CHAPTER 4

THE 18TH-CENTURY SCOTTISH SERMON: MODES OF RHETORIC
Now-a-days, a play, a real or fictitious history, or a romance, however incredible and however unimportant the subject may be with regard to the best interests of men, and though only calculated to tickle a volatile fancy, are more valued than the best religious treatise...

This statement in the preface to a Scottish Evangelical tract of the 1770s assembles very clearly the reaction in Evangelical circles to contemporary trends in 18th-century Scottish letters. The movement in favour of a less concentrated form of religion and the attractions of the new vogue for elegant and melodic sermons were regarded by the majority of Evangelicals as perilous innovations. From the 1750s onwards, the most important task facing Moderate sermon-writers was how to blend the newly-admired concepts of fine feeling and aesthetic taste with a modicum of religious teaching. The writers of Evangelical sermons, on the other hand, remained faithful to the need to restate the familiar tenets of doctrinal faith, often to the exclusion of all else.

The Evangelicals regarded the way in which Moderate divines courted fine feeling in their pulpits as both regrettable and ominous. In some quarters, it even assumed the character of a possible harbinger of doom for Scottish prosperity. This reaction on the part of the Evangelicals accounts for the frequent 'alarms' published in connexion with religious topics in 18th-century Scotland. These

pamphlet outcries were attempts to persuade or to coerce society into an awareness of the consequences of a rapid decline into infidelity. To the Evangelicals, the decline of national religion was regarded merely as a forerunner of an equal decline in national prosperity. In the post-1750 period, Evangelical opinion tended to echo more and more the sentiments expressed by John Clarkson in the sermon he published in 1774:

> With respect to the different branches of philosophy, what are called the fine arts, elegance in composition, improvements in agriculture, or an acquaintance with trade; I will grant it is an enlightened age. But alas! with respect to religion the case is lamentably reversed.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine 18th-century Scottish sermons and to attempt to trace the development of different modes of rhetorical practice in the sermon. I propose to deal, firstly, with the Evangelical sermon, secondly, with the Moderate sermon and, thirdly, to give some slight account of the work of John Erskine and Robert Walker, preachers whose sermons show evidence of combining elements from both Evangelical and Moderate rhetorical practice.

1. The Evangelical Sermon: 'The Blusterings of a Pulpit-Thunder'.

Your Clergy are for the most part made up of the meanest of the People ... they are a set of Men of

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1 See, for example, John Jamieson's *An Alarm to Britain; or, An inquiry into the causes of the rapid progress of infidelity, in the present age*, Perth, 1795. John Jamieson (1759-1838), author of the Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language (1808), was Antilburgher minister in Forfar and Edinburgh. He was referred to by Scott as 'an excellent good man, and full of auld Scottish cracks'. *Life of Sir Walter Scott* ed. J.G. Lockhart, Edinburgh, 1902, viii, 353.

2 John Clarkson, *Gallio; a sermon preached at Kilwinning*, Glasgow, 1774, p.12.

3 [Andrew Moir], *A Letter to the Author of the Ecclesiastic Characteristics*, Glasgow, 1754, p.5.
a scanty Education, of no Letters, and less Manners, peevish and proud beyond measure.\footnote{The Causes of the Decay of Presbytery in Scotland. In Answer to a letter from a clergyman of that persuasion, Edinburgh, 1713, p.2.}

The Scots Magazine for 1801 made the following harsh comment on the quality of Scottish pulpit rhetoric in the early 18th century:

It was not uncommon for the Scottish clergy to value themselves upon the length, the loudness, the extemporary effusion, the mingled mysticism and vulgarity, and the canting recitation of their sermons, much more than upon any of those qualities which can alone gain the approbation of rational piety and true taste.\footnote{Scots Magazine, lxxiii(1801), 4. The extract is from an 'Account of the Late Dr Hugh Blair'.}

In the early part of the century, sermons were composed with the predominant aim of presenting audiences with a basic religious code by which to live. The rhetorical setting in which this code was presented, however, was complex and abstruse. An examination of the sermons of early 18th-century Evangelical preachers such as Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine and Thomas Boston confirms this view. This is a fairly typical excerpt from one of Ralph Erskine's sermons:

Now Believer, his calling you to rise and come away with him by that Name, My Love, my fair One, is a Call to Fellowship with him as one married unto you, not only in a general, but in a particular and special Manner, by your having given your Heart and Hand to him, some Time a Day, and your having called him by Faith your own God, yea your own Man, your own Husband, your own and your only Beloved; and now tho' you have been by a Whorish Heart, playing the Harlot with other Lovers, and laying yourself by from Fellowship with him; yet infinite Kindness and Pity towards you, he wants you to return to your first Husband, for then it was better with you, than since you left his Company.\footnote{Ralph Erskine, Christ's Love-Suit reinforced and repeated; or, His kindly Gospel-call renewed, Edinburgh, 1752, p.45.}

The style of Erskine's prose is prolix and verbose, the presentation is over-involved and the language is highly-
coloured and repetitious. The doctrine proffered in these sermons was, however, essentially simple, and based on an uncomplicated system of eternal reward or punishment. Mankind was divided into two categories: those who accepted the tenets of orthodox religion and acted in accordance with them were assured of eternal salvation; those who did not were to be consigned to eternal damnation. Man was seen as good or evil in relation to the success or failure with which he adhered to the circumscribed beliefs of orthodox religion.

The early 18th-century Evangelical sermon had its rhetorical provenance in the sermons of the 17th-century Scottish Covenanting divines. The primary motive behind these sermons was expediency and, in consequence, sermon form tended to be sacrificed to the desire to cram as much doctrinal matter as possible into a single sermon. In the early 18th century, Evangelical sermon-writers appear to have been concerned to maintain this tradition against the possible encroachments of heresy and liberal inquiry. One of the constant and unchanging aspects of Evangelical religion was its innate conservatism and reluctance to admit any form of innovation in sermon form. To admit of innovation was to sanction a potent threat to the sanctity and stability of the religious message.

In the pre-1750 period, two events occurred which crystallized and confirmed Evangelical attitudes on what
the function of the sermon should be. The first was the re-publication in 1718 of Edward Fisher's *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* by James Hog of Carnock, and the subsequent controversy that ensued over the doctrines contained in Fisher's work,¹ and the second was the Secession of 1733. When James Hadow, Principal of St Andrews, attacked the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* in his sermon *The Record of God and Deity of Faith therein required* in 1719,² the Committee on Purity of Worship in the Church called Hog and his supporters before them for examination. The report subsequently sent by the Committee to the General Assembly alleged that Fisher's *Marrow* showed Antinomian tendencies and taught, among other things, that holiness was not necessary for salvation. In consequence, the General Assembly passed an Act in 1720 prohibiting ministers from recommending the book either in the pulpit or in print. The matter did not, however, rest there, for a number of the *Marrow*'s supporters, including Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine and Thomas Boston, appealed to the General Assembly in 1721 to reverse the decision.

The significant factor in the controversy was that the *Marrow*'s supporters argued their case on the grounds that by accepting the report of the Committee on Purity of Worship, the Assembly had given tacit recognition to the preachers of 'mere morality without religion'.³ This conviction

¹ For an account of the controversy, see Donald Beaton, 'The "Marrow of Modern Divinity" and the Marrow Controversy', *Records of the Church History Society*, 1(1926), 112-135.


³ The representation is quoted in John Struthers, *The History of Scotland*, Glasgow, 1827, i, 504n: '... the growing humour in this generation, for turning that religion left among us unto a mere morality ...'
certainly led to a strengthening of Evangelical determination to preserve the doctrinal integrity of the message passed to them by their 17th-century predecessors, and encouraged the view that Evangelical preachers should assume the rôle of 'preservers of the faith'. This view was compounded by the leniency the Evangelicals felt had been shown to John Simson in the controversy in 1717, when he had been accused of teaching Arminianism (for which he had been admonished), and in the later controversy, again involving Simson, in 1726 when he had been accused of Arian teaching after the manner of Samuel Clarke (for which he was finally suspended and did not teach again, although he was not deprived of his Chair). The growing conviction that cases of heresy were being leniently handled was further encouraged when the charges of heresy brought in 1736 against Principal Campbell of St Andrews and in 1743 against William Leechman were summarily dismissed. As a result, the views of Evangelical preachers about the content of sermons became more rigid and inflexible in the face of what they regarded as the erosion of doctrinal truth.

The second important development in regard to the Evangelical sermon was the Secession of 1733 when a group of ministers, spearheaded by Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine¹ (who

¹ For an account of the Erskines, see Donald Fraser, The Life and Diary of the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, Edinburgh, 1821. In a review of this work in 1831, the reviewer referred to the changing attitude to the Secession: 'The education and talents, the diligence and fidelity of their pastors, and their influence in maintaining peace and order in a large department of the community, have attracted the eulogies of all whose commendation is desirable'. The Edinburgh Literary Journal, 5(1831), 263.
had earlier been prominent in the Marrow controversy), left the Church to form the Secession Church, ostensibly on the grounds that they were opposed to patronage but, in reality, because the Evangelical wing of the Church wished to adhere to the past, in opposition to modern ideas and philosophies. The characteristic trends in the early 18th-century Evangelical church were conservatism and pessimism. Their conservatism was most clearly in evidence in the desire to cling to the established doctrinal tenets of religion, and the tendency to regard innovation as a potential threat to the dissolution of the true faith. The sentiments towards improvement expressed in *The Fashionable Preacher* (1773) represent the credo of the Evangelical sermon-writer during the 18th century. Referring to Moderate sermons, the author comments:

Such discourses may be excellent in their kind; they may do honour to the ... authors as critics, or philosophers; but not as preachers: they may please the fancy and tickle the ear, but they touch not one feeling of the heart.¹

John Brown of Haddington in his 'Two Letters on Gospel Preaching, and on the Exemplary Behaviour of Ministers' defined the Evangelical view of religion:

A preacher's elocution may be charming, his action perfectly regular, his language elegant ... and yet he may not truly preach the gospel of Christ. The Christian religion is the religion of SINFUL men.

As well as wishing to maintain the status quo, the Evangelicals were innately pessimistic about new ideas and improvements

in sermon design. Even John Erskine, himself of an Evangelical disposition, referred to the way in which 18th-century Evangelical preachers clung to the old manner of preaching without any longer 'the apology of necessity'. This was particularly true in regard to rhetorical practice, where the format of the late 17th-century Evangelical sermon was simply retained without substantial change or amendment.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of early 18th-century Evangelical sermons was the close relationship that the printed version bore to the form in which the sermon was originally delivered. Many of the sermons were informal and almost conversational in tone, or as the Moderates would term them 'familiar', and they underwent little or no revision for printing. Indeed, frequently, Evangelical sermons carried notes in the preface stating that no attempt had been made to polish or to refine the sermons for the press. When Ralph Erskine published his sermon *Christ the People's Covenant* in 1725, he drew attention in the advertisement to the sermon's unrevised state in almost belligerent tones:

> The Reverend Author doth interest *sic* himself in the Undertaking, nor doth he apologise for what Mistakes or Escapes may be in it; nor is it he who now advertiseth the censorious Reader to beware of misconstruing what the Author is not answerable for, seeing he neither revised the Manuscript, nor corrected the printed Sheets as they were cast off.

Equally, in 1778, when James Ramsay published the sermon he had preached at the ordination of a fellow minister to the Associate Congregation of Kilmarnock, he stated the limits

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1 Ralph Erskine, *Christ the People's Covenant*, C Edinburgh], 1725, advertisement.
of his sermon in the preface:

Elegance and refinement made no part of his design, and may not therefore be expected; he meant to say plain things, without affected ornaments. ¹

Again, when John Ker's sermon Obedient Believers the Friends of Christ was published posthumously by his congregation at Carmunnock, the question of concessions to style was summarily dismissed:

If the reader expects in the following pages elegance of composition, and a display of the powers of oratory, or if he expects a philosophical harangue, he will be disappointed ... But if the reader expects serious and evangelical preaching, it is hoped that he will find it here. ²

The often deliberate refusal on the part of Evangelical preachers to recognize the advantages of improving the style of their sermons probably arose from their feeling that the religious message had been transmitted from God, and that it should, therefore, flow spontaneously from the pulpit without being in any way interfered with by man. This statement in a pamphlet answer to Blair's Sermons confirms the view that the eternal verities were what the Evangelicals regarded as important.

However pleasing the harmonious style, the nervous diction, and well-turned period, may be in publications respecting the lesser concerns of human life; yet, when the matters of eternal concern to man are the subject, the beauty of language, and the arts of oratory are of little moment. - If the grand matter, the one thing needful, ³ is wanting, they become contemptible trifles. ⁴

¹ James Ramsay, The Character of the true Minister of Christ Delineated, Glasgow, 1778, preface iii.
² John Ker, Obedient Believers the Friends of Christ, Glasgow, 1775, preface iv.
³ The 'one thing needful' was the 'saving truth of God'.
⁴ Letters on Dr. Blair's Sermons, Edinburgh, 1779, p.10.
This opinion, however, was frequently and consistently criticized by opponents of the Evangelical party both outside and within the established Church. In this extract from an early 18th-century Episcopalian pamphlet, the author satirized the spontaneous nature of William Burnet of Falkirk's prayers.

Do ye think Mr Burnet at Falkirk, who makes one of the best Figures among you, was inspired when he prayed thus, 'Lord we hear that the Tyrant of France is dead, but we are not sure of it, but we are sure his Clergy play at Cards on Sunday ...

At the same time, it is interesting to note that when James Webster's sermons were reissued in 1764, the publisher eliminated the stylistic aspects of the sermons that were unacceptable to modern palates. When Webster first published his Sacramental Sermons in 1705, his preface acknowledged that the style of the sermons was flawed.

They were taken from my Mouth (when I delivered them to my Congregation) by the Pen of one, no Scholar, and who understands not Latin: This necessarily expos'd them to the inconveniences of some bad Spelling and Pointing ... and to a Coldness and negligence of Stile: and indeed they can't be very Correct, for they are carried strait from the Pulpit to the Press, without transcribing ...

Webster also took the opportunity to expose sermon-writers who relied on using allusions to and quotations from writers such as Seneca, Cicero, Thomas Aquinas and Augustine.

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1 William Burnet, minister in Falkirk (1696-1714). FES, i, 206.
2 The Causes of the Decay in Presbytery in Scotland. In answer to a letter from a clergyman of that persuasion, Edinburgh, 1713, p. 22.
3 James Webster (1659-1720), minister of the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh (1693-1720). He was active in the prosecution of Simson in 1717, and he was also involved in an action brought against him by Archibald Pitcairne on account of Webster calling him an atheist. DNB, i, 123-4.
4 James Webster, Sacramental Sermons and Discourses at the Lord's Table, Edinburgh, 1705, preface.
Is there such an Embargo laid upon Invention now a days, that a man can't Entertain us, without he Robb and filch from the Ancients, and Borrow from the more Modern.

When Webster's sermons were republished in 1764, however, the advertisement to the edition explained that the sermons had been carefully revised and corrected. The reason offered was that,

some expressions in the sermons suit the audience, and are adapted to the particular circumstances of a congregation, that look not so well from the press ...

Similarly, when Robert Shirra reissued his sermons in 1760, he took the opportunity to revise one of the sermons included in the edition.

It hath not only undergone several amendments by the Author, but is also freed of many inaccuracies in the former impression.

The arrangement of early 18th-century Evangelical sermons followed a more or less standard format, consisting of a number of heads usually on a single text. The heads were each dealt with in turn and subdivided again and again, resulting in a very fragmented and staccato arrangement. The framework of the sermon consisted of an introduction, an explication, an argument (or conviction) and an application. The majority of Evangelical sermons were on doctrinal topics, and the text selected supplied both the heads and

1 James Webster, Sacramental Sermons and Discourses at the Lord's Table, Edinburgh, 1705, preface.

2 James Webster, Select Sermons preached on several texts, Edinburgh, 1764, p. 33.

3 Robert Shirra, Four Sermons on the following important subjects, Glasgow, 1760, advertisement.
all the divisions and sub-divisions for the sermon. The following example from Ralph Erskine's *The Militant's Song; or, The Believer's Exercise while here below* (1729) illustrates fairly typically the arrangement of the Evangelical sermon. The heads were:

1. What mercies the people of God meet with, and what it is in these that afford matter of a song.
2. What judgments the people of God meet with, and what it is in them that may be matter of a song of praise.

The first head was then subdivided into further heads as follows:

1. What this mercy is.
   1. There is the mercy of God, in sending Christ to be the Saviour.
   2. There is mercy in the death of Christ.
   3. There is mercy that he shews, in raising of Christ from death.
   4. There is mercy that he shews, in cleansing the soul from the filth of sin.
   5. There is mercy that he shews, in adopting such heirs of hell by nature.
   6. There is mercy that he shews, in conferring the high dignity of priesthood and royalty upon them.
   7. There is mercy that he shews his people, in abiding and standing by them in all difficulties.

Ralph Erskine's sermons were published by his son-in-law in a two-volume folio edition in 1764. The list of subscribers included ministers, bakers, weavers, and merchants.
viii. There is mercy that he shews, in giving many merciful experiences of his goodness and mercy. The text was then further subdivided into examples of merciful experiences.

a. merciful intimations and communications  
b. merciful visits  
c. merciful accomplishments of promises  
d. merciful grant of all their desires  
e. merciful instruction and illumination  
d. merciful sensible enjoyments

The seminal work that all Evangelical sermon-writers drew upon was the Bible, which they regarded as the ultimate and only genuine source of reference. Frequently, precise textual references were given in sermons, probably so that the hearers could themselves later check on the doctrinal proof advanced by the preacher. In addition, the Erskines and Thomas Boston relied heavily in their sermons on the Westminster Confession of Faith, the metrical psalms and the works of Scottish divines, including Patrick Hamilton and Samuel Rutherford, as well as the Puritan divines. The works most familiar to Evangelical audiences were those of the 17th-century fundamental divines. John Mitchell recorded that in the mid 18th-century, the most popular works among the Seceders were:

'The cloud of witnesses,' 'Guthrie's trial of a saving interest in Christ,' 'Rutherford's letters,' 'Wellwood's glimpse of Glory,' 'Pike's cases of conscience,' with the writings of other Puritan divines of a similar class.1

In the same way as the design and construction of the Evangelical sermon was complex and involved, the style employed in these sermons was equally cumbersome and prolix. The sermons of the Erskines were characterized by the use of slang phrases and importunate language, repetitious phrases, rhetorical questions and a generally staccato prose style. There were no flowing periods in Evangelical rhetorical practice. In his sermon The Best Bond; or, The Surest Engagement, Ralph Erskine commented:

What are all other judgments to his bloody sweat in the garden, and his expiring grones upon a cross?2

And in the eloquently titled sermon, Pregnant Promise with her Issue; or, The Children of Promise brought Forth, and Described, Erskine called his fellow Scots 'Babylonish brats'. The device of repetition for effect was used in a totally unrestrained manner in the Evangelical sermon.

O sinner! sinner! sinner! O enemies! enemies to God, enemies to Jesus! O hard-hearted sinner!3

In addition, repetitious phrases such as 'love-call', 'love-visits', 'love-glances', and 'love-tokens' were also interspersed throughout the sermons.

1 John Mitchell, 'Memories of Ayrshire about 1780', Miscellany of the Scottish History Society, Third Series, vi, Edinburgh, 1939, 305.
3 Ralph Erskine, Sermons, i, 177.
4 Ibid., i, 181.
The general theme of the 18th-century Evangelical sermon was one of pessimism and emphasis on the fallen condition of man.

The understanding is polluted with ignorance, darkness, error, enmity, and prejudice ... It is a diffusive and infectious pollution; a spreading gangrene. All the children of men are overspread with it, and defiled. The whole man is over-run.\(^1\)

The vocabulary employed evoked sensations of disgust and revulsion from the effects of sin: the sermons abound with the use of terms such as 'profane', 'depravity', 'filthy', 'defiled', 'flagrant', 'abominable practices' and others similar.\(^2\) In the Evangelical theory of religion the sole hope for man's improvement lay in the mercy of God, and the epithets used to indicate that this was so were carefully selected in order to create the desired effect. The eternal sinfulness of man, with which he must constantly be brought face to face, was juxtaposed with the eternal holiness of God. There was also a strong stress on personal religion in Evangelical sermons, which accounts for the direct address to conscience, the preacher often addressing the audience directly as 'man' or 'woman'.

One of the most significant features of the language of early 18th-century Evangelical sermons was the frequently scatalogical and often obliquely sexual imagery used in them.

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\(^1\) Ralph Erskine, *Sermons*, ii, 463.

\(^2\) The Edinburgh Review reviewed Thomas Boston's sermon *The Redeemer's Ability to Save Sinners* in 1755. The reviewer cited as an example Boston's reference to Satan 'lying nibbling at the heels of the saints', and he commented: 'Such vulgarisms as these, are indecent in conversation, but much more so in a solemn discourse from the pulpit'. *Edinburgh Review*, no.2(1755), 26-7.
And it is interesting to note that in 1778 when Archibald Bruce published a sermon (originally delivered at the opening of the Associate Synod), on the corruptions in the Church, the sexual orientation of the language of the sermon was still evident.

The art of seducers is often mentioned; and in all ages has been too successful; 'By the flight of men, and cunning craftiness, they ly in wait to deceive'.

The language employed by the early 18th-century Evangelicals showed similarities to that used in the sermons of 17th-century Covenanting divines. The sermons of Samuel Rutherford and Alexander Peden were, after all, reprinted in the 18th century and provided the staple reading diet for succeeding generations of Evangelicals. The attraction of these sermons, which continued in the 18th century with the sermons of Boston and the Erskines, was that although the arrangement of the sermons was complex, the imagery was simple and easily understood by formally uneducated but 'spiritually edified' audiences. In addition, the sermons were often highly dramatic and imaginative, and it is important to remember that audiences attended church not only to be instructed but also to have their minds entertained (even if they were unwilling to admit that that was the case).

Samuel Rutherford in a sermon delivered at a communion in London (frequently reprinted in the 18th century) used this imagery:

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1 Archibald Bruce, A sermon preached at the opening of the Associate Synod at Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 1778, p.31.
Christ was the lamb roasted with Fire for you.
He suffered hot Fire for you. He got a Roast
and a Heat that made him sweat Blood.¹

In the same sermon, Rutherford exhorted his audience to:

Ride with Christ in his Chariot; for it is all
paved with love.

And Ralph Erskine in his sermon, Preventing love. Or, God's
love to us the cause of our love to him, commented that 'the
Sacrament of the Supper i.e. Communion is a Love-Feast'.³

The language of these early 18th-century Evangelical
sermons frequently contained Scotticisms; the sermons of
Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, for example, are interspersed
with Scots usages like 'ken' and 'spate', continuing the
tradition in 17th-century Scottish sermons. The 17th-century
Rutherford, for example, asks in a sermon: 'Was not Christ's
love Tocher good enough?' James Webster, on the other hand,
commented on the inaccuracies of spelling and grammar in his
sermons, and he drew attention to 'Scoticisms which may have
escap'd me in the Delivery ...'⁴ But no attempt was made to
refine the language of the sermon nor, indeed, was there any
significant recognition that the language was in any sense
inappropriate. The primary aim in the sermon was to arouse
strong feelings in the audience and to buoy up these feel-
ings until the climacteric appeal to could could take place
at the end of the sermon. At that point, the aim of the

¹ Samuel Rutherford, An exhortation at a communion to a
Scots congregation, Edinburgh, 1728, p.9.

² Ibid., p.3.

³ Ralph Erskine, Preventing love. Or, God's love to us the
cause of our love to him, Glasgow, 1740, p.3.

⁴ James Webster, Sermons and discourses at the Lord's Table,
Edinburgh, 1705, preface.
Evangelical sermon, which was to convert souls, could be realized. It was, however, against the impassioned and fiery zeal of the rhetoric of these divines that their contemporaries reacted. John Millar, son of Robert Millar, recorded his impressions of Evangelical divines in a manuscript extant in Edinburgh University Library.

I had scarce ever read any thing of our old Scots divines Writing, and therefore after my coming home I read Gillespie's Miscellanys, Rutherford on Liberty of Conscience Mr James Guthrie on the Causes of God's wrath, and several other things of these great names or their Contemporaries ... But I must own that I was quickly disappointed, and I rather think that the characteristic mark of these Authors & Times is a flaming fiery Zeal to promote their own Side on the Ruins of others. Their Learning is shown by an undigested Heap of Citations, especially from old fusty divines, their learning is Passion, which is often very weak & lame.

In attempting to explain the opposition to progress in the Evangelical sermon, it is important to recognise the pressures which these sermon-writers felt themselves to be under. The emergence of the scientific movement in the late 17th century and the theories of Bacon, Descartes and Boyle had helped to create an awareness of a potential threat to religious certainty. Coupled with the added dangers of the Deist view of existence and the growing support for a natural rather than a revealed view of religion, it helped to create an atmosphere uncongenial to religion. The response of the Evangelicals was to attempt to combat these new ideas by adhering strictly to inherited beliefs and stressing the

1 'Notes of John Millar's reading with a list of books read. Begun 1720.' EUL La.111.540,f.63.
vanity of human knowledge. While their ecclesiastical contemporaries decided to adopt a form of religion which admitted compromise and a blending of new ideas with traditional ones, the Evangelicals clung vigorously and deliberately to old truths, and they set themselves up as a lobby to suspect and investigate heresies and inroads of deistical thought wherever they occurred.

Enthusiastic religion in 18th-century Scotland might have been expected to be reinforced by the sweeping demonstration of religious feeling that followed in the wake of the Methodist movement in the 1740s. George Whitefield had been invited to Scotland in 1741 by members of the Secession Church, notably the Erskines, in the hope that his successes in America and England might repeat themselves in Scotland. Their invitation was not, of course, devoid of self-interest on the part of the Seceders, for they hoped, that, by means of his popularity, directed by them, they might gain both attention and influence to their infant sect.

The Secession clergy discovered very swiftly, however, that there was little common ground between the Methodist cause and their own, and as they turned their backs on Whitefield, the establishment ministers stepped in and made their pulpits available to him. The group who adopted Whitefield were the so-called 'Evangelical' ministers of the established church,

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1 The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon ed. J.K. Foster, London, 1839-40, i, 183. The Countess of Huntingdon was a fervent supporter of the Methodist cause. It was proposed in 1776 that she should meet Hume but Blair warned Hume against having any concourse with the Methodists on the grounds that: 'You can have no sort of intercourse with them that will not be misrepresented'. Letters of David Hume ed. J.Y.T. Greig, London, 1932, ii, 321 n.
men like John Erskine, Alexander Webster and John MacLaurin, who were to form the basis of the Evangelical party within the established Church of Scotland as distinct from the Moderates and the Seceders.

Whitefield’s activities aroused a measure of interest among all sections of Edinburgh society. One biographer maintained rather optimistically that the appeal of the Methodists was not restricted to the 'lower or middle classes' of society, since:

ministers of the Establishment, and members of the University, persons of rank and title, were found mingled in their audiences.

All was not smooth sailing for Whitefield, however, for another account refers to the conflict and dissension which his successes created both inside and outside the Church. A quarrel about Whitefield erupted between John Erskine and William Robertson and, in 1748, a debate was held in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr to examine the desirability of Whitefield’s preaching. One of the speakers commented:

His preaching Talents, I know, some admire: but the more judicious think, the Adagium may be justly applied to him, Vox & praeterea nihil. Moving the passions, without informing the Judgment, will never promote a rational Religion, & yet that is the strain in which this applauded Orator generally harangues. 3

In the same year, the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale decided that it was irregular for ministers to employ Whitefield in


2 Erskine supported Whitefield while Robertson took a contrary view. Foster recorded that their disagreement was 'agitated with so much zeal and asperity, as to occasion the dissolution of their society, and to interrupt even their intercourse in private life'. Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon ed. J.H. Foster, i, 184.

3 A fair and impartial account of the debate in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, 6 October 1748, anent employing Mr Whitefield, Edinburgh, 1748, p.6.
their pulpits and recommended that they should cease to do so.1

One would have expected that the opposition of both Whitefield and Wesley to Deist ideas would have endeared them to the Evangelical cause. Wesley wrote in the following scathing terms about Hume in his Journal, after reading Beattie's Essay on Truth while on a visit to Aberdeen:

He [Beattie] is a writer quite equal to his subject, and far above the match of all the 'minute philosophers', David Hume in particular - the most insolent despiser of truth and virtue that ever appeared in the world ... he is an avowed enemy of God and man, and to all that is sacred and valuable upon earth.2

But despite its early popularity, the evangelizing light of the Methodists in Scotland gradually began to flicker as it became less and less possible to reconcile Whitefield's religious tenets with traditional Calvinistic beliefs. More important, perhaps, the rumours of the general disfavour in which the movement was regarded by persons of literary taste in England began to filter through to Scotland. The Countess of Huntingdon almost admitted as much when she commented:

The clamour excited in England, before this time, against the progress of Methodism ... must have greatly contributed to heighten the prejudices circulated in Scotland against Mr. Whitefield and the respectability or success of his labours.3

Thus, those who had found the experience of Whitefield in full rhetorical spate an edifying and impressive spectacle

1 Edinburgh Evening Courant, 7 November 1748.


3 Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, ed. J.K. Foster, 1, 184.
began to lose interest.\textsuperscript{1} The Evangelicals, too, who by inclination might have been his supporters, were alienated by the unacceptable doctrinal beliefs advocated by his movement, while those who were less motivated by purely religious considerations became equally unsympathetic to the movement as their conviction grew that emotion could and should be channelled through an aesthetic and not an enthusiastic medium. Adam Gib, minister of the Associate Congregation at Edinburgh, published a pamphlet in 1742 entitled \textit{A Warning against Countenancing the Ministrations of Mr George Whitefield}, in which he described the 'awful profanation of the Lord's day, which the noise of Mr Whitefield's ministrations introduces ...'\textsuperscript{2} As an indication of the changing fortunes of the Methodists in Scotland, one has only to compare the comment in a letter of Lady Jane Nimmo to Lady Huntingdon in 1750 with the situation twenty years later when Wesley returned to Edinburgh. Lady Jane Nimmo commented:

\begin{quote}
There is a great awakening among all classes ... The fields are more than white, and ready unto harvest, in Scotland.\textsuperscript{3}
\end{quote}

But when John Wesley returned to Edinburgh in 1770, he was dismayed to find that his Methodist Society had shrunk in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} George Ridpath referred to the General Assembly of 1757, at which Gilbert Hamilton, minister of Cramond, made 'a well-aimed blow at Whitfield'. \textit{Diary of George Ridpath 1755-1761} ed. Sir James Balfour Paul, \textit{Publications of the Scottish History Society}, 3rd series, ii, Edinburgh, 1922, p.139. By 1772, a reviewer commented of Whitefield that 'he weakened the head, while he reformed the heart'. \textit{Critical Review}, xxxiii(1772),224.
\item \textsuperscript{2} \textit{Life and times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon} ed. J.K. Foster, i,186.
\item \textsuperscript{3} 'A Warning against Countenancing Mr Whitefield', \textit{Scots Magazine}, iv(1742),307.
\end{itemize}
number from one hundred and sixty to a mere fifty members. ¹

The Secession in 1733 drew off into Secession circles
the more dominant facets of Evangelical preaching which con-
tinued in the sermons of the Burghers and Antiburghers after
the division over the Burgess Oath in 1747. The more formal
divergence in the early 1750s of the two styles of preaching
into Moderate and Evangelical sermons only helped to confirm
fundamental Evangelical attitudes. When Archibald Bruce ²
published the lectures he had delivered at the Theological
Academy at Whitburn, ³ many of the views he expressed had
not changed in character from when they had been stated
earlier in the century by the Erskines. In a lecture on the
vanity of human knowledge, Bruce defined the limitations of
grammar, philology and rhetoric:

(They) are only so far estimable as they lead to
the knowledge of things. ⁴

He emphasised the 'truths of religion', i.e. the theological
and doctrinal essence of religion, and he confirmed the Bible
as the ultimate authority on all matters of faith and morals.

The scholar who can be charmed with a mythologic
tale, or a trifling ode, of an ancient poet, or
a pompous oration of a Cicero, and yet can remain

¹ Wesley suffered badly at the hands of John Erskine who,
in 1765, published Hervey's Eleven Letters (first published
in 1759) with a preface in which he attacked the Methodist
preacher. One of Wesley's itinerant preachers, James
Kershaw, replied to Erskine's attack in print, whereupon
Erskine published a defence of his preface containing an
even more violent attack on Wesley, in which he stated:
'One is there at the head of their Societies who has blended
with some gospel truths a medley of Arminianism, Antinomian
and enthusiastic errors'. Account of the Life and Writings
of John Erskine ed. Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Edinburgh,
1818, pp. 249-65.

² Archibald Bruce (1746-1816), ordained minister of the Anti-
Burgher congregation at Whitburn in 1768 and appointed Profess
of Divinity in 1781.

³ Archibald Bruce, Introductory and occasional lectures; for
forming the minds of young men intending the Holy Ministry,
Part I, Whitburn, 1797.

⁴ Ibid., p. 42.
untouched with the sacred fire that kindled the ardent devotion and turned the melodious harp of the sweet Psalmist of Israel ... must have a vitiated taste indeed.

Secular learning was as unacceptable to Bruce as it had been to Boston and to his contemporaries:

The swelling words of vanity, the theatrical bombast, the quaint points of wit, the sophistical declamations, or the tawdry unnatural ornaments of artificial rhetoric.

The Associate Synod passed an Act in 1761 on preaching in which they cautioned their preachers against 'an affected pedantry of style and pronunciation, or politeness of expression'. Their expressed aim was to guard against 'an affectation to accommodate the manner of preaching, which, if not timely prevented, may at length issue in attempts to accommodate the matter of it also, to the corrupt taste of a carnal generation'. The Evangelicals saw the refined discourse as an overt example of egotism, and a distraction from the true direction in which religious thought should be proceeding. As an old man, John Brown of Haddington commented sadly on the quality of his early oratory:

I cannot but remark it also as a kindness in Providence, that though, when I commenced a preacher, my imagination led me sometimes to use flighty expressions in my sermons, the Lord made me ashamed of this ...

As far as rhetorical training was concerned, the early 18th-century Evangelicals drew their inspiration from the

1 Archibald Bruce, Introductory and occasional lectures; for forming the minds of young men intending the holy ministry, Part 1, Whitburn, 1797, p.65.

2 Ibid., p.85.


4 The Posthumous Works of John Brown, p.10.
sermons of the 17th-century Puritan divines, the Covenanters and the sermons of their own 18th-century Evangelical contemporaries. In 1736, however, the Associate Presbytery appointed William Wilson of Perth to teach theology, and the Theological Academy organized itself into providing formal training for student ministers of the Associate Synod. In addition, of course, there was the probationary trial, which was the only practical training common to all 18th-century ministers. John Mitchell recorded that the accepted teaching models for Seceding ministers were:

some foreign authors such as Calvin and Witsius - domestic writers such as the Erskines & Boston; British authors such as Owen, Howe, Flavel, Henry, Poole and the other puritanical divines.¹

And John Brown of Haddington 'perused the writings of the best old divines, particularly Turrentine, Pictet, Maastricht, Dr Owen; also these of the modern, Boston, Erskine, Hervey, etc.,²

The general practice in Evangelical sermons was the memoriter sermon. The sermon was usually written out, often in shorthand, but otherwise in longhand, and then either committed to memory or delivered by rote or, in certain cases, delivered as a spontaneous oration. It was never read from a prepared manuscript. The form of the printed sermon could, however, vary from the delivered sermon. This was the case, for example, with Thomas Boston:

¹ John Mitchell, 'Memories of Ayrshire about 1780', p.309.
Some of his sermons printed a good many years ago from his notes, which I myself heard him preach, and took him a full hour to deliver, may yet be read, even deliberately, in near the half of that time. One reason of which is this; the scriptures, which he brought as proofs ... are only cited chapter and verse in his notes, and he left several enlargements on them to delivery.¹

John Mitchell recorded that his father's sermons were 'almost never unpremeditated or extemporaneous, but written and committed to memory'.² Ralph Erskine generally wrote his sermons out in full:

For the most part, he wrote all; and kept very close to his notes in the delivery except when the Lord was pleased to carry in upon his mind ... some apt and apposite enlargements ...³

The Evangelicals' main criticism of sermons read from the pulpit was their lack of spontaneity. Some Evangelicals also disapproved of sermons written out in manuscript at all, because they felt that the scope for revision that the manuscript sermon allowed increased rather than diminished the force of what the preacher had to say to man's condition.

The rhetoric of the Evangelical sermon was based on a speculative theology, each doctrinal point being examined and assessed in a formal manner and with great precision and care, but without any practical application to the contemporary moral code of society. It relied for the most part on a language of invective which was aimed at propelling the

¹ Erasmus Middleton, Biographica Evangelica: or, An Historical Account of the Lives and Deaths of the most Eminent and Evangelical Authors and Preachers, London, 1786, iv, 256.
² John Mitchell, 'Memories of Ayrshire about 1780', p. 314. Mitchell's father was the Rev. Andrew Mitchell, minister of Beith, where the Secession congregation was founded in 1761. Mitchell recorded that his father was 'a master of shorthand'.
³ Ralph Erskine, Sermons, i, preface ix.
audience into a realization of their fallen state, and their need for conversion to the true faith. James Lackington, the English bookseller, colourfully described in his Memoirs how he had attended a service conducted by a Scot:

I soon afterwards went to hear an old Scotchman, and he assured his congregation that they would be damned, and double damned, and treble damned, and damned for eyer, if they died without what he called faith.

Throughout the 18th century, Evangelical sermon-writers attempted to explain in their own terms the declining hold of religion on society. William Thom, minister of Govan, preached a sermon in 1761, entitled An Enquiry into the Causes of the Decline of Religion, in which he attributed the decline in religious observance to the prevailing atmosphere of peace which reduced society's need for religion; the increasing commercialism of the age which encouraged an antipathy to religion; the fact that the greater the knowledge that men gained about religion, the more their respect for it tended to decrease; and, furthermore, that the low status of ministers in society had impugned their reputation in an age where success was synonymous with wealth and poverty with ignorance. 2

The Evangelicals also regarded patronage as an enemy of pulpit oratory. The control of livings by heritors and the unfavourable influence that this system imposed on ministers to conform to the wishes of their patrons, was interpreted by the Evangelicals as a stultifying brake on the freedom of

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2 William Thom, An enquiry into the causes of the decline in religion, Glasgow, 1761 (2nd ed.).
preachers to say what they wished from the pulpit. William Graham, a minister of the Secession Church, remarked on the low standard of Evangelical pulpit rhetoric in Scotland in 1769, by comparison with the previous high standards attained by their Evangelical predecessors, who had inspired their audiences 'with truly noble and evangelical resolutions':

I saw young, raw, airy, flippant clergymen, - ill-beloved by those, of whom their office requires they should be most regarded, of doubtful characters, and of little solid learning ...

It is significant that these Evangelical critics do not comment at all on the failure of the Evangelical church to adapt or adjust to the changing conventions of the age. As the century progressed, the Evangelicals became more and more out of step with the prevailing mores of society with little or no point of contact between the religion they preached and the interests and aims of contemporary society. They were, therefore, forced into a position where they were obliged to sound endlessly against the false innovations and vain ideas of the new pulpit rhetoric.

If a book on farming makes its appearance, numbers are ready to purchase it. If a history is published, how many are impatient to peruse it? Let a frothy novel, or luscious romance come abroad; and alas! a first, a second, a third edition can scarcely supply the demand for it.

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1 William Graham (1737-1801) was born in Carriden, Linlithgowshire, and completed his theological training under Alexander Moncrieff at Abernethy. He was minister of the Close Meet- ing-House in Newcastle from 1770 to 1801. DNB, viii, 364-5.

2 William Graham, An attempt to prove that every species of patronage is foreign to the nature of the Church ... with an introduction wherein the unhappy condition, to which the Church of Scotland is reduced, by the present ecclesiastic management, is represented as the reason for the present undertaking, Edinburgh, 1769, p. 8.

3 John Clarkson, Gallo: a sermon preached at Kilwinning, Glasgow, 1774, pp. 8-9.
In the address to the reader prefixed to *The Christian, the Student and Pastor*, John Brown reiterated Evangelical opposition to the 'light sermonizing' of the Moderates when he defined his purpose in the work as 'to disparage the fashionable, but soul-ruining flimsiness in religion'.

1 John Gillies published a twice-weekly newsheet for the benefit of his Glasgow congregation, and in an early number he inveighed against the Deists and their false promises.

*Hast Thou too great an Admiration of some Deistical Writers who have misled thee ... Thou mayst be a Man of good Sense, or great Parts, a fine Genius, a great stock of Wit and Humour, a good Taste, a pleasant Temper, agreeable Conversation, great Learning ... But Alas! notwithstanding of all these abused Endowments thou art ACCURSED of GOD.*

It is remarkable that the Evangelicals had no constructive comments to make, or lead to offer, in regard to the standard of rhetoric in the 18th century. By contrast, John Wesley whose aim, like that of the Evangelicals, was to convince largely uneducated audiences of the truths of religion, produced his *Directions Concerning Pronunciation and Gesture*, to provide his preachers with very practical directives in the art of oratory.

Never clap your hands, nor thump the pulpit. Use the right hand most; and when you lose the left, let it be only to accompany the other. Your hands are not to be in perpetual motion: This the ancients called the babbling of the hands.


2 John Gillies, *An exhortation to the inhabitants of the South Parish of Glasgow and the bearers in the College-Kirk*, Glasgow, 1750, i, no. 3, pp. 20-1.

3 John Wesley, 'Directions Concerning Pronunciation and Delivery' in *Works*, London, 1872, xiii, 520.
The nearest to practical comments on pulpit oratory in Scotland are extracts in sermons or pamphlets like George Cowie's *The Presbyterian Dissenter's Guide in Choosing a Pastor* (1787), in which Cowie satirized current fashionable trends in pulpit oratory. The Methodist tradition was the natural ally for the Secession Church but their rejection of it on the grounds of doctrinal incompatibility left the rhetorical tradition untouched and unmarked by new external influences. Wesley in his *Journal* commented on the inquiring but, at the same time, suspicious and carping disposition of Scots congregations.

What a difference between an English and a Scotch congregation! These judge themselves rather than the preacher; and their aim is not only to know, but to love and obey.

The Evangelicals did not waver in their opposition to the refined sermon throughout the 18th century, a situation which contributed to maintaining the gap between literature and the sermon. This is demonstrated in the following extract from a sermon preached by James Hall, minister in Lesmahagow, in 1793:

The following observations were not published with a view to acquire literary fame. Depth of argument, novelty of sentiment, and elegance of diction must not be expected. The modern graces of composition were not attempted.

Much earlier in the century, too, Henry Lindsay commented in a sermon originally delivered at the opening of the Synod of


2 *James Hall, David and Goliah; or, Great Britain and France*, Glasgow, 1793, p. 33.
Perth and Stirling in 1733:

It is not set off to the Advantage, with fluent Expressions, or handsome Period, to engage the refin'd Wits of this Age to give it their Applause.  

Comments such as these indicate how aware Evangelical sermon-writers were that their published sermons were likely to be assessed by the critical conventions of the age, and how resistant they were to admitting the validity of this practice.  

While it must be said that the sermons of the Evangelicals were vivid and aggressive in terms of diction and sentiment, their introspective basis and limited vision make them of lesser interest in terms of their literary value. Perhaps the best example of the clash of interests between the Evangelical and the Moderates is to be found in the review of Ebenezer Erskine's sermon The Plant of Renown in the Edinburgh Review of 1755. The reviewer quoted the following passage from Erskine's sermon:

These ministers must be the devil's ministers, and not the ministers of Christ, who, instead of preaching a crucified Christ, entertain their hearers with harangues of heathen morality, flourishes of rhetoric, the doctrines of self love, as the principles of religious actions, and the like stuff.

The reviewer's assessment was equally venomous:

1 Henry Lindsay, The present state of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1733, preface 3.

2 A sermon published in 1761 contained this caveat in the preface: 'Any reader who may be inclined to censure the stile and composition of the following Sermon, is intreated to remember, that is a popular discourse, wherein force of expression is often times more requisite than correctness'. A sermon, which might have been preached in East Lothian, upon the 25th day of October, Edinburgh, 1761, preface.

3 Edinburgh Review, i(1755), 36.
[these sermons] are in our opinion but little calculated to promote that reformation of manners, which ought to be one great object of every preacher's attention. They are so full of childish conceits and fancies; the sublime doctrines of christianity are treated of, in such a low and ludicrous manner ... there is so little morality ... that we are sorry to say, they seem to be rather calculated to do harm than good; to expose religion to contempt and ridicule, instead of recommending the love and practice of it.

Yet, the Evangelical wing of the Church was convinced that its method of approach to the craft of sermon-writing was superior to that of the Moderates. John Mackenzie, minister of Portpatrick, preached a sermon in the New Church, Dumfries, in 1772 in which he summed up the credo of Evangelical sermon-writers on contemporary trends in pulpit rhetoric.

There never, in any period, was less virtue, and more sentiment than in the present. Conscious of our deficiency in active virtue we endeavour to impose upon mankind and upon ourselves, by a copious exhibition of general maxims and fine thoughts, which serves no other purpose than to display our own agreeable convivial talents, and purchase for ourselves from fools, and at the cheapest price, the characters of men of refined feelings and delicate sentiments.

2. The Moderate Sermon: 'The Language of the Heart'

Without being strikingly sublime, or remarkably pathetic, Dr Blair steals insensibly into the heart, and makes impressions which are calculated to have a good effect on the temper and conduct.

1 Edinburgh Review, 1(1755),39.


3 The New Annual Register, or General Repository of History, Politics, and Literature for 1780, London, 1793,1,201.
In dealing with the 18th century in Scotland, it is all too easy to assign preachers to either the Evangelical or Moderate wings of the Church. A serious examination of the sermons of these so-called Moderate preachers makes the boundaries of these classifications much more difficult to define. The only satisfactory way to classify preachers as belonging to the Moderate school of pulpit rhetoric is to examine the aspects of rhetorical theory and practice that these sermon-writers have in common, but which also represent a significant departure from Evangelical rhetorical practice.

It is remarkable how much information survives on the content and nature of Moderate beliefs and rhetorical style. This derives not simply from the content of individual sermons, but also from the enormous resources of contemporary satirical attacks on Moderate rhetoric. The first and most scathing satire on the characteristics of Moderate pulpit rhetoric was John Witherspoon's *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, which was published in 1753. By 1755, four editions of the work had come off the presses. In the preface to the second edition, Witherspoon recounted an anecdote, in which he referred to a minister who had asked if a friend who had attended the General Assembly was a 'moderate man'.

Witherspoon then went on to offer a definition of the archetypal Moderate man in 'The Athenian Creed'. I have quoted it in full below because of the bearing it has upon the

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Moderate rhetorical credo.

I believe in the beauty and comely proportions of Dame Nature, and in almighty Fate, her only parent and guardian, for it hath been most graciously obliged, (blessed be its name,) to make us all very good.

I believe that the universe is a huge machine, would up from everlasting by necessity, and consisting of an infinite number of links and chains, each in a progressive motion towards the zenith of perfection, and meridian of glory; That I myself am a little glorious piece of clock-work, a wheel within a wheel, or rather a pendulum in this grand machine, swinging hither and thither by the different impulses of fate and destiny; That my soul (if I have any) is an imperceptible bundle of exceeding minute corpuscles, much smaller than the finest Holland sand; and that certain persons, in a very eminent station, are nothing else but a huge collection of necessary agents who can do nothing at all.

I believe that there is no ill in the universe, nor any such thing as virtue absolutely considered; that those things vulgarly called sins are only in the judgment, and foils to set off the beauty of Nature, or patches to adorn her face; that the whole race of intelligent beings, even the devils themselves (if there are any) shall finally be happy; so that Judas Iscariot is by this time a glorified saint, and it is good for him that he hath been born.

In fine, I believe in the divinity of Lord Shaftesbury, the saintship of Marcus Antoninus, the perspicuity and sublimity of Ackenside, and the perpetual duration of Mr. Hutcheson's works, notwithstanding their present tendency to oblivion. Amen.

John Witherspoon's Ecclesiastical Characteristics was followed by Archibald Bruce's The Kirkind; or Golden Age of

1 John Witherspoon, Ecclesiastical Characteristics, Glasgow, 1754(2nd ed.), p.27. Henry Davidson, minister of Galashiels, commented to an English preacher colleague in 1753 of Witherspoon's pamphlet: 'It is written with a vast deal of humour through the whole piece. A second edition is just now thrown off. You will easily guess it provokes highly. It would please you much.' Henry Davidson, Letters to Christian Friends, Edinburgh, 1811, p.211.
The Church of Scotland (1774), The Fashionable Preacher (1773), Roderick MacKenzie's Reading no Preaching: or, A Letter to a Young Clergyman (1752), and numbers of Evangelical and Seceding sermons, all of which broadly indicated the boundaries of the new ideas they felt had been introduced into pulpit rhetoric.

The main force of Evangelical attacks on Moderate rhetorical practice was directed at the increasingly secular basis of the Moderate sermon. There were numerous symptoms of this tendency in post-1750 sermons to which the Evangelical wing of the Church could point in confirmation to their view. The introduction of literary allusions into sermons, the perceptible development of a new pulpit vocabulary incorporating terms such as 'virtue' and 'benevolence', and the new emphasis on questions of style and presentation were all signs that rhetorical thinking about what a sermon should be was undergoing a process of change. In this process, the Evangelicals, with few exceptions, remained opposed to fresh ideas on how the rhetorical approach to the Scottish 18th-century sermon should proceed, and it is thus possible to argue that what the Evangelical critics of the Moderate sermon were principally opposed to was innovation in rhetorical practice.

The genesis of the 18th-century Moderate sermon was founded in the belief that the sermon should reflect contemporary changes in the canons of taste of Scottish society. This included not simply literary but also aesthetic and social changes. In order, therefore, to accommodate new
ideas, the basis of the sermon had to be modified from its traditional foundation in orthodox rhetorical practice. In a society where the prevailing belief was in the essential virtue of man, it was logical that the emphasis of sermons extolling this belief should shift from older concepts of reward and punishment to stressing the benefits of virtue.

By the 1770s, the conventions which had begun to satisfy the public in literary writing began to appear in sermons, too. When Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* caught the shift in public taste so successfully in 1771, similar exercises in sentimentalism were frequently being offered from moderate pulpits. In view of this, it was not surprising that emphasis on strict Biblical exegesis should decline in importance, and that the scriptural basis of the sermon should intrude less and less upon its audience. The effect of this movement was to create, in effect, two schools of thought on rhetorical practice: one which remained static and was, in general, opposed to innovation and another which welcomed any idea which would help to ensure the acceptability of the sermon as a form to an 'improving' society. David Sillar stated the divinity student's dilemma in his poem 'Epistle to J. W-N, student of Divinity, Edinburgh':

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When ye come back frae out your teachin',
To try the trade which we ca' preachin',
Will ye be flytin' or be fleechin'
    Wi' silly flock;
Or will ye free them frae, or keep them,
    'Neath yon auld yoke?'
Will ye appear i' the New Light
Which pits sae mony in a fright;
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Or come an' Orthodoxian Wight,
Inspir'd an' proud,
An' roarin' H-11 wi' a yair might,
Tae please the crowd? 1

The rhetorical provenance of the Moderate sermon lay in the early part of the 18th century, in the sermons of men like Leechman, Hutcheson, George and William Wishart, and Robert Wallace, whose sermons had begun to reflect the new moral and ethical bias of 18th-century thought. It was the moral content of these sermons that attracted the opposition of Evangelical opinion. James Currie in a printed sermon first preached to the Synod of Fife in 1732, referred to these sermons as,

bare Harangues of Morality, their Discourses having little, but sometimes no more in them but what might have been said by such as never saw a Bible ...; so that a Stranger, at hearing, might doubt whether the Preacher was a Christian or a Deist.

In 1735, John Bruce preached to the Synod of Perth and Stirling and commented on 'the many dry and sapless, and, at best, but barely moral unevangelical ... Sermons which are preached by some'. 3 And in 1732, Ebenezer Erskine, in a sermon to the Synod of Perth, used characteristically expressive language to voice his sentiments on the new style of preaching.

2 A Short Essay to prevent the dangerous Consequences of Moral Harangues now so common in Scotland, Glasgow, 1746, preface.
3 John Bruce, A sermon preached at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, quoted in A Short Essay to prevent the dangerous Consequences of Moral Harangues, Glasgow, 1746, preface.
The new Mode of preaching some Men have fallen into, with their Harangues and Flourishes of Morality, while Christ is scarce named from the Beginning to the End of their Discourse; I look on as a Plot of Hell, to throw out the Corner Stone ... 1

From the 1750s onwards, it is evident that a body of preachers were preaching sermons which contained many of the fashionable ideas in vogue in contemporary society; a stress on the moral virtues; an emphasis on benevolence; charity and candour; the importance of the sympathetic emotions; and the connexion between religion and the civilized society.

She [i.e. Moderation] smiles, with soft and winning air,
Ey'n from the theologic chair;
There softens ev'ry harsher feature,
And dictates nought but pure good-nature. 2

In selecting a sermon-writer to represent the archetype of the Moderate sermon, the choice almost inevitably falls upon Hugh Blair whose sermons were delivered in Edinburgh charges and were then published in five volumes between 1777 and 1801. It was David Drummond who remarked of Blair's sermon that they -

lighted things up so finely, and you get such comfortable answers. 3

The work of popularizing the Moderate sermon was most successfully and most spectacularly carried out by Blair, first at the Canongate and later at Lady Yester's and the

1 Ebenezer Erskine, The Stone rejected by the Builders, erected as the Headstone of the Corner, quoted in A Short Essay to prevent the dangerous Consequences of Moral Harangues, Glasgow, 1746, preface.

2 Archibald Bruce, The Kirkiad; or, Golden Age of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1774, p.28.

In 1776, Kincaid, the publisher and H.M. Printer in Scotland, offered Blair £100 for an edition of sermons to be undertaken jointly between Kincaid and Strahan. When Kincaid died in 1777, the task of publishing the sermons was assumed by William Creech, and the first volume appeared in 1777 under the imprint of Creech, Strahan and Cadell.

Hugh Blair's suitability to act as a representative of the craft of Moderate sermon-writing is enhanced by his position as both a preacher and a teacher of rhetoric. In another sense, however, Blair is not the most representative figure to choose, in that he was by far the most successful of Moderate sermon-writers and also the most widely known. The genesis of the published sermons has been mentioned supra, but the documents that survive relating to the history of their publication indicate how practical and acute Blair was in a business sense. Although he described his sermons as

1 Blair was ordained to the parish of Collessie in Fife on 23 September 1742. He was translated to the Canongate Church, Edinburgh, in July 1743, where he remained until 1754 when he moved to Lady Yester's Church, Edinburgh, of which he was minister until 1758. His move to the High Kirk in 1758 met with Evangelical opposition. A letter in the Saltoun Correspondence refers to Lork Milton blocking Evangelical opposition to Blair's transfer at Robertson's request. NLS Saltoun MSS, Box 90 (14 May 1758).

2 Strahan had discouraged Blair from publishing his sermons, but he had taken the initiative of sending them to Dr Johnson whose opinion was instrumental in advancing their publication. 'I have read over Dr Blair's first sermon with more than approbation; to say it is good is too little'. Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen ed. Robert Chambers, Glasgow, 1835, revised by the Rev. Thomas Thomson, London, 1868, i,146.

3 The Chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres was established and Blair appointed to it on 27 June 1760, the Senatus 'being satisfied that the teaching of Rhetorick in the University would be of singular use to the students and a great benefit to the city ...' University of Edinburgh, Charters, Statutes, and Acts of the Town Council and Senatus, 1583-1858 ed. A. L. Morgan, Edinburgh, 1937, p.177.

4 See Appendix 1, which contains correspondence relating to the publication of Blair's sermons.
of a 'sentimental sort' when he first submitted his manuscript to William Strahan, he rapidly became involved in negotiating tough contracts with his publishers and worrying into the minor details of edition size, type and paper.

The sermons had an instant and extensive popularity on publication and they continued to roll off the presses well into the 19th century. John Gardiner referred to them as 'the most popular, most approved and which come nearest to perfection of any we have'. Interestingly enough, though, when William Creech wrote to Thomas Cadell in 1807 casting doubts on the viability of issuing an octavo edition of the sermons, he commented:

I do not think a royal 8vo edit. of Blair's Sermons, at such a price suited to this Country - I think the Book will readily sell in England, I must therefore there seek a market for I have no other.

As the Sermons continued to be published volume by volume, they were met with enthusiasm by critics and public alike. James Lackington, the bookseller, commented:

Sherlock's sermons had a very great sale, as had Dr White's and many others, but none ever sold so well as Dr Blair's, and the sale of them is still as great as ever.

And in a letter to Alexander Carlyle in 1790, John Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, commented rather drily:

1 John Gardiner, Brief Reflections on the Eloquence of the Pulpit, Taunton, 1796, p.58.


The Ladies will insure a great Sale for Dr Blair's third Volume. 1

Numerous poems eulogizing the sermons appeared in periodicals and magazines. The *Scots Magazine* for 1777 contained a poem 'To Dr Blair, on his Sermons' 2; and in 1780, a poem entitled 'Verse written on a blank leaf of Dr Blair's Sermons', was included.

Youths yet unborn, shall listen to thy lore,
Their model thou, as FARQUIAR 3 was before
For once, the public to our author just,
Takes not the merit of his work on trust;
...'Tis read where sermons never were read before. 4

In 1796, the *Aberdeen Magazine: or, Universal Repository* contained a poem 'On Reading the First Volume of Dr Blair's Sermons'.

He who thro' life pursues thy wholesome plan;
Becomes the child of God, and friend of Man. 5

The serious reviewers, too, were enthusiastic about the Sermons. In 1777, when the first volume was issued, the *Monthly Review* commented on,

the elegance and simplicity of the Author's style;
of his unaffected manner; of his taste in composition; of the variety, beauty, and propriety of his sentiments; and of his happy talent ofconvincing the judgment, and at the same time affecting the heart. 6

The *Weekly Magazine* directly attributed the improvement in standards of pulpit rhetoric to the publication of the

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2 *Scots Magazine*, xxxix(1777), 211.
3 John Farquhar, author of Sermons published posthumously in 1772 by George Campbell and Alexander Gerard.
4 *Scots Magazine*, xli(1782), 151. The same contributor, 'F.D. of Abbots Inch', contributed a poem entitled 'On the Abuse of Rhetoric' to the same volume (p.209).
5 *The Aberdeen Magazine: or, Universal Repository*, i(1796), 352.
6 *Monthly Review*, lvi(1777), 289. 'The man of taste and the polite scholar, will be pleased with them, as elegant compositions; and the man of the world will approve the Preacher's judicious observations upon human life' (p.278).
sermons of William Craig in 1775 and those of Hugh Blair in 1777. Their sermons were praised since,

on the one hand, they breathe the warmest sentiments of rational piety; so, on the other, they inforce and illustrate many of the great rules of morality.

In addition, they opened up 'the most secret recesses of the human heart', informed the understanding and improved taste.

In 1794, when the fourth volume of Blair's Sermons was published, the Monthly Review allowed itself a degree of self-congratulation when it commented:

It is an inexpressible gratification and encouragement to us in our literary labours, when we find our judgment concerning the merit of important publications confirmed by the general suffrage of the world.

But the Critical Review sounded a note of caution when it referred to the potentially injurious effect of the desire of other sermon-writers to imitate Blair's rhetorical style and 'the calm and elegant description of manners, and ... moral observations'.

Blair's private library contained all the source-works of a preacher dedicated to the craft of sentimental writing and to delivering moderate sermons in the pulpit. His collection included the works of Sterne (Edinburgh, 1799), Thomas Hardy's Sermons (Hawick, 1811), Macknight's Harmony of the Gospels (London, 1756), George Hill's Sermons (London, 1796), Robert Walker's Sermons (Edinburgh, 1784), as well as copies of D'Harmonville's Moral Tales (Perth, 1792), Cavern of death, a tale (London, 1794) and the Culture of the Heart

1 Weekly Magazine, xxvi(1777), 177.
2 Monthly Review, new series, xv(1794), 52.
3 Critical Review, xxiii(1798), 61.
Blair published eighty-nine sermons in his five published volumes of *Sermons*, which is a relatively modest output besides the one hundred and thirty or more published by Ralph Erskine. Of these sermons, Blair preached forty-one (46%) on Old Testament texts and forty-eight (54%) on texts from the New Testament. His favourite books of the Bible for selecting texts were Psalms, Proverbs and Corinthians, a choice influenced, no doubt, by the moralizing character of the sermons he composed. Boswell recorded in *The Tour to the Hebrides* that Robert Watson, Blair's predecessor as lecturer in rhetoric, told Samuel Johnson that Blair took a week to compose a sermon, and the author of the *Letters on Dr Blair's Sermons* in 1779 hinted that Blair spent a long time revising for the press when he referred to the 'long-laboured revisal of the author'. The average length of one of Blair's printed sermons was approximately 30 pages although exceptionally, sermons could extend to fifty-six pages.

I have examined the sermons published from 1777 to 1801, classifying them into three categories in order to identify the different types of sermons preached by Blair.

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1 It also contained three translations of the *Sermons* (Leipzig, 1781-91), (Amsterdam, 1778) and (Lyons, 1784). *The Library of Hugh Blair, Sold at Ballantyne's*, 8 April 1816.


3 *Letters on Dr Blair's Sermons*, Edinburgh, 1779, p. 5. Blair also encouraged other sermon-writers. He wrote, for example, to George Hill of St Andrews in 1794 to encourage him: "As to my Sermons, I do not think that they form any obstacle. It is true, that I have been so lucky as to hit, in my strain of composition, the present taste; but it does not follow that I have engrossed it, so as not to leave room for writing in a different strain. Quintilian says, very justly, 'Plures sunt eloquentiae facies'. George Cook, *Life of George Hill*, Edinburgh, 1820, p. 250.

I have divided the sermons into the following groups:

1. Moral essays
2. Doctrinal sermons
3. Methodical sermons relating to precise Biblical texts

Using this division, I have calculated that 60% of Blair's sermons belong to the category of moral essays, 25% are methodical sermons and 15% are doctrinal sermons. The moral essays include titles like 'The Union of Piety and Morality', 'On Gentleness', 'On Devotion', 'On the Love of Praise', 'On Death', 'On Candour', 'On Fortitude' and 'On Envy'. Among the titles of the doctrinal sermons are 'On the Influence of Religion upon Adversity', 'On the Influence of Religion upon Prosperity' and 'On the Importance of Public Worship'. The methodical sermons include titles like 'The Presence of God in a future State', 'On Submission to the Divine Will' and 'On the Ascension of Christ'.

Despite the variety of his sermons, Blair was criticized by his preaching opponents for the bias of his sermons towards pleasing and inspiring the pious and well-disposed, the benevolent and the charitable.

This volume, so much admired in the world by men of all sorts, contains no gospel to the poor ... it is no gospel to the wretched, the miserable, the poor, the blind, and the naked. Such profane sinners must keep back ... till they have attained the necessary requisites.

In examining Blair's sermons, it may be convenient to consider, firstly, their content and, secondly, their style and language. Blair gave his sermons secular titles, a

1 Letters on Dr Blair's Sermons, Edinburgh, 1779, p.12.
practice adopted by some 18th-century Scottish preachers on both the Evangelical and Moderates sides of the Church, as opposed to the practice of heading the sermon simply by the text to be preached on. (It is probable, however, that to some extent the titles of printed sermons were added at a later date after delivery in the pulpit.) The design of the sermon was much simplified, consisting normally of an introduction, an explication on the theme, followed by a division of the theme into separate headings which were then separately examined point by point, culminating in a persuasive oration or exhortation to follow the moral life.

The majority of Blair's sermons were composed on a single theme, either praising the moral attributes (morality, gentleness, devotion, sensibility, fortitude, moderation, and friendship) or condemning their opposites (luxury, vice, envy, idleness, and disorders of the passions). There is a singular lack of doctrinal evidence or Biblical confirmation of the truths advanced in the sermons. Blair's approach was to illustrate the truth of his text by showing its effects on mankind, rather on the individual man. In his sermon 'On the Union of Piety and Morality', for example, Blair argued against the neglect of piety.

If there be any impression which man is formed by nature to receive, it is a sense of religion ... The expressions of those affections under the various forms of religious worship, are no other than native effusions of the human heart.

1 Ralph Erskine and Robert Walker, among others, assigned titles to their printed sermons.

2 Hugh Blair, 'On the Union of Piety and Morality' in Sermons, i, 4-5.
On occasions, Blair employed a didactic approach to convincing his audience of the relevance of the dictates of moral behaviour to man, by arguing that all men were motivated by the same basic laws of behaviour.

For all men, even the most depraved, are subject, more or less, to compunctions of conscience.\footnote{Hugh Blair, 'On the Union of Piety and Morality' in Sermons, 1,13.}

In formulating his arguments, Blair made little use of supporting Biblical evidence. He derived his proofs from the common experience of man, and the Bible provided a secondary source by which to confirm them.

To propound the Hutchesonian view of virtue and the essential goodness of man in his sermons,\footnote{John Witherspoon defined Moderate philosophy in these terms: 'It illustrates the truth of Mr Hutcheson's doctrine, that virtue is founded upon instinct and affection, and not upon reason; that benevolence is its source, support, and perfection; and that all the particular rules of conduct are to be suspended, when they seem to interfere with the general good'. John Witherspoon, Ecclesiastical Characteristics, Glasgow, 1755(4th ed.), p.68.} Blair relied heavily on the use of the moral character sketch: the 'wise man', the 'man of candour' and the 'moral man', all of which had a historical provenance in the 18th century. The use of these archetypes allowed the personification of the attributes valued and admired by the Moderates and which they wished to encourage others to assume. In addition, the use of stark and simple images was a convenient extension into the sermon of the 'cult of simplicity' in contemporary writing. This arose out of the belief that simple ideas simply expressed were the most effective means of moving the human heart, an idea which was directly opposed by the
Evangelicals, who believed that exposing the scourges of sin and offering the promise of salvation were the best means of persuading audiences to reform.

Blair's sermons also emphasized the positive virtues of benevolence, charity and candour, later to become the armour of the sentimental movement. For example, he preached sermons on the titles 'On the Moral Character of Christ' and 'On Candour'. In the sermon 'On the Progress of Vice', Blair made it clear how close his view of man was to that of Hutcheson.

Though human nature be now fallen from its original honour, several good principles yet remain in the hearts of men ... In every breast, some benevolent affections are found; and conscience still retains a sense of the distinction between moral good and evil.¹

The theme of benevolence was one that appeared frequently in Moderate sermons. John Farquhar, minister of Nigg, defined benevolence as:

> a leading principle of human nature, upon which all the virtues of patriotism, natural affection, gratitude, charity are grafted.²

¹ Hugh Blair, 'On the Progress of Vice' in *Sermons*, iii, 108. In his life of Lord Kames, Tytler commented that Duncan Forbes of Culloden became 'an admirer of the Hutchinsonian scheme of Theology, which professes to find in the Holy Scriptures ... a complete system of natural philosophy, as well as religious instruction ...' A.F. Tytler, *Memoirs of the life and writings of Henry Home of Kames*, Edinburgh, 1807, p.33.

² *Sermons on Various Subjects by the late John Farquhar* ed. George Campbell and Alexander Gerard, London, 1772, i, 147. Farquhar commented in the same sermon (p.154): 'Read the history of mankind ... and I think there is no possibility of comprehending ... without supposing a principle of direct benevolence ... implanted in the human mind by its great Creator'. 
In the *Evidences of the Christian Religion*, James Beattie identified benevolence as one of the important aspects of the Christian solution to the moral life.

Christianity proposes to our imitation the highest examples of benevolence, purity, and piety ... By teaching, that all mankind are brethren; by commanding us to love our neighbour as ourselves; and by declaring every man our neighbour to whom we have it in our power to do good; it improves benevolence to the highest pitch.

The genesis of 18th-century Scottish benevolence lay in Hutcheson's reference, in his *Essay on the Passions*, to the 'benevolent desires', which gave credibility to the idea that morality and, particularly, a moral code which could be assessed by the presence of 'benevolent desires', was something to which all men might aspire. Elizabeth Mure commented on this development in her essay on the changing mores of Scottish society.

Professor Hamilton & the two Mr Wisherts at Edinr. Professor Hutchison, Craig, Glark & Principal Lishman in the west, these taught, that whoever would please God must resemble him in goodness & benevolence.  

Benevolence as a criterion of individual moral behaviour was later extended into the belief that the contemplation of the happiness of others could enhance one's own happiness, and that the roots of individual happiness lay in being benevolent to mankind, since altruistic good was the only true source of virtue and personal happiness.


2 Elizabeth Mure, 'Essay on the Change of Manners in My Own Life 1700-1790'. NLS MS.5003,f.1.
Benevolence gradually began to signify an approach to life, an attempt to conduct one's affairs on the basis of a selfless attitude to others, with the tacit assumption that the benevolent man was also a virtuous man. The sentimental writers seized upon this new reading of man as virtuous and benevolent as a potentially valuable new literary medium. And in the sermons of the Moderates, benevolence was interpreted as one of a number of common links between the religious life and the secular life. Thomas Blacklock, for example, referred to the 'ravishing joys of benevolence' in his sermon Faith, Hope and Charity compared, and he contrasted the riches of the benevolent man with the dullness of the insensitive man.

Benevolence is ever rich with native and inherent treasure; for, tho' the good man may not always have capacity, or opportunity, to effuse the tenderness of his heart, in offices of liberality and kindness, yet, even the unaccomplished wishes, and abortive attempts of a generous mind, are infinitely preferable to the success of selfishness and guilt. 1

Thus benevolence, one of the hallmarks of the virtuous man, was being used by Moderate preachers to signify religious well-being and secular acceptability. Thomas Randall preached a sermon before the SSPCK on Christian benevolence in 1763, 2 and, in 1791, Thomas Hardy preached on the benevolence of the Christian spirit. 3 Benevolence was thus a theme which

1 Thomas Blacklock, Faith, Hope, and Charity, compared, Edinburgh, 1761, p.25.
2 Thomas Randall, Christian Benevolence. A sermon preached before the SSPCK, January 3, 1763, Edinburgh, 1763. The sermon was reprinted in Edinburgh in 1786.
could simultaneously satisfy the conventions of religion and the mores of contemporary polite society.

The second theme linking religion and contemporary secular society favoured by the Moderates in their sermons was the beneficial aspects of religion to mankind. Where religion was being attacked by the forces of scepticism and liberal inquiry, it was perhaps not surprising that Moderate sermon-writers wished to accentuate the positive aspects of religion in an increasingly secular society. What marks their attitude as significant is their stress on the advantages conferred on society by a positive connexion between religious beliefs and the legitimate aspirations of man. That perfected relationship was one which avoided the extremes of moral conduct, as Blair indicated in his sermon 'On Extremes in Religion and Moral Conduct:

The perfection of our social character consists, in properly tempering the two with one another; in holding that middle course which admits of our being just, without being rigid; and allows us to be generous, without being unjust.¹

David Plenderleath delivered a sermon before the SSPCK in 1754 on Religion a treasure to men, and the strength and glory of a nation, in which he defended religion against the criticism that men of letters were opposed to revealed religion on the grounds that it was harmful to society. Plenderleath set out to show instead that religion was beneficial to the promotion of industry, and that it also

¹ Hugh Blair, 'On Extremes in Religion and Moral Conduct' in Sermons, iii, 360.
strengthened the nation by improving the moral character of society, and he asked:

Men of learning have opposed Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy: must that scheme therefore be false, and sink into disrepute?  

Thus, the Moderates saw religion as a force to bind society together. As George Campbell commented in his sermon, *The Happy Influence of Religion on Civil Society*, in 1779:

"where there is no religion, there is no restraint."  

Hugh Blair regarded religion as having a legitimate connexion with secular affairs and concerns.

They are mistaken friends of piety, who, under the notion of exalting it, place it in a sort of insulated corner, disjoined from the ordinary affairs of the world, and the connections of men with one another. On the contrary, true piety influences them all.

Alexander Gerard believed that religion had a harmonious effect on the public interests of civil society by spreading felicity throughout society.  

Again, John Hamilton preached a sermon at the opening of the General Assembly in 1767, on *The Practice of Religion shewed to be pleasant and delightful*, in which he described the pleasures of religion as:

great and sublime ... rational, and suitable to our nature ... pure and unmixed, and without any alloy ... solid and substantial ... and durable and lasting.

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3 Hugh Blair, 'On Friendship' in *Sermons*, iv, 359.  
The idea of a society of mankind had its roots early in the 18th century, although it is popularly assigned to Adam Ferguson and the publication of his Essay on the Civil Society. Shaftesbury in his Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour had, however, as early as 1709, hinted at the existence in man of a, herding principle, and associating 'Inclination ... All men have naturally' their share of this combining Principle.¹

Montesquieu, quoted by Ferguson, confirmed that 'Man is born in Society, and there he remains',² and David Hume, too, commented of man that he was:

born into a family, is compelled to maintain society from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit.³

The work of Adam Smith, Gilbert Stuart, John Millar and Lord Monboddo was also primarily concerned with the need to view man in society in order to understand him.

The significant factor in Ferguson's view of social philosophy was his insistence that the concept of society arose not out of a sense of calculated mutual advantage but from a natural desire intrinsic to human nature and established by pleasurable habit.

Man is, by nature, the member of a community; and when considered in this capacity, the individual appears to be no longer made for himself ... He is only part of a whole.⁴


² Montesquieu, De L'esprit des Loix. The work was first translated in 1750 and between 1750 and 1800, nine editions were published in Scotland. Alison K. Howard, 'Montesquieu, Voltaire & Rousseau in 18th century Scotland'. The Bibliothèque, 2(1959), no.2, 40-63.


In Ferguson's view, society was an organised entity, a unit of essential oneness whose different functions and institutions were interdependent, but in which progression was natural.

Change, growth, progress are the order of nature in man as well as in the universe about him. No institutions are stable; where growth ceases, decay and death set in.¹

The concept of a society in which social growth was accepted and recognized as a continuous process was readily approved by the Scots literati, as they recognized the mutual advantages both to society and to man of a correctly organized framework for society. The advantage of a formal arrangement of society was confirmed as early as 1746 in a sermon preached by George Wishart after the 1745 Rebellion.

That Society is natural to Men, and necessary to their Improvement and Perfection; both the natural Abilities, and the natural Weaknesses of Mankind concur to shew.²

Thomas Blacklock confirmed the clergy's acceptance of this view in his sermon Faith, Hope and Charity compared:

The most distant or superficial view which any candid observer can take of mankind, will plainly discover, both from their frame and circumstances, that they are formed for society. The original determinations of their hearts are social. The cool and unbiassed dictates of reason prescribe social intercourse as the noblest and most effectual method both of attaining improvement, and of securing what is convenient or agreeable.³

Blair viewed religion and the state as exercising a combined rôle in the creation of social order:

¹ Adam Ferguson, Principles of Moral and Political Science, Edinburgh, 1792, p.xvi.
² George Wishart, A sermon preach'd before the General Assembly, May 8 1746, cEdinburgh, 1746, p.3.
³ Thomas Blacklock, Faith, Hope, and Charity compared, Edinburgh, 1761, p.3.
Religion and Government are the two great foundations of order and comfort among mankind. Government restrains the outrages and crimes which would be subversive of society... Religion supplies the insufficiency of the law, by striking at the root of those disorders which occasion so much misery in the world.

Another of the hallmarks of the Moderate sermon is charity, which is linked with sympathy and sensibility. Sympathy, charity, benevolence and compassion were proofs of the sympathetic emotions, and when these emotions were manifest, they confirmed that the individual was a man of feeling and a civilized member of society. To the Moderate sermon-writer, the connexion between charity and religious morality was a very convenient one, since charity and sympathy were already cornerstones of Christian morality, and could be advanced legitimately on these grounds as well as on the grounds of their fashionable currency in the 18th-century world of the polite.

When Thomas Blacklock defined charity in his sermon Faith, Hope and Charity compared, he recognized that the term had a special meaning in Moderate currency, and he pointed out that his definition differed in essence from the original Apostolic definition.

For charity at present, all generally mean no more than some particular degree or exertion of that universal and boundless benevolence, whose object is God and his works. It sometimes expresses no more than that kind disposition, whether felt or exercised, which prompts us to supply the wants of the poor. At other times it is limited to that favourable prepossession for men in general, which impells us to put upon their conduct the most humane interpretation it will bear; which throws a

1 Hugh Blair, 'Of Candour' in Sermons, ii, 277-8.
shade over their infirmities, and sets their virtues in the most advantageous light.¹

John Farquhar defined charity as comprehending,

Candour in our judgments, fairness in our actions, humanity and kindness in our whole behaviour.²

and he compared it to 'a liberal fountain, giving rise to a large river'.

In Moderate sermons, charity usually involved looking at man in the best possible light, and implied a 'soft' interpretation of the term which had already been accepted as part of the fashionable language of the age. John Drysdale, minister of the Tron Church, defined charity in decidedly sentimental terms:

By charity we are here to understand, not merely a bountiful relief of the wants of the poor ... but also that generous sensibility which enters into the feelings of mankind, that universal love and benevolence to all our fellow-creatures, which prompt us to desire their happiness ... Such is the charity which is here meant, and which might have been rendered benevolence, or love.³

When John Clarkson preached the sermon Gallio in Kilwinning in 1773, he satirized the use of the term 'charity' as part of the jargon of the age.

'Charity' is the all in all of modern religion: and what is it? A belief that a person may be a very good Christian whatever his principles, - or his practices be! It is thus our dictionary writers should now define it, ... though the inspired writers seem to have been ignorant of this sense of it.⁴

1 Thomas Blacklock, Faith, Hope, and Charity compared, Edinburgh, 1761, pp.5-6.
3 Sermons by the late Rev. John Drysdale ed. A. Dalziel, Edinburgh, 1793,1,2. Drysdale met with opposition when he was presented to the charge of Kirliston because 'his discourses contained too great a proportion of the doctrines of morality'. He was later translated to Lady Yester's in 1763. On a visit to London, William Strahan asked him to prepare a volume of sermons which he began but did not continue.
4 John Clarkson, Gallio; a sermon preached at Kilwinning, Glasgow, 1774, p.8n.
The currency of sympathy and sensibility was linked to the popularization of the theory of sympathy in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* published in 1759. A contemporary review in the *Annual Register* for 1759 credited Smith with, making approbation and disapprobation the tests of virtue and vice, and shewing that those are founded on sympathy he raised.  

George Ridpath, minister of Stitchel, was more reserved, however, in his opinion of Smith's work when he commented:

> The work shows him to be a man of knowledge and of genius too, but yet I can by no means join in the applauses I have heard bestowed on it. What is new in it is perhaps of no great moment in itself, and is neither distinctly explained nor clearly established.

The effect of Smith's theory was to present the public with a watertight formula for testing and verifying their social attitudes. The success or failure of a man's relation to society was measured by the success or failure within him of the principle of sympathy. Elevating sympathy to the sole criterion of the morally and socially acceptable, encouraged the creation of a connexion between the effusiveness of emotion and its acceptability. The emphasis on degrees of sympathy appears both in Smith's concept of sympathy and in the style in which he described it. A.R. Humphreys refers to Smith's 'panegyrics of sympathy', "the amiable virtue of humanity" which recall the novels of sensibility in their transports and tears.  

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1 *Annual Register*, (1759), 485.  

Take, for example, the passage: 'by relating their misfortunes they in some measure renew their grief ... Their tears accordingly flow faster than before ... They take pleasure, however, in all this, and, it is evident, are sensibly relieved by it; because the sweetness of his sympathy more than compensates for the bitterness of that sorrow, which, in order to excite this sympathy, they had thus enlivened and renewed'. Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* ed. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie. Oxford, 1976, p. 15.
'exquisite' in connexion with feeling heralds the onset of a sentimental approach to sympathy. The focusing of a literary genre on a single emotion was made possible by Adam Smith's subordination of all other emotions to the single ruling principle of sympathy, which, though its meaning was, perhaps, originally the same, may now, however, without much impropriety, be made use of to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever. This definition was demonstrably vague and fluid. Fellow-feeling was the emotion generated when an individual imagined himself in the situation of a person who was suffering, and reflected on what his own feelings would be in the same situation. Smith's single reservation was the distinction that he made between fellow-feeling with the sufferings of others, which he termed pity and compassion, and the more general identification of one person's feelings with another's which he termed sympathy.

An essential feature of Smith's view of sympathy was the conviction that:

To approve of the passions of another ... is the same thing, and to observe that we entirely sympathize with them.

In this sense, sympathy was a subjective expression of approval of virtuous actions or feelings; and the absence of sympathy was analogous to disapproval of these actions. Smith stressed that concern for the sufferings of others should override more selfish concerns with personal distress.

2 Ibid., p. 3.
3 Blair confirmed the action of sympathy: 'How often will the look of tender sympathy, or the tear that involuntarily falls, impart consolation to the unhappy?'. Hugh Blair, 'On Sensibility' in Sermons, iii, 30.
Perfected sympathy, he argued, produced individual and social harmony; and perfected sympathy implied a rigid self-control over personal distress, however legitimate, and an altruistic concern with the sorrows of the world.

And hence it is, that to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature; and can alone produce among mankind that harmony of sentiments and passions in which consists their whole grace and propriety.  

Only with the experience of grief and sorrow came the ability to raise the sympathetic emotions. This idea was inherited from classical oratory and is frequently restated in the sermons of the period. Gilbert Hamilton, minister of Cramond, quoted Horace's *De arte poetica* and restated this view in his sermon on *The Disorders of a Church and their Remedies* in 1752.

He who would work up the passion of grief in another, must first be sad himself; he must shew that his own heart is affected with sorrow.

Sensibility provided a convenient hook on which to hang a critical theory which took as its single criterion of merit the success with which the sympathetic emotions of the reading public were aroused. The reviewer of the novel *Juliet Grenville: or, The History of the Human Heart* used this language to assess the novel:

the author aims at the heart, and his aim is never ineffectual. The heart is an instrument which he touches with the hand of a master; and ... I know no modern author equally qualified, from his pathetic

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2 'Si vis me flere, dolendum est. Primum ipsi tibi ...'

powers, and his intimate knowledge of the subject, to write a work worthy to be entitled, the History of the Human Heart.¹ 

At the same time, it provided a comfortable belief in its implied conviction of the superiority of virtue over all temporal vicissitudes.

Human virtue is superior to pain, to poverty, to danger, and to death; nor does it even require its remotest efforts to despise them.²

Such a theory also provided a purpose for the trials of human existence; the worst that might befall man could be endured with the knowledge that moral virtue was ultimately victorious, and that the hardships of this life would be rewarded in the next. In the 'life of feeling', the entire scale of conventional values was displaced by an insistence on the values of sympathy and benevolence. The supreme values of the life of sensibility were the finer or 'soft' emotions: a propensity to the tender passions makes a man agreeable and useful in all parts of life.³

Smith's ideas on sympathy and sensibility found an immediate echo with the Moderates, who wished to accentuate in their sermons the softer and refined virtues of humanity rather than the stern policies advocated by their Evangelical colleagues. To the Evangelicals, however, the standards of Moderate sermon-writing were totally unacceptable: We hear much of mild religion; but religion may be so refined as to be vapid.⁴

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¹ Edinburgh Repository: or, Fortnight's Magazine, i (March 1774), 35.
The contemporary convention of sympathy fitted in very comfortably with the Moderate view of humanity. Hugh Blair preached a sermon 'On Sensibility' in which he defined sensibility as:

that temper which interests us in the concerns of our brethren; which disposes us to feel along with them, to take part in their joys, and in their sorrows. This temper is known by the name of 'sensibility; a word, which in modern times, we hear in the mouth of every one.

Blair argued that man had a natural and innate propensity towards sensibility through his social instincts, and he described the perfection of man's nature as 'the counterpoise of those social principles which ... render man equally useful to himself, and to those with whom he is joined in society'. He then went on to stress the relevance of sensibility to religion and to indicate how the Bible abounded with directives to this end, arguing that those dispositions inimical to sensibility, such as cruelty and hardness of heart, were directly in opposition to the Christian character.

Blair linked the generation of the emotion of sympathy to the 'Joy in Grief' syndrome. The Ossianic concept was restated and expanded by George Campbell's definition and classification of the sympathetic emotions in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* in 1776.

There are then in pity, these three different emotions: first, commiseration, purely painful; secondly, benevolence, or a desire of the relief and happiness of the object pitied ...; thirdly,

1 Hugh Blair, 'On Sensibility' in *Sermons*, iii, 22-43.
2 Ibid., p. 23.
3 Ibid., p. 25.
4 Ibid., p. 33.
love, in which is always implied one of the noblest and most exquisite pleasures, whereof the soul is susceptible ...  

At the same time, Blair offered a caveat against the misdirected use of sensibility which assumed the appearance of sensibility without its reality.

Professions of sensibility on every trifling occasion, joined with the appearance of excessive softness, and a profusion of sentimental language, afford always much ground for distrust.

He condemned the practice in polite society of making superficial gestures of sensibility without genuine sentiment to reinforce the feeling.

They relent at the view of misery when it is strongly set before them ... The tears they shed upon these occasions they consider as undoubted proofs of virtue ... At the same time, these transient relentings make slight impression on conduct. They give rise to few, if any, good deeds; and soon after such persons have wept at some tragical tale, they are ready to stretch forth the hand of oppression ...

The core of this interpretation of the sympathetic emotions was the recognition that these emotions acted as measures of sensitivity; firstly, as measures of sensitivity to external distress and, secondly (and of equal importance), as indications of internal sensitivity. As Hugh Blair expressed the principle in his explanation of why the painful emotions aroused by tragedy should at the same time gratify the audience,

We are pleased with ourselves, for feeling as we ought, and for entering, with proper sorrow, into


2 Hugh Blair, 'On Sensibility' in Sermona, iii, pp. 36-7.

3 Ibid., 41.
the concerns of the afflicted. ¹

There is also an insistence on a connexion between sensibility and piety, a sentiment with which Blair concluded his sermon on sensibility.

Sensibility, when genuine and pure, has a strong connection with piety ... He who pretends to great sensibility towards men, and yet has no feeling for the high objects of religion, no heart to admire and adore the great Father of the universe, has reason to distrust the truth and delicacy of his sensibility. ²

To the moderate sermon-writers, sympathy was the issue central to the code of morality that was advanced as the correct and best way for man to live. Sympathy and compassion were sentiments integral to their reading of Biblical teaching, and they readily recognized that these sentiments also touched upon the zeitgeist. Writers like Thomas Blacklock contrasted the limitations of secular vanities with the ethereal transports of the sympathetic emotions:

Is not the pleasure which mingles with that compassion bestowed by every uncorrupted heart on distress, more elegant, more refined, and even more delightful; than all the luxury of sense or ambition? ... Even the sigh which pursues departed worth to Heaven, the sympathetic tear which flows for a brother’s distress, are to him more precious than the glare of pomp, the increase of possession, or the allurements of pleasure.

In his sermon The Counsel of Gamaliel Considered, preached

1 Hugh Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, ii, 496.

2 Hugh Blair, 'On Sensibility' in Sermons, iii, 42. William Enfield, author of The Speaker (London, 1784) composed a sermon 'On Sensibility' in which he commented: 'Sensibility is valuable, not only as a SOURCE of INJUDICIOUS, but as an AID to VIRTUE'. William Enfield, Sermons on Practical Subjects, London, 1799 (2nd ed.), i, 143.

3 Thomas Blacklock, Faith, Hope, and Charity, compared, Edinburgh, 1761, pp. 22-3.
before the SSPCK in 1762, Robert Dick\(^1\) turned the argument round when he proposed that an age of refinement should concern itself with extending the influence of religion:

> In an age which abounds in humanity towards every species of misery, and in public spirit to forward every worthy plan, shall hearts and hands be wanting, to rescue men from the vassalage of sin and Satan ...?\(^2\)

By contrast, Evangelical preachers encouraged their audiences to sublimate the forces of private distress and grief before the hope of eternal reward. James Hall demonstrated Evangelical reaction in his sermon *Comfort to the Christian under All the Trouble of Life* in 1789.

> The good man knows, that his short afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. \(^3\)

There is a deliberate lack of emphasis on death and its consequences in Moderate sermons, unlike Evangelical sermons, where the themes deal exclusively with the life to come rather than on man's present existence. Moderate sermons, in contrast, were very firmly based on man's earthly existence with little emphasis on death and eternity. In the pamphlet *A Letter to the Author of the Ecclesiastic Characteristics*, Andrew Moir referred sarcastically to a sermon delivered at the club of which he was a member.

> an ill-bred Orthodoxian had the Impudence, last Night, to whine away a grovelling Discourse upon Death, with all the Blusterings of a Pulpit-Thunder. \(^4\)

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1 Robert Dick (1722-82), minister of New Greyfriars and later of Trinity Church, Edinburgh. His eloquence is referred to in Henry Moncrieff-Wellwood's *Life of Dr Erskine* (p.481) and Dugald Stewart's *Life of William Robertson* (p.193). DNII,1,134.


4 [Andrew Moir], *A Letter to the Author of the Ecclesiastic Characteristics*, Glasgow, 1754, p.5.
The moderate response to death and to distress was to seek refuge in the emotions. In the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith had referred to 'that sublime and passionate eloquence' which had long been practised in France and Italy and which 'was just beginning to be introduced into England':

so wide is the difference between the degrees of self-command which are required in civilized and in barbarous nations.¹

To lend support to his argument that the machinery of sensibility could act as a guide to the level of progress of a society, Smith enlisted the example of Cicero, who -

in the times of the highest Roman politeness, could, without degrading himself, weep with all the bitterness of sorrow in the sight of the whole senate and the whole people.²

Similarly, Alexander Gerard in his *Essay on Taste* drew a parallel between a society's sensibility and the level of its progress as a society.

Savages can be touched by nothing, but what excites the utmost extravagance of passions, so a gross and barbarous taste can relish nothing that is not either palpable or overdone.³

At the same time, Adam Smith recognized that the emphasis on sensibility was an 18th-century innovation.⁴ In the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he admitted that among orators of older ages it would have been,

1 Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p.208.
2 Ibid., p.207.
4 See also the *Memoirs* of J. Cradock (1,63), where he commented: 'How much soever the ancients might abound in elegance of expression - their works are very thinly spread with sentiment'. Quoted in J.H.S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800*, London, 1932, p.92.
Hugh Blair composed a sermon 'On Death' in which he argued that the pomp surrounding death was what captured the imagination and caused men to fear death, but he contended that the forces of the human mind could conquer that fear:

There is almost no passion in our nature but what has showed itself able to overcome the fear of death. Honour has defied death; love has despised it; shame has rushed upon it; revenge has disregarded it; grief a thousand times has wished for it. 3

To Blair, religion was a source of comfort in the extremities of life and, as proof of its effectiveness in this role, he cited the 'magnanimous behaviour of such as have suffered death in the cause of conscience and religion'. 4 William Lothian preached a sermon entitled Reflections on Jesus Keeping 5; Thomas Somerville, in a sermon On the Death of Christ, spoke of the 'sensibility of Jesus' 6; and, in 1789, John Jamieson published his Sermons on the Heart. 7

As well as modifying the content of Moderate sermons to accord with fashionable themes and conventions, the language and style of sermons also underwent a process of improvement

1 Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, pp. 207-8.
3 Ibid., 222.
4 Ibid., 239.
5 The Scotch Preacher: or, A collection of sermons, Edinburgh, 1776, ii, 201-14. The Scotch Preacher 'had great celebrity, and was popular among all ranks and classes of readers ... This book, which was intended to have continued periodically, ended with the Editor's life'. The Scottish Pulpit; a Collection of sermons by Eminent Clergymen of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1823, ix.
6 Ibid., iii, 90.
7 John Jamieson, Sermons on the Heart, Edinburgh, 1789-90, 2 vol.
and refinement. The most significant change was a softening or reducing of the religious content of the language used, so that its effect was muted and made less clearly Biblical in origin. John Witherspoon drew attention to this trend in the Ecclesiastical Characteristics, when he commented that the moderate sermon-writer,

\[
\text{[must]} \text{not insist on such passages of scripture as will, by the very repetition of them, contaminate his style, and may perhaps diffuse a rank smell of orthodoxy through the whole of his discourse.}^1
\]

Witherspoon instanced the substitution of the 'moral virtues' for the 'graces of the Spirit', and he compared the moderate's substitution of the phrase 'a high pitch of virtue' for 'a great degree of sanctification'.\(^2\) He also contrasted the differences between the sermons composed by an Orthodox and a moderate preacher on a text from Acts xxiv.25.\(^3\) The Orthodox preacher concentrated on experimental preaching, with frequent references to 'reproving' and 'conviction', while the moderate preacher, by comparison -

first observed, that St. Paul was a moral, or a legal preacher; discoursing of righteousness and temperance, without a word of faith; and then that he was a reasoning preacher, that did not strive to raise peoples passions, but informed their judgement.\(^4\)

James Baine, the Evangelical minister of Paisley, criticized the general tone and bland presentation of contemporary moderate sermons.

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1 John Witherspoon, Ecclesiastical Characteristics, Glasgow, 1754, p.15.
2 Ibid., p.15.
3 Acts xxiv.25: 'Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee'.
4 John Witherspoon, Ecclesiastical Characteristics, p.17. In The Moderator, Edinburgh, 1756, no.2, p.4, Witherspoon drew attention to the fact that Leechman referred to ministers as 'public teachers' not 'ministers of the gospel'.
And are not these distinctions much laid aside? Dismiss'd by many as antiquated cant, or deformities in the structure of a modern elegant discourse. 1

The movement in favour of using euphemistic language in moderate sermons included avoiding the use of specific Biblical terms, or, at least, masking them in vague and general language. A pamphlet of c.1790 makes this clear.

It is said indeed, that it is now become fashionable with some preachers, to deal with the Saviour of men, as they ought to do so with some sons of men, that is, not so much as name them in publick. 2

James Murray, who had studied under Hamilton at Edinburgh, commented in his Sermons to Asses:

It would very much spoil the beauty of a page, to have passages of Holy Scripture, standing in Italics or inverted commas in the midst of a genteel sermon ... 3

Hugh Blair's sermons are a useful example of this practice among moderate sermon-writers. Blair frequently used the phrases 'Divine Legislator', the 'Almighty Governor', the 'Omniscient Witness' and the 'Divine Shepherd' in his sermons, but references to the titles of 'God' and 'Christ' are relatively few. Blair quoted extensively from Biblical texts, but his selection of texts was eclectic, and they were usually injected into the text of his sermons in such a way that their textual derivation was disguised.

He fears no evil, as long as the rod and the staff of his Divine Shepherd are with him. 4

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1 James Baine, A sermon preached at the translation of the Rev. Dr. Motherspoon from Beith to the Laigh Church of Paisley, Glasgow, 1757, p.10n.
2 The Babbler, or the fate of the faithful ministers of Christ, c.Edinburgh, 17903, pp.5-6.
3 James Murray, Sermons to Asses, Paisley, 1800(6th ed.), i, 88.
The object of this method of using language was to heighten the similarity of the sermon to the moral essay by using language that was smooth and modulated, and selecting the appropriate sentiments and vocabulary. His success is demonstrated by the comment of the reviewer who assessed his sermons in 1798:

If we consider the volume as a collection of essays rather than of sermons, we must allow that it has great merit.  

Blair employed a number of rhetorical devices to assist him in achieving this end. He used a double combination of nouns and epithets for emphasis: 'the respectable and the amiable character of a man' and 'the honour and blessedness of a true Christian'. The device of repetition was frequently used, both by repeating phrases of moral import, like 'the principle of honour' and 'the instruct of benevolence', and by the repetitious use of a single word for rhetorical effect. In his sermon 'On the Death of Christ', Blair made extensive play on the word 'hour' for emphatic effect.

Father, the hour is come! - What hour?  
An hour the most critical, the most pregnant with great events ... It was the hour in which the Son of God was to terminate the labours of his important life ...; the hour of atoning ...; the hour of accomplishing ...; the hour of concluding the old ...; the hour of his triumphing over the world ...  

Short sentences were used to heighten dramatic tension.

The veil of the temple was rent in twain.  
The earth shook. There was a darkness over all the land.  

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1 Critical Review, xxiii(1798), 66.  
2 Hugh Blair, 'On the Union of Piety and Morality' in Sermons, i, 3.  
3 Hugh Blair, 'On the Death of Christ' in Sermons, i, 115-16.  
4 Ibid., p. 16.
In Moderate sermons, there is a total absence of slang expressions or vulgarisms (in contrast to Evangelical sermons), which is consistent with Moderate concern for expressing acceptable and refined sentiments. Alexander Carlyle recorded his disgust at the nature of the sermon he heard Dr Dodds preach at the Magdalen Asylum.

I could not help ... condemning the whole institution, as well as the exhibition of the preacher, as contra bonos mores, and a disgrace to a Christian city.

Blair's sermons were predominantly on themes of moral excellence or on the advantages to be derived from the acceptable and the practice of religion, with little emphasis on matters of doctrinal import. The arguments employed were assembled from a rationalist standpoint. Blair often used a didactic approach to convince his audience of the relevance of the dictates of moral behaviour to man. He argued that all men had common aims and aspirations and, by comparing the situation of the good man with that of the evil man, he highlighted the benefits of virtue. Blair stressed the relevance of religion to the polite world on the grounds that it provided an example to the rest of mankind.

I must ask such persons, how they can expect that religious assemblies will be long respected by the lower ranks of men, if by men of rank and education they are discountenanced and forsaken? Do not they know, that those lower ranks are ready to copy the manners, and to follow the example of their superiors in all things ...

1 Alexander Carlyle, Autobiography, Edinburgh, 1840, p. 504.
2 Instead, Blair used metaphors like 'the clear sunshine of charity' and 'the dark and sullen shade of jealousy' to create the effect he sought.
3 Hugh Blair, 'On the Importance of Public Worship' in Sermons, iv, 237.
The moderates also saw in religion a natural source of the sublime. Blair confirmed his belief in the existence of the sublimity of God in the works of Nature.

In the solitary desert, and the high mountain, in the hanging precipice, the roaring torrent, and the aged forest, though there be nothing to cheer, there is much to strike the mind with awe, to give rise to those solemn and sublime sensations which elevate the heart to an Almighty, all Creating Power.

James Beattie identified the sublime emotions in religion in his *Dissertations Moral and Critical* when, in a chapter on 'Illustrations of Sublimity', he stated:

Benevolence and piety are sublime affections; for the object of the one is the Deity himself ... and that of the other is the whole human race.

Fortitude and generosity are sublime emotions: because they discover a degree of virtue, which is not everywhere to be met with ...

And the treasures of the Bible were listed by George Hill in *A Sermon on the Advantages of Searching the Scriptures* delivered before the SSCK in 1787.

The careless reader must miss the treasure contained in a book where the most interesting histories, the most sublime poetry, the plainest words of promise, and the tenderest effusions of devotion are beautifully thrown together.

Thomas Gordon, minister of Speymouth, referred to the Bible as the 'foundations of true eloquence' and as the source of 'that sublimity, all that pathos, which give strength and sublimity to a work'.

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The sublimity of the Bible had a wide currency in the 18th century. Boileau had translated Longinus' treatise On the Sublime in 1674, and the English translation by William Smith, published in 1739, exerted considerable influence on 18th-century thinking on the sublime. Longinus was primarily concerned with what he regarded as 'height': in effect, elevated thought and high feeling, and the treatise is concerned with correctness of rhetoric and diction. Longinus' desire to associate passion and grandeur in oratory and to superimpose upon it the moral ideal of a man of feeling (who was also a reliable member of society) ensured that the theme of the sublime became the focus of philosophical investigation and inquiry, and an important factor in the development of aesthetic taste.

Smith's translation of Longinus' treatise emphasized the existence of examples of majestic simplicity and grandeur in the Bible. This was seized upon as a convenient belief by preachers who wished to present religion in contemporary terms. In a review of Courtney Molmoth's The Sublime and Beautiful of Scripture, the Critical Review laid out the proofs of the sublimity of the Bible.

1 Adam Ferguson, for example, quoted from Acts: 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being: as certain of our Poets have said', and he commented: 'This is a very sublime expression and beautifully applied to the Apostle'. Adam Ferguson, The Morality of Stage-Plays seriously considered, Edinburgh, 1757, p.4.


3 Edmund Burke published his essay A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful in 1757. Burke's work shows little of the influence of Longinus, but emphasized the sublime in emotions like death, the immense and the infinite, an emphasis which contributed to bestowing the status of literary merit on works containing grave and majestic ideas expressed in a simple manner.

4 Principally in Chapter 9, which quoted from Genesis and fostered the idea of the 'noble simplicity' of the Creation.
They were written in ages of primitive simplicity, when all frivolous embellishments of style were unknown. They are the productions of oriental writers, who were used to bold, metaphorical expressions and magnificent images. But, above all, the sacred writers employed their thoughts on the most exalted thoughts...

The concern with the sublime helped to nourish the view that there were certain topics, many of them religious (for example, God, Spirit, Hell, miracles) that were sublime in themselves. Rollin, for example, had stated 'The Sublime, or marvellous, is that which constitutes the grand real eloquence'.

It is easy to see the attractions of the 18th-century definition of the sublime to moderate preachers, since it fostered the awe-inspiring as well as the merely refined aspects of religion. There was, therefore, a ready acceptance of language that was simple and majestic and which conveyed simple ideas clearly but with feeling. The desirability of this approach was confirmed in a review of David Lamont's sermons in 1780:

There is no quality so graceful and becoming, or rather so essentially necessary, in the eloquence of the pulpit, as that of a natural and majestic simplicity.

Simplicity was regarded as the epitome of refinement and polished taste, and thus the opposite of the uncouth and barbaric language forms employed by the Evangelicals.

1 Critical Review, xliii(1777), 252. Melmoth's work was The Sublime and Beautiful of Scripture: being essays on select passages of sacred composition.
3 Critical Review, xliv(1780), 192, in a review of David Lamont, Sermons on the most prevalent vices (1780).
4 James Stoddart, minister of Kirkintilloch, confirmed in 1764: 'We should never forget that plainness and simplicity, clearness and perspicuity ... are some of the distinguishing characteristics of the sublime'. James Stoddart, The Revival of religion, A sermon preached in the High-Church of Glasgow, Glasgow, 1764, pp.14-15.
Moderates selected the language of their sermons with deliberation in order to foster a new and acceptable image of religion. How conscious a decision this was is confirmed by the following comment in John Jamieson's *Sermons on the Heart* (1789).

> Many in our times, have laid aside such terms as were formerly used on religious subjects; because, as they pretend, they have been prostituted by some, as the engine of Hypocrisy and Enthusiasm.

Thus the Moderates designed their sermons to reflect current critical thinking, and since it was an easy matter to inject the appropriate religious foundation into the sermon (to give it a religious as well as a literary justification), the task of the Moderate sermon-writer became relatively simple as well as pleasurable.

Since many of the church leaders were also active in university circles, the important matter was to hold the balance of Moderate interest intact. In his article on William Robertson, Jeremy Cater has shown that in 1762, the University of Edinburgh contained between the Principal and the Faculty of Divinity, four Moderates and a single Evangelical. The Moderates regarded the sermon as an important vehicle for disseminating correct sentiments and ideas, and as a means of presenting the public with a view of life and

1 John Jamieson, *Sermons on the Heart*, Edinburgh, 1789-90, i.vi.

2 Alexander Carlyle expressed the Church's recognition of this fact when he commented: 'Do not our universities borrow many of their fairest ornaments from the CHURCH?' Alexander Carlyle, *The Tendency of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, to form the Temper, Spirit, and Character of her Ministers*, Edinburgh, 1767, p.37.

society that was the antithesis of Evangelical uncouthness and enthusiastic fervour. In 1749, James Allan of Eyemouth preached a sermon to the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, on Moderatism Explained and Recommended, which was then published by Thomas Lumisden in Edinburgh the same year. In his sermon, Allan defined moderation as:

not only ... an ardent Love and Benevolence tempered by Meekness, but that particular Form, and these Expressions of Goodness, that are most remote from Rusticity, Rudeness, or Barbarity, and are known by the Names of Affability, Courtesy, Clemency.

Allan’s view was that true religious moderation had a moderating influence:

It tempers Passion with Meekness, and the Wildness of Enthusiasm by the Dictates of Reason.

Moderate rhetorical practice was designed to present these virtues in the best light and, thereby, to win their acceptance by contemporary secular society. In that connexion, it is interesting to note a pamphlet published in 1753, the purpose of which was to discourage those who had joined the Secession. To the Seceders’ objection that the Secession had the best preachers, the author countered:

Let me observe to you, that we are not always edified most with what pleases us best ... It is natural, I confess, for every one to wish to have the best Teachers; but it is not possible, and it is too common now-a-days, for every one to insist for Ministers to their Taste and Liking.

1 The sermon was on the text Philip iv. 5: ‘Let your Moderation be known unto all men’.
2 James Allan, Moderation explained and recommended, Edinburgh, 1749, pp.10-11.
3 Ibid., p.24.
4 A friendly admonition to such well-meaning and conscientious persons as have already joined, or incline to join the Secession from the Church of Scotland, by a minister of the Church, Edinburgh, 1753, p.30.
In a letter in 1793, the printer, George Chapman, replied to Alexander Carlyle, who had sent for his consideration the sermon delivered by Carlyle to the Society for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy:

Possessing such talents for composition, you will be wanting to Yourself and to the public, if You keep them hid under a bushel - Proceed then to publish more sermons, and dread not to stand in an inferior place among the Blairs, the Logans, the Drysdales, &c. of the present time.

3. THE MIXED SERMON: THE DOCTRINE OF COMPROMISE

I had, no other View in preaching them, than to guard my hearers against the Delusions of the mere Moralist on the one hand, and the Enthusiast and Antinomian on the other. 2

In examining rhetorical theory in 18th-century Scottish sermons, it is relatively simple to isolate the methods of composing sermons employed by Evangelical writers and Moderate writers. There is, however, an intermediate area of sermon-writing, comprising the sermons of men like John Erskine, Robert Walker and John Witherspoon, who were Evangelical by party and religious sympathies but whose sermons were conceived along different lines to those of Moderate or Evangelical preachers. While their doctrinal position was Evangelical, their views on the presentation of these beliefs had more in common with the Moderates than with the Evangelicals. When Sir Walter Scott selected the archetype of the

1 Letter, dated 19 November 1793, of George Chapman to Alexander Carlyle. LUL MS. Dc. 4. 41, f. 136.

2 John Erskine, The People of God consider'd as All Righteous; in Three Sermons, Edinburgh, 1745, p. iii. This sermon aroused some speculation and a fair degree of animosity when it was first delivered since it was believed that its strictures were aimed at individual ministers. See John Erskine, Discourses preached on several occasions, Edinburgh, 1801-4 (2nd ed.), i, 279.
Scottish preacher in his novel *Guy Mannering*, he chose to give a sketch of John Erskine rather than of any of the Moderate sermon-writers.¹ Pleydell commented in the novel that although Erskine's sermon could not be regarded as a correct specimen of pulpit eloquence, yet he 'had nothing of the sour or pharisaical pride which has been imputed to some of the early fathers of the Calvinistic Kirk of Scotland'.²

John Erskine (1721-1803) was the son of John Erskine of Carnock, Professor of Scots Law at Edinburgh. The young Erskine had studied under Stevenson and Wishart at Edinburgh, and in 1767, he was admitted collegiate minister of Old Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh (along with William Robertson).³ The main canon of Erskine's sermons was published in 1798 as *Discourses preached on several occasions*. The sermons were favourably received by the critics, the *Critical Review* commenting in 1799:

The sermons are judicious compositions, and full of important instruction. Their deficiency in that refinement and elegance of style, which are to be found in some of the discourses that have of late years issued from the press, will be considered by many as more than compensated by the solidity of the matter ....

3 In his sermon preached on the Sunday after William Robertson's death, 'The Agency of God in Human Greatness', Erskine referred to 'our different sentiments, as to some points of religion and morals'. *Discourses preached on several occasions*, Edinburgh, 1801, i, 263.
4 *Critical Review*, xxvii (1799), 79.
Erskine insisted that the raison d'être of religious instruction (including the sermon) was to preach faith and not solely to propound the doctrine of good works.¹ In the sermon, the qualifications necessary for teachers of Christianity, he stressed the need to view religious teaching in this light.

Without regard to Christ in principle ... the brightest speculations, and the strongest arguments, a text fetched from the bible, and motives brought from heaven, would be to preach Seneca rather than Christ.²

Yet in many respects, Erskine's sermons show similar influences to those that are to be seen in Moderate sermons. His sermons contain references to the sympathetic emotions and use the same catch-phrases in this connexion as those that are popular in Moderate sermons.

The language of the heart has something in it peculiarly lively and persuasive; something of unction, not to be equalled by the most laboured compositions of others.³

In his sermon 'On Public Spirit', Erskine referred to benevolence in these terms:

Benevolence gives men a pleasure in rejoicing with them that rejoice, and a relief in weeping with them that weep. No tears have a larger mixture of joy, than tears of compassion.⁴

¹ At the same time, Erskine condemned the lack of practical application in the Moderate approach to good works: 'Perhaps, they can talk fluently in praise of universal benevolence, and a charitable candid disposition; yet, when they come to explain their sentiments by their conduct, this charity is confined to those who favour their opinions ...' John Erskine, 'The people of God considered as all righteous' in Discourses preached on several occasions, Edinburgh, 1801, i, 300.


³ Ibid., pp. 20-1.

⁴ John Erskine, 'On Public Spirit' in Discourses preached on several occasions, ii, 105.
Nevertheless, Erskine's references to the conventions of moderate rhetoric were always tempered by applying them ultimately to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

There are others who value themselves on their benevolence and public spirit, who yet look not on the things of Christ Jesus ... 1

Erskine also disapproved of the extreme position adopted by Evangelical preachers on the question of style. In his sermon Ministers cautioned against giving offence, Erskine cautioned preachers against imitating the florid style of Hervey and MacEwen of the Secession Church.

Luxuriances of style, generally overlooked in original geniuses, 2 appear ridiculous in their servile imitators.

It is significant that Erskine frequently argued the case for religion from a common sense point of view. He did refer to the increasing depravity of the age, but he more often contended that mankind was sufficiently sensible not to be beguiled by false doctrines. In doing so, he sounded a different note from his more extreme Evangelical colleagues, who viewed mankind in a totally pessimistic light.

The world, in general, retains too much common sense to be convinced by sceptical sophistry, that virtue and vice are indifferent, except in as far as they affect private pleasure or pain.

Erskine's sermons were for the most part doctrinal, although he did also preach a number of sermons with moral

1 John Erskine, 'On Public Spirit' in Discourses preached on several occasions, ii, 109.
2 John Erskine, 'Ministers cautioned against giving offence' in Discourses preached on several occasions, i, 58n.
3 John Erskine, 'On the Ostentation of False Goodness' in Discourses preached on several occasions, ii, 155.
titles such as 'On Self Denial' and 'On Public Spirit'. His method of approach was to bring home the content of his sermon text to his congregation, either by relating the text to the spiritual condition of the age, or by beginning his sermon by describing a certain state of affairs or situation and then relating the purpose of the text to it. The quotations and references Erskine used in his sermons were predominantly contemporaneous: they included references to the works of Blair, William Wishart and David Hume and, among his ecclesiastical predecessors, Robert Leighton and Gilbert Burnet. In a sermon on The Influence of Religion on National Happiness in 1756, Erskine criticized Hume for objecting (in his History of Great Britain) to national concern for the interests of religion in foreign parts.

But that a gentleman of compassion and humanity, should feel himself unaffected, when a principle, which he apprehends malignant, diffuses itself thro' populous kingdoms, is a mystery of scepticism, which my reason, is, as yet, too shallow to comprehend.

Erskine's sermons were generally less technical than the average Evangelical sermon. Frequently, his sermons rehearsed arguments and points of view contrary to his own, and he used these as a starting point from which to argue the truth of his own position. When he preached the sermon On the Influence of Religion on National Happiness in 1756, he outlined the Deists' case against established religion before advancing his own arguments in opposition.

1 John Erskine, The influence of religion on national happiness, Edinburgh, 1756, p.27. The sermon was delivered at the Anniversary Meeting of the SSPCK in 1756. The collection at the door amounted to £15.10 and the SSPCK Committee subscribed for 400 copies of the printed sermon, 300 of them to be sent to London. SSPCK General Minutes, vol.4,pp.579 and 589-90, Scottish Record Office MS. GD 95/1/4.
In the days of our fathers, the most celebrated sceptics retained so much modesty, as only to plead, that atheism was innocent, and religion unnecessary. But our modern sceptics, with a more hardy boldness, pronounce, the religious principle malignant and hurtful.

His sermons show slight evidence, however, of the wide and catholic reading to which Thomas Davidson drew attention in his account of Erskine prefixed to the 1809 edition of the Theological Dissertations.

He perused the foreign literary journals ... He sent to the Continent many works of British authors which he thought valuable; and was in the constant habit of procuring and reading whatever he understood to be useful among the foreign publications.²

Nor was there any clear evidence in his sermons of the constant contact he maintained with secular learning.

no books of merit, either on the subjects of literature or science, were published which he did not read ...³

Another preacher who wrote sermons with characteristics of both Evangelical and Moderate parties was Robert Walker who was Hugh Blair's colleague in the High Church of Edinburgh. His Sermons on Practical Subjects were published in four volumes between 1775 and 1796. When the fourth volume was published in 1796, the Critical Review assessed the sermons favourably.

They are written with the same animation, seriousness, and orthodoxy, for which Mr. Walker was eminently conspicuous; and, amongst sermons of this class, are intitled to a very distinguished station.

3 'Account of the Public Life and Character of the late Dr Erskine, of Edinburgh' in Scots Magazine, lxxv (1803), 78.
4 Critical Review, xxii (1797), 344.
The *Edinburgh Evening Courant* in 1772 carried a poem
dressed to Robert Walker) on a sermon he had preached
from Romans xiv.7,8.

PROCEED, DIVINE! attract the list'ning heart!
With nervous language GOSPEL TRUTHS impart!
Thy fervid accents, cannot fail to charm
The FEELING mind - the GUILTY to alarm! 1

But when Walker published his sermon we have Nothing which
We did not Receive (1775), the *Edinburgh Magazine and Review*
criticized him very severely.

Mr. Walker indulges himself, as in his former
publications, as well as in this, with obscure
and sarcastic reflections, which, perhaps, are
perfectly well understood by his friends ... but,
we cannot avoid observing, that good preaching
needs not a key, any more than good poetry: and
that, of all prostitutions of the pulpit, there
is none more reprehensible than the converting
of it into a squirt to ... gratify party malice. 2

Walker's sermons resemble those of the Moderates in
their freedom from the obsolete usages and pulpit jargon
associated with the majority of Evangelical sermons. Thomas
Somerville referred to Walker's language as 'Addisonian' in
style.3 At the same time, although the style of his sermons
had more in common with the Moderates, Walker (like Erskine)
concentrated his attention on the sermon as a vehicle for
presenting doctrinal truths. His ultimate aim was to
strengthen men's faith as well as making them into better
men. The illustrations in his sermons were generally taken

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1 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 1 August 1772.
2 *Edinburgh Magazine and Review*, iv(1775), 776.
3 'Mr Walker, in the High Church, compressed and softened
the Calvinistical doctrines, in simple Addisonian language,
pronounced with a vivacity, harmony, and sweetness of tone'.
from the Bible, and he made few quotations from sources other than the Bible, although it is clear that he was aware of contemporary critical opinion and its swing away from the opinions of the Evangelical party.

The sermons of Erskine and Walker provide a central point between the Evangelical rhetorical position in which style and diction were subjugated to orthodoxy, and the moderate position where doctrinal content was overlaid with concepts of aesthetic taste and style. George Campbell drew attention to the desire in society for an orthodox approach when he commented:

In consequence of this party spirit, many bearers whose minds are unhappily poisoned with its malignity, come to a new preacher with anxious concern, not to be instructed, but to be satisfied whether he is what they call orthodox.

The sermons of John Erskine and Robert Walker supplied the demand for orthodoxy, but they also interpreted the presentation of religious beliefs in a thoroughly practical manner. Robert Walker epitomized this approach when he stated in a sermon delivered to the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale in 1761 that:

A holy life is the most persuasive sermon, expressed too in a language which men of all nations equally understand. Men will see more beauty in a truly virtuous action, than in the most rhetorical description we can give of it.

1 Hugh Watt suggests that the Calvinism of the late 18th century had degenerated in rhetorical terms into Trans-actionism where the whole emphasis was on a Scheme of salvation and the typical attitude was one of admiration for Divine sovereignty. This view, in Watt's opinion, accounts for the popularity of works like Robert Pollock's Course of Time. Hugh Watt, 'Robert Walker of the High Church', Records of the Scottish Church History Society, xii (1958), 82-97.

2 Lectures on Ecclesiastical History by George Campbell ed. George Skene Keith, Aberdeen, 1815, i, lxxi in.

In 1803 the *Scots Magazine* commented on the improvement in the standard of pulpit rhetoric between 1742 (the year in which John Erskine was licensed) and 1798 (when his sermons were published).

At the former period, sermons abounded with diffuse illustrations, and were disgraced by colloquial phrases, and vulgar provincialisms. In these later years, pulpit composition has attained a dignity and elegance of which our forefathers had no conception.¹

The rhetoric of preachers like Erskine and Walker provided a middle ground between the extremes of the Moderate and Evangelical rhetoric, and it remained influential and became more significant towards the end of the 18th century when the shortlived flowers of Moderate rhetoric had disappeared, as Robert Chambers commented:

Although the discourses of such men as Robertson, Home, and Logan, and others of their contemporaries, were conspicuous for their beauty, still it is to the published sermons of Dr. Erskine that the perspicuity and good taste subsequently displayed in the addresses from the pulpit have been justly traced.²

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¹ 'Account of the Public Life and Character of the late Dr Erskine, of Edinburgh', in *Scots Magazine*, lxv(1803), 78.

CHAPTER 5

THE 18TH-CENTURY SCOTTISH SERMON AND CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS
What advantage may not be gained, from the clergy's having become the chief depositaries of general learning, now that the attention and efforts of almost all other men are devoted to commerce alone? ... what glory may not be won in that field of distinction so lately opened to the learned of this country, I mean, composition, and the art of writing; where the whole range of science is before them, where there are laurels enough to satisfy the most ardent ambition of literary fame?

The 18th-century trend towards the choice of English as the correct medium for any work with pretensions to elegance and taste exerted a considerable influence on those who wished to have their sermons regarded as the literary equals of other forms of contemporary writing. Robert Chambers, for example, referred to the post-1750 period as,

an age, when to attain certain proprieties in language, was looked upon as almost the sumnum bonum of authorship of any kind ...

The extension of interest in the English language and its role as the polite medium for expressing contemporary events can be detected from the period of the Act of Union of 1707. The popularization of the English language had gathered considerable momentum by mid-century, but it reached new heights in the post-1750 period, both as a result of the expansion of Scotland's commercial activity in England and of the increased desire of Scotland's literary protagonists

1 Alexander Carlyle, The Tendency of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland to form the Temper, Spirit and Character of her Ministers, Edinburgh, 1767, pp.36-7.

to achieve for their works the same levels of acceptability in England and in Europe as at home. The literati's desire to broaden the base of Scottish literary endeavour made it mandatory for them to improve the style of the written word as a means of ensuring wider acceptance for Scottish literary writing. If a work lacked polish and refinement, it was argued, it was unlikely to be regarded as a work of taste, whatever sentiments or ideas it contained. When John Mitchell wrote to Charles Mackie, Professor of History at Edinburgh, on this theme in 1728, he made a plea for the introduction of formal instruction in the English language:

Give me leave to say that I wish some method might be fallen upon to teach Young Gentlemen the English, our chief Tongue, and that whereby any can make a figure in affairs at home, and the want of it is a very great loss to all who come, or are sent here.

Concern with language took two principal forms in 18th-century Scotland: first, a desire to improve the quality of the English in use in Scotland and, secondly, an acceptance of the need to assign Scots to a subsidiary role in the theory of the polite discourse. The advocates of improvement in the use of the English language believed that it was essential to improve both the art of speaking and the art of writing, that is, both elocution and rhetoric.

1 By the 1770s, this comment on the situation was made: 'Since the union of England and Scotland, the English language has made considerable progress in Scotland - is daily advancing in its conquest, and it is probable that when the language of both kingdoms becomes the same, the modes of life and manners, and the religion of both kingdoms will also unite'. The Moral Telescope, London, 1771, 81.

2 L. W. Sharp, 'Charles Mackie, the First Professor of History at Edinburgh University', Scottish Historical Review, xli (1962), 29. The extract is from a letter dated 8 October 1728.
In the early 18th century, the general medium for instruction in Scotland was Latin. A report of the annual visitation of the High School of Edinburgh in 1752 referred to the pupils 'pronouncing Latin orations ... in order to initiate them in the art of oratory'. The Church occupied an important position in 18th-century Scottish education, and it was therefore well placed to regulate or influence the educational process if it wished to do so. Under the terms of the 'Act for securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government' in the Act of Union of 1707, it was stipulated that all school masters and professors were required to acknowledge the civil law of the land and to sign the Confession of Faith before the Presbytery. From 1739 onwards, candidates for teaching posts were examined by a committee of scholars (including members of the Presbytery) which was appointed by the Town Council to promote its interests. In 1750, for example, the committee included Principal Wishart and Frederick Carmichael, minister of New Greyfriars Church. The Church also carried out school visitations, a responsibility which came within the jurisdiction of the Presbytery, although in the early part of the century, both Presbytery and Town Council carried out separate inspections of schools. The ministers who served in this capacity tended, of course, to be those who held


2 Acts of the Parliament of Scotland, xi, 402, c.6. The connexion between Church and education derived ultimately from the emphasis on education in The First Book of Discipline.

3 Minutes of the Town Council of Edinburgh, 31 October 1750.
important charges in the Presbytery and they were, by and large, the same ministers who later became prominent in the literary movement.

At the same time, however, while fairly strict control was exercised over admitting schoolmasters to teaching posts, developments within the 18th century in Scotland combined to lower the educational standard and diminish the skill of these masters.¹ From the 17th century, there had been inherited a tradition of schoolmasters who were by profession ministers but who had not yet been appointed to charges. In addition, men who intended to go to university often filled in temporarily as teachers, and sometimes divinity students acted as teachers when they were not at college. This practice was eroded in the 18th century, however, largely as a result of action by Town Councils to try to eliminate plurality of office, as well as to discourage the employment as teachers of men who intended at some future date to enter the ministry.² In practice this policy led to a dilution in the educational standards of Scottish school education, and it placed a greater responsibility for formal improvement of the standard of the spoken and written language on universities and the activities and resources of private individuals.

The new interest in English composition and oratory, which developed out of the increasing currency of English

¹ John Mitchell commented of 18th-century Ayrshire: 'The teacher himself was perhaps no Cicero; and as he did not exhibit the model, he could not be supposed to teach the rules of true elegance, or train his disciples to be orators'. John Mitchell, 'Memories of Ayrshire about 1780', p.274.
in polite society, manifested itself in two ways: firstly, in the publication of works calculated to improve the use of the language and, secondly, in the devising of schemes of elocution to upgrade the standard of the spoken language. One of the earliest works in this connexion was the collection published by John Warden in 1737.¹ Warden's Collection included a selection of extracts from the Spectator, the Tatler and the Guardian, and the author claimed to follow Rollin's method of studying the belles lettres. Other publications followed, including R. Godskirk's and J. Hume's Edinburgh New Method of teaching English in 1750, and A New Grammar for Speaking and Writing English properly and correctly also published in 1750. An advertisement in the Edinburgh Evening Courant² in 1750 for Benjamin Martin's Bibliotheca Technologia or, A Philological Library, of Literary Arts and Sciences drew attention to the inclusion in it of a section on 'Rhetoric and Oratory, or the Art of speaking eloquently'. Contemporary sources also show that a number of teachers of English set themselves up independently as free-lance language teachers in the post-1750 period. The Edinburgh Evening Courant for 22 June 1771 carried a lavish front-page advertisement for Arthur Masson, who was engaged in teaching French, Italian and English in Edinburgh.

Arthur Masson, MA at his house in the Old Assembly Close, continues to TEACH ENGLISH grammatically, from its first Principle and Particularly the

¹ Caledonian Mercury, 23 June 1737.
² Edinburgh Evening Courant, 17 April 1750.
propriety of Pronunciation, which he acquired from some of the best judges in England. Having for many years applied himself to this subject, he will, from experience, undertake to teach a child, of about six years of age, to read intelligibly, and with a degree of propriety in Six Months ... 1

In his Day Book 1773-98, James Beattie stated that in order to acquire the best pronunciation, Masson had studied under Digges at Edinburgh, Sheridan (for two seasons) in Edinburgh and London, and finally under Garrick in London. 2 In 1761, Masson had offered his services to teach correct English pronunciation to college students and pupils from the High School of Edinburgh. 3 His industry in this field was complemented by the work of William Perry, an Englishman who set up an Academy in the Cowgate and later took over a printing business in order to print and distribute his own works. An advertisement in the Caledonian Mercury for January 1776 for a course of public lectures on the art of reading and writing, noted that Perry's lectures would include:

Orations on Bar, Physical, Clerical, Scotch, Irish and English Oratory ... 4

As far as the pulpit was concerned, there was a dual interest in the new approach to composition. Discerning sermon-writers were concerned both to raise the standard of their written discourses and also (although this appears to

1 Edinburgh Evening Courant, 22 June 1771. Masson had been educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen.


3 Caledonian Mercury, 2 November 1761.

4 Ibid., 10 January 1776.
have played a lesser rôle) to reform standards of pulpit delivery. It is easy to demonstrate that members of the clergy were interested in improving the written and spoken language, but there is substantial evidence to suggest that opinion was divided on the success with which the new standards were being achieved. In 1774, the poems of William Richardson, Professor of Humanity at Glasgow,¹ were reviewed in these terms:

However common it may be among us to extol the refinement and learning of the present period ... it must be acknowledged, that, in purity of idiom, in propriety of diction, and in accuracy of accentuation, the generality of Scotch writers, who have not travelled, or studied the language with unwearied attention and assiduity, are obviously inferior to the English ... These assertions, we are sorry to add, are not gratuitous. They will appear evident as the light of heaven, to any man of taste who will make the experiment.²

The reviewer continued, however, by welcoming the publication of Richardson's poems, praising them for their style.

[their] Muse discovers not, by the barbarity of her accent, and the harshness of her numbers, that she has acquired her first ideas of harmony and modulation north of the Tweed.³

The esteem in which English was held in mid 18th-century Scotland and the desire to adapt literary material to the requirements of a wider market, obviously encouraged writers to examine their use of formal English. An active practical interest in elocution can be detected from the 1750s onwards, reaching its climax in the 1770s. In March 1748, Thomas

¹ William Richardson, Poems chiefly Rural, Glasgow, 1774.
² Edinburgh Magazine and Review, i(1774), 262-3.
³ Ibid., 263.
Davies, one of the managers of the New Concert Hall in the Canongate gave lectures on reading and speaking English. Adam Smith began to deliver his lectures on rhetoric that same year, followed in succeeding years by Watson and then by Blair. William Noble opened a school in Edinburgh in 1761 to teach English 'taking all imaginable care of the quantity, accent and manner of expression, by which he hopes all the barbarisms ... would be properly guarded against'.

A further important step was the visit of Thomas Sheridan to Scotland in June 1761, to deliver a series of lectures for gentlemen, one series to be on elocution and the other 'on the English tongue'. The lectures were attended by:

more than 300 gentlemen, the most eminent in this country for their rank and abilities; who expressed no less satisfaction with the ingenuity and justness of his sentiments, than with the elegant and interesting manner in which he delivered them.

Sheridan was fortunate that the timing of his lectures coincided with a rising tide of interest in elocution. Thomas Ritchie, William Robertson's biographer, recorded that Robertson was enthusiastic about the new teaching:

1 Edinburgh Evening Courant, 3 March 1748. The advertisement noted that in order to prepare himself for his task, Davies 'has taken uncommon Pains to read over such Authors as will best contribute to his Design'. Subscribers were requested to submit their names to Messrs Hamilton and Balfour.

2 Caledonian Mercury, 19 September 1761.


4 Scots Magazine, xxiii(1761), 390. This quotation is extracted from an article 'Lectures on the English Tongue by Sheridan'.
Dr. Robertson was so enamoured with it, that he sported on all occasions, his progress in speaking English, and to the day of his death, persevered in the practice of enunciating his words with the most pointed correctness.\(^1\)

Thomas Somerville attributed to Sheridan the distinction of fostering a proper regard for elegance of speech since his lectures were attended by,

the professors in the College, by several of the clergy, by the most eminent among the gentlemen at the bar, by the judges of the Court of Session, and by all who at that time were the leaders of public taste.\(^2\)

Since this time, correct pronunciation and elegant reading have, in Edinburgh, been reckoned indispensable acquirements for people of fashion and for public speakers, and perhaps have come to be overrated, particularly in pulpit oratory, to the neglect of attainments of a more important nature.\(^3\)

Sheridan himself was not unaware of the popularity of his lectures in Scotland. In his General Dictionary of the English Language (1780), he referred to -

the ardour ... for obtaining a just and polished delivery, which I found prevail among the young gentlemen of Scotland, when I delivered my Course of Lectures at Edinburgh.\(^4\)

At the same time, there were some members of Scottish society (including David Hume) who continued to have reservations about Sheridan. Hume commented drily to Boswell:

1 Thomas Ritchie, An account of the life and writings of David Hume, London, 1807, p.94.
2. Thomas Somerville, My own Life and Times 1741-1814, Edinburgh, 1861, p.56.
3 Ibid., p.57.
4 Thomas Sheridan, A General Dictionary of the English Language, London, 1780,1,61, quoted in The Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Amusement, xlix(1780), 119-120. Sheridan quoted (as an example of correct pronunciation) Lord Alemoor who: '... by his own pains ... conversing much with such Englishmen as happened to be there, and reading regularly with some of the principal actors, arrived at an accuracy of pronunciation, and had not the least tincture of the Scottish intonation'. Thomas Sheridan, A General Dictionary, 1,61.
Mr. Sheridan's Lectures are vastly too enthusiastic. He is to do every thing by Oratory.

Nevertheless, there was sufficient admiration for Sheridan's theory of elocution to encourage the Select Society in 1761 to propose the founding of a society for promoting the reading and speaking of the English tongue in Scotland. The plan was to be based on the introduction into Scotland of teachers from England, an aim in which the Select Society was to be ably supported by Sheridan, who had announced the formation of the Society in his final public lecture. In practice, however, the plan faltered and, although one teacher was actually sent to Edinburgh for this purpose, the initiative was unsuccessful, and when Sheridan returned to Edinburgh in 1764, his lectures were poorly attended and he attracted scant attention. The lack of success of this venture is generally held to have resulted from the hostile reaction of the Scots to the idea of being instructed in the use of English by English teachers. The failure had more to do, however, with the flagging fortunes of the Select Society (which was finally disbanded in 1764) than with Sheridan himself, although it is also possible that Sheridan's

1 Private Papers of James Boswell, New York, 1928-34,1,129.
2 Scots Magazine,xxxii(1761),390.
3 The arrival of the teacher, Mr Leigh, 'well qualified to teach the pronunciation of the English tongue' was noted in the Caledonian Mercury for 28 July 1762.
4 The course of readings was advertised in the Scots Magazine as readings 'of select pieces of English Composition, both in poetry and prose, interspersed with critical observations on the art of DELIVERY'. The poetry included Milton, Pope, Thomson, Gray and Mason: 'Those in prose will be some select sermons, and different parts of the translation of Ossian'. Scots Magazine,xxvi(1764),462.
5 The last publicized meeting of the Select Society for Promoting the Reading and Speaking of English in Scotland was held on 30 July 1764. D.D. McElroy, A Century of Scottish Clubs, 336-3,footnote 193.
oratorical style had lost its original popular appeal in Scotland where, in the post-1750 period, enthusiasm of any kind was not easily tolerated by the moderate elements in society. It is interesting to note that the English, however, took equal exception to the increase in non-indigenous teachers of the English language. The Scots Magazine for 1775 carried a sharp comment on this trend in a notice (reprinted from the Monthly Review) of Remarks on the English language, with rules for speech and action by J. Jones:

It is somewhat pleasant, to see Welch, Scots, and Irish, issue from their native regions, like the prophets of the groves of old, with the benevolent purpose of instructing us in our mother-tongue!

Contemporary and later references to the influence of Sheridan's theories suggest, however, that while his personal appeal may have diminished, his ideas continued to exert a significant influence. The Select Society included as members a considerable number of 'literary' clergymen, among them, John Home, William Robertson, Hugh Blair, John Jardine, Robert Wallace and George Wishart. Hugh Blair, who had a common interest in rhetoric, was a guest at Sheridan's London home in 1763; and James Beattie referred to Sheridan's 'elegant lectures' in the Dissertations Moral and Critical twenty years later. It may be that after the initial flush of enthusiasm (as with Whitefield in the 1740s), people's appetite for the routines of systematic and formal instruction in the use of English may have waned before the enormity of the task, and

1 Scots Magazine, xxxvii (1775), 41. The notice continues with a short epigram on the curiosity of these nationalities teaching English.


instead more and more people turned to examples of elegant writing, probably in the hope that the correct style and sentiments could be absorbed by example. This may be the explanation for the genre of 'elegant extracts' from the most polite and refined authors. At the same time, those who wished to have formal tuition in the English language were well provided for by the many freelance teachers available.¹

What was most significant about Sheridan's work was his contribution to directing the theory of speech and delivery into the province of elocution.² In consequence, the theory of the written word became more exclusively the concern of rhetoric. In 1756, in his work British Education³, Sheridan appealed for an improvement in pulpit oratory, a plea which he repeated at length in his Lectures on the Art of Reading.⁴ His criticisms of the low standards of pulpit eloquence met with fierce reaction from his English contemporaries but, in Scotland, where the need to pay close

¹ Law comments that there were 27 teachers of English language and elocution between 1761 and 1789 compared with nine between 1729 and 1761. Alexander Law, Education in Edinburgh in the Eighteenth Century, pp.37-45.

² Other influential works were James Burgh, The Art of Speaking, London, 1763; William Cockin, The Art of Delivering Written Language, or an Essay on Reading, London, 1775; John Walker, Elements of Elocution, London, 1781. Benzie, with others, assigned Sheridan to the Natural School of Elocution which believed that elocution should not be hampered by rules. Burgh, by contrast, belonged to the Mechanical School of Elocution which provided explicit and detailed rules for the study of elocution.


attention to modes of delivery was recognized early in mid-century, improvements in elocution played an increasingly decisive rôle in post-1750 rhetorical training. A letter to the Scots Magazine in 1762 advocating societies for improving literature, drew attention to the neglect of delivery both in public speaking and in the pulpit.

A preacher studies the composition of his sermon with the greatest care; about the delivery of it he is little solicitous. 1

The author suggested that students of divinity should set aside part of the time allocated to them for private preparation in order to deliver the sermons they had composed (as part of their studies) and, thereby, improve the quality of their discourses.

In the post-1750 period, the 'rage for the study of elocution' encouraged the publication of selections from the best authors as study pieces and, also, to the holding of public readings. Sheridan gave readings from Ossian and Gray's Elegy and, in 1779, William Scott, 2 a teacher of English in Edinburgh, published his Lessons in Elocution 3 which, by 1803, had run into its 15th edition. Scott divided his work into two parts: Part 1 dealt with forming an accurate and polished taste for prose and verse, and Part 2

1 Scots Magazine, xxiv (1762), 518. The writer refers to Sheridan's published lectures.

2 William Scott was a nephew of James Burgh (1714-75), who was himself a cousin of William Robertson, the historian, and had set up an Academy in Stoke Newington in 1747. Scott recorded in his A New Spelling, Pronouncing, and Explanatory Dictionary of the English Language, Edinburgh, 1802, that he had assisted his uncle until he came to Edinburgh.

was concerned with public speaking in the pulpit, the bar and the Senate. In the preface, Scott explained his purpose in compiling extracts from the most polite authors:

The pupil ... by the frequent perusal of so many of their principal beauties, will acquire a taste for correct and elegant writing ... Nothing will be found in it which can, in the smallest degree, be offensive to delicacy, or hurtful to morals.

The first part of the work contained passages from the Spectator and the Tatler, as well as extracts from the works of Blair, Robertson, Sterne, Hume and Smollett. The extracts from Blair's works included passages from his sermons appropriately titled: 'Piety to God recommended to the Young'; 'Modesty and Docility'; 'Sincerity'; 'Benevolence and Humanity'; and 'Industry and Application'. Part 2 of Scott's work contained a section on the eloquence of the pulpit and sermon delivery. The authors selected included Tillotson 'On truth and integrity', Atterbury 'On doing as we would be done unto', Seed 'On Benevolence and Charity', Sterne 'On happiness', and Blair 'On the death of Christ'.

Earlier, in 1771, a series of six lectures 'On the Art of Speaking in Public, wherein will be illustrated the principles of British eloquence' was given by John Herries in March 1771. The lectures were advertised at half a guinea for six lectures 'as delivered to a very numerous and

2 William Scott also published a volume of Beauties of Eminent Writers followed by A Supplement to Beauties of Eminent Writers (Edinburgh, 1793). It contained extracts from Blair 'on oratory' and Sheridan's 'The perfect orator', as well as extracts from the works of Chesterfield, Hume, Sterne and Fénélon.
3 Edinburgh Evening Courant, 2 March 1771.
polite audience, at Essex House in the Strand, London, and the Great Music-Hall, Dublin. Herries's lectures included an essay on the voice, the modulation of the voice, reflections on composition, the genius and feelings of the orator, the beauties of eloquence depending on the sentiments, and rhetorical figures of speech. (Herries published the results of his work in *The Elements of Speech* (1773), a work which he dedicated to members of the universities of Great Britain and Ireland). In the introduction, Herries stated that in any civilized society, 'the ART of SPEAKING has always been cultivated with peculiar care'. He subscribed to the natural theory of elocution in his view that oratory ought not to be hampered by restrictive oratorical rules.

A man who is ... inspired with the very genius of eloquence, will spurn the unfettering rules which dullness has imposed.

His approach was based on an emotional interpretation of the function of speech, the first essential being for the orator himself to feel the emotion before he could successively transmit it to his audience.

A speaker will affect his audience according to the degree in which he is affected himself. There is a congenial sympathy, which darts like an electrical spirit, from heart to heart!

In the same year, 1771, John Drummond published *The Art of Reading and Speaking in Public*, which he intended for use


2 Ibid., p.249.

3 Ibid., p.248: 'The orator cannot be truly GREAT, unless he is truly GOOD' (p.255).
both in schools and for 'private perusal'.\textsuperscript{1} Further interest in rhetoric is indicated by the fact that the dates upon which Blair was to deliver his lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres were - and continued to be - advertised in the press.\textsuperscript{2} Robert Hamilton (who had won the elocution prize at Glasgow twice) advertised his classes 'for instruction of young gentlemen in the exercise of reading the English language with propriety' in the Edinburgh Evening Courant on 10 January 1780. The Rev. Rest Knipe gave a series of lectures on elocution in Edinburgh in 1783. His lectures were advertised as 'from London and formerly under the tuition of that great orator, Sheridan ...'\textsuperscript{3} A second English clergyman named Cleeve also gave a course of readings and recitations in 1784 from authors including Addison, Ferguson, Beattie, Home, Hume and Sterne.\textsuperscript{4} There was thus in Scotland a recognition among those concerned with literary improvement that continuing improvement in rhetoric and elocution was required. They were also aware, however, that a measure of progress was already being achieved. A letter to the Weekly Magazine in 1775 drew attention to the singular progress in this respect in Scotland.

\textsuperscript{1} John Drummond, The Art of reading and speaking in public, Edinburgh, 1771. \textsuperscript{2} William Perry, in the preface to his The Only Sure Guide to the English tongue, Edinburgh, 1776, referred scathingly - and inaccurately - to: 'North British authors like Masson, the late Mr Drummond, etc. some of whom probably never crossed the Tweed'.

\textsuperscript{3} Edinburgh Evening Courant, 9 November 1771: 'Dr Hugh Blair begins his course of lectures on 20th November'.

\textsuperscript{4} Edinburgh Evening Courant, 19 March 1783.

\textsuperscript{4} Caledonian Mercury, 5 January 1784.
North Britain in general, and its clergy in a particular manner, form almost single exceptions. The progress of science, of commerce, the arts and agriculture, as every man knows, has here been rapid, and almost instantaneous.

As an interesting contrast, the Caledonian Mercury carried an advertisement in spring 1775 for a lecture on the 'Scottish Language' to be delivered by Mr Young, the prompter at the theatre. The advertisement (although it seems to be an isolated example) commented:

At a period when the attention of the public is so laudably engaged in the study of the language of our sister kingdom; it is hoped it will not be deemed improper to pay some regard to that or our own'.

Comments on the success with which the use of English was being improved varied from those who were extremely enthusiastic about it to those who dismissed or deprecated the value of what had been achieved. Francis Douglas, the Scottish Anglophile, on a visit to the Court of Session in Edinburgh applauded the level of progress:

What struck me most was the elegance and propriety with which the English language is spoken at the bar.

Edward Topham was considerably more reserved in his judgment, however, when he commented of the attempts of the Edinburgh literati to improve their use of English:

1 Weekly Magazine, or Edinburgh Amusement, xxix(1775),229. The extract is from 'An address to the clergy of the Church of Scotland, by a stranger'. The improvement is ascribed in part to 'the politeness, learning, elegant hospitality, and moderate sentiments that obtain, gentlemen, among the members of your church'.

2 Caledonian Mercury, 18 May 1775.

3 Francis Douglas, Familiar letters on a variety of important and interesting subjects, London, 1773, p.391.
The inhabitants of this place, who are acquainted with the English ... endeavour to speak like them, especially the politer sort of people, and the Professors of the College, who, in their lectures, strive to shake off the Scotch pronunciation as much as possible ... I shall only say, that they appear to me, from their conversation, to write English as a foreign tongue; their mode of talking, phrase, and expression, put little resembling the language of their works.¹

At the same time, there is a clear impetus towards improvement in the post-1750 period. It can be seen not only in the practical steps taken to improve language use but also in the attitude of the improvers towards the Scots language. Simultaneously with the desire to expand the acceptability of the English language came the need to eradicate from the written form those characteristics that immediately identified language forms as of Scots origin. The purging of Scotticisms was an attempt by the literati to eliminate as far as possible from their written discourses all evidences of the parochialism and insularity that they felt were antithetical to contemporary conventions of taste. For that reason (among others) writers referred their compositions to one another (or to experts whose fluency they regarded as superior to their own) for critical comment. Hugh Blair, for example, circulated the manuscript of his sermons to his literary colleagues in 1776 but he still wrote to his publisher, William Strahan, in these terms:

> If your corrector be a good judge of language, and if he notices any thing he takes to be a Scotticism or an impropriety, let him mark it

on the Margin with a q- and I shall attend to it.¹

The recognition of English as the standard language for the expression of civilized and polite ideas led to an equal concern with purity of language, a concern that was prompted by the frequent gibes made by English reviewers about the presence of Scotticisms in the work of Scots writers. When Henry Mackenzie's The Man of Feeling was published in 1771, the quality of its language was called in question by the Monthly Review:

"with regard to composition, it is careless and abounds in provincial and Scottish idioms."²

Some authors were aware of their deficiencies in the use of the English language, and they sometimes drew attention to them in the preface to their works. James Craig, author of Spiritual Life, Poems on Several Divine Subjects, commented as early as 1727:

Such as understand the true Propriety of the English Language, will, no doubt, observe a great many Phrases, or ways of speaking that will be called Scotticisms, as well as wrong accepting of words, according to the English pronunciation ...³

Craig attempted to defend his position by arguing that if the sense was clear and the content rational, 'it is easy

¹ Letter, dated 4 December 1776, of Hugh Blair to William Strahan, R.B. Adam Collection, University of Rochester. Quoted in R.M. Schmitz, Hugh Blair, New York, 1948, p.82.

² Monthly Review, xliiv(1771), 418. Mackenzie enlisted the assistance of James Elphinston in eradicating his Scotticisms: 'I shood take it as a singular favor, if yoo wood point out any defects in language, or Scottish iddioms, dhat struc yoo on a peruzal ov dhe book'. James Elphinston, Forty Years' Correspondence between Geniussses ov boath Sexes and James Elphinston, London, 1791-4, i, 270. Elphinston gave a series of lectures in Edinburgh in 1779, including one on Scotticisms.

³ James Craig, Spiritual Life, Poems on Several Divine Subjects, relating both to the inward experience and the outward practice of Christianity, Edinburgh, 1727, preface x.
whether the Expressions be called Scots or English'.

As might be expected, a number of guides to identifying Scotticisms appeared in the second half of the 18th century. The first, by David Hume, was printed separately but issued with Hume's Political Discourses (or, at least, with some copies of Hume's work) in 1752, and it was later reprinted in the Scots Magazine in 1760, where it was criticized and extended in 1764 by Philologus. James Beattie, for whom the use of Scots and refinement of language were quite incompatible, published his Scoticisms, arranged in alphabetical order, designed to correct improprieties of speech and writing in 1779 and, in 1782, Sir John Sinclair issued Observations on the Scottish Dialect, in which he summed up the attitude of many of his contemporaries when he commented:

Old things must then be done away - new manners must be assumed, a new language adopted.

It is significant perhaps that when Sinclair's work was reviewed in the European Magazine and London Review in 1782, its value as a corrective aid was questioned:

It may indeed enable a North Briton to correct some Scotticisms; but the greater number of those which it points out, are so palpably obvious, that no person who aims at purity of stile is in any danger of falling into them.

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1 Scots Magazine, xxii(1760), 686-7.
2 Scots Magazine, xxvi(1764), 187-9. James Elphinston published The Contrast: a specimen of the Scottish Dialect, in prose and verse, according to the latest improvements; with an English version in Edinburgh in 1779. He commented in it: 'Certain it is however, that a Country, amidst the many improvements which daily more distinguish her, has within these fifty years made considerable alteration in her language' (pp. 5-6), but he still found grounds for criticizing the standard of the English language in use.
4 European Magazine and London Review, i(1782), 196.
Hugh Mitchell, an English master at Glasgow, published his Scotticisms, Vulgar Anglicisms and Grammatical Improprieties corrected in 1799. The lectures George Campbell had delivered to students at Marischal College, Aberdeen, from 1772 onwards were issued in 1807 as Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, and in this work Campbell recommended the works of Rollin, Fenelon and Blair, as well as Longinus On the Sublime and the sermons of George Farquhar. He suggested that students should be taught to cultivate the English language because of its wider currency and application.

if you attach yourself to a provincial dialect, it is a hundred to one, that many of your words and phrases will be misunderstood in the very neighbouring province, district or county... they have a coarseness and vulgarity in them, that cannot fail to make them appear to men of knowledge and taste ridiculous.

Scotticisms continued to be criticized in works by Scottish authors throughout the 18th century. In 1749, the pamphlet A Letter to the Rev. P. Doddridge concerning his life of Col. Gardiner was dismissed in these terms:

The stile and diction of this pamphlet are truly Scotish; and the author seems quite a stranger in the republick of letters.

There does, however, appear to be a relative absence of comment on the presence of Scotticisms in sermons during the period from approximately 1765 to 1790, and I have found few references to this aspect of language in this period.

1 George Campbell, Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, London, 1807.
2 Ibid., p.298.
3 Monthly Review, i(1749), 318.
4 This was not exclusively the case though. Henry Hunter delivered a set of lectures in the Scots Church in London which were then published in 1784. The reviewer commented of them: 'The author sometimes, indeed, lets a Scotticism escape him that gives an awkwardness to his periods...'. Scots Magazine, xvi(1784), 633.
The practice of noting Scotticisms in sermons seems, however, to have revived in the 1790s. The Scotticisms are pointed out in George Hill's *Sermons* in 1796; even in the *Sermons* (1798) of Hugh Blair 'occasional Scotticisms, or small improprieties of diction' are observed; and in James Riddoch's *Sermons* 'some Scotticisms which now and then appear' are criticized. This may be explained by a declining emphasis on correct diction and expression in the last decade of the century and by the fact that the practice of deleting Scots usages from sermons prepared for the press may have seemed less important than in earlier decades.

The enthusiasm with which the literary ministers set about the business of improving their sermons can be seen from the comments on their activities in contemporary documents. A satire on the hierarchy of the Church of Scotland published in 1798 poked fun at the fashionable trend for elocution.

Let every one, who in future means to appear in the church as a fashionable preacher, attend some teacher of elocution, who has resided in ENGLAND at least fourteen days.

The opposing Evangelical tradition was also commented upon in the description (in the same pamphlet) of the appropriate training for High-Flying preachers:

They must be taught the ENGLISH language by an old woman not below sixty years of age, in order to get as much as possible of the twang of the last century; for the modern pronunciation is totally inconsistent with their language and sentiments.


3 Ibid., p.14.
Criticism of the new attention to matters of elocution was linked to the continuing Evangelical dislike of the read sermon, the development of which was seen by the Evangelicals as a direct and unwelcome response to the now care and regard for the spoken word. Fashionable preachers were criticized for imitating this new trend:

The prevailing itch for learning and refinement has led our fashionable preachers into another absurdity; and that is the reading of sermons. Lest they should err in the pronunciation of a syllable; lest they should misplace a single word in the arrangement; or lest the run of a period should offend the most delicate ear, they will trust nothing to memory; all must be read. 1

At the same time, even the opponents of the Moderate approach appreciated the need to maintain certain standards. The author of The Babbler commented:

I do not mean, that you should debase the truths of the gospel, by delivering them in a dung-hill dialect to your hearers... You are to speak as unto wise men, who have a right to judge what you say. 2

John Howie of Lochgoim in 1779 criticized contemporary preachers whose oratory was characterized by 'flights of fancy and terms of art, pronounced in a South British accent', comparing them adversely with 17th-century preachers whose sermons had been delivered 'in such a sense and dialect, as was best understood by common hearers...'. 3 A comment in a letter reproduced in the Edinburgh Evening Courant in 1780 indicates how pervasive the interest in oratory had become.

1 The Fashionable Preacher: an Essay, Glasgow, 1773, pp.10-11.
2 The Babbler, or the fate of the faithful ministers of Christ, Edinburgh, 1790, p.30.
3 John Howie of Lochgoim, A collection of lectures and sermons, Glasgow, 1779, xxvi.
The Cacoethes loquendi seems at present to have pervaded the whole British Empire. Oratory is not now confined, as in Dean Swift's time, to the pulpit, the bar, and the ladder ... all ranks of people, male and female, from the cobler to the countess, make speaking in public the prime object of their ambition. To excel in this qualification, no pains are spared, no opportunity is let slip, and the most uncommon and elegant flowers of rhetoric are used.¹

Claudero, the eccentric but versatile James Wilson, attacked Sheridan's lectures in his Miscellaneies. He referred to Sheridan as one of the -

Foreign Mimicks who have had the effrontery of late, to persuade the sons and Daughters of Edina, that they could neither speak nor write, and one of them delivered several rhetorical lectures to crowded audiences, in order to inform us of what he alleged we knew nothing of, though indeed vice versa.²

Wilson explained that he himself had a syllabus of lectures on rhetoric which he would be prepared to deliver, if it was not that he did not wish to interfere with the province of 'a learned and eminent gentleman of this city, who is in every respect better qualified for that task' [i.e. Hugh Blair].

Robert Heron articulated the general response to the status of writing in Scotland when he commented on the period when Blair first began to deliver his lectures:

All the Writings of Scotchmen residing in Scotland, - except perhaps half a dozen, or hardly so many - were, properly speaking, written in the Scottish dialect; we admired the best English authors, we sometimes tried to imitate but we dared not emulate them.³

¹ Edinburgh Evening Courant, 29 March 1780.
² The Curious History on several occasions, being part of the works of the noted poet CLAUDERO. [Edinburgh, c.1767], p.8.
³ Robert Heron, Observations made on a journey through the western counties of Scotland, Perth, 1793, i,495.
2. THE 18TH-CENTURY SCOTTISH SERMON AND THE STAGE: 'A LAND OF PLAYERS' ¹

O happy actors, and more happy actresses, who, instead of being shunned and contemned by all except the loose and dissolute, are now become the darlings of the Clergy, who glory in their commerce with your persons, and industriously vindicate your cause!²

The productions of the stage were traditionally frowned upon by the Presbyterian Church as a licentious form of entertainment which did nothing to promote the morals of society but which, if anything, fostered impure and hostile attitudes in its audiences. In the 1720s, for example, an English actor named Anthony Aston had come to Edinburgh, and although he seems to have been unmolested when he first arrived, by 1727 a ruling had been passed by the Magistrates preventing him from staging his plays in Edinburgh.³ The matter was argued back and forth until 1728 when Alston finally left Edinburgh to return to London, but not before he had considerably agitated ecclesiastical circles. An entry in Mist's Weekly Journal for 2 December 1727 reads:

Last Sunday the Kirk pulpits were thump'd in a violent and outrageous manner, and the cause of abominations feelingly display'd with abundance of pious rhetoric on account of Tony Aston's being tolerated to entertain the beaus and belles with his comick scenes and representations.⁴

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¹ [John Witherspoon], The Moderator, no. 2, [Edinburgh, 1756], p. 10.
² Ibid., p. 10.
³ See, in this connexion, Allan Ramsay's defence of the stage in Some Hints in Defence of Dramatic Entertainments, Edinburgh, 1727.
⁴ Mist's Weekly Journal, 9 December 1727, no. 132. The Presbytery of Edinburgh drew up an exhortation against frequenting stage plays which was ordered to be read from all the pulpits in the district.
In 1756, however, drama came very prominently to the fore in Scotland with the production of John Home's *Douglas*, a play whose author was a minister of the Church of Scotland. Home, the minister of Athelstaneford, had already composed a poetical drama *Agis*, but because of his lack of success in persuading Garrick to stage the play, he had turned his attention instead to *Douglas*, and by 1754 it was in a sufficiently complete form to be shown to members of the literati (including Hume).\(^1\) When the play was finally advertised in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* on 4 December 1756 (prior to its first performance on 14 December), it was described as the production of 'an ingenious gentleman of this country' which 'by the concurrent testimony of many gentlemen of taste and literature will do honour to the country'.\(^2\)

The play was greeted with enthusiasm by the literati of Edinburgh, including Home's colleagues, the clergy.

The town in general was in an uproar of exultation that a Scotchman had written a tragedy of the first rate, and that its merit was first submitted to their judgment.\(^3\)

The *Scots Magazine* in December 1756 commented of the play's performance:

> Persons of all ranks and professions crowded to it ... Though the tragedy is not yet published, the critics have been exercising their wits in

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1 Hume classed the play 'a very fine thing' and referred to Home's 'great Genius for the Theatre'.

2 *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 4 December 1756.

The periodicals also observed that a number of the clergy had attended the play. It is not difficult to explain the adulation with which Home's play was received by the literary society of Edinburgh. At the very time when the new 'spirit of composition' was taking root, and when the idea of improvement in literary endeavour was being enthusiastically advanced by the literati, there had emerged from within their own portals a creative genius, who was also a clergyman, and who had written a play on an appropriate theme in appropriate language and sentiments. The Gentleman's Magazine published a probably mythical account of the rehearsal of Douglas in Mrs Sarah Ward's lodgings in which members of the literati, including Robertson, Carlyle and Blair took part, and interpreted the occasion as proof of the enthusiasm for drama among the clergy. The author commented ironically that Hugh Blair impersonating Anna, the maid, would 'form a strange frontispiece to his sermons'.

Although the play's performance was welcomed and attended by members of the literati and 'Moderati', the Evangelical element in the Church took exception both to

1 Scots Magazine, xviii(1756), 623-4. Henry Mackenzie attended the play and described its success: 'The applause was so enthusiastic; but a better criterion of its merits was the tears of the audience, which the tender part of the drama drew forth unsparingly'. Henry Mackenzie, Life of John Home, p.38.
the play and to the association of the Church with its promotion. The Presbytery of Edinburgh promptly responded to the potential danger by issuing on 5 January 1757 'An Admonition and Exhortation by the Reverend Presbytery of Edinburgh to all within their bounds', which was to be read from all pulpits in the Presbytery.¹ The following month, the Presbytery of Glasgow followed suit by supporting their Edinburgh colleagues.² The offending ministers who had attended performances of the play were called before the Presbytery of Edinburgh to explain their actions and to be admonished, if not to be more severely dealt with. Some ministers, like Thomas Whyte of Liberton, promptly caved in before the forces of ecclesiastical opposition and attempted to explain or excuse their actions in attending the play as temporary aberrations of conduct.³ Others, like Carlyle, were considerably more resistant to being censured for conduct which they regarded as perfectly acceptable.

The chief protagonists in the scenario took to print to justify their different positions in the matter. David

¹ Scots Magazine, xix (1757), 18-19.

² Ibid., pp. 47-8. The adeptness with which the Scottish clergy circumvented official disapproval of the stage can be seen from the statement in Henry Mackenzie's Life of Hume (p. 49): 'During the first visit of Mrs Siddons to this city, in 1784, while the General Assembly was sitting, there was, I have been told, great difficulty, in procuring a full sitting of its members on those evenings when she was to perform'. Carlyle in his Autobiography (p. 322) also maintained that the country clergy always visited the theatre on their visits to the city and continued to do so, and that only the Edinburgh clergy 'had abstained from the theatre because it gave offence'.

³ Scots Magazine, xix (1757), 47. Whyte (1717-89) was ultimately suspended for three weeks after having previously made an abject apology to the Presbytery of Edinburgh.
Hume sprang to the defence of his friend Home and was attacked in turn along with Henry Home and John Home by John Witherspoon. Witherspoon referred to them scathingly as:

an impious j---e, a wicked sceptic sage,  
A stage-playing priest ...  

The apologists for the stage included Adam Ferguson in his work *The Morality of Stage Plays Seriously Considered* \(^2\), in which Ferguson argued that there was no Scriptural evidence against the stage; and Alexander Carlyle's spirited satires on the views of the opponents of the stage. \(^3\) The candid Robert Wallace wrote a pamphlet *'An Address to the Reverend the Clergy of the Church of Scotland by a Layman of their Communion on occasion of Composing acting & publishing the Tragedy called Douglass'* which remained unpublished. \(^4\) In the pamphlet, Wallace argued that it was unwise of the Church to attack the stage in such an unrestrained manner, since the whole affair might ultimately act against its interests and influence, if the play-going society was to associate the suppression of Douglas with the Church. Wallace commented drily:

\(^3\) Alexander Carlyle, *A full and true history of the bloody tragedy of Douglas, as it is now to be seen acting at the theatre in the Canongate, Edinburgh, 1757, and An argument to prove that the tragedy of Douglas ought to be publickly burnt by the hands of the Hangman*, Edinburgh, 1757.  
\(^4\) EUL MS. Laing II, 620.
I think the season seems to be past for the Clergy to interpose by their Acts and Declarations. The calm and wiser part of them are certainly of this opinion.

The reaction of the Moderate element in the Church was to attempt to curb extreme reactions to the stage and drama. They believed that if the Church was to appear to be fanatical in its response to Home's play, it would diminish the image of candid tolerance which they wished to foster.

The issue of Home's play, however, soon widened to provide a platform from which to confront more serious complaints against the Moderates and their attitudes to religion, of which their championing of stage-plays was merely the most recent and most flagrant example. In John MacLaurin's pamphlet *Apology for the Writers against the Tragedy of Douglas* published in 1757, the full force of criticism was directed at the Select Society and its adulation of Home's *Douglas*, a work of little merit but 'exaggerated with all the amplifications of bombast'. The full force of MacLaurin's attack was directed, however, at the way in which the Select Society concerned itself with standards of style and diction.

The first and fundamental maxim for this dictatorial club is, That a punctilious correctness of style is the *sumnum bonum* of all compositions: though the greatest genius should shine throughout a work, yet if in it is found an unguarded expression, a slip in syntax, or a peccadillo in grammar, ad piper et farras with it.

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1 EUL MS. Laing II, 620, f. 2.
3 Ibid., p. 4.
John Haldane, an upholsterer in Edinburgh, published a scurrilous pamphlet *The Players Scourge* or a detection of the ranting prophanity and regnant impiety of stage plays probably in 1757, followed in 1768 by *The second part of the Players Scourge exhibited to the world*. Haldane used his pamphlets to attack the moderate church collectively as well as to concentrate attacks on individual preachers. Alexander Carlyle, for example, came in for fierce criticism.

Carlyle deserves the next place, being an ignorant, empty, frothy, foolish, light mountebank, who scarce acknowledges God out of the pulpit, either in his family or elsewhere, entertains his people with reading a ballad of other men's composing, which is the more intolerable that he culls out such sermons as are most stuffed with Arminianism, and therewith intermixes passages from plays.¹

The basic issue of Home and his play gradually faded rather insignificantly out of prominence; Home resigned his parish at Athelstaneford and went to London in 1757 to pursue a career (rather unsuccessfully as it turned out) as a dramatist. What continued to remain as significant was the confrontation between the two opposing forces within the Church: those who welcomed the forces of improvement and saw Home's creative genius as an example of these forces,² and those who regarded the play as yet a further unwelcome encroachment upon the forces of religious orthodoxy. James Morison, writing twenty years after the performance of Douglas, still viewed the stage with undisguised scepticism:

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² Witherspoon commented drily: 'There is one inducement to attendance on the stage, which hath more influence than all the arguments - that it is become a part of fashionable education'. John Witherspoon, *A Serious Inquiry into the Nature & Effects of the Stage (1757)* ed. D.T.K. Drummond, Edinburgh, 1876, p. 45.
Nay, stage-plays, and such like seminaries of lewdness, luxury, and dissipation, - instead of being dreaded as immoralities, are avowed to be polite and profitable entertainments.¹

The principal objections put forward against the stage by those who opposed it were its pernicious effects on the morality of society, its dissipating effect on mankind, and its irresponsible misuse of time which could be more profitably employed.² In that sense, the reaction to Douglas brought out into the open the conflict of opinion that was increasingly to develop between the two factions. As John Witherspoon was to comment in A Serious Inquiry into the Nature & Effects of the Stage in 1757:

This indeed seems to be the great error of modern infidels, to suppose that there is no more in morals than a certain taste and sense of beauty and elegance.³

When William Thom of Govan published his Enquiry into the Causes of the Decline of Religion in 1761, he included the theatre as a contributory factor to religion's decline.

...the theatre is thronged to, by the power of an artful, a bewitching, and dangerous adulation. It is said to be a picture of the passions and vices and follies of men: but to get a crowded house, the painters are forced to condemn the vices which the audience have not, and to flatter and ferment those they have.⁴

But what was the reason for the Moderate clergy to become so affected by the publication of Home's play? As has

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² There was also the contemporary view of actors themselves, who were referred to in a contemporary pamphlet as 'the debauchers of men's minds and morals, unclean boasts, idolatrous papists and atheists ...' Robb Lawson, The Story of the Scots Stage, Paisley, 1917, p.123.
already been suggested, the Moderates were concerned with improvement in all literary genres and with refining the art of composition. In addition, however, the stage and the pulpit had a common interest which created a more direct connexion between them than between the pulpit and other contemporary literary genres. Both were concerned with the spoken word and with the dissemination of information through speech. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Moderate clergy who were concerning themselves with improving the quality of their pulpit discourses should be interested in the stage where the theory of elocution could most readily be observed in practice. Equally, it was not surprising that opponents of this trend in pulpit rhetoric should see the stage as a direct encouragement to all the innovations that they resented or feared.

Thomas Sheridan, then at the Theatre-Royal in Dublin, presented John Home with a gold medal in 1757 in recognition of the contribution his play had made towards the work of the theatre. In the *Annals of the Edinburgh Stage*, Dibdin confirmed that in the 1770s -

>a number of actors and actresses ... had made a livelihood by giving lectures on and teaching elocution, pronunciation of the English language, etc....

The rash of lectures on elocution by actors trained for the stage must have increased its interest for any pulpit orator

1 *Scots Magazine*, xix (1757), 662.
who was concerned with improving his oratory. In a review of James Fordyce's sermon On the eloquence of the pulpit in 1752, the Monthly Review made a plea for the acceptance of Fordyce's views on elocution.

One thing must be very obvious to every person who has thought justly upon the subject, that if such a graceful manner, such a decent, manly, and natural elocution, as is recommended in the excellent sermon now before us, were to prevail, instead of that dull uniformity of gesture, that insipid, dronish and unanimated manner, which we so often meet with, it would render our preachers, in general, perhaps much more useful, certainly, more agreeable than they too often are.

In addition, the Church had a stage of its own in the shape of the annual meeting of the General Assembly, where ministers could demonstrate their skills and abilities in elocution.

There the humble pastor, whose lot has been cast in the remotest corner of the Highland wilds, feels himself, for a time, on a footing of equality with the first citizen in the kingdom; he can there dispute with him the prize of eloquence, the most flattering distinction to the liberal mind; a distinction which is naturally sought after with the greater eagerness in that assembly ...

The scepticism with which the Moderates' interest in the stage was viewed by the Evangelicals, can be detected from their responses to the performance of Douglas in 1756. In The Usefulness of the Edinburgh Theatre seriously considered that fear was articulated in the following terms:

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1 Andrew Kippis published a sermon in 1769 on The Character of Jesus Christ as a Public Speaker. The Critical Review commented in its review: 'Composition and delivery are circumstances very much insisted on by critics, in their descriptions of a complete orator'. Critical Review, xxvii(1769), 394.

2 Monthly Review, vii(1752), 104.

May we not also flatter ourselves with the hope, that our promising young clergy, freed at length from the tramels of Presbyterian stiffness, which have so long and so miserably cramped every sub-limer genius of our church, will now get about the improvement of pulpit eloquence, by trans-fusing the flowery-buskined rhetoric of the stage into the solemn harangues of the pulpit. This reformation, I confess, is yet in its early dawn.

George Brown, the author of the anti-patronage pamphlet Address to the People of Scotland on Ecclesiastical and Civil Liberty, published in Edinburgh in 1782, argued that patronage was largely responsible for lowering the standard of pulpit eloquence by encouraging ministers to be more concerned with impressing their heritors than with fulfilling their religious obligations.

The grand affair is to read a sermon with a theatrical grace.

Some clergymen were already considered to be accomplished in the skill of using dramatic effect in the pulpit. In The Players Scourge, John Haldane accused Alexander Carlyle of the practice of 'culling' out such sermons as are most stuffed with Arminianism, and therewith intermixes passages from plays'. The connexion between the theories advanced on the stage and current Moderate philosophy is brought out in the comment in the pamphlet The usefulness of the Edinburgh Theatre seriously considered.

1 The Usefulness of the Edinburgh Theatre seriously Considered, Edinburgh, 1757, pp. 3-4.
2 George Brown, Address to the People of Scotland on Ecclesiastical and Civil Liberty, Edinburgh, 1782, p. 2.
Players are no dry, speculative moralists; they bring all home in a warm application and show by example, the best teacher, how every man and every woman ought to be fruitful in good works.

The fact that the stage was regarded as instructive by the Moderate clergy is confirmed by John Witherspoon's ironical comment in *The Moderator*:

> How shall the light of the clergy now shine with redoubled lustre, when they shall be no more overgrown with the rust of singularity and restraint, but polished with collision with the world, and stamped with the very form of virtue, by attending the instructive stage?

In 1751, John Chalmers, minister of Elie, and Harry Spens, minister of Wemyss and later Professor of Biblical Criticism at St Andrews, decided to publish a work in the form of a literary correspondence between them, and as a preliminary step, they issued *An Inquiry Concerning a Plan of a Literary Correspondence* (1751). Their intended plan was to explore a series of profitable questions, and the Inquiry set out the potential value of publishing the volume, including the suggestion:

> Might not that false and corrupt Taste which so generally prevails, and is so manifest in the Nation, in the Encouragement given to immoral Plays and Novels, and various Schemes of Infidelity, and other vile Compositions of the kind, be hereby corrected?

The divergence of attitude in Evangelical and Moderate philosophies, which was based in part on Evangelical desire to

1 The Usefulness of the Edinburgh Theatre seriously Considered, Edinburgh, 1757, p. 8.
3 An Inquiry concerning a Plan of a Literary Correspondence, Edinburgh, 1751.
4 Ibid., p. 37.
maintain religion within strict limits (lest by failing to do so, religion should lose its authority) came into the open after the episode of Home's play. Witherspoon made these fears explicit when he commented on the connexion seen by the Evangelicals between the eloquence of the stage and the pulpit.

Better it were they should stammer in speech ... than that they should learn the art of eloquence, by puffing their souls in the most eminent dangers.

The theatre, however, was well aware of its reputation as a 'school of immorality'. An advertisement in the Edinburgh Evening Courant in September 1748 explained that in order to diversify the use of the New Concert Hall, it had been decided to introduce performances of plays after the nightly concerts. Care was taken to assure the public of the moral rectitude of the plays that were to be produced:

no Plays shall be given ... after the Concert, that have the least Tendency to Vice, Irreligion or Immorality ... They are sensible the Theatre has been, and ought to be, a School of Virtue, by inculcating the sublimest Morals, in a Manner the most agreeable and engaging.

In this sense, the issue of Home's Douglas was a significant event in the history of the 18th-century Scottish church. In the first place, it led to the open recognition of the Moderates' intention to be associated with, and become part of, a wider literary spectrum and, secondly, it revealed

1 John Witherspoon, A Serious Inquiry into the Nature & Effects of the Stage (1757) ed. D.T.K. Drummond, Edinburgh, 1876, p.35.
2 Under the Licensing Act of 1737, it was necessary to obtain a licence to stage dramatic performances. Until the Theatre Royal was opened in 1768, attempts were made to circumvent this requirement by referring to these halls as Concert Halls.
3 Edinburgh Evening Courant, 27 September 1748.
the conflict of interest that existed between those who interpreted religion in a strict and confined sense, and those who wished to consolidate and extend its influence by making it acceptable to the conventions of the age. John Witherspoon described this division very succinctly in his pamphlet on the effects of the stage.

There is a great difference between the shining thoughts that are applauded in the world by men of taste, and the solid and profitable truths of religion.

3. THE 18TH-CENTURY SCOTTISH SERMON AND LITERATURE

Should the texts at the head of these sermons be removed, and a few other slight alterations made, they would rank among those essays, miscellanies, &c. with which our learned ladies have frequently favoured the public.

In the same way as the 18th-century Scottish sermon reflected changes in attitude towards the function and the design of the sermon, so one must examine the extent to which these changes are reflected in - or were a product of - changes in the contemporary literary conventions of society. It may, therefore, be profitable to explore the relationship between the sermon and literature in 18th-century Scotland.

When Thomas Newte visited Scotland in 1785, he was impressed by -

the spirit of literature and religion, which appear, at least, in the great mass of the


2 An extract from a review of Mary Deverell's Sermons on the following subjects (1775) in Scots Magazine,xxvii (1775), 37.
people, to influence and support each other.¹

And earlier, in 1772, the Critical Review in a review of George Whitefield’s sermons, quoted Whitefield’s remarks on the Scots’ love for religion.

The Scotch, except the people of New England, are the most knowing people in religious matters, perhaps anywhere.²

The publication of Hume’s Treatise of Human Nature in 1739, in which Hume questioned the position of rational thought in ordering and controlling human action and making sound moral judgments, as well as his scepticism towards the basis of Christian orthodoxy, helped to create a retreat from reason into sentiment. In the Enquiry concerning the principles of morals, Hume had defined the limitations of the rational element in human motivation.

The ultimate Ends of human Actions can never, in any Case, be accounted for by Reason, but recommend themselves entirely to the Sentiments and Affections of Mankind, without any Dependence on the intellectual Faculties.³

The effect of this retreat into a sentimental view of human behaviour can be traced in the literature of the Evangelical and Moderate schools of pulpit rhetoric.

The close affinities that can be discerned between the excessive piety and the enthusiasm of the 18th-century Evangelical movement in Scotland and the later development of the sentimental movement in Scotland suggest that both

² Critical Review, xxxiii(1772), 221.
movements were motivated by many of the same sentiments. The fundamental difference, of course, was that the religious enthusiast took as his starting point a strong and actively Evangelical belief in God while the sentimentalist, on the other hand, was concerned with an almost equally spiritual belief in the 'sensitive man'. The link between the two positions can be seen, however, in the sentimental bias of Evangelical enthusiasm in 18th-century Scotland. It is also possible to detect a strain of religious feeling in the 18th-century sentimental novel, almost as if a religious element was included in order to heighten the acceptability of the novel to religious classes of readers. It is certainly true that in the pre-1750 period, secular literature that reflected the tenets of Evangelical theory satisfactorily was more likely to find acceptance from the Evangelicals. John Wesley, for example, decided to revive Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality* in 1781 as a working manual for Methodists. 'I could not', he said, 'but observe the design of it, to promote the religion of the heart, and that it was well calculated to answer that design'. The hero of Brooke's novel, Henry Moreland, 'spontaneously followed the promptings of his own heart'; he was capable of enduring severe personal vicissitudes, but he was nevertheless supremely sensitive to the sufferings of others; and the novel highlighted the way in which man's intellectual


faculties should be subjugated to the spontaneous promptings of the heart. Brooke's novel had many of the same characteristics as Henry Mackenzie's sentimental novel The Man of Feeling (1771), although Mackenzie, while admiring the pursuit of excellence and virtue in Brooke's novel, took exception to the overt manner in which the religious implications of the novel were presented. Both works, however, shared the common aim of advocating the 'language of the heart' as the only true guide to human conduct.

Enthusiastic religious feeling made considerable use of the same machinery later used by the sentimental movement. The devices employed included melancholy, human distress, virtue, stock situations and characterizations, and an almost primitivist belief in man's shortcomings and failure to realize his potential. William Craig commented in the Lounger in 1786:

"Observers upon human nature have frequently remarked, that the contemplation of objects of distress gives a melancholy pleasure to the mind. Persons of sensibility are well acquainted with this pleasure; and when a story of distress is set before them, they feel much enjoyment from indulging in it."

Even the fundamental doctrinal divisions could be compromised when the interests of sentimentalism and religion coincided, and it was quite possible for the doctrinal content of


2 Lounger, no.77(July 1786),77.
religion to be glossed over or even totally evaded. Sundered from the traditionally Christian awe, humility, and sense of brotherhood in sin, the benevolence of the sentimental Christian or the Christian sentimentalist becomes what Goldsmith calls 'the luxury of doing good' - a self-satisfied emotional indulgence which merely parodies the altruistic ideal.1

The evasion of the doctrinal content of religion was the point of division between literature that was acceptable to the Evangelicals and that which was not. The emphasis on sentiment appears to have been acceptable to the Scottish Evangelicals provided that it retained a strong doctrinal basis. There were, in fact, striking parallels between 18th-century Scottish religious literature and sentimental literature. In both, for example, there was a strong tradition of association with death, and the notion of dying as generating true emotion. The convention of the death-bed scene was frequently employed in Evangelical literature. The motive for doing so was to drive home a didactic message about death and eternity. Literature of this genre, which provided a religio-sentimental connexion, was the staple reading diet of large sections of 18th-century Scottish society. Those who listened earnestly to the sermons of the Erskines and their Evangelical colleagues supplemented their reading diet by this religious material, which was easily read, cheap and readily accessible. Evangelical ministers regarded the task of supplying their congregations with suitably Evangelical reading matter to be just as much part of their function as

composing and delivering sermons, and they often published their own sermons for this purpose. The content was purely didactic and instructional, and encouraged the reader to accept religious beliefs by displaying the attractions of religion and by painting in a dramatic way the fatal results of religious omission. John Brown's *The Young Christian; or, The Pleasantness of Early Piety Exemplified* (1788) contained an account of the religious piety of eleven young children, in which death-bed scenes figured prominently:

> As she lay dying her mother expressed her grief, that she had reproved and corrected her so often. She replied, O Mother, say not so; for I bless God, when I am now dying, for your reproofs and corrections; I might have gone to hell, had it not been for them. After this she had a great sense of God's love, and expired in a rapture of holy triumph.

To Evangelicals, there was an additional religious emphasis in the death-bed scene, because of the possibility it carried of death-bed repentance, but much of its significance derived from the inherent belief that the dying utterances and comments of the virtuous (particularly those of ministers) could offer moral edification or spiritual consolation to those who heard them. Thus, the final sequence of life was often exaggerated in duration, detail and character.

The favourite Evangelical literature in Scotland until the advent of the sentimental novel was the work of the Covenanting divines, Puritan literature, the Evangelical sermons of the Erskinite school, and didactic literature produced by Evangelical writers. These included William

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Crawford's *Dying Thoughts in Three Parts* (Edinburgh, 1738); John Calderwood's *A Collection of the Dying Testimonies of some Holy and Pious Christians* (Kilmarnock, 1806); and Robert Shirra's *A Death-Bed Dialogue: being a series of conversations, between Mr Shirra and Mr Lister* (Edinburgh, 1769). The output of John Willison, an Evangelical minister in Dundee, was more or less standard reading for the 18th-century Evangelical reading public. In 1727, he published his *Afflicted Man's Companion*, which contained a collection of the dying words of saints. When Robert Bolton of Broughton was dying, for example, Willison described his fleeting last words in this way:

> When the pangs of death were upon him, being told that some of his dear friends were about him to take their last farewell, he caused himself to be raised up in his bed: and, after a few gaspings for breath he said ... ¹

The transition from religious literature of this genre to the sentimental novel could thus be painless and effortless. The doctrine of sentiment as expressed both in Evangelical religious literature and in the sentimental novel viewed death as a vehicle of release from the trials of human existence, and this aspect of the sentimental novel may help to explain part of its appeal to society which by tradition was only too ready to seek or accept refuge from human misery in the expectations of the rewards of the next life.

In his *Rural Recollections*, George Robertson recalled that up to 1765 the reading of the husbandmen of the Lothians (apart from ballads and the Bible) consisted mainly of:

the works of Sir David Lindsay, of Buchanan, of Knox, of Rutherford, of Bunyan, and of Boston; and of Wodrow too.¹

The cottars during this period read material of a similar vein but 'on a lesser scale, being usually pamphlets, or religious tracts; such as Christian Ker, Elizabeth West, and Peden's Prophecies'.² Robertson pinpointed the year 1765 as representing a watershed between the older tradition for religious literature and the movement away from religious to secular literature.

In the oldest times, the few books read were generally of a pious cast ... A new species of book-entertainment has arisen, or rather has got a wider spread; namely, of fictitious story.

The transition from one genre of literature to another was made easier by the nature of the literature that the Evangelical reading public had long been familiar with. Throughout the 18th century, for example, there was a tradition of religious periodical literature which included some of the conventions later made available in the novel. David Paterson's *Religious Magazine* or *Christian's Storehouse* set itself to include:

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¹ George Robertson, *Rural Recollections; or, The progress of improvement in agriculture and rural affairs*, Irvine, 1829, p.98.
² Ibid., p.100.
³ Ibid., p.107. Robertson does qualify his statement by adding that fiction had not 'prevailed much among the class in question [i.e., the husbandmen]; in fact, much reading is not a sin that besets them'. Ibid., pp.107-8.
a plain system of divinity, church history, Christian biography, practical pieces and selected poetry.¹

Concomitant with the development of society and a decline in the influence of religion, the change of emphasis from Evangelical literature to the novel can be seen almost as a shift in the 'ideal quotient' of the period. Amid the contagion of improvement in the post-1750 period, it was relatively easy for the public to shift from an hierarchical system founded on God to a more material system which saw man's activities as taking place within a social unit. The connexion between the conventions of 18th-century sentimental theory and religion is a factor which should be taken into account when the appeal of the popular novel in 18th-century Scotland is considered. Although the popularity of the novel was acknowledged, it was opposed by the Evangelicals on account of what they regarded as its potentially pernicious effects on society. The speed with which the whole genre of fiction was increasing in status was associated in the minds of Evangelical opponents with a decline from the older form of sermon-writing to a style which reduced the differences between the sermon and other forms of literary writing. It was thus hardly surprising to find that they were opposed to the popularity of fiction. When John Mackenzie published his satire The Love of Pleasure Inconsistent with Reason in 1772, the dedication apologized for adding to the store of

¹ David Paterson, Religious Magazine and Christian Store-house, 1760. The first two numbers of this periodical are in the British Library.
sermons already in print but defended the decision to publish on these grounds:

I hope, however, it will be considered as no small recommendation of my sermon, that (without any design of mine) it partakes not a little of the nature of a romance; inasmuch as the reformation it proposed is thought by many to be nearly as chimerical as the metamorphosis of Humphry Clinker, or the schemes of Gulliver.1

The connexion between the novel of sentiment and the sermon becomes of the greatest significance in the post-1750 period with the development of the 'sermon of feeling' or 'sentimental sermon' of the Moderate school of rhetoric, and it is here that the search for fine feeling and taste in writing is most clearly visible. The coalescence of the sentimental sermon and the sentimental novel in the post-1750 period in Scotland is important to any investigation of the period, since both forms show a number of common attitudes.2

The sentimental sermon of Moderate sympathies was undoubtedly the most practical and accessible medium for demonstrating the theories of rhetoric and belles lettres which currently were being evolved. The medium of the pulpit was fixed and constant, and the demand for sermons offered unlimited scope for the composition of sermons that acceded to the contemporary conventions of taste and fine feeling. The concept

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2 Note the comment in a letter to the editor of The Beauties of Magazines in 1788, relating to the novel Adrastus and Amelia: 'has ever such villany known, but in such Romance? did we ever hear of it but in some Novel ... to paint the sequel as it ought is above me, I cannot refrain from tears, - it would need the tongue of a Greenfield to tell the rest. The Beauties of Magazines Reviews and other Periodicals, (1788), 1, 243.
of aesthetics in sermons was particularly encouraged by the climate of reasonableness and moderation in doctrinal approach that prevailed among the Moderate clergy. The attractions of a view of the sermon which permitted and, indeed prompted sermon-writers to stress the optimistic and pleasurable aspects of religion and, at the same time, allowed audiences to evoke in themselves good and positive feelings rather than feelings of guilt and shame, were obviously very great. The success of religion was to be achieved through the medium of Moderate doctrinal content which, by the same token, conformed to the standards of good taste. With the divergence of the religious parties in the 1750s, the Moderate party attracted to its ranks clergymen who combined religious affiliations with secular activities of various kinds. The blossoming of the Moderate clergy into men of letters and the use of the sermon as a vehicle for conveying ideas on good taste contributed to a new regard for the clergy, which both recognized their status as upholding the interests of religion and also assigned them to the forefront of aesthetic activity. There were two prominent trends contributing to this transformation: firstly, the clergy's absorption of intellectual currents at the universities, which stimulated a spirit of inquiry\(^1\) and, secondly, the revival of patronage which resulted in the

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\(^1\) To the Evangelicals, the spirit of inquiry was unwelcome: 'The pride of reason hath, in every age, cavilled at the truths of revelation. But, in the present, it hath given birth to a spirit of inquiry which spurns all restraint ...' John Jamieson, *An alarm to Britain; or, an Inquiry into the causes of the rapid progress of infidelity*, Perth, 1795, p.131.
Moderate clergy allying themselves with their heritors and, in consequence, being (or having to be) more receptive to ideas of improvement. The spirit of improvement among the Moderate clergy manifested itself most clearly in their desire to polish and refine their taste by the cultivation of literary pursuits. In addition, the most impressive way for a clergyman to cut a dash among his fellows was to demonstrate a high degree of elegance and refinement in the sermons he delivered from the pulpit. The new aesthete had to reflect the Moderate clergy's increasing tolerance in their treatment of doctrinal issues, or as one 18th-century critic expressed the distinction:

The early Moderates devoted their attention to the cultivation of the graces of literature to the exclusion of the gospel ... the early Evangelicals, with but few conspicuous exceptions, confined themselves almost exclusively to the presentation of the Gospel ... with little or no regard to elegance of style or manner.

In this way, the Moderates saw the 18th-century Church as an integral part of the general advancement of society, its position enhanced rather than detracted from by the divisions of party allegiance. Alexander Carlyle expressed the situation of the Church proudly when he said:

For half a century past ... since the ardent zeal of enthusiasm has given place to, or been tempered, by the benign principle of Christian charity, the Church of Scotland has demonstrated the truth of that position of a great author,

'That uniformity is an idea of weak and vulgar minds'...

The teaching of the Church was to successfully blend together elegance, taste and religious sentiments, without intruding into the sermon language or sentiments that would offend either the orator or the audience. The sentimental elegance of the letter written in 1776 by the Rev. John Grant of Strathglass to his heritor, Sir James Grant, in recognition of his receipt of the living of Arrochar, gives a clear indication of the style which was considered appropriate in sentiment and expression when writing to a patron.

Wherever I am placed, whatever be my lot, that duty which I owe to you, shall continue unimpaired either by space or time; and shall only expire with my expiring breath, when I can no longer feel, nor be capable of publishing it to the world, I am sensible motives of this kind have not, and never can extend their influence to your good actions: they flow from a superior principle. But I must indeed be depraved, and unworthy of being the object of your kindness and benevolence, if I did not feel those emotions which kindness and benevolence naturally impune.

The Moderate clergy were thus attempting to move to a point where their opinions on matters of taste and refinement and secular activities of all kinds would be accepted on a par with the opinions of litterateurs who were not churchmen. The position they sought was one which would combine ecclesiastical status with an equal status in


2 A letter from the Rev. John Grant of Strathglass to Sir James Grant of Castle Grant, dated Strathglass, 6 June 1776. Grant Correspondence (Seafield Papers), SRO MS. GD 248/52/3.
secular society. They wanted society to recognize that they were competent to conduct themselves in secular affairs with the appropriate modicum of knowledge, cultivation and taste. Probably as a result of these aims, the concept of a united party combining the ideal of a collective unit based on mutual support developed in the post-1750 period, a trend which was observed by their Evangelical opponents.

They are a body, every member of which hath neither the same abilities, nor the same office. They are also a body most firmly united, for mutual defence and support ... The Moderate are remarkable for the most perfect union and harmony, and for a firm and stedfast adherence to each other, in the prosecution of their designs.

The connexion between the Moderate sermon and literature appears frequently in the writing of the period. John Witherspoon satirized the methods of the sermon-writers who conceived their sermons as literary works.

If it be said, that sermons are not poems, and therefore not to be composed by the rules of poetry: I answer, it is a mistake; many of our sermons, especially those composed by the younger sort among us, are poems; at least they are full of poetical flights, which come much to the same thing ... How often have I heard parts of Mr Addison's Cato, Young's Night Thoughts, and divers other poems, in sermons; and to say the truth, they were none of the worst parts of them.

1 In the Ecclesiastical Characteristics (p.64n), John Witherspoon commented: 'This expression, a man of a good heart, is much in fashion among the moderate, and of great significance and beauty, but is only to be used in speaking to persons of some degree of taste'.

2 John Witherspoon, Ecclesiastical Characteristics, preface, x.

3 Ibid., pp.18-19. Witherspoon suggested (p.19) that preachers who plagiarized modern printed poems in their sermons should 'transpose them a little, so to speak, that they may not be too easily discerned by young gentlemen who read the Magazines'.

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At the same time, even those who disapproved of the trend for fine writing conceded that Edinburgh was the centre of an improving spirit.

If a clergyman there hath a genius for literature, he will in a little time make greater improvement in science and taste, than perhaps he could do all his life at any other place in the nation.\(^1\)

And John Clarkson referred to the pulpits being "weekly occupied by Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, and even by Portius, Cato, or Hamlet ...\(^2\)

The literary theory advanced by Niel Douglas is an interesting example of the coalescence of religious thought and poetry. Douglas (1750-1823) was a poet, preacher and social reformer. He was educated at Glasgow but his ecclesiastical sympathies were complex and not always harmonious; his affiliations were originally with the Relief Church but by 1809 he described himself as a 'preacher of restoration'. In 1794 he published *The Lady's Scull*, a poem on the subject of death, which was intended as an admonitory poem to the female sex. In the preface to the poem, Douglas stated the connexion between Christianity and poetry.

The sublime truths of Christianity impart dignity and elevation to poetry ... and give a certain commanding authority to these pieces in which they prevail, even following they should possess nothing remarkable in point of elegance of composition, or harmony

\(^1\) A *Short History of the late General Assembly of the Church of Scotland shewing the rise and progress of the Schism Overture*, Edinburgh, 1766, p.59.

of numbers. 1

A sample quotation from his poem, however, is hardly convincing evidence of his success in combining the two elements.

I have, alas!
Oft heard of grace,
Of God - of Jesus, and his love divine,-
But heard in vain,
Which now gives pain: -
For to such themes my heart did never incline. 2

Nevertheless, there was a desire among Scottish literary writers who were preachers to try to link the aims of sermon-writing and literature, a development which they saw as an opportunity to raise society's esteem both of them and of religion. This is clearly seen in the remarks of men like John Ogilvie, who published his poem The Day of Judgment in 1753. Ogilvie saw the poet as having to fulfil a function identical to that of the orator in his attempts to evoke emotion:

The human heart, like a citadel surrounded with almost inaccessible bulwarks, must (e're one can obtain access to it) be attacked with the firmest intrepidity; the several avenues that lead to it discovered, and numberless accidents surmounted in the way. A man must rouse the conscience, alarm the passions, captivate the imagination, and interest the judgment. 3

1 Niel Douglas, The Lady's Scull; a Poem, Dundee, 1794, preface p.10.

2 Ibid., p.35.

3 John Ogilvie, The Day of Judgment; a Poem, Edinburgh, 1753, preface iv.
CONCLUSION
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Whatever therefore tends to exhibit our religion as amiable, is, in fact, an intrinsic evidence of its truth; and consequently tends as really, though not so directly, to render it credible, as arguments deduced from prophecy or miracles.

The most striking evidence to emerge from a detailed investigation of the rhetorical attitudes of 18th-century Scottish sermon-writers is that which places their activities firmly in the forefront of improvement. It has long been recognized that philosophical, historical and literary writing of the period shows the influences of contemporary improvement; the impetus behind the writing of this thesis was to try to discover to what extent, if any, the conventions prominent among the 18th-century literary improvers were also to be found in 18th-century Scottish sermons. This was felt to be particularly relevant since so many of the major figures influential in rhetorical teaching in 18th-century Scottish teaching institutions were also themselves preachers, and, therefore, had the resources of the pulpit at their command from which to disseminate these new and favoured ideas.

The evidence seems to indicate that from the 1750s the Church had in its Moderate clergy a group of men who were concerned to improve standards of pulpit rhetoric, and who sought to do so by composing their own sermons to the highest models, and by seeking to recommend these models to their

contemporaries. When it was decided to issue The Scotch Preacher in 1773, for example, the aim was to make available in print a selection of the best contemporary sermons. The editor commented in the preface:

To Students of Divinity also, the Probationers for the Ministry, this collection would be attended with singular advantages. It would afford them a variety of the most approved models, for forming and training them to the composition of sermons.

These preachers were anxious to create a necessary relationship between religion and the reformation of manners and they wished to see religion as an indivisible link in the harmonious unity of society, unlike their Evangelical brethren who clung to the patterns of the past. In his sermon The Situation of the World at the Time of Christ's Appearance, William Robertson made the bold claim for Christianity that,

> It not only sanctifies our souls, but refines our manners; and while it gives the promises of the next life, it improves and adorns the present.

The process of refinement included the practical steps of refining the texts of their sermons. Phrases like 'those improvements of heart' were replaced by 'those moral endowments' and 'to rest satisfied with the greatest purity' became 'to rest satisfied, with an entire blamelessness of outward character'.

In many ways, the attitudes of these Moderate sermon-

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1 The Scotch Preacher, Edinburgh, 1773, i, ix. The preface stated that manuscripts submitted would be referred 'to the judgement of some Clergymen of the most approved knowledge and taste (p. vi).


3 The changes are made from the second and sixth editions of William Leechman's The Temper, Character, and Duty of a Minister, Glasgow, 1742.
writers represented the closest alliance ever achieved between the Scottish Church and the conventions of polite society, and it is interesting to speculate whether those prominent in advancing the new ideas had realized that the hold of the Church on 18th-century Scottish society was really rather fragile, however powerful it appeared to be superficially, and that they saw that the only hope for creating and maintaining a harmonious regime between religion and society was to make the doctrines of religion acceptable to polite society. If this involved reducing the doctrinal content of their sermons, that was a sacrifice they were quite willing to make, particularly since if religion was approved by polite society, its influence would percolate throughout society and thereby, they hoped, strengthen the foundations of religion. Robert Petrie preached a sermon before the Synod of Dumfries on 11 October 1743 on The Reasonableness and Necessity of Public Worship, in which he complained that if the 'eminent in society' were seen to despise religion, this would have a dire effect on the fortunes of religion since,

The world ... have always been led by the example of the great.¹

The Moderates, therefore, far from being despised for their ecclesiastical tepidity as they so often are, are rather to be commended for anticipating the imminent signs of danger for established religion in the increasing secularization of

society and for advancing (in the common aims of religion and society) what seemed to them to be the only viable solution to the inevitable divergence of religion and society. But fashions change and as the Moderates were swept away in the dying moments of the 18th century, so was their vision and the opportunity was lost for ever.
APPENDIX 1
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CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE SERMONS
OF HUGH BLAIR, 1777-1801. 5 VOL.

The manuscript letters reproduced in this Appendix relate to the publication of Hugh Blair's Sermons (1777-1801), which undoubtedly provides the most thoroughly documented account of sermon publishing by an individual preacher in 18th-century Scotland. The Appendix contains letters from Blair to William Strahan, including his letter of 29 October 1776 introducing his Sermons to Strahan, and later letters to Strahan and Thomas Cadell in connexion with the publication of subsequent volumes of the Sermons.

The letters have been transcribed from manuscript sources in the National Library of Scotland and Edinburgh University Library. The arrangement of the letters is chronological and the manuscript reference is given at the head of each letter. Minor punctuation changes have been made to assist the sense.

The letters illustrate the keen interest Blair took in the publication of his sermons and the business acumen he displayed in negotiating and dealing with his publishers. The Sermons were a commercial success, from the sale of which Blair gained almost £2,000, as well as earning him a pension of £200 per annum from George III.

1 There are manuscript letters relating to the publication of the Sermons in the R.B. Adam Collection, University of Rochester, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which, unfortunately, it has not been possible to reproduce here. These letters are referred to in R.H. Schmitz, Hugh Blair, New York, 1948, pp.82-3.
Letter of Hugh Blair to unidentified correspondent [i.e. William Strahan], dated 29 October 1776. NLS MS.1707,f.4.

Dear Sir

I was very glad to learn that my friend Mr Watson concluded with you upon terms which appear very fair for him and which I hope shall prove not unprofitable to you. I have myself at present in View a Small publication in which it would give me pleasure that you were Concerned, though it be of that kind of which I am afraid you will put no great Value, being no other than a Volume of Sermons. All I can say for it is that I have employed more time & pains on them than I believe is commonly bestowed on publications of that Nature. As Sermons announced by The Professor of Rhetorick and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh may probably draw some Criticism I have given all the Attention that was in my power both to the Composition & the Style, and they have undergone the careful review of several of our best judges here who would not wish my reputation to be endangered by them.

Mr Kincaid, our present Lord Provost, who is my old Acquaintance & Friend was very desirous of being Concerned in this publication and offered me £100 for the Property which I have accepted. But both he and I wish very much that you were joined with him, in case the proposal suits you, and if he has not already written, he will soon write to you on the Subject. I think I can flatter myself that in a
reasonable time there will be a demand for another Edition. Mr Kincaid, out of favour to me, proposed to print at present only a Small one; which as it will promote the Credit of the book by accelerating a new impression, may turn out no disadvantage to the Proprietors in the end. The Sermons are mostly of a popular & sentimental kind; intermixed with one or two of a more Philosophical cast. To send you Specimens of so small a work I suppose would not have been worth while. I subjoin the Subjects in case you have any desire to know them. Most Sincerely I condole with you on the death of our Excellent & amiable Friend, Mr David Hume. I am, with great respect and Esteem

Dear Sir
Edin, 29 Oct Your most obedient &
1776 most humble Servant
Hugh Blair

Dear Sir

I was favoured with your kind letter a few days ago; and must begin with returning you my best thanks for this new present you make me of £50. Your Proceedings with me have been exceedingly handsome: and I shall always acknowledge them as such and mention them to your honour. I take a double interest now in the sale of the Book; for the sake of your interest, no less than for my own reputation. The Accounts which you give me of its continuing success are very obliging in you, as well as flattering to me.

I regretted very much the delay of the last Edition, owing to some mismanagement here about paper; & often complained of it to Mr. Creech, as tending to let the book fall out of Sale. For there were no copies here for two months any more than at London; and I knew at one time 9/- offered for a copy, if it could have been got, to send to the Country. I am very glad you have now taken it into your own hands & are preparing an Edition at London. I make no doubt you will take care that the paper and print shall at least not fall short of the last Edinburgh edition which seems to be the best. I would not wish to have it reduced to a diminutive size, which I think there is yet no occasion for, but to have it retain its old octavo form. In some late publications you have a way of saying on the title page, a New Edition,
But I would much prefer your going on with the Succession of Editions which certainly tends to buoy up a Volume of Sermons, and entitling this, as it will be, the Sixth Edition - Having been confined to the house by a slight indisposition since receiving yours I have not yet seen Mr. Creech. After I have met with him I shall some days hence draw upon you, as you allow me, for your proportion & Mr. Cadells of the £50.

Yesterday I received a Copy of your new Edition of all David Hume's works from his last correction; which by his will was directed to be given to me & a few others of his friends. I am glad to find it a very handsome edition; the paper good, & the type, for its size, excellent. Poor David! What an irreparable blank does he make amongst us here. Taking him all in all, we shall never see the like. Indeed I cannot but agree with what Adam Smith says of him in the last sentence of his printed letter to you. I am glad to hear that our friend Dr. Robertson has got such health by his journey. For he was but poorly for a long while when here.

Had there been anything promising to look to, I would have begd. a little communication from you as to Politics. But the subject is at present too disagreeable to be dwelt upon. Having seen Britain in its fullest glory, I much fear we may here to see it also in its disgrace & decay. And yet I am persuaded there is still Vigour & Spirit, & indignation too in the nation, if there were any man of bold & determined Spirit to take the lead, and Call it forth. But Alas! where
is there any such publick Leader to be found?

I Beg you would take the trouble of presenting my best Compts. to Mrs. Cadell; with whom, some time or other, perhaps I shall have the pleasure of becoming acquainted; and believe me, ever to be, with much esteem & respect

Dear Sir

Your obliged and Affectionate humble Servant

Edinb. 10 April, 1778.  

HUGH BLAIR

P.S. On all the Editions of my Book I made a good many verbal Corrections, & little improvements in style; availing my Self of all that was suggested either by friends or Criticks. Since the Publication of the 5th Edn., no alteration has occurred to me, to be inscribed in the Editn. you are preparing. Only, this observation has been suggested to me on the very first page of the Book, the last line, where I say, neither obscurity of station, nor imperfection of knowledge sink thou below his regard - that it ought to have been sinks, in the singular number, as the Conjunctions used are disjunctive not copulative. I incline to think it may do either way, & that as it stands, it does not hurt the ear. However, perhaps the alteration proposed is more agreeable to purity of language; and therefore, if you have not yet begun to print, you may, in case you think it worth while, mark this Correction on the Copy given to the Printers. I know of nothing else to suggest; and I commit the Book wholly to the accuracy of your Correctors of the Press.

H.B.
Copy of a letter of Hugh Blair to William Strahan, dated 3 August 1779, in the possession of the Earl of Rosebery at Barnbougle Castle. EUL Dc.2.76, f.10

Dear Sir,

I was favoured with your very obliging letter which by my residing out of town came to hand some days later than I ought to have received it. The present you are so kind as to make me of another £50 on account of my sermons is exceedingly handsome and deserves my grateful acknowledgments. What you tell me of their continued success is very flattering to an Author, and gives me pleasure of your account as well as my own. I shall according as you desire draw upon you by next post for £33-6-8d which is Mr. Caddel's share and yours. I have not seen Mr. Creech since I received yours as he is gone for a few days somewhere into the Country.

I went over these sermons so often upon the first 4 editions that were published here and made such a number of small corrections that I have nothing more to do upon them in that way. I should wish that you went on numbering the editions and entitle what you are proposing to publish the 8th Edition, not a new one as is sometimes done; as it will tend to keep up their fame. Did you notice the compliment that was paid to them by Dr. Horne, the President of Magd. Coll., Oxford, in a late publication of sermons by him; when he vindicates the age from the supposed contempt of sermon writing by the high respect which the Publick have
paid to mine? I saw it extracted in the monthly review for May last.

I hesitated much whether I should venture on a Second Volume; sensible that I had a good deal to lose, and afraid to commit my self again on such difficult ground. However, I have been so incessantly teazed & urged about it and thought my refusal might have so much the appearance either of Barrenness or culpable indolence, that I have at last set about it & am now busily engaged on it. I have made considerable progress and in case I meet with no interruptions from bad health or other causes think I may be ready to go to press about the month of January so as to be published in March, which was the time of the last Volume. This however is in some degree uncertain. To say the truth, Sermon writing (so as to draw the publick attention) is the most difficult of all compositions, without exception. To hit on proper & taking subjects; to give to such beaten topicks the grace of Novelty; to be popular without being nonsensical; and Strong & elegant without being flimsy is, I do assure you, a work of continual labour & difficulty. Few of my brethren sermonize have seen these difficulties, or have had the industry to surmount them; and so it has fared with them ...

As to D. Hume's Dialogues, I am surprised that though they have now been published for some time, they have made so little noise. They are exceedingly elegant. They bring together some of his most exceptionable reasonings; but the
principles themselves were all in his former works. The part you took, was I think in one of your character & situation, well judged ... 

3 Aug, 1779.

Letter of Hugh Blair to unidentified correspondent i.e. William Strahan, dated 14 December 1781. NLS MS. 2257, f.9.

Dear Sir

According to your desire I applied to Messrs Balfour and Creech for each of their Sixth parts of the £200 resting due on the property of Dr Watson's Book; which accordingly they are about to pay. By to morrow's post therefore a Bill will be drawn upon you for the remainder, deducting also the £10"8"7 which you tell me Mr Cadell paid to Mr Wadilove on Dr Watson's Account. This reduces the draught which is to be made on you to £122"18"1 - The Bill will be drawn on you by Elizabeth Watson the Eldest of Dr Watson's daughters, who has a full and legal factory to give discharges & act for all the rest. - It will be proper that you send me any receipt that Mr Cadel has for the money he paid to Mr Wadilove as it must enter into our Accounts.

Dr Watson was in possession of many Spanish Books relating to the history of his period, some of the Curious and brought from Spain. I sent a distinct catalogue of them to Mr Thomson the continuator of the History. I wish you or Mr Cadell would get this catalogue from him, and see if you wd incline to purchase these Books from us; and if Mr Cadell
inclines to it, let him set a price & let us know what he would give for them.

The continuation of the History is advancing, and as Mr Thomson appears to be employing such pains about it, I perswade my self you will find it worthy of your acceptance as a property when finished.

Dr Adam Ferguson comes up to London next week I am sorry that you and He did not agree about his Book. I have read the greatest part of it, and I can assure you that I think it a very Valuable Work. It is out of all sight the best Roman History that we have, for my opinion it will extinguish any other. It is political and profound; written in an easy perspicuous Style; and the Narration both Art and Military is interesting, and carries the Reader along. It is a large Work; and will take, I am sure, three Volumes in quarto, larger than Dr Robertson's. I am perswaded it is a larger work than his Charles V.

I was truly concerned for the last part of your letter in which you complain so much of your health. as you are for ordinary stoic I did not like to hear you complain, and you are too useful a member of Society to be lost, for many years yet to come. I was glad however to hear by Mr Creech that you was getting better, and I flatter my Self that your Cold is now entirely removed, only Pray take care of long Sederunts in the House of Commons.

We shall hear by next post I suppose of violent debates you have had about the American War. The prospect there is so dark & fabricate, that one knows not indeed what to
think, nor what measures one would wish administration to
take; the difficulties are so great on all hands.

I shall be glad when you can get your Engraver to
finish that you send me down some copies of the Head and
allow the Picture to return here. You must put Caldwell in
mind, I suppose, from time to time, that he may not trifle
with it. I am glad to hear that the Sermons still continue
to drop off with you, which is the case here also; insomuch
that very lately Creech told me he had not a dozen left,
& could not answer the commissions that were given him till
he received more from you which had been at Sea for some
time.

I am, with great esteem and respect,

Dear Sir

Your Affec't

14 Dec' 1781 Edinburgh

Hugh Blair

Pray favour me with a line when you have leisure.

Letter of Hugh Blair to Thomas Cadell, dated 18 June 1790.

NLS MS. 2257, f.14.

Dear Sir

I was sorry that the Copies of my third Volume of
Sermons were not sent up to you so soon as was intended;
owing in a great measure to the press of Seamen which stop'd
some of our Ships for some days from Sailing. However I
presume this delay would prove of no material Consequence
to you. I shall be happy if the sale of this Volume, together with the new edition of all the three, which I hear you are preparing shall continue to answer expectations. All the persons here to whose taste I can trust, agree in thinking this 3d Volume to be in no respect inferior to the other two which have been favoured with so much of the publick acceptance. By most of them I find it is reckoned the best Volume of the three. In what manners it is to be treated by your different reviewers, I know not, as I have no connexion with any of them, since the death of my old friend at Chiswick. The Queens acceptance of my dedication was in terms the most flattering to me.

Agreably to the terms of our agreement with which in so ready and handsome a manner you concurred, I shall take the liberty, ten days hence, if before that time you do not write me of its being inconvenient, of drawing upon you and Mr Strahan for £200, as the first half of the price due by you & him in the publication of this Volume; and for the other £100 of that moiety I shall have recourse to Mr Creech. I beg to have my best respects presented to Mr Strahan, with whose father I lived in long habits of intimate friendship; and am with great esteem & respect,

Dear Sir

Your obliged

and most obedt humble Servt

Edinburgh

Hugh Blair

18 June 1790

Dear Sir

Agreeably to your suggestions and Mr Strachan's, sometime ago, and to Mr Creech's here, I have been employed all this summer, and part of last winter, in preparing for the press one volume more of Sermons, and have now entirely finished my work. After 18 editions I think we may safely venture on a 4th volume; and I can positively assure you that this will be the last of my publications. Hitherto I have enjoyed very good health; but at my advanced time of life, it becomes proper and requisite to retire. From the attention which I have given to this volume (which will consist, like the 3rd, of 20 sermons) and from the opinion of a friend of very good taste, who but perused part of it, I think I can flatter myself that it will not be reckoned inferior to the former volumes. I should be very unworthy of the high favour which the publick has shown me as well as wanting to myself, if I were to conclude with anything which carried any mark of carelessness or want of exertion.

As I am quite ready for going to press, I imagine it is proper to begin without delay, that the publication may take place as early in the spring as shall be proper. Mr Creech is decidedly of opinion that the book should be printed here, as all the other volumes of my sermons have been; and indeed I incline to this myself, in order to save
the troublesome transmission of so many sheets to and fro, from London; and to have the press at hand is always some advantage. But in this I submit to you.

With regard to terms, I have nothing to say. I know that with perfect confidence I can leave these to you, and Mr Strachan. Of your candid & generous dealings I have spoken to many with praise. I do not suppose that you will make any difficulty to give the same price for this, as for the last Volume, which was £600; and more I do not look for - The translations of my other Volumes into French, High German, and Dutch have all been sent to me from abroad; of some, more than one Edition. I am sorry I never could get the translation into Slavonic, or Hungarian Language; of which the Translator himself wrote me - I beg to have my best Complements offered to Mr Strachan, whom it were needless for me to trouble with a Letter on the same subject with this. - and I shall hope to hear from you with your first Convenience; and am, with much respect

Dear Sir

Your most obedient &
obliged humble Serv'y,

Hugh Blair

Edinburgh

25th Octob'r 1793
Letter from Thomas Cadell to Hugh Blair, dated 3 November 1793.

The Rev. Dr Blair, Edinburgh

Dear Sir

I received your favour of the 25th of October at this place where I have been for some time to obtain the benefit of Sea Bathing - Mr Strahan joins with me in expressing our satisfaction that you intend giving to the publick another Volume of Sermons and at the same time readily agreeing to the Terms demanded in the Copy right Viz. on the publication. As you seem to prefer that this new Volume should be printed at Edinb we cheerfully acquiesce and request you will loose no time in going to press so that we may be able to publish early in the Winter. Mr Creech will print the same Number of the fourth Volume as he did of the third, and when ready loose no time in forwarding to us our Shares - when I go to London which will be next week I will make Enquiries after the Translation of your Sermons and endeavour to obtain you a Copy - Mr Strahan in a Letter to me desires his most respectful Compliments - I remain with great Regard, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient & obliged

I cordially agree to all, humble Servt

A.S.

Ramsgate, Novбр 3. 1793. T.C.
Letter of Hugh Blair to Thomas Cadell, dated 19 March 1794.

Dear Sir

Along with this I send you the Deed making over Copy right to you, Mr Strachan & Mr Creech, Signed & Executed according as you desired. This however relates only to the Second Volume of my Sermons. Since that time there have been my Lectures in 3 Vol, a third Volume of Sermons, and now a fourth, about to be published. There is certainly no Chance that I shall live to execute similar deeds for these Works. But if you can Contrive any legal & regular mode by which I can during my Life execute some provisional deed for conveying, to you three, the full property of these Publications, I shall be very willing to do it, if it can Contribute to your advantage.

My fourth Volume goes on, not through my fault, more slowly than I expected. We are however advanced more than 3 fourths of it, and I should hope that about the end of next Month it may be ready for coming up to you. It is well & correctly printed.

I shall be very well pleased if you and Mr Bruce can settle Matters. His original Plan was for Crowding his whole book into 4 Volumes, on a very small Type. I advised them against this, and rather to extend it to 5 Volumes & make the Type larger. He agreed to this, and sent me a Specimen, which I should think may do very well. As to his Terms I am in no way a Judge of them & told him so; as I was not
acustomed to deal by Single Editions; but that I believed you would be disposed to give him as good terms as he could expect from any other, and he seemed inclined to transact with you rather than with any other.

Mr Creech takes the charge of getting this Packet coming frankd to you; as our Members of Parl are all gone from hence. With my best Compliments to Mr Strachan, I remain always

Dear Sir

Yours most Faithfully

Hugh Blair

Edinb

19th March 1794

Letter of Hugh Blair to Thomas Cadell, dated 8 June 1795.

My Dear Sir

I return you my best thanks for that beautiful & Elegant Copy of the *Mirror & the Lounger*, in 4 Vols, which you did me the favour to transmit to me by Mr H. MacKenzie. The Present was exceedingly Acceptable to me, both as the Authors of all the Papers contained in these Volumes are my particular Friends, and as it furnished me a fresh proof of your kindness & friendly Notice.

I have also to thank you for the very obliging letter you wrote me, 25th of last Month, in which you signify your
entire Acquiescence in the Reasons which I gave for not making any additions to my Lectures. I am happy that you are satisfied it was not from backwardness on my part to take some trouble, provided I could have done what would have been of any real service to you. I willingly flatter my self that it maybe in my power to renew the Lease of your Property, as only 2 years more are wanting for that purpose. Though I cannot at my time of Life but feel sensibly the Infirmity of Age, yet as they are not hitherto accompanied with rapid or threatening decline, it may perhaps please Providence to spare me till then; and it will be an Argument to me to wish for that Continuance that it may be in my power to be of any use to Persons who have behaved in so handsome a manner to me. In the meantime, it is most grateful to me, you may be assured, to receive from you such a favourable Testimony to the Continuing Success of my Writings. It is a most real Satisfaction to me to entertain the hope that the currency of my Sermons may have contributed to advance the Interests of Religion, & that, as you observe, it affords ground to think that the present age is not so irreligious as some would represent it. I beg leave to present my best Respects by Mr Strahan; and have the honour to be with much Esteem, & regard

My dear Sir

Your most obliged

& obedt humble

Edinb. 8th June 1795

HUGH BLAIR
APPENDIX 2
APPENDIX 2

A CHECK-LIST OF WORKS RELATING TO PULPIT Rhetoric Printed
IN THE 18TH CENTURY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>Jean Delmé</td>
<td>The Method of Good Preaching, being the advice of a French Reformed Minister to his son, translated from the French by James Owen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1705-7</td>
<td>John Edwards</td>
<td>The Preacher. A discourse, shewing what are the particular offices and employments of those that character in the Church. 3 parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1712</td>
<td>Thomas Blackwell</td>
<td>Methodus Evangelica, or, Discourses concerning the legal method of preaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1713</td>
<td>J. Barecroft</td>
<td>Advice to a Son in the University. To which is now added Concionatorum instructio: or, rules for preaching, etc. 3rd ed. 2 parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715</td>
<td>J. Barecroft</td>
<td>Ars concionandi: or, an Instruction to Young Students in Divinity. 4th ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1716</td>
<td>Anon.</td>
<td>Some Rules for Speaking and Action; to be observed at the bar, in the pulpit and the senate ... in a letter to a friend. 2nd ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1721</td>
<td>Jonathan Swift</td>
<td>A Letter to a young Gentleman lately enter'd into Holy Orders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1722</td>
<td>Fenelon</td>
<td>Dialogues on Eloquence in general and that of the Pulpit in particular, translated from French by William Stevenson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>John Jennings</td>
<td>Two Discourses: the first of Preaching Christ, the second of Particular and Experimental Preaching. With a Preface by Isaac Watts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>Edmund Gibson</td>
<td>Directions given to the Clergy of the Diocese. 2nd ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1726</td>
<td>Dr Mather</td>
<td>Directions for a Candidate of the Ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1729</td>
<td>John Henley</td>
<td>'Discourse on Action in the Pulpit' in Oratory Transactions. No.2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1734 Charles Rollin, *The Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres ... with Reflections on Taste; and Instructions with regard to the Eloquence of the Pulpit, the Bar, and the Stage*, translated from the French.

1741 William Leechman, *The Temper, Character and Duty of a Minister of the Gospel*.

1744 [Roderick Mackenzie], *Reading no Preaching; or, a Letter to a young Gentleman ... concerning the unwarrantable practice of reading the Gospel instead of preaching it*.


1750 John Erskine, *The Qualifications Necessary for Teachers of Christianity*.

1751 Philip Doddridge, *Lectures on Preaching and the Several Branches of the Ministerial Office*.

1752 David Fordyce, *Theodorus: A Dialogue Concerning the Art of Preaching*.

1752 James Fordyce, *The Eloquence of the Pulpit: an Ordination Sermon*.

1752 Gilbert Hamilton, *The Disorders of a Church, and their Remedies*.

1752 George Campbell, *The Character of a Minister of the Gospel, as a teacher and pattern*.

1753 Isaac Watts, 'Pattern for a Dissenting Minister' in *Works*.


1760 Fenelon's *Dialogues*.


1762 Alexander Gerard, *The Influence of the Pastoral Order on the Character Examined*.

1764 Archibald Smith, *An Inquiry into the Subject and Manner of Apostolic Preaching*.

1765 *Anon.* *An Essay towards pointing out in a short and plain Method the Eloquence and Action proper for the Pulpit*.


1766 Henry Owen, *Directions for Young Students in Divinity, with regard to those Attainments which are necessary to qualify them for Holy Orders*.

1767 *Anon.* *A Dialogue between the Pulpit and the Reading Desk, by a Member of the Church of England*.

1769 Thomas Secker, 'A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Canterbury in the year 1766' in *Eight Charges Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Oxford and Canterbury*.

1771-4 John Wesley, 'Directions concerning Pronunciation and Gesture' in *Works*.

1773 *The Fashionable Preacher*.

1774 John Clarkson, *Gallio; a Sermon*.

1776 George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*.


1778 James Ramsay, *The Character of a True Minister of Christ Delineated*.

1783 Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*.

1787 George Gregory, *Sermons ... to which are prefixed, Thoughts on the Composition and Delivery of a Sermon*.

1790  William Paley, Advice addressed to the young Clergy of the Diocese of Carlisle.


1800  Edward Williams, The Christian Preacher; or, discourses on preaching by several eminent divines.
APPENDIX 3

A CHECK-LIST OF SERMONS PRINTED IN SCOTLAND 1700 TO 1800

The check-list of sermons printed in Scotland from 1700 to 1800 presented in this Appendix has been provided in order to indicate the scope and the themes, as well as the development, of the 18th-century sermon printed in Scotland. It does not, of course, take account of those sermons by members of the literati that were printed in London (as many of them were), but it is intended to indicate how the topics and the titles selected for sermons changed during the century as a result of changing attitudes to the function of pulpit rhetoric.

The sermons are listed chronologically and then alphabetically within the year of publication. Each entry consists of author, short title and imprint (place of publication, printer and date of publication, where known). The check-list is based on the 18th-century Scottish holdings of the National Library of Scotland, with some supplementary titles included from the 18th-century Scottish holdings of New College Library, University of Edinburgh. The list is not intended to be comprehensive but merely to act as a guide or indication of the scope of the 18th-century Scottish sermon.
1700


BRUCE, Michael. *The rattling of the dry bones; or, A sermon preached in the night time at Chapel-Yard in the parish of Carluke*. [Edinburgh?, c. 1700.]


CLARK, James. *Christ's impressions strong, sweet, and sensible on the hearts of believers, delivered in a sermon at Athelstonfoord, June 16, 1700*. [Edinburgh]: printed by J. Reid, 1700.


MORRAN, Shonat, pseud. *The Welch-mans warning-piece; or The Highlands mans preaching. As it was delivered in a sermon, in Shrop-shire, at the Assembly*. Glasgow: printed by R. Sanders, 1700.

RUSSEL, Robert. *The accepted time, and day of salvation. Or, sinners flee from the wrath to come*. Glasgow: printed by R. Sanders, 1700.


Taken from his mouth in short-hand; and now published by
John Williamson. Edinburgh: printed by J. McEuen and
Company, 1700.

1701

DU BOSC, Pierre Thomines. The doctrine of grace, or, A
sermon upon those words of St. Paul, For we are Saved by

HAMILTON, John. A sermon preached before His Grace James
Duke of Queensberry, and the Honourable Estates of
Edinburgh: printed by J. Watson, 1701.

SCOTT, Robert. A sermon upon occasion of the late dread-
ful fire at Edinburgh, the third of February, 1700.
Edinburgh: printed by J. Watson, 1701.

WILSON, D. The glorious bridegroom's appearance: or The
midnight-cry to awaken drowsie sinners out of their mid-
night slumber. Edinburgh: printed by J. Watson, 1701.

WISHART, William. A sermon preached before His Grace,
James Duke of Queensberry, and the Honourable Estates of
Parliament, 1 December, 1700. Edinburgh: printed by G.
Mosman, 1701.

1702

DUNHAM, James. Christ crucified: or, The marrow of the
Gospel, holden forth in LXXII sermons, on the 53. chapter
of Isaiah. 3rd ed. corrected. Edinburgh: printed by the
heirs and successors of A. Anderson, 1702.

[KILPATRICK, J.] A sermon occasion'd by the King's death,
and Her present Majesty's accession to the Crown. Preach'd
March 19, by a Presbyterian minister in the North.
[Edinburgh?, 1702.]

SHIELDS, Alexander. A sermon preached in the Cannongate
meeting-house, Feb. 10. 1691. [Edinburgh], 1702.

WISHART, William. A discourse of suppressing vice, and
reforming the vicious. Delivered in several sermons.
Edinburgh: printed by the heirs and successors of A.
Anderson, 1702.

WISHART, William. A sermon preached before the Synod of
Lothian and Tweeddale, at Edinburgh, 5 May 1702. Edinburgh:
printed by G. Mosman, 1702.


SPALDING, John. Synaxis sacra; or, A collection of sermons preached at several Communion. Edinburgh, 1703.

WEDDERBURN, Alexander. Heaven upon earth, or, The history of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ (sic) opened, and practically (sic) improved in several sermons. Edinburgh: printed by J. Reid Junior, 1703.


CLARK, James. The picture of the present generation; or The temper of the times represented and taxed: in a discourse at Glasgow, July 4, 1704. Edinburgh: printed by J. Reid Junior, 1704.


1705


HAMILTON, Alexander. A sermon explaining the life of faith, preached in the City of Edinburgh, by a minister of known learning, piety and integrity. Edinburgh, 1705.


1706

[ARBUTHNOT, John.] A sermon preach'd to the people, at the Mercat Cross of Edinburgh; on the subject of the Union. Edinburgh, 1706.


WALKER, Henry. Sermon upon the nativity of our Lord Jesus. Edinburgh: printed by A. Symson, 1706.

WEBSTER, James. A sermon preached at the election of the Magistrates of Edinburgh, in the High Church, October 1, 1706. Edinburgh: printed by G. Mosman, 1706.

WILSON, John. Spiritual chymistrie, being a discourse on Rom. 8, 28, preached three several Lord's Days, in a meeting-house in Edinburgh. Edinburgh: printed by J. Reid, 1706.

1707

BRUCE, Michael. Good news in evil times for fainting believers, or, The sum of a lecture upon Jeremiah 45 chapter. [Edinburgh], 1707.

BRUCE, Michael. Soul-confirmation or A sermon preached in the parish of Cambusnethan in Clyds-dail. [Edinburgh], 1707.


CANT, Andrew. A sermon preach'd at Edinburgh, on Thursday the thirtieth of January M. DC. VII. being the anniversary of K. Charles I. [Edinburgh], 1707.


1708

BRUCE, Michael. Good news in evil times for fainting believers, or the sum of a lecture upon Jeremiah 45 chapter. [Edinburgh], 1708.

CALER, Robert. A sermon preach'd on the barbarous and bloody murder of the Royal Martyr King Charles the First. [Edinburgh], 1708.

1709

BRUCE, Michael. Soul-confirmation; or, A sermon preached in the parish of Cambusnethan in Clyds-dail. [Edinburgh], 1709.


THOMSON, James. A sermon preached at Elgin, on Thursday 17 February 1708/9, the day appointed for Thanksgiving for the successes of the arms of Her Majesty throughout this last year. Edinburgh: printed by the heirs and successors of A. Anderson, 1709.

GRAY, Andrew. The mystery of faith opened up: or some sermons concerning faith. Edinburgh: printed by the heirs and successors of A. Anderson, 1710.

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. Christ's napkin: or, A sermon preached in Kirkcudbright at a communion, May 12. 1633. [Scotland, c.1710.]


WELCH, John. An alarm to the impenitent, being a sermon preach'd at Brotherston-Burn, in the spring of 1679. [Edinburgh], 1710.

WELCH, John. The great gospel summons, sic, to close with Christ under the pain of the highest rebellion against the great God of Heaven. Edinburgh: printed by J. Reid, 1710.

1711


CANT, Andrew. A sermon preach'd at Edinburgh on Tuesday the XXX of January M.DCC.XI being the anniversary of the martyrdom of K. Charles I. [Edinburgh], 1711.


GRAY, Andrew. Great and precious promises; or, Some sermons concerning the promise, and the right application thereof. Edinburgh: printed by the heirs and successors of A. Anderson, 1711.

A SERMON preached at Edinburgh, on Good-Friday last, March 30, M.DCC.XI. Edinburgh: printed by J. Watson, 1711.

1712

ANDERSON, John. A sermon preach'd in the church at Air, at the opening of the Synod, on Tuesday the first of April 1712. Glasgow: printed by H. Brown, 1712.

COCKBURN, William. A sermon upon the eighth of March, being the anniversary of Her Majesty's happy accession to the Crown. Edinburgh: printed by J. Watson, 1712.


1713

ANDERSON, James. Two sermons preached at Hamilton, upon the late Communion-Sabbath. Edinburgh, 1713.

CANT, Andrew. A sermon preached after the renovation of the National Covenant, and celebration of the Lord's Supper, Glasgow, 1638. Edinburgh, 1713.

DICKSON, John. A sermon preached in the church at Air, at the sitting down of the Synod; Tuesday, October 4, 1698. Glasgow? 1713.

FRAZER, James. Prelacy an idol, and prelates idolaters: in a sermon. [Edinburgh], 1713.


1714


1715

ANDERSON, John. A sermon preach'd in the Church of Air at the opening of the Synod on Tuesday the first of April 1712. Glasgow: printed by H. Brown, [1715].

[CANT, Andrew.] A sermon preach'd in one of the meeting-houses in Edinburgh, on Monday, January 31, 1715. Being the anniversary of the martyrdom of King Charles the First. Edinburgh, 1715.

DURHAM, James. The blessedness of the death of those that die in the Lord; in seven sermons on Revel. xiv. xiii. Glasgow: printed by R. Sanders, 1715.

GOOD news from the North; or, The best way to have King George long continued, as a great mercy to these nations. Contain'd in a sermon preached at Inverness, October 20 1714. Edinburgh: printed by J. Moncur, 1715.


1716

BROWN, John. The life of faith in time of trial and affliction, cleared up and explained, from Heb. x. xviii. Edinburgh: printed by the heirs and successors of A. Anderson, 1716.

BURNET, Gilbert. A sermon preach'd at the Parish Church of St. James's Westminster, on the first day of August, 1716, Being the anniversary of His Majesty's accession to the throne. Edinburgh: reprinted 1716.


1717

BRADDEY, Thomas. *The primitive Tories; or, Three precedents, of persecution, rebellion and priestcraft, consider'd*. In a sermon preach'd November 5, 1717. Edinburgh, 1717.


1718


GILLESPIE, Patrick. *Rulers sins the causes of national judgments, or, A sermon preached at the Fast, upon the 26 December, 1650. To which annexed, A sermon upon the difficulty of conversion, by John Balwood*. Glasgow: printed by J. and W. Duncans [sic], 1718.

[MACGEORGE, William.] *The sum of Christianity, containing a brief account of what we are to believe, and of what we are to practise, in order to our obtaining eternal life; described in a discourse*. Edinburgh: printed by R. Brown, 1718.

THE NATURE of spiritual rebellion consider'd, and applied to the Presbyterians; in which their commission, either to preach, or to administer the sacraments is proved to be ineffectual: in a sermon. Edinburgh, 1718.

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. *An exhortation at a communion, to a Scots congregation, in London*. [Glasgow, 1718.]
ANDERSON, John. A sermon, preach'd in the Trone Church of Glasgow, on Thursday 28 May, M.DCC.XIX, being the anniversary of the birth of His Majesty King George. Glasgow: printed by J. and W. Duncans [sic], 1719.

BROWN, John. Christ in believers the hope of glory; being the substance of several sermons. Glasgow: printed by R. Sanders, 1719.

DUGUID, William. Plain dealing with Presbyterians: a sermon preached in the meeting-house of Burntisland in Fife. Upon Friday January XXX. 1719, being a day of humiliation for the horrid and barbarous murder of King Charles I. Edinburgh, 1719.


A SERMON preached on Tuesday April 14, 1719. Being a Fast-Day, appointed by the Presbytery of Lithgow, on the occasion of an invasion intended by Spain against Britain, in favours of a Popish Pretender. [Edinburgh, 1719.]


1720

ADAMSON, John. Christ's coronation or, The Covenant renewed, with some notes of the prefaces, lectures, and sermons, before and after the solemn Action, June 28, 1719. [Perth?], 1720.

CALAMY, Edward. The great danger of covenant-breaking. Being the substance of a sermon preached January 14, 1645, before the Lord Mayor of London; being the day of their taking the Solemn League and Covenant. Edinburgh, reprinted 1720.

EMYLNE, William. A time to weep; or, The necessity of continuing the observation of the XXX day of January in Scotland, as well as in England, as a day of solemn humiliation. Edinburgh, 1720.

Peden, Alexander. The Lord's trumpet sounding an alarm against Scotland by warning of a bloody sword. Being the substance of a preface and two prophetical sermons preached at Glenluce anno 1682. [Glasgow? 1720?].
WEBSTER, James. The two great promises of the Covenant of Grace, and its foundation unfolded or, An action sermon, preached in the Tolbooth Kirk, March 7,1714. [Edinburgh, 1720.]


1721


1722


DUNLOP, William. Sermons preached on several subjects and occasions, with some lectures. 2 vol. Edinburgh: printed by J. Watson, 1722.

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The groans of believers under their burdens, set forth in a sermon, from 2 Cor. v. 4. Preached in the Tolbooth Church of Edinburgh, 27 October 1720, before the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Edinburgh, 1722.

1723


1724


ERSKINE, Ralph. *The best bond, or surest engagement: a sermon preached upon Jeremiah xxx. 21 before the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.* Edinburgh, 1724.

ERSKINE, Ralph. *The harmony of the divine attributes display'd, in the redemption and salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ.* Edinburgh: printed by J. Ross, 1724.


1725

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. God's little remnant keeping their garments clean in an evil day. Being a sermon preached at the Sacrament of Strathmiglo, June 1714. [Edinburgh], 1725.

ERSKINE, Ralph. Christ the people's covenant. A sermon preached before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Dunfermline, August 19, 1722. [Edinburgh], 1725.

1726

BROWN, John. The life of faith in time of trial and affliction, cleared up and explained. Edinburgh: printed by J. Ross, 1726.

[CAMPBELL, Archibald]. The duty of praying for civil magistrates, recommended in a discourse on 1 Timothy ii.1,2. Edinburgh: printed by R. Fleming and Company, 1726.


ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The backslider characterized; or, The evil and danger of defection described; in a sermon, John vi.66 preached at Dysart. Edinburgh, 1726.


ERSKINE, Ralph. The happy congregation; or, The great gathering of the people to Shiloh. Being several sermons preached on sacramental occasions, in the year 1725. Edinburgh, 1726.


1728


ERSKINE, Ralph. The gradual conquest: or, Heaven won by little and little. Two sermons preached at Carnock, July 3 1727. Edinburgh, 1728.

ERSKINE, Ralph. Preventing love: or, God's love to us the cause of our love to him. Being a sermon preached after the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Portmoak, June 3 1723. Edinburgh: printed by J. McEuen and Company, 1728.
ERSKINE, Ralph. The rent vail of the temple: or, Access to the Holy of Holies by the death of Christ: being a sermon preached after the administration of the Lord's Supper, at Carnock, 12 July, 1719. Edinburgh, 1728.

ERSKINE, Ralph. The rent vail of the temple: or, Access to the Holy of Holies by the death of Christ: being a sermon preach'd on Matthew xxvii. 51 after the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at Carnock, 12 July, 1719. 2nd ed. Edinburgh, 1728.

ERSKINE, Ralph. The saving sight, or, A view of God in Christ. Delivered in several sermons, at the occasion of celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Dunfermling, 21 May, 1727. Edinburgh, 1728.

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. The cruel watchmen: a sermon on Song. v.7,8,9,10. Edinburgh, 1728.

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. An exhortation at a communion to a Scots congregation in London. From a manuscript never before printed. Edinburgh, 1728.


1729

CULLIN, James. A sermon against the infallibility of the Church or Pope of Rome preached in the New Church of Glasgow, the seventeenth of January, 1729. Glasgow: printed by W. Duncan, 1729.


ERSKINE, Ralph. Christ the people's covenant. A sermon preached before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Dunfermline, August 19, 1722. 2nd ed. corrected and amended. Edinburgh, 1729.


ERSKINE, Ralph. The mediator's power in Heaven and earth. In a sermon preached before the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Edinburgh, 1729.
437.

ERSKINE, Ralph. The militant's song; or, The believers' exercise, while here below. A sermon preached at Carnock, July 1723, being a Thanksgiving-Day immediately after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Edinburgh, c.1729?

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. An exhortation at a communion to a Scots congregation in London. From a manuscript never before printed. Edinburgh, 1729.

SCOTT, Robert. Twelve sermons preached before and after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Edinburgh: printed by J. Davidson and Company, 1729.

1730

CARMICHAEL, Alexander. Believers mortification of sin by the Spirit; with the author's last three sermons. 2nd ed. Glasgow: printed by Mr. Carmichael and Company, 1730.

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The law of faith, issuing forth from Mount Zion: in three sermons preached at the administration of the Lord's Supper at Innerask, August 9, 10, 11, 1729. Edinburgh, 1730.

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. An exhortation at a communion to a Scots congregation in London. From a manuscript never before printed. Glasgow: printed by W. Duncan, 1730.

1731


RUTHERFORD, Samuel. An exhortation at a communion to a Scots congregation in London. From a manuscript never before printed. Edinburgh, c.1731.


1732


DICK, James. The duties of a minister of the gospel, especially the importance and difficulty of them considered. Glasgow, 1732.

DOUGLAS, Robert. The form and order of the coronation of Charles the Second as it was acted at Schoone, the first day of January, 1651. A sermon. Glasgow: printed by J. Duncan, 1732.

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The government upon Christ's shoulder. Being a sermon preach'd at Stirling, June 4 1732, on Sabbath evening after the sacrament. [Edinburgh, 1732.]

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The stone rejected by the builders, exalted as the headstone of the corner. A sermon preach'd at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, at Perth, October 10, 1732. 2nd ed. Edinburgh, 1732.

ERSKINE, Ralph. The happy congregation; or, The great gathering of the people to Shiloh. Being several sermons preached at sacramental occasions, in the year 1725. Edinburgh, 1732.


A SERMON preached at Dunfermline, July 16, 1732. [Edinburgh, 1732.]
A SERMON preached in the Tolbooth Church of Edinburgh, March 6, 1732. [Edinburgh, 1732?]

1733


ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The character of a soul espoused to Christ. A sermon preached upon a Thanksgiving Day after the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the Tolbooth Church of Edinburgh, March 6, 1732. Edinburgh, 1733.

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The stone rejected by the builders, exalted as the head-stone of the corner. A sermon preach'd at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, at Perth, October 10, 1732. Edinburgh, 1733.


LINDSAY, Henry. The present state of the Church of Scotland, with the duty of the members thereof enquired into, in a sermon at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, October 9, 1733. Edinburgh: printed by T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1733.


WILLISON, John. The Church's danger, and the minister's duty declared, in a sermon preach'd at the opening of the Synod of Angus and Mearns, at Montrose, 16 October 1733. Glasgow: printed by J. Duncan, 1733.

1734


DURHAM, James. The blessedness of the death of those that die in the Lord. Glasgow, 1734.

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The king held in the galleries; being a sermon preach'd on Sabbath-evening, immediately after the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Dunfermline, June 2, 1734. Edinburgh, 1734.

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The wind of the Holy Ghost blowing upon the dry bones in the valley of vision. Being a sermon preach'd in the Tolbooth Church, upon a Fast before the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, March 15, 1715. Edinburgh, 1734.

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. Christ's napkin; or a sermon preach'd in Kirkudbright, May 12, 1633. Edinburgh, 1734.

WATSON, Thomas. A body of divinity consisting of one hundred seventy six sermons on the lesser Catechism. Glasgow, 1734.

WILLISON, John. A sermon preach'd before His Majesty's High Commissioner to the General Assembly, on 5 May 1734. Edinburgh: printed by T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1734.

1735


ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The true substance and strength of a church and nation. Two sermons preach'd at the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Dunfermline, June 10, 1733. Edinburgh: printed by A. Alison, 1735.
RUTHERFORD, Samuel. The door of salvation open'd: or, A loud and chirl voice from heaven, to unregenerate sinners on earth. Edinburgh, 1735.

WILSON, William. Blessedness to be found in Christ. A sermon on Psalm, lxxii.17. [Edinburgh, 1735.]

1736

APPLETON, Nathaniel. Gospel ministers must be fit for the Master's use: illustrated in a sermon preached at Deerfield, August 31, 1735. at the ordination of Mr. John Sargent, to the evangelical ministry, with a special reference to the Indians of Houssatonnoc, who have lately manifested their desires to receive the Gospel. Boston printed: Edinburgh reprinted 1736.


ERSKINE, Ralph. The tabernacle of David ruined by man, and reared up by the mighty God. Being three discourses deliver'd on different occasions. Edinburgh: printed by T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1736.

ERSKINE, Ralph. Present duty before approaching darkness. A sermon preached at Cambusnethan, on Wednesday August 3, 1737. Being a Fast-day appointed by the Associate Presbytery. Edinburgh: printed by A. Alison, 1736.

1737


ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The tree of life, shaking his fruit and leaves among the nations. Being three sermons, preached at the sacrament of Dunfermline, July 12, 13, 14, 1729. Edinburgh: printed by A. Alison, 1737.

ERSKINE, Ralph. Dark providences clear'd in due time. Being a sermon preach'd at Dunfermline, Monday July 2, 1736 after the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Edinburgh, 1737.
ERSKINE, Ralph. God's great name, the ground and reason of his saving great sinners. A sermon preach'd at Carnock, July 18 1730, before the administration of the Lord's Supper. Edinburgh, 1737.


ERSKINE, Ralph. The promising God, a performing God, A sermon preach'd on a Thanksgiving-Day, after the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, October 22, 1733. Edinburgh: printed by A. Alison, 1737.


1738:


ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The annals of redeeming love, with the Redeemer's vengeance upon the grand enemy of the redeem'd. Being several sermons preached at sacramental and other occasions, on Isa. lxiii. 4. Edinburgh: printed by A. Alison, 1738.


ERSKINE, Ralph. The mounting Christian; or, The eagle-wind'd believer; being a sermon at Kinclaven preached June 1, 1735. Edinburgh: printed by A. Alison, 1738.

GUTHRIE, James. A cry from the dead; or, The Ghost of the famous Mr. James Guthrie appearing. Being the last sermon he preached in the pulpit at Stirling, before his martyrdom at Edinburgh, June 1661. Glasgow: printed by W. Duncan, 1738.

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The plant of renown; being two sermons on Ezek. xxxiv. 29. Being taken in shorthand from the author's mouth in the delivery, and revised by him. Edinburgh, 1739.

ERSKINE, Ralph. Glad tidings in sad times; or, The City of God, in the times of trouble and confusion, water'd with the river of consolation. A sermon preached in Annandale, on Sabbath August 27, 1738. Glasgow: printed by J. Duncan, 1739.

ERSKINE, Ralph. Present duty before approaching darkness. A sermon preached at Cambusnethan, on August 3, 1737, being a Fast-day appointed by the Associate Presbytery. Edinburgh: printed by A. Alison, 1739.


Peden, Alexander. The Lord's trumpet, sounding an alarm against Scotland, by warning of a bloody sword. Glasgow, 1739.

1740

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The believer exalted in imputed righteousness. Being a sermon preached at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, June 4th, 1721. Glasgow, 1740.


ERSKINE, Ralph. Gospel-compulsion, or, Ministerial power and authority. A sermon preached at the ordination of John Hunter to the pastoral office. Edinburgh: printed by A. Alison, 1740.

ERSKINE, Ralph. Preventing love. Or, God's love to us the cause of our love to him. Glasgow: re-printed by W. Duncan, 1740.

WEBSTER, Alexander. The wicked life, and fatal but deserved death of Haman, Ahasuerus's Prime Minister. A sermon, preached before the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Town-Council of Edinburgh, at their election, 30 September, 1740. Edinburgh, 1740.

WELCH, John. Fifty and two directions written by John Welsh to his parish at Irongray in Galloway. Glasgow: printed by A. Miller, 1740.
WHITEFIELD, George. The marriage of Cana. A sermon preached at Black-heath, in the year MDCCXXXIX. Edinburgh, 1740.

WHITEFIELD, George. Sermons. Glasgow, 1740.


WHITEFIELD, George. The wise and foolish virgins. A sermon preached at Moor-fields, and Kennington-Common, in the year MDCCXXXIX. Edinburgh, 1740.

1741

A COLLECTION of several remarkable and valuable sermons. Glasgow, 1741.

ERSKINE, Ebenezer. A lamp ordained for God's anointed. Being the substance of two sermons. The first preached at the admission of James Fisher to be minister of the dissenting Associate congregation, in and about Glasgow, October 8, 1741. The other preached upon the same text, at Stirling, the third Sabbath of October, 1741. Glasgow: printed by R. Urie, 1741.


FISHER, James. Christ Jesus the Lord considered as the inexhaustible matter of gospel-preaching. In a sermon at the ordination of James Mair to be minister of the Associate Congregation at Lintoun, May 29, 1740. Edinburgh, 1741.

LEECHMAN, William. The temper, character, and duty of a minister of the Gospel. A sermon preached before the Synod of Glasgow and Air; at Glasgow, April 7, 1741. Glasgow, [1741?].

LEECHMAN, William. The temper, character, and duty of a minister of the Gospel. A sermon preached before the Synod of Glasgow and Air; at Glasgow, April 7, 1741. 2nd ed. Glasgow, [1741?].

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. An exhortation at a communion to a Scots congregation in London. From a manuscript never before printed. Edinburgh, 1741.


1742


DISSET, John. Communion betwixt Christ and the believer; or, The delight they have in the Remembrance, fellowship, and commendation of each other; held forth in a sermon preached in the College-church of Aberdeen, before the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, April 18 1742. Aberdeen, 1742.


ERSKINE, Ralph. Redemption by Christ, shewn to be of God as the first cause, and to God as the last end. A sermon preached at the celebration of the Lord's Supper at Dunfermline, July 11.1742. Edinburgh, 1742.


FRASER, James. Prelacy an idol, and prelates idolaters: all prelatists, maintainers of, and compliers with prelacy, charg'd with idolatry, and proven guilty. 2nd ed. Glasgow, 1742.


SCHAW, John. The removal of a faithful minister from the people a Providence seriously to be noticed by them. Being a valedictory sermon preached at Leslie, May 2,1708. Glasgow, 1742.


WILSON, William. The day of a sinner's believing in Christ a most remarkable day. A sermon preached in the New Church of Perth, before the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Sept. 20,1741. Edinburgh, 1742.


ERSKINE, Ebenezer. The angel's seal, set upon God's faithful servants, when hurtful winds are blowing in the Church militant. Being three sermons preached in the New Church of Bristow, at Edinburgh. Glasgow, 1743.

ERSKINE, Ralph. The builder's armour, or, the work and warfare of spiritual builders. A sermon, preached at Stirling, June 13. 1743, on Monday after the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Edinburgh, 1743.

GRANGER, John. The best employment: or, Three sermons on the nature and gainfulness of Godliness. Glasgow, 1743.


LEECUJAN, William. The nature, reasonableness, and advantages, of prayer; with an attempt to answer the objections against it. A sermon. Glasgow: printed by R. Foulis, 1743.

KENWICK, James. The Church's choice. A sermon on Canticles i.7. 2nd ed. Glasgow, 1743.


1744

DISSET, John. A doctrinal testimony against many prevailing evils at this day. A sermon preached in the New Church of Aberdeen, 11 April 1744, being the national Fast-Day. 2nd ed. Glasgow, 1744.

BLAIR, David. The fear that's due unto God and the King, consider'd and recommended: in two sermons preached at Brechin, April 11 1744, the day appointed for publick humiliation. Edinburgh: printed by T. Lumisden and J. Robertson, 1744.


1745


BOSTON, Thomas, the Younger. The triple testimony to the truth of Christianity. A sermon. Edinburgh, 1745.


SMITH, John. The excellency and nobleness of true religion, in its original, nature, properties, operations, progress, and end. Glasgow: printed by R. Foulis, 1745.


1746


CUMING, Patrick. A sermon preached in the Old Church of Edinburgh, December 18, 1745, being the Fast-Day, appointed by the King, for the Rebellion. Edinburgh, 1746.


ERSKINE, Ralph. The best security for the best life; or, a life hid with Christ in God. A sermon preached at Dunfermline, August 11, 1745. Edinburgh, 1746.

RENWICK, James. A prophecy concerning the Lord's return to Scotland, by a plentiful out-pouring of the Spirit upon his church and land; in three prophetical sermons. Edinburgh, 1746.

WALLACE, Robert. Ignorance and superstition a source of violence and cruelty, and in particular the cause of the present rebellion. A sermon preached January 6, 1745-6, upon occasion of the anniversary meeting of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge. Edinburgh, 1746.


WEBSTER, Alexander. Heathens professing Judiasm, when the fear of the Jews fell upon them. Two sermons preached in the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh, on occasion of the Thanksgiving, June 23 1746, for the victory over the rebels at the Battle of Culloden. Edinburgh: printed by T. Lumisden & J. Robertson, 1746.

WHITEFIELD, George. Abraham's offering up his son Isaac. A sermon. [Glasgow?], 1746.


1747

BOSTON, Thomas, the Elder. The sovereignty and wisdom of God displayed in the afflictions of men, together with a Christian deportment under them. Being several sermons. Edinburgh: printed by W. Gray, 1747.


ERSKINE, Ebenezer. A robbery committed and restitution made, both to God and man. A sermon preached upon a Thanksgiving-day after the Sacrament in Dunfermline, August 11. 1746. Edinburgh: printed by W. Gray, 1747.
ERSKINE, Ralph. Christ's treasures opened by himself, declaring he hath all things that God the Father hath. A sermon preached before the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at Dunfermline, July 19, 1747. Glasgow, 1747.

ERSKINE, Ralph. Clean water: or, The pure and precious blood of Christ, for the cleansing of polluted sinners. A sermon preached before the administration of the Lord's Supper, Dunfermline, August 10, 1746. Glasgow, 1747.

ERSKINE, Ralph. Heaven pos'd and press'd with questions and demands; or, Faith's freedom with God warranted. A sermon preached at Glasgow, July 21, 1746, after the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Glasgow, 1747.

LAVELY, Murtagh. Purgatory prov'd. In a funeral sermon upon the death of one of his parishioners. Liverpool: printed: and Edinburgh: re-printed 1747.

MONTAGUE, Alexander. The duty of national covenanting explained, in some sermons preached at the renovation of our Covenant, National and Solemn League, by the Associate Presbytery, at Abernethy, July 1744. Edinburgh, 1747.


SCOUGAL, Henry. The life of God in the soul of man. To which is added, a sermon at his funeral by George Gairden. Edinburgh: printed by W. Sands, 1747.

1748


NEVAY, John. The nature, properties, blessings, and saving graces, of the Covenant of Grace, in I. I. c. e. 49. Sermons on 2 Samuel XXIII. 5. Glasgow, 1748.


WILLIAMSON, Jacobus. The stones of a crown lifted up, as ensigns in the Messiah's land, for the salvation of God's people: shewn in a sermon, delivered in the New Church of Middleburgh, May 10, 1747. Edinburgh, 1748.


1749


BISSET, John. A sermon preached in the New-Church of Aberdeen, upon the twenty-fifth day of April 1749, being the national thanksgiving for the peace concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle. Aberdeen: printed by J. Chalmers, 1749.


GRAY, Andrew. The mystery of faith opened up: or, Some Sermons concerning faith. Glasgow: printed by W. Duncan, 1749.

MACKAIL, Hugh. The last publick sermon, preach'd by Hugh Mackaile, in the Old Church at Edinburgh, upon the Sabbath preceding 8 September 1662. Edinburgh: printed by R. Fleming, 1749.

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. The door of salvation opened. Or, a loud and shrill voice. Edinburgh, 1749.

RUTHERFORD, Samuel. An exhortation at a communion to a Scots congregation in London. Edinburgh, 1749.


GRAY, Andrew. Great and precious promises: or, Some sermons concerning the promises. All being revised since his death, by some friends. The last impression, carefully corrected and amended. Glasgow: printed by W. Duncan, 1750.


1751


SCougAL, Henry. Discourses on important subjects. To which is added a sermon preached at his funeral, by George Gairden. Glasgow: printed by R. and A. Foulis, 1751.


1752


1753


Bonar, Thomas, the Elder. Sermons and discourses on several important subjects of divinity. Edinburgh: printed by W. Gray, 1753.


Carmichael, Frederick. Sermons on several important subjects. Edinburgh: printed by R. Fleming, 1753.

Robertson, Robert. Submission to the present government asserted, and the justice of the revolution-establishment vindicated, in a sermon on reformation and revolution principles, preached before the Synod of Perth and Stirling, October 18, 1752. Edinburgh: printed by Sands, Murray, and Cochran, 1753.

455.

WHITEFIELD, George. *Flying from the wrath to come.* A sermon preached in the Castle-Yeard of Glasgow, from Matthew iii.7. Glasgow, 1753.


1754


DURHAM, James. The blessedness of the death of those that die in the Lord. Glasgow, 1754.


WEBBERBURN, Alexander. Heaven upon earth or the history of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ, opened in several sermons. Glasgow: printed by J. and J. Duncan, 1754.

1755

ABERNETHY, John: Discourses concerning the being of God. Dublin: printed: Glasgow: reprinted by R. Erie, 1755.

BOSTON, Thomas, the Younger. The Redeemer's ability to save sinners to the uttermost, illustrated. The second sermon preached in the Tolbooth Church of Edinburgh, at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, March 26, 1755. Edinburgh, 1755.


FISHER, James. Christ the sole and wonderful doer, in the work of man's redemption. An action sermon preached before the Lord's Supper, in the Associate Congregation of Glasgow, June 23, 1745. To which is subjoined, the doors of the heart summoned to open to the King of Glory. An action-sermon, preached August 30, 1755. Glasgow, 1755.

MACLAURIN, John. Sermons and essays. Published from the author's manuscript by John Gillies. Glasgow: printed by J. Knox, 1755.

MONCKIEFF, William. A banner displayed because of the truth, matter of praise to all the wellwishers thereof. A sermon preached at the opening of the Associate Synod, August 19, 1755. Edinburgh: printed by Sands, Murray, and Cochran, 1755.

ROBERTSON, William. The situation of the world at the time of Christ's appearance, and its connexion with the success of his religion considered. Edinburgh: printed by Hamilton, Balfour and Neill, 1755.


1756


BOSTON, Thomas, the Elder. The best security against the day of wrath. A sermon on Heb.xi.28. Edinburgh: printed by W. Gray, 1756.

BOSTON, Thomas, the Elder. The end of time and the mystery of God finished with it. Being several sermons, preached 1732. Edinburgh: printed by W. Gray, 1756.

BOSTON, Thomas, the Elder. The evil and danger of schism. 3rd ed. Edinburgh, 1756.


BOSTON, Thomas, 1676-1732. Sermons and discourses on several important subjects in divinity. Edinburgh: printed by W. Gray, 1756.


1757

DAINE, James. A sermon preached at the translation of the Rev. Mr Wotherspoon from Leith to the Laigh Hall at Paisley. Glasgow: printed by A. McLean, 1757.

INNES, Hugh. Scotland alarmed by the loud cry of threatened judgments. In a sermon preached on the Fast-day Febr. 10 1757. Glasgow, 1757.


1758


1759

AMBROSE, Isaac. The compleat works of Isaac Ambrose, consisting of these following treatises, viz. Prima, media, et ultima, or, The first, middle, and last things. With a sermon added, concerning redeeming the time. Dundee: printed by H. Galbraith and Company, 1759.

1760


GERARD, Alexander. The influence of the pastoral order on the character examined. A sermon preached before the Synod of Aberdeen, April 8. 1760. Aberdeen, 1760.


MUIR, George. The Christian's duty towards kings, and those in authority, represented in two sermons, upon the demise of George II. and the secession of George III. Glasgow, 1760.

The RIGHT improvement of time: deduced from the state of man. A sermon. Edinburgh, 1760.

SHIRIYA, Robert. Four sermons on important subjects. Glasgow, 1760.

1761


CRAIG, William. The reverence which is due to the name of God. A sermon. Glasgow: printed by R. and A. Foulis, 1761.


MUCKARSIE, John. The mission and work of gospel-ministers, considered; in a sermon from John 1.6,7. Preached at the ordination of John Ferguson, to be minister of the Associate Congregation of Comrie and Strathallan, March 4, 1760. Glasgow, 1761.
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