances by appeal to other courts had been "calculated" to promote peaceful unity. 7 The

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1 O.D., p. 130; Vide, Brown of Wamphray as a representative of early Scottish ecclesiology on this subject, quoted by Walker, op. cit., p. 107, "But since all the members of this church cannot in actual fact meet together for God's worship, particular Churches, less or greater, are instituted as convenience may require", See also p. 95; MacPherson, J., op. cit., pp. 91-128.

2 Ibid., p. 135.

3 Ibid., p. 130; Vide, MacGregor, op. cit., p. 234, "The outward form of the Church is 'divided', however, because of rather than in spite of the inward unity."

4 Ibid., pp. 130f; This was the attitude maintained by the Westminster Commissioners toward the Independents who argued for mutual forbearance. See Walker, op. cit., pp. 97, 98, "If you can join with us occasionally in acts of worship, you ought to act with us in joint communion, not in separated congregations. God's way of revealing truth to such as are otherwise minded, is not by setting men at a distance from each other. That you should be a distinct Christian organization, taking members from our Churches who may have scruples of conscience, is schism undoubted in the body of Christ".

5 Ibid., pp. 131f.

6 Ibid., p. 132.

7 Ibid., pp. 134f.
"mode in which office-power is conveyed" from one generation to another, by the divesting of it from those who had previously had it, "marked the oneness of the church and kept it up". His own ordination had been a very important factor in his whole interdenominational ministry because:

... the act of ordination is regarded as so constituting, on the part of the person ordained, a relation to the whole visible church, as to give validity to his official ministrations in any part of the world.

Ordination was not the thing that had set him "apart" so much as it had been the divinely authorized means of empowering his whole ministry.

(v) When Christ bestowed upon the church the property of "Catholicity" or "Universality" he thereby provided the basis for world missions and here again, Symington's description of the progress of the Church has a ring of amazing confidence:

... all that dwell on the face of the wide earth shall unite in the belief of the same truth, the worship of the same God, the enjoyment of the same salvation and the practice of the same obedience.

(vi) When Christ bestowed upon the church the property of "Perpetuity" he thereby provided the basis for hope:

The church thus universally diffused, shall be effectually perpetuated. The government of Messiah shall not only increase, but it shall have no end ... if (men) can only have faith in the mediatorial dominion they may dismiss their fears and confidently rely in, not merely the preservation, but the triumphant success and universal establishment of the church.

These three properties of the church, her 'unity', 'universality', and 'perpetuity', were all directly related to the 'Universality' of Christ's

1 O.D., pp. 132f; Vide, MacGregor, op. cit., p. 126, "As the gift of the ascended Christ to the Church, the ministry, if it be a true ministry, cannot but manifest a unity in the Church".

2 Ibid., p. 133; (underlining is mine).

3 Ibid., p. 136; "It is not the church of England, nor the church of Scotland, nor the United Secession church, nor the Reformed Presbyterian church, any more than the church of Rome, which is entitled to lay claim to universality; but that community composed of all those who make a credible profession of true religion together with their children ..."

4 Ibid., p. 137, See also pp. 186, 187; Vide, Torrance's evaluation of Calvin, "The missionary expansion belongs to the very nature of the Gospel and to the very nature of the Church ...", in op. cit., p. 161.

5 Ibid., pp. 186f.
Dominion. Therefore Symington could go on to say that the very nature of the church "... is such as to admit of universal extension ... its divine Head will so order the affairs of providence, as to secure for it a diffusion proportioned to the catholicity of its character".¹

Emerging from all this is to be seen the same strong doctrine of visible unity which has been described by theologians from Walker to MacGregor as a marked feature of Scottish ecclesiology. Walker has suggested that it is closely related to the "kingdom-concept" of the Church and that its decline seems to have kept pace with the rise of Independency and an increasing emphasis on the requirement of external proof of internal grace for church membership but he does not say which is cause and which result.² MacGregor has pointed to a study of "the Nature of the Church in Reformed Theology", as that which would contain a key to world union today.³ In Symington's case it was the Kingdom of Christ which determined the Nature of the Church and in particular it was the 'Universality' of Christ's Kingdom projected into the church which determined inter-church relationships. It had provided the church with the unity, catholicity, and perpetuity which are essential features of a universal world church. The 'Universality' of Christ's Kingdom thus became a kind of guarantee of Christ's intention of having a universal world church. It provided the principle of unity, the cement, which held his whole doctrine of visible unity together. It was within the context of this Kingdom emphasis that he was able to see the ordinances, government, and confessional standards, as the means provided by Christ for identifying the existing degree of unity and for making progress towards greater unity.

It was not by deprecating the importance of any of these means, simply because they had been misused to prove the divisions instead of the unity in the church, but it was by emphasizing their importance in general and by studying all differences in the light of scripture, that men were to prove and to improve the unity of the church. Differences were not to be avoided simply because they were the focal points of disagreement, but they were to be studied in the light of the universal kingdom. It was thus that men would come to want to have them

¹O.D., p. 184.
²Walker, op. cit., pp. 95-100, 122-123.
³MacGregor, G., Corpus Christi, "The Nature of the Church according to the Reformed Tradition", See also p.1.
resolved and progress could be made toward unity. Symington's great concern for the confessional statement of the Evangelical Alliance was perhaps the best illustration of this point. The very formulation of such a statement was a means by which an all-powerful Christ intended to draw men of 'one faith' closer to Himself and therefore closer to each other. It was also this Kingdom emphasis which helps to explain his sheer optimism and confidence in the final outcome. Christ had not only commanded a universal world church as an important part of His Kingdom; He had also provided the means necessary for making progress toward it. Men could do something more than discover the existing degree of unity; they could work together with all these means toward that end. As will be seen in a moment, the practical influence of this Kingdom emphasis on such internal affairs of the church as terms of membership also tended to be one which would standardize and unite the churches in their practice.

William Symington's statements concerning visible unity are among the strongest and most confident in Scottish theology, either before or after the resolutioner-protestor controversy. It would appear from the fact that the universality of Christ's dominion was such an important factor in his doctrine, that this had been the element in the doctrine of the church which had caused men to believe in visible union and to work for it as he did. So long as men planned and worked on the sole basis of the unlimited power of King Jesus and the Universality of His Dominion, then there could be no doubt about the ultimate visible unity of His Church and they were able and willing to resist divisive influences and to work for unity of practice as well as profession. It was some time after men began to limit Christ's Kingdom, to divide it, and to make specific denials of its universality, that there came to be divisions in the church.1

We must, of course, evaluate Symington's thought on this subject in terms of his limited experience. He had not known, for instance, "the ecumenical sadness" caused by the ecclesiological differences brought to light at the third world conference at Lund. On the other hand, as both Walker and MacGregor have

1It would also appear, for example, that it was following Calvin's study of this subject that he became as much interested in church unity as Bucer had been; Vide, Pauck, W., The Heritage of the Reformation, p. 82, "Furthermore, there can hardly be a doubt that, in Strassburg, Calvin was introduced to the idea of a universal Protestantism, for the cause of which he worked so enthusiastically and ceaselessly during the last years of his life ... From that time on, he was almost another Butzer in his interests for a union of the Protestant churches ..."; See also Torrance, op. cit., p. 164, "... there is little doubt that he learned much about this from Butzer, than whom Calvin was no less energetic in the work of bringing the Churches together into unity".
indicated in their studies, the church of the past had in it elements which are needed in the present. Symington did know sadness at the lack of "orthodoxy" among the men at the Evangelical Alliance, but he apparently did not consider this to be reason for abandoning discussions leading to a further development of the confessional standard. They were one of Christ's means for bringing churches into conformity to Christ's Kingdom. Churchmen, as well as Statesmen, were invited to look beyond themselves and their own differences to the Kingdom which must come. This doctrine had an important influence on the polity and programme of the Church.

4. **THE MEANS AND THE METHODS BY WHICH THE CHURCH WAS TO OPERATE** had also been determined and provided by Christ as her Lord. All the ordinances of the church, in the light of the influence of this doctrine of Dominion, became part of the means designed not by men but by Christ for the express purpose of accomplishing His own ends through it in a manner consistent with the nature He had bestowed upon it.  

Worship and ecclesiastical fellowship, for example, had been authorised by Christ, for the expression of the devotional feelings of the church, and for the edification of the whole body of believers. Symington's own concern for the orderliness of his services and the courses of instruction he provided for congregational singing indicated an interest in the liturgy of the church, but it was a fact typical of the times that he did not discuss liturgy as such. The standard of evaluation which he would undoubtedly have applied to any proposed liturgy is to be found in his description of the 'spirituality' of the Kingdom:

> The diversity of sentiment existing among Protestant churches, is painful and bewildering ... The system which has the least of worldly pomp, which least depends on the smiles of the world, which has fewest attractions for the carnal heart; the system which, at the same time, pays most respect to spiritual principles, and best subserves the spiritual ends, of Christ's Kingdom is surely that which has the strongest claim on our regard.

A regular form of church government had not been left to be regulated by "the wisdom of men" or the expediency of "circumstances". It was his confidence in the detail of Christ's administration in this particular part of His own Kingdom that led Symington to reject flatly the argument that lack of agreement

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1 O.D., pp. 146f.  
2 Ibid., p. 149.  
3 Ibid., pp. 67f.
proved the non-existence of any one divinely instituted plan of church government. Interestingly enough he did not insist upon what he called "the presbyterian model", but instead he referred to "the fact" that Christ has instituted "some form" of government. Symington himself expressed a preference for:

... that form in which different individual churches are regarded as parts of a grand whole, and the office bearers as representatives of the people, forming a gradation of church courts, by which all controversies are to be settled, with right of appeal from the lower to the higher.¹

In other words, the same respect for Christ's sole lordship in the Church which caused him to insist upon an ultimate, complete agreement, also caused him to refuse to prescribe a particular "presbyterian" form to which all others must agree.²

Schaff has pointed out that "no particular form of Church government or worship is laid down in the Confession (of 1560) as binding"³ and MacPherson,⁴ MacMillan⁵ and MacGregor⁶ have all supported this as being the traditional position of Reformed ecclesiology.

The discipline of the church also showed the direct influence of this doctrine of dominion. It was dependent upon the merciful authority of Messiah the Prince. He alone could maintain a healthy balance between the best interests of the freedom of conscience for individual church members and the peace and purity of the church as a whole. On the one hand, with regard to "feelings", officers in the church were responsible, under Christ, for excluding at the one extreme the person devoid of all religious feelings and at the other extreme the person whose whole experience consisted of feelings and ecstasies. On the other hand, with regard to "professions", officers were to guard against that kind of

¹O.D., p. 151; Vide, Macpherson, J., op. cit., p. 200. The reformers "... did not regard this matter of government as of the essence of the Church ..."

²Ibid., pp. 164, 169; In order to get at the subject of 'office bearers' in general, Symington described them in 'Presbyterian' terms but on p. 169 he adds, "It is not so much our object to shew what offices Christ has appointed ... as to speak of the exercise of his mediatorial authority ...". This explains his willingness to participate in private services in private chapels with an Anglican Bishop in London; Calvin wrote, "... we know that every Church has liberty to frame for itself a form of government that is suitable and profitable for it, because the Lord has not prescribed anything definite", as quoted by Torrance, in op. cit., p. 135.


⁴Macpherson, J., op. cit., p. 200.

"spurious orthodoxy" which appeared at one extreme in the form of an "implicit belief in the church or its ministers" and at the other extreme as the memorization of words without the comprehension of ideas. After everything else had been done:

... it would seem that the utmost they could require was a credible profession of true religion. Of this intelligence and orthodoxy constitute essential elements.

In effect, this meant that the burden of the responsibility did not rest so much on the testing or proving of the relationship (reputation) between the individual member and the office bearers, as it did depend on their mutual responsibility for discerning that relationship which already existed between the member and Christ. Christ and not man was the Lord of the Church and was finally in control of all such decisions in His Church.

In this matter, William Symington struck truly middle ground between Samuel Rutherford and Thomas Boston, and made a significant contribution to his own church. Boston tended to limit church membership, perhaps because he lived in times of comparative religious indifference or lethargy. Rutherford tended to make church membership unlimited, perhaps because he lived in times of persecution when men joined the church at the risk of losing property and life. The terms of church membership for Symington's church had been derived from those test questions by means of which people were carefully screened before being admitted to membership in the Societies. This, plus a national trend in intervening years towards religious indifference, and other factors, all contributed to an attitude of exclusivism the the Reformed Presbytery. There was an important element in the church whose attitude might be summarised as being that a candidate for church membership was 'guilty until proven innocent' and Symington's position, which was based upon the active rule of the Mediator, had reversed it. In a long defence

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1 O.D., p. 153.

2 Walker, op. cit., p. 121; and Macpherson, J., op. cit., p. 88, both refer to this difference between Rutherford and Boston. It would also appear that the two men were of different temperaments.

3 Binnie, Thos., Sketch of the History of the First Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, p. 185, "... a party arose, largely composed of members who had been received into the Church from congregations in Ireland, which sought to impose its own restricted interpretation of the principles on the consciences of all the members"; He was referring to the Church as a whole. These included the ministers who had not been taught by either of the Symingtons and who, in the main, made up the minority group which separated in 1863 and refused to participate in the union of 1876.
of the new position\(^1\) he insisted that it was better to assume that men really are what they appear to be;\(^2\) that actual saintship could never be a requirement for membership in the visible church;\(^3\) that the presence of some hypocrites in the church did not cripple it and might have some advantage;\(^4\) that even the administration of the sacraments under such conditions could have a good effect;\(^5\) that this view would make the whole idea of church discipline more reasonable and actually increase the sense of responsibility insofar as office bearers were concerned.\(^6\) This was neither the subjectivism of Boston nor the objectivism of Rutherfurd, but a combination of both which was clearly illustrated in his own evangelical ministry.

His well filled churches and missions in Wigtownshire and Glasgow were neither the institutes of salvation, designed wholly for the salvation of souls, nor were they select societies of elect believers who were to be of mutual comfort and encouragement to each other. They were intended to meet the needs of both groups and it would appear that there needed to be some tares among the wheat if the church was to accomplish its intended ends.

Symington's doctrine of discipline was closely related to the active administration of Christ as the only Lord of the Church and to the view of the Church as a covenant-kingdom which had been in continuous existence since the days of 'the Edenic conversations'. Because of this Dominion-discipline relationship he saw the very changes in the Testimony and practice of the Church as being evidence of the continuity, not the compromise, of the Church. It was not that those things such as "translations", "occasional hearing" and participation in civil government which had been wrong during the 17th century persecutions were suddenly 'right' in 19th century circumstances, but it was that Christ chose to face different circumstances in different ways. That same Dominion-discipline relationship also helped him to avoid the two extremes which were apparent in the 19th century church in Scotland, on one hand the 'cauld' mechanical orthodoxy which seemed to centre in the national church and on the other hand the Anabaptistic-like subjectivism which seemed to centre in

\(^1\) O.D., pp. 158–163.  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 158.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 159.  
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 159  
\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 161f.  
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 163.
Independency and a growing Voluntaryism. It led him to strike an important balance between a concern for the liberty of conscience and the purity of the church.

MacGregor said, "It may be that it is in the recovery of the ministry of Discipline, which flows from the mystery of the divine agape itself, that the Church will more fully express and so make more visible its wholeness as corpus Christi. ¹ The important unifying influences that Symington's doctrine of discipline had in his own church and in the church in 19th century Scotland, would lend weight to this speculation; but it should be noted that it was a doctrine of discipline held in proper perspective by his doctrine of the Universal Kingdom and Kingship of Christ that had produced these results. The Kingdom was the end, the Kingship most honoured, and the doctrine of discipline then became one important means of honouring Christ and establishing His Kingdom.

Office bearers were another part of the church's equipment, provided and empowered by Christ² and here again Symington's doctrine of dominion provided an important deterrent to two extremes which have tended to isolate and divide churches.

The first had to do with the distinction, often misunderstood in those days, between the ministerial commission and the pastoral relationship. The scarcity of ministers, the custom of 'marrying' a congregation for life, the fact that the 'ordination' of missionaries or other ministers who had not already been called as pastors was almost unheard of, the importance (in view of unwanted 'presentees') attached to "the call" of the people, and an increasing interest (pro and con) in the ordination of lay preachers and evangelists, were all factors contributing to the belief that the call of the people was essential to the power of the minister. Once a man had been 'called' and 'ordained' as pastor of a particular 'congregation', they tended to think of him as their private chaplain and to limit his services to their own needs. This problem has already been noted in the court actions objecting to Symington's "translation" to Glasgow and he dealt with the same point in M'Gill's ordination sermon.³

Symington's kingdom emphasis made it quite clear that whereas the power of ministry may be transmitted through the men of the Presbytery by the laying on of the hands, yet it can in no sense be said to be derived either from the members making the call or the men who ordained, but can come only from Christ who is the

¹MacGregor, op. cit., p. 249.
²O.D., pp. 118, 164-166.
³Supra, pp. 63, 73.
"fountain" of all such authority. The pastoral relationship was limited to the mutual agreement of those involved, but the ministerial commission had no limits; "No magic circle circumscribes the bounds of his ministrations.... Wherever his voice can reach ... his feet can carry him ... there has he a full and unquestionable right to unfold the message". Behind that thought stood the Christ of a universal Mediatorial Dominion and this helps to account for that evangelical ministry which carried him into churches and missions of many different denominations throughout the length and breadth of Wigtownshire and then of all Scotland. This too explains his willingness, his desire, to ordain missionaries to other lands -- ministers as yet uncalled by any people. These powers flowed directly from Christ as King of the universe, through men of the Presbytery and it was by this means that Christ sent His ministers into the world and authorized and empowered them to establish His Kingdom.

The second, and in some ways opposite, extreme brought back into perspective by this doctrine of dominion, dealt with extraordinary circumstances. There had been some tendency for the people of the Reformed Presbytery to misunderstand the actions of the Societies in refusing to hear "indulged" curates, in sending men to Holland for ordination, and later in waiting for sixteen years without any minister until a Presbytery could be formed. There was a strong tendency to believe that there could not be any commissioning of ministers outside the bounds of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and many still believed that it would be as wrong to hear 'other' ministers as it had been wrong to hear the curates in the days of persecution. The problem has already been noted in the charges made against Symington while he was still at Stranraer, and in the Synod debates concerning "occasional hearing".

Symington's response to that situation was quite plain; "We do not contend for an uninterrupted succession from the apostles as essential to the validity of official ministrations .... there is no form nor rite in being in the church which may not be lawfully dispensed with on particular occasions ... cases may occur in which at the call of the people, persons may warrantably and validly exercise the function of the ministry without having undergone the solemnity in question."^1

^1O.D., p. 173; MacGregor points to a similarity in the doctrines of Rutherford and Hooker on this point, in op. cit., pp. 94, 95; Symington (p. 174) went on to insist that "the power of ordination does not lie with a bishop ..."; MacGregor favours a system with bishops as a means to unity and efficiency, See MacGregor, op. cit., pp. 208, 226.

^2Ibid., pp. 172-174, 177, esp., p. 173. ^3Ibid., p. 174.
This was that same confidence in the sole authority of Christ as the only Head of the Church that caused the early reformers to accept the baptism and the ordination of the church of Rome, and yet at the same time to insist that apostolical succession could never be *essential* to the very existence of the church, *bene esse* but not *esse*. Christ as Lord of the Church had in fact authorized the Presbytery to transmit the ministerial commission and under all ordinary conditions that order was to be carefully observed; but it was that same Lordship of Christ which forbade even the Presbytery from claiming any exclusive jurisdiction in this work. It was when viewed in the light of the over-arching dome of Christ's Universal Dominion that the call of the people on the one hand and the importance of regular succession on the other hand were made to fall into proper perspective. They were not so much 'marks' of the "true" church as they were means to the establishment of Christ's Kingdom.

These are two extremes facing denominations today; the importance of the call of the people which is a 'mark' of Independency, and the importance of a regular succession which is a 'mark' of Episcopacy. Symington's experience in the Reformed Presbyterian Church would indicate that they fell into their proper perspective when viewed in the light of Christ's Universal Kingdom and unlimited Power. It was the establishment of the Kingdom that was most important, and the means which Christ chose to use must never be misused in such a way as to obstruct that end.

The powers that Christ bestowed upon office bearers were of three kinds: (1) dogmatic, (2) ordaining, and (3) disciplinary. It is in Symington's explanation of them that we find the best illustration of the relationship he saw between the *imperium* of Christ and the *ministerium* of men. The first was not for determining what men were to believe but for "explaining and enforcing the truths of religion" by 'circulating scriptures', 'preaching' or 'exhibiting summaries' of Christian truth. The second was not a legislative but an administrative power; not for making new laws but for administering Christ's laws. The third was "entirely spiritual" and as already seen, was subject to Christ in every way.

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1 Calvin wrote "But because by the tyranny of the Pope, the continuous line of ordination has been broken a new expedient is requisite for the restoration of the Church", as quoted by Torrance in *op. cit.*, p. 99, (footnote 3); See also MacGregor, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 211; and Macpherson, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 97, 100.

2 O.D., pp. 175f.

Insofar as the imperium was concerned, this did not mean that as few things as possible were to be established as being jus divinum because that too would have been dishonouring to a King who was perfect in every detail; but it did mean that anything so established must constantly be subject to review and even to change by that same Lord. The Church from her very point of origin had been altogether subject to His sovereign will and must continue to be so in every detail. These points were well illustrated by his insistence on one form of church government and his statements concerning ordination. Insofar as the ministerium was concerned, this meant that the church was not as much concerned about ministering to the more natural and aesthetic desires of men as she was concerned about subjecting her whole ministry to the will of Christ --- opening herself to His ministry through her. Here again the important thing was not the 'powers' that men had, but the fact that Christ was working through the men of the Church in such a way as to establish His Universal Kingdom.

The salvation of souls as it is carried on within the context of this doctrine of the Church as Christ's Kingdom, at first sight almost seems to exclude the work ordinarily attributed to the Holy Spirit. It is the 'Spirit of Christ' which acts in every case under commission from Christ in such a way as to secure the honour of man's redemption for the Redeemer. It is 'the naked energy of the Saviour himself' that rescues fallen man from sin and Satan and it is the power of His grace that imparts the sense of pardon and confers the title of 'children' of God. Christ continues to reign in the hearts of His people in such a way as to protect them as they wrestle against principalities and powers and it is, finally, Christ who welcomes them into heaven as King of Saints and Glory. From beginning to end, the emphasis in Symington's soteriology is upon the work of Christ and the response of man. Office bearers and ordinances were empowered in a special way by the Spirit of Christ in carrying out this work, but they were only the means. This was another instance of the imperium of Christ and the ministerium of men.

Every one of these elements in the internal affairs of the polity and programme of the Church showed the direct influence of Symington's Kingdom emphasis and in general it could be described as being a standardizing influence. Especially in the case of the doctrine of Discipline, Church Government, Ordination, Office Bearers and their Powers, did that Kingdom influence tend to establish

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1 O.D., p. 179.  
2 Ibid., pp. 180-183.
a medium which avoided the extremes that divide churches. At the same time it emphasized Christ's control and power in the Church in a way that identified Symington's doctrine with earlier reformed theology. These internal affairs of the Church were integral parts of the very nature of the Church. In particular, they were the means by which Christ drew the Church to Himself and proved that she was "subject to Himself alone", and it was as Christ worked through them that the "visible unity" of the church was made manifest to the world.

To summarize: The importance of the influence of the kingdom-concept, the over-arching dome of the *Regnum Christi*, in Symington's whole doctrine of the Church, can hardly be overestimated. Kingdom-Church relationship was of the closest and most practical kind. 1. It determined the very order in which Symington treated the subject. There was no thought of beginning with a study, even a Scriptural study, of the membership or ordinances of the church and working up to the doctrine of the nature of the church and kingdom. It was the Kingdom which had been projected downward into the church in such a way as to determine everything about it and yet this did not leave it more rigid and inflexible. One interesting result is to be seen in the fact that Symington's order and emphasis is more like that of the earlier Scots Confession than it is like that of the Westminster Confession. He began with 'God', not the doctrine of "Scripture". 2. It was the controlling factor in every major element in the doctrine of the church. Her origin, ends, nature, means and methods, all bore the stamp of the 'Necessity', 'Spirituality', and 'Universality' of the *Regnum Christi* and it was as the Church grew up into the mould of this stamp that she made her particular contribution to the establishment of that Kingdom. 3. It determined every one of the external relationships and internal ordinances of the Church, because Church-State relationships, the Visible Unity, and the Imperium-Ministerium relationships were all governed and made possible by those characteristics of the Kingdom which had become part of the nature of the church. 4. It meant that the Church itself operated as a Kingdom and here the cumulative effect of everything else came to a head in an emphasis on the "mission" or function of the church; that primary reason for her existence which was inextricably interwoven with Christ's work on the Cross. The Church was not so much a community for mutual spiritual help as it was the particular instrument that Christ used as He

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1McCrie, C. C., *The Confessions of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 17. With particular reference to the Confession of 1560 he said, "... its Calvinism is of a type as old as the days of the Apostle Paul and of St. Augustine, and of a milder form than that embodied in the Thirty-nine Articles ... and in the thirty-three chapters of the Westminster Confession of the next century", And p. 54; See also McEwen, J. S., *The Faith of John Knox*, pp. vii, 21.
went about the business of building His Kingdom.

Hand in hand with this doctrine of the Kingdom-Church went an equally strong emphasis on Christ's Kingship. In fact, as has been seen, Symington's first concern was for the honour and prerogatives of King Jesus and His Kingdom. His second concern was for Christ's "Headship over the Church" and his whole doctrine of the Church was a systematic, reformed explanation of that phrase. It was Christ who had brought the Church into existence; assigned her ends; bestowed upon her the characteristics of His own Dominion; designed her ordinances; provided her office bearers; proscribed her terms of membership and discipline; and then worked through her in order to rescue fallen men. From her point of origin to her work of saving souls, the Church was a Kingdom with Christ as her only King and this was the basis of hope for the future. It assured "a diffusion proportioned to the catholicity of her nature". Everything about it was designed to reflect glory on Christ as the Head. Any encroachment was sin, and conversely service through it was one of the greatest privileges of life on earth.

The distinctive feature of Symington's contribution to Scottish theology at this point, can best be shown by a series of comparisons. While the Westminster Commissioners and others, in process of defending the Church against the claims of the magistrate in sacris, were making careful comparisons of the (rival) powers of Church and State, Symington was emphasizing the power and the means provided by Christ which made it possible and therefore necessary for them to resolve their conflicts in order to get on with the work of His Kingdom. While others continued to prove the possibility of closer Church-State cooperation in the work of that Kingdom, Symington was emphasizing the inevitability of it. While others were arguing to prove Christ's authority as Head over the Church, and His ability to control it, Symington was emphasizing Christ's Lordship as being the means by which Christ's power worked in and through the Church in order to overcome the whole world. While others argued against the sin of "schism", Symington was showing how an omnipotent Christ had already provided the means for holding His Church together, in practice as well as profession. Most important of all, while others thought it necessary to limit or to divide Christ's Kingdom --- to

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1 MacGregor, op. cit., p. 248, "If our exposition of the nature of the Church according to the Reformed tradition has demonstrated anything at all, it has demonstrated that the Reformation was essentially an attempt to recover the Headship of Christ in the Body. In the act of doing so, the Reformed Church has discovered an ecclesiology ... grounded on the Chalcedonian christology ... equally with this christology an expression of the Christian faith to which the Scriptures testify".
make specific denial of its universality --- in order to protect the church, this became the point of Symington's greatest emphasis. It stood behind the unity, catholicity, and perpetuity of the church and it was the single factor that helped to account for the difference in emphasis in each one of the comparisons noted above. It also helped to account for the fact that he treated the subject, beginning with the Kingdom, instead of beginning with the polemics of his day.

Symington did not make direct personal criticism of the writings of the Westminster Commissioners. They defended the church in a time of particular need and most of them have left records of their dislike for the polemics in which they were necessarily involved. Had their circumstances been different, they too might have chosen to write on this subject, beginning with the Kingdom, but as it is, there is more reason to be concerned about the long range influence of their theology than about their own character abuses and in both cases the polemics of the situation carried them beyond the point of necessity. Meanwhile, the Church has gone beyond the stage of having to prove and to defend her very existence, to the business of expanding and uniting her work throughout the world. It was to this end that Symington's doctrine of the Kingdom-Church was, and still is, intended to contribute.

The importance of Symington's contribution to Scottish ecclesiology, and to ecclesiology of all time, has been illustrated for us in the influence this doctrine had in his own church. The three problems in the Reformed Presbyterian have already been noted. The first had to do with church membership at that point where men were encroaching upon the rights of Christ by taking matters of requirement and judgment into their own hands. The second had to do with ordination at that point where the members of the church tended to limit the rights

1 O.D., p. 107, "Be not afraid or ashamed to affirm his universal sovereignty. If some have seemed to do so theoretically, let us hope that it has arisen more from mistaken conception or party prejudice than from real opposition to his honour. This is not a mere speculative matter; it affects the perfection of the Redeemer's character."; See also "Love One Another" in Discourses on Public Occasions, by Wm. Symington, pp. 201-204, wherein he praises them.

2 Macpherson, in The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology, p. 11, "... all their works with which we are to deal in these lectures are critical in the sense of being directly and pertinaciously controversial." "It is not only in works which are avowedly controversial ... it is more or less characteristic of all the theological literature of that age", See also pp. 200f., "... the writings of Rutherford and Gillespie are not only argumentative, but continuously polemical .... This feature of the case should be attended to in estimating the genius of our old Scottish theologians".
of ordination to their own body, to recognize only the ordination of their own "congregation", or at best only that which had been performed by their own presbytery. The third had to do with the ministry at that point where they tended to limit the services of a minister to that particular congregation to which he had been appointed, or at best to their own denomination or nation. All three of these problems tended to isolate the Reformed Presbyterian Church, to separate her more and more completely from other churches in such a way as to violate the unity of the church in Scotland and to limit her ministry to an increasingly exclusive few. This was the record of the gradual development of "Independency". There had been no conscious interest in 'separation' and certainly nothing that could be openly identified as 'schism', but there had been neglect of this kingdom-concept, and it was accompanied by further separation.

Symington's teaching brought to light a doctrine which was in the testimony but which people had unconsciously neglected. His emphasis on the unlimitedness of Christ's power and the universality of Christ's Kingdom was the most important single (human) element in reversing the trend towards further separation in his church. It demanded that the Church bring its practices into conformity with the fact that rights of ordination came only from Christ. It refused to admit that the only duly authorised ministers were those who had been ordained by the Reformed Presbytery and insisted that men should expect to "hear" God's Word in many other churches. It shrank from encroaching upon Christ's prerogatives in selecting members who were 'deserving' membership in His Church. And it proclaimed such an absolute confidence in Christ's power and Universal Kingdom that the men whom Symington trained not only travelled throughout the churches of Scotland helping to heal the breaches of the Church in Scotland, they also went on to found missions and mission programmes for other churches throughout the world. It was the doctrine of the Universality of Christ's Kingdom that was the distinctive feature in his teaching and it was this doctrine that bridged the gap and changed a trend which had been towards separation to a trend that made practical progress toward a universal world church.
CHAPTER VIII

DOMINION APPLIED TO THE STATE

"The Orb is under the Cross whether it knows it or not."

(W. E. Gladstone)
CHAPTER VIII

DOCTRINE OF DOMINION
APPLIED TO THE STATE

In the introduction to his study of The State in the New Testament, Oscar Cullman has written, "Where the expectation of the end is taken seriously in Christianity, it becomes necessary to assume toward the earthly State an attitude based on principle - and yet not in such a way that the State as such would be renounced a priori." In Dr. Symington's case the Universal Dominion of Christ was the "end" and as has been shown it produced the doctrine of a strongly united, universally expanding, perpetually existing Church which confronted the State in such a way as to make their coming to terms "obligatory".

The doctrine of Dominion had made provision within the very nature of the Church for the resolution of Church-State 'conflicts' and their continuing close 'co-operation'. There could be no thought of renouncing the State, a priori or otherwise, because it was an extremely important part of Christ's Universal Kingdom and it was in his doctrine of Dominion that Symington found the principles that were the controlling factors in his doctrine of the State.

The doctrine of Dominion had already provided reasons that implied that Christ should be Lord of nations. Christ's being invested with the

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2 Vide, Vidler, Alec R., The Orb and the Cross, (1945), p. 80, "The Liberal State, when it turns into an authoritarian State, has been comparatively little inhibited by the Churches, since they had lost or surrendered their spiritual power by restricting the range of their interests and limiting their witness. Only a religion of revelation and a Church that knows itself to be an agency of universal truth and ultimate authority can be a match for the powerful State ... Only a Church, which is conscious of bearing an intrinsic and transcendent authority from God, is fitted to confront the temporal sovereignty of the State. Such a Church would teach a high doctrine of the State as well as of the Church and would bear constant witness to the tasks assigned by God to Church and State respectively".

3 O. D., p. 194, "By nations, of course, we mean civil associations; men existing in civil or political institutions; including the office-bearers by whom the laws are administered, as well as the people at large for whose good they are appointed to govern"; He used the words State and nation interchangeably.
mediatorial dominion in no way supposed the abrogation of any of his rights of dominion as God. His moral authority over all creatures in all their 'associations' had never been laid down, nor could it be. His moral qualifications for the position of Lord over nations and their rulers were beyond question and since it was true that "all things" had been delivered to Him of His Father, and all power had been given unto Him in Heaven and in earth, and in particular 'all flesh', then it could hardly be expected that such a vast, important thing as civil associations would be exempted from that mediatorial rule. Without such power over nations, Christ's efficiency in the work of opening the way for the diffusion of the Gospel, in overruling the rebellions of men, in bringing about that time when 'the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ', would be seriously impaired. Symington's doctrine of dominion gave him every reason to believe that Christ was Lord of nations as well as of the Church.

More important than these reasons however, were the specific statements from scripture. The commands of scripture, particularly in Psalm 2 as quoted in Acts 4:25, 13:33, Heb. 1:4, 5:5; and Rev. 2:27: The predictions of scripture, Ps. 47:2, 3, 8, 9; Ps. 77; Isa. 49:22, 23; 60:11, 12, 16; Ezek. 45:17; Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15; 21:24, 26, and such designations in scripture as those wherein the Mediator is addressed as "Governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:28), "Higher than Kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27), "King of nations" (Jer. 10:6, 7), "Prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5), and "King of kings" (Rev. 17:14; 19:16), all asserted Christ's Lordship over nations.

1 Ibid., p. 210, "Standing as it does on such a basis of Scripture evidence ..."; Cf. e.g., Gladstone's analysis of the four principal methods of taking up this subject: 1. appeal to Scripture, 2. analytic examination of the nature of the State, 3. inquiry into what works, and 4. appeal to historical testimony. Vidler has accurately summarized Gladstone's reasons for rejecting the first of these, "... there can be no direct appeal to Scripture in this matter, since the Hebrew commonwealth differed in many points of importance from any that concerns us now, and since 'the Scriptures of the New Testament were written at a time when there was no case of a nation of persons professedly Christian', in The Orb and the Cross, pp 33f.

2 Ibid., pp 194-197.

3 Ibid., pp 197-205.

4 Ibid., pp 205-209.
It became apparent from this that while Symington's final appeal was to scripture, and that he refused to reject the relevance of the Old Testament on this subject, he was also careful to maintain a balance between the statements of the Old and the New Testaments. All three of these classifications of scripture contain references from both Old and New Testaments which involve what God has commanded, what the prophets have promised, and those precedents already established throughout the whole Bible concerning God's dealings with man on this subject. The doctrine of Christ's Lordship over nations did not depend entirely upon the scriptural record of God's dealings with Israel, but there were some things about those dealings which were relevant to this doctrine.

Christ's Lordship over nations implied eight things which could be understood as being either further explanation of the phrase or further proof of the doctrine. Behind these points it is also possible to read something of the source of Symington's doctrine for they are a summary of the royal prerogatives of Christ in matters civil, for which the Society Men had contended at the time of the Revolution Settlement.

**Christ's Lordship Over Nations**

1. The very origin of nations was in the hands of Christ. On the one hand it was necessary to admit that civil government had originated in God, "not as the God of grace, but as the God of nature."¹

National society, political government, magistratical authority, all originate in the moral government of God as the God of nature, and not in the mediatorial system. These might all have existed had there never been a mediatorial economy ... they do often exist where the economy of Grace is quite unknown.²

But this was not the whole truth, nor in this case the most important part of it, for on the other hand, it was necessary to insist that nations derive their being from Christ: "They (i.e. nations) originate in the will, authority and appointment of the Messiah."³ The solution to the apparent

¹Ibid., p. 215.
²Ibid., p. 215, See also pp. 211, 213.
³Ibid., p. 216.
contradiction is to be found in Symington's explanation of Romans 13:2 and I Peter 2:13 wherein civil government is described as being both an ordinance of God and an ordinance of men.¹ The God of nature gave to men certain powers, for drawing up their own constitutions, selecting their own rulers, amending their own systems - and "the right to use those powers"; but this still did not make men independent of God in the exercise of those powers because: "Civil government can be the ordinance of men in no sense that is inconsistent with its being strictly and properly the ordinance of God."² By means of His works of creation and providence God had put the original desire into men for a 'voluntary' social compact; but civil government originated with God morally not less than providentially - He not only permitted it, He caused it - and so it was also by means of His moral precepts that God formed and directed the affairs of nations. As has already been seen in Symington's doctrine of dominion, all the dispensations of providence as well as the administration of the whole moral universe had been placed in the hands of Christ as Mediator and therefore at both these points (i.e. the overrulings of providence and the administration of moral law) civil government was brought under the direct control of Christ, and might in this sense be said to have been brought into existence by Him.

This point had been in process of development before the Presbytery came into existence. Those who first attacked the Act, Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbytery, some time after it was written, used it in trying to prove that the Reformed Presbytery had founded magistracy in grace rather than nature. John Fairly³ and John Thorburn⁴ in process of denying this charge and defending the Testimony developed the doctrine in an argumentative way.

¹Ibid., p. 213.
²Ibid., p. 214.
³Fairly, John, An Humble Attempt in Defence of Reformation Principles; Particularly on the Head of the Civil Magistrate. Wherein the gross falsehoods, calumnies and imposed senses, palmed, by Mr. John Goodlet, upon the Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery, are exposed and confuted; and said Testimony vindicated. (1770) (Hereinafter referred to as An Humble Attempt ...), pp 39ff.
⁴Thorburn, John, Vindiciae Magistratus: or, the Divine Institution and Right of the Civil Magistrate Vindicated: etc., with appendix, (1773), (Hereinafter referred to as Vindiciae Magistratus ...), pp 11, 12, 155ff.
2. It was also Christ who continued to oversee the affairs of the State by means of his control of the machinery of providence. He influenced the counsels of statesmen and the prowess of armies in such a way as to terminate some nations and to bring others into existence. This subject had of course been discussed among the Society men in connection with the restoration and rejection of kings, the coming of William and Mary, and the Revolution Settlement itself. It too had been included in the first Act, Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbytery, and developed in the writings of Fairly and Thorburn.

3. It was Christ who issued those commands through the Word of God which were to direct civil rulers in promoting public good, restraining evil, administering laws with justice, protecting and helping the church, and doing it all in such a way as to recognize the authority and to promote the ends of the Redeemer. He had also stated and exemplified those standards or qualifications for office which were to guide subjects in rendering due subjection and obedience to rulers.

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1 O. D., pp 216f.

2 Howie, John, Faithful Contendings Displayed, Being An historical Relation of the State and Actings of the Suffering Remnant in the Church of Scotland, who Subsisted in Select Societies, and were united in general correspondencies during the hottest time of the late persecution, viz. from the year 1681 to 1691. ("Collected and kept in record by Mr. Michael Shields, who was clerk unto these general Societies and personally present at most of their meetings. Collected and transcribed by John Howie") (1780), (Hereinafter referred to as Faithful Contendings Displayed ...), pp 390, 427, 433.

3 Act, Declaration and Testimony for the Whole of Our Covenanted Reformation, as attained to, and established in Britain and Ireland; particularly betwixt the years 1638 and 1649 inclusive; By the Reformed Presbytery ("The Third Edition with Several Additions") (1777), (Hereinafter referred to as Act, Declaration and Testimony ...), p. 184; Fairly, An Humble Attempt, pp 157ff; Thorburn, Vindiciae Magistratus ..., pp 165ff; If the practical results of the doctrine of angel powers as proposed by Cullman and Barth are the same as these providential powers described by Symington (i.e. the rise and fall of nations) then this would provide another interesting similarity in doctrines because Symington had emphasized the fact that Christ as Mediator controlled both good and evil angels. Symington's doctrine however, would bring men more directly into contact with the authority of Christ than would either Barth's or Cullman's. See Cullman, The State in the New Testament, (1957), SCM edition, pp 95ff; Barth, Karl, Church and State, (1939). (Trans. by G. R. Howe) SCM edition pp 24ff; O. D., pp 81-94.

Patrick Walker tells how Cargill met with other ministers in Glasgow and discussed the subject of praying for a king who refused to live by these commands.\(^1\) From their beginning to their end, the "Conclusions" of the United Societies show how much they were concerned about 'the extent' to which they should submit (through such things as the paying of 'the cess') to the State. Their concern for properly qualified officers appeared in connection with the selection and appointment of men to represent their cause to the Reformed Church in Holland, and before the King in London. It was also involved in their selection of those military officers to whom they were to be in subjection at the time of the origin of the Cameronian Regiment.\(^2\)

4. **It was Christ who overruled the rebellions of those peoples who refused to obey Him.**\(^3\) Many of the Society Folk believed that the persecutions they were enduring were the direct result of the national rebellion or apostacy and there were those who wanted to join with the English or the Dutch troops as being God's 'instruments' in bringing about the punishment and reformation of their own government.\(^4\)

5. **It was Christ who executed the judgments of God on those nations and rulers who refused to be directed by His moral law.**\(^5\) This was a point of concern that was well illustrated by the many confessions of public sin and the periodical release of "Reasons for Public Fasting" by the Societies and later by the Reformed Presbytery.\(^6\) Symington himself, particularly during his ministry in Stranraer, was involved in many of these days of fasting and public prayer for national sin.

6. **It was Christ who also used civil government, "for the universal dissemination and success of the Gospel among the nations."**\(^7\) He not only

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\(^3\) O. D., pp 219f.


\(^5\) O. D., pp 221-224, esp. p. 221, "National crime, when carried to a height, operates as a conductor to draw down the lightning of vengeance from the eternal throne".

authorized or commissioned men through ordination, He also authorized
them, as King of kings, to enter any country on the face of the earth,
regardless of national or international law, to preach His Gospel.
Furthermore, He promised them success in that work:

... the Prince of the kings of the earth can open a way for
his own cause in the midst of all obstructions: nothing can
baffle his counsel; nothing withstand his might. Diffi-
culties disappear at his approach ... believing in the
dominion of Christ over the nations, he (i.e. a minister of
Christ) need not despair of being enabled to add, 'a great
door and effectual is opened unto me'.

In other words, it was not only what Christ did for nations and to nations,
but also what He did through them that proved his Lordship over them and
this was another 19th century application of a truth learned in 17th century
Scottish national history. The same powers with which Christ had struggled
in Scotland in the 17th century, were available to men who were struggling
in the jungles of the South Pacific in the 19th century; and John G. Paton
and John Inglis were among those who have illustrated the practical influence
of this doctrine.

7. It was Christ who worked through the civil government in such a
way as to gather together and to protect the Church - and in particular to
protect her against all the encroachments of the State. In fact, because
of the character of nations, there could be no hope for the Church of Christ
if it were not for the fact that Christ was Lord of the nations as well as
the Church. The people of South West Scotland were very keenly aware of
the encroachments of the State upon their Church and in their discussions
and Testimonies they kept contrasting such influences with the influence
their State had in earlier times. One indication of the strength of their
confidence in Christ's Lordship over their nation is to be seen in their
refusal to allow themselves to be called an "ecclesiastick judicatory".
For many years they believed that they should wait (for Christ to overrule
their nation and to re-form the Church of Scotland) rather than to form
another Church.

1 Ibid., pp 226f.  
2 Ibid., pp 227f.  
3 Howie, Faithful Contendings Displayed ..., pp 389, 390, 427, 433.
8. It was Christ who promised to bring about "an entire change in
the character and constitution of the nations of the world";¹

The basis of their organisation will then be the Word of
God, and the aim of their administration, the glory of
Christ: their officers shall be peace and their exactors
righteousness; and the spirit which shall pervade all
their actions, shall be the pure spirit of the Gospel.²

This was what the Societies had prayed for and waited for up to and after
the Revolution Settlement and it lay behind their refusal to allow them-
selves to be called a "civil judicatory". They would wait for the re-
formation of their old State rather than form a new one.³

In all these ways, then, Christ asserted His Lordship over nations:
by bringing them into existence; by controlling and directing them; by
working through them or using them to carry out the work of His Kingdom,
and by promising their ultimate complete reformation. Conversely, at
each of these points civil government was thrust back into the light of
Christ's mediatorial dominion. It was as each one of these subjects had
been discussed in the light of Scottish national history, that the doctrine
of Christ's Kingship over nations had been developed⁴ and it, in turn,
became an important factor in the doctrine of Christ's Universal Mediatorial
Dominion. This was one indication of the close practical relationship
between Symington's doctrine and the life of the worshipping church and
nation.

The practical result of all this was that men were thus confronted
in government and magistracy, as well as in the Church, with the Mediatorial
authority of Christ. It was of and by Christ, not just of and by God as
Creator and Ruler. It was something more than Theocratic, it was Christo-

¹ O. D., p. 228.
² Ibid., p. 229.
³ Supra, pp 1ff.
⁴ Vide, Act, Declaration and Testimony ..., pp 177-205.
exercise a direct control of it as a special instrument in the establishment of His Kingdom. Christ had also brought the State into existence, by indirect or intermediate means to be sure, but the ultimate origin and therefore the ultimate ends of both were the same; and in the final analysis, at least for the Christian, Christ's authority in the State was as absolute as it was in the Church. The State too was a special instrument to be used in the work of His Kingdom. Beyond this, Christ was not only the means of bringing it into existence, He continued to rule and use and reform it. He not only instituted civil government, He also constituted it. He was not only the fountain by which it came, He was also the conduit through which it came and therefore Christians, and particularly Christian magistrates, were bound to be concerned not only about doing "Christian" things but also why they did them, that is, they were to have Christian motives. Everything pointed to civil government as an ordinance of God, but more than that, it was "the moral ordinance of God ... a divine institution":

Nations are thus invested with high and noble character. They are the moral subjects of the Redeemer. Their rulers are not the mere servants of men, the creatures of popular choice, but the ministers of God ... the vicegerents of the Prince of the Kings of the earth. This gives them a peculiar elevation and dignity; throws around them a moral grandeur; lays them under obligations to attend to moral qualifications and conduct; and entitles them to be treated by people with esteem, veneration, and honour.

There is an interesting similarity between this point and one that Karl Barth found it necessary to emphasize in his lectures on Church and State in the United States. The State, he writes, "... has been created in Christ, through Him and for Him ...". The God who ordains the powers

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1 Fairly, An Humble Attempt ..., pp 50ff, and Thorburn, Vindiciae Magistratuum ..., pp 28, 29, 44ff, made a particular point of this.

2 0. D., p. 214, The marks of emphasis are Symington's.

3 Ibid., p. 216.

4 Barth, Karl, Church and State, (Trans. by G. R. Howe) (1939), SCM edition, p. 30; See also p. 29, "... the State as such belongs originally and ultimately to Jesus Christ ... in its comparatively independent substance, in its dignity, its function and its purpose, it should serve the Person and the Work of Jesus Christ and therefore the justification of the sinner".
in Romans 13:

... cannot be understood apart from the Person and Work of Christ; He cannot be understood in a general way as Creator and Ruler, as was done in the exposition of the Reformers, and also by the more recent expositors up to and including Dehn and Schlier ... We shall then not have to relate to God, as distinct from Jesus Christ, the grounds for the attitude required by I Peter 2:13 ... in this authority we are dealing indirectly, but in reality, with the authority of Jesus Christ.

This doctrine of the origin and continuing control of the State had important implications in so far as the response of the State was concerned, and behind Symington's statements of these responses are to be seen the requirements of a "Christian nation" for which the Societies had contended at the time of the Revolution Settlement.

"Christian Nation"

1. The glory of Christ was to be the chief end of the nation.3 It was "not enough", in view of Christ's Lordship: to aim for the "immediate end" in civil government, to be satisfied with the promotion of social order and happiness among men, to be motivated by a patriotic regard for the good of the community. Everything that the State did: every constitution she formed, every institution she established, every home or foreign policy she framed, every law she enacted, every appointment she made, and every act of administration and justice she carried out, must be first and foremost with an eye to the display of the excellency of her Lord. Even indifference to this principle was construed as being indifference to, or rebellion against, her sovereign Lord.

In effect, this point tended to equate civil government with what is generally known as moral government. It inferred that the best interests

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1Ibid., pp 32-36; Barth did not limit himself to Rom. 13 and I Peter 2:13 as references. Those are the two references Symington used in showing the "origin" of the State.

2Symington used the phrase frequently, See O. D., pp 263, 275, 285, 287 and p. 229 where he speaks of how Christ will "Christianize" the nations of the world.

3O. D., pp 231-234.
of God, government, and man were one. Government was intended to do much more than just guard and defend civil society and protect individual rights and properties. It was also intended to hold together moral and political truth. It was the natural result of the desire of the Societies for a Civil Government which would help rather than hinder spiritual progress.  

Thorburn in his defence of the Testimony had questioned whether there could be any distinction between political and moral truth. This was more, for example, than Buchanan had in mind when he said, "... in the whole of this disquisition (De Jure Regni) I have aimed at nothing else but at preserving sacred and inviolate Cicero's maxim - 'Let the safety of the people be the supreme law'".

2. The law of Christ was to be the rule of conduct for nations:

We contend, then, that the Bible is to be our rule, not only in matters of a purely religious nature, in matters connected with conscience and the worship of God, but in matters of a civil or political nature.

The "dim light" of the law of nature was no more adequate for nations which had access to the revealed Word, simply because they might be said to have been founded in nature, than it was adequate for the regulation of prayer, of praise, or of those family relationships which had also been founded in nature. The Bible had been given to supply the imperfections in man's understanding of the law of nature. It was commanded of the Jews that their kings and judges use it constantly as their rule of duty, and less could hardly be required of those who had a more complete revelation, i.e., the New Testament. This applied to the whole moral law, to both tables, because nations were capable of obeying the first four commandments - by acknowledging God in their constitutions, by providing for the maintenance

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1Howie, Faithful Contendings Displayed ..., p. 390, The General Meeting on March 4th 1689, "in this juncture of affairs, where religion, liberty, country, and all was in great danger", offered to provide for the Prince of Orange a regiment to protect these. "Religion" and good government were closely related in their thinking.

2Thorburn, Vindiciae Magistratus ..., p. 2, "divine truth, both moral and political, (if any distinction may be allowed between the two)", and p. 3, "The subject about which the debate is, is GOVERNMENT: by which I mean civil or moral government".


4O. D., pp 234-241.

5Ibid., p. 235.
and observation of ordinances of divine worship, by restraining profanity, and by making provision for the sanctification of the Sabbath -- in the same way that they were capable of obeying the last six commandments. Both tables must necessarily be interpreted in the light of the whole Word of God, and it was as nations thus made it their rule of conduct, that they honoured Christ as the Lord of nations.

In effect this meant that the State, by virtue of being an instrument of Christ, a moral ordinance of God, was not limited to such secular grounds as common consent, protection of property, business interests, physical needs, or political expediency,¹ as a basis for the enactment of laws; but could, and therefore must, go directly to the revealed moral law as the best basis or standard for the intent and content of civil law. Civil law, in order to be binding upon moral creatures needed to be founded upon the moral law. The same was true of the restraint of irreligion² or the punishment of such offences against religion as gross blasphemy, profane swearing, open idolatry and the desecration of the Lord's Day. Offenders were to be punished by magistrates not only because they were offensive to men, but also because they were displeasing to God.³ At the same time, this principle forbade the idea that such civil interference could ever compel any inward worship or reverence for God's name, simply because this again would have been a violation of other means established by this same Lord for those purposes. The consciences of men who were offending and the means of administration used by magistrates were both subject to the preceptive will of the Lord of both. The former could not claim to be free of Christ's law and the latter could not claim to overrule it. In both legislation and restraint of irreligion, the most important thing was that which would be most honouring for Christ as the Lord of the nation.

An important element in this was Symington's doctrine of Natural law. He did not take up the subject as such but it lay beneath the surface in connection with his doctrine of creation, the inspiration of scripture, and the administration or regulation of the government of both Church and State. It had been developed by both Fairly⁴ and Thorburn⁵ in their defence.

¹Ibid., pp. 292-297. ²Ibid., pp. 298-301.
³Ibid., p. 300.
⁴Fairly, An Humble Attempt ..., pp. 9ff.
⁵Thorburn, Vindiciae Magistratus ..., pp. 11-23.
of the Church Testimony, and could be summarized briefly by saying that since there was only one God who could not contradict Himself, then there could be no substantial differences between the will or law of God as it was found in the law of nature and the will or law of God as it was found in the revealed Word. The natural law and the revealed law were actually the same law. That one law had been built into man perfectly at the time of creation, but because of sin man had become unable to 'read' or discern it clearly. God had also chosen to give man that same law in the form of words and since all God's communications with man were through Christ in His mediatorial capacity, then it too came through Christ. It is for this reason that we find Symington continuing to insist that it is Christ who speaks through the Old Testament as well as in and through the New Testament.  

The fact that the moral law in the form of the revealed scriptures was not known to all men was a very important element in all Symington's thinking. It accounts for his intense concern for the work of Bible Societies and for his repeated reference to the differences between the circumstances and responsibilities of those (Christians) living in nations which had access to the Gospel, and the circumstances and responsibilities of those who lived in lands which had not yet received the Bible. Their having or not having the Bible was a very important circumstance having to do with the manner or the degree of the discovery of the law, and it affected the attitude and actions of Christians living in the land, even though it could not actually affect the nature or matter of the law itself. It was also for this reason that Symington kept insisting that the whole Word of God must be used in the development of the doctrine of the State in a nation such as Britain. It was the best sign, the best "light" available to man.  

Vidler concluded that inquiries into the history and meaning of the conception of 'Natural Law' were less fruitful than he had hoped for,  

1O.D., pp. 147, 238, and 241, where he refers to "that divine Mediator, who is at once the author of revelation and the Governor among the nations".  

2Ibid., p. 241.  

3Vidler, The Orb and the Cross, p. 2; Gladstone as quoted by Vidler in footnote 2, page 34, believed that "The law of nature depended on the law of Christianity. They could not keep the law of nature and get rid of the law of religion .... 'What was the law of nature?' depended on the answer to the question, 'What was the law of Christianity'. This was in spite of the fact that Gladstone himself had rejected the relevance of Scripture on the subject of Church-State relationship. See also pp. 33f.
insofar as their application to the problem of Church-State relationships was concerned. It is significant, however, that he believed it to be "... a matter of unresolved disputation among the theologians", and there can be little doubt that such indecision has been a factor in the development of the secular state. Those who plead substantial differences or contradictions between Natural Law and Revealed Law as it appears in the Old and New Testaments have provided grounds for avoiding further study of either Old or New Testaments on this subject, and have left the door open to the introduction of an entirely different standard for the formation and administration of the State. Symington's doctrine was calculated to prevent just that. The law of the nation was to be the law of the Lord of nations.

3. The standards which had been established by Christ were to be used in evaluating the qualifications of office bearers. Scripture (Dt. 1:1; 17:14,15) favoured a representative form of government, but neither the power of the magistrates nor the power of the electors was an absolute power because both had been limited by the same Divine Law which required: good natural abilities, a moral character that is "unimpeachable", and a religious profession of faith. A man with these three qualifications could justly be known as a 'minister of God for good'. Hananiah was an example of one who had been elected to be ruler over Jerusalem, "for he was a faithful man and feared God above many".

Christian electors, particularly in view of Christ's Lordship over nations, were bound to rule out choice by passion or prejudice and to subject their judgment and inclinations to the principles from the Word of God, for while the franchise was a "civil right" it was also to be exercised out of respect to the will and the honour of Christ. This did not mean that a non-Christian would, ipso facto, cease to be a magistrate, but it did mean that such a situation in a land that had received the revealed Word of God, was unfitting and, worse yet, dishonouring to Christ. At

1Ibid., p. 129.


3Ibid., p. 242, "Even under the Old Testament dispensation, when kings were designated to office by immediate revelation, the consent of the people was deemed indispensable to their lawful authority; and they were liable to removal from office, by the people, for abuse of their trust".

4Ibid., p. 247; (Neh. 7:2).
the same time, Christian magistrates were to recognise that they were "... not the mere servants of men ... but the ministers of God ..." and regulate their conduct accordingly.¹

4. The authority of magistrates and the subjection of Christian citizens in a nation which had access to the Gospel, were dependent upon these standards.² Obedience to properly qualified and constituted authorities in this nation did not stem either from dread or from selfish motives, but from love and respect for the Redeemer. It involved respectful 'fear', 'well doing' in the sense of diligent service, 'tribute' or taxes imposed for privileges enjoyed, 'custom' or a portion of profits made possible by the organization of society, and an 'honour' which called for respect and yet avoided 'idolatrous adulation' towards those in power. Disobedience, or even resistance under these conditions was an act of rebellion against Christ. This point was in sharp contrast with the idea that "the lawfulness of a power depended solely upon its existence", the theory that any power that happened to "be" was ipso facto, a power of God.³ Symington turned again to Romans 13 to point out that Paul would not have commanded Christians to render such cheerful obedience as this to Nero who was the 'power' then in existence, but who could hardly have been described as being a 'minister of God for good'.

This did not mean, however, that a Christian citizen must refuse to have anything to do with a State which could not meet all these requirements. If it was dishonouring to Christ as Lord of Nations to have an improperly constituted State and unqualified magistrates, then it was also dishonouring to render them unqualified allegiance, and Christians were to be careful to avoid complicity in the guilt of such a government. But it was at this point that they were to distinguish between God's providential and his preceptive will, to look upon a government or magistrate failing to meet these standards as being a "chastisement"⁴ sent by God; and they were still to conform with the laws of that government for the sake of peace and order. Beyond this, they might participate in many of the

¹Ibid., p. 216. ²Ibid., pp. 249-256.
³Ibid., pp. 252, 253; Cf., e.g., Collier, Jeremy, Vindiciae Juris Regii (1669), p. 18, "... with us Power always proves its salt ... conquered People must not pretend to make their own Terms. And therefore, their privileges are not of their own Creating but Acts of Royal Favour, and Condescentions of Sovereignty".
⁴Ibid., p. 254.
official functions that were in and of themselves inherently or intrinsi-

cally right in order to bring about God's preceptive rule of that same
government. It was an important point because it demonstrated an es-

sential difference between Symington's doctrine of the State and that of

the Anabaptists with whom Luther and Calvin had contended. Christ was

Lord of nations and therefore there could be no thought of identifying
civil government with the kingdom of Stan. Christians were to serve

Christ through such participation in the business of civil government,
and to serve Him with diligence "at the hustings as well as at the table
of the Lord".¹ Symington's instructions to electors as noted above, his

intense interest in all political affairs as noted in the 'Journal', his

own participation in the political meetings at the Glasgow City Hall, his

sermons and teaching concerning the necessity for educated, morally re-

sponsible citizens, and the part he had in changing the position of the

Reformed Presbyterian Church with respect to the franchise, are illus-

trations of this point. These were among the means provided by Christ as

the Lord of nations, whereby Christian citizens were to work to bring their

nation more and more in line with Christ's preceptive will.

Symington's reasoning at this point was influenced by the distinction

between 'power' and 'authority' which Thorburn² had developed. "God has

invested the people", wrote Symington, "with power in political matters,
and ... the people of course have a right to the exercise of this power ...".³

This was 'moral power' as distinguished from 'physical power'; the power
to organize their own affairs, to agree upon laws and constitutions, and
to choose and invest with power certain individuals who would be their

rulers. This much, however, was only the basis of the secular state, and

Symington went beyond this in making his distinction between that kind of

'power', and the 'authority' which a Christian magistrate possessed. Both

moral power and moral authority came from God but the former came imme-

diately as a natural thing, and the latter mediately as an extrinsic or

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¹Ibid., p. 249.
²Thorburn, Vindiciae Magistratus ..., pp 30ff.
³O. D., p. 214.
There were at least two things necessary for securing right or title to this 'authority': (1) a moral capacity (involving age of maturity and a sound mind) which was necessary to acquisition of moral power, and (2) a moral ability which was not necessary to the acquisition of moral power, but was necessary to the acquisition of moral authority. For example, a person who was "of age" and a sound mind, might have demonstrated his moral inability to rule his own children and yet his moral power over those children could not be denied. Such a man, however, could not be said to have moral 'authority' and since God does not give such a man any such 'authority', then Christian citizens should not attempt to do so by electing or otherwise appointing him to rule over them. It might not be the responsibility of a Christian citizen to investigate the moral 'ability' or 'authority' of a man engaged in making his shoes, but before investing him with the responsibility of ruling, he must enquire into his natural, moral and religious qualifications. This was the intent of Symington's three requirements for magistrates as noted above.

Luther tended to make magistracy dependent upon reason and therefore the qualifications of the magistrate did not matter as much, but Bucer required a religious test. Knox in his first blast of the trumpet had acted upon the same principle:

If any think that because the realm and estates thereof, have given their consent unto a woman and have established her authority, and it is lawful and acceptable unto God: Let the same men remember ... That man cannot approve the doing nor consent of the multitude, concluding anything against God's word and ordinance ...

Symington nowhere mentions the possibility of a woman magistrate, and whether or not Knox ever should have applied the principle to women, or

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1 Pauck, W., The Heritage of the Reformation, pp 71-74, Compares Luther and Bucer. (p. 74) Luther, "... recognizes - surely in contrast to Butzer - that an unbeliever can sometimes rule and govern in a better way than a Christian"; See also p. 71 where Pauck quotes Bucer, "The task of a magistrate is another task than to make shoes, clothes, and such things", to which Pauck adds, "Here we touch a very important difference between Luther and Butzer"; Vide, De Regne Christi, pp 270, 272.

2 Knox, John, "The First Blast of the Trumpet", in The Works of John Knox (ed. by D. Lang) Wodrow Society, vol. 4, p. 415; See also pp 370, 390, 397, 399, And p. 357, where John Calvin said of it "I sufficiently showed my displeasure that such paradoxers should be published ... the evil ... should rather be buried in oblivion than made a matter of agitation".
to this particular woman, may be a debatable question, but both men acted upon the same principle; and it made the authority of the magistrate dependent upon his meeting scriptural qualifications. This had been a point of particular concern for the members of the United Societies; it appeared not only in their own election of representatives to the Estates meeting in Edinburgh,¹ but also in their petitions to The Estates² and to Parliament.³ There is something of the depth of their personal feeling in this last petition:

We therefore, in all humility and earnestness, supplicate, obtest and beseech your Honours, in your wisdom to provide some laws (according to the laudable precedents of your noble progenitors) for removing out of trust, and out of capacity of doing more mischief to the king, church, country and armies, such instruments of the late king's tyranny, and of our late slavery ... For we can never believe, that they who betrayed our laws and robbed us of our privileges under the last reign, will ever administer justice, or do us any good under the present government. We cannot but be always in fears, while we remain in the hands of our old oppressors, in whose conduct and administration, we could never see anything but rage, and rapine, and unjust violence.⁴

It is not surprising that these men and their descendants learned to make distinctions between 'power' and 'authority'.

All this is in sharp contrast with the views of the secular state as represented, for example, by Laski:

... sovereignty means no more than the ability to secure assent ... There is no sanction for law other than the consent of the human mind. It is sheer illusion to imagine that the authority of the State has any other safeguard than the wills of its members. For the State is simply what Mr. Graham Wallis calls a will organization, and the essential feature of such a thing is its ultimate dependence upon the constituent wills from which the group will is made.⁵

¹ Howie, op. cit., p. 387.
² Ibid., pp 390, 400, 401, 408, 428-433.
³ Ibid., pp 428-433.
⁴ Ibid., pp 432f.
Symington might well have referred to such a 'will organization' as being a 'faction' instead of a 'civil' society, insisting that there would be no standard to prevent its deteriorating to the point of having a harmful influence.

5. The State was also under obligation to make a public acknowledgment of Christ's rightful authority as Lord over it, by swearing allegiance to Him, that is, by entering into national covenant with Him. As individuals desired to swear allegiance to a lawful sovereign, so nations desired to swear allegiance to Christ. This did not need to be done frequently but was particularly appropriate in times of deep distress as a means of animation and comfort, in times of danger for the purpose of promoting stability, or in times of gratitude for public blessings. The idea had been examplified in the history of Israel, in the prophecies concerning Gentile nations (Isa. 19:18, 20; 62:4), and in the history of France, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, England and Ireland. In so far as the covenants of Scotland were concerned:

... it may fairly be questioned, on the authority of the best historians, whether our Country ever appeared in a more dignified attitude than during the period in question, or whether a kingdom can ever be more dutifully or appropriately employed than in solemnly and sincerely vowing to him, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice, the Prince of the kings of the earth.2

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1O. D., pp 256-259; Vide, De Regno Christi, p. 113, Where Bucer recommends to the king that after God has worked throughout the whole kingdom and the various councils of the kingdom have agreed on the full acceptance of Christ's kingdom (in plenam regni Christi susceptionem fuerit consensum), then the king should send chosen men to persuade the churches to the same reformation, and adds, "When that has been done, because the Covenant of the Lord (foedus Domini) will then have been received again and constituted with the full authority of the kingdom, it will be within the duty of your Most Serene Majesty to ratify the covenant by holy laws (sanctis legibus) and just punishments directed against violators of it, and to maintain it as watchfully and consistently as possible". This is the content and intent of the public social covenants of Scotland so far as things religious were concerned, but without the actual form.

2Ibid., p. 259; Cf., Brown, P. H., History of Scotland, vol. II (1902), p. 454, "But, in point of fact, when the Revolution came, the spirit that had produced the two Covenants was no longer the prevailing force in the country. The experience which the nation had undergone since the Restoration had engendered a spirit of compromise which reduced religious considerations to a secondary place in the Revolution settlement". Symington would not have considered such 'compromise' to be 'more dignified'.

323.
The United Societies had renewed the Covenants, 'with some alterations which the circumstances of the times of necessity called for', at the time of the Revolution Settlement. They also referred directly to them in petitions addressed to the governing bodies of both Church and State and the responses were such that they found in them additional grounds for not participating in the Settlement, but it is significant that in their discussions and 'Conclusions' they make more reference to such things as the selection of properly qualified rulers than to the Covenants themselves. It would be correct to say that they were as much interested in the "Truths" or Principles summarized in the Covenants as they were in the act of covenanting. This was true of Symington. Covenanting to him was a privilege, and in this case a privilege which had been made possible by virtue of Christ's Lordship over nations. It is significant in this respect that these two subjects ("covenants" and the "recognition" to be given by the State to "true religion") are listed after his discussion of the "authority" of the State and magistrate. That is, the 'covenant', and the 'recognition' might be expedient or even a duty, but they did not have the same serious influence on the very authority of the State as did the other duties.

6. The State was also to "recognize, favour and support the true religion", legally. This of course involved the whole Church-State

1 Howie, Faithful Contendings Displayed ..., p. 381, March 2nd 1689 at "Lismahagow".

2 Ibid., pp. 451, 453. See also p. 461, the "Protestation" for individuals desiring to join a church.

3 Ibid., p. 431, "We complain, that our national covenants, which we avouch to be of indispensable obligation, have been very long abused and trampled upon ... We therefore humbly move ... that acts of parliament may be passed ... vindicating and approving these reproached covenants; and that your Honours may be pleased to think upon some expedient course for the renewing of the same, the administration of the way and the order of it being left to the General Assembly"; See also p. 419 for an example of Sir Robert Hamilton's (isolationist) influence.

4 Act, Declaration, and Testimony ..., Part II, pp. 57ff.

5 On some of the old Covenanter Battle Flags, e.g. that on display at Winston Barracks, Lanark, headquarters of the Cameronians, the word "Truths" is used in place of the word "Covenants" in the phrase "For Christ's Crown and Truths"; Cf. e.g., Walker, W., A History of the Christian Church, pp. 416, 419, "The legal establishment (1690) of the Presbyterian Church was opposed by the Cameronian laity, who continued their hostility to any control of the church by civil authority and condemned the failure to renew the covenants, and by the Episcopalian, who were strong in northern Scotland"; He makes no reference to their testimony re Christ's Lordship over nations.

6 O.D., p. 265.
relationship which will be considered more formally in a moment. Again it was because Christ was Lord over the State,\(^1\) that it was not limited to granting Christianity, "a vague passive toleration" to be held in common with all other religions, but could, and therefore must, go on to identify true religion and to grant to it an "active formal authoritative protection ... to which others have no right ... and ought not to receive".\(^2\) "Perfect accuracy" was no more necessary in such identification and legislation than it was in matters connected with arts and sciences in which it was generally conceded that magistrates must render some decision in order that standards of education might be established for the nation.\(^3\) This did not imply any persecution however, because the same respect for Christ's Lordship that necessitated such legislation also dictated the means of its administration: "No means but what are moral are employed to bring the public mind into conformity with that of the rulers .... The conscience of every individual is left free ...\(^4\)

The door was thus opened to further privileges, permitting nations to enact laws that would help with the observance of the fourth commandment, restrain irreligion, and contribute in a very practical way to the physical or pecuniary support of the Church. The pecuniary support would be used not only to maintain the particular work of Christ in their own land, but also to extend His Gospel message to those in other lands who were still unable or unwilling to contribute to that which they had yet to learn to appreciate. It in no way interfered with the principle of individual contribution, but made it possible for the State to participate in the support of the work of the Lord, from Whom it had already received much benefit. Again the cry of 'persecution' was avoided by focusing responsibility for "the evil of compulsion"\(^5\) upon those who refused to give voluntarily and cheerfully in response to the legitimate claims of Christ as the Lord of nations. It is noticeable that in all this Symington listed first the 'recognition' and then the 'favour and support'. It was not public needs but the capacity of the State to recognize true religion that was more

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 265f., "The doctrine of the Mediatorial headship over the nations, lays a firm and ample foundation for an alliance between Church and State .... Christ is appointed Head over the nations for the good of the Church".

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 286.

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 287f.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 289.

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 304.
important insofar as the contribution of the State to the work of the Kingdom was concerned.

The Group Person

An integral element in all this, and one that helps to bind the doctrine of "The Lordship of Christ over nations" to the doctrine of a "Christian Nation", was Symington's concept of the State as a Group Person, a moral Being:

Associations, composed of such as are individually, morally responsible, must be morally responsible collectively. An aggregate of moral subjects must itself possess a moral character. Every society of moral beings is itself a moral being or subject.

That the State could have an ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ, regulate her conduct according to the moral law, authorize magistrates, swear allegiance, and "recognize" true religion, was, at once, the proof and the result of its Being and Person. The whole State-Christ relationship was not a mechanical thing but a living, breathing relationship between two moral beings and this tended to lift the tone of everything Symington had to say about the State for as Martin Buber has said, "A doctrine of the State which confines it to the world of I call a low doctrine; a doctrine which also recognizes it in the world of Thou I call a high doctrine".

1 Gladstone criticized Bishop Warburton because he limited the ends contemplated by the State to "the body and its interests" and made the recognition of religion a matter of "calculation, and not of conscience", in The State in its Relations with the Church, (second edition) pp. 11-13.

2 O.D., p. 230; See also p. 96; Gladstone, P. T. Forsyth, J. N. Figgis, and Vidler supported the idea of a corporate personality and have indicated extremes to which it is not necessary to go in order to maintain it; Forsyth, P. T., Theology in Church and State, pp. 148-205 (He deals particularly with the corporate personality of the church); Figgis, J. N., Churches in the Modern State, pp. 87-89; Vidler, op. cit., pp. 48-81, especially p. 70, "Because they have now in varying degrees this partial or provisional personality, and the promise of being taken up into the real and complete corporate personality of Christ, we cannot be content either with an atomistic theory of the nature of societies or with a merely fictitious or legal theory of group personality. By the design of God, by his redeeming acts in Christ, and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, men on earth and natural communities are bound to one another more intimately than such theories acknowledge ...".

3 Buber, Martin, I and Thou, (Trans. by R. G. Smith, 1937); p. 48; Vide, Fairly, John, An Humble Attempt ..., p. 51, "That civil government and magistracy being the ordinance of God, it is what that people who are the church of God, owing and professing obedience to him, (either as individuals or considered as a community) are so far from having little or no concern with, that both the law of God and light of nature require them to have a very particular care and concern about it".
This became a particularly important factor in a land which had received the Gospel --- where this nation 'person' had been 'Christianized'. There it was not a question of how much the State might persecute Christ's work, how He must overrule and judge nations by acts of power and providence, how temporary their existence, and how independent of all their work the Kingdom-work might be. Such a situation might be the case in a land which had not yet received the light of the Gospel; but for the Christian nation it was not how little but how much the State could do in the work of Christ's Kingdom, not how temporary her existence but how permanent her contribution, not so little she could have to do with religion, but how accurately she could 'recognize' it, how sincerely she could profess her loyalty to Christ and how sensitive she could become to His revealed law. Messiah the Prince was the Lord, the States were his subjects, "... and all the duties which subjects owe to their prince must be due by them to him".1

There is one important difference to be seen most clearly at this point between the over-all impression left by Wm. Symington and that left by Oscar Cullman. In spite of all the things that Cullman has had to say about Christ's Lordship over the State2 he has left the over-all impression that there are only two alternatives. The worst that could happen would be the development of the totalitarian State which would persecute the Church. The best that could happen would be the development of a State (perhaps even "Heathen") which knew its limits but toward which the Christian must remain "in principle critical".3 Symington would have agreed about the need for the State to know its limits and for the Christian to be prepared to be critical when necessary, but the main emphasis of his Scottish born theology was towards a third possibility. That is, that there could be, as a direct result of the 

\[1\]O.D., p. 230.


\[3\]Ibid., pp. 89-92; See also pp. 98, 99 where Cullman quotes from H. Von Campenhausen, "Civil governments are yet existing but fading powers, on which the Christian is dependent for the present time, but there is no point in arguing about their individual justness or unjustness", to which Cullman adds, "I agree wholeheartedly with this"; Cf. Barth's introduction to the whole Church-State problem, "Is there an inward and vital connection by means of which in any sense human justice (or law), as well as divine justification, becomes a concern of Christian faith and Christian responsibility ..." in Church and State, p. 1.
which would have a very positive moral influence and towards which the attitude of the Christian citizen should be more enthusiastic than 'critical'.

Persecution and Intolerance

Figgis warned that "Whatever the ultimate effect of Protestant principles, they did not directly tend either to toleration or to non-theological politics. Only, indeed, where real toleration exists, can politics be non-theological; and, vice versa, only where the idea of theocracy is abandoned, can there be real toleration. To attempt to identify Christian law with that of the State must frequently lead to persecution". In connection with each one of the duties of the Christian State as described above by Symington, there was of course abundant opportunity for both intolerance and persecution and yet he continued to insist that persecution was neither necessary nor permitted. His whole position was based on the proposition that it would be a Christian magistrate administering Christian laws according to Christian methods and for Christian ends --- without supposing that physical means could ever induce inward spiritual service. This ruled out the possibility of persecution simply because the Christian magistrate who recognized gradual progress being made through time towards the establishment of the Regnum Christi, would neither be satisfied with the status quo nor demand the realized kingdom now. He would continue to work gradually toward the ends of that kingdom as Symington did.

But Symington also believed that the creature could not have the liberty to cast off the revealed law of the Creator. For God to give a right or a law which would make man absolutely independent of Himself would be for God to do an immoral thing. It would be an immoral law which would authorize men to sin against Himself. It was also true that Christ, and therefore His State, could not ('ultimately') be said to tolerate sin.


2O.C., p. 300, where he refers to need for "prudence", "discretion", "judgment", and "wisdom".

3Ibid., p. 301, "The conscience has no inherent absolute rights; all the liberty it possesses is conferred upon it by God; and it is utterly absurd to suppose that any man possesses from God a right to blaspheme ...". See also pp. 97, 214; The Act, Declaration and Testimony ..., p. 121, referred to this as "giving man a negative over" God; See also p. 181, "toleration is destructive of all true religion ...".
At this point, Symington's whole position becomes, in effect, a challenge to the 'right' of the secular state to exist, at least in those lands which had access to the Gospel. Hume Brown has shown that from the time of the Revolution Settlement there had been the "gradual substitution of the secular for the theological spirit in the conduct of public affairs" and everything that Vidler has said about the "transition from the Church State to the Liberal State" which caused Gladstone to write on the subject of Church and State, applies with equal force to Symington. The books of Symington and Gladstone were published the same year. Symington's *Journal*, as noted in earlier chapters, indicated his serious concern about the development of these influences and this was one of the immediate reasons for his writing. In effect, his position anticipated the thought of T. S. Eliot who wrote in describing *The Idea of a Christian Society*, "... in the modern world, it may turn out that the most intolerable thing for Christians is to be tolerated". For Symington there could not be real tolerance of sin on the part of Christ's State, but it was also true that such a (Christian) group person as he had described the State to be, could not be involved in any un-Christ-like act of persecution.

Walker, in process of describing the doctrine of the State in Scottish theology has written:

> This may appear, perhaps, a low view of State duty, and hardly in keeping with the impressions our national religious history seems naturally to convey. But you have a catena of testimonies in its favour which it seems impossible to resist.

Whatever might be said of Symington's doctrine of the State, it could not

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1 Brown, P. H., *History of Scotland*, vol. II (1902), pp. 443, 454, See also vol. III, pp. 1, 2.

2 Vidler, *op. cit.*, pp. 23ff.

3 O.D., pp. 209, 210, See also pp. 260, 261, A section added to the second edition, "Yet it is lamentable to think how inadequately it has been appreciated. By some it is almost entirely overlooked and treated with neglect. By others it is denied and speculatively opposed .... It should be held up to the nations of the earth ... urged upon them ... " His reference was to the "Redeemer's" active Lordship over nations.


be described as "a low view of State duty". The difference that Walker seems almost reluctant to admit here between "the impressions" from Scottish national religious history, and the theology he was at that moment describing, was an important factor. It is significant that he has discussed the doctrine of the State almost entirely in terms of the writing of those who had found it necessary to meet the threat of Erastianism by denying, or at least failing to endorse, the universality of Christ Mediatorial dominion.¹ This was the written theology on the subject; and since it was not the mediatorial authority of Christ with which, as they saw it, they were dealing in the State, they tended to lower the tone of their statements about the State. Symington's theology, as has been noted, came directly out of the experiences of the national religious history of Scotland and that history, beginning with the use which Knox as the pupil of Calvin had made of the State and continuing down through the Acts of Parliament between 1638 and 1649, does indeed imply that the State is a particular instrument which is to be used by Christ in a special way in the work of His Kingdom. When the Societies first began meeting in Scotland they resolved that they would not discuss subjects just to "satisfy curiosity", or to settle a "sublime point of divinity", or to resolve questions of scripture interpretation or other "controverted" subjects, but would take up only questions "ament practical cases". They also resolved to pray "for the coming of Christ's kingdom ... long and pray for the out-making of the gospel-promises to his Church in the latter days, that King Christ would go out upon the white horse of the gospel conquering and to conquer ... that it may be sounded that the kingdoms of the world are become his, and his name called upon from the rising of the sun to its going down".²

¹ e.g., In responding to the "Popish Prelate" who had said, "We speak of Christ as head of the church. Some think that Christ was king by his resurrection, jure acquisito, by a new title, a right of merit. I think he was a king from his conception", Rutherford said, "This makes the king "a ministerial head of the church under the head of Christ ...", in Lex Rex, p. 211; Gillespie pointed out that The Photinians defined the kingly office of Christ as being "an office committed to him by God, to govern, with the highest authority and power, all creatures endowed with understanding, and especially men and the church gathered of them.", and added, "But those who have written against them have corrected their definitions in this particular, because Christ is properly King of his church only.", in A Brotherly Examination, p. 11; And John Brown of Wamphray, argued "That the Christian magistrate derives not his office from Christ as Mediator, and so doth not govern the church as Christ's vicegerent commissioned for this purpose", in Contra Velthusius, p. 389.

² Walker, P., Six Saints of the Covenant, (Ed. by D. H. Fleming), pp. 93, 94.
By these means and by referring continually to the accomplishments of the State during the periods usually known as the first and second reformation, the Societies maintained the impression that Christ would use the State as one of his 'kingdoms of the world' in conquering the world. As was noted in the first chapter, the testimony to Christ's particular Lordship over nations was written into the records of the Reformed Presbytery and was in fact the truly distinctive feature of the Church. It was this particular impression from Scottish national religious history that Symington's "Reformation" Church and his Bucer-like theology has preserved for us. He concluded that the State was a very important part of Christ's Universal Mediatorial Kingdom.

**Covenanters and Governments**

The Covenanters have frequently been accused of being uncooperative or even subversive insofar as civil government is concerned, 'anti-government' people. Mary nearly accused John Knox of treason when he called the 'Congregation' to Edinburgh without consulting her first. King James complained that the ministers were teaching the people that he as king was "the highest evil", and added, "they began to fantasy themselves a democratic form of government." Charles I believed that as a direct result of the National Covenant, "he had no more power than the Duke of Venice." Charles II was incensed, at least later, by the thought of the fact that he

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1 Lang, A., History of Scotland, vol. III, p. 422; Mathieson, Law, Politics and Religion in Scotland, 1560-1695; Brown, R. H., History of Scotland, vol. II, pp. 414, 415, in commending the ministers who accepted the indulgence he wrote, "... but it is not by men born to be heroes and martyrs that well-ordered states are founded and maintained; and the compliance of these ministers was, in truth, the first and necessary step towards that religious and political compromise which the force of circumstances was gradually imposing on the Scottish people". See also, Lane, Jane, The Reign of King Covenant, (1956).

2 Laski believed that Knox wanted Presbyterianism to "control" the State, "as did the Papacy", in the interests of the church, in Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty, p. 49.

3 "Basilicon Doron" (1599), as quoted by Henderson, G. D., in The Burning Bush, p. 122.

had been required to sign the Covenant before being crowned,¹ and James VII carried the persecutions of Covenanters to new extremes. Declarations of Independence such as the Queensferry Paper and those nailed to the mercat crosses in Sanquhar and Lanark, Gargill's excommunications and the attitudes and actions of the people who belonged to the United Societies, all serve to bear out the impression that the Covenanters were opposed to Government.

The facts however deny the accusation. Rutherfurd believed that an "absolute monarchy" was the worst form of government but that a constitutional monarchy, "limited", was the best form of government and he warned that rule by the people was not safe.² Gillespie and Baillie were outspoken in their defences of monarchy and their criticisms of the democratic ideas of the English. The whole position became quite clear when the Scots "restored" the king. But the ministers and men of Scotland were repeatedly disillusioned --- even persecuted --- by the very royalty they had sought to defend.³ The Reformation, and particularly the rediscovery of the Scriptures, had introduced a new element to the whole subject, and after 200 years of struggling, the attention of men began to turn from kings to the scripturally enlightened judgment of the people. The change in attitude is clear when we compare Rutherfurd's preferences on this subject with those of Shields who wrote, "Kings and tyrants for the most part are reciprocal terms."⁴ He called for a Social "Compact" theory of government that would produce some form of Republicanism.⁵ Many of the factors

¹Macpherson, Hector, The Covenanters Under Persecution, p. 26, "Charles had a personal grudge against the men who had practically compelled him to sign the Covenant before owning him as King. Their democratic principles were distasteful to him".

²Rutherfurd, S., Lex, Rex, (1843), pp. 190-193, esp., p. 192, "Every government hath something wherein it is best; monarchy is honourable and glorious-like before men; aristocracy for counsel, is surest; democracy for liberty, and possibly for riches and gain, is best. Monarchy obtaineth its end with more conveniency .... We more easily fear, love, obey, and serve one than many".

³Rutherfurd said, "The ministers of Christ in Scotland had never a contest with king James but for his sins, and his conniving with papists, and his introducing bishops, the ushers of the Pope", in Lex, Rex, p. 216.

⁴Shields, A., A Hind Let Loose, p. 310, 311.

⁵Hector Macpherson said, "It seems likely that Shields inclines to some form of Republicanism ..." in The Cameronian Philosopher: Alexander Shields, pp. 179f.
that contributed to this change can be seen in Rutherford's own life. He himself had obeyed the first summons of the government, accepting banishment to Aberdeen rather than disobey and become the first outlawed field preacher. A few years later he wrote Lex, Rex, still advocating the hereditary monarchy, and he welcomed Charles, soon to be crowned King at Scone, with a Latin oration; but then Lex, Rex, was ordered to be burned by the same king he had welcomed and it would appear that had he lived, Rutherford himself might well have been prepared to refuse the king's "last" summons. In spite of such experiences as these the minds of the Covenanters did not turn, at any time, to Anabaptistic or Roman ideas concerning the evil or abolition of all government. The trend in thinking that had been well begun prior to Rutherford's lifetime received new impetus during the years of persecution between 1660 and 1690.\(^1\)

The actual formation of the United Societies was one very strong indication that those Covenanters who were immediately involved in them were not anti-government. They were, in practice, a representative form of government and their very refusal to allow themselves to be called a "civil judicatory" was further indication of their interest in national government. Their pro-government feelings were made quite clear in the letter sent back to the Estates by the men of the first Cameronian regiment as they marched out in pursuit of Dalziel:

> Having confidence in humility to saw we were the first in the nation that publicly prayed for, and avouched a readiness to concur with his Illustrious Highness, before, at, and since his arrival; We were the first that declared a desire to engage for him, and under him, at our renewing of our Solemn Covenants .... the first that offered our service for the defence of the Meeting of Estates ... the first that offered to be levied into a modelled regiment ...\(^2\)

\(^1\)Macpherson, Hector, The Covenanters Under Persecution, (1923), p. 36, "Thus during the twenty-eight years of persecution, the opposition to the Government gradually increased in volume and intensity until, at the Revolution the whole of Lowland Scotland was unanimous that an end be put to arbitrary tyranny. By the close of the period a Whig party in politics had made its appearance .... The resistance to the tyranny of the Stewarts was, on the whole, a popular resistance; the Covenanting movement was, in the main, democratic".

\(^2\)Howie, Faithful Contendings Displayed ..., p. 408, See also p. 409, "... many reproaches are cast upon us, that we are enemies to government, and will not fight for it, and that we are disorderly persons, not fit to be trusted .... But now being to march to the Highlands ... and nearer to the enemy, with whom we look for daily conflicts ...".
Their efforts to influence the electors on the eve of the first meeting of the Estates, their elections of men to represent them before the Estates, and their action in petitioning Parliament, far from being the actions of an anti-government influence, were anticipations of the liberties welcomed by the entire nation with the passing of the Franchise Act, 143 years later.¹

The writings of the Covenanters offer conclusive evidence concerning their constructive interest in civil government. Of the four books described by Taylor Innes as the most influential writings by Scottish authors on the subject of civil government Buchanan's De Jure Regni, Rutherford's Lex, Rex, the Informatory Vindication by the Society People, and Sir James Stewart's Jus Populi Vindicatum² three were by Covenanters who were closely related to the persecuting times, and the last two were within the framework of Symington's Church. W. J. Couper said of Torburn's Vindiciae Magistratus, "Lord Kames described it as 'the best defence of Whig principles'".³ Hector Macpherson said of Alexander Shields, "He is worthy to rank with Buchanan and Rutherford among the chief Scottish protagonists of the theory of the social contract and of democracy in Church and State."⁴ It would be a serious mistake to conclude from this evidence that the Covenanters of Scotland were anti-government men, in fact it would be hard to find any other one group of men who had done more for the development of government.

They were, however, directly involved in the change in the form of civil government that was taking place during those years and there was in this an influence that could be traced from the very beginning of the Reformation. Knox had worked with the nobles and the Sovereign until they proved uncooperative and then he appealed directly to the 'congregation'. His ability to work with the people of the worshipping church was one of the most important factors of the Reformation for in spite of other

¹Ibid., pp. 378, 387, 428-433, esp. p. 429, "... now, we have not only the liberty of ease from these grievances, but of access to represent them, it being now declared to be the subjects right to petition, which was before counted treason ...".

²Innes, Taylor, Studies in Scottish History, p. 5.

³Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 82.

interests and support, the success of the Reformation itself was ultimately dependent upon the people. The actions of the Parliament and General Assembly between the years 1638 and 1649, in particular the interest indicated by the Acts of Parliament in the qualifications of office bearers, did nothing to hinder the development of the idea of appealing to the (Christian) judgment of the people and Knox's attitudes and influences on this subject were brought to bear directly upon the men of the United Societies each time they referred to the National Covenant, simply because the first two sections of that covenant were the Scots Confession plus a renunciation of Romanism that had been added at the time of the writing of the Negative Confession.\(^1\) Even the absolutist demands of the kings, the reactions caused by the persecutions, and other influences of the Commonwealth period, were contributing factors; and the whole trend, from the days of Knox could be seen as having been away from Monarchy and towards Democracy, away from confidence in Rutherford's hereditary monarch and towards confidence in the judgment of Christian citizens, away from the idea that a particular king was God's special gift for good government and towards the idea that Civil Government, as a whole, was God's special gift. The United Societies were among the first to put this trend to the practical test and in this sense, they provided an important link between the practices of the Reformation and the Franchise Act of 1832. The contest had actually not been, Covenanter versus Government, but Absolutism versus Democracy. The Covenanters became involved simply because they were pioneers in this latter field, but as Hugh Miller put it in his letter to Lord Brougham, the principles of civil liberty which they had found had only been a "chance-consequence" of their search for spiritual truth.

The men who continued to object to the government after the indulgences, providing for freedom from physical tyranny had been offered to them, were even more interested in the purpose of the government than in the form of it. G. D. Henderson has caught the significance of the National Covenant as it was interpreted by Shields and the Society People in general.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Henderson, G. D., The Burning Bush, pp. 38, 39, esp. p. 40, "all who took the National Covenant avowed their acceptance of the Scots Confession... the authority of the Scots Confession may be said to have remained alongside that of the Westminster Confession amongst the hillmen and conventiclers and Cameronians. In the Reformed Presbyterian Church... we find the Covenants renewed... in 1712, and more than a hundred years later still regarded as of perpetual obligation".

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 123.
Whatever it had been intended to mean, they interpreted it as a new beginning for civil government in Scotland. From that point on, civil government in Scotland was to be on the basis of God's revealed Word -- for ruler and ruled. When they substituted the words "Civil Magistrate" for the word "King" at the first renewing of the covenants in 1689, it seemed to indicate that the choice of the people was to be more frequently and more directly involved in the affairs of government, but it was still not to be a government of, by, and for the people. It was to be government of, by, and for King Jesus. It was an inferior view of government that put it 'for' men instead of 'for' Christ. 'Government for men' could have been a description of their problem with tyrants and they concluded that it was no more safe to put civil government into the hands of unqualified magistrates than to put church government into the hands of unqualified clergy. The only safe place for it was in the hands of men who were qualified according to Christ's standards, and so influenced by His Word as to bring that government into subjection to His purposes. Without any such absolute standard, government might well fall into the hands of the people only, and thereby become another form of nationalistic tyranny. Such interest in the changes in the form and purposes of civil government could not be described as being 'anti-government'.

They aroused the opposition of Royalists in the 17th Century, and commanded the respect of the Whigs in the 18th Century, but they also stood opposed to the aims of the advocates of the independent secular State in the 19th century and to those of any age who would put any kind of patriotism above loyalty to King Jesus. There were many who accused them of being 'anti-government' but as we have seen, Symington's doctrine of the State came directly from these sources of Scottish national history. They produced a very "high" doctrine of the State.

**Church-State Relationships.**

Symington's doctrine of the proper relationship between Church and

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1 Vide, Fleming, D. H., *The Reformation in Scotland*, pp. 536f; Macpherson, Hector, *The Covenanters Under Persecution*, pp. 36f; And Hewison, J. K., *The Covenanters*, vol. II, pp. 541f summarized his own study by quoting from Carlyle's summary of the merits of his countrymen: "How many earnest, rugged Cromwells, Knoxes, poor Peasant Covenanters, wrestling, battling for very life, in rough miry places, have to struggle, and suffer, and fall, greatly censured, be-mired, - before a beautiful Revolution of Eighty-eight can step over them in official pumps and silk stockings with universal three-times-three!"
State rested upon three foundations. (1) His doctrine of Dominion had made ample provision for a relationship which he referred to variously as a 'union', an 'alliance', or a legal 'establishment'. The 'Spirituality' of Christ's Mediatorial Dominion had been built into the very nature of the Church in such a way as to provide a basis for the resolving of Church-State 'conflicts' and the continued 'close cooperation' of the two. At the same time it was the basis for the assurance that the Church would continue to be 'subject to Himself alone'. The 'Universality' of that Dominion had also been built into the very nature of the Church in such a way that 'the powerful principles of the religion of Jesus' sent a closely unified, universally expanding, perpetually existing Church moving throughout the world. A coming to terms between Church and State was not only necessary for both, it was 'obligatory'. It was also the 'Universality' of Christ's Dominion that had made Him Lord over the State. In all this Symington was quite careful to insist that the basic differences between Church and State would continue to be preserved. They were different insofar as their immediate origin, their immediate ends, and their forms of administration were concerned. They were particularly different in their means of operation. Their attitude towards their subjects or members and the character of their effects were also different. At the same time he continued to insist that the origin of both had been in the hands of Christ. His word was the rule and standard for both. His glory was the ultimate end for both; both were subject to Him as their Lord and ... distinction does not necessarily imply hostility. Things can be diverse without being adverse. His whole doctrine of the Church-State relationship became a practical application of the principle he had worked out in connection with the 'Spirituality' of Christ's Dominion. It was a kind of reflection of the relationship between the Regnum Christi and the regna mundi. There was a sharp clear distinction but it did not necessarily imply further separation of the two. In fact, it was this distinction that made the separation unnecessary. What the church could not do in the Kingdom work, the state did do. It was actually because of

1 O.D., pp. 262, 263, 313.

2 Ibid., p. 305, Vide, Pauck, W., The Heritage of the Reformation, p. 73. He points to the fact that in Bucer's doctrine "A distinction between the political and ecclesiastical power is recognized, but their separation is not stated".
their differences as well as their similarities that the two had been intended to work together to the glory of Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom. The fact that help given by the State to the Church had been abused, did not mean that it must necessarily tend to "secularize" and corrupt "true religion", or otherwise to "blend" Church and State, any more than it meant that States by virtue of having suffered at one time from the encroachments of the Church no longer had any need for religion. Both Church and State were ordinances of God, and the fact that Christ had been made Lord of both guaranteed that the necessary distinctions in both would continue to be preserved when they formed a proper "alliance".\(^1\) It was thus the overarching dome of Christ's Universal Dominion, and in particular Christ's moral supremacy over nations, that provided the grand basis for the union of Church and State as well as the motive for bringing the two historically unruly "persons" together. They were "... different moral provinces of the same king, --- separate departments of one vast moral empire".\(^2\)

(2) The scriptural authorization for such an "alliance" between Church and State Symington found in the New Testament in the manner in which the objects of the office of the magistrate are described. As the "minister of God" who was to be a terror to "evil" he must necessarily be concerned with such things as the suppression of irreligion or "the discouragement of offences against religion". As "the minister of God" for "good", he must necessarily be concerned with the "interests of true religion". The important thing was the very lack of limitation or restriction put upon the terms "evil" and "good". It lay at the heart of the New Testament description of the proper attitude for magistrates on this subject.\(^3\) The Old Testament provided three kinds of divinely

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 306, "Civil society and the Church of Christ, being both ordinances of God, can have no necessary tendency to corrupt each other, but must be capable of dwelling together in friendly cooperation, and of exerting a mutually beneficial influence"; Cf. "letter concerning Toleration" by John Locke, "The church itself is a thing absolutely separate and distinct from the commonwealth. The boundaries on both sides are fixed and immovable. He jumbles heaven and earth together, the things most remote and opposite, who mixes these societies, which are, in their original end, business, and in everything perfectly distinct, and infinitely different from each other", in The Works (1825) vol. 5, p. 21.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 312, "The grand basis of this obligation ... is the moral supremacy of Christ over the nations. From this ... springs the duty of extending their countenance and support to his church. The other arguments may be regarded as corollaries from this great principle or axiom".

\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 267-269.
approved examples of that principle.  (i) Under the pre-Jewish, patriarchal economy (It "bore a closer resemblance, in many respects to the Christian dispensation than did the Jewish")\(^1\) Melchizedec illustrated a "combination of things civil and sacred" which had been pleasing to God.  

(ii) During the Mosaic economy, the Jewish Kings such as Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah, illustrated the principle of magistrates who supported religion in a way that was pleasing to God, and yet in each case the necessary distinctions between Church and State had been preserved by the appearance of a priest alongside the king.\(^2\)  

(iii) Among the Gentile princes, the contributions made to the work of the Church by such men as Cyrus king of Persia, Darius, and Artaxerxes, help to destroy the idea that such state support was purely Jewish and therefore without God's approval for any other dispensation.\(^3\) The fact that Christ had refused to invoke the aid of the State during the early years of Christendom, did mean that Christianity was not dependent upon civil aid or approval for its existence but did not imply that therefore the church must continue to do without such aid now, any more than other New Testament precedents implied that 'unlearned men' should now be ministers or that the State should now persecute the Church:

> What the Head of the church may choose to do for her protection and support, in extraordinary circumstances, and in order to subserve the purpose of setting in a clearer light her spiritual independence and divine vitality, can form no rule of procedure in other circumstances.\(^4\)

Scripture evidence, when not limited either to Old or New Testament, authorized an "alliance" between Church and State.  

(3) Symington's reasoning on the whole subject was based upon the Religion-State relationship. He introduced the subject first in terms of the need of the State for "religion" and what "religion" could do for the State, and he continued to refer to it in that way throughout the book.\(^5\) This is one thing that makes his thoughts relevant for us today. He was

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\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 269ff.  
\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 271-277.  
\(^3\)Ibid., pp. 277, 278.  
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 311.  
\(^5\)Ibid., p. 262, Where he lists the subject for Chapter 9 wherein he is discussing the Church-State relationship as, "the duty of nations, as such, to have respect to religion" and again pp. 308, 309, wherein he discusses the consequences of the State's "disowning religion".
not "fighting a rearguard action for an undermined Church-State theory". He was concerned about the whole influence of the State on religion and vice versa. On one hand the State could do more than just restrain irreligion and protect the work of Christ and the Church. She could carry out her own part in that work by making a profession of her own faith in Christ and pledging her own loyalty to Him. She could exemplify His standards of office and conduct in her magistrates and laws, and she could contribute directly to the physical (pecuniary) support, and to the extension of the special work of His Kingdom through the exercise of her official or diplomatic influences. On the other hand, religion, as taught by the Church, was a very important element in the establishment of that kind of a sound political economy which would be most honouring to Christ and most conducive to the progress of His Kingdom. It taught the magistrates that they were the "vicegerents" of Christ with real authority from Him, but it also emphasized the point that they were ministers of God for "good", directly responsible to Christ as well as to men, for repressing all selfish temptations to tyrannize, to tolerate injustice, or to legislate, administer or judge in any way that ran counter to His revealed law. It taught the people the value of true liberty and the real source of it, that is, as the by-product of their knowledge of "true religion". It taught them to restrain those natural tendencies toward

1 Vidler, op. cit., p. 20, This was Vidler's description of the mistake made by "Christian theologians" who were faced by the development of "the independent secular State".

2 O.D., p. 280, "Without religion, nations may aim at freedom, but they can never attain it; and even although they could, they would be unfit for enjoying it, for, ... it will hold true of communities as of individuals, that 'whom the Son makes free, they and they only are free indeed'"; Vide, Macpherson, John. The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology, pp. 157, 158, He quotes from James A. Froude's "The Influence of the Reformation on the Scottish Character", "The Covenanters fought the fight and won the victory, and then, and not till then, came the David Humes with their essays on miracles, and the Adam Smiths with their political economies, and steam-engines, and railroads, and philosophical institutions, and all the other blessed or unblessed fruits of liberty"; Figgis, J. N., "Political Thought in the 16th Century", in The Cambridge Modern History, vol. III, p. 756, "Religious liberty arose, not because the sects believed in it, but out of their passionate determination not to be extinguished, either by political or religious persecution .... religious liberty is rightly described as the parent of political"; Forsyth, P. T., op. cit., p. 177, "... the Church ... has been, and must always be, directly or indirectly the mother of public freedom. Freedom in the State owes most to those who stood and stand for freedom from the State ...".
anarchical licentiousness and indifference which would be dishonouring to the Lord of the State and detrimental to the efficiency of civil government. The Church, as the teacher of religion, was also directly concerned with the "natural wealth" of the nation, and to some extent responsible for securing new industry through the development of personal habits of honesty, industry and thrift; without at the same time actually becoming involved in that industry or acquiring that wealth herself. The prevention of indulgence, waste, and pauperism was another important part of this.

Symington's Glasgow trade school system was an excellent practical application or illustration of the whole point. The Church was particularly concerned about the establishment and maintenance of the real "moral" prosperity in the nation which, neglected, had resulted in the political collapse of ancient nations and civilizations. She could use the means peculiar to her own nature to reach into the very hearts of men to promote the cause of peace, and go to the very sources of lawlessness, profligacy, and impiety which lay far beyond the scope of civil law and its physical means. Once the necessity for the Religion-State relationship had been firmly established, it went far toward determining the necessity for a formal legal contract which would bring together a particular State and a particular Church.

There is an interesting similarity between the writing of Bucer and Symington on this point. Both men have gone into long digressions dealing with two different commandments, and neither has explained the reason for it. Bucer, in his seventh law, a section of De Regno Christi later translated by Milton, takes up the seventh commandment and goes into great detail showing why the State should establish the principle contained in that commandment by civil legislation dealing with marriage and divorce. Symington took up the fourth commandment and showed in detail that civil

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1 Ibid., p. 280; Vide, De Regno Christi, Bucer's first law (p. 113) and his eighth law (p. 239) involved the instruction of the young. His sixth law, which was later translated, concerned pauperism. His ninth law (p. 260) dealt with waste and luxury, and laws ten, twelve, thirteen and fourteen dealt with the making, administering and rendering of justice on the basis of (moral) laws, pp. 265, 273ff.


3 O.D., pp. 289-298; Bucer's second law deals with days of holy service, in De Regno Christi, p. 115.
legislation on the subject of Sabbath labour and recreation should not be based upon reasons of expediency such as physical needs, personal profit, or selfish advantage, but upon a basis of moral right and wrong as it was to be found in the commandment. The cause and effect of the two digressions were basically the same. In Bucer's day the burning issue was marriage and divorce. This was the point of particular pressure being brought by the rule of the papacy and by the reaction of the people to that rule, to the whole subject of the Religion-State relationship. In Symington's day a similar pressure was being brought to bear on the whole Religion-State relationship by the big Industry of the Industrial Revolution and men had tended to defend their 'rights' to a day of rest on the basis of selfish expediency rather than moral law. Both Symington and Bucer were responding to these two different pressures and their digressions illustrated what they had to say concerning the necessity for a Religion-State relationship. The State, in both cases, needed the support of religion (i.e. by direct appeal to the moral law) in order to protect herself and her citizens against the outside encroachments either from a Church or from Industry. The two men, separated by nearly three hundred years of history, found it wise to deal with the Church-State relationship in terms of the basic Religion-State relationship, at that point where the pressure was most severe.

The Proper Form

For a 'proper' establishment, it was not any Church which was to be considered, but one "possessing and maintaining the true religion of Christ".\textsuperscript{1} Symington criticized the currently established Church,\textsuperscript{2} but he nowhere suggested the establishment of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Nor was it any Civil Government that would do, but one "possessing the character of the moral ordinance of God".\textsuperscript{3} Both the Church and the State were to be equally concerned, and considerate of the "character" of the

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., p. 265; Vide, Act, Declaration and Testimony ..., pp. 60, 73.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., pp. 189, 313, 314.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 265; Vide, Act, Declaration and Testimony ..., pp. 58, 60.
Once those decisions or choices had been made then:

The confession of the church's faith may be adopted and ratified by the State, without the state being at all chargeable with the iniquity of dictating to the church what shall be her creed ... such an act of legal recognition or ratification serves the end, not merely of pledging the nation's honour to the defence of these truths, but of constituting an open, public, national profession of true religion.\(^2\)

This kind of an "authoritative sanction" would add nothing to "the evidence or weight or obligation or authority" of the truths to which it was "appended", but it would constitute a national "profession" of the religion of Christ which would be one mark of a "Christian nation".\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 314; Vide, Act, Declaration and Testimony ..., pp. 11, 12, "And here we may observe, that while this church and nation contended for the obtaining a legal establishment of the ecclesiastical polity, they were no less concerned to have that other distinct ordinance of God, civil magistracy, unalterably settled, in agreeableness to the rule of GOD'S word. This appears, not only by the church's contending against the abuse of that ordinance amongst them; but also, by the public acts of parliament ...", See also pp. 69, 70, "The presbytery testify against the revolution settlement of religion, not only as including avowed apostacy from the covenanted constitution of the reformed church of Scotland, and a traitorous giving up of the interests and rights of Christ, our LORD and REDEEMER, in these, and especially in this land; but also as it is an erastian settlement, which will appear, by considering .... The antiscriptural method then taken in establishing religion: Instead of setting the church foremost in the work of the Lord, and the state coming after and ratifying by their civil sanction what the church had done, the revolution settlement inverted this beautiful order, both in abolishing prelacy, settling presbytery, and ratifying the confession of faith as the standard of doctrine to this church", See also p. 73, "... it is not a religious but a mere civil and political ..." settlement.

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 286f., Vide, Cunningham, "Historical Theology", vol. I in The Works, vol. II (Third ed.) p. 409, "The true Presbyterian principle upon this subject is thus admirably stated by Gillespie: 'The civil sanction added to Church government and discipline, is a free and voluntary act of the Magistrate. That is, church government doth not, ex natura rei, necessitate the Magistrate to aid ...'; This is the practical application of the principle of spiritual independence which Symington had explained earlier and for which Macpherson, J., op. cit., pp. 178ff, contends so earnestly.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 287, Symington's statements at this point are in the form of a question, viz., "Can that be a Christian nation which makes no profession of the religion of Christ? And how can such a profession be nationally made but in some such way as we have supposed ... by the functionaries of the nation, in their official capacity, giving their authoritative sanction to the church's creed?"
Eighty-two years later, in the "Church of Scotland Act, 1921", through words prepared for her by the Church, Parliament declared:

Recognition by civil authority of the separate and independent government and jurisdiction of this Church in matters spiritual, in whatever manner such recognition be expressed, does not in any way affect the character of this government and jurisdiction as derived from the Divine Head of the Church alone...¹

In another section, Parliament declared in words prepared by the Church:

This Church acknowledges the divine appointment and authority of the civil magistrate within his own sphere and maintains its historic testimony to the duty of the nation acting in its corporate capacity to render homage to God, to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ to be King over the nations, to obey His laws, to reverence His ordinances, to honour His Church, and to promote in all appropriate ways the Kingdom of God. The Church and the State owe mutual duties to each other, and acting within their respective spheres may signally promote each other's welfare.²

It is one thing for a State to acknowledge that a Church professes the Kingship of Christ over nations. It is quite another for that same State to make its own profession of Christ as its own Lord, and then to go on to conduct itself accordingly. As to whether or not Symington would have been satisfied with this part of the act as being a "pledging of the nation's honour to the defence of these truths, an open, public national profession of true religion", we cannot know.³ This was however, on the part of the State, a positive "recognition" and acknowledgement of 'true religion' and it contained in substance the very points that Symington had covered in his description of that which the State could do for the Church. It is also true that every point for which he had contended concerning the 'spirituality', 'independence', and 'subjection to Himself alone', as essential parts of the very nature of the Church, were thoroughly covered by this Act. For these two reasons he would have hailed the Act of 1921 as a major

¹ As quoted by Henderson, G. D., The Claims of the Church of Scotland, p. 142.

² Ibid.

³ Vidler pointed out that "the orb is under the cross whether it knows it or not", in The Orb and the Cross.
accomplishment, the realization of at least two of his reasons for writing; i.e. the proper guarantee of the spiritual independence of the Church, and the proper, non-Erastian form of the settlement itself.

**Theocracy and the Use of Scripture**

There was, in Symington's whole book, something more than a Christian doctrine of the State. Such a Church and such a State, brought together in such a 'union', would be more accurately described as being a Christian State, although as he made abundantly clear, there was no thought of a single (Medieval type) society which would render either Church or State unnecessary. If by Theocracy we mean a 'blending' of Church and State into one society, predominantly Church, then Dr. Symington did not believe in Theocracy and he insisted that the Jewish system also denied the very idea. If by Theocracy we mean, "... an attempt to construct a state on purely Biblical grounds, without any reference to historical development and existing conditions", then Symington did not believe in Theocracy because his whole doctrine was born out of Scottish national history and he made many very practical applications of it to the political and social conditions in 19th Century Scotland. But if by Theocracy we mean any union at all, any kind of relationship between religion and the State, the precepts of God and politics, then Dr. Symington not only believed in it, he insisted that by fair and reasonable grounds of interpretation it was authorized by the Bible

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1 Hopf, G., *Martin Bucer and the English Reformation*, p. 100, "The first part (of De Regno Christi) is of more or less doctrinal character concentrating on suggestions how to create a Christian State. Some might even call it a Christian Utopia"; Pauck, W., *The Heritage of the Reformation*, p. 73, Summarizes Bucer's doctrine by saying, "The result is a Christian state which endeavours to develop all its life under the law of the Biblical word." Cf. Vidler, op. cit., p. 7 "Whether or not the New Testament adumbrates, or lays the foundations of, a Christian doctrine of the State, it certainly contains no indications of a doctrine of a Christian State ..."; Cullman, O., *The State in the New Testament*, p. 89, "The State does not have to be Christian".

2 O. D., pp 308, 309, footnote 62; Cf. Pauck, op. cit., p. 74, Complains that "Butzer's ideal of state is a 'commonwealth' (Respublica) wherein the common welfare is best guaranteed by the Christian nature of the state and its actions. Thus he blends two spheres that are essentially foreign to each other".

3 Figgis, J. N., "Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century", in *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. III, p. 740, This is his description of the doctrine of the Anabaptists.
when it was taken as a whole book. He denied the idea that the 'proper' Church-State relationship for the 19th Century was one that would in all respects be the same as that which was found in either the Jewish or the New Testament economy, but he insisted that it was still possible, and necessary, to draw from the Old Testament many divinely prescribed principles which might be interpreted in the light of the New Testament in such a way as to guide men in the formation of a "Christian nation". It would produce an evangelically minded, well unified Church working in close cooperation with a State that was keenly aware of its moral influence and purposes.

That 'profound and implicit deference' to the authority of the whole Bible which was a marked feature of his private devotional life, his preaching, his public speaking, and his theological writings, was the most important factor in the decisions of his Churchmanship, the work of his ministry and the formation of his doctrine. He tested, examined, proved the doctrines - and practices - of his Church in the light of Scripture to his own satisfaction and in this respect, and in many others he stood in worthy succession to the "Cameronians Apostle", John MacMillan I of whom it was said with great discernment: "... he drove his way alone, through every sophism, straight to the highest covenanting ground". 1

The Covenants and Dominion

The second factor in the development of Symington's doctrine was the practice (or doctrine) of Covenanting to which little reference has thus far been made. Macgregor has pointed out that:

To the seventeenth-century Scottish divines, it appeared to be a fundamental presupposition that God dealt with Scotland as a nation ... The Settlement that followed the turmoil of a century was based on the doctrine that Church and nation were co-extensive. 2

The national covenants, as Symington explained them, would have been important factors in the formation of that "fundamental presupposition". A covenant,


to him, involved: 1. a law (i.e. something in itself obligatory), 2. a vow (i.e. an engagement to perform that obligation) and 3. an oath (i.e. an appeal or oath to God regarding the sincerity of the one making the covenant). More important, it further supposed, on the part of the other party, the one with whom it was made, an engagement to bestow certain favours — a promise of reward — as a result of its being kept or carried out.¹ A covenant was "civil" when entered into between men and having to do with affairs of this life. It was "religious" when entered into between God and men with respect to the duties which they owe to God. It was "personal" when an individual promised to keep God's commandments and to anticipate His rewards. It was "social" when a group of people agreed upon these same things together. A "Public Social Covenant" was a "mutual, solemn religious transaction between God and men", "an act of religious homage or divine worship".² Covenanting was a "voluntary" transaction because the obligation of the law was there regardless of the covenant. Men could not be forced to make a covenant but there could be a "guilt of neglect". Public social covenanting might be used in all the relations of life but it was a moral duty and therefore could not be limited to a "positive domestic ecclesiastical or national institute". The Solemn League and Covenant, for example, illustrated the point that covenants need not be limited to the members of any one church, to members of many churches, to members of any one nation, or even to religious matters in various nations. The same covenants could in fact include both civil and religious matters:

... it surely never can be wrong for a moral creature to engage to do what God has required to be done ... duties of both kinds are embraced in personal covenants ... things sacred and civil are inseparably associated. The good of the Church is intimately connected with the good of the State. The prosperity of Sion may in many ways be affected by the State of civil society, and the peace and prosperity again of civil society by the welfare of Sion. In fine is not the glory of God deeply concerned in both, being promoted by the peace and order of the commonwealth as well as by the beauty regularity and purity of the Church?

² Ibid., p. 5, 6.
The objection (to including civil and religious items in the same covenant) we hold to be unfounded ... To unite, is not to confound; to connect is one thing, to blend is another thing ... things may be united ... without having their distinctive character destroyed ... the circumstances of divine providence are not seldom such as to render the connexion in question utterly unavoidable, civil rights being often asailed as the means of abridging spiritual liberties, and spiritual privileges being endangered by the plausible pretext of civil rights.  

Symington believed that the national covenants were of continuing moral obligation for the citizens of Scotland and this was one thing that set Scotland apart as one of those nations which had already received the Gospel. The covenants provided a means for bringing together men, Church and State on a horizontal level, and focussing everything in the Kingdom on one single purpose. They provided continuity or 'perpetuity' in so far as the dimension of time was concerned. At the same time they related man in all capacities of life, to God. The seventeenth century divines had reason to believe that God dealt with everything and everyone in their nation as a single unit. The whole nation had been entrusted not only to His providential care, but also to His preceptive will - by the solemn exercise of the wills of the people of the nation.

In other words, everything Symington had to say about Church and State and Church-State relationships must be understood in the light of these national covenants. They were important factors in the development of the Kingdom concept of the Church, in the development of the idea that the State was subject to Christ's preceptive or revealed will as well as to His providential overrulings, and in the development of the idea that Church and State, matters political and moral, should be more closely bound together in purpose. In all these ways the practice of covenanting as it had been carried on in Scottish national history had contributed to the development of Symington's doctrine of Dominion. Covenanting was, as noted in Chapter One, the third main point in the Testimony of his Church, and it is only when we ask why Symington did not write on the doctrine of Covenants in connection with Church and State, that it becomes clear that he had substituted in its place the descriptions and explanations of the overarching

1Ibid., p. 10f; See also pp 7-10.
dome of Christ's Mediatorial Dominion. Everything that had been done by the Covenants was done in a better way by this doctrine of Dominion. When rightly understood and applied it served to bind men together in purpose on earth, in family, Church and State. At the same time it provided a practical link between the Regnum Christi and the regna mundi. When the national covenants were first drawn up, political and religious circumstances were such that attention was focussed upon the 'law', the 'vow', the 'oath', and the 'personal' and 'voluntary' aspects of the covenant, but one of the most serious dangers in Covenanting was the bargaining spirit it could generate - the obedience-for-the-sake-of-reward - and as the Covenants began to be misused as a test instead of a profession, this last characteristic feature of the covenants, as Symington had described them, overshadowed the others in importance. There came to be the danger that the covenants themselves would be the means of the development of the spirit of legalism. It is true that Symington defended those national covenants already made. He nowhere criticized them but it is also significant that he did not support the many covenant renewal proposals in his own church courts as he did support the work of foreign missions or the Evangelical Alliance. His references to the Covenants throughout the book on Dominion are passing references and it would seem that his total influence was more obviously in favour of "personal" covenanting that it was in favour of formal "social" covenanting. His section on Dominion might almost be seen to be a "spiritualizing" of the more formal or mechanical form of the covenants. It accomplished all that the covenants had been intended to do from the inside, as it were, by direct appeal to the wills of men rather than by any external, formal binding and compelling. The Covenants however, were the second important factor in the formation of Symington's doctrine of Dominion.

The United Societies and Doctrine Development

The third important factor influencing the development of Symington's doctrine came from his study of the statements and experiences of the United Societies and there is here an opportunity for further comparison between his doctrine and that of Bucer's. Bucer, undoubtedly influenced by his experiences in the City-State of Strassburg, used the term "respublica"
to designate the whole Christian community. Professor Torrance has well summarized his doctrine in the following words:

Thus in contrast to Luther's sharp distinction between the Regnum spirituale and the Regnum corporale, the Regnum Christi in Butzer's theology constitutes a third dimension, the Communio Christiana, which, through the Word and the Spirit, is visibly and actively realized on earth, and through the Church's preaching of the Word and daily witness also in the State. (The State is also responsible for encouraging widespread preaching of the Word, and evangelism.) The relations of the Church and State are mutual. The Word of God is communicated to the State through the Church, and in obedience to that Word the State creates within the world a sphere of liberty, setting bounds to the kingdom of Satan, so that the life of the Church protected by the State may freely grow in obedience to God's Word and in the exercise of love, and so assume the character of a Respublica or Societas Christiana ... Thus the Regnum Christi reaches out primarily through the Church, but also through the Commonwealth that is obedient to the Will of God, to the final advent of Christ and the manifestation of the Kingdom of God in glory and power.  

Symington also referred to the Christian group as a 'community' or a 'Society' and his thinking was undoubtedly influenced by his interest in the United Societies from which the Testimony of his Church had come. They had insisted that they were neither a Church nor a State and in effect they were a 'third dimension' in Scottish national history. There were many other similarities in the doctrine of the two men. Both insisted that civil laws must be based upon the whole moral law, 2 that there must

1 Torrance, op. cit., p. 87, Pauck, W., The Heritage of the Reformation, pp 72, 73, has also summarized Bucer's doctrine, but expressed a decided personal preference (pp 71-74) for the doctrine of Luther. See p. 72, "The State is in the service of the Kingdom of God, directly not indirectly. It does not only prepare for the highest morality; it is obliged to spread the true and best one among its subjects ... So it follows that the State promotes and serves the church and that it stands beside her, is even inferior and subject to her, as it hears from the ministers of the Church the word of Christ", but see p. 74, "he blends two spheres that are essentially foreign to each other".

2 De Regno Christi, p. 266; Pauck, op. cit., pp 74, 75, Comparing Luther and Bucer, "Legislation is ... governed by the common 'positive law', and not - as Butzer advised - by Christ's precepts or by the decalogue. For the Gospel does not contain a rule about the method of government; it prescribes only that one shall honour the civil magistrate. How superior is Luther, with his profound description of the Mosaic law as the Jews 'Saxon Code', which may be used as a pattern of a law code and as a good example, to Butzer, who was always inclined to consider the Mosaic law not as a code of natural or common law, but as a law of God, deserving preference to all human laws!".
be Christian standards for the office of the magistrate,\(^1\) and that the State should recognize, profess and provide for the true religion. But it is the source of their interest in the whole subject with which we are concerned at this point. Both men had been prompted by the facts related to their experiences - Bucer as he grappled first hand with the problems of Church and State in Strassburg and Symington as he read and studied the Testimony of the United Societies which had carried on the business of both a Church and a State in the General Meetings. Prompted by these experiences, both men went on to develop the doctrine of the whole Christian State in its over-all relationship to the Regnum Christi. It was not just the improved unity of the Church, the 'Christianizing' of the State, the desire to protect the Church against the encroachments of the State, nor the desire to see a particular State united to a particular Church in which they were both interested (i.e. in Britain); these were all important factors about which both men were very much concerned and to which both made important contributions, but they were even more concerned about the over-all progress of Christ's whole Kingdom and in particular, the radical importance of the Religion-State relationship if the State was to become useful as Christ intended it to be in the work of His Kingdom - to help rather than to hinder that work.

When Bucer wrote, the way to accomplish this had been by working down into the lives of individual citizens through a Christian king who would enact and administer Christian laws. By the time Symington wrote three hundred years later, progress had been made in civil liberty, and government had been put more directly into the hands of the people. It may have been because of this and because of the record of Scottish national history during the first and second reformation, that Symington put more emphasis than did Bucer on the role of the commonwealth in the work of Christ's Kingdom. The State for Symington not only set bounds to the Kingdom of Satan, it exercised its influences in such a way as to help to move these

\(^1\)De Regno Christi, p. 270, His eleventh law required a test for magistrates; Collier, J., An Ecclesiastical History of Britain, pp 416, 417, "Bucer proceeds to lay down some directions for the regulation of the magistracy. He would have every person nicely examined, before he is put into any office of trust and power". 
bounds back. It not only provided the circumstances under which the Church could work best, it also set a positive moral example, and exercised a positive moral influence in the lives of citizens. Civil Government did more than just provide an orderly existence, it held moral and political truth together. It was at this particular point that the rapid development of the secular state became of crucial importance in Symington's doctrine. The new opportunities, afforded by the civil liberty, implied redoubled responsibilities on the part of individual citizens; but instead of becoming more aware of the State as a part of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom, men began to look upon it as a product of their own creation, brought into existence for their own benefit. The influence from across the channel calling for 'liberty, equality and fraternity' contributed to the trend and instead of civil government showing more and more perfectly the influence of Christ's Mediatorial Dominion, it was moving in the opposite direction - driving a wedge between politics and religion. Symington responded to the situation by writing a book which emphasized the important responsibilities of the individual Christian magistrates, Churchmen, and citizens who must stand in the gap and become the influence by means of which Christ drew the State into close practical cooperation with the work of His Church as it was being carried on throughout His Kingdom.

It was this experience in actually grappling with the problems of Church and State which helps to give to the writings of both Bucer and Symington their ring of confidence. One of the most serious criticisms that could be made of Symington's whole doctrine is to be seen in the fact that he did not know political theory. He was a churchman writing about the business of statesmen, and yet the very thing that gives to his writing

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1"Liberalsim", writes Vidler, "asked for liberty for men to worship, to believe and practice, according to their own dispositions, and not for recognition by the State of man's obligation to worship God according to His revelation", in op. cit., p. 90; His words bear a curious resemblance to the complaint made by the United Societies to the Revolution Settlement; that is, that it had been according to "the fluctuating inclinations of the people" rather than according to the Word of God, in Act, Declaration and Testimony ..., p. 73; See also Howie, op. cit., p. 453, In their petition to the Assembly in 1690 the Societies said, "So in our poor judgments, we think in the establishment of religion, and religious rights in a land, respect is always to be had to the pattern and rule of God's revealed will in his word, and not to the inclinations of men, and their worldly politicks".
a note of authority that is often lacking in the 'speculations', of others
is this close relationship to Scottish national history. His theology
was not just 'paper theology', it had been tried and proven in the fires
of Scottish history during that period to which historians, theologians
and statesmen look as being a time of particular importance in the develop-
ment of the civil and religious life of the nation. This then was the
third distinctive factor in the formation of his doctrine.

Evaluation

In evaluating Symington's theology in terms of Scottish theology in
general, there were four areas in which he made particular contribution.
Listed in order of importance they would be: 1. his doctrine of Christ's
Universal Mediatorial Dominion, 2. his doctrine of Christ's Lordship over
nations, with its resultant 'high' doctrine of the State, and 3. his 'high'
doctrine of Church-State relationships. Symington's doctrine of the
Church was not unusual in so far as Scottish history or theology was con-
cerned, but there were differences in emphasis within it, and he worked
out the Kingdom-Church, Church-State relationships in terms of the nature
of the Church, in a way that had not before been done.

There are five reasons for believing that Symington's theology was,
in at least one sense, an original contribution to Scottish theology in
general. 1. Those Scottish theologians (e.g. Walker and Cunningham) who
have discussed the subject of the extent of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom
have referred consistently to non-Scottish theologians, particularly at
that point where the State was involved. 2. When other Scottish theolo-
gians touched on these subjects, namely the Westminster Commissioners in
their discussions of the State in its relation to Christ's Kingdom, they
tended to exclude the State and to limit the Kingdom. For 'good' or for
'bad' Symington's theology was different. It was more like that of Martin
Bucer than that of Samuel Rutherford or George Gillespie. 3. Both the

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1Poole, for example, points out that publicists in France, Germany,
and England wrote without trying to adapt their political theories to
existing situations. He believed that Wyclif was an exception. In the
struggle between Church and State, "Neither party could afford to negotiate
on their theoretical footing", in Illustrations of the History of Medieval
Thought and Learning, pp 246, 247.
extent of the Mediatorial Dominion of Christ, and the doctrine of Christ's Lordship over nations had been involved in the truly distinctive feature of the Testimony of the Reformed Presbytery as explained in Chapter I and these were the points in that Testimony to which the Secession Church, and others, had later objected. 4. It did produce results that were unusual in 19th Century Scotland. It changed a trend that had the earmarks of 'Independency' within his own church, producing in its place a unifying effect that was perhaps most clearly seen in the fact that only three ministers refused to remain, in 1863, with the Church that entered the union in 1876. These were the people who had never seceded, and overcoming 186 years of 'independence' was no mean accomplishment. It also provided the impetus for his own evangelical ministry, making him a pioneer in home and foreign missions, a recognised leader in Interdenominational affairs in Scotland and at the World Evangelical Alliance meetings in London. It caused him to thunder in an almost Knoxian way that Church-State cooperation was 'obligatory' at the very moment when others in Scotland were speculating, or even denying, that such a thing was 'possible'. Other Evangelicals pressed for one or the other of these but not all. Many Evangelicals tended towards a subjectivism that led to Independency. It was generally Moderatism that was expected to champion the cause of Establishment and to lean toward an objectivism in church membership. Symington was an Evangelical, historically speaking, most 'independent' in so far as the established church was concerned, intensely subjective in his private practice and personal ministry, and yet quite objective in his attitude towards church membership and the continuity and establishment of the Church. In other words, the results or effects of his doctrine would indicate that it was 'original' in so far as Scottish theology in the 19th Century was concerned. 5. The banners, sermons, and actions of those who were immediately involved in the persecutions leading up to the Revolution and the formation of Symington's Church, would seem to indicate that there had been important things rediscovered concerning Christ's Crown and Kingdom during that particular period in Scottish national history. Whatever that development had been, Symington's early training and his position in the Church fitted him in an admirable way for recording it in the form of systematic theological statement and then training others in the understanding and practice of it. In the sense that Symington's theology came directly from these sources, it
was not 'original', but in the sense that it had not been written prior to his time in a systematic form, other than as part of the Reformed Presbyterian Church Testimony or a pamphlet in defence of that testimony, it was an original contribution to Scottish theology. The fact that it had been taken from the actual experiences of a community of people who had later 'professed' it in a Church Testimony, does not detract from its originality, but does serve to commend its value to us. It was not 'original' in the sense of being novel, speculative, paper theology. It was the result of the rediscovery of the Kingship and Kingdom of Christ in the life of the worshipping Church in Scotland.

Bucer's writings and those of Calvin bear ample witness that the doctrine of Christ's Kingship and Kingdom had been worked out under remarkably similar circumstances, and recorded by other non-Scottish reformed theologians. The very fact that it had also been rediscovered in Scottish national history is further indication to us of the importance of the doctrine. In this larger perspective, Symington's theology would be more accurately described as being "progress" or a Scottish adaptation of reformation theology. The general progress becomes apparent as we go from the 14th to the 16th to the 17th Centuries.

Wyclif's books, on Dominion, written at the very dawn of the Reformation emphasized the priesthood (or kingship) of every believer. Each believer 'held' (dominion) directly from God as a result of his spiritual relationship with God. As has been noted this was an important element in the distinction Symington assumed between the 'power' and 'authority' of the civil magistrate but Wyclif did not have the benefit of Scottish reformation history. He neglected the more objective element of the kingdom and his teaching produced a measure of anarchism among the people on one hand and on the other hand the king who claimed to rule by divine right. In so far as the Church, the State, or Church-State relations were concerned, his teaching on dominion could not be said to have had a particularly unifying effect. Wyclif's main concern was for the reformation of abuses in the Church and yet one of the most significant results of his teaching was to be seen in the changes it produced in men's thinking as it was related to the State.
Bucer's book, written the year he died and summing up much of his life work for reformation, carried on Wyclif's point. Magistrates, particularly in a reformed land, must be right with God; but Bucer also went on to point out the relationship between moral law and civil laws, and religion and State. It is plain that he had a much more objective concept of the Kingdom of Christ than did Wyclif. He indicated that he believed, as did Symington, that there must be a "solid" reformation not only in the Church, but also in the State. Bucer's weakest point is to be seen in his relatively brief description of the king's ratifying of the covenant after all the major councils in the whole country have indicated their profession of faith. This was the result to which he looked forward after the full proclamation of the Gospel throughout the entire land; but the question is, when is a nation sufficiently 'reformed' to permit such an action with its resultant enforcement of 'Christian' laws. His strongest point is to be seen in his clear description of the part that the Christian magistrate has to do as a Christian administrator in helping to form and to administer laws, and in training men in the actual 'reforming' of the nation. Pauck\(^1\) and Hopf\(^2\) have both apologized for the fact that Bucer's book apparently failed to produce many immediate results in Britain in so far as the State was concerned, but Hopf especially has shown in Martin Bucer and the English Reformation what an important influence his teaching had in the Church and in other matters. His main concern in De Regno Christi was for the reformation of abuses in the State and yet one of the most significant results was to be seen in the influence it had in the Church and society.

Any evaluation of the contribution made by Symington's doctrine to all this must take into consideration the point that he too was thinking in terms of the whole covenanted kingdom in Scotland. He assumed that because of the signing of the national covenants, the entire nation therefore had already been committed to becoming a "Christianized nation". It was a kingdom that had already been committed, as Wyclif and Bucer would have it,


\(^2\) Hopf, C., Martin Bucer and the English Reformation, p. 100.
to Christian standards for citizens and magistrates. It was also a
kingdom that had already been committed, as Bucer looked forward to it,
to a very 'high' doctrine of the State as a particular instrument of
Christ to be used by Him in the establishment of His Kingdom. There
was an equally 'high' doctrine of the Church's unity, universality, and
perpetuity. Symington went beyond this to include a 'high' doctrine
of Church-State relationships, one that bound such a State and such a
Church closely together in mutual subjection to the single will of Christ
and at the same time guaranteed their continuing necessary distinctions.
These then were the two points at which Symington made a significant
Scottish contribution to the earlier reformation theology. 1. The
doctrine of "Christ's Kingship over nations", with the corresponding
response that a nation made in becoming a "Christian nation", had been
assumed by others, but Symington spelled it out in the form of systematic
theological statement, showing just how it was related to the doctrine of
Christ's Universal Mediatorial Dominion. 2. The doctrine of a Church-
State relationship had also been assumed in the working agreements the
earlier reformers had with the State; but here again, Symington spelled
it out in the form of theological statement, showing how the "Spirituality"
of Dominion was projected into the Church in such a way as to provide a
practical basis within the very nature of the Church for the resolving of
Church-State conflicts and for their continuing close cooperation. Both
these points (the "Dominion" State relationship and the "Dominion" Church-
State relationships) were directly related to the doctrine of the Kingship
of Christ as it had been developed in Scottish national history.

A major weakness in Symington's doctrine is to be seen in the impor-
tance he placed on the actual signing of the national covenants. He looked
back to that particular point in time in much the same way Bucer looked
forward to the king's ratification of the foedus domini. Historians,
theologians and statesmen have tended to deny that those official contracts
or covenants by means of which the people of 17th century Scotland sought
to bind themselves and their entire nation to God and to His will, could
have done just that, or if they had done it, that such a binding could
continue to be valid in so far as their posterity were concerned. They
would say that Symington's view of the significance of the covenants was
exaggerated and whether they were more right than was Symington in so far
as the original intentions of the actual covenanters were concerned, may be
a debatable question; but the very existence of their denials is a
significant factor in so far as any continuing obligations of the cove-
nants are concerned. In spite of any handicap involved by his assumption
however, Symington was very keenly aware that 19th Century magistrates
were not being selected on the basis of moral qualifications. Laws were
not being made or administered on the basis of moral law, and the purposes
of civil Government could not be considered to be in line with Christ's
purposes; and to the extent to which he actually dealt with these problems,
he eliminated the 'handicap' of his assumption.

It is in his explanations of "HOW" men (magistrates, churchmen, and
citizens) can make practical progress from current conditions toward the
ideal or "Christianized nation", and "WHY" they should keep on working at
it, that we find another distinctive feature of his theology, one having
to do with its application. Bucer's laws deal with the subject from the
king's standpoint - the responsibilities of the Christian administrator.
Gladstone's theories provide an outline for the actual legal progress to
be made by the government itself in the recognition of organized religion,
and in this connection he has provided many of the same reasons for making
sure that there is a continuing Church-State relationship that Symington
did;⁴ but his weakness lay in his elimination of scripture in a matter
which directly involved the Church, and the State as a moral being, and
his reliance on the actual legal form or nature of the State-Church rela-
tionship. There would surely be some danger here of trying to determine that
which should be solely on the basis of that which had been. Symington has
put the whole thing in terms of that which the Scottish Christian citizen
can do about it, and 'why'; that is, he is to be motivated in matters of
both Church and State by his knowledge of the Kingdom of Christ and His
love and loyalty for King Jesus. He does not give up the subjective emphasis
of Wyclif, but he keeps it within the context of the whole kingdom. He

⁴Midler points out that T. R. Birks, in Church and State, has explained
"a theory of the relations of the State with the Church, which is similar in
its conclusions to Gladstone's theory, but founded on a direct appeal to the
Scriptures", in op. cit., p. 34 footnote 1; In the 1881 edition of Symington's
book On Dominion, pp 252, 278; 287, 289, his sons point out that Symington
had quoted from Birks' book.
does not appeal to the King, Prime Minister, or administrator to bring about a Reformation, but to the people themselves who must finally stand in the gap as they did in the days of Knox, to bring their nation into the service of Christ. His doctrine arose out of the struggles of the people who were making Scottish national history, and it seemed to lend itself to maintaining its vital contact with the life of the worshipping church and nation.

There were no immediate changes in the State that could be said to match those to be seen in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as a direct result of Symington's teaching. A similar apology has already been made for the relative failure of Bucer's book, and of Gladstone's book, particularly in view of the latter's "career" as a Liberal Statesman. All three books were too Utopian to produce immediate results. States do not change rapidly, and in Bucer's case there seemed to be little change in either direction. In the cases of Gladstone and Symington, the continuing rapid development of the independent secular state was in direct opposition to their ideals. The very appearance of these books, however, was another step towards the realization of what G. D. Henderson has called a "Christian world".

The Twentieth Century

It is in the three influences that were peculiar to Symington's writing on this subject that we find keys to the adaptation or rediscovery of the doctrine under quite different and even more rapidly changing 20th Century circumstances.

There is undoubtedly much truth in what Gladstone, Figgis, Hector Macpherson, and many others have said about how the Scriptures have been misused to prove points on either side of the Church-State controversy. The Covenanters, as Macpherson has pointed out, were not above 'finding'

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1Vidler closes his book with a chapter entitled "Gladstone's Creed and Career", wherein he is at pains to show his career as a Liberal statesman did not annul his earlier political philosophy, "although it concealed it", in op. cit., pp 142ff.

2Henderson, G. D., The Burning Bush, p. 138; At the close of his chapter on "Religion and Democracy in Scottish History", he anticipated the future in terms of a "Christian world".

3Macpherson, Hector, The Covenanters Under Persecution, pp 63, 64.
texts to prove their particular point of view and Symington's exegesis would certainly not stand the test of modern textual criticism. It is not his particular use of particular texts, but his continuing insistence upon a balanced use of the Old and the New Testament - the whole Bible - that commends itself to our attention. It appeared in connection with the scriptural evidence for the 'Reality' and 'Universality' of Christ's Dominion, in connection with his doctrine of the Church, and in particular where he found continuity or perpetuity between the Old Testament Church in the wilderness and the New Testament Church. It became an important influence in his doctrine of the State at that point where he refused to be limited either to that particular period in (Old Testament) time when God was dealing with His people and they were, as it were, on the inside of the State looking out, or to that particular period in (New Testament) time when they were, as it were, on the outside of the State looking into it. It was not by limiting the doctrine of the State to an Old Testament Theocracy, nor was it by limiting it to New Testament exegesis and those tensions and circumstances peculiar to that particular period in time, that Christians were to find Christ's final attitude towards the State. The former would provide a high but artificial doctrine of the State as a peculiar kind of Theocracy that would be as incompatible as were the separatist doctrines of the Anabaptists. The latter would leave a low, almost persecution complex type of attitude towards the State - an attitude illustrated by Cullman and his view of that contrast between Romans 13 and Revelation 13, which he has perceived and explained so accurately. Symington was as much concerned about the Kyrios Christos as was Cullman but he did not discuss this apart from the Old Testament concept of the Kingdom and His close contact with the whole idea of "the kingdom" in Scottish national history has helped to provide a note of reality in his thinking on this subject. It is not his particular use of particular passages, but his consistent use of the whole Bible, that commends itself to our attention as being a potentially important and somewhat neglected factor in the formation of a 'high' doctrine of the State as one important element in a 20th century "Christian world".

The second major influence in Symington's writing was that of the Covenants, although as noted, he tended to substitute thoughts of dominion and its more inward unifying influences for the signing of those formal contracts that would bind and demand, as it were, by means of external pressures.
From the whole study it becomes clear that when men—in the 14th, 16th, 17th, and 19th centuries got down to grips with the problem of the overall influences of such organizations as the Church and the State upon each other and upon individual souls, they became involved in a doctrine of dominion and therefore it should provide another key to our thinking on the same subjects in the 20th century. The trend had been from Wyclif's emphasis on the individual's dominion and his part in bringing about the reformation of the Church, to Bucer's emphasis (at least in De Regno Christi) on the king's responsibilities in bringing about a reformation of the entire nation, to Symington's emphasis on that Kingship of Christ in both Church and State which provided a basis for better organized, more practical Church-State cooperation. It went from the subjectivism of individual dominion to increasingly complex organizational inter relations, and that trend has continued to become increasingly complex in the 20th century. To the extent to which Wyclif, Bucer, and Symington have described Church and State confronting each other in the light of the influences of the overarching dome of Christ's Dominion, their doctrine has avoided the temporary circumstances and dangers of the polemics peculiar to their age or the traditions peculiar to their Church and bears the stamp of that which has a universal and practical value. The experiences of the past are seen to have an important bearing on the circumstances of the present, but neither past nor present can be worshipped as being ideal when viewed within the context of the Kingdom. Progress, or the lack of it, becomes more obvious when viewed in the light of the gradual development of Christ's Kingdom.

The doctrine of the foedus, "federalism", "covenants", or "social contracts", however, had been frequently involved in the development of the doctrine of dominion. Symington was no exception. Figgis has pointed out, in tracing the history of the whole idea of the Social Contract, that it is firmly embedded in the theology of the covenant.1 G. D. Henderson has shown a relationship between federalism, the covenants, and civil and religious liberty in Scottish theology and history.2 Bucer looked forward


to the ratification of the *foedus domini* and Symington looked back to the signing of the national covenants. There have undoubtedly been many misuses of the covenant and there has been some tendency to misunderstand the actual social swearing of these particular national contracts as being all that there is to the whole doctrine of covenanting. In view of the way in which Bucer used the word *foedus*, it would be more accurate to consider them not so much the cause of the progress of Christ's Kingdom as the result of progress already made - another outward sign or milestone or progress being made in the establishment of Christ's *Dominion*. Symington's substitution of the influences of the Dominion for those often ascribed to the national covenants, indicated that he saw the continuing need for a strong practical unifying, standardizing influence, but that it would need to be something more than the formal national covenants.

It is not a re-signing of the old covenants, nor even a revising of them that commends itself to us in all this, but the concept of the overarching dome of Christ's mediatorial dominion as a single, unifying, Christianizing influence that could meet particular needs in the 20th century. Everything that T. S. Eliot has said about the need for a distinctly Christian Society,¹ that Vidler has said about the increasing importance of a 'Christian' influence in view of the complexity of the tightening controls of Collectivism,² and all that has been said by Laski and others concerning the tendencies toward an organizational anarchy or

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¹ Eliot, T. S., *The Idea of a Christian Society*, (1939), p. 25, "My thesis has been, simply, that a liberalised or negative condition of society must either proceed into a gradual decline of which we can see no end, or ... reform itself into a positive shape ... the only possibility left is that of a positive Christian society". He proceeds to speak in terms of a "Christian State".

² Vidler, *op. cit.*, p. 22, "The Collectivist State becomes "Totalitarian" when it seeks to guide the whole community according to its own will, and to extend its control over culture, the national ethos and philosophy of life, suppressing dissentients. The move towards collecticism and away from (19th Century) liberalism is giving the question of the relation of the Church and the State a new form ...": See also p. 140, "The collectivist State or the planned society of the future will, so far as we can judge, be based on some sort of metaphysical or anti-metaphysical dogma; its ideology will not be laissez-faire. The question has to be asked whether the Christian faith can be so re-presented to the State and so recover its hold on the community as to lead to the public acknowledgment of its truth ...".
a decentralization of governmental authority, would emphasize the need for a single, Christianizing influence to which all might look. The rash of mechanical Church-State relationships that sprang up in connection with the Reformation, of which the Scottish covenants were a single important instance, were strong indications of the fact that wherever men read their newly restored Bibles they came to the conclusion that there must be some working relationship between the State, whatever form it might take, and the Church; but as the C.O.P.E.C. report for 1924 pointed out, "We have now a variety of philosophic theories regarding Church and State, but in effect no Christian theory".

More recently Professor Joseph Sittler, at the meetings of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi (1961) emphasized the critical need for a doctrine more like that of Irenaeus than that of Augustine. He insisted that the problems forced upon us by the events of the present decade were not soluble by the covert dualism of nature and grace which had worked itself out in the history of Christian thought and practice, in terms of a dualism of Church and world, of spiritual and temporal. Such a dualism was never appropriate to the organic character of biblical speech and has now become unintelligible. The "unitary Christology" of the early church affirming "all nature as a realm of grace" had been a key factor in avoiding that dualism, and one which had been attested and liberated by the reformers; but during the "post-Reformation consolidations of their teachings" it had again been permitted "to slip back into a minor theme". He believed that while we had "a christology of the moral soul, ... of history", and in a limited sense a "christology of the ontic", we did not have "at least not in such effective force as to have engaged the thought

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1Laski, H. J., Studies in the Problem of Sovereignty, p. 25, "We shall make the basis of our State consent to disagreement. Therein shall we ensure its deepest harmony", see also pp. 279ff.; Vidler has echoed these concerns as an alternative to Collectivism, "The organisation of the State has become immensely complicated --- and the Civil Service, the Employers' organisations, the Trade Unions, the Banks, are widely felt to be more powerful expressions of the national life than Parliament.... the whole system is manipulated by 'sinister vested interests' ...", in op. cit., pp. 110, 111.


3Sermon entitled "Called to Unity" (Col. 1: 15-20) by Professor Joseph Sittler, delivered on Nov. 21st, 1961, at New Delhi, India; Personal copy of Professor Tindal, New College, Edinburgh.
of the common life, a daring, penetrating, life-affirming christology of nature.... Our vocabulary of praise has become personal, pastoral, too purely spiritual, static. We have not affirmed as inherent in Christ --- God's proper man for man's proper selfhood and society --- the world-political, the world economical, the world aesthetic.". He also pointed out that such a doctrine as he was advocating would not be born of other doctrines "in an unchanging vacuum" but must be "clarified, refined, given force and precision within the challenge of exact circumstances" because "the facts of history are the exciters of insight; the nature of the moments need engenders the doctrine to serve and bless it". Within the context of these needs the Church was "both thrust and lured toward unity"; the "thrust" coming from God's will and promise and the "lure" coming from God's will and promises working through the needs of history. The "way forward" "is from Christology expanded to its cosmic dimensions" (the ta panta of Col. 1: 15-20) and it involved "the care of the earth, the realm of nature as the theatre of grace, the ordering of the thick, material procedures that make available to or deprive men of bread and peace --- these are christological obediences before they are practical necessities".  

Dr. Symington's reformation doctrine of the over-arching dome of Christ's "Dominion", coupled with his confidence in the immediate and unlimited powers of King Jesus, developed as they had been in the crucible of Scottish national history, would be such a doctrine as the one towards which Professor Sittler is looking here --- an important factor in meeting the most critical needs of the 20th Century. It provided a standardizing, unifying, energizing force within his own church and yet made the Church more and more conscious of its relationships and ministry within the Church in Scotland and throughout the world. It was a theological reflection of the actual experiences of a community of Christian men and women who were carrying out the functions of both a Church and a State, and doing it in such a way as to produce good results for the entire Scottish nation. As men become more and more concerned with 'the vault' of the heavens, learning to look back at The Church in its relationships with various States on earth, this concept of the overarching dome of Christ's Mediatorial Dominion takes on new meaning and reality as another means to the formation of a

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1 Ibid., Symington would probably have insisted that the Church was not only "thrust" and "lured" to unity, but that such discussion of doctrine as Sittler has advocated as a means to unity, were means by which Christ would also draw men closer to Himself and thus closer to each other.
"Christian world".

The third major influence in the formation of Symington's doctrine came from the United Societies. It involved his use of history as well as their practices. Assuming that it is true, as Macgregor has asserted, that one reason for the conflict of opinion among Reformed theologians, concerning the relationship between the nature of the Church and the Kingdom, has arisen because "... a Christian philosophy of history has never yet been sufficiently worked out in terms of Scriptural eschatology and the ecclesiology of the Reformed tradition"; then Symington's use of history must also commend itself to our attention because he had shown a strong clear Kingdom-Church relationship and the influence of Scottish national history was a very important factor at each point. The progress of world history may well have gone beyond the point where a small group of mature Christians might experiment, although seriously and in all sincerity at peril of their very lives, in a 'pilot plant' situation with the fundamental problems of Church and State. Their fears concerning the dangers of Erastianism were confirmed at the time of the Disruption. Their fears concerning the dangers of any State's becoming more and more 'for' the people and less and less 'for' Christ, have also been confirmed in the history of the nationalism of Germany, and some of them are being put forth again by Vidler and Eliot. In other words, there are those things about the basic principles of the Societies, as recorded by Symington which continue to commend themselves to our attention; and in the relationship between the facts from Scottish national history and Symington's theology, there is to be seen a Christian philosophy of history --- one that uses or draws from the experiences of history without dogmatising or traditionalising it.

The practices of the United Societies were an integral part of the development of this doctrine, a means for making the Kingdom and Kingship of Christ real and practical to men. They were a close copy of the earlier forms of "The Exercise" which G. D. Henderson has also recommended as an important factor in the development of the priesthood of believers, a practice encouraged by Bucer and Calvin and Knox and other reformers, but one of the first to be neglected, and one that could profitably be

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1 MacGregor, G., Corpus Christi, p. 237.

reintroduced today. The members of the United Societies were not exegetes or historians or statesmen or philosophers or even ministers, but men and women who had learned to discuss the current problems of Church and State in the light of Scripture and the experiences of history, and to come to "Conclusions" concerning what God wanted them to do. Those "Conclusions" were so closely related to their convictions that they were willing, when necessary, to die for them; and while this certainly does not commend their conclusions to our age, it does serve to commend to us the reality and the quality of the principles derived from those conclusions, and even the methods by which they arrived at them. Such study and discussions as these would be a very important factor in bridging the gap between history and theology, organizational Testimony and personal profession and practice, political and moral truth. They would be an essential factor in the adaptation of Symington's doctrine of Dominion to 20th Century circumstances --- a virile force in the formation of a "Christian nation" and a "Christian world".

The first of these three, the use of the Scripture, could be seen as being the origin of it all. From it came the concept of the ideal, the universal, overarching dome of that Kingdom of Christ which is to come on earth even as it is in heaven. The "Exercise", the practices of the Societies, provided an extremely practical means for bringing The Word and the doctrine of Christ's Dominion into vital contact with the life of the worshipping Church. The three had been important factors in the early reformation, and in the formation of Symington's Reformation Church and doctrine. They are also to be seen in his entire ministry. The first he exemplified not only in his writings but also in his own diligent, daily study of the Word. The second he described as a reformed theologian in his book on "Dominion", showing how it applied particularly to the Church, the State, and their relationships with each other. The third he put into practice in his work as a pastor, a churchman, and a professor.

The doctrine of dominion provided a template or outline for his pastoral work at Stranraer and throughout Galloway, and for the whole ministry in Glasgow. The dangers of a "paper Testimony" (a "Profession" that actually lacked professors or believers) were abundantly clear from the fact that trends in the practices of the Reformed Presbyterian Church had been in direct opposition to the spirit of the principles in their written Testimony. Those trends were causing it to lose its contact with the life of the worshipping Church and Symington himself was frequently forced to defend
his own actions by appealing to the principles in the Testimony. It required far more than a re-statement of the theology to correct that situation. The principles or "Conclusions" had to be communicated again to the members of the Church in such a way as to become convictions and this was the point of Symington's pulpit ministry, his extra-ordinary system of schools, his teaching as a Professor at the theological hall and his continuing interest in the Societies. There was more to it than 'telling' or 'teaching'. He trained the members of his congregation and seminary classes by using them in the mission work in Glasgow. They learned the fine art not only of making their own 19th Century applications of those principles, but also of teaching them to others. From his home and Church and classes they went throughout the world in that work and to the extent to which they in turn have not failed to train others as he had trained them --- to that extent the work continues yet today. The concept of the unlimited powers of King Jesus and the Universality of His Dominion once again became a matter of conviction. Men and women responded to the Kingship of Christ and important progress was made in the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ.

In the record of Dr. Symington's life we have an illustration of the perpetuity of the Church --- as an individual, the direct product of the theology of his Church, he stood between the 19th Century and the reformation theology of the 14th and 15th Centuries. He lived the theology of the Reformation Presbytery and rightly stands in line of succession with Knox, Guthrie, and M'Millan. His influence was that of an Evangelical, reformed theologian and it was nowhere more apparent than in the evangelical spirit he breathed into Turretin's doctrine of Atonement, into the whole idea of the covenants, into his own Church and its whole programme at home and abroad, and into the Church in Scotland. The record of that ministry might well be a commentary on the words of Martin Bucer:

True theology is not theoretical or speculative. Its aim is rather action, that is a good life.
APPENDICES

A. THE FAMILY

It would appear, from the record of William Symington's father's activities, that the work of the home was made to revolve around the business of the church. One of the Paisley Societies was known as the "Symington Society" because it met in his home. One of the more difficult assignments given him by their "Correspondence" was:

To make up Essays to be sent to them (i.e. offending Societies near Greenock) in order to promote brotherly love and harmony among us and them and to bring forward these Essays against this Day three weeks and say them before a Correspondence to meet here that night to judge of these Essays.2

His name appears among the "subscribers" to "Plain Reasons for Presbyterians Dissenting from the Revolution Church in Scotland ...", which was printed in 1787 as a semi-official statement of the position of the Reformed Presbytery. In 1785 he was listed as one of seven "Trustees and Managers for the whole dissenters in and about Paisley", who signed a lease for 999 years to provide a place of worship in Paisley.3 He was among the first and largest contributors to the new church fund, in spite of the fact that these were the years when his sons were in College.4 After the congregation was formed, as a ruling elder, he was a frequent petitioning representative sent to Presbytery. Almost prophetically, he was one of three appointed in 1799 "to draw up a petition to be sent to the Presbytery signifying our wish that they should set apart one of their members to attend the students of divinity

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1 Minute Book of The Societies, Paisley, 15th January 1808. (To be found in the Oakshaw West Church of Scotland, Paisley.)

2 Ibid., 17th January, 1800.

3 Minute Book of The Societies, op. cit., 22nd April 1785; See also, The Cameronians ... with special reference to the Paisley Congregation, by Robert Macfee, p. 61 and p. 63.

4 Minutes of the Board of Deacons of Oakshaw St. Church, November 1810, wherein Wm. Senior lends the congregation 180, this was Wm. junior's first year at college.
as professor in order that they might be brought more speedily and regularly forward.\(^1\) An eye witness of the early Presbytery meetings remembered that, "If any member of Presbytery wandered from the question before the house, he was sharply put to right by William Symington, Elder from Paisley, who told them that the best order was kept in Church Courts by the Kirk of Scotland."\(^2\) A grandson said he was a man whose:

natural talents, which were of no mean order, were made the more marked and memorable in their development by his shrewd wit, and strong vein of humour and keen relish for innocent jocularity, while all about him was pervaded by that genuine, consistent, Christian character, in virtue of which he left to children and children's children the best of all inheritances.\(^3\)

Of William Symington's three sisters we know comparatively little. Susanna died very young. Margaret married early in life and we find William frequently remaining overnight "at sister Margarets" when he visited Glasgow during his Stranraer pastorate. Marion married later in life and was a frequent visitor in William's home at Stranraer — a favourite sister.

James Symington was the youngest brother of William Symington. He was also destined for the ministry. He had completed his college and theological training and had been licensed to preach when he died in 1831.\(^4\) The records indicate that he too showed great promise as a preacher and as a student.

Walter, nine years younger than William, was a merchant in Paisley. He died at the age of thirty-three in the Typhus epidemic of 1837, and it was while recovering from the same terrible disease that the news first reached William of his brother's death. He wrote, "While recovering, the news reached us of the illness and afterwards the death of my brother Walter.

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\(^1\) Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery 1802; See also, The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland by Hutcheson, p. 245; And Couper, W. J., The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 161.

\(^2\) Memorials of the Rev. John Sprott, edited by Rev. G. Sprott, Edinburgh 1906, Rev. J. Sprott was a native of Stoney Kirk, attended the R. P. Hall and later moved to America.

\(^3\) "Memoir of the Author" being a preface to the last edition of William Symington's book, Messiah The Prince, p. xix.

which affected me much and has retarded the progress of my restoration...

He has left a widow and four children for whom my heart bleeds. He was very fond of me; and he gave hopeful symptoms of an interest in Christ on his death bed. "¹ That concern for the spiritual welfare of his immediate family appeared often in William's more personal records.

Robert Brown Symington was eight years older than William. He too was a merchant in Paisley and for many years a very active elder in his brother Andrew's congregation there. He did well in business and we find the frequent notation in William's Journal, "at Robert's for tea", or "Roberts' in for tea". It is highly probable that William's second son, (the first was named William), was named for this brother. Robert Brown Symington died very suddenly in 1841 at the age of forty-three. William made the following notation in his Journal at that time:

When came out of pulpit had announced to me death of brother Robert. Had heard before of his being under fever, but not prepared for this sudden fatal termination. Who shall be next? Of the five brothers who were alive when I became a minister, only two now remain., May I be prepared for the summons. I feel stunned and confounded. The Lord the Spirit come and enable to improve. ²

B. WILLIAM SYMINGTON'S TRIALS FOR LICENSURE ³

1. Glasgow, 6th November 1816. "Mr. Wm. Symington having finished his third session at the Hall, the Presby. agreed to give him as subject of an essay, Matt. 7:12 "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" - to be delivered on 6th May.

2. Glasgow, 5th May 1817. The Essay on Matt. 7:12 was "approved".

¹Journal, 2nd April 1837. ²Ibid., 17th Jan. 1841.

³Taken from MSS Minutes of the Western Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (1810-1836), to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.
3. Glasgow, 28th October 1817. "A letter being received from Professor M'Millan, certifying that Mr. Wm. Symington had regularly attended the Seminary at Stirling; the usual number of sessions; and recommending him to the Presbytery as a candidate for license; it was resolved immediately to take him on trials, and the Court assigned him for a Homily Ps. 3:8. "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord." ... to be delivered at next meeting of the court to be held at Glasgow on the 30th Dec. next."

4. Glasgow, 30th Dec. 1817. Mr. Symington's Homily on Ps. 3:8 was "Approved and sustained as part of trial for license. The Presbytery assign to Mr. Wm. Symington for Exegesis, 'An filiation filii Dei sit personalis aut officialis?' - and an Essay on the History of the Church from 1688, to 1712 inclusive; these discourses to be in readiness against next meeting of Court."

5. Paisley, 2nd March 1818. Mr. Wm. Symington's Exegesis and Essay, "were sustained as parts of trial for license. The Presbytery assigned Mr. Symington for exercise & Additions, Heb. 2:14 & 15, to be delivered at next meeting of Court."

6. Glasgow, 5th May 1818. The Exercise and Additions specimen, "was approved and sustained as a piece of trial for license. The Presbytery appoint Mr. Symington as subject for Lecture Matt. 11:25-27, & for popular Sermon Heb. 1:3 - 'When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high' - to read and translate in the Greek Testament ad aperaturam Libri, & then to be examined in Theology - of these pieces of trial the lecture at least to be delivered at next meeting of Presbytery and the rest with all convenient speed."

7. Glasgow, 30th June 1818. "Mr. Wm. Symington was called, & asked by the Modr. if he was in readiness to deliver the discourses assigned to him at last meeting, he answered in the affirmative, and delivered a lecture on Matt. 11:25-27, and a sermon from Heb. 1:3 - 'When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high' - which were approved and sustained - he then read and translated from the original a part of the33rd Psalm - in the Greek Testament ad aperaturam Libri - he was examined on Theology, & on his acquaintance with the work of grace in his own heart, with all which the Court being satisfied, after prayer the questions in the formula were put, and being answered in a satisfactory manner, he was by the Rev. A. Symington, as the mouth of the Presbytery, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, licensed to preach the gospel of the grace of God. The Rev. A. Symington gave him suitable exhortations."
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Unprinted

MSS Journal, 1819-1862, with the exception of the years 1821 to 1835, to be found in the offices of Messrs. Courtney and A. M. Symington, London.¹

MSS (autograph) Letters from Wm. Symington to G. Rowatt, to be found in Broughton House Museum, Kirkcudbright.

MSS (autograph) Letters from Wm. Symington to his wife, Dr. Liddell, and close friends or relatives, to be found among the possessions of Miss Marion Symington, now belonging to Mr. James Struthers Symington, B.Sc., Edinburgh.²

Church Records

Of the Paisley Reformed Presbyterian Congregation (now the Oakshaw Street Church of Scotland).

Session Minutes and other Record Books are to be found in the Session House of the Church.

Of the Stranraer Reformed Presbyterian Congregation.

The Manager's Minute Book and a few records of the Societies are in the custody of Mr. James Wither, Stranraer.

Of the Great Hamilton Street Congregation (now the M'Millan-Calton Church of Scotland).


2. Book with title page "Minutes of the First Reformed Presbyterian Congregation's Session Great Hamilton Street Glasgow". The first entry is in 1841 and the last, 6 Dec. 1855. (Loose notes prior to 1841)


¹Messrs Symington also have Dr. Symington's portrait, Hall Chair, the diploma granted by Edinburgh University and signed by Chalmers and Welsh, and a few letters.

²One of the Battle flags of the Covenanters was another treasured possession of Miss Marion Symington.
4. Book with no title page, first entry "Calton 3rd Nov. 1800 The Congregational meeting being met and constitute ...", and the last entry, "Glasgow 3rd March 1834 The Committee appointed to watch over the interests of the Congregation met and was constituted by prayer".

5. "Minute Book of the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, Great Hamilton Street, Glasgow" first entry 12 Jan. 1835 and last entry 12 June 1862. It included the business of Managers, Managers and Elders, and the Congregational meetings.

6. Book without title page, first entry, "At Glasgow 16th August 1862 and within the Divinity Hall met the Managers" and the last entry "At Glasgow March 15th 1877 and within the Session House met the Managers ... This being understood to be the last meeting of the Managers".

7. BAPTISMAL REGISTER (1845) but listing as its first entry "John Waddel, New Monkland, March 30 1794, Rev. John Fairly" and its last entry 1869.


9. A book without engraving or title page, the records of "Collections and Distributions" for the "Glasgow Congregation in connection with the Reformed Synod 1815-1824.'


Of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, to be found in Trinity College Library, Glasgow.

1. Minutes of the Societies

2. Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery

3. Minutes of the various Presbyteries: Western, Southern, Newton-Stewart, Dumfries, etc.

4. Minutes of the Synod, including both MSS Minutes and the Extracts of Synod Minutes, 1834-1876, in a single bound volume.

5. Minutes of the various Committees of Synod, Foreign Missions, Theological Hall, etc.

6. Matriculation Book for the Theological Hall.

Of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, to be found in Library of the Presbyterian Church Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

1. Minutes of the Presbyterian Tract and Sunday School Society.

2. Minutes of the Board of Publication for the Presbyterian Church.
Printed Works of Wm. Symington

Books

Discourses on Public Occasions, David Bryce, Glasgow, 1851.

Messiah the Prince, or, the Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ,


T. Nelson: London, 1881 with a Memoir of the Author by his sons.

R. Carter, New York, 1859, a second edition containing a Memoir of the Author by his sons, 1881.


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WhYTE, Edinburgh, 1834; a Second Edition the same year.

Robert Carter, New York, Four Editions 1836-1858,1

Board of Publications, United Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, 1859, 1864, 1868.

Pamphlets and other articles

The Character and Claims of the Scottish Martyrs, a Discourse delivered in Dumfries, St. Michaels Churchyard, 1831, on occasion of a collection for erecting a monument commemorative of some who suffered in the cause of Reformation. D. Halliday, Dumfries, 1831.


Charges Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. James McGill, July 21, 1829; on occasion of his being invested with the pastoral care of the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, Hightae, Dumfries-shire, Halliday, Dumfries, 1829.

Charity to the Poor Explained and Enforced, a sermon preached at Paisley September 23, 1823 for the Widow and Orphan Society there, Gardner, Paisley, 1823.

Come Out of Her, being a sermon preached in Edinburgh in connection with the Protestant Institute, D. Bryce, Glasgow, 1860.

1In the Lenox Library (now part of New York City Library) a leather-bound, gold-engraved copy of Symington's book, bearing the coat of arms of Mr. James Lenox, has the following note on the title page in the handwriting of the old Lenox Library Bibliographer, "Robert Carter's first publication", and the following note has been added to the first page: "In 1836 Mr. James Lenox sent for me and gave me a book which he valued very much and advised me to publish. I did so, and he took one hundred copies, and distributed them mainly among the students of Princeton Seminary. The book was Symington on the Atonement. I took a copy of it to some of the leading booksellers in New York, and they told me I had mistaken my calling - that this was too dry a book for Americans, though it might have suited the Covenanters of Scotland two hundred years ago. Notwithstanding this, the First Edition went off, and fifteen hundred more were printed and sold. It was then stereotyped, and more than six thousand have been circulated". "Symington on the Atonement continued on his catalogue to the end of his life."

Cooperation for the Immediate Repeal of the Maynooth Endowment: Amendment to the Law of Mortmain: Opening of Nunneries, etc. to Regular Public Inspection: And for Establishing and Vindicating Religious Liberty at Home and Abroad, being the Report of a Great Public Meeting Held in the City Hall, Glasgow ... Bell and Bain, Glasgow, 1852.

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The First Pious Youth, a sermon to students and young men, C. Ziegler, Edinburgh, 1843.


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