

## ANTIQUARY

When did George Gillespie write  
*Miscellany Questions?*

In January of 2024, Reformation Heritage Books and Naphtali Press issued the final volume of *The Shorter Writings of George Gillespie*,<sup>1</sup> completing a three volume set containing all of Gillespie's known writings, except for the two large publications that marked the meteoric beginning and the apex of his brief ministry.<sup>2</sup> In this third volume appears a posthumously published set of papers entitled *Miscellany Questions*. This work has twenty-two chapters consisting of individual, sometimes related but mostly unrelated, studies that Gillespie undertook, supposedly all while in London serving as one of the ecclesiastical commissioners to the Westminster Assembly of Divines. William M. Hetherington writes in his memoir of George Gillespie:

A short time after his death, and during the year 1649, his brother Patrick published in one volume, entitled a *Treatise of Miscellany Questions*, a series of papers, twenty-two in number, on a variety of important topics, which appeared to be in a condition fit for the press. Though this is a posthumous production, and consequently without its author's finishing corrections, it displays the same clearness, precision, and logical power, which characterize his other works. We are inclined to conjecture that these Essays, as we would now term them, were written at different times during the course of several years, and while he was studying the various topics to which they relate. Several of them are on subjects which were debated in the Westminster Assembly; and it is very probable that Gillespie wrote them while maturing his views on these points preparatory for those discussions in which he so greatly distinguished himself.<sup>3</sup>

The twenty-two chapters in *Miscellany Questions* are.

1. That the ministry is a perpetual ordinance of Christ in the church, and that ministers are to be received as the ambassadors of Christ now as well as in the primitive times.
2. Of the election of pastors with the congregation's consent.
3. Whether ordination be essential to the calling of a minister.
4. Objections against the necessity of ordination answered.
5. Whether these prophets and prophesying in the

primitive church, 1 Corinthians 14, 12:28, Ephesians 4:11, were extraordinary, and so not to continue; or whether they are precedents for the preaching or prophesying of such as are neither ordained ministers nor probationers for the ministry.

6. Whether any but a minister, lawfully called and ordained, may administer the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper.

7. Of prophets and evangelists: in what sense their work and vocation might be called extraordinary, and in what sense ordinary.

8. That the primitive apostolical pattern holds forth unto us, for our imitation, a presbytery, i.e., an assembly of elders, having power of ordination, with laying on of hands.

9. What is meant in Scripture by the word *heresies*, and how we are to understand that there must be heresies, for making manifest the godly party, or those that are approved, 1 Corinthians 11:19.

10. Of new lights, and how to keep off from splitting either upon the Charybdis of pertinacity and tenaciousness, or upon the Scylla of levity, wavering, and scepticism.

11. Of stability and firmness in the truth.

12. Whether a sound heart and an unsound head can consist together, and vice versa, or whether truth and holiness be not inseparable companions.

13. Whether conscionable Christians, and such as love the power and practice of piety, can, without defiling their own conscience, or without a destructive wounding of the power of godliness, embrace and hold the principles of those who call themselves the godly party; or whether they ought not rather to avoid those who do now pharisaically and Donatistically appropriate to themselves the name of the godly party,

1. *The Shorter Writings of George Gillespie*, volume 1, 384pp., volume 2, 535 pp., volume 3, 616 pp. The set is published as part of the book series, Naphtali Press Special Editions (Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2021, 2022, 2023).

2. Gillespie's first publication, *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies* (1637; critical ed., Naphtali Press, 2013), which had been published in the Netherlands and smuggled into Scotland, arrived shortly after the revolt against the imposition of Laud's service book and became the intellectual argument for what became known as the Second Reformation in Scotland. Though still a young man in his mid-twenties, and not yet ordained, having refused ordination at the hand of any bishop, the acclaim for this work catapulted Gillespie into the leadership of the church and led to his appointment as one of the Scottish ecclesiastical commissioners to the Westminster Assembly of Divines. His largest work and magnum opus, published in 1646, was a work against the Erastian theory of church government bearing the title of *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*. A critical edition of this book should be published in late 2024 or early 2025 for the NPSE series.

3. See Memoir of the Rev. George Gillespie in *Works of Mr. George Gillespie*, The Presbyterian's Armoury (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1844-46), p. xxiv. See also, *Shorter Writings*, volume 1, p. 43.

as being indeed such, who, under the pretence of zeal for the power of godliness, hold diverse ungodly principles.

14. Another most useful case of conscience discussed and resolved, concerning associations and confederacies with idolaters, infidels, heretics, or any other known enemies of truth and godliness.

15. Of uniformity in religion, worship of God, and church government.

16. Whether it be lawful, just, and expedient, that the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant be enjoined by the Parliament upon all persons in the kingdom under a considerable penalty.

17. Of infant baptism.

18. Of the use of a table in the Lord's Supper, and of the communicants' coming to and receiving at the table.

19. That there was among the Jews a jurisdiction and government ecclesiastical distinct from the civil.

20. That necessary consequences from the written word of God do sufficiently and strongly prove the consequent or conclusion; if theoretical, to be a certain divine truth which ought to be believed; and, if practical, to be a necessary duty which we are obliged unto *jure divino*.

21. Of an assurance of an interest in Christ by the marks or fruits of sanctification, and namely, by love to the brethren. Also how this agrees with or differs from, assurance by the testimony of the Spirit; and whether there can be any well-grounded assurance without marks of grace.

22. Of the true real and safe grounds of encouragement to believe in Jesus Christ; or, upon what warrants a sinner may adventure to rest and rely upon Christ for salvation.

4. See the tracts against toleration in *Shorter Writings*, volume 1, and the tracts engaging Thomas Coleman in *Shorter Writings*, vol. 2.

5. See Notes on the Westminster Assembly in *Shorter Writings of George Gillespie*, v. 3, p. 473. See *Aaron's Rod* in *Works* (1844–1846).

6. Memoir, *ibid*.

7. This chapter was published separately as *An Usefull Case of Conscience, Discussed, and Resolved. Concerning associations and confederacies with idolaters, infidels, hereticks, or any other known enemies of truth and godliness. By Master George Gillespie, late minister at Edinburgh. Whereunto is subjoyned a letter written by him to the commissioners of the Generall Assembly, in the time of his sicknesse; together with his testimony unto this truth, written by him two dayes before his death* (1649). Thomason purchased the London edition on January 25, 1648 [i.e., 1649]. *Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers, and Manuscripts Relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration collected by George Thomason, 1640–1661*, 2 volumes (London: British Museum, 1908), p. 718. ESTC records two Edinburgh variants (R213029 and R7619). <http://estc.bl.uk/>.

8. Thomason, 1.718.

9. Sankar Muthu, *Empire and Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 70 and n25.

10. *Shorter Writings*, vol. 2, p. 443.

11. See *Shorter Writings*, vol. 3, page 573. See also "Anti-Engagement Writings," in *Shorter Writings*, volume 2, pp. 441–528.]

As to their origin, rather than preparatory to his assembly debates, these essays appear to have flowed from either the subject first arising in the assembly or from the controversies of the chaotic ecclesiastical scene in London at the time, much as the two tract wars did in which he engaged, the three against tolerating sects and heresies, and the three engaging Thomas Coleman on Eraſtianism.<sup>4</sup> Otherwise, with some qualification in the conclusion of this article, Hetherington seems largely correct about the nature of these essays, when he goes on to note the similarity of the paper on excommunication appearing in Gillespie's *Notes of the Assembly*, to sections of *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*.<sup>5</sup>

May he not have been in the habit of concentrating his mind on the leading topics of the subjects which he was studying, writing out pretty fully and carefully his thoughts on these topics, and afterwards connecting and arranging them so as to form one complete work? If so, then we may conclude that the *Miscellany Questions* contain such of these masses of separate thinking as Gillespie found no opportunity of using in any other manner, and, therefore, consented to their publication in their present form.<sup>6</sup>

While he does not say, Hetherington likely knew that there was one clear exception to the idea that these essays all date to Gillespie's stay in London. This is the chapter that was also previously published as a standalone tract, Chapter 14, "Another most useful case of conscience discussed and resolved, concerning associations and confederacies with idolaters, infidels, heretics, or any other known enemies of truth and godliness." This paper was published by January of 1649, and also contained his dying testimony.<sup>7</sup> The *Miscellany* was published later in the year about July 16, 1649.<sup>8</sup> The claim is well off the mark historically that this chapter "was apparently a sermon originally delivered in 1640, at the time of the Bishops' War, in defense of separation from the English Church; it was reissued with a covering letter from Gillespie (who was on the point of death) denouncing the treaty made between Charles I and the Scots delegates at Carisbrooke in December 1647."<sup>9</sup> The content and references, dating as late as 1646, and references to a General Assembly act of August 1647, indicate this likely was produced no earlier than January or February 1648, once the agreement of December 26, 1647 to invade England to rescue King Charles I became public knowledge (a failed attempt subsequently known as "The Engagement"), and Gillespie began to industriously and vigorously oppose the plan in many sermons.<sup>10</sup> This lecture or sermon is likely what was ordered printed at Gillespie's death.<sup>11</sup> So this paper was written in Scotland, well after Gillespie had left the assembly on July 16, 1647.

What about the rest of the essays? Do they all date to Gillespie’s time in London? One can try to date the essays from the content or by the publication dates of books referenced in them. For the latter, we fortunately have the extraordinary notations made by George Thomason of all the thousands of publications he purchased during the time of the English Civil Wars, where he carefully wrote the acquisition date on the title pages. Of these essays, several do not reference contemporary publications that might date them more precisely. For chapters nine, eleven, and eighteen, we must look to the subject and content to date them with greater specificity than simply Gillespie’s years in London.

Chapter Nine, “What is meant in Scripture by the word *Heresies*,” and Chapter Eleven, “Of stability and firmness in the truth,” could have been written at any point once Gillespie had been in London long enough to see the magnitude and number of errors and sects flourishing, perhaps dating to after he had been in London a good year when he wrote his tracts against toleration, circa October–December, 1644.<sup>12</sup> Certainly Gillespie realized the degree of the danger of falling away to error, as John Livingstone wrote of him, “I heard him once say, when he went to England he was hardly a moneth there but he was in danger to turn a sectary [*sic* malignant], and was hardly a moneth again in Scotland but he was in danger to turn a malignant [*sic* sectary]. This he said because sectaries so abounded in England, and malignants in Scotland.”<sup>13</sup>

Chapter Eighteen, “Of the use of a table in the Lord’s Supper,” likely dates no earlier than the time of the controversy in the Grand Committee on March 4, 1644, over the Scots’ insistence on the use of a table and all communicants seated around it, and no later than the submission for publication of the final text of the subdirectory of worship “Of the Celebration of the Communion or sacrament of the Lord’s Supper,” on November 12, 1644.<sup>14</sup>

The majority of the remaining essays, or chapters, can be most easily narrowed down to a “completed by no earlier date” by comparing the contemporary books referenced to when George Thomason’s acquired his copy. They fall into two groupings, one late in Gillespie’s stay in London, and the rest could have been written earlier over a wider period.

The later writings represent perhaps the more interesting of the two groups. In Chapters One, “That the ministry is a perpetual ordinance of Christ in the church,” Three, “Whether ordination be essential to the calling of a minister,” and Six, “Whether any other but a minister, lawfully called and ordained, may administer the Sacraments,” Gillespie appears to be aware of or references the anonymous Eraſtian work, *Grallæ, seu Vere puerilis cothurnus sapientiae* (Franekeræ, 1646) and the English translation, *The supreme povver of Christian states vindicated against the insolent pretences of Guilielmus Apollonii* (London: For George Whittington, 1647). In

chapter one, Gillespie refers to this work having been printed the prior year in Franeker, making 1647 the year of his writing, and the English translation was purchased by Thomason on May 18, 1647, putting a completion date on or after that date.<sup>15</sup>

Chapter Four, “Objections against the necessity of ordination answered,” is functionally a part two to Chapter Three, and must date to the same period on or after May 18, 1647. The Directory for Ordination had been gutted of its doctrinal underpinnings by the House of Commons and only the practical procedural part was approved and published in October of 1644.<sup>16</sup> However, ordination would continue to come up in various ways and the Dissenting Brethren protested the idea on December 12, 1644, that only the presbytery had the authority of ordination, in *The Reasons of the Dissenting Brethren concerning the power that is in the congregations*, which the assembly did not get around to answering until April 19, 1648.<sup>17</sup> Also, as will be next noted, Gillespie references congregationalist Sidrach Simpson’s Διατριβη in several chapters, and that tract may have been at least part of the impetus for taking up those essays.

Chapter Five, “Whether these prophets and prophesings in the primitive church . . . were extraordinary,” refers to Westminster divine Sidrach Simpson’s Διατριβη: *Wherein the judgement of the reformed churches and Protestant divines, is shewed, concerning ordination, laying on of hands in ordination of ministers: and, preaching by those who are not ordained ministers* (1647). This was obtained by George Thomason on February 5, 1647,<sup>18</sup> and is also referenced in chapters three and four. Chapters Seven, “Of prophets and evangelists,” and

12. Gillespie does speak of heresy in all three of his tracts against toleration, but nowhere does he define it as in the essay making up chapter nine of the *Miscellany*. See *Faces About, Dialogue Between a Civilian and a Divine*, and *Wholesome Severity Reconciled with Christian Liberty*, in *Shorter Writings of George Gillespie*, volume 1.

13. John Livingstone, *Memorable Characteristics*, in *Select Biographies*, 2 vols., ed. William K. Tweedie (Edinburgh: Printed for the Wodrow Society, 1845), 1.331. W. K. Tweedie, the editor, has indicated the terms should be switched, which changes the meaning, that it was not that Gillespie was in danger of turning one way because it was prevalent, but that he was in danger of reacting to that prevalent error by turning to the other error. Tweedie did not provide any basis for why he thought the terms should be switched.

14. See *Notes on the Assembly*, in *Shorter Writings of George Gillespie*, v. 3, p. 461. See Chad Van Dixhoorn, *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly 1643–1652*, 5 volumes (Oxford University Press, 2012), 5.108.

15. Thomason, 1.510.

16. See Chad Van Dixhoorn, *God’s Ambassadors: The Westminster Assembly and the Reformation of the English Pulpit, 1643–1653*, Studies on the Westminster Assembly (Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), pp. [71]–77.

17. *Minutes*, 5.144, 340, and *The Grand Debate* (1648; 1652, repr. Naphthali Press, 2014; 2nd ed., with Reformation Heritage Books, 2024).

18. Thomason, 1.591.

Eight, “That the primitive apostolical pattern holds forth unto us for our imitation, a presbytery, i.e., an assembly of elders, having power of ordination, with laying on of hands,” both make reference to William Aspinwall’s *Certaine queries touching the ordination of ministers* (1647), which Thomason obtained on February 27, 1647.<sup>19</sup> This is also referenced in chapter four.

Chapter Twelve, “Whether a sound heart and an unsound head can consist together, and vice versa; or, whether truth and holiness be not inseparable companions,” has a reference to John Goodwin’s *Hagiomastix* (London: Matthew Simmons for Henry Overton, 1647), which Thomason purchased apparently the same day as Simpson’s *Διατριβη*, on February 5, 1647,<sup>20</sup> likely placing the production of this essay during the same period as the foregoing.

Chapter Thirteen, “Whether Conscionable Christians, and such as love the power and practice of piety, can, without defiling their conscience, or without a destructive wounding of the power of godliness, embrace and hold the principles of those who call themselves the “godly party,” contains a reference to Thomas Edwards’s *The third part of Gangraena: Or, A new and higher discovery of the errors, heresies, blasphemies, and insolent proceedings of the sectaries of these times* (London: Ralph Smith, 1646). Judging from Thomason’s purchase, this appeared about December 28, 1646.<sup>21</sup> Also referenced is William Dell’s fast sermon preached by their request before the House of Commons on November 25, 1646. Dell presented a printed copy to the House of Commons on December 12, 1646.<sup>22</sup> This created a stir, possibly because there had not been a thank you given and order to print issued by the Commons, which was usually routine following the preaching, and a committee was appointed to review the publication. Ironically, that same day, the Commons also ordered a committee to read and review *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*, which was clearly a rebuttal to their nine “captious questions” issued when charging the Westminster Assembly with breach of privilege in chastising the House for encroaching on the divine prerogatives of

Christ to order the government of His church.<sup>23</sup> This likely also places the writing of this essay in the first half of 1647 before Gillespie’s departure in mid-July.

Chapter Seventeen, “Of Infant Baptism,” refers to Robert Baillie’s *Anabaptism, the true fountaine of Independency, Brownisme, Antinomy, Familisme, and the most of the other errors, which for the time doe trouble the Church of England, unsealed* (London: Gellibrand, 1647), which Thomason dates as acquired on December 28, 1646.<sup>24</sup> This places the production of this essay as well in the same six month period prior to Gillespie’s departure in July 1647.

It is possible then, that ten essays (chapters 1, 3–8, 12–13, 17), date to a relatively short and shared period, some dating their completion no earlier than February 5, 1647 and others no earlier than May 18, 1647. However, one can see an immediate issue at this point. Gillespie departed the Westminster assembly on July 16, 1647. So, the question arises, did Gillespie write these essays in these final weeks, or did he continue to work on them after he departed for Scotland? While the latter is certainly possible, it may be unlikely.

Upon returning to Scotland, Gillespie was exceedingly busy. Since he had his family with him at this point, Gillespie was essentially moving household from London back to Scotland, and at the same time, he likely would barely have arrived and he would have had to attend the month long General Assembly in Edinburgh, which meet from August 4, 1647 to the last session on September 1, 1647, in which assembly he played a large role.<sup>25</sup> Also, he was transferred to fill the vacant position in Edinburgh, left void by Henderson’s death, on September 22, and he surely was busy with this new ministry in an important pastorate in the nation’s capital. Also, while they were complete when submitted to the General Assembly, his *The 111 Propositions*, approved by them to be published, and appearing in London by November 30,<sup>26</sup> would have required at least some of Gillespie’s attention. It does not appear then, that he would have had much time for extra circular writing in the remaining months of 1647 after his return to Scotland. This likely was also true the next year. The year 1648 would be consumed with the controversy over the Engagement, his declining health, the August 1648 General assembly, and then his death in January of 1649. Therefore, while it is not impossible he revisited these essays for minor tinkering, it seems more likely that they were largely in a semi-finished state before he left London on July 16, 1647.

Consequently, it seems to be the case that this group of essays, as well as the earlier grouping to be noted, had to be completed by early July 1647, which makes it likely he was working on those dating no earlier than May 16, 1647 (chapters 1, 3–4, 6), the date of the English translation of *Grallæ*, between then and early July, the likelihood of which is addressed in the conclusion.

19. Thomason, 1.496.

20. Thomason, 1.591.

21. Thomason, 1.483.

22. See *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. 5 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1803), vol. 5, p. 10.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 10; *Shorter Writings*, 2.146; *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, 1637–1662*, ed. David Laing, 3 volumes (Edinburgh: [Bannatyne Club], 1841–1842), 2.378. For background on the controversy, see John R. de Witt, *Jus Divinum: The Westminster Assembly and the Divine Right of Church Government* (Kampen: Kok, 1969), pp. 169–208.

24. Thomason, 1.483. However, ESTC gives January 1 [?], 1647. ESTC R38567.

25. See *Shorter Writings*, volume 2, pp. 347ff.

26. Thomason, 1.575. See *Shorter Writings*, volume 2, p. [382].

The rest of the essays date to an earlier time or at least fall into a wider time period for completion.

Chapter Two, “Of the Election of Pastors,” mentions Charles Herle as Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, which he became on July 20, 1646, after the death of William Twisse. Referenced is Blondel’s *Apologia pro Sententia Hieronymi de Episcopis et Presbyteri* (1646), for which the author’s preface is dated March 7, 1646, putting it likely in print about the same time, but allowing time for importing, likely puts the earliest possible writing for chapter two between April and June 1646, or possibly later, depending on when copies would have been imported into London.

Chapter Ten, “Of New Lights, and how to keep off from splitting either upon the Charybdis of pertinacy and tenaciousness, or upon the Scylla of levity, wavering, and scepticism,” references a posthumously published work by Simon Episcopius, in which the preface is dated February 1646. While one might think this title would fit the genre of studies connected to the time of his writing his tracts against toleration, those spanned the period from October to December of 1644. The reference to the work by Episcopius puts an earliest completion date after February 1646.

Chapter Fifteen, “Of uniformity in religion, worship of God, and church government,” opens with the adducing of two tracts written against uniformity, William Dell’s *Uniformity examined whether it be found in the Gospel* (London: Matthew Simmons for Henry Overton, 1646), which Thomason dates February 11, 1646, and Henry Burton’s *Conformitie’s Deformity* (London: Giles Calvert, 1646), which he did not purchase until October 26, 1646.<sup>27</sup> Thus the window for writing this short essay probably dates to sometime between November 1646 and July 1647, possibly placing it in the group completed in the first six months of 1647.

Chapter Sixteen, “Whether it be lawful, just, and expedient, that there be an ordinance of parliament for the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant,” refers to the ordinances for the ordination of ministers, “the first and the last one.” It is not absolutely clear what is meant by “last” since a temporary order was issued on October 2, 1644, which was renewed on November 8, 1645, and then it was made permanent on August 27/28, 1646. It is likely he meant the last date because he also refers to the Newcastle propositions for peace presented to the king on July 24, 1646, which the king replied to on August 1 by refusing to answer without being allowed to come to London. Both were published sometime afterward by Evan Tyler in 1646. However, a delegation of Scottish commissioners had taken the propositions to the king, and upon their return, made a report to the House of Commons on August 12, 1646, and this essay dates to any time about that date and afterward, when Gillespie would have learned of the outcome of the negotiations with the king.<sup>28</sup>

Chapter Nineteen, “That there was among the Jews a jurisdiction and government ecclesiastical distinct from the civil,” refers to several pages in Gillespie’s own *Aaron’s Rod Blossoming*, which was obtained by Thomason on August 4, 1646, a few days after Gillespie had presented copies to members of the Westminster assembly on July 30, 1646,<sup>29</sup> dating this essay to between the ensuing twelve months until his departure on July 16, 1647.

Chapters Twenty, on necessary consequences of Scripture, Chapter Twenty-One, “Of an assurance of an interest in Christ,” and Chapter Twenty-Two, “Of the true, real, and safe grounds of encouragement to believe in Jesus Christ,” all reference Thomas Moore, Sr.’s, *The Unversallity of God’s Free-grace in Christ to Mankind* (London: {Overton,} 1646), a copy of which Thomason obtained on April 8, 1646,<sup>30</sup> dating all three to a wider period from April 1646 to July 1647.

To conclude, William Hetherington was mostly correct in his theory that the *Miscellany Questions* were individual writing projects that George Gillespie undertook while in London, as a means “of concentrating his mind on the leading topics of the subjects which he was studying, writing out pretty fully and carefully his thoughts on these topics, and afterwards connecting and arranging them so as to form one complete work?”<sup>31</sup> However, contrary to his theory, they were not written so much to prepare for the debates in which he engaged at Westminster, as much as they seem to have either been sparked by those debates or by the errors, heresies, and ecclesiastical chaos of London in the 1640s. The essays also are not evenly distributed over his time in London at the assembly. Half of the essays seem to have been written in the last six months of his service in London, before leaving for good on July 16, 1647, and it is possible many or even most of the other half of the essays, that are dated to a wider range of time, could have been written then also. Only chapter eighteen on the use of a table for observing the Lord’s Supper appears to date more certainly to his first year or so in London, toward the end of November, before his brief trip back to Scotland for the General Assembly in January 1645.

There are no early manuscripts to indicate if writing in this way was George Gillespie’s study method. It is certainly possible. This sort of writing may have been natural due to his course of study from grammar school and university, and

27. Thomason, 1.420, 1.471.

28. *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. 4 (1802), pp. 642–643. See Baillie, *Letters & Journals*, 2.370–387. Henderson had gone to counsel the king in May, and, as Baillie relates, by August 7, lay dying at Newcastle. Gillespie and Baillie were not part of the delegation but no doubt were fairly soon informed of the outcome of the negotiations with the king at least by August 12, 1646.

29. Thomason, 1.483. *Minutes*, 4.219.

30. Thomason, 1.431.

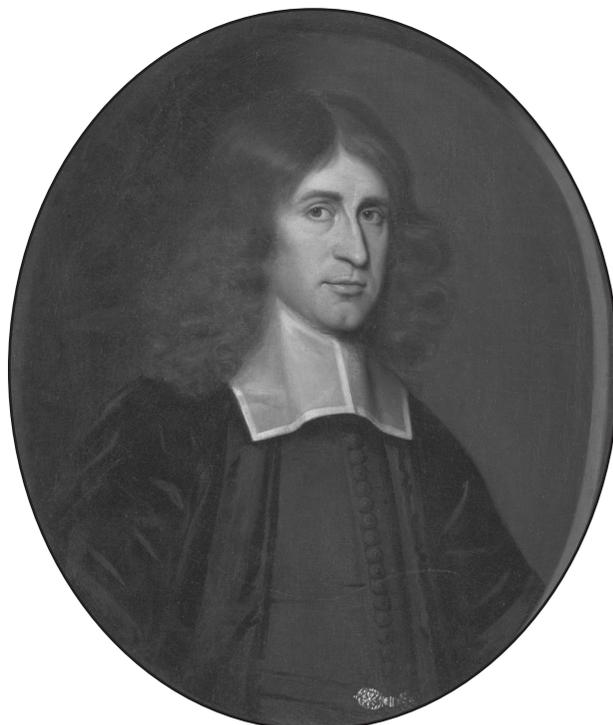
31. *Memoir*, p. xxiv. *Shorter Writings*, 1.43.

divinity studies, where the classical education, study of Latin, Greek, probably Hebrew, logic and rhetoric, engaging in disputations and “the elaborate logical defence of theses,” must surely have instilled in Gillespie the “orderly thinking, logical accuracy, quick judgment, clear expression, fluent utterance, clever criticism, ingenious argument” to be able not only to write out a response to some question at the Westminster assembly voiced the prior day, but also to be able to make a reply extemporaneously shortly after the speaker sat down. He certainly had the intellect, having taken M.A. at not yet seventeen years of age, and it seems likely writing such essays came easily to him in London.<sup>32</sup>

However, Gillespie also was not investigating just any topic that intrigued him. Judging from what we have as evidence from his time at the Westminster Assembly in London, Gillespie wrote in order to answer a question or clarify a position to further the goals of the Solemn League & Covenant, to preserve “the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, against our common enemies” and “the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship,

discipline, and government, according to the Word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches; and shall endeavor to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church government, directory for worship and catechising; that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.”<sup>33</sup> This was true of his debates at the assembly, of his tracts, *Sermons, Aaron’s Rod Blossoming*, *111 Propositions against Erastianism*, and it is true of the *Miscellany Questions*. It may also be true, if it is the case that more than a couple of these essays were not just finalized but undertaken and completed in the last two months of his time in London, that he wrote quickly! He likely was a fast writer of even the most detailed passages dense with references, given his ability to make the briefest of notes while an opponent was speaking in the assembly, and then rise and with just those notations and his thoughts organized, deliver a fully developed extemporaneous answer to all the speaker’s arguments and objections, point by point.<sup>34</sup>

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George Gillespie (1613–1648), by Henry Scougall (active 1661–1677), Scottish National Portrait Gallery, on loan from St. Bryce Kirk Session and Board, Kirkcaldy, Scotland.

32. See “University Studies” in *Shorter Writings*, volume 1, pp. 61–64.

33. The Solemn League and Covenant, in *The Confession of Faith; the Larger and Shorter catechisms ... covenants, National and Solemn league*; etc. (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1855), p. 359.

34. The question has been raised over Gillespie’s debate performances as recorded in his notes. See “Antiquary: Did George Gillespie embellish his Notes recorded during the Westminster Assembly?” *The Confessional Presbyterian* 19 (2023): 305–309.