

Account of the Controversy Respecting *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*

By Thomas M'Crie

The Marrow of Modern Divinity was a little known 17th-century book which Thomas Boston republished and caused an 18th century controversy in the Church of Scotland. In recent years, Sinclair Ferguson's 2016 work, *The Whole Christ*, has renewed our awareness and interest in the Marrow Controversy. In the *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology* David C. Lachman writes, "Doctrinally, the controversy centred around various aspects of the relationship between God's sovereignty and human responsibility in the work of salvation, with the Marrow Brethren emphasizing God's grace and the majority insisting on what must be done in order to obtain salvation." The Marrow Men were "more in harmony with the Reformed Confessions of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and, on balance, with the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. Their opponents, though representative of the great majority of ministers in the early eighteenth-century CoFS, reflected the legalizing tendencies of late seventeenth-century developments of Reformed theology, rather than Reformed thought as a whole" ("Marrow Controversy," p. 547). "On the surface the Marrow Controversy was about how we preach the gospel, what role, if any, God's law and our obedience play in the Christian life, and what it means to have assurance of salvation. But those issues are always, at bottom, about the gospel itself" (Sinclair Ferguson, "Why I Wrote a Book about the Marrow Controversy"). In short, the Marrow Controversy was a struggle to rightly understand the relationship between God's grace and our works. Its study remains useful, even crucial, in our day.

Serious readers delving further into this controversy then turn to David Lachman's magisterial treatment, *The Marrow Controversy* (Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology, Rutherford House, 1988), where his first footnote references this present work by Thomas M'Crie, Sr., "as a good historical narrative, though limited by a lack of access to ecclesiastical records, but does not attempt an analysis of the theological issues debated in the course of the Controversy." Finding M'Crie's treatise, however, proved elusive, with no digital edition avail-

able in the usual places. At last a full set of *The Edinburgh Christian Instructor* was obtained for the PCA Historical Center's collection, and a transcription is presented here.

M'Crie's "Account" was published anonymously. However, Thomas M'Crie, Jr. confirmed his father's authorship, and notes that "he was so fastidious as to take every precaution to conceal his authorship of the papers in the Instructor, and he felt rather annoyed on its being accidentally discovered (*Life of Thomas M'Crie, D.D.* [1842], 280ff.). It may be that attaching the famous historian's name to this "good historical narrative," has rescued it from obscurity, much like Thomas Boston did *The Marrow*.

WAYNE SPARKMAN

THE AUTHOR: Thomas M'Crie (M'Crie or McCrie; the open single quote mark or "inverted apostrophe," was an 18th-19th century printing convention for the superscript "c") was a Scottish Presbyterian historian and minister (1772-1835). Excerpted from *The Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, vol. 30, no. 8 (August 1831): 539-551; vol. 30, no. 10 (October 1831): 687-699; vol. 30, no. 12 (December 1831): 811-826, and [New Series] vol. 1, no. 2 (February 1832): 73-94. Some terms have been explained in brackets. Text compiled by Wayne Sparkman and edited by Chris Coldwell. Footnotes have been updated to reference sources published since M'Crie wrote. If possible, manuscripts have been located to current collections. Two substantial resources remained in manuscript at the time M'Crie wrote: *The Correspondence of Robert Wodrow*, 3 vols, ed. Thomas M'Crie, Jr. (1842-43) and Robert Wodrow, *Analec̄ta: Or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences...*, 4 vols. (1842-1843). M'Crie's citations from the *Analec̄ta* manuscripts have been updated with references to the published text, and where possible letters to and from Wodrow are cross referenced to the *Correspondence*, though the majority of the letters to Wodrow do not appear in print. Also where possible, the location by item number in the Wodrow Octavo and Quarto manuscript volumes of letters are given as cited in David C. Lachman, *The Marrow Controversy* (1988). The archives at National Library of Scotland and the New College collection could not be visited to confirm some manuscript locations within specific manuscript groupings, or exact locations of some Wodrow correspondence in their volumes. In the first, a best guess by catalogue description is made, and in the case of the latter, the full index for all letters of an individual is given from the National Library of Scotland, "Index to Letters (Quarto and Octavo)," compiled by Louise Yeoman.

[PART ONE]

TO UNDERSTAND ARIGHT the controversy respecting the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, like most other disputes which have agitated the church, it is necessary to look farther back than the time at which it first broke out, and to trace the causes, which, if they did not produce the strife, gave it the peculiar character which it assumed, and made it rage with a heat for which those who consider only the abstract points of difference will find it difficult satisfactorily to account.

Soon after the Revolution there sprang up two parties in the Church of Scotland, which, for want of better designations, may be called the Court and the Independent parties; the former disposed to manage ecclesiastical affairs in such a way as to gratify the wishes, and promote the political views, of the civil government; and the latter, though warmly attached to that government, yet jealous of its encroachments on the liberties of the church, and anxious that the ecclesiastical judicatories, setting aside considerations purely secular, should pursue the course and adopt the measures best calculated to advance the interests of religion, and preserve the purity of the Presbyterian constitution,—which, they were convinced, would eventually prove most conducive to the peace of the country, and to the security of the government established at the Revolution.

The Revolution, so auspicious to the civil and sacred liberties of Britain, was brought about in England by a coalition between two parties, political and religious. It was quite otherwise in Scotland. Though a warm friend to liberty of conscience, William was a stranger to those opinions respecting the independence of the church which were cherished by Scotch Presbyterians; and he was not disposed, either from principle or habits, greatly to respect them, when they interfered with his own political views. Disappointed in his object of effecting an ecclesiastical *comprehension* in England, and aware that he could not safely grant a toleration to the Episcopalians in Scotland, who were almost to a man hostile to his authority, he was urgent that the curates, as they were called, or Episcopalian incumbents, should be received, on as easy terms as possible, into the communion and ministry of the Presbyterian establishment. This was resisted by the more zealous Presbyterians, who dreaded

the consequences of admitting persons, who, besides their hostility to the established discipline, were strongly suspected of holding erroneous sentiments on points of doctrine. In consequence of this resistance, an act of Parliament passed, declaring that such incumbents as offered to subscribe the Confession of Faith and submit to the Presbyterian discipline, if not proved scandalous or erroneous before a certain day, should be taken under the protection of government, in other words, should be maintained in the possession of the legal stipends as parochial ministers. The church was finally gained over to the measures of the court, after a warm contest, in the course of which the General Assembly was once dissolved, and repeatedly prorogued, by the civil authority. These invasions of the rights of the Presbyterian church, over which the people of Scotland had always exercised a vigilant jealousy, were succeeded by the imposition of oaths on her ministers, as such, under the pain of deprivation of office. Among the ministers who opposed these measures was Mr. James Hog of Carnock, whose name became afterwards famous in the affair of the *Marrow*. He repeatedly mentions, in his Memoir, the offence which was taken at his conduct in these transactions by the leading members of the church. In 1695 he was excluded from his seat in the General Assembly, because he had not taken the qualifying oaths, though his loyalty was most unquestionable. And when admitted in 1701, he renewed his exertions in support of the intrinsic power of the church.¹

These differences were widened on the accession of Queen Anne, one of whose first acts in Scotland was to dissolve the supreme ecclesiastical court, when it was deliberating on an act, declaring Christ to be the sole head of the church. The union of the kingdom was succeeded by the restoration of patronages, and the extension of the oath of abjuration to Scotland. By this oath, which was imposed on the ministers of the Church of Scotland, the swearer engages to maintain the succession to the Crown, as settled by an English act of Parliament, which provides that the successor shall be always of the communion of the Church of England. At first few of the ministers took the oath, but a slight alteration having been made on its phraseology, at the accession of George I. by far the greater part qualified themselves according to law. Upon this a warm controversy arose. The Court party had from the beginning defended the oath; those who refused to take it were supported by the general voice of the people, who, independently of other considerations, looked upon it as a badge of slavery, imposed on those who ought to appear before them unfettered as the messengers of Heaven. Both parties

1. March 3, 1701. "Mr. Hog's bringing in the intrinsick power so by head and shoulders, and as a considerable omission of the commissioners, and the Commissioner's open declaration of the king's tender regard to the intrinsick power of the church, and the general satisfaction of the Assembly with this, may stand for an open assertion of the church's privileges at this time."—(*Wodrow's Analec̄ta*, i.3. [*Analec̄ta* (1842), 1.2.]

appealed to the public through the medium of the press; the dispute was brought into the pulpit; and scenes not very creditable to religion, and in which it is natural to suppose blame attached to the actors on both sides, were sometimes exhibited, particularly on sacramental occasions. In 1719 the Parliament removed the most palpable objection against it, so far as concerned ministers and preachers, in consequence of which the number of non-jurors was reduced to very few, and their rigidity severely censured. Formerly the Assembly, or its commission, had sometimes petitioned for the abolition of the oath, and at other times had interceded with government not to enforce the law; but now these petitions and intercessions were refused, and the scruplers were exposed at once to state persecutions, and to the high displeasure of their brethren.² In this state were all the ministers who appeared in behalf of the *Marrow*; and while the controversy respecting that book was pending, sentence was pronounced by the civil courts against some of them, while prosecutions were hanging over the heads of the rest.³

But grounds of difference of deeper import, and more intimately connected with their official duty, subsisted among the ministers of the Church in Scotland. There is reason to think that, early in the eighteenth century, a strain of legal or unevangelical preaching was introduced into several of our pulpits, after the example of Archbishop Tillotson, and some other English divines. This was encouraged by the state of matters among the dissenters in England. Soon after the revolution, a warm dispute arose in that body on some points connected with the doctrine of grace; turning chiefly on the question, whether the gospel is a new law or constitution, promising salvation upon a certain condition; some making that condition to be faith, others making it faith and repentance, to which others added sincere obedience. Those who held the affirmative were called Baxterians, or Neonomians; who, in their turn, did not scruple to charge their opponents with antinomianism. The most able and esteemed advocate of the former was Dr. Daniel Williams; the most celebrated writer in favour of the latter was Mr. Robert Trail. Their dissensions were removed or compromised, by the labours of the celebrated Dutch divine, Hermann Witsius, to whom both parties had appealed; but they soon broke out afresh; and Neonomianism grew first into Arminianism, and afterwards into Arianism. The Neonomians, in the early party of the controversy, sheltered themselves (as Mr. Baxter had done before them), under the authority of the Westminster standards, which apply the word *condition* to faith in the matter of salvation. Their

opponents did not object to the use of that word when properly understood; but, on account of the manner in which it was abused by the adversaries of gratuitous justification, they preferred the use of the word *mean* or *instrument*, by which the standards referred to explain the other; and they were careful in their sermons and writings to distinguish accurately between the law and the gospel. The state of public opinion in England began at this time to exert great influence over Scotland; the writings of Williams and Trail were then in the hands of the ministry of this church; and the contest which these men and their respective friends had maintained against one another, was now to be transferred from English to Scottish ground.

Among those who distinguished themselves by zeal for the doctrine of grace, as well as the liberties of the church, were Mr. Hog of Carnock, already mentioned, and Mr. Alexander Hamilton, minister of Airth, who was afterwards translated to Stirling. The former, in a book on the Covenant of Grace⁴, printed in 1706, and in other treatises published about the same time, was at great pains in guarding against legality, or a

2. Boston's *Memoirs*, anno 1719, page 352. At an earlier period, Mr. Boston had found it necessary to execute legal deeds conveying his property to others, to prevent its seizure by order of the Sheriff, while his brethren harassed him by insisting on a pledge that he would not speak against the taking of the oath. *Ibid.*, p. 277, 279. [See *Memoirs of the life, time, and writings, of the reverend and learned Thomas Boston, A.M. sometime minister at Simprin, afterwards at Etterick. Divided into Twelve Periods. Written by himself, and addressed to his children. Now first published from his own manuscripts. To which are added, some original papers, and letters to and from the author (1776). See Works, vol. 12 (Aberdeen, 1852), p. 310.*]

3. Early in January 1720, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh informed the Magistrates that he had received a letter from the Duke of Roxburgh, appointing him "to order the Magistrates of Edinburgh to execute the laws upon the non-jurant ministers of the Established Church, and those of the Episcopal persuasion, and return an answer of their diligence." (Letter, Mr. Webster to Mr. Wodrow.) "The Sheriff-substitute of Stirling has passed sentence (for refusing the abjuration) against Mr. Hamilton, Warden, Anderson in Falkirk, Haſtie in Slamanno. We are not yet troubled here." (Letter, Mr. William Wilson of Perth to Mr. Wodrow, Feb. 22, 1720.) [Letters sent to Robert Wodrow are generally not in the three volumes published of his correspondence. Here, see NLS, Special Collections, Wodrow Manuscripts, Quarto and Octavo, James Webster, Minister of the Tolbooth, Edinburgh, letters of 1719–20, Wod.Lett.Qu., vol. XIV, ff.19, 134, 142, 214, and William Wilson, Minister of the Third Charge, Perth, letters of 1719–20), Wod.Lett.Qu. vol. XIV, ff.48, 84, 103, 112, 150, 199, 223, 249.]

4. Hog, James, *Some select notes, towards detecting a covered mixture of the covenant of works and of grace: With the danger of that evil, and a few advices for remedying thereof. Contained in a letter to a friend upon the head.* Edinburgh: Printed by James Watson, 1706. [20 p.] or *The Covenants of Redemption and Grace displayed. In some questions sent by a Gentleman to a Reverend and Pious Minister of this*

self-righteous disposition, on the head of acceptance with God; and in explaining the place which faith holds in that momentous concern, as well as its influence on evangelical holiness.⁵ The latter embodied his sentiments on the subject in a Catechism on the Covenants of Works and Grace, in which he draws a broad line of distinction between the law and the gospel; makes the righteousness or finished work of Christ the only proper condition of the covenant of grace; maintains that this covenant, as exhibited in the gospel, consists of unconditional promises *indefinitely* proposed to sinners to be received by faith; and teaches that, though faith may be called a condition in a loose sense, yet it cannot be so termed in a strict and proper sense, because it is one of the blessings promised, and we never think of describing the mere reception or acceptance

church, with his answers returned to them. Edinburgh: John Moneur, 1707. 24 p.

5. A correspondence which Mr. Hog carried on by letters with one of his brethren in the years 1710–1712, is still preserved in manuscript, and relates to the conditionality or absoluteness of the premises of the covenant of grace. [See Papers of the Rev. James Hog (c. 1658–1734), New College Library Archives and Manuscripts, MS GD-20. The library lists letters concerning the absoluteness of the covenant of grace for the years 1712–1713. “Letters concerning the absoluteness of the covenant of grace. 4to. 29p. Letters numbered 41 to 56. Dated Dec. 13 1712–Jan. 19 {1713?}.”]

6. Letter, Mr. Alexander Hamilton to Principal Stirling, April 12, 1714. [See New College Library Archives and Manuscripts, MS HAD, Papers of James Hadow (c.1670–1747), Principal of St Mary’s College, St Andrews 1710–1714, Letters of Principal Hadow . . . (with copy of a letter from Principal John Stirling to Alexander Hamilton (27 Feb. 1714) and Hamilton’s reply (12 Apri. 1714). (From General Assembly Library.)]

7. Letter, Mr. Gibb of Cleish to Mr. Wodrow, October 1, 1711. [See most likely in either John Gib, Minister of Cleish, NLS, Wodrow quartos, Wod.Lett.Qu.II (1711), XIX, f.11, or Wodrow Octavos, Wod. Lett.Oct.II (1709, 1711), ff.3v, 9v, 75.]

8. Letters which passed between Principal Hadow, and Mr. Alexander Hamilton, in 1710–1712. The Principal calls Mr. A.H. a man “whom I am bound to love and honour, and do reckon to be amongst the truly faithful and conscientious ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Mr. Hamilton professes that the Principal’s missives “had been edifying” to him, and begs the continuance of his favours. “That manuscript catechism (says he) that is so much mistaken, came very accidentally from my hand, neither was it designed for public view, but rather to be a record with myself of some thoughts upon these points. If there be heresy in it, it’s more than I am yet convinced of.” [See New College Library Archives and Manuscripts, MS HAD, Papers of James Hadow (c.1670–1747), Principal of St Mary’s College, St Andrews 1710–1714, Correspondence between Princ. Hadow of St Andrews and Mr Alex Hamilton, minr of Airth on the subject of the Gospel offer and collateral topics. 4to. 159p. (copies of 5 letters, Sept 14, 1710–Jan. 28, 1712).]

9. *Fama clamosa* = a general bad report, a rumor. In Scottish ecclesiastical law, *fama clamosa* provides sufficient grounds for action against pastor or laity, even though based solely on common report and not on a charge by accusation. If the rumor is general and hurtful,

of a gift as the condition on which it is offered. This catechism he showed to some of his brethren, with the view of obtaining their opinion or animadversions. Principal Stirling of Glasgow having taken offense at something said by Mr. Hamilton in a sermon preached by him in the church of Stirling, procured a copy of the catechism, then only in manuscript, and showed it to some members of the General Assembly held in 1710; in consequence of which an overture was hastily introduced and passed into an act, by which, among other things, it was enjoined that no minister or member of this church shall use any expression, in regard to the articles of faith, not agreeable to the form of sound words expressed in the Confession of Faith, nor “presume to print, or to *disperse in writ*, any catechism, without the allowance of the presbytery of the bounds and of the commission.” Suspecting that he was the person aimed at, Mr. Hamilton at the time insisted on being made acquainted with the fact, and offered to defend anything which he had written; but his request was waved. Such is the secret history of the act for purity of doctrine in 1710, which led to an injunction by the synod of Fife in the course of that year.⁶

Mr. Hamilton, if not also Mr. Hog, appears to have been troubled in consequence of this act. “I need write nothing (says a correspondent of Mr. Wodrow), anent Mr. Hog, as I understand you have correspondence with him yourself. Only he has been kept low by affliction this summer. Ye desired some farther accompt anent Mr. Alexander Hamilton: I thought to have got his catechism, and have sent you a copy of it, though I have seen it several times and read it; but I apprehend ye may have got it yourself ere now. It gives an account of the whole matter, for what I know that was like to be a difference between him and his presbytery; but I hope it’s happily taken up.”⁷ Mr. Hamilton carried on a friendly correspondence with Principal Hadow on the question respecting the conditionality of the covenant of grace, and collateral points; and he published his catechism in 1714, to correct misrepresentations which had gone abroad respecting his sentiments.⁸ This controversy was forgotten and absorbed in the interest excited by two events—the approaching invasion of the kingdom, and the process commenced against Mr. Simpson, professor of divinity in Glasgow, for dangerous errors. The ecclesiastical leaders testified no fondness for this prosecution. Instead of instructing his presbytery to proceed against the professor on a *fama clamosa*⁹, they left the burden on Mr. Webster of Edinburgh, who had brought the affair before the church courts; and though it appeared in evidence that he had taught Arminian and

Pelagian sentiments, the Assembly merely found that he had vented some opinions not necessary to be taught in divinity, used some expressions which bear, and are used by adversaries in, a bad and unsound sense, and, for answering the objections of adversaries, had used some hypotheses that tend to attribute too much to natural reason, and the power of corrupt nature; which expressions and hypotheses they discharged him from employing. It was in the year 1717 that this process was issued. And on the same day on which this leniency was shown; and before those who had opposed it had time to breathe, the Assembly inflicted a mark of their strongest reprobation on the following sentiment, "That it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God." This was one of a series of propositions which the presbytery of Auchterarder had inserted in their minutes, on occasion of an erroneous person passing trials before them. Of this proposition the Assembly declared "their abhorrence," as "unsound and detestable;" and appointed the presbytery to be called to account for it; against which act Mr. Thomas Boston of Ettrick and some others, remonstrated as rash and dangerous.

The tenderness shown to professor Simpson, contrasted with the severe treatment of a presbytery which had evinced its zeal for evangelical doctrine, filled many good men with ominous apprehensions as to the state of religious belief among the ministers of the church. This led to consultations as to the best method of preventing the progress of the evil. Among the means which appeared to them to unite the greatest efficiency with the least offence, were the composing of new works, and in the meantime the republishing of old ones, written in an evangelical strain. A resolution to this purpose gave rise to several of Boston's most popular works, and to the first printing of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* in Scotland.

The circumstances which led to the republication of a book which has caused so much noise, and acted so powerfully on the mind of the religious public both in the way of attraction and repulsion, cannot be altogether uninteresting. Mr. Boston, soon after his ordination, met with two old books in the house of one of his parishioners at Simprin. The one, entitled *Christ's Blood Flowing Freely*, by Saltmarsh, he laid aside, on finding that it was of an antinomian tendency. The other, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, he read with great pleasure; and to the perusal of it he imputed in a great degree the clear views he obtained of the gospel offer, and the liberty which he henceforth felt in

proclaiming the free, open, and unrestrained access of sinners to Christ as a Saviour. These views he unfolded at different times in sermons preached before his brethren, without ever hearing that they gave any offence. Sitting in the Assembly-house in 1717, he happened to mention *The Marrow* to Mr. John Drummond, minister of Crieff, and a member of the presbytery of Auchterarder. The account he gave of it inspired Mr. Drummond with a strong desire to possess the book, of which, after a diligent search, he obtained a copy before leaving Edinburgh. That copy was read by Mr. Webster of Edinburgh, and afterwards came into the hands of Mr. Hog of Carnock, who, by the advice of his brethren, wrote a recommendatory preface to it, which was printed along with the first part of the work in the course of the year 1718.¹⁰ The book was read by many with satisfaction and delight; but it was soon understood that it had been received with very different feelings by others, including some of the leading and most influential ministers of the church.¹¹ Hearing of the objections circulated against the work, Mr. Hog, early in 1719, published *An explanation [sic explication] of the passages excepted against in The Marrow of Modern Divinity.* Soon after this, Principal Hadow of St. Andrews, in a sermon preached at the opening of the Synod of Fife on the 7th of April, 1719, attacked directly Marshall on Sanctification, and especially the *Marrow*. He did not, as in his subsequent writings, accuse these works of antinomianism, but he charged them with contradicting the Scriptures, and the standards of the Church of Scotland, by "making the very essence and formal nature of justifying saving faith to be a man's persuading and assuring himself of his particular interest in Christ," and building this "upon a foundation of universal redemption." The sermon was immediately published at the desire of the Synod,¹² and led the way to a host of polemical pieces on both sides of

the court can investigate it without any accuser, for the vindication of the character of the Church and of the court, and with a view to the preservation of good morals in the community. Cf. Hill, *Church Practice*, p. 49.

10. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 330.

11. "The publishing *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, with a preface by Mr. James Hog, is much reflected upon." (Letter, Mr. William Wilson of Perth to Mr. Wodrow, January 24, 1719.) [Ibid., Wod.Lett. Qu. vol. XIV.]

12. It is entitled "The Record of God and the Duty of faith therein required: a sermon on 1 John v. 11, 12." [*The Record of God and Duty of Faith Therein Required: A Sermon on 1 John v. ver. 11, 12 before The Synod of Fife at St. Andrew's April 7th, 1719* (Edinburgh: Printed by John Mosman and Company, for John Paton Bookseller, and to be sold at his Shop in the Parliament-Closs, 1719. (Price Four Pence).]

the question, which continued to issue from the press during the four following years.¹³

It does not appear that the *Marrow* was mentioned at the meeting of the General Assembly in May 1719, but it was well understood that the following clause in the instructions to the Commission was principally directed against that book. "And that they inquire how the prohibition has been observed in the bounds of the Presbytery of Auchterarder, or elsewhere, whereby the using of the proposition remitted by that Presbytery, and condemned by the General Assembly 1717, was discharged; and that they inquire into the publishing and spreading of books and pamphlets tending to the diffusing of that condemned proposition, and promoting a scheme of opinions relative thereto, which are inconsistent with our Confession of Faith; and that the recommenders of such books and pamphlets, or the

13. To attempt to enumerate all the pamphlets would be tedious and unprofitable. Mr. Hog replied to the Principal's sermon in a "Conference between Ephaphroditus and Epaphras," and in a "Second Dialogue between Gamaliel, Paul," &c. To these the Principal replied in his "Antinomianism of the Marrow Detected," which was answered satirically by the "Political Disputant" (a work to which the "Ecclesiastical Characteristics" of Witherspoon bear no small resemblance), and gravely, in the "Sober Inquiry into the grounds of the present Differences;" the most acute of all the books in favour of the *Marrow*, and afterwards known to have proceeded from the ingenious pen of Mr. Riccaltoun of Hobkirk, who was probably also the author of the "Political Disputant." The "Snake in the Grass," and "This Cromwellian Ghost Conjured," were squibs on the other side.

14. "This morning the committee for instructions met. There was canglings [i.e., wranglings] and debates about our grievances, and some charges from the Synod of Fife against Mr. Simpson for error. The head of error is committed to the committee."—(Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, Edinburgh, May 20, 1719.) [See the text somewhat modernized in *The Correspondence of Robert Wodrow*, volume 2, edited by Thomas M'Crie ([1843]), 446–447.]

15. It was preached September 18, 1718, at the admission of Mr. David Shaw to Auchterarder.

16. Letters, Mr. William Wilson of Perth to Mr. Wodrow, August 31, 1719, and February 1720. Papers concerning Mr. Drummond's process. The process commenced January 9, 1719, and terminated February 11, 1720. One of the opponents of the *Marrow* writes as follows: "There are few of the Presbyteries of Stirling and Auchterarder but are for Mr. Hog, Webster and Hamilton's doctrine, though I believe none of the three will own Mr. Drummond's creed, who is a very ordinary man, for I knew him full well: he is nothing of a scholar, though I truly believe him a very good man; he was under my ministry in St. Ninian's."—(Letter, Mr. Patrick Coupar to Mr. Wodrow, August 1719.) [Wilson letters, *ibid.*, Wod.Lett.Qu. vol. XIV. The letter of Coupar is in *Correspondence*, 2.452–453. but the referenced substance of the libel against Drummond was not included. See Patrick Coupar, Minister of Pittenweem, letters of (1719), Wod.Lett.Qu.XIV, f.101. There is also an MS described as Drummond's propositions (1719), Wod.Lett.Qu.XIX, f. 120. Is unclear if the reference to the papers intends to imply they still existed and may be in volume XIV. See the long explanatory footnote about the case in *Correspondence*, 2.507–508.]

errors therein contained, whether by write or print, be called before them to answer for their conduct in such recommendations; and the Commission are empowered to judge, in cases of doctrine that shall be brought before them, by appeals or references from Synods or Presbyteries." At this Assembly a new charge of error was brought against Mr. Simpson; but it does not appear that any proceedings were founded upon it, at least for several years.¹⁴

Previous to this time, a process had been commenced against Mr. Drummond, already mentioned, for sentiments uttered by him in a sermon.¹⁵ He appears to have preached the doctrine common to the Marrow-men, as they have been called; but the propositions charged against him in the libel, drawn up by a committee of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, were expressed in very odious terms. He gave in large defences, in which he denied all the counts but one, which he explained, and retorted in severe terms on his principal prosecutors; but by the advice of his friends, he withdrew these, and substituted a paper couched in milder language, upon which the Synod dismissed the process, in the way of prohibiting Mr. Drummond, or any other in their bounds, to use the propositions as expressed in the libel, and returning thanks to the brethren who had brought the cause before them. "This last clause," says a member of Synod, "contributed not a little to the unanimity."¹⁶

In the meantime the Commission was not idle in following out the instructions, and exerting the powers which they had received from the last Assembly. Their first step was to appoint a committee under the imposing name of the committee for purity of doctrine, who, in their turn, nominated a sub-committee to sit at St. Andrews, to "ripen the affair," by fixing on the persons to be dealt with, and drawing up interrogatories for their examination. The sub-committee carved out a sufficiency of work for their constituents, Messrs. Warden of Gargunock, Brisbane of Stirling, Hamilton of Airth, and Hog of Carnock, were summoned to attend the committee at Edinburgh, in the beginning of April, 1720. The first was to be examined on a book which he had published on the Sacrament of the Supper; the second on a sermon he had published on Rom. vi. 14; the third on his Catechism, which had been before the public for six years; and the last on the *Marrow*. On their first appearance before the committee, they begged to know in what character they appeared, and in what light they were called to converse; and being told that they were to answer certain questions respecting books which they had written or recommended, they requested to see the queries, which was refused. After

protesting that such procedure had the appearance of a judicial trial, was an encroachment on the privileges of the radical judicatories, and an examination *super inquirendis*¹⁷, they agreed to answer such questions as should be proposed to them for the satisfaction of their brethren; upon which they were conversed with separately. When we consider the station and character of the members of committee who were present, it is impossible to charge them with want of judgment; whether they were misled by their own dread of innovations, or were imposed upon by the keenness of their brethren at St. Andrews, the reader may judge, after perusing the following letter.

Reverend and dear Brother—Having the occasion of this sure hand, I write you an account of our Edinburgh conversation, of which I doubt not but you have heard before now. We were called to meet on the 11th, but it was Wednesday the afternoon ere we were called; and after some dispute in what capacity they were who were to converse with us, which Mr. Hamilton and I were willing to waive for peace sake, at last they were pleased to call for me, when the Moderator told me they had little or nothing to say to me. I answered that then they were not so very tender in obliging me to ride sixty miles for nothing, especially when I was to have corresponded with the Synod of Glasgow. They replied that they wished I had gone to Glasgow, and had only wrote to them. I answered, I know I was represented as bad enough by some whom I desired to forgive; and if I had not come, it might have been improved by some not to my advantage. I desired, therefore, to know why I was sent for; whereupon Mr. Grierson asked, [said] that he did not doubt that I owned the little book as mine. I told I did, and was not afraid of anything in it before an œumenick [i.e., ecumenical] council, errors of the press excepted. Here he told, there was somewhat observed, page 133, line 29, but that they understood it was a typographical error. I told them it was so, tho' not among the *errata*; that there were several copies out ere I observed it, but so soon as I did, I left an order in Mr. Anderson's shop to sell none but where the word *not* was deleted; and wherever I met with them, I so amended them. They all said they knew this, and entreated I would not be angry. I then said, I wondered what was in the Inquisition's blind eyes that they saw not a *not* too little in another place, which made greater nonsense and greater error, viz. p. 138, line 10, where the words are *I dare assert*, and should be *I dare not assert*. Here there was silence. Then the moderator said that there was only a very little thing, page 113, where I

say "persons should accept, etc. with full assurance." I asked him, was not the truth, and will he have a person doubt if God will be as good as his word. Here they all said, "Houts! houts!¹⁸ let that alone." But one said, he believed I did not think I was of opinion that assurance was essential to faith. I said there was no such thing, but the contrary, in that place asserted, viz. the assurance of the connexion betwixt faith and the blessing. But then, though this was to answer *super inquirendis*, yet to satisfy them, I told I was far from any such thought, for then I should many a time exclude myself. Hereupon they all declared that they were more than satisfied, and that troubling me required an apology, and therefore offered me any satisfaction I would demand. I told them I wanted no satisfaction, but wished some might be forgiven; and if this was their way of doing, they might come to have more of my change. Here all smiled. I was much caressed by them, so that others were like to take umbrage.

They professed themselves satisfied with Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Brisbane, and never so much as once named Mr. Hamilton's *claim*, which some here and elsewhere made so much work about. They met with Mr. Hog the Monday after, and I hear they parted very friendly. The conveners were Mr. Grierson, Principal Wishart, Professor Hamilton, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Allan Logan (a learned and distinct scholar indeed.) Mr. Smith, and my Lord Grange. I make no observation, only that piece of conduct, and your Glasgow overtures, make rare work."¹⁹

It is unnecessary to detail the particulars of Mr. Hamilton's examination; for, though it did not turn so much on errors of the printer as that of Mr. Warden, yet he cleared himself, to the satisfaction of the committee, from doctrinal errors.²⁰ Mr. Hog, when called, frankly

17. *super inquirendis* – i.e., without a specific charge.

18. *Hout*, or *hoot*: An exclamation of annoyance, disgust, or unbelief, often used to dismiss someone else's opinion.

19. Letter, Mr. J. Warden to Mr. Wodrow, May 8, 1720. [See Letters of John Warden, Minister of Gargunnoch (1719–1720), *Wod.Lett.Qu.*, XIV, ff.55–291 (*passim*).]

20. They asked him, what he meant in his Catechism by the legal federal sufficiency of the death of Christ, and if he held that Christ represented and stood in the room of all; to which he answered in the negative, and said that all he meant was the intrinsic sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, as fulfilling the law of the covenant of works; upon which one of the committee said, without that the elect themselves could not be saved. They quarreled at his making this sufficiency the foundation of the universal call of the Gospel, and Professor Hamilton asked him, how he could reconcile that with his holding special election and particular redemption, to which he replied that

acknowledged his activity in reprinting *The Marrow*, and the favourable opinion which he still entertained of that book.²¹ But the answers he gave to the questions relating to his own sentiments were such as proved satisfactory to the committee. “When their communing ended, Thursday night (says Mr. Hamilton), they declared that they were very much satisfied with our answers, and gave us by this to know that they would make a favourable report, which, I hear, they accordingly did to the next Assembly; yet then signifying that there were some things which should be further considered.”²²

After the amicable termination of the conference, it was earnestly wished, and confidently expected, by many who had taken no part in recommending or circulating *The Marrow* that all judicial proceedings relating to it would be dropped. The matter might very probably have issued in this way, had it been left entirely to the committee which met at Edinburgh. But the controversy carried on by the press had produced irritation on both sides. In consequence of the recommendation of last Assembly, inquiries had been instituted by presbyteries; and where the majority in these

the Professor was as much bound to solve that difficulty as he was. (A Copie of the Conduct of the Committee for purity of doctrine with regard to Mr. Alex Hamilton.) [New College, XI4a 2/2 as referenced in Lachman, p. 259. This may be now be classed or in the collection MSS HAM 1, Alexander Hamilton, Minister of Airth (1663–1738), Copies of letters and other documents on the Marrow Controversy, by Alexander Hamilton, John Warden, Ralph Erskine and Jame Hog, 4to. 168p. 1714–22, or MS MAR, Papers Relating to the Marrow Controversy, 1720–22, Collection of letters, proclamations, etc., by Ralph Erskine, James Hog, and others, mainly dealing with aspects of the Marrow Controversy, 1720–22. 4to. 632p.]

21. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 361.

22. Copie of the conduct of the Committee with regard to Mr. Alex. Hamilton. [See prior note.]

23. Mr. Allan Logan of Culross was reported to be revising the papers of Hog and Hamilton, and finding faults in Warden's book of the Lord's Supper. (Warden to Wodrow, January 2d, 1720.) [See Letters of John Warden, Minister of Gargunnoch (1719–1720), Wod.Lett. Qu., XIV, ff.55–291 (*passim*). Lachman notes that this letter is item No. 206 in the volume. Lachman, 260.]

24. “As to your dear brother's affair, it stands, for what I hear, as it was till next Synod. No doubt you will have accounts from him of the satirical review of his conference [the Snake in the Grass] and the reply he has given to it with much modesty, and the Queries at the close upon the Gospel Offer.” (Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mr. Thomas Hog, Minister at Rotterdam, Feb. 18, 1720.) Mr. Wodrow was opposed to the *Marrow*, but was on intimate terms with several of its friends. [Cf. *Correspondence*, 2,508–509.]

25. Letter, Mr. John Grant, Minister of Auchinleck, to Mr. Wodrow, Dec. 10, 1719. From a letter of Wodrow to Grant, April 1731, it appears that the latter was then to London, and it was reported he was to remain there. [John Grant, Minister of Auchinleck, letters possibly of (1719), Wod.Lett.Qu.XIV, f.124. See John Grant, letter to (1731), Wod.Lett.Oct.IV, f.188.]

courts showed themselves reluctant or slack, individuals in them brought the matter before provincial Synods, who transmitted the information which they received to the sub-committee at St. Andrews.²³

Accordingly, it appears that Mr. Hog's case had been repeatedly under the consideration of the Synod of Fife, to which he belonged.²⁴ The following are the remarks of a respectable minister who disapproved of several things in *The Marrow*, but afterwards opposed the Assembly's procedure respecting that book.

“I am heartily sorry there's so much noise made about *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*; I am afraid there's too much of a party spirit at bottom. It does not look well that so worthy a gentleman as Mr. Hog should be singled out as the butt of opposition and censure, tho' I humbly conceive he's a little stiff in its defence as to that of assurance its being essential to faith; *The Marrow* leaning a little too much to that side. I reckon it cannot be refused there are a good many things unhappily worded in that book, but at the same time I conceive that the scope of the book is excellent, as I take it, viz. to point out the absolute necessity of being cut off from the barren stock of old Adam, and implanted in the second Adam, and receiving constant sap and juice from the glorious root, as the only spring of and nourishment to gospel holiness. And there are a great many rich and savoury truths in it that have no tendency to antinomianism. As to the hints in that book, and in the scheme of some others (that on other accounts I have a great deal of honour and respect to) of universalism in Christ's being given to all mankind, I cannot see them consistent with particular decrees. It looks a little like a cheat upon mankind to assert the one, and not teach the other. You'll pardon my remarks upon these great points.”²⁵

The General Assembly met on Thursday the 12th May, 1720. In the fourth Session (Monday the 16th) the committee for purity of doctrine reported that they had had under their consideration several books and pamphlets, had conversed with the alleged authors of them, “and were well pleased to hear them explain themselves upon sundry of the grounds quarreled,” but added that there were certain other positions and expressions in these writings which deserved to be further considered. On their motion and overture, the Assembly agreed to instruct and empower their commission to appoint a committee for purity of doctrine, similar to the last. The affair of the *Marrow* was introduced in the same sederunt, but in a rather singular manner. It appeared that

the Commission had been appointed to meet on the Tuesday before the opening of the Assembly, in order to receive a report from their committee on that subject, but that diet not having been held, the report was given in to the committee for overtures, who transmitted it to the Assembly. It was accompanied with some propositions collected from *The Marrow*, "which appeared contrary to the Scriptures, and Confession of Faith, and likewise, with some expressions exceeding harsh and offensive, passing many others that were exceptionable." The report and excerpts being read, the Assembly agreed that before entering on the consideration of these, they should lie on the table till Thursday first, to be perused by the members, and that likewise a diet should be appointed for a meeting of the committee for overtures, in order fully to consider the said report and propositions, where all the members of the Assembly, and any ministers of the church that please, may be present and allowed to reason on these subjects.

Next day, at the desire of some members, the clerk was ordered to allow any member who chose to take a copy of the propositions. On Wednesday the overture concerning *The Marrow* was debated in the committee of overtures, or of the whole house. The principal persons who reasoned against it were Mr. Gabriel Wilson of Maxton, Mr. John Bonar of Torphichen, and Mr. Hog, who, though not a member, availed himself of the liberty which the Assembly had granted.²⁶ They urged that the *Marrow*, in its general strain and drift, was confessedly sound and excellent, and ought not to be condemned and prohibited on account of a few injudicious or incautious phrases; that "many paradoxes, and harsh expressions, liable to misconstruction when taken separately, were to be found in authors of uncontested orthodoxy and eminence, both old and late, and the excellent meaning had hitherto procured an overlooking of such flights;" that it was but fair and candid to explain and qualify the expressions of an author by other parts of his writings in which he treats of the same subject directly and *ex professo*²⁷; and they offered to show that the passages excerpted against in this book were reconcilable with other parts of it, in which the errors with which it was charged were rejected by the author. They were allowed to proceed for some time in this mode of defence; but as the defenders of the overture, who were supported by the great body of the committee, refused to admit of this latitude of explanation, and insisted that the passages quoted conveyed an erroneous meaning, they were at last forced to desist.²⁸

On Friday (the 20th) the overture was brought into the Assembly, and after the excerpts from *The Marrow*

were compared with the Scriptures and passages from the standards, it was twice read, "and then voted and approved." Four ministers voted in the negative, Mr. Gabriel Wilson, Mr. John Grant of Auchinleck, Mr. Andrew Burgh of Maddertie, and Mr. Robert Willock of Echt. "After the vote, Mr. Wilson desired his voting *not* might be marked; whereupon it was moved he might be called to the bar and give his reasons, with a great deal of heat. He came to the bar, asked pardon wherein he had given any offence, and declared his dislike of the propositions which were condemned, but declared he had an expedient to propose for the peace of the Church, which could not be heard before the vote, which made him mark his dissent. This satisfied all, and there was no more of it."²⁹

The passages of *The Marrow* condemned by the Assembly, are arranged in the act under five heads. 1st. Concerning the nature of faith; under which the charge is that assurance is made to be of the essence of faith. 2d. Of universal atonement and pardon. 3d. Holiness is not necessary to salvation. 4th. Fear of punishment, and hope of reward, not allowed to be motives of a believer's obedience. 5th. That a believer is not under the law, as a rule of life. To these a number of expressions collected from *The Marrow* are added. "The General

26. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 18, 1720. [*Correspondence*, 2, 583.]

27. *Ex professo*: as an expert, or with the competence one would expect from a professional.

28. MS. Dialogue between Theod. and Phyl., by Mr. Hog. [This MS could not be traced. Hog uses the name Philologus for one of the speakers in his Dialogues. But there is also a manuscript entitled "Memorial written by Philomathes," which is a "spiritual autobiography in eleven chapters," of Hog, but it ends before the Marrow Controversy. The copy owned by M'Crie is lacking pages that have been torn out. New College, MS GD-20, "Memorial written by Philomathes and addressed to his surviving friends. 4to. Wants all after p.694, subsequent leaves having been torn out. (MS originally presented to the Theological Library, Whitburn. Autograph of Thomas McCrie on flyleaf." The pages torn out apparently made up the text published as *Memoirs of the Public Life of Mr. James Hogg* (Edinburgh, 1798) (see David George Mullan, *Narratives of the Religious Self in Early-Modern Scotland* (2010; Routledge, 2016), 29). There is another copy in octavo, 701 pages, NLS, Adv.MS.32.3.8. This Dialogue must be a later work drafted during the controversy using the same Philomathes to refer to himself or was a Dialogue involving Philologus that was not published. A portion is quoted in John Brown, *Gospel Truth* (American ed., 1827), p. 116–118; (1831), 46–49, and as with the autobiography, may have circulated in hand drafted copies. Charles L. Moffatt, Jr. suggested the work was no longer extant ("James Hog of Carnock [1658–1734], Leader in the Evangelical Party in Early Eighteenth Century Scotland" [Ph.D thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1960], 177), as does David C. Lachman (p. 272, note 2).]

29. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 20, 1720. [*Correspondence*, 2, 532.]

Assembly found that the said passages and quotations which relate to the five several heads of doctrine above mentioned, are contrary to the Holy Scriptures, our confession of faith and catechisms; and that the distinction of the law as it is the law of works and as it is the law of Christ, as the author applies it, in order to sense and defend the six antinomian paradoxes above written, is altogether groundless; and that the other expression above set down, excerpted out of the said book, are exceeding harsh and offensive. And therefore the General Assembly do hereby strictly prohibit and discharge all the ministers of this church, either by preaching, writing, or printing, to recommend the said book, or in discourse to say anything in favours of it; but on the contrary, they are hereby enjoined and required to warn and exhort their people in whose hands the said book is, or may come, not to read or use the same.”³⁰

In the draught of the act as it came from the committee, there was a clause, “discharging ministers to print, publish, or recommend any book or pamphlet relating to doctrine, worship, discipline, or government of the church, without the advice and allowance of their presbytery.” But when it came before the house, this clause

30. The act is to be found among the printed acts of Assembly, and has been lately reprinted in Brown’s *Gospel Truth*, second edition. [See *Acts of the general assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638–1842* (Edinburgh: for the Church Law Society, 1843), 534–536; John Brown of Whitburn, *Gospel truth accurately stated and illustrated / occasioned by the republication of the marrow of modern divinity, a new edition greatly enlarged and improved* (Glasgow, 1831), pp. 171–176. The act came to be called the Black Act. See Lachman, p. 158, Boston, *Memoirs, Works* 12, p. 357; and Donald Macleod, “Reformed Theology in Scotland,” *Theology in Scotland* 17, no. 2 (2010), 8.]

31. Probably Mr. John Anderson, then one of the ministers of Glasgow, and author of the Defence of Presbyterian Government against Mr. Rhynd. He was a member of this Assembly.

32. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 20, 1720. The following queries serve at least to show that the draught of the act condemning *The Marrow* was understood at the time to be the work of Principal Hadow, who is called the *Detector* from the title of one of his pamphlets on the controversy. “Whether it be consistent with the memory of some honourable and reverend members of the Assembly 1720 that some persons whose draught the condemnatory act was, made them believe that some clauses in that act were deleted, which yet were not, and when they were challenged in the General Assembly, took a pen, and pretended to score them, and yet did let them stand in the act? Whether some members of that Assembly will not own that they thought these clauses had been deleted, or they would not have voted them? Whether this consideration may not account in some good respect, for the Assembly’s being led into an oversight, at the same time that it doth expose the unaccountable conduct of the Detector?” ([Boston,] *Queries to the Friendly Advisor, to which is prefixed, a letter to a friend concerning the affair of the Marrow*, p. 35, printed in the year 1722.)

33. [*The Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, vol. 30, no. 8 (October 1831): 687–699.]

was strongly opposed by Mr. Anderson,³¹ and the Assembly agreed that it should be “separate, and reserved to be afterwards considered.”³²

[PART TWO.]³³

Those who have directed their attention to ecclesiastical history, cannot be ignorant of the five propositions extracted from a work of Jansenius, bishop of Ypres, entitled *Augustinus*, and condemned by Pope Innocent X., which gave rise to such warm disputes in the seventeenth century between the Jesuits and Jansenists; the latter professing that they believed the propositions to be erroneous, and justly condemned by the sovereign pontiff, but maintaining that they were not to be found in the book of Jansenius in the sense in which they had been condemned. All France was divided on this question *de facto*, and the press teemed with publications on both sides during a number of years. The dispute was at last settled by an edict from his Holiness, pronouncing, *ex cathedra* that the condemned propositions were contained in the work of the bishop of Ypres.

There is a considerable resemblance between the controversy excited by the publication of *Augustinus*, and that which arose on the republication of *The Marrow*. The General Assembly condemned five propositions, as contained in this book, and “as sensed” by its author; their prohibition related directly to the book; and when they were afterwards charged with involving certain truths in their condemnatory sentence, they vindicated themselves by saying that they had condemned these propositions, not in the abstract, but “in the sense” in which they were held in the book. By the friends of *The Marrow*, the interpretation put on the passages referred to was denied; and thus the dispute resolved itself, in a good degree, into a question of fact. But as no infallible authority was recognized in Scotland, as in France, for deciding such matters, the controversy was kept alive, and *The Marrow* continued to be sought after and read, because it was prohibited and run down, as well as because it was recommended and vindicated.

Such being the aspect which this controversy assumed, it is more than a matter of curiosity to inquire into the history of the book and its author. Many who have heard of the dispute think that the book which gave occasion to it was of recent origin, and may be surprised at being told that it had been in circulation nearly four-score years, and had gone through twelve editions before it incurred the censure of the General Assembly.

The following is the account given of the author by Principal Hadow, the earliest and ablest opponent of *The Marrow*: “Edward Fisher, the author of *The Marrow* was

a tool whom the Independents thought fit to encourage in that juncture. He was as to employment a barber in London, who took upon himself to be a minister of a separate or independent congregation, as may be gathered from the book itself, and to set up for the Independent way, in opposition to Presbyterian government. Such an intruder into the sacred office would not readily at that time have obtained the recommendation of any true Presbyterian, who had a zeal for the covenant, and sworn reformation of the Church of Scotland."³⁴ By this statement, the Principal stumbled at the threshold, and exposed himself to the double charge of having recourse to the *argumentum ad invidiam*,³⁵ and of being rash in judging of facts. There is no good evidence that Edward Fisher was embarked in any faction; and, according to the most credible accounts, instead of being an illiterate barber, he was a gentleman by birth, and a scholar by education.

"Edward Fisher, the eldest son of a knight, became a gentleman-commoner of Brazenose College, August 25, 1627, took his degree in arts, and soon after left that house. Afterwards, being called home by his relations, who were then, as I have been informed, much in debt, he improved that learning, which he had obtained in the university, so much that he became a noted person among the learned, for his great reading in ecclesiastical history and in the fathers, and for his admirable skill in the Greek and Hebrew languages. His works are *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, etc."³⁶

Such is the account given by the historian of Oxford, who cannot be suspected of partiality either to Independents or Presbyterians; and although there are grounds for suspecting the accuracy of his information in some particulars, it is sufficient for showing that we should be cautious in receiving the odious or discreditable representations which controversialists are apt to give of their opponents.

The Marrow was first published in 1646 with the *imprimatur* of Mr. Joseph Caryl, the well known commentator on the book of Job, who was appointed by the Assembly of Divines, then sitting at Westminster, to revise and approve of theological works before they came from the press. His note of license contained a strong recommendation,

I have perused (says he) this ensuing dialogue, I find it tending to peace and holiness; the author endeavouring to reconcile and heal those unhappy differences which have lately broken out afresh among us, about the points

therein handled and cleared; for which cause I allow it to be printed, and recommend it to the readers, as a discourse stored with many necessary and seasonable truths, confirmed by Scripture, and avowed by many approved writers, etc.

The subsequent editions of the work were recommended, among others, by Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs and Mr. William Strong, dives of acknowledged learning and soundness in the faith. Principal Hadow urges that Caryl and Burroughs, though members of the Westminster Assembly, "were of those Independents named by the Parliament who were engaged in a party in opposition to the settling Presbyterian government," and with this view cherished the other sectaries; that Mr. Sprigge, one of those who recommended *The Marrow*, abetted the extravagances of Sir Henry Vane; and that Toun, who is quoted in the book, was an antinomian. To these assertions his opponents replied that Caryl was not one of those who opposed Presbyterian government in the Westminster Assembly; that Mr. Burroughs and his Independent brethren were avowed enemies to the doctrinal errors of the other sectaries; that though Sprigge had proved a Judas, it would not have invalidated his former testimony to the truth; and that the words quoted in *The Marrow* from Toun are directly opposed to antinomianism. To this it may be added, in point of fact

34. [Hadow,] *The Antinomianism of the Marrow of Modern Divinity Detected* [1721], p. 9.

35. This charge is strongly put by Mr. Riccalton. "When we have looked through this charge, all we can find in it is that he was an Independent and a barber. For the first (however he says nothing of it), we have the same reason to refuse our approbation, I will not say unto Mr. Caryl and Mr. Burroughs, but even to Mr. Greenhill, Dr. Goodwin, and Dr. Owen, with I know not how many more of the very best writers England ever produced. Nor is there one circumstance which makes really against the author of *The Marrow* in this narrative, which does not militate as strongly against them, unless it is that they were not barbers. But, and if he was really such, what can anybody make of it? So were Peter, James and John fishermen; and is it impossible for a barber to be a man of sense and learning? Nor do I know any piece of folly more foolish than that of valuing books by the authors, unless it is another, of valuing authors by the time they have spent in universities, and the degrees they have taken there. I know the circumstance has been publicly contradicted from the press. But as I look upon that other account of the author, however better vouched, yet never a whit more authentic than this, so I own it, I value *The Marrow* more when I look upon it as written by Edward Fisher the barber, than when I consider it as the work of the learned and honourable Edward Fisher." (*Sober Enquiry* [1723], p. 41, 42.) – [*argumentum ad invidiam*: an argument that appeals to popular hatred or prejudice to sustain its rationale.]

36. Wood's *Athenæ Oxoniensis*, vol. ii, p. 198. [Anthony à Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, a new edition ed. Philip Bliss, volume 3 (1817), 408.]

that though *The Marrow* was published at the time that the antinomian errors prevailed in England, it was not then supposed to be favourable to them; and neither Mr. Baillie nor Mr. Rutherford, nor any contemporary writer against antinomianism ever once introduce it among the numerous works which they refute, or accuse of favouring that heresy.

The Marrow is composed in the form of a dialogue between Evangelista, a minister of the gospel, Nomista, a legalist, Antinomista, an antinomian, and Neophytus, a young Christian; the first of these being always understood to express the sentiments of the author. It is called *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, because the object of the author was to exhibit the substance of that doctrine which was revived at the era of the Reformation. The work consists chiefly of extracts from the writings of the reformers, and some of the boldest expressions, and those which gave greatest offence, were the very words of Luther, and of Bolton, Rogers, and Preston, three learned and pious divines of the church of England.

Before resuming the narrative of the controversy, it may be proper to state a few facts of an earlier date, which may perhaps serve to account for the extraordinary jealousy which some good men of decidedly orthodox views expressed of *The Marrow*, and of those who recommended it. They will, at any rate, make a small addition to our ecclesiastical history, and to that

portion of it which is most defective, the state of opinions. Mr. Frazer of Brae, a gentleman distinguished for the sufferings to which he was exposed in the reign of Charles II., composed, during the persecution, a treatise on saving faith, in which he adopted substantially the views of Amyraud, Daillé, and some other divines in the reformed church of France, who held that there was a twofold destination of the atonement, the one restricted to the elect, and the other coextensive with the human race. This work, or rather excerpts from it, having been shewn to some friends in the year 1677, gave great offence, and in particular to Mr. John Carstairs (the father of the celebrated Principal of that name), who wrote animadversions on the new scheme of doctrine.³⁷ Means were used to suppress the controversy, and Mr. Frazer, who was greatly esteemed for his piety and zeal, became minister of Culross after the Revolution. His work was not published during his lifetime, but copies of it came into circulation in manuscript after his death.³⁸ Mr. George Mair, who was his successor, perhaps also his colleague, in Culross, if he did not adopt Mr. Frazer's theory of redemption, appears to have made use of some of his modes of expression and illustration.³⁹ He was succeeded, as minister of that parish, by Mr. Allan Logan, who took a very active part against *The Marrow*.⁴⁰ There is no reason to think that the author of *The Marrow* was acquainted

37. Macward's MSS. Frazer, in a letter written from the Bass to Carstairs, disowns the "conditional" redemption of Amyraud. [It is not clear what M'Crie means by "Macward's MSS" other than a reference to MSS in the Wodrow Folios held in the Advocates library until donated at the founding of the NLS in 1925. Elsewhere M'Crie elaborates, "Wodrow MSS. vol. lix. Carstairs' Letter is dated June 4, 1677. Fraser wrote a long letter in reply, which Carstairs again answered; and there the correspondence appears to have ended." M'Crie, *The Bass Rock: Its Civil and Ecclesiastical History Geology* ([1848]), p. 144.]

38. "You have acquainted me with more than I knew before, I mean of Brae's manuscript on Faith and Universal Redemption, its being transcribing for me at Edinburgh. Mr. Webster some time ago told me he had the paper, and promised me the use of it, but that then it was with Mr. Wilson at Perth's; and therefore I wrote him some five or six weeks ago, if I rightly mind, to make good his promise to me. He has not been so kind as yet to give me an answer, but Mr. Macky wrote me that he was transcribing for himself, and promised the use of his copy how soon he had finished it. I own I long to see it, for I can't take up his notion by the memoirs of his life, and I have a great regard to his way of thinking in a great many things." (Letter, Mr. J. Grant of Auchinleck to Mr. Wodrow, Dec. 10, 1719.) [John Grant, Minister of Auchinleck, letters possibly of (1719), Wod.Lett.Qu.XIV, f.124.]

39. "The question is not, 1, Anent the mere sufficiency of the death of Christ for expiating the guilt of all men's sins, in which sense possibly we might say it might be extended to all sinners, devils as well as men, if God had pleased to design so. Nor, 2, anent its legal and ordinate sufficiency with respect to man (as some eminent writers zealous

against Arminianism have expressed themselves) so as all men who hear thereof may in law plead for remission of sins thereupon. Nor, 3, the warrant hereupon we have to preach this as the gospel or good tidings from heaven to every creature, and their duty to believe the same, with application to the salvation of their souls. Nor, 4, anent the necessary and certain connexion betwixt this faith of the gospel and salvation, and betwixt unbelief and damnation. Nor, 5, anent Christ's having bought the world, so as all power in heaven and earth is given to him, and the Father has committed all judgment to the Son. Nor, 6, anent all grace, its coming by Jesus Christ, whether common or special. And so, nor, 7, anent the obligations that all the children of men are under to the Lord Christ for preserving and providing grace; and for all the objective and subjective grace they enjoy, which if all mankind were not more or less partakers of, they would be in respect of sin and misery like the damned in hell. Nor, 8, anent the capacity of Adam's children to improve the grace they get, and that in this way they may expect and do ordinarily obtain more of that sort of grace, whether it is common or saving. These and the like, I think, might be granted, and though there might be a different conception or expression therein from what others might have thereabout, I think it were tolerable." (Letter, Mr. George Mair to Mr. Wodrow; Culross, Sept. 8, 1713.) [NLS, George Mair, Minister of Tulliallan, letters of (1713-15), Wod.Lett.Qu.XIX, ff.22-6, 32-6, 42, 61-3.]

40. Principal Hadow was very anxious to let it be known that he had the support of a person of such acknowledged orthodoxy as Mr. Logan. "The brethren (says he), whatever ways they take to distinguish themselves, may be pleased to know that there are ministers of the Church of Scotland who will cede to none of them in owning

with "the new method" of doctrine (as it was called in France), afterwards adopted by Frazer, and Mr. Hog and his brethren were certainly hostile to it. But as there were expressions in *The Marrow*, which, when taken by themselves, seemed to favour universal redemption, it is not unnatural to suppose that Mr. Logan, who could not be ignorant of the sentiments of his predecessors, felt alarm on that head, and laboured to impress his brethren with the same feeling.⁴¹

The Commission, according to the directions of the General Assembly 1720, appointed a committee for purity of doctrine. That committee, at their meeting on the 12th of August, appointed the sub-clerk, Nicol Spence, to require Mr. Alexander Hamilton to wait upon them at Edinburgh, on the second Wednesday of October, and to bring along with him a letter which he had written from Airth on the 18th of November 1718. Mr. Hamilton was then in bad health, but came to Edinburgh at the time specified. On expressing to the members of the committee his surprise that he should have been called to attend them, after he had given them satisfaction on a former occasion, he was told that want of time had prevented them from conversing with him on certain points as to which they wished for further satisfaction; and that, to prevent misunderstanding, queries would be put into his hand, to which it was expected he would return answers in writing. As the members of the sub-committee at St. Andrews, to whom the task of framing the queries had been entrusted, had not come forward, Professor Hamilton, at the desire of the committee, drew up nine questions, which, after the arrival of Principal

Hadow and Mr. Allan Logan, were enlarged to fourteen. They related to the extent of Christ's death, the conditionality of the covenant of grace, the nature of faith, and the precepts of the gospel; and they were founded on the catechism printed by Hamilton, on a manuscript copy of that work, and on the letter already referred to. After perusing them, he signified that as the greater part of the queries were founded on a manuscript catechism for which he was not accountable, and on an incorrect and mangled copy of a confidential letter which his most intimate friends had never so much as heard of,⁴² they were quite irrelevant, and that, instead of answering the remainder, he might have demanded a libel; but that for the sake of peace, and out of respect to the authority by which the committee was appointed, he would state his sentiments on the different articles, craving liberty, if he should afterwards find it necessary, to give a narrative of the whole procedure, and complain of the manner in which he had been treated.

The queries and replies are preserved in manuscript, and throw considerable light on the subjects then agitated; but it would be tedious to report them at large in this place. In answer to the four first queries, which relate to the extent of the death of Christ, Mr. H. states that the Lord Jesus Christ, in his obedience unto the death, stood in the room and place of elect sinners of Adam's family, and that in no sense he stood in the room and place of any other; but that in this obedience there is a full answer to the demands of the broken law, and a full satisfaction to the justice and holiness of the law-giver, and consequently that, as revealed in the gospel,

and asserting the gospel doctrine of free grace, though they cannot go into new schemes, and the modern divinity of the recommended *Marrow*. And for a testimony hereof I shall exhibit the following assertions, wherein I have the concurrence of the reverend the moderator of the late General Assembly, and of Mr. Allan Logan of Culross." (*Antinomianism of the Marrow*, Preface, p. 3)

41. The first part of Frazer's work on Saving Faith was published in 1722. The second part, which was the most exceptionable, did not make its appearance until 1749, when it gave rise to warm disputes in more than one religious society in Scotland. Its principles having been adopted by some members of the Reformed Presbytery, usually styled Cameronians, produced a division in that body. They were also adopted in part by Mr. Thomas Mair, minister of Orwell, a member of the Associate Synod, commonly called Antiburghers; and his strenuous defence of them led ultimately to his deposition from the ministry. (Gib's *Display of the Secession Testimony* [1774], vol. ii, pp. 131-148.) Mr. Thomas Mair was a nephew of Mr. George Mair of Culross, and was employed, when a boy, probably by his uncle, in transcribing Frazer's work on Faith. Mr. Gib was disposed to question the fact (which there is now no reason for doubting) that the work was really written by the person to whom it is ascribed. Extracts from Frazer's work have lately been given to the public by Mr. Thomas Erskine, in support of what are called the Row opinions. [See *Extracts of Letters to a Christian Friend*

from a Lady, with introductory essay by Thomas Erskine (Greenock, 1830). Needham notes that "fairly substantial quotations from his [Frazer's, which he notes is also attributed to George Mair] *Treatise on Justifying Faith* were appended to Erskine's *Introductory Essay to Extracts of Letters to a Christian Friend by a Lady* (February 1830), by means of which Erskine sought to gain credence for his own synthesis of universal atonement and particular election)." Nicholas Richard Needham, "Thomas Erskine of Linlathen His life and theology 1788-1837 (Thesis, Doctor of Philosophy, University of Edinburgh, 1987), 216. The reference to "Row opinions" is to Erskine's and John McLeod Campbell of Row's leadership in the "Row controversy" (1828-31). See "Erskine, Thomas (of Linlathen)" and "Campbell, John McCleod," in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology*, ed. Nigel M. De S. Cameron, David F. Wright, David C. Lachman, and Donald E. Meek (IVP, 1993), 129-130, 302-303.]

42. "Mr. Hamilton has got another letter, sent by the sub-clerk, to meet with the committee for purity of doctrine, the first Tuesday of October, in which Mr. H. is desired to bring a letter with him wrot to Mr. Hog, in Nov. 1718. You will be surprised when I tell you that I never heard of such a letter until April last, and never saw it until the other day." (Letter, Mr. Warden to Mr. Wodrow, Sept. 24, 1720.) [See Letters of John Warden, Minister of Gargunnoch (1719-1720), Wod.Lett.Qu., XIV, ff.55-291 (*passim*).]

it is sufficient for any of Adam's race to build upon for redemption and life, and a sufficient legal foundation for a universal call to all the hearers of the gospel to believe on the Son of God for their salvation. His answer to the three following queries, respecting the conditionality of the covenant of grace, amount to this that this covenant, proposed to the hearers of the gospel, consists of absolute promises; that all and every one are warranted to close with, accept, receive, and trust in Christ, according to the offer of the gospel, for salvation; that this right is antecedent to their believing and repenting, yea, belongs to those who never believe or repent,—“which kind of universal right (says he) is, in my humble opinion, and with submission to those of riper thoughts, so far founded upon Christ's obedience to the death of the cross, as without this it would not be in a due consistency with the divine perfections, and indispensable laws of life and death stated in the covenant of works;” and, in fine that the promise of the first grace (or of the new heart) whereby the faithful God obligeth himself to perform the same, is made to the elect only, and “cannot be said to belong so to sinners to whom the gospel invitation comes, as that they are obliged to believe that God will give them this first grace, or accomplish this promise in them;” yet it is “of such use to all the hearers of the gospel, as that they may take great comfort therefrom in their present lost circumstances, and may be encouraged to come to Christ for himself and all things, and the more that not only there is such a promise as contains even the first grace, but that it, with all the other promises, do so far concern them as they are revealed, set forth, and proposed to them, in the divine invitation, indefinitely and generally, without distinction of nation, state or condition.” The 12th query is, “Whether or not our receiving Christ as offered in the gospel be our covenanting with God, and a constituent part of the covenant of grace as made and concluded betwixt Christ and the sinner.” Mr. Hamilton replies, “All I shall say in answer to this question is that, though I am persuaded that nothing is intended by the reverend committee but what is truth, yet I cannot answer affirmatively in the precise terms of the question. But I say that, as the accepting of the Lord Jesus Christ in the promise and offer of the gospel, may be said to be our covenanting with God, and

that whereby the covenant of grace may be said to be established in the believer's person, so the believer's promising and engaging himself through grace to serve the Lord, his covenanted God, may be said to be his covenanting also; and as all sinners may and ought to be called and pressed to covenanting in this order, so it is their duty to observe the same in compliance with such a call.” In answer to other queries he states that by a confident particular applying faith, he means a sinner's firm trust in Christ for complete salvation, upon the warrant of God's word of grace, and not that God hath loved him in particular, or that Christ belongs to him in particular; and that, though there are no precepts to duty which are not either fundamentally or formally, generally or particularly, contained in the law, and though the gospel precisely understood is a revelation of grace, yet there are precepts which were not actually and formally given in the law before the fall, but result from the revelation of the gospel, and these may justly be called gospel precepts.⁴³

The committee sat during eight days, and Mr. Hamilton appeared ten or eleven times before them; after which they came to the following judgment in the affair:

Edinburgh, 11th October 1720. The committee for purity of doctrine unanimously expressed their satisfaction with the answers given by Mr. Alexander Hamilton to their queries proposed to him, and agreed to make a favourable report thereof, and of his conduct in that affair, to the commission, and resolved, on all occasions that they will improve it with the greatest affection and brotherly tenderness towards him. The which being intimate to him, he was allowed a copy hereof. Extracted from the minutes of the committee, by Nic. Spence.

The communing (says Mr. Hamilton) was begun, carried on, and ended with a good measure of calmness, and, I hope, of brotherly respect and affection, so as that scarce one irritating expression was uttered upon either side. Only, when I might return home, Mr. Logan said, it would take a month to dispatch all the queries. I told them that if once I were gone, though an ecumenick council should call me, I would not answer; to which Principal Hadow answered, ‘that might be spared, when the clearing of truth lay at the stake,’ or some such words; to which I replied, little did he know my circumstances, and with how much difficulty I came in and staid in town; or some words to that purpose. I was much obliged to see the ministers of Edinburgh, particularly the Professor and Mr. Mitchell. I confess, when they were putting some queries to me which insinuated

43. Answers to the Queries delivered to Mr. Alexander Hamilton, minister of the gospel at Airth, by the committee for purity of doctrine, and given into the said committee by him upon the 11th day of October 1720. [This may be preserved as NRS CH1/2/43, Report of subcommittee for purity of doctrine, General Assembly Papers, Main Series (1720), 253–260.]

great suspicion of gross errors, and others that I thought grated much upon special gospel truths, my heart grew so great that I could scarce utter a word without a flood of tears, for which I craved their pardon, and told them it was my infirmity which I could not help; and some of themselves were so affected that they *teared* also.⁴⁴

It had been intended to subject Mr. Warden, Mr. Brisbane and others, to the ordeal through which Mr. Hamilton had passed;⁴⁵ but by this time it had come to be known that the late act of Assembly was creating much dissatisfaction, on which account the committee judged it prudent to desist, and sought by their lenity to disarm the opposition of such as were most tractable. In this they succeeded; for none of the three ministers just mentioned took a decided part in the subsequent management of the controversy.

When the act concerning *The Marrow* was printed, it gave offence in different quarters of the church, even to persons who scrupled at various expressions in the book which it condemned.⁴⁶ But the first motion to take steps for having it repealed were made in a part of the country where the controversy had not been agitated. The subject having been brought before the presbytery of Selkirk by one of its members, in concert with others, was referred to the synod of Merse and Teviotdale, at their meeting in October. The synod refused to countenance the overture, and those who supported it were treated with great severity, in the course of the debate which took place on that occasion.⁴⁷ By Mr. Gabriel Wilson's advice, Mr. Boston wrote to Mr. Hog, giving him an account of what had passed at the synod, and suggesting that some joint measure should be taken by those in different synods who were aggrieved by the Assembly's deed. He received an answer from Mr. Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline, to whom Mr. Hog had communicated his letter, signifying that he and several of his brethren in the neighbourhood were ready to concur in seeking redress of the injury done to truth; and soon after he received from the same quarter a draught of a representation to the Assembly. As this did not satisfy him and his friends, Mr. Boston, at their desire, drew up another, which he sent to the brethren in the north, and it was arranged that a meeting should be held at Edinburgh in the end of February to deliberate on the subject.⁴⁸ Nine ministers attended that meeting, at which it was resolved that a representation and petition should be given in to next Assembly; the draught was committed to Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, of Portmoak that he might introduce such alterations and additions as had been suggested in the course of conversation;

and it was agreed that his labours should be revised by the brethren in his neighbourhood, and submitted to another meeting to be held at the same place in the end of March.⁴⁹

The draught of the representation was submitted to such ministers as were known to the dissatisfied with the act of the Assembly, and they were requested to attend the adjourned meeting; but many of them prayed to "have been excused." When decided measures in a public cause are to be taken by a minority, and there is reason to think that those may lead to consequences affecting public peace or private interest, it is hard to say how individuals will act, and they are not always conscious of the motives by which they are actuated. At the time of which we speak, some, whose zeal had perhaps outrun their knowledge, went over to the side of the majority, and joined in the persecution against their former friends.⁵⁰ Others declined to act with them on different grounds. It is singular that none of the ministers in the presbyteries of Auchterarder and Stirling stood forth, though the controversy properly originated with them. The process against Mr. Drummond, favourable as it was to him in its issue, appears to have cooled

44. A Copie of the conduct of the committee for purity of doctrine, with respect to Mr. Alexander Hamilton, minister of Airth, done by himself. [See footnote 20.]

45. "Mr. Hamilton has been at Edinburgh this week,—I hear I am to be called in for the endeavour I used to rectify the first draught of Mr. Hamilton's catechism some eleven or twelve years ago." (Warden to Wodrow, 8th October 1720; and Wodrow to Warden, 12th October 1720.) [See *Correspondence*, 2.537 and 539.]

46. "A godly and learned divine (says Mr. Gabriel Wilson), who had no manner of concern in the late edition of *The Marrow*, nor in the last Assembly that condemned the book, having in a letter touched on that point, adds, 'I would not for ten thousand worlds have been a yea in the passing of that act.'" (Brown's *Gospel Truth*, p. 21.) "I hear there are some things in the act of last Assembly anent *The Marrow* very stumbling to some brethren." (Mr. William Wilson of Perth to Mr. Wodrow, 3d January 1721.) [Ibid., Wod.Lett.Qu. vol. XIV.]

47. Similar motions were made in other presbyteries and synods, and with similar success. (*The Controversy concerning The Marrow of Modern Divinity considered in a familiar Dialogue*, p. 126.)

48. When Mr. Boston was thus employed, his *Fourfold State of Man* came from the press; a book which has contributed more than any other human and private work, to mould the religious sentiments of the commonality of Scotland. He at first looked on the circumstances in which it made its appearance as unfavourable, but lived to see the contrary.

49. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 364–370.

50. "Mr. Henderson (of Dalgety) was the man that most of all did advise Mr. Hog to publish *The Marrow*, with his Preface." He purchased copies of Mr. Alexander Hamilton's catechism to circulate in his congregation, but afterwards became a great enemy of both. (Letter, Mr. Ralph Erskine to Mrs. Balderston, Aug. 1, 1720.) [This may be in the letter collection in New College Library, Archives and Manuscripts, HAM-1.]

his zeal. Mr. Muir of Stirling, who was judged one of the most violent against the act of Assembly, contented himself with expressing his opinions as a member of court. The same course was followed by Messrs. Hamilton and Brisbane, who, satisfied with the appearances which they had already made, were averse to involve themselves farther in controversy with the judicatories. Mr. Warden, who appears to have been fond of management, had a favourite plan of his own, and wished to act as a mediator between the two parties.⁵¹ And Mr. Wilson of Perth, who attended the former meeting, had not made up his mind, and both parties claimed him as a friend.⁵² Accordingly, a number who were expected, including the persons just named, did not attend the meeting in March; but the representation was signed by those who were present, and it was agreed to meet again on the day on which the Assembly sat down. On that day, Mr. Hog, whose presence had hitherto been dispensed with, on account of the personal interest he

had in the affair, attended. This meeting was gratified by the entrance of a number of brethren who had hitherto kept aloof; but it soon appeared that their presence was calculated to embarrass, rather than to forward the object. Besides finding fault with some parts of the representation, they urged two things; first that they should ask a conference with the leading members of Assembly before they took the proposed step, and secondly that a few persons only should subscribe the paper, leaving the rest to support it in the court. Mr. Warden was the chief person who managed this opposition, in which he was supported by Mr. Moncrieff of Culfargie, who afterwards saw reason to repent of the line of conduct which he pursued at this time. Mr. Boston was inclined to yield to the first proposal, but it was resisted by his brethren, who perceived its tendency to defeat their great object. Upon this the representation, being subscribed by twelve ministers, was given in by Mr. Kid to the committee of bills.⁵³ “We understood afterwards,” says Mr. Boston, “that Principal Hadow, the spring of that black act of Assembly, was in his way to the committee of bills, to bring in some motion about that act, it would seem for explaining it, etc. but that hearing the tabling of the representation had prevented him, he was disappointed and forbore.”

The diet appointed by the committee for considering the representation, was attended by a great part of the members of the court, who either were attracted by curiosity, or wished to overawe the complainers, and induce them to withdraw their paper. Those who had formerly urged them to request a conference renewed by dwelling on the consequences to be dreaded, if the affair came before the Assembly. The subscribers having declined to comply with this advise, the committee agreed to transmit the representation. It was expected that the affair would be brought forward on Wednesday the 17th of May, but on that day, in consequence of the continued indisposition of the king's commissioner, the Earl of Rothes, the Assembly was suddenly dissolved, after it had referred such business as it could not overtake to the commission.⁵⁴ The act appointing the commission empowered them “to receive any references or appeals that shall be made to them from synods and presbyteries in matters of doctrine, and particularly to take under consideration the representation presented to this Assembly by Mr. James Hog and others about the book entitled *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, and to call the subscribers of that representation before them, or their committees, and ripen and prepare these matters concerning doctrine for the next Assembly, but not to give a final decision therein.”

51. “Some written letters, designed for the press against the Assembly's act, were sent me to revise; and this week a draught of a Representation to be given in to the next Assembly against the former act, which was sent me also, was under my consideration; in both which I find extremes, and have made my remarks on both so plainly that I am persuaded I shall be more and more reckoned ‘a foot out of joint,’ as I know they reckon me. I have pressed with all earnestness to forbear a paper war, though indeed the carriage of the other side to these is scarcely tolerable.” (Mr. Warden to Mr. Wodrow, 28th Jan. 1721.) “I have also been revising (*sed hoc tibi solti*) a draught of a representation by some south country brethren against the act of Assembly condemning *The Marrow*, and indeed I like the representation, as to the doctrine of it, fully as ill as *The Marrow*, yea much worse. But a conference is proposed; and indeed there is an absolute necessity that the Assembly's act be rectified, for never did I see its equal.” (Mr. Warden to Mr. Wodrow, 28th Feb. 1721. [March 1st in *Correspondence*]) “Truly, they run so fast, especially Mr. M. [Muir?] at Sterline that I believe it shall not be in my power to keep within sight of them.” (id. To eund. [the same], 22d March 1721.) [See *Correspondence*, 2.559, 568.]

52. “Mr. Wilson of Perth was here, and preached in the New Kirk in the afternoon, but he did not meddle with *The Marrow*. However, some say that he was for it, but I was with him in converse a little time, and there was none with us, and he told me that he was not for it. My Lord Grange took Mr. Wilson with him to sup this night.” (Mr. J. Dougall to Mr. Wodrow, Edin. 3d Jan. 1722 [sic 1721].) [NLS, James Dougall, Letters of (1721–2), Wod.Lett.Qu.XV, ff.6–180 (*passim*). The year should be 1721 if Lachman is accurate, who cites this passage as well and numbers the letter as No. 83; cf. Lachman, p. 288.]

53. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 370, 371. The persons who subscribed the representation were Mr. James Hog, minister of Carnock, Mr. Thomas Boston of Ettrick, Mr. John Bonar of Torphichen, Mr. John Williamson of Inveresk and Musselburgh, Mr. James Kid of Queensferry, Mr. Gabriel Wilson of Maxton, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine of Portmoak, Messrs. Ralph Erskine and James Wardlaw of Dunfermline, Mr. Henry Davidson of Galashiels, Mr. James Bathgate of Orwell, and Mr. James Hunter of Lilliesleaf.

54. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 372.

The representation was couched in respectful and temperate, but at the same time, firm and decided language. In the preamble, the subscribers express their conviction that there is a propensity in the corrupt nature of man to licentiousness, and to pervert the grace of God to an encouragement of this, by venting such opinions as these, "that the law is not a rule of life to believers," and "that holiness is not necessary to salvation;" opinions which their hearts did abhor as egregious blasphemy against our Lord Jesus Christ, and which it is the duty of all the ministers and assemblies of the church to stifle as monstrous births. At the same time they express an equally strong conviction that there is also a bias in corrupt nature to seek righteousness and salvation by the old way of the first covenant—not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; and that this bias is more subtle and less easily discerned than the former, because it is opposed to a new revelation made after the fall, whereas the other is opposed to the law impressed on man's mind before the fall. And apprehending that the late General Assembly had not sufficiently adverted to the danger on that side, in their act concerning *The Marrow*, and that gospel truth had thereby suffered, and was in danger of suffering still more, they beg leave, with all humility and deference, to lay before this venerable Assembly some of the things which in the said act are stumbling to them and many others in the church. These they arrange under five heads.

And first, say they, "it is surprising and exceedingly grievous unto us that by the said act the following position is condemned, namely, 'That as the law is the covenant of works, believers are altogether and wholly set free from it;—set free both from the commanding and condemning power of the covenant of works.' We acknowledge and profess, we look upon our freedom from the covenant of works, or the law as that covenant, to be the chief branch of that precious liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and in which the eternal salvation of our souls is wrapped up. And to suppose that a man cannot be under the law as a rule of life, unless he be under the covenant of works (which the act above specified plainly imports), is contrary to our Confession of Faith, chapter 19, sect. 6, and Larger Catechism [Q. 97], question anent 'the use of the moral law to the regenerate,' which bear, 'That although believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, yet it is of use to them as a rule of life, or as the rule of their obedience.'"

Secondly, they object to the declaring of the distinction of the law, as it is the law of works, and as it is the law of Christ, according to the application of the author of *The Marrow*, to be altogether groundless. This,

they say, is of the same dangerous tendency as the former, and they express their regret that the Assembly had not taken another method to expose the antinomian paradoxes.

Thirdly, they complain that, in attempting to fix upon *The Marrow* the charge that holiness is not necessary to salvation, the Assembly had condemned a number of precious truths contained in the passages quoted, particularly that the believer had in Christ all things necessary to his salvation, and in answer to the demands of the broken law,—which truths the book censured had expressed in the very words in which "that blessed and famous reformer, Martin Luther, in his strenuous and courageous defence of the evangelical doctrine of justification, asserted the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus, as our surety, to be the only righteousness upon which we may rely in the case of justification before God."

Fourthly, with respect to the nature of faith, they represent that the Assembly had in effect excluded from faith that act by which a person approbates to himself what before lay in common in the gospel offer, and thereby turned it into that "general and doubtful faith" abjured in our national covenant; that it is notorious that our first reformers, and the body of reformed divines after their times, had spoken of faith in the same strain as the author of *The Marrow*; that though a different mode of speaking had in later times come into use, and the subscribers were well satisfied with the manner in which saving faith was described in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, yet they never doubted that it was substantially the same with the doctrine formerly taught that "receiving and resting on Christ for salvation," implies that assurance by which it had been customary for divines to describe the fiducial act or appropriating persuasion of faith; that the Confession, in the passage referred to by the Assembly, doth not exclude all assurance from the essence of faith, but speaks of that kind of assurance which is complex, and contains not only what is included in the direct act of faith, but also what arises from spiritual sensation and rational argumentation; and that the Assembly would have done more acceptable service to God, had they shown the agreement between the ancient and modern way of describing faith, instead of condemning the former as erroneous, and thus inflicting a stigma on the reformed churches.

Fifthly, They complain that by condemning this position, "That the Father had made a deed of gift and grant unto all mankind that whosoever of them shall believe in his Son shall not perish," the Assembly had encroached on the warrant which the revelation of the divine will in the Word gives to all men to receive Christ.

The subscribers say they were willing to waive any consideration of the expressions in *The Marrow*, which the late Assembly had judged exceeding harsh and offensive, as their concern was for the truth, not the manner of expressing it; but they could not but advert to the hard treatment of a book which was remarkable for setting the difference between law and gospel in a clear light, and pointing out the true way of attaining evangelical holiness. As instances of this, they specify the charges of its touching that the believer is not under the law as a rule of life, and that holiness is not necessary to salvation; when the author plainly asserts the contrary, and one half of his book is occupied in explaining and applying the law of the ten commandments both to unbelievers and believers, for their direction and excitation to holiness of heart and life.

In conclusion, the subscribers declare that they “do not account the deed of the late Assembly otherwise than as an oversight;” yet their hearts trembled for its consequences, especially as there was a growing humour in the generation for turning religion into a mere morality, which has nothing but the matter of it in common with true holiness and gospel obedience. They were afraid that the act complained of would open a sluice for the entrances of such tenets, more especially when they connected it with the loose terms in which the last Assembly had stated the doctrine of justification and holiness, in another of its acts, containing directions as to catechetical doctrine. On these grounds they pray the Assembly to repeal the act concerning *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, and to provide a remedy for removing the offence given by the other act referred to; “which (say they), will afford matter of thanksgiving to God, in behalf of the truth and of yourselves, to many who love the truth and peace.”

[PART THREE.]⁵⁵

The “representation” caused no small perplexity to the leading men in the church. They had heard, from various quarters, of the offence taken at the act in question, and were not unconscious that it contained unguarded

expressions which gave a handle to its opponents. The precipitation with which it had been passed was matter of general complaint: it was openly asserted that, though the act bore that the Assembly had compared the passages in *The Marrow* with the Scriptures and Confession of Faith, no such collation ever in fact took place, either in the committee or in the court; and some members acknowledged that they gave their vote in its favour under the impression that the titles prefixed to the several heads of the act, such as, “Holiness not necessary to salvation,” and “The believer is not under the law as a rule of life,” were expressions in the book which they were called on to condemn.⁵⁶ Aware of these things, the ecclesiastical managers were prepared to make a proposal to correct the errors into which too great haste had betrayed them, but were baulked by the measure adopted by their opponents. The latter had indeed given a soft name to their paper; but, though called a representation and petition, it was in reality a remonstrance and complaint; and as such it was felt. The equity of the Assembly’s judgment was arraigned; it was charged with doing injury to truth; the imputing of this error to “an oversight,” seemed to be a compliment paid to the honesty of the members at the expense of their wisdom; and many who could have wished the sentence had not been pronounced, were unwilling that the authority of the court, and their own credit, should be impeached or compromised by a repeal.

The representers were called before the commission on the day after the Assembly rose, and they complain that they were treated as offenders, from whom acknowledgments were demanded, rather than petitioners, who sought for redress. After the representation was read, and Mr. Hog had said a few words in support of it, Principal Hadow, Professors Hamilton and Blackwell, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Logan and others, to the number of thirteen, followed with set speeches on the other side.⁵⁷ The speakers chiefly expatiated on the errors of the *Marrow*, from which they quoted passages additional to those which had hitherto been animadverted upon; they accused it of an antinomian tendency, and of teaching constructively that the sins of believers are no sin; and they alleged that, as the representers did not approve of many of the expressions in that book, their opposition to the Assembly’s act seemed to spring, less from love to the truth, than from regard to one of their own number who had recommended it, and from a desire to distinguish themselves and form a party, as appeared from their hauling in, *ad captandum vulgus*,⁵⁸ the overtures respecting kirk-sessions and presbyteries.⁵⁹ When the members had delivered

55. [*The Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, vol. 30, no. 12 (December 1831): 811–826 and 31. (1832).]

56. Dialogue concerning *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, p. 108–111. [James Hog, *The Controversie concerning the Marrow of Modern Divinity. Considered in several familiar dialogues. Dialogue I* (Edinburgh: John Macky, 1721).]

57. Dialogue concerning *The Marrow*, p. 137. Boston’s *Memoir*, p. 372. Wodrow’s Letter, *ut infra*. [*Correspondence*, 2, 584.]

58. [*ad captandum vulgus* (Latin): “to ensnare the vulgar” or thus, “to captivate the masses.”]

59. The reference here is to certain overtures, transmitted by the

their opinions, the representers were permitted to speak, and Mr. Boston and Mr. Erskine of Portmoak expressed their sentiments shortly; but the former was seized with one of those fits of bashful timidity to which he was subject, and the talents of the latter were more fitted for the pulpit than the arena of ecclesiastical debate. They however acquired the praise of comparative moderation on this occasion, from the members of the commission. "Mr. Boston and Mr. Ebenezer Erskine spoke with some modesty, and many distinguish them from several others among them. The last owned his willingness to retract anything in the paper, when convinced that it was contrary to the Confession of Faith and Scripture; and the former declared he had no jealousy that the Assembly designed anything against the truth, but thought that clause about the covenant of works might be misimproven in time to come.⁶⁰ Mr. Williamson of Inveresk and Mr. Gabriel Wilson were more cautious; and, after expressing their opinion generally as to the direction which had been given to the discussion, declined replying, on the spur of the moment, to so many elaborate speeches. A large committee was appointed to hear them next day.⁶¹

Being asked in the committee what were the "other grievances" to which they referred, besides those which they had specified, the representers agreed to pass from that part of their paper, and to confine themselves to the points of doctrine which they thought injured by the decisions of the Assembly before last. They were then heard at considerable length; and, in the reasoning which ensued, they claim that advantage which they allow their opponents to have had on the preceding day. "Kind providence so ordered it (says Mr. Boston) that the career they were on the day before was, through the divine mercy, stopped to conviction, at that and the following meetings. Particularly, Mr. Williamson did, in a point of debate, fairly lay Mr. Allan Logan, minister of Culross; and I was encouraged by the success of an encounter with Principal Hadow.⁶² The discussion, however, was limited chiefly to two points, the guilt of sin and the nature of faith.⁶³ On receiving the report of the extrajudicial conversation, the commission appointed a committee to prepare an overture vindicating the act of Assembly, to be laid before them at their next meeting, on the second Wednesday of August, which the representers were warned to attend. A difference of sentiment had arisen in the commission, as to the mode of procedure, some of the members disapproving of one part of the Assembly's act; and to please them, the committee was instructed to "state the doctrine of this church as to the believer's freedom from the covenant of works."⁶⁴

In the meantime, the controversy was carried on with increasing warmth before the public, and gave rise to proceedings in different presbyteries and synods of considerable interest, which may be noticed, after bringing the narrative of the main process to a close.

At the meeting of the commission in August, a large overture was laid before them by their committee, vindicating the Assembly against the charges contained in the representation of the twelve brethren, and adducing additional proofs of "the antinomianism of *The Marrow*." It is unnecessary to give a more particular account of it here, as, after being abridged, and undergoing some slight alterations, it was afterwards embodied in the act of Assembly, which terminated the controversy in its judicial form. Several members insisted that it should lie on the table, and be more deliberately and fully considered at the meeting in November; but after a long debate, it carried by a great majority that is now transmitted to the next General Assembly as an overture, with this provision that the commission at their next meeting should add something farther to it, if they saw it meet. Lord Grange, Colonel William Erskine, Mr. Warden, and Mr. Darling, minister of Kinnoul, voted for delay. It was next agreed that the overture should be immediately printed.⁶⁵ "It is ordered (says one of the supporters of the measure) to be printed that all the brethren and people of this church may see the Assembly was vindicated from the false aspersions cast upon it by these twelve brethren."⁶⁶ When this business was

General Assembly, which were viewed with great jealousy, as giving a negative to ministers in kirk-sessions, and otherwise innovating the Presbyterian constitution.

60. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 19, 1721. [*Correspondence*, 2,585.]

61. *Ibid.*

62. [Boston's] *Memoirs*, p. 373.

63. Dialogue concerning *The Marrow*, p. 145.

64. Wodrow's Letter, *ut supra*. [*Ibid.*] Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 373.

65. It would appear from the following passage that the representation was printed subsequently to the answers, or overture of the commission. "Phil. But, Sir, how can you offer to expose anything to the world in this controversy contrary to such an express statute of the church against printing in favours of *The Marrow*? Paul. Sir, it seems you are for trying us neck and heel, and then pelting us at pleasure. We are not the aggressors in the matter of printing, nor have we been hasty therein. Not to speak now of P. Hadow's performance, the commission have printed their overture, and in some parts of it have appealed to the impartial world; and would you have that impartial judge to determine without hearing both parties?" — (*Dialogue concerning The Marrow*, pp. 116–7.)

66. Letter, Mr. James Stirling, August 11, 1721. [NLS, James Stirling, Minister of the Barony, Glasgow, letters of (1721) Wod.Lett.Qu.XV, ff.10–86 (*passim*). This is item No. 62 in volume XV; cf. Lachman, p. 311 (note *John* is mistyped for *James* in Lachman's footnote.)

finished, the representers, who had been in waiting for several days, were called in, and told that the commission had transmitted to the Assembly an overture on their cause, and that their attendance was expected at the meeting of the commission in November.⁶⁷ We have seen that additions to the overture were contemplated. What these were was kept a secret, at least from the brethren immediately concerned; but with a view to that affair the committee for purity of doctrine was appointed to meet on the second Tuesday of September, and a sub-committee to revise their labours, on the Tuesday before the next meeting of the commission.⁶⁸

In the month of November (1721) the subscribers of the representation again appeared before the commission. They thought they had good reason to complain of its proceedings at last meeting: it had, *per saltum*, approved of a paper charging them with “foul reproaches,” had transmitted this as an overture to the General Assembly at a much earlier period than was necessary, and had caused it to be published to the world. But they now learned that still stronger measures were to be taken against them. The committee, which met in September, had drawn up a series of queries relating to points connected with the representation, and calculated to draw from them answers which might lay a foundation for counter-charges, and for obliging those who had accused the supreme court of injuring the truth to clear themselves from error. These were agreed to by the commission on the 8th of November; “and thus (says Mr. Boston) they turned the cannon directly against us.” When they were called in, and the queries presented, they requested liberty to consult

among themselves before receiving them. Some individuals were of opinion that the demand should be resisted as unconstitutional, inquisitorial, and ensnaring; but after some serious deliberation, they agreed that it was most expedient in their circumstances to receive the queries, under protest. The reason assigned by one of their number for adopting this course discovers the gloomy prospect they had as to the issue of the affair. “I was clear (says he) that, whatever should be the consequences, we should receive and answer them. What determined me to this was that I thought we were to lay our account with parting with our brethren, as being cast out by them, and, in that event, it would be safest both for the cause of truth and our own reputation.”⁶⁹ Accordingly, they next day gave in to the commission a paper, subscribed with their names, in which they say,

The Reverend Commission having, in August last, past an overture, and therein made determinations upon the several heads of the representation aforesaid, which no answers of ours can warrant them to alter, and considering that the putting queries to us in this manner is, we conceive, an uncommon and undue manner of procedure, we do not look upon ourselves as bound to answer them: Nevertheless, for the sake of truth, and to take off any shadow of suspicion, though never so groundless, and being neither afraid nor ashamed to bring to light our sentiments on these points in the form of answers to these queries, as well as we have already done in our representation, we judge it expedient to condescend to take them under our consideration, and to give answers thereto against the commission in March; withal protesting that this our condescension herein shall not be construed an approbation of this method of procedure, nor be improved as a precedent.⁷⁰

Upon this they received the queries. It would seem that they made some objections to giving in their answer to the committee for purity of doctrine, but in this also they acquiesced.⁷¹

The queries, it may be presumed, were not the more acceptable to them that they, as well as the commission's overture, were chiefly taken from Principal Hadow's *Antinomianism of the Marrow Detected*. They were so divided as to make twelve in number; which looked as if the commission had intended to ask each of the representers a single question. Instead of being a play upon numbers, this might be one of those casual coincidences which sometimes occur, and which, when discovered, merely provoke a smile. But it is certain that grave committees did find leisure to count their fingers,

67. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 376. *Dialogue concerning The Marrow*, p. 146.

68. Mr. Stirling's Letter, *ut supra*. The postscript to this letter is in the following words: “They are thinking upon some queries to the twelve brethren, which relates to their representation, and these are to be proposed against the commission in November.”

69. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 378.

70. Queries and Answers, pp. 7, 8; printed in 1722. [*Queries, agreed unto by the Commission of the General Assembly, and put to these ministers, who gave in a representation and petition against the 5th and 8th Acts of Assembly 1720: together with the answers given by these ministers to the said questions* (1722).]

71. “This day the commission received in the twelve brethren's answer, which has some harsh expressions in it, such as *unduely*, and very peremptory assertions, *we have condescended*, &c. It was delayed till afternoon.—After this the twelve brethren came in, and were referred to meet with the committee, March 8, the week before the commission, and then to give in their answers to be reported to the committee; about which they made some bustle, but at length they yielded.” (Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, 9th November 1721.) [NLS, to Margaret Wodrow (1721–22), Wod.Lett.Qu.XV, ff.68–75, 98, 153–165. This is item No. 71 in volume XV; cf. Lachman, p. 314.]

and arrange their *duodecuple* divisions, in other proceedings connected with this controversy. Speaking of the committee appointed by the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale to examine a sermon preached before them, a writer of that time says, "they drew up a charge consisting of *twelve* remarks, *twelve* questions, and *twelve* slanders; for you must know, by the by that the number *twelve* is what some wanton kirk-men have taken pleasure to sport themselves with of late; though some of them have discovered how ridiculously straightened they have been to find their account."⁷²

At the meeting of the committee for purity of doctrine in Edinburgh, on the 8th of March 1722, the representers, who had not been able to assemble during the winter, requested two days to examine and correct a draught of answers which was under their consideration.⁷³ Their answers were accordingly given in on the 10th, along with a separate paper, containing authorities in support of the sentiments which they had advanced, taken from the writings of the most eminent protestant divines, foreign and domestic. They were subscribed by all the representers, except Mr. Bonar, who "being detained by indisposition, could neither attend when the queries were given, nor the answers returned."⁷⁴ The draught of the answers was begun by Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, but much extended and improved by Mr. Gabriel Wilson, whose "vast compass of reading, with his great collection of books, qualified him singularly for the task."⁷⁵

The merit of the answers, in point of composition, and in respect of the information they contain on certain important doctrines, will be allowed by those who disapprove of the conduct of the compilers, and dissent from some of their conclusions. They begin with complaining that the title prefixed to the queries, which in terms of the commission's overture, describes their representation as "in favours of *The Marrow*," was calculated to give a wrong colour to that paper, "as if (say they) the chief design of it was to plead, not for the precious truths of the gospel which we conceived to be wounded by the condemnatory act, but for *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, the which, though we value for a good and useful book, and doubt not but the church of God may be much edified by it, as we ourselves have been, yet came it never into our minds to hold it, or any other private writing, faultless, nor to put it on a level with our approved standards of doctrine."

In answer to the first query, "Whether there are any precepts in the gospel that were not actually given before the gospel was revealed," after signifying that they could perceive nothing in their representation which

gave just occasion for putting such a question, they state in substance that in the gospel, strictly understood, and as contradistinguished from the law, there are no precepts; all of these, the command to believe and repent not excepted, belonging to and flowing from the law, which fastens the new duty on us as soon as the gospel reveals the new object; so that there never was, nor can be, an instance of a duty owing by the creature to God, which is not commanded by the moral law, either directly or indirectly, expressly or by consequence. And this distinction is equally necessary for maintaining the perfection of the law, and for preserving the purity of the gospel, in opposition to Arminians and Baxterians, who turn the latter into a new or remedial law. But if the gospel be taken largely for the whole doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, or the whole system of revealed truth, then it contains, besides faith and repentance, many precepts which were not actually given or expressly promulgated and required before the revelation of grace; such as, love to enemies, bearing the cross, hope and joy in tribulation, mutual forgiveness, and many others.

The second query runs thus: "Is not the believer now bound, by the authority of the Creator, to personal obedience to the moral law, though not in order to justification?" Having expressed their surprise that the commission should have moved such a query upon the passage of their representation specified as the ground of it, they add, "Since they have been pleased to think otherwise, we answer *affirmatively*, the believer, since

72. *The Trust, a Sermon, at the opening of the provincial synod of Mers and Teviotdale, at Kelso, October 17th, 1721. by Gabriel Wilson, Minister of the Gospel at Maxton.* Glasgow: Printed by John Bryce, 1765. Preface, p. iv.

73. "On Wednesday, upon the first meeting of that committee, three of the representatives compeared [i.e., appeared in court], and told they were not ready to give in their answers, and believed they would not be ready before Friday, if so soon. The committee being but thin, adjourned to five that evening, and having again called the representers, they compeared by two others of their number, and repeated their former answer; and left us at an uncertainty, if on Friday we should have their answers. This is the fruit of allowing them to make a joint answer. However, the committee adjourned to Friday afternoon in hopes of it." (Letter, Principal John Stirling, Edinburgh, March 8, 1722.) [NLS, *ibid.*]

74. Queries by the Commission, and Answers, p. 86. This document was printed in the course of the year 1722, by the representers, with the motto, *Errare possum, hereticus esse nolo* [Though he may be in error, he will not be a heretic]. It has been frequently reprinted, both along with *The Marrow*, and in a separate form. [*Queries, agreed unto by the Commission of the General Assembly; and put to these ministers, who gave in a representation and petition against the 5th and 8th acts of Assembly 1720. Together with the answers given by these ministers to the said queries.* {Edinburgh}, 1722)].

75. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 379.

he ceases not to be a *creature* by being made a *new creature*, is, and ever must be, bound to personal obedience to the law of the ten commandments by the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, his Creator; but this authority is, as to him, issued by and from the Lord Jesus Christ, at whose mouth he receives the law, being as well his Lord God Creator, as his Lord God Redeemer, and having all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him." Having quoted the following position, "If a believer ought not to receive the law of the ten commandments at the hand of God as he is Creator out of Christ, he is not under its obligation as it was delivered by God the Creator, but is loosed from all obedience to it as it was enacted by the authority of the Lord Creator,"⁷⁶ they say, "What can be more injurious to the infinite majesty of the Sovereign Lord Redeemer, by whom all things were created—than to speak as if the Creator's authority was not in him; or as if the receiving the Creator's law from Christ did loose men from obedience to it as enacted by the authority of the Father?"

To the third query, "Doth the annexing of a promise of life, and a threatening of death, to a precept, make it a covenant of works?" they answered as in their representation, with some additional illustrations. And to the fourth, "If the moral law, antecedent to its receiving the form of a covenant of works, had a threatening of hell annexed to it," they return this striking answer, "As to the intrinsical demerit of sin, we are clear, whether there had ever been any covenant of works or not, it deserves hell;—yet what behoved to have been the Creator's disposal of the creature on the supposed event of sin's entering without a covenant being made, we incline not here to slip into. But we reckon, it is not possible to prove a threatening of hell to be inseparable from the law of creation, the obligation of which, because resulting from the nature of God, is eternal and immutable; for confirmed angels, glorified saints, yea, and the human nature of Christ, are all of them naturally, necessarily, and eternally obliged to love, obey, depend on, and submit unto God, and to make him their blessedness and ultimate end; but none, we conceive, will be preemptory in saying that they have a threatening of hell annexed to the law they are under."

The sixth and seventh queries relate to the necessity of holiness in order to the obtaining of eternal happiness. To which they answer, "That personal holiness and justification being inseparable in the believer, we are unwilling, so much as the query does, to suppose

their separation;" and then they enumerate a variety of grounds on which holiness is necessary; after which they add, "yet we dare not say, 'A holy life is necessary in order to the *obtaining* of eternal happiness;' for to say nothing of the more gross sense of these words, which yet is obvious enough, though we are far from imputing it to the Assembly, we cannot, however they may be explained into an orthodox meaning, look upon them as *wholesome words*, since they have at least an appearance of evil, being such a way of expression as Protestant churches and divines have industriously shunned to use on that head."

In answer to the eighth query, "Is knowledge, belief, and persuasion that Christ died for me, and that he is mine, etc. the direct act of faith,—and the very essence of that justifying act of faith?" They reply that in their representation, they had asserted nothing positively concerning the passages of *The Marrow* relating to faith, but merely remonstrated against the indiscriminate condemnation of them, as what seemed to hurt the appropriating act of faith, and to fix a blot on the doctrine of reformed churches and divines;—which they might do, without determining that the persuasion spoken of in the query was the very direct and formal act of justifying faith. But as the query was so closely put, they would not decline giving their sentiments on that point. Having corrected the commission's statement of the description of faith in *The Marrow*, which did not contain the clause, "Christ died for me," they give the following commentary on it in substance.

"Be verily persuaded," whatever one believes, he is really persuaded of.

"In your heart," it must be a cordial persuasion, in distinction from that cold and naked assent which one gives to things which do not affect or concern him.

"That Christ is yours;" not in possession (for before faith we have no actual or saving interest in him), but in the free offer of him as a Saviour in the Word, in which respect Christ is in some sense ours, namely, as it is lawful and warrantable for us (not for fallen angels), to take possession of him and his salvation by faith; and as it is the duty of every one under the gospel, so the Spirit enables the convinced sinner, upon the above ground and warrant, to appropriate, apply, and make his own the thing offered, by believing.

"That you shall have life and salvation by him;" namely, the life of holiness, as well as of happiness; and salvation being, above all things, in a sensible sinner's eye, he cannot be relieved, unless by faith, he sees his salvation in Christ.

"And that whatsoever Christ did for the redemption

76. These are the words of Principal Hadow, in his *Antinomianism of the Marrow* [1721], p. 88.

of mankind, he did it for you;" for whosoever believes in the manner above explained, may, and ought to believe this also in its proper order; and all who rest on Christ for salvation do believe it virtually, if not explicitly.

Having adduced proofs that the assurance of faith was taught in the formularies of the reformed churches, and writing of their most approved divines, under the expressions of *fiducia specialis misericordiae*, fiducial application, affiancing, appropriating persuasion, etc., and that it is implied in most of the words used in Scripture to describe saving faith, they add certain distinctions for removing difficulties. One is that this persuasion, "is not axiomatical, but real," that is, though the first saving manifestation of Christ to a believer begets such a persuasion and humble confidence as is real and relieving, and particular as to his own salvation, working a proportional hope as to the issue, yet he often fears to express it directly and particularly of himself, owing to the deep impressions he has of his guilt, the awe of the divine majesty on his spirit, his indistinct knowledge of the gospel and grounds of faith, etc.

Another distinction, which is illustrated at some length, is that between the assurance of faith, and the assurance of sense, meaning by the latter, what arises from reflection, spiritual argumentation, or inward sensation, by which a person comes to know, and be assured that he is actually united to Christ, and in a state of grace and salvation.

In answer to the tenth query, they say, "Although we believe the purchase and application of redemption to be peculiar to the elect,—yet the warrant to receive him is common to all; and although this is neither in our representation, nor in the passages of the book condemned on that head, called a deed of gift or grant of Christ, yet, being required to give our judgment on this point, we think that, agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, it may be so called that this grant made in common to lost mankind is from sovereign grace only, and cannot fail to be absolutely free; yet so as none can be possessed of Christ and his benefits, till by faith they receive him."

To the last query, respecting the hope of heaven and fear of hell as motives of the believer's obedience, they reply by a more particular statement of their sentiments than they had given in their representation, having been induced to exclude from it what they had prepared on that head, with the view of securing the concurrence of some brethren, who, after all, did not join them.⁷⁷ "Taking heaven (say they) for a state of endless felicity in the enjoyment of God in Christ, we are so far from thinking that this is to be excluded from being a motive of the believer's obedience that we think it the chief end of

man, next to the glory of God;—but to form conceptions of heaven as a place of pleasure and happiness, without the former views of it, and to fancy that this heaven is to be obtained by our own works and doings, is unworthy of a believer, a child of God, in regard it is slavish, legal, mercenary and carnal." With respect to the fear of hell, they reckon it a special branch of Christian liberty that believers yield obedience to the Lord, not from slavish fear of wrath, but from childlike love, and filial fear of God; and they agree with Rutherford, Durham, and Owen, who, while they own that the threatenings of everlasting wrath are to be viewed by believers as declarative of God's hatred of sin, and his will to punish it, yet maintain that "the use of them cannot be to beget an anxious, doubting, solicitous fear, about the punishment threatened, grounded on a supposition that the person fearing shall be overtaken with it." After requesting a charitable construction of their answers, and complaining of the aspersions thrown on them as enemies to the law of God, the respondents conclude by saying,— "We adhere to our representation and petition in all points; and so much the rather that we have already observed the sad fruits and bad improvement made of the Assembly's deed therein complained of."⁷⁸

When the commission met on the 8th of May, the brethren's answers to the queries were laid on the table, together with remarks upon them by a sub-committee, which had been appointed for this purpose by the committee for purity of doctrine in March. These remarks formed "a long paper," says Mr. Wodrow, "as long as the brethren's answers very near, and took up our whole forenoon's sederunt to read." After being committed and sub-committed, they were reduced to that size and form which fitted them for being added to the overture agreed upon in August; and to the whole was subjoined the commission's opinion as to the mode of issuing the affair. Mr. Muir was the only individual who voted against this conclusion.⁷⁹

The overture (including what was now and formerly

77. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 371.

78. Queries and Answers, *as above*. The writer of this article has in his possession a copy of Answers to the twelve Queries, by Mr. Alexander Hamilton. His answers are short, but agree in substance with those given by the representing ministers. [It is not clear if this Hamilton MS still exists. The contents are not fully enumerated for New College Library, Archives and Manuscripts, MS MAR and MS HAM 1, and this Hamilton MS may be in one of those collections.]

79. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 9, 1722. The sub-committee which completed the overture, consisted of Mr. Mitchell, Principal Stirling, Principal Chalmers, Mr. John Hunter, Mr. David Anderson, Professor Hamilton, and Mr. Wodrow. [*Correspondence*, 2.639.]

agreed upon), begins with enumerating certain charges brought against the Assembly in the representation, which are characterized as “foul reproaches,” and “injurious and undutiful aspersions.” Then follows an assertory part, in which, with the view of wiping off these aspersions, and preserving the purity of gospel truths, a variety of doctrines, to the number of eight, are asserted in the very words of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms. The third part contains a vindication of the Assembly’s act. To prevent well-meaning people from being “imposed upon by the evil suggestions of the said representation, its authors and abettors, and for removing mistakes which the unthinking may fall into.” It is declared in general that the passages cited from *The Marrow* “are to be understood in the sense and meaning of its author, gathered from the book, and are condemned only in so far as they import the erroneous opinions ascribed to it, or are applied by the author to that purpose.”

More particularly, concerning faith, it is argued that the doctrine in the Assembly’s act “is altogether different from the general and doubtful faith of the papists, who allow a man’s believing implicitly as the church believes, and place true faith on a general assent to revealed truths, without a cordial accepting of Christ as offered in the gospel for salvation, deny perseverance, and do not own assurance to be attainable by believers, without extraordinary revelation.”—“Nor can they (the representers), charge the Assembly with denying that a belief of the mercy of God in Christ and of Christ’s ability and willingness to save all that come unto him, is necessary unto justifying faith.”—With respect to the universal atonement and pardon, it is said, “the brethren do not blame the Assembly for condemning the assertion of an universal atonement,” but complain that the Assembly hath condemned “the deed of gift and grant,” extracted out of the sacred records in *The Marrow*, by which the brethren say they understood no more but the revelation of the divine will in the Word, affording a warrant to offer Christ to all, and a warrant unto all to receive him; “which revelation and warrant the Assembly owns. But they (the representers) omit the sense and meaning of the author, which the Assembly evinceth to be an asserting of universal redemption as to purchase.” As to the article concerning the necessity of holiness, it is said, “the Assembly have given no just ground of quarrel on this, nor for any who understand the gospel to be offended, seeing, though good works be excluded from being the ground of justification, yet they are necessary in the justified, in order to their obtaining the enjoyment of eternal

salvation.” On the subject of the fear of punishment, and the hope of heaven, it is urged that the author of *The Marrow* excludes these motives entirely, and that the brethren “do not declare themselves, whether they allow that a believer may and ought to be moved unto obedience by the hope of heaven, in any other sense than that of obtaining a right and title to it by his own works.” What relates to the question of believers being under the law as a covenant, was afterwards so much altered in the Assembly that any account of it shall be omitted here.

In defence of the Assembly’s condemning the distinction between the law of works and the law of Christ, it is said, the brethren have no reason to complain, seeing the author of *The Marrow*, “will have a believer to be under no law which commands any moral duty to be done, either for eschewing of punishment, or upon promise of any reward, temporal or eternal, and so not under the moral law, nor even under the law of Christ, according to the author’s own account of it.” In answer to the objections brought against the act of Assembly concerning catechetical doctrine, it is urged that the article of justification is so expressed as that “it necessarily implies our being justified for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us;” and “the article immediately following concerning the necessity of no dangerous consequence, if they truly own personal holiness to be necessary to salvation; and if they quarrel the phrase of obtaining everlasting happiness, they may also quarrel the apostle’s expression.”

The last part of the overture is accusatory, charging certain positions “of a pernicious and dangerous tendency,” partly on the representation, and partly on the answers to the queries. Of the former kind is this, “that the law, as to believers, is really divested of its promise of life and threatening of death.” And of the latter are the following, “that in the gospel, properly so taken, there are no precepts, the commands of faith and repentance not excepted;” and “that holy obedience is not properly a federal or conditional mean, nor has any kind of causality, in order to the obtaining of glory.”

In conclusion, the commission proposes, “that the General Assembly refuse the petition in the representation, for repealing the act 1720, and as to the other clauses that the Assembly discharge all speaking, teaching, preaching, and printing the above particulars in time coming; and that the presbyteries and synods where the brethren are, take notice of their observation of this act, and that the brethren declare before the Assembly their subjection and acquiescence in this condemnation, under pain of censure. What censure

the aspersions cast upon the church deserve, is left to the Assembly."⁸⁰

The General Assembly met on Thursday the 10th of May 1722, and Mr. William Mitchell, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, was chosen moderator. On Tuesday, the 15th, the committee of overtures reported that they had had laid before them the proceedings of the commission on the representation of the twelve brethren, respecting the fifth act of the General Assembly 1720, and also an overture from another quarter concerning the fifth paragraph of that act, with their opinion that the Assembly should proceed to consider that affair. It now appeared that a strong opposition would be made to the mode of issuing the affair proposed by the commission. Some were anxious for the simple repeal of the act complained of; others wished it to be modified; while a still greater number were dissatisfied with the high ground which had been taken by the leading men in the church, and afraid that a schism would ensue, if the Assembly adopted the harsh measure recommended to them. They were anxious, accordingly that the Assembly should not enter on the cause, until it should be seen what success would attend the attempts made by extrajudicial conference to effect an accommodation and agreement.⁸¹ A debate rose, whether to read the papers before they were transmitted to a committee, which lasted three hours; where was a great deal of hedging and political disputing. Great were the heats on both sides, and insinuations made that the twelve brethren were ready to come to terms, and that it might be the representation might be withdrawn. But no assurance of this could be given; and at length it came to the vote, Read the papers, or remit to a committee? And it carried, Read in open assembly before remitting, by forty-three. This vote is reckoned unfavourable to the representers."⁸²

Next day the subscribers of the representation were called, and all of them compeared, except Mr. Bonar. The representation, the commission's overture, and the other overture transmitted by the committee, were read, after which the Assembly remitted the whole affair to their committee of overtures, to meet that afternoon; declaring that all members of the house who chose might attend and speak their mind on the subject, and that no other committee should meet at the same time. The representers were warned to attend that meeting. According to appointment, the committee met in the assembly house, which was thronged with members. After long discussion on the question, whether to proceed to the examination of the commission's overture, or previously to hear the representers, the latter was agreed

to. "Many speeches," says Mr. Wodrow, "were made before they came in, as to their good disposition, but little of it appeared." They complained that the commission had passed its overture in August without their being heard, and had groundlessly blamed them for calumniating the Assembly and the church, and they offered to reply to that paper article by article. This was refused on the ground that it would lead to endless disputation. They were told that it was expected they would request a conference with a sub-committee, to which they replied that they were ready to argue the matter before the present committee or any other; but being urged, they signified their wish for a smaller committee. This was immediately appointed, and met that night though it was then late.⁸³

Nothing was done by the sub-committee. The members had recourse to their old plan of putting questions which the representers declined answering, except in the words of the standards, profiting in this by the example which the commission had set them in its overture.⁸⁴ On Thursday night, the committee of overtures again met as before, when the brethren were heard at considerable length. Mr. Williamson, in a speech of nearly two hours, examined the charge which the commission had brought against *The Marrow*, if it denied that the law was a rule of life to the believer; endeavoured to show that it was groundless, and produced a number of passages much harsher from the writings of Luther, which

80. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 9, 1722. "There was one particular," says Mr. Wodrow, "the brethren were called in upon, and a query was put to them, on a consequence we thought naturally arose upon one of their answers, about unbelievers, their being obliged to seek life in the way of a covenant of works; which consequence they renounced, and so we left it out. Whether the brethren will disown several other things in their answers we have marked out to the Assembly, I cannot say; but unless they do, it seems hard to conceive how they will escape censure." [*Correspondence*, 2.638.]

81. "The second part of *The Marrow* was published on Saturday, with a long preface and appendix; which is confidence enough in the representers, who are upon conferences for peace." (Letter, Mr. Wodrow, May 14, 1722.) [*Ibid.*, 2.644.]

82. Letter, Mr. Wodrow, May 15, 1722. [*Ibid.*, 2.645.]

83. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 16, 1722. "I cannot mind them all (the members of the sub-committee) the moderator, Mr. Allan Logan, Mr. Smith, Mr. William Boyd, Mr. William Hamilton, Mr. James Brisbane, Principal Stirling, Principal Hadow, my Lord Grange, President Cullen, Sir James Stewart, they are 17 or 18 in all. What they will bring the brethren to, I know not, nor what overturn they will bring in, so as to salve the church's authority and preserve peace." [*Ibid.*, 646-647.]

84. "Mr. Williamson gave us an abstract of the first Dialogue, of which now I am ready to think he is the author." (Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 19, 1722.) Mr. Matthew Crawford was of opinion that Mr. Hog was the author of that tract. (Letter, January 9, 1722.) [*Ibid.*, 649.]

yet Rutherford, the great opponent of the Antinomians, had vindicated and explained in a sound sense.⁸⁵ Others of the representers followed on the same side. At the close of the debate, Principal Hadow and Mr. Smith were appointed to examine and verify the quotations made in the overture. Next day the committee were employed, from four o'clock in the afternoon to midnight, in examining the overture, and putting it into the form of an act. The chief thing which puzzled them was the fifth paragraph of the act of Assembly complained of, which related to believers being under the law as a covenant of works. As the overture of the commission did not give satisfaction on this head to some persons, another overture had been brought before the Assembly from a different quarter. A long debate ensued, in the course of which the rescinding of that clause in the act was pleaded for by several members, among whom was Mr. Logan, who had been a strenuous opponent of *The Marrow*. They insisted that this was the honest and fair course; and that any explanation which was consistent with the orthodox doctrine must be a virtual approbation of the proposition which the Assembly had condemned as erroneous.⁸⁶ But they were overruled by the majority; and an explanation drawn up by a committee sent out for that purpose was adopted. It amounted in substance to this that whereas the following passages,—“As the law is the covenant of works, you are wholly and altogether set free from it,”—and “you are now set free both from the commanding and condemning power of the covenant of works,” were quoted, from *The Marrow*, in the Assembly's act, as a proof that the author

85. Such are the following:—“Works (says Luther), cannot be taught unless you hurt faith, seeing faith and works, in the matter of justification, are completely opposed, so that the doctrine of works must necessarily be a doctrine of devils, and a departure from the truth.”—“Therefore the law hath dominion over the body and the old man; let this man be under the law, but let us not pollute the chamber where Christ alone ought to rest and sleep that is, let us not trouble the new man with any of its uses and offices.”—“A man never sins more horribly than at the moment when he begins to feel and understand the law.”—“It is impossible for Christ and the law to dwell together in one soul”—“It is the great art and wisdom of Christians to be ignorant of the law, and works, and all active obedience, especially when the conscience wrestleth with the justice of God; just as it is the greatest wisdom for men, without the church of God, to know, consider, and press the law, works, and active obedience.”—“A Christian hath nothing at all to do, especially under temptation, with the law and sin; in so far as he is a Christian he is above the law and sin, having Christ, the Lord of the law, inclosed in his heart as a pearl in a ring.” &c.—“Setting aside the matter of justification, we are with Paul to think warmly and speak highly of it, but in the conscience it is the devil.”—“I cannot suffer the law that inexorable tyrant and cruel exactor, to reign in my conscience, for it is the seat and temple of Christ, the Son of God.”—“It is impossible that a son of God should sin, although it

maintained the erroneous sentiment that the believer is not under the law as a rule of life, it is declared that it was not the meaning nor intention of the said act in the least to insinuate that believers in Christ are under the law as a covenant of works, and that these two passages shall not be understood as a proof of the foresaid error in any other sense.⁸⁷

That part of the commission's overture which was drawn up in May was referred to a sub-committee, which sat on Saturday from nine o'clock in the morning to six at night. The alterations which they made contributed in no small degree, to facilitate its progress. In the overture, certain positions and expressions contained in the answers to the queries were declared to be of pernicious and dangerous tendency. It was seen that this rendered it necessary, in point of justice that the Assembly should read these answers; and to prevent this, all reference to them was expunged, and the clause was made to refer generally to positions and expressions which “have at this time been published.” A still greater alteration, and one that had more influence on the issue of the affair, was made. The clause which required the representers to declare their acquiescence in the condemnation of their sentiments was dropped.

The report of the sub-committee was approved of by the committee of overtures which met on Monday forenoon; and, after some reasoning, it was finally agreed, with three dissentient voices, to transmit the overture, as corrected, to the General Assembly.⁸⁸

The Assembly was appointed to meet at three o'clock (on Monday, the 21st of May 1722), but did not actually

is true that he sins; but because his sin was pardoned, therefore when he truly sins he sins not.” (Rutherford's *Spiritual Antichrist* [1648], p. 100–138.)

86. “The clause about believers not being under the covenant of works was matter of tedious debate, and after some hours a committee was sent out to put the passage in writ as amended. The rescinding the act 1720 was plainly enough contended for by Mr. Brisbane, Lord Grange, Mr. Forbes Lesley, and other favourers of the representers. Mr. Logan was for owning a mistake in it.” (Letter, Mr. Wodrow, May 19, 1722.) [Ibid., 649.]

87. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 19, 1722; and Act of Assembly. [*Correspondence*, 2.649. See *Acts of the general assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638–1842* (Edinburgh: for the Church Law Society, 1843), 554.]

88. “There were reasonings against this by Mr. Brisbane and Mr. Alexander Hamilton, and when it came to the vote, it carried, transmit to the Assembly unanimously, save Mr. Brisbane, Mr. Forbes, and a third *not*. Mr. Hamilton was silent, and several others. How it will carry this day in the Assembly, I know not; but it's expected it will carry. My Lord Grange came in late and did not vote. The appointing of a fast is like to be left to the commission, the Commissioner not being particularly instructed about this.” (Letter, Mr. Wodrow, May 21, 1722.) [*Correspondence*, 2.651.]

meet until six o'clock. This was occasioned partly by a violent storm of thunder and rain,⁸⁹ and partly from the anxiety felt by some influential persons to fall upon some plan, even at that late stage of procedure, to accommodate the points of difference. An extraordinary meeting of the committee of overtures was held, and it was proposed that the clause respecting censure should be left out; but the leading members insisted on adhering to what had already been agreed to.

When the Assembly met, it was moved that the representers should be heard; but this was overruled, so they had already been allowed to express their sentiments before the committee of overtures, or of the whole house. The overture was read, and a few verbal alterations were made. When it came to the statutory part, a motion was made and supported by Mr. Logan and others that the condemnation of the position, "that the law has neither threatenings nor promises to believers," should be omitted; which was resisted. Another debate arose respecting the censure to be inflicted; and Mr. Logan moved that, instead of "sharply rebuke," it should run, "gravely admonish." This also was resisted; but it was at last agreed that the word "sharply" should be omitted. The vote being taken, five voted in the negative,—Mr. Brisbane, Mr. Drummond, Mr. Forbes, Mr. Linlithgow, and Mr. Walter Riddell. Five were *non liquet*. Lord Grange, Mr. Alexander Hamilton, Mr. William Stewart of Perth, Mr. N. Campbell, and about a dozen others, were silent. And 134 voted, approve. When the brethren were called in, the moderator told them that the vote was most harmonious; that it ought to be considered as a more decided expression of the opinion of the church than if it had been pronounced at last Assembly, inasmuch as the subject had been discussed from the press, and presbyteries had had an opportunity of considering it maturely; that he believed they had been betrayed into unbecoming expressions in the heat of controversy; and that, though it was painful to him, he was bound to administer that rebuke which the court has decreed. Mr. Hog requested that the sentence should be read, but was told that, so far as regarded them, it had already been intimated; and that no speeches could be allowed, after judgment had been pronounced. Upon this Mr. Kid, who had been selected for the task on account of his great courage, gave in a protestation subscribed by himself and his brethren, which he desired to be read. This being refused, "he left it on the table, and gave gold with it."⁹⁰

This protest, of which Mr. Boston, "easily foreseeing what would be the issue," had made a draught before he left home, was subscribed by the representers before

they knew the exact terms of the act of Assembly, or its injunctions as to their conduct; on which account it did not bear so particularly upon the sentence, as otherwise it would have done.⁹¹ In consequence of its not being received, it was immediately published. After relating the steps of procedure in this cause, it concludes in the following terms: "We do protest that we look upon the said fifth act of Assembly 1720, as contrary to the Word of God, and to the foresaid standards of doctrine and covenants, and on what we have complained of in the foresaid eighth act as of dangerous consequence thereto; and that therefore we dare not, in any manner of way, no, not by silence, consent unto or approve of them, nor the acts of Assembly relative thereunto; and that it shall be lawful to us, agreeable to the Word of God, and the standards of doctrine aforesaid in this church, to profess, preach, and still bear testimony unto the truths condemned, or otherwise injured, by the said acts of Assembly, notwithstanding of the said acts, or whatsoever shall follow thereupon: upon all which we take instruments, and crave extracts."

Considerable anxiety was entertained about the proceedings of the Assembly on the following day; some expecting that the representers would take some additional step, and others thinking that the Assembly would call them to account for their protest, in which they had declared that they would continue to teach the doctrines on which the supreme judicatory had laid an express inhibition. But nothing of this kind happened. The brethren reckoned they had sufficiently exonerated themselves;⁹² and the Assembly deemed it prudent to wink at what they felt as a contempt of their

89. "From twelve of the clock to near four, we had very great thunder and lightning. About half three the lightning broke in upon an hospital, I think they call it Craft's (The Trades') Hospital, and all the children were in it, and part of the house was broken down, but no hurt was done to any person, for which a note was put into the Assembly, to praise God for the deliverance." (Letter, Mr. Wodrow, as above [Ibid., p. 2.652]. Comp. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], p. 379.)

90. Letter, Mr. Wodrow, May 21, 1722. [*Correspondence*, 2.651.]

91. Appendix to *Faith no Fancy: or, A treatise of mental images, discovering the vain philosophy and vile divinity of a late pamphlet intitled, Mr. Robe's fourth letter to Mr. Fisher: and shewing that an imaginary idea of Christ as man (when supposed to belong to saving faith, whether in its act or object), imports nothing but ignorance, atheism, idolatry, great falsehood, and gross delusion*, by Mr. Ralph Erskine. Edinburgh: Printed by W. and T. Ruddimans, 1745. With the Appendix, "relating to part of the late writings of the Rev. Messrs. Willison and Currie, especially touching some points of gospel doctrine, injured by their defence of the act of assembly, 1722."

92. "There was no insisting by the brethren for *The Marrow*. They think their protestation, though not received, continues good; but it's wrong." (Letter, Mrs. Wodrow, May 22, 1722.) [*Correspondence*, 2.654.]

authority. They had reasons for adopting this course. The truth is, the dissensions in the church had engaged the attention of government, which considered them as extremely hurtful at a time when the country was threatened with an invasion. His Majesty's letter to the Assembly 1721, contained this clause, "We hope you will apply yourselves with concord and unanimity to dispatch the affairs proper and necessary to be considered in this Assembly, and guard against all matter of contention; since you cannot but foresee the many unhappy consequences with which divisions among you may be attended." A similar clause was inserted in the royal letter to the Assembly 1722; and previous to the sederunt at which the cause of the representers was decided, the king's commissioner, the Earl of Loudon, urged upon the leading members the propriety of abstaining from everything which might cause a breach.⁹³ Had not this influence been exerted, there is reason to think that the sentence would have been more severe; and in that case, the Secession would have taken place ten years earlier than it actually happened.

[PART FOUR.]⁹⁴

It may now be proper to take notice of certain proceedings relating to this controversy, which could not so well be introduced into the preceding narrative, and to add some facts of a date subsequent to the final decision by the Assembly.

We have already seen that Mr. Warden of Gargunock was anxious to discharge the office of a peace-maker, and to steer a middle course between the extremes to which he thought the representers and their opponents were disposed to run. It is not surprising to

93. At three the Assembly [should have] met, but it was five ere we met. The reason was, out of tenderness to the representers, and from the fear of a breach, which the Commissioner insisted upon that it might by all means be prevented, as unfit for our present feared confusions." (Letter, Mr. Wodrow, May 21, 1722.) [Ibid., 652.]

94. [*The Edinburgh Christian Instructor*, New Series, vol. I, no. 2 (February 1832): 73–94.]

95. Letter, Mr. Warden to Mr. R. Erskine, September 4, 1721. [See New College Library, Archives and Manuscripts, MS HAM 1, which seems to be the new reference given for MS W13b Box 11. See Lachman, pp. 401–404.] In a letter to another correspondent, having mentioned that he had received no answer from Mr. Erskine, he says that he saw "no disposition to a calm search after truth or peace." He then adds, "It would divert you to see Mr. B. [Brisbane?] at Stirling, how he now speaks, when so attacked by Principal Haddow, in his late book against *The Marrow*. Mr. H. (Hamilton?) seems to be very easy, and heartily laughs at B. (Letter, Mr. Warden to Mr. Wodrow, September 18, 1721.) See NLS, Letters of John Warden, Minister of Gargunock (1721–2), XV, ff.12, 36, 41, 85, 90, 99, 112, 136, 168, 207. Lachman refers to this letter as No. 65 in volume XV. Lachman, p. 401.]

96. Letter, Mr. R. Erskine to Mr. Warden, October 30, 1721. [Ibid.]

find him complaining that he met with hard treatment from both sides, for that has been the usual fate of reconcilers and middle-men; but facts seem rather to show that he was caressed by the ruling party. In September 1721, he opened an epistolary correspondence with Mr. Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline, by a letter, in which he says, "I had occasion to see somewhat of an advertisement, importing a necessity of meeting in regard of some expressions in Mr. Hadow's book. I cannot say I have yet read it quite over, but should think it very proper these positions in his book were condescended on, and that more of a Christian, friendly, and open conference by letters were maintained on these heads." He mentions one position in the Principal's book which he could not well understand, viz. 'That the law, as it was or is the matter of the covenant of works, is still binding upon believers;' and adds, "that little word *as* has created no small trouble to us, and I wish our vexation with it were at an end."⁹⁵ Mr. Erskine, in his reply, expresses his surprise at the dubious and apparently light manner in which his correspondent had spoken of the above position, and signifies that the word *as*, little as it is, formed the hinge of the controversy, and the point on which the charge of antinomianism, brought against *The Marrow*, mainly rested.⁹⁶ Mr. Warden, in his next letter, admits that if the word be understood in "the ordinary sense of mankind, both lawyers and divines,—it will indeed be a terrible blunder. But to do justice to that learned person (adds he) you may observe that afterwards he alters the phrase, and says, 'which was the matter of the covenant of works;' as to which I observe that if *as* and *which* be the same, then a great part of his book is in vain;—for *The Marrow* grants, even according to the Principal that they (believers) are under the law which was the law of the Creator." Still, however, Mr. Warden denies the inference that, according to the doctrine of Mr. Hadow and the commission, believers are under the law as a covenant of works.

The discussion then turned on the following question: Has the moral law, without the form of the covenant of works, a promise of eternal life, and a threatening of death and wrath, to believers? Mr. Warden takes the affirmative on both parts of this question, and with respect to the latter, maintains that believers are by their sins made liable to eternal death, though it will never be executed upon them, in consequence of their interest in the surety righteousness; nor will he admit of the distinction which his correspondent had made between desert or the intrinsic demerit of sin, and guilt or liability to punishment. After three letters had passed between them, the correspondence was dropped.

To an impartial reader, it throws light on the subject and shows the importance of making accurate distinctions and avoiding the ambiguous use of words; but it certainly had not the effect of bringing the parties nearer to one another in sentiment, or of increasing that friendship which had formerly subsisted between them. The one did not display that candour and self-denial which are so requisite in a peacemaker, nor make those allowances which are always due to a person contending against a majority; and the other showed himself impatient of those infirmities in a good man, which he must have perceived and borne with at a former period, when they lived together and loved as brethren.

In his last letter Mr. Warden talks of "the quirks and empty distinctions" of his correspondent; and he concludes thus, "I believe you will not in haste give yourself nor me the trouble of so long letters. I have wrote my thoughts, and I beg there may be no disputing: it breaks my heart."⁹⁷ To this Mr. Erskine answers, "As the former was far from the design of the last I sent you, and as I cannot accuse myself of having employed my pen about trifles (and I wish you had let me understand wherein it appears to be as you allege), so the latter seems to be as far from the design of the first you sent to me, wherein you expressed such an inclination towards communicating by word or writ to one another. And as I was not the first that wrote and made the proposal of conferring in this way, so I am content I am not the first that hath insinuated an inclination to drop it; which indeed I would have done the more readily, if this way of speaking had not suggested, as if there was no more could be said after this strong effort of yours." Accordingly, he subjoins a long reply, which, however, concludes in the following friendly strain: "Meanwhile, as a brotherly line from you, proposing whatever you think proper, will always be acceptable to me, so I hope nothing that has past in our communication hitherto shall make me disown that debt which I am always obliged to pay (according to the apostolical precept, 'owe no man anything but to love one another;') nor yet weaken just esteem and brotherly love, which I own to be a debt always owing to you in particular."⁹⁸—One thing which contributed to render this correspondence less satisfactory in its issue was that, during its continuance, Mr. Warden was acting along with the commission, in their proceedings against the representers.⁹⁹

During the agitation which prevailed, it is natural to suppose that the controversy would force its way into the pulpit, and produce collision and offence. The representers appear to have formed the resolution, not only to abstain from recommending *The Marrow*, but to

avoid introducing into their sermons the points of difference, while their representation was in dependence before the Assembly. They complain, however that they were constrained to lay aside this reserve, in consequence of the accusations brought against them, from the pulpit and the press, as antinomians, new schemers, etc.¹⁰⁰ At communions, where they officiated, persons attended to carry away, by word and writing, what the preachers said, or were supposed to say, on the controversial doctrines. This was particularly done at Dunfermline, Large, and Gladsmuir, where the dispensation of the sacrament was attended by crowds in the years 1721 and 1722.¹⁰¹

The contention was hottest within the bounds of the synod of Fife, which included five of the representing ministers, and some of the keenest of their opponents. A strict watch was kept by the latter over the conduct of the former; and at the privy censures, in the synod and in some of the presbyteries, one of the questions put to ministers, was, Have you obeyed the act of Assembly condemning *The Marrow*?¹⁰² At the meeting of synod, on the 28th of September 1721, formal complaints were lodged with the committee for overtures against Messrs. Bathgate and Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine, as

97. Letter, Mr. Warden to Mr. R. Erskine, January 4, 1722. [Ibid.]

98. Mr. R. Erskine's answer to the above letter. [Ibid.]

99. "I am, by a letter, called to the committee for purity of doctrine, as a member of it. I want not great difficulties in going, so ready are all sides to mistake one another; yet gladly would I go, if so be I might do any service. It meets the first Wednesday of March.—I purpose to stay, and next week to wait the commission, when you shall have all that has past betwixt Mr. Ralph Erskine and me." (Letter, Mr. Warden to Mr. Wodrow, February 23, 1722. [No. 95, Lachman, p. 402])—"I have no news of the representing brethren to write you. I hear nothing on that side; but, ah! how much do I see of a spirit impatient of contradiction, and fearful inclination to be thought infallible, so that if you will not say as they do, you must by all means be run down." (Letter, Mr. Warden to Mr. Wodrow, January 19, 1722). [NLS, Letters of John Warden, Minister of Gargunock (1721–2), *ibid.*]

100. Brown's *Gospel Truth*, 144–5. Mr. Hugh Maxwell preached a sermon before the Synod of Angus and Mearns, in which he attacked *The Marrow* and its defenders. It was published in 1721, under the title of *The Beauty and Purity of the Gospel Church*, with two appendixes, one on Antinomian errors, and a New Scheme of doctrine, and the other on *The Marrow* and Mr. Hamilton's Catechism.

101. At Gladsmuir, there were "a great many writers taking down the sermons. Mr. Hamilton desired them to write on, and take all" (Letter, Mr. J. Dougall, to Mr. Wodrow, Sept. 14, 1722.) The minister of Gladsmuir at this time was Mr. Sethrum, who, though not one of the subscribers of the representation, was of the same sentiments with them. [NLS, James Dougall, Letters of (1721–2), *Wod.Lett.Qu.XV*, ff.6–180 (*passim*).]

102. Letter, Mr. E. Erskine to Mr. Gillespie of Strathmiglo, Sept. 18, 1751 (Brown's *Gospel Truth*, p. 125.) This letter was originally printed, but without names, in the *First Dialogue on the Marrow*, pp. 46–57.

guilty of contravening the act of Assembly and an act of synod in 1710,¹⁰³ by preaching doctrines opposite to what were held by the church. These brethren vindicated themselves from misrepresentations of their words and meaning, but did not deny that they had taught the doctrines contained in their representation, and the sentence of the Synod bears that Mr. Ralph Erskine, in particular, owned, “that he had, at public occasions, preached some doctrines that are, *in terminis*, in *The Marrow*, such as that a believer is not under the law as a covenant of works.” Wherefore, “the synod, upon report of said committee, did, and hereby do, declare their high dissatisfaction with such practices, and strictly enjoin the said brethren, and all the ministers within this synod, punctually to observe the foresaid act of synod and Assembly; with certification, the contraveners shall be censurable by their respective presbyteries and this synod, according to the demerit of their offences.”¹⁰⁴

In the course of the debate which led to this decision, some members having denied that there was any gift of Christ as a Saviour to sinners of mankind, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine rose, and, with a tone and manner which is reported to have made an uncommon impression,

103. This act of Synod (which was formerly referred to), appears to have been introduced here, because the act of Assembly 1720, prohibited only the recommending of *The Marrow*, which these brethren had abstained from.

104. Brown's *Gospel Truth*, pp. 31, 144–5.

105. *Ibid.*, pp. 105–6.

106. Frazer's *Life of Ebenezer Erskine* [Donald Fraser, 1831], pp. 238–247. Mr. Erskine was induced to print the sermons complained of; and, in an Apologetical Preface to a sermon on Rev. iii. 4 (which was his first publication), he has related the facts mentioned above. Among other reports calculated to excite odium, Mr. Anderson told the commission that Mr. E. being desired to reconcile his sentiments to the Confession of Faith, replied, “Let them see to that who have subscribed it.” [Brown, *Gospel Truth* [1831], p. 108, cites the text quoted, but the preface to this sermon was apparently reduced significantly for the 1733 second edition and that text forms the preface reproduced in Erskine's *Works*. Neither the 1725 nor 1733 edition of this sermon is online or in ECCO (Eighteenth Century Collections Online).]

107. Ralph Erskine's *Faith no Fancy*, apud Brown's *Gospel Truth*, p. 30.

108. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mr. Charles Masterton in Ireland, May 28, 1722 [*Correspondence*, 2.656]. “This day the overtures met, and rejected a motion about renewing subscription to the Confession.” (Mr. Wodrow, May 22, 1722.) [NLS, Charles Masterton, Minister at Connor, Ireland, letters of and copies of letters of [to Robert Wodrow] (1722), Wod.Lett.Qu.XX, ff.279, 292, 313.]

109. The pamphlet which gave the chief offence was the *First Dialogue on the Marrow*; and we have already seen that, if Mr. Wodrow was right in his conjecture, its author was Mr. Williamson, and not Mr. Hog. [James Hog, *The Controversie Concerning the Marrow of Modern Divinity. Considered in several familiar dialogues. Dialogue I* (Edinburgh: Macky, 1721). The attribution to Hog does not seem to be questioned and writers assign it without controversy.]

said, “Moderator, our Lord Jesus said of himself, ‘My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven;’ this he uttered to a promiscuous multitude, and let me see the man who dare say he said wrong.”¹⁰⁵ At the same time the synod appointed a new subscription of the formula by ministers, “as a fresh evidence of their zeal for, and adherence to, the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this church.” This was resisted by the representers, as an unwarranted assumption of power on the part of a subordinate judicatory, and an indirect method of obliging them to approve of recent proceedings. To silence, however, the reports circulated against their orthodoxy, they afterwards did subscribe a second time, though in such terms as excluded any reference to the synodical appointment. This affair proved peculiarly vexatious to Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, who, in consequence of an oversight on the part of the presbytery, as well as himself, by no means singular or uncommon, had not subscribed either at his license or ordination. This circumstance was mentioned to his prejudice by Mr. Alexander Anderson, minister of St. Andrews, who, in May 1725, arraigned him before the commission for alleged errors vented in sermons, some of which had been preached ten years before that time.¹⁰⁶ It would appear that these charges were not countenanced by the commission.

The synod of Fife endeavoured at the ensuing meeting of the General Assembly, to procure the sanction of the supreme court to their new mode of subscription;¹⁰⁷ and it would appear that they had nearly succeeded in extending it over the whole church. “A motion came (says Mr. Wodrow), from one of our synods to the Assembly that all ministers who are suspected of declining from our standards, should be called upon to renew their adherence to our Confession of Faith; which cast up from a particular case in that synod, of some brethren who declined adhering to their subscription, save in a consistency with a peculiar representation they had given in. This motion was soon made, but, by reason of much more important affairs falling, could not be considered till the very last day of the Assembly's meeting, and so it never came farther than the committee, though, had it been got completed, in my opinion it would have passed.”¹⁰⁸

Mr. Hog was, of all the representing brethren, the most obnoxious to the opponents of *The Marrow*, and was accordingly subjected to more rigorous proceedings before the synod of Fife. Being suspected to be the author of certain pamphlets anonymously published during the controversy,¹⁰⁹ the synod agreed to put the question to him. He refused to answer, and objected to

the mode of procedure as inquisitorial, and calculated to establish a bad precedent. After dealing with him in vain at different times, the synod appointed a committee to prepare an overture on the affair. This was given in on the 4th April 1722, and was to the following effect:—"The committee appointed by the synod to prepare an overture upon Mr. Hog's repeated refusal to answer the questions put to him by the Synod, viz. Whether he be the author of these pamphlets, said to contain errors in doctrine, and slanderous aspersions upon the judicatories and ministers of this church, find that Mr. Hog is obliged to give direct answers, whether he be the author of these pamphlets or not." The reasons assigned for this are, the divine authority for dealing with conscience, to which the spirit of the prophets is subject; his ordination vows; the form of process; and "his refusing to answer, and disobeying the authoritative order of the synod," tends to overthrow the government and defeat the ends of discipline, is a bad precedent, and condemns the practice of the church since the Reformation. "Therefore, the committee are of opinion, the synod should declare the practice of Mr. Hog censurable, and reserve in their own hand the determination of what censure they will inflict till afterwards."¹¹⁰ To another species of interrogatory employed by the synod, Mr. Hog did not make the same objections. He replied, first verbally, and afterwards in writing, to eight queries, which they put to him concerning his sentiments. The queries in general resembled those which the commission had proposed to him, in common with his representing brethren; so that it is unnecessary here to give a particular account of them or of his answers.¹¹¹ There is reason to think that circumstances occurred to prevent the synod from carrying this prosecution any farther.¹¹²

But that which made the greatest noise was the process against Mr. Gabriel Wilson. In a sermon preached by him at the opening of the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, on the 17th of October 1721, he delivered his opinion on some doctrines which were at that time controverted, and took notice of certain defections in the church, which many good men had long bewailed. He did not, however, specify either *The Marrow*, or the act condemning it, nor did he use any violent or disrespectful language in his condemnation of public evils.¹¹³ But it gave great offence to some of his reverend auditors, who could not conceal their uneasiness during its delivery, and no sooner was the Synod constituted, than a formal complaint was made against the preacher. He was required instantly to deliver the notes, or manuscript of his sermon, for examination, and upon his refusal was threatened with suspension. After some

violent discussion, it was at last agreed that a copy of the sermon should within a fortnight be given in to a committee appointed to examine it, and to report to the synod at their next meeting.¹¹⁴ Mr. Wilson accordingly presented the transcript, accompanied with the original manuscript, for the purpose of collation. At the same time he gave in a protest, in which he declared that, as he had produced the sermon in compliance with the orders of the Synod, with the view of satisfying them as to some particular points, it should not be employed as materials to form a libel, or articles of charge in order to censure, against him, which would make him his own accuser, contrary to the Word of God, the form of process, and the natural rights of mankind. He protested also that nothing which he might say to give satisfaction to the committee as to his sentiments, should militate or be improved against him in any process which might

110. Copy, Minute of Synod of Fife, Kirkcaldy, April 4, 1722. [See Minutes of the Synod of Fife, 1719–1738, National Archives of Scotland (National Records of Scotland), CH2/154/7.]

111. Queries of the Synod of Fife to Mr. James Hog, minister of the gospel at Carnock, with his Answers to these Queries, April 5th, 1722, *hora quinta post meridiem*.—The following is the preamble: "Having the very reverend Synod's allowance to review and amend my answers, ere they make faith as mine, I take the benefit of extending and clearing them, according to my stated sentiments before and since that time, and without communication with any person that the information of the committee against me may be set in a true light in so far."

112. "I heard lately of Mr. James Hog that he was pretty well when he was in town. I got the inclosed copy of his answers to the Synod's queries to be given in the next Synod; which return me after perusal. I know no more of that Synod." (Letter, Mr. William Hog to Mr. Wodrow, January 11, 1723.) [This quotation is partially cited in a note M'Crie adds to Wodrow's reply in *Correspondence*, 3.7. For Hog's letter see NLS, William Hog, Merchant, Edinburgh, letters of (1723), Wod.Lett.Qu.XV, ff.19, 27, 35.]

113. Before the process was concluded, the sermon was published in 1723, under the name of *The Trust*, without the author's knowledge, by one of his friends, who had procured a copy of it. According to Mr. Boston's information, the preface was written by Mr. Kid of Queensferry. The quarrelled passages are carefully marked. The sermon has been frequently reprinted. [The 1765 edition was cited by M'Crie previously. See Gabriel Wilson, *The Trust. A Sermon at the opening of the provincial Synod of Mers and Teviotdale, at Kelso, Oct. 17, 1721* (Edinburgh: 1723).]

114. "There was a Synod at Teviotdale lately, and the account we hear is that there was one Mr. Gabriel Wilson that preached before the Synod, being moderator at the last Synod; and he preached up the Marrow boldly, and told in his sermon that he would own it, although they would suspend him. The Synod, they said, was very uneasy on hearing of him, and when the sermon was done, the Synod desired him to deliver up the sermon to them, otherwise they would suspend him. He would not part with it; however he promised within fourteen days to deliver it up. Mr. Mitchell said to one, he believed they would make no hand with him now, they having given him fourteen days; for Mr. Mitchell said, the Synod should not have parted with him until

be founded on the quarrelled sermon.¹¹⁵ A sub-committee was appointed to extract from it the materials of a libel against the author.¹¹⁶ The committee found, on examination that the offensive portions of the discourse could not bear the construction which they had put upon them in the act of hearing, and accordingly had recourse to a loose mode of charge, consisting of twelve remarks as to doctrine, twelve instances of slander, and twelve topics for question. It is only necessary to compare the remarks with the sermon to perceive that some of them are unfounded, others gathered by strained inference, and the remainder connected with points on which the author had laid his sentiments before the supreme judicatory.¹¹⁷ The alleged slanders were against the civil government, against the church, against particular ministers who had written against *The Marrow* (Principal Hadow and Mr. Maxwell), and against students of divinity. In this form the affair was taken up by the synod, and the author was forced to appear at the bar during four several meetings of that court, and of as many committees of their appointment, without any decision being given in the cause.¹¹⁸

In a speech delivered, apparently at a meeting of

synod, in October 1722, Mr. Wilson expresses himself, evidently more in grief than in anger or dread of the issue, in the following manner:

Moderator, it is known all the world over, and will be while the world lasts that where a man's discourse is in general solid, sound, and to the purpose, little notice is taken, or severity used, as to some words or phrases, though not so well chosen or fitly set; because men, for the most part, remember themselves to be but men, who cannot promise, on every occasion, to write or speak infallibly; else processes of this sort had not, unto this day, been such a rarity in the churches of Christ, and particularly in the Church of Scotland.

Moderator, it is given out of me, propagated among the people, and through the church, so far as it will go that I deny the Father in the glorious Godhead, the necessity of holiness, etc.; and now, when the sermon is delivered that I have altered it, and kept back all the gross things that were in my papers, and which I delivered before the synod; whereas the brethren appointed to receive the copy know, and the brethren of the committee

they had gotten it. However, the Synod have appointed a committee to receive it from him, the sermon he had, to wit, Mr. Wilson. He bantered [rebuked; scolded] magistrates, and ministers, and all, at a strange rate." (Letter, Mr. J. Dougall to Mr. Wodrow, Oct. 28, 1721.) Without deciding upon the charitableness of the suspicion imputed to Mr. Mitchell, it is proper to notice that due precautions were taken against the supposed danger. "The committee of the Synod, appointed to collate the copy with the notes, reported, they had a faithful transcript of them" (Preface to *The Trust*, p. iv.) And a rumour of this kind being afterwards spread, Mr. Wilson, in the presence of the Synod, appealed to the members of the committee for its falsehood. (Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], Appendix No. iv.) Dougall to Mr. Wodrow, Edin. 3d Jan. 1722.) [NLS, James Dougall, Letters of (1721–2), Wod. Lett.Qu.XV, ff.6–180 (*passim*); No. 70; cf. Lachman, *The Marrow Controversy* (1988), p. 406. *The Trust* (1785), p. iv. Boston, *Memoirs*, Works, v. 12 (1852), 464.]

115. The protest is published in Boston's *Memoirs*, Appendix No. iv.

116. "Mr. G. Wilson gave in a copy of his sermon to the sub-committee of the Synod, with a very strange protestation that, though he owned it to be the doctrine delivered by him, and maintained all the propositions in it to be orthodox, yet it should by no means militate against him, or be made use of as a libel. The sub-committee have prepared materials to be presented to the committee of the Synod, in order to form a libel against him, against the time of the Synod's meeting. I saw some of the extracts from his sermon, which are very gross, and can never be defended, without explaining away the genuine sense and obvious meaning of the words. (Letter, Mr. M. Crawford to Mr. Wodrow, January 9, 1722. [Matthew Crawford, Professor of Church History, Edinburgh University, Letters of (1721–22), Wod. Lett.Qu.XV, ff.106, 119, 143, 149, 151, 174. Lachman identifies the letter as item No. 84. Lachman, p. 364.]

117. The following is a specimen of the remarks:—"First, Mr. Wilson

maintains that the law is not part of the trust committed to Timothy (page 2 of his sermon), contrary to Malachi, 2, 7, &c. Secondly, he sets the doctrine of the gospel in opposition to the doctrine of the law, in this particular that he ascribes the effectually teaching of holiness to the doctrines of the gospel, and denies it to the law (Sermon, p. 20), whereas both law and gospel teach holiness effectually, by the concurrence of the Spirit, and none of them without it. And, page 30, under that head of his sermon where he speaks of the commands which are the rule and way of holiness, but the doctrine of the gospel as the channel of sanctifying grace, contrary to Ps. xix. 7. 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,' &c. And thereby he seems to symbolize with Islebius Agricola (as quoted by Rutherford, *Survey of Spiritual Antichrist*, p. 81) who asserts, 'that the law teaches not good works, nor is the law to be preached that we may do good works, but only the gospel.' Thirdly, p. 24, in speaking of keeping the gospel distinct from the law, he speaks unduly of the law, saying only, 'It may be called the doctrine of God;' wherein he seems to symbolize with Islebius Agricola (as cited by Rutherford), who asserts 'that the law is not worthy to be called the Word of God.'" The following is one of the committee's questions: "What he (Mr. Wilson) means by the law as a covenant, and whether he means the law as having a penal sanction annexed to it? And is it not as such, by Christ, as our Prophet and King, adopted into the dispensation of the gospel, and made use of for the instruction and government of believers? And whether Christ makes use of the law for the instruction and government of believers in a sense distinct from the covenant of works? And what that sense is? (Remarks of the Committee of the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, upon Mr. Gabriel Wilson's Sermon, preached before the Synod, October 1721.) [National Records of Scotland, Records of the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, 1708–1723, SRO, CH2/265/1 (See the discussion in Lachman, pp. 343–351.)

118. *The Trust*, Preface, p. iii, iv.

know, they have a faithful copy of my notes, and not only so, but of all things delivered by me, though they were not in my notes, so far as I ever remember them. Whatever measure I have got, or may further get, never did one give his judges fairer play against himself than I have done.

What shall I say, Moderator? I am made a gazing-stock by reproach, and a world's wonder throughout Scotland, and may be farther too, for anything I know. Reproach sometimes breaks the heart; and were it not, in some measure, I believe the promises and the special providence of God, I behoved to sink and be broken effectually.

Moderator, it is not in the power of this synod, were they ever so willing, to make reparation of the injuries done me by means of their procedure; for infamy will stick better. If there had dropped from one's pen, on a paper which, in his account, the world was never to see, expressions not so well chosen or guarded, would not the love of God, the love of truth, and the love of our neighbour, which the gospel so much teaches and recommends, make all men in whom it dwells rejoice to see these things, elsewhere in the same paper, more plainly and fully expressed to satisfaction? And will not that humility, modesty, and compassion which a sense of human weakness and frailty, which a sense of our own imperfections and liability to mistake begets, persuade the same thing? Even the wisest of societies happen at times to express themselves, for removing such misapprehensions as their words had given occasion to.¹¹⁹

The straining or wrestling of words, or occasional passages, in this case, in order to the fixing of odious notions that the words neither express, nor, candidly interpreted, give any countenance to, cannot miss to be held as a clear evidence that something is aimed at, either with respect to the person or doctrine that is not fairly and honestly owned and spoken out. Yet considering my unskillfulness, and my profound security from all fears of such unprecedented measures, I conceive I have much reason to bless the name of the Lord, who instructs the simple and guides the blind in a way they know not; and, accordingly, here I desire, with all my soul, to bless him that my excesses were not both more and greater than they are; else, alas! where had I been? I had been swallowed and eaten up as bread, the truth had suffered by my means, and the friends of truth had been ashamed for my sake.¹²⁰

The cause came before the commission by reference in November 1722, on which occasion Mr. Wilson, who had a great portion of fire in his constitution, freely exposed the irregularity of the proceedings, and pronounced a violent philippic against Mr. Ramsay, minister of Kelso, who had been the most active person in raising and keeping alive the prosecution.¹²¹ A committee was appointed to examine the papers and to make a report to the commission at their meeting in March; but, at that meeting it was found that the committee had done nothing; and the cause was transmitted, as it came from the synod, to the ensuing General Assembly.¹²² When the reference came before the Assembly, Mr. Wilson obtained time to prepare answers to the synod's statement or abstract of the process; as the committee for bills had refused to transmit the paper which he had given in to them, alleging that it was "full of complaints and hard words."¹²³ The truth is that the leading members disapproved of the prosecution as inexpedient, and wished to get rid of it in the easiest way possible, consistently with the act of last Assembly, and the credit of their friends in the synod. Accordingly, when the cause came before the court, it was moved that the Assembly should set aside that part of the process which related to alleged slanders against the government, the church, and particular ministers,

119. There seems to be an allusion here to the explanatory act of the General Assembly 1722 concerning *The Marrow*. [See *The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland Convened at Edinburgh, the 10th Day of May, 1722* (Edinburgh, 1722), VII. Act concerning doctrine, confirming and explaining the Acts 5th and 8th of the General Assembly Anno 1720. 21 May 1722, Sess. 10., pp. 13–26. Cf. Acts of the general assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638–1842, p. 548.]

120. Boston's *Memoirs*, Appendix No. iv.

121. "I expected to have seen you in town at last commission, wherein Mr. Gab. Wilson's affair was commenced, of which, no doubt, you have heard, and the flaming speech he made against Mr. Ramsay" (Letter, Mr. William Hog to Mr. Wodrow, January 3, 1723.) "There was a remit (to the commission) from the synod of Merse, concerning Mr. G. Wilson, which I think is delayed till March." (Mr. Matthew Simpson to Mr. Wodrow, November 15, 1722.) "Nothing more of that case was laid before us than the reference itself, and a general state of the case; the whole papers, which are very long, being referred to a committee, to prepare the affair for the commission in March. Only, Mr. Wilson had a very long discourse, full of bitter invective against the synod and Mr. J. Ramsay." (Principal John Stirling to Mr. Wodrow, November 19, 1722.) [NLS, William Hogg, merchant, Edinburgh, letters of, Wod.Lett.Qu.XVI, ff.6, 11, 24. Matthew Simson, Minister of Pencaitland, Letters of (1722), Wod.Lett.Qu.I, XV, ff. 195–7. John Stirling, Principal of Glasgow University, letters of and to (1721–2), Wod.Lett.Qu. XV, ff. 14, 39, 48, 59, 138, 199.]

122. *The Trust*, preface, p. iv.

123. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 11, 1723. [*Correspondence*, 2.45.]

on the ground that “the synod, at least a good part of it, were tolerably satisfied” as to those, and that they should confine themselves to three points of doctrine, on which the synod seemed not to have received satisfaction. This was opposed by Mr. Wilson, who insisted that he should either be found guilty or exculpated from such deep and heavy accusations. But he at last yielded to the proposed arrangement, and was accordingly heard in answer to the three remaining charges.

After long discussion, the matter was referred to a committee, with power to them to call for Mr. Wilson and converse with him. They presented an overture, which was adopted by the Assembly on Tuesday the 21st of May. It bore that on the first article of charge, viz. “That the moral law to a believer is divested of the curse or threatening of eternal damnation, and hath no other sanction but fatherly chastisement.” Mr. Wilson had answered, “that he did not tenaciously adhere to that expression, and that all his meaning is that a believer by his union with Christ is forever delivered from the curse of the law, so that he shall never for one moment come under the sentence of eternal condemnation.”

As to the second article, viz. “That gospel or saving repentance is not necessary in a sinner in order to the pardon of his sins in justification,” he had answered that “justifying faith and gospel repentance are inseparable, both in their principles and exercise;” and being asked, if he would own it as a truth that God did never justify an impenitent sinner, he answered that he could not express himself in these terms, or in any words that might seem to import that a sinner is justified by any works of his own; and that the cautioning against that, was the main thing he had in his view in expressing himself as he did in his sermon and to the synod.

And as to the third article, viz. “That assurance, or a man’s persuasion that he shall be saved by Christ, is of the essence of justifying faith,” he had answered that “he owned all that is contained in our Confession of Faith

and Catechisms on that head, and at the same time adhered to the answers given to the queries proposed by the commission in 1721.”

The committee further reported that, though they had not received satisfaction from him on these points, yet as the last Assembly had passed an act respecting them, and this process had commenced before that act, it was their opinion that the General Assembly should prohibit him from teaching anything on the foresaid three points, contrary to the doctrine of this church and to the act of 1722, and admonish him to beware of expressing himself in such a manner as may have a bad influence on Christian practice, or may weaken the life and power of godliness. On the intimation of the sentence, Mr. Wilson signified his dissatisfaction with it, and was proceeding to state his reasons, but the Moderator having desired him to remove, he declared his adherence to the paper given in by the twelve brethren.¹²⁴

In 1725 Mr. Gabriel Wilson and Mr. Henry Davidson, minister of Galashiels, were sent by the presbytery of Selkirk, as members to the General Assembly. The committee for inspecting commissions stated in their report, “that the commissions from the presbytery of Selkirk have an extraordinary declaration therein, which is transmitted to the committee of overtures.” The declaration referred to was that they had subscribed the Confession of Faith as approved and explained by the act of Assembly 1647, and agreeably to the old Scots Confession and Covenants. “It was thought (says Mr. Wodrow) that the design of this was to make a noise, and to be taken notice of as adhering to their former doctrines, after the Assembly’s determination against them, and it was thought best to overlook it at this time, with a disapprobation of several commissions, and to appoint a new form of commission to be drawn up.”¹²⁵ The reason assigned for the terms in which the subscription ran, is probably correct, so far as it goes, but there was an additional reason. A great dissatisfaction had been caused throughout the church by a collection of Confessions, lately published by a committee of Assembly, with a preface by Mr. Dunlop, because it did not contain the act of Assembly 1647, receiving the Westminster Confession, nor the Solemn League and Covenant, and severe animadversions were made on the conduct of the publishers during this meeting of the supreme court.¹²⁶ Though Mr. Wilson was allowed to sit as a member of Assembly, an indirect mark of displeasure was put on him, his name being expunged from the list laid before the committee for naming the members of the commission.¹²⁷

One of the bad effects of that process, and collateral

124. Acts of Assembly 1723: and Wodrow’s Letters of 13th and 21st May 1723. [XI. Act anent Mr. Gabriel Wilson Minister at Maxton, his Sermon, preached before the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale, At Edinburgh, May 21, 1723, Sess. 12, in *The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Convened at Edinburgh, the 9th Day of May, 1723* (Edinburgh, 1723), 20–22; *Acts, 1638–1842*, 565–566. *Correspondence*, 3.46, 53.]

125. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 10 and 14, 1725. [*Correspondence*, 3.195, 197–199.]

126. *Ibid.* May 17th and 18th, 1725 [*Correspondence*, 3.202]. Professor Robert Stewart complained that he had been “excommunicated from the Lord’s table,” by Mr. Darling, and some of the representers, for the part he had acted in that edition; referring, it is presumed, to what they had said in debarring from the communion table.

127. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mrs. Wodrow, May 15, 1725. [This does

measures, was that several ministers who were cordially attached to the constitution of the Church of Scotland, had their confidence in all national churches shaken, and soon after, Mr. Wilson and his co-presbyter and intimate friend, Mr. Davidson, began to discover their preference of independent to presbyterian government.¹²⁸

Another evil resulted from these proceedings. A warm controversy was at that time carried on among the presbyterians in Ireland respecting subscription to Confessions of Faith, as tests of orthodoxy. The non-subscribers, who were generally tainted with Arminian and Arian sentiments, laid hold on the differences among the Scottish clergy, some of whom did not scruple to furnish the innovators in Ireland with information agreeable to their wishes. "Our non-subscribers (says an Irish minister) pretend to good information from all your synods and assemblies; and I know not but it is so, though what friends they have I cannot tell. One of them told me yesterday, with a considerable air of satisfaction, that some of your commissioners to the Assembly refused to subscribe the Confession of Faith, without allowance to except some parts they scrupled at, and that they were allowed by the Assembly, or some committee, to explain what they thought fit."¹²⁹ It was probably to prevent such misconstructions of their conduct that Messrs. Wilson and Davidson, soon after their return from the General Assembly, took an opportunity to subscribe in the usual form.¹³⁰

The Irish non-subscribers made a similar use of the act of Assembly condemning *The Marrow*, and the representation to which it gave rise. One of their advocates introduces an entrant to the ministry, as saying, on being required to subscribe, "Several particular doctrinal propositions in the Confession appear to me ambiguous, and capable of different and inconsistent senses. To illustrate more perfectly what I intend, I beg leave to observe what has lately passed in Scotland." And having made quotations from the writings on both sides, he adds, "By this it plainly appears to me that such as subscribe the Confession are not agreed about the sense of many doctrinal propositions contained in it, and therefore agree in sound rather than in sense."¹³¹

To this the defender of the subscribers replies, "I can't see that their reasoning amounts to any more than this that the General Assembly and these twelve ministers differed about the sense of some propositions in the book mentioned, called *The Marrow*; the one alleging these propositions were contrary to the Westminster Confession, and that they favoured Antinomianism, and the other alleging the contrary. But how it is proved that

they differed in their sense of the Confession, unless it be a consequence of this entrant's making, I am at a loss to understand. I have reason to believe that these twelve ministers have satisfied their brethren that they are far from understanding any articles in their public Confession as favouring Antinomianism. I am likewise credibly informed that one of these twelve ministers, who, it seems, had acknowledged he had never subscribed to the Confession, was required judicially to subscribe to all the propositions of it in their obvious sense, with which he complied."¹³²

The subscribers had written to Scotland for materials to enable them to answer this objection, and Wodrow, who was employed to convey these, evidently felt at a loss, and was fain to smooth down the difference.

"If the Assembly (says he) and the twelve representatives differed as to the sense of some propositions in the Confession, what can be inferred thence? What is put into the candidate's mouth as to the Assembly's condemning some pages *in cumulo*, serves no way to affect the question as to subscription. It is obvious, from

not appear in volume 3 of the *Correspondence*. See NLS, Margaret Wodrow, letters to, Wod.Lett.Qu XVI, ff.54-9, 186-195, 345-357.]

128. "Indeed, I am apprehensive that the serious part of this church are in greater hazard of turning to the excesses of the Independents than many are aware of.—The reputation and just weight of our judicatories is every year dwindling away, partly through ministers' unacquaintedness with our constitution and scriptural foundations, through want of reading and study, and our unhappy party divisions, and state differences, which we both senselessly and sinfully embark in." (Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mr. Marr, minister of Murross, Oct. 27, 1727.) In another Letter written on the same day, he requests Lord Grange to let him know if there was any prospect of anything being done at the approaching meeting of the committee for purity of doctrine, in Professor Simson's process, "worth a winter's journey to one that is turning frail, and almost weary of many of our church meetings, and the chicane and different views we have." [NLS, James Marr, Minister of Murroes, letters to (1727-8), Wod.Lett.Oct.IV, ff.43v, 54v. James Erskine, Lord Grange, Lord Justice Clerk, letter to (1726-31), Wod.Lett.Oct. IV, ff.1-207 (*passim*).]

129. Letter, Mr. Livingston of Templepatrick to Mr. Wodrow, June 10, 1725. Compare Letter, Professor Hamilton to Mr. Wodrow, Aug. 21, 1725. [William Livingston, Minister of Templepatrick, letters and copies of letters of (1723-5), Wod.Lett.Qu.XX, ff.296-8, 300-1, 309-10, 316. See Wodrow's reply to Livingston, *Correspondence*, 3.211. William Hamilton, Principal of Edinburgh University, letters of and to (1724-5), Wod.Lett.Qu.XVI, ff. 227, 247, 263, 299, 331, 403; (1725), XXI, ff.262-5, 277, 297.]

130. "Mr. Wilson and Mr. Davidson, two of the twelve Marrow brethren, have subscribed without any explanation." (Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mr. Livingston, June 28, 1725.) [*Correspondence*, 3.211.]

131. [John] Abernethy's *Defence of the Seasonable Advice*, with a Postscript by the Reverend N. Wald, J. Boyse, and R. Choppin, p. 199, 200. Belfast, 1724.

132. [Charles] Masterton's *Short Reply to the Postscript to Mr. Abernethy's Defence of the Seasonable Advice*, p. 22. Dublin, 1726.

the act of Assembly that they did not condemn every proposition in the pages they point at, but mark those pages only as containing some propositions contrary to the truth stated in the title of the Assembly's act, which the Assembly find contradicted in *The Marrow*. I only add that one of the twelve brethren never signed the Confession, which came to light only in May last; but, for what I know, he and the other Marrow brethren are for subscription."¹³³

There is also a perceptible difference between the manner in which he had formerly spoken of the proposal for a new subscription, and that which he now uses on hearing of the reaction which the report of it had caused in Ireland. "I fancy (says he) the occasion of the mistake is the opposition that was made against re-subscribing the Confession of Faith, which was proposed is one of our committees of Assembly, 1722, if I mind right, and dropped without a vote. But that is a quite distinct question from subscribing, which none among us ever opposed that I know of; and they would soon be taken up, if they did."¹³⁴

So eager were the church courts at this time in guarding against the infection of *The Marrow* that cases of license, ordination, and translation were decided according to the sentiments which the candidates were understood to hold respecting that prescribed publication.

The disposition of the judicatories (says a writer of that time), too evidently appeared, whenever any student or

candidate was supposed to be tinctured with *The Marrow* that is, a gospel spirit. There was no quarter for such; queries upon queries were formed to discourage them, and stop their way, either of being entered upon trials, or ordained into churches; while those that were of the most loose and corrupt principles were most favoured by them. These things are too notour [i.e., notorious or infamous] to be denied; and these were some of the sad and lasting effects of the foresaid acts of Assembly, and the sad occasion of planting many churches with men that were little acquainted with the gospel, yea, enemies to the doctrine of grace. Many pious youths of sound principles, to whom now a door is opened in holy providence among us (the Seceders), had the door of entrance into the ministry quite barred against them; and we formerly fought many times as in an agony, and fought in vain, to have it set open to them.¹³⁵

But as this is the testimony of one who was engaged in the Representation, it may be proper to adduce a few facts.

In the course of the year 1722, two students of divinity were on trials before the presbytery of Edinburgh. One of them had for his subject the words of the apostle Paul, "So run that ye may obtain;" and he made use of certain expressions which led the presbytery to suspect that he "savoured of the *Marrow*." Two brethren were appointed to converse with him, with the view of ascertaining his real sentiments, and they reported their opinion that "the young man was not upon that way," in consequence of which his discourse was sustained. The youthful aspirant had the sagacity to perceive the object of the deputation with which he had been honoured, and did not neglect to avail himself of the discovery. Against next meeting of presbytery he addressed a letter to the moderator, Mr. Craig, in which he disowned the *Marrow*, and called it a "blasphemous book." The reporter of this anecdote, who was chaplain to a public institution in the city, and a great news monger, says, "One of the ministers thought this was a harsh expression, and some said one thing and some another, and so the young man's licensed."¹³⁶

The celebrated Boston, who for personal piety and ministerial gifts had then few equals in the Church of Scotland, was, in consequence of the part he took in this controversy, "staked down in Ettrick," a place unfavourable to his health, and where he encountered severe trials.¹³⁷ And on the same ground avowedly, the name of Mr. Ebenezer Erskine was not permitted to be put on the "leet" at an election in Kirkcaldy, and his translation to that parish was prevented, after the

133. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mr. Charles Maisteron, June 28, 1725. [*Correspondence*, 3.214.]

134. Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mr. Charles Maisteron, Oct. 14, 1724. [*Correspondence*, 3.161.]

135. Ralph Erskine's *Faith no Fancy* [1805 ed.], p. 401.

136. Letter, Mr. J. Dougall, to Mr. Wodrow, July 21, 1722. [James Dougall, Edinburgh, letters of (1721-2), Wod.Lett.Qu. XV, ff.6-180 (*passim*). This is No. 117; cf. Lachman, p. 465.]

137. Boston's *Memoirs*. ["However, I had at that time ground to think, the Church would have some time or other removed me out of Etterick; till I fell under their displeasure in the affair of the Marrow, which I reckon to have staked me down in it." *A General Account of My life, Printed for the first time from the original manuscript*, ed. George D. Low (Hodder and Stoughton, [1908]), p. 229. The sentence does not appear in the *Memoirs* first published by Michael Boston in 1776, who weaved the two MS accounts of his father's life which he had maintained (*A General Account of My Life* and *Passages of My Life*) and who omitted this phrase and other passages as he saw fit to put the two together. M'Crie must have obtained the short phrase "Staked down in Ettrick," from John Brown of Whitburn's *Gospel Truth* (1831), p. 29, and since Brown does not attribute it, he must have assumed it was from the published *Memoirs* (note he does not give a page number). Brown could adduced the statement because he at that time was in possession of the manuscript of *A General Account of My Life*. See Low, Editor's preface, for an account of the manuscripts.]

cause had been brought before the supreme judicatory.¹³⁸ But the following case is less known, and of a more singular character.

In the year 1722, the town-council and general kirk-session of Edinburgh gave a call to Mr. John Hepburn, minister of Torryburn, to fill one of their churches then vacant. When the call was presented to the presbytery, on the 27th November, some members took notice that it was subscribed by only seven ministers and about twenty elders, not councilors.—There had been a party in the kirk-session in favour of another candidate, Mr. Smith, minister of Cramond; but no appearance was made in his behalf.¹³⁹ The presbytery judged it fit to converse with the non-subscribing ministers and elders, as to the reasons for withholding their names, and with this view the consideration of the affair was delayed until the 26th of December. On that day the ministers and elders who had not subscribed the call declared that their not signing arose from a conviction that the transporting of Mr. Hepburn from Torryburn, as things now stand in that corner of the country, would be attended with very great inconveniences and prejudices to the interests of religion. Passing by other things, they stated that the presbytery of Dunfermline consists of fourteen parochial charges, four of which are filled with ministers in a valetudinary state, or plainly in a dying condition; other four charges are filled with ministers who, whatever otherways are their merits, have given an open declaration of their favouring and supporting the doctrine of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, which the General Assemblies of the church have thought fit to condemn; that Aberdeen being vacant, the abettors of the *Marrow*, in the event of Mr. Hepburn's removal, and of the absence of the valetudinarians, would equal in number to the brethren who stand firm to the doctrine of the church; and that as the settlement of Aberdeen had been long obstructed, and other parishes must probably soon become vacant, the fore-mentioned brethren, already so near to an equality, would, in a very short time, have a considerable majority, and be able to do as they pleased within the bounds of the presbytery.

They further stated that by an act of Assembly 1694, designed transportations are not to be concurred with, except the greater good of the church be manifestly evident; and that they regarded this act as a rule to them in subscribing calls, as well as to presbyteries in concurring with them.

After hearing parties, the presbytery, considering how much the General Assemblies of this church have had this matter of purity of doctrine at heart, and what just concern they have showed to prevent the spreading

of errors and novelties, particularly those of the *Marrow*, did find themselves greatly diffculted; and without determining whether what had been represented was a sufficient ground for rejecting the call, being willing to show all possible regard to those concerned in it, were inclined to refer it to a superior judicatory for decision; and considering that the commission is empowered to act in all matters that concern purity of doctrine, it was put to the vote, and carried, *nem. con.* Refer to the commission; upon which the commissioner from the city of Edinburgh protested and appealed to the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale.

The cause came ultimately before the General Assembly by reference from the commission, and no small embarrassment was felt in settling it.

"A committee (says Mr. Wodrow, has been meeting on it for two days, and has postponed the general concerns of the church more than ever I saw. They reported, they had dealt 'twixt parties for peace, but with little success." The truth seems to be that the delicacy of bringing the real objection to the call before the open Assembly was felt, and therefore, a committee was appointed to persuade the town of Edinburgh to relinquish their object.¹⁴⁰ When this was found impracticable, the objection was avowed, and the assembly, after rescinding

138. Frazer's *Life of Ebenezer Erskine* [1831], p. 320–326.

139. "There is a new flame breaking out at Edinburgh. The magistrates and several of the elders, with some of the ministers, have carried a call for Mr. John Hepburn (old Mr. Hepburn's son), to a vacancy there. The plurality of the ministers and elders were for Mr. Smith of Cramond, and yet the council cast the scale for the other, and the presbytery have declined to concur with the council and remitted the matter to the commission, and the magistrates and callers have appealed to the Synod." (Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mr. M'Bride at Ballimoney, January 15, 1723.) [*Correspondence*, 3.9] A somewhat different account of the facts is given in the following extract: "I know not if I wrote you in my last that the call given by the town of Edinburgh to Mr. John Hepburn, minister at Torryburn, is referred by our presbytery to the next commission to be knocked down, though it be signed by eight ministers and all the elders but two or three, which is management somewhat singular, but not unusual with them." (Letter, Mr. William Hog to Mr. Wodrow, January 11, 1723.) [William Hog, Merchant, Edinburgh, letters of (1723), Wod.Lett.Qu.XV, ff.19, 27, 35.]

140. "In the afternoon, the town of Edinburgh's call to Mr. Hepburn came in, and the first question was, who were parties. The presbytery of Edinburgh, and the commission in March, making them parties, were heard, when the merits of the cause, the strengthening of the hands of the Marrow brethren in Dunfermline, giving them the vote by taking away Mr. Hepburn, and giving them occasion to license young men favouring the new scheme, was entered on," &c. (Letter, Mr. to Mrs. Wodrow, May 17, 1723.) [*Correspondence*, 3.50–51.] "Committees were appointed to converse with the parties, and try if the good town would fall from the call. When they would not do, the Presbytery of Edinburgh are ordained to concur," &c. (Letter, Mr. Wodrow to Mr. John Evans at London, May 18, 1723.) [*Correspondence*, 3.54.]

a vote of the commission finding the presbytery of Edinburgh parties, came to the following decision: That though the presbytery of Edinburgh had reason, conform to the views they then had of the circumstances of the presbytery of Dunfermline, to refer to the commission the affair of their giving their concurrence with the call, yet that it should now be concurred with, and prosecuted in the ordinary course; and that, in the event of Mr. Hepburn's transportation, the parish of Torryburn should not be planted but with the advice and at the direction of the synod of Fife. And so the "orthodox brother" was transported; but so tender were the presbytery of Edinburgh of the safety of their brethren of Dunfermline that they scrupulously abstained from taking any active part in the affair, even after the supreme court had authorized them, and made provision, in its wisdom, against the evil which they professed so much to dread."^[sic]¹⁴¹

The next case relates to an ordination. In the year 1729, Mr. Francis Craig received a harmonious call to the parish of Kinross, with concurrence of the patron, Sir Thomas Bruce Hope.¹⁴² It was with considerable difficulty that Mr. Craig, whose piety is praised equally by Mr. Boston and Mr. Wodrow, had been prevailed on to preach within the bounds of the presbytery of Dunfermline; owing, most probably, to the dissension which prevailed among its members, and the jealousy with which their proceedings were viewed by men of great influence in the church. When the call was laid before the presbytery, they, in deference to the opinion of some members who had heard surmises of his having imbibed divisive principles, examined him closely on that point, as well as on theology, and were so fully satisfied that

they agreed unanimously to proceed with his trials for ordination. But soon after this, they received a letter from the presbytery of St. Andrews, informing them that reports were abroad that Mr. Craig was friendly to the doctrines which the Assembly had condemned in the *Marrow*. In consequence of this information, the affair was referred to the synod, who resolved that he should be examined *de novo*. A committee of synod was appointed to meet at Cupar to prepare queries, which were to be transmitted to the presbytery of Dunfermline for their consideration, after which a joint meeting of the committee and presbytery was to be held at Kinross, to propose the queries and to judge of the answers that should be returned to them. The queries, which had not been transmitted according to appointment, were laid before the joint meeting, and amounted to twenty, comprehending all the points of doctrine contained in the acts of Assembly 1720 and 1722. These were put into Mr. Craig's hand, and he was required to give in written answers to them against the afternoon's sederunt. Within that short time he presented a paper, containing answers to all the questions but the last. Some members demurred to some of the answers, but no particular objection was stated; and all were struck with the proof which the young man had given of his ability in answering, on the spur of the moment, and with so much accuracy and distinctness, questions of such nicety, which had divided persons of great experience and skill.

The question which he declined answering was to this purpose, Do you approve of the acts of Assembly respecting the *Marrow*? It was urged by several members of court that the question should be dropped as highly improper; but Mr. Alexander Anderson and some others insisted that it should be put. Being called in, and told that he must return an answer in writing to the last question, he begged to be excused, and pled that it was not his business to approve or disapprove of particular acts of Assembly that he owned the acts in question to be deeds of the church, and did not in the least controvert them, and that it was his resolution not to oppose or meddle with them in public or in private. His request was refused, and he was required to give a direct answer; upon which he said that, being obliged to declare his private opinion, he was inclined to think that if the Assembly had taken more time, and fully considered what was advanced by the subscribers of the representation, it might have conducted more to the peace of the church, and that, according to his present light, he was of the sentiments of the representers, and was content to stand and fall with them. "This was what they wanted," says Mr. Wodrow, speaking of those who were adverse to

141. "As for our news here, I presume you heard an account of Mr. John Hepburn's call, which the Presbytery of Edinburgh, at their last meeting, referred to the commission, being unwilling to have any hand in transporting an orthodox brother from the Presbytery of Dunfermline, where the Marrow doctrine prevails so much." (Letter, Mr. Matthew Crawford to Mr. Wodrow, January 12, 1723.) "Mr. Hepburn's call was tabled before the Presbytery of Dunfermline, upon Wednesday last. This presbytery (of Edinburgh) refused to send any in their name to prosecute it." (Letter, the same to the same, July 5, 1723.) [Matthew Crawford, Professor of Church History, Edinburgh University, Letters of (1723–5), Wod.Lett.Qu. XVI, ff.13, 76, 163, 250, 265, 301, 417. If the close quotation mark is accurate, it is unclear where the open quotation mark should have been placed, particularly since double quotation marks are used around "orthodox brother."]

142. "Mr. John [Francis] Craig, son to Mr. Hugh Craig, minister at Galashiels, a good, honest man, was centered on by the parish of Kinross. Mr. Craig was a pious youth. [...] The people were as one man for him, save one Baillie [...] who influenced another. The more he preached there, the more they were built up in him." (*Analecta*, October 1729. [See volume 4 (1843), page 78].)

his settlement. The cause was referred to the provincial synod, to be held at Kirkcaldy in the end of September.

In the meantime, attempts had been made to stir up an opposition in the parish to the settlement. Sir Thomas Bruce Hope had died, and was succeeded by his brother Sir John. This gentleman, whose mind had been prepossessed against Mr. Craig by the individual who at first opposed the call, had signified to the presbytery his aversion to the settlement.¹⁴³ At the ensuing meeting of synod he appeared; and a few others gave in a paper purporting to be subscribed by a great many in the parish, and charging Mr. Craig with imprudencies in his preaching at Kinross. His answers to the queries were first read, and the synod, by a majority, declared they were not satisfied with them. They afterwards came to the following decision in the cause.

The synod considering not only that Mr. Craig's answers to the queries proposed to him had been found not satisfying by the above vote, but farther, the great change of the parish from what it was at the moderating the call, as appeared by the petition of Sir John Bruce Hope, and a great many others, against his settlement there; and also the imprudencies alleged against Mr. Craig in his lecturing and preaching at Kinross, represented in the above-mentioned declaration, subscribed by several hands; and that this synod were well informed that Mr. Craig himself had, before the presbytery and committee at Kinross and again before the presbytery itself, declared his willingness to quit the call of Kinross to him that he might be no more a bone of contention; and farther, his desiring the presbytery to take proper methods for the speedy planting that parish otherways; it was, upon the whole, put to the vote. Lay aside the call, or not? and the roll being called, and votes marked, it carried—Lay aside.

From this decision the parishioners appealed to the General Assembly, and a dissent was entered by nine ministers and eight elders.¹⁴⁴ The dissentients, in their reasons, complain that those who, in the course of reasoning, hinted dissatisfaction with Mr. Craig's answers, were repeatedly asked to condescend on anything that was faulty in them, but refused; that when it was proposed that the state of the vote should be—approve of the answers as a part of trials, this was also refused; and that by the state of the vote actually put, "every member of synod who did not fully understand the answers, or who perceived the least omission or failure of expression, was put *in toto* to condemn them;—by which method no man, more than Mr. Craig, can be in safety,

if a prevailing party in a judicatory has a mind to break either his character or his call.¹⁴⁵

As to the alteration of the inclination of the people, they deny that the least of it was made legally evident to the synod; the document adduced for it was made legally evident to the synod; the document adduced for it being an extrajudicial paper subscribed by several hands without any attestation, and not above three or four of the subscribers appearing to declare their adherence thereto. Besides, "it was judicially declared by members of Dunfermline that the said petition was subscribed by several infamous persons, lying under the censures of the church;—many of them were persons depending immediately on Sir John Bruce, particularly his menial servants; and others were influenced and compelled by threats and promises to subscribe, which those for Mr. Craig do in their petition offer to document." On the "alleged imprudencies," in lecturing and preaching at Kinross, it was contrary to all the principles of justice to introduce confessedly unproved allegations into the grounds of a sentence; the presbytery, on examination, were satisfied that they had originated in "the chimerical application of certain plain texts uttered by Mr. Craig,—which application he declared before the presbytery did never so much as once enter into his thoughts." When a patron has given his concurrence to a call, to allow his successor to interpose his influence for defeating its object, is to aggravate, instead of alleviating, the grievance of patronage. "Obliging young men to subscribe answers to proposed queries, as it is a method nowhere practiced now that we know of, in the Church of Scotland, except in the synod of Fife, so we judge it, *in terminis*, contrary to the 10th act of Assembly 1717, in the case of the presbytery of Auchterarder and Mr. William Craig, by which act the said presbytery, or any other presbytery, within this national church, are discharged to require subscriptions of any young man to be licensed to preach the gospel, or ordained to the office of the ministry, to

143. Sir John alleged as an objection to Mr. Craig, "that he had once been crazed in his mind." The following extract, while it explains the occasion of the unfeeling charge, puts us in possession at the same time, of the cause of the jealousy which the synod of Fife entertained of this probationer. "Mr Craig was a pious youth, under great deeps of exercise for some years, while a student in Edinburgh. When in the Lady Maitland's family, his serious exercise brought him to haunt with some of the Marrow brethren, or their followers." (Wodrow's *Analec̄ta*, October 1729.) [*Analec̄ta*, 4,78, 80.]

144. Copy, Minute of Synod of Fife, at Kirkcaldy, October 1, 1729. [See Minutes of the Synod of Fife, 1719–1738, National Archives of Scotland (National Records of Scotland), CH2/154/7.]

145. Copy, Reasons of Dissent from the Sentence, &c. [Ibid. See the discussion in Lachman, 467–472.]

any formula but such as is or shall be agreed to and approved by the Assembly of this church.”

On the query requiring Mr. Craig to express his opinion of the acts 1720 and 1722, the dissenters make the following remarks:—“It has a manifest tendency to perpetuate divisions and animosities among ministers and people who yet own one another’s orthodoxy and soundness in the faith, and who always are living in Christian communion and good understanding one with another; and we humbly think that, in the judgment of all sober persons, such handles of debate and strife among brethren should rather be sopite [i.e., to lull or put to sleep] and buried. It is well-known that there are few acts passed in the assemblies of the Church of Scotland, wherein members are perfectly of one mind; votes are divided through a diversity of sentiments; and, though as to the outward practice the

minor part yield unto the majority, yet the vote of the majority can never determine a man’s private light. And, therefore, we reckon it a piece of great cruelty to oblige a young man upon trials to propal [urge on] his private light or way of thinking about any particular act, anent which ministers themselves have different sentiments, without any detriment to the doctrine, worship, discipline, or government of this church; and if this practice of querying men upon particular acts be introduced, we do not know where it may land; perhaps a prevailing party may in a little propound questions after the same manner about other acts of Assembly. In fine, this practice has a tendency to alter and innovate the terms of ministerial communion, and to introduce other terms than those of Christ’s appointment, and that have been known in the churches of Christ, which may be of dangerous consequence, as laying a foundation for schisms and divisions in the body of Christ.”¹⁴⁶

146. Copy, Reasons of Dissent from a sentence of the Synod of Fife, laying aside the call to Mr. F. Craig from the parish of Kinross,—Mr. Wodrow has the following remarks on this decision of the synod: “This, as far as I can see, is a most imprudent and unhappy step, and is like to cast this poor divided rent church into a new labyrinth. On the one hand, the flames about the *Marrow* were just dying out, and the debates just ending. This will revive the whole, and the representing brethren will get multitudes to join them that were before opposite to their peculiar ways of speaking, which I am far from approving. And, which is in some respects as ill, this, especially after what has been of late as to Mr. Simson’s queries, and the battail we had there, [will] expose the method of queries, and stop any overtures in dependence about putting them. To urge and stop a man on his trials till he give a direct consent to all complex acts of Assembly, and make that a query, after satisfaction as to his soundness of the faith, is such a stretch in the method of queries as I do not see can be vindicated. I doubt not but this use of queries will be very satisfying to Mr. Simson and his friends, who with such keenness opposed this just method, when it’s regulated scripturally.”—(Wodrow’s *Analec̄ta*, September, 1729.) [*Analec̄ta*, volume 4 (1843), p. 80.]

147. “The affair of Kinross is referred to it,” says Mr. Wodrow, speaking of the commission. “Sir John Bruce, when meeting with some ministers at Kinross to oppose Mr. Craig, his horse fell with him and broke his leg. I heard, there were inclinations to be soft in that matter by the Synod of Fife, and that Sir John Bruce was falling from his opposition; but I doubt that will not hold.”—(*Analec̄ta*, May 1730.) [*Analec̄ta*, volume 4 (1843), p. 135.]

148. “Sir John Bruce, patron of Kinross, hath stopped payment of stipend to Mr. Ebenezer Erskine and Mr. Thomas Mair, upon the account of their non-jurancy. However the people pay their part, but he keeps L.60 in his own hands due to Mr. Erskine. The reason is, their opposing him in the settlement of Kinross. He intented a process before the Session this winter for a declaration of his not being obliged to pay the stipend to them since unqualified, or attempted it, but was dissuaded from it. Mr. Erskine tells me, he had advice of lawyers, he was in no hazard on many grounds. But soon after this attack, Sir John’s debtors fell on him for his debts, and he is like to run the country for his own debts.”—(Wodrow’s *Analec̄ta*, March 1731.) [*Analec̄ta*, volume 4 (1843), p. 215.]

The Assembly referred the cause to the commission and it was thought that the general feeling which had been expressed would teach the synod of Fife greater moderation, and induce Sir James Bruce to drop the opposition which he had made to the call.¹⁴⁷ But these expectations were disappointed. The determination which the church-courts had formed to resist popular election, joined with antipathy to the *Marrow* doctrine, induced the commission to confirm the sentence of the synod of Fife. Subsequently, the patron of Kinross, with the assistance of the synod, forced an unpopular candidate on the parish;¹⁴⁸ the body of the parishioners refused to acknowledge the intruder, and applied for religious privileges from the neighbouring ministers, who were prohibited by the church-courts from granting them; and the dissensions caused by this, and by similar occurrences in other parts of the country, contributed in no small degree to the secession which soon after took place from the national church.

It has been noticed that the arbitrary measures of the ecclesiastical judicatories had driven some of the ministers of the Church of Scotland to the opposite extreme of Independency. Mr. Glass, minister of Tealing, having been prosecuted for denying Presbyterian government and national churches, and for certain irregular practices founded upon these sentiments, was, in the year 1729, deposed by the commission. A remonstrance against this sentence was sent by some of the southern presbyteries in which the representers had influence, and it was anticipated that this would produce a division among them, fatal to their cause, as their brethren in the north were unanimous in their opposition to the

views of Glass.¹⁴⁹ There is no evidence that Mr. Boston ever adopted the sentiments of his friends Mr. Wilson and Mr. Davidson, but he might be induced to join in the remonstrance under the idea that ministerial liberty had been encroached on unduly in the process referred to, and there is reason to suspect that, by professing to agree with him on some points connected with the Marrow controversy, Professor Hamilton, who endeavoured to screen Mr. Glass from censure, insinuated himself at this time into his confidence.¹⁵⁰ The processes against Mr. Simson on the one hand, and Mr. Glass on the other, together with the alarming increase of intrusions, appear to have abated the temporary coldness which the dispute about the *Marrow* had produced between certain brethren; but there is no reason to believe that any of the representers either retracted or repented of the sentiments which they had so solemnly avowed.¹⁵¹ Mr. Boston published his Notes to the *Marrow* in 1726, and subsequently taught the same doctrine in his work on the Covenant of Grace. Mr. Ebenezer Erskine defended the main point in the dispute, in his sermons on the Assurance of Faith; and all the doctrines held by the representers were stated and vindicated by him in common with his brethren of the Secession, in their Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace.

It was customary at that period for presbyteries to send written instructions, along with their commissioners, to the General Assembly, suggesting such things as they thought demanded the attention of the supreme court. Though these were little attended to, unless when they fell in with the views of the leaders, yet they show the feeling which pervaded different portions of the church, and it may not be improper to give a specimen of them during the period referred to.

Anno 1722.—"Considering that a book, the *Marrow*, condemned by the late assembly, has been published and spread in their bounds that their members represent the transgression of the act by publishing a second edition of it, and concur in suppressing it." (Presbytery of Lanark.)—"That the Rev. Mr. James Hadow greet the public thanks of the Assembly for the great pains he has been at in vindicating the act of Assembly 1720, by his writing and publishing the *Antinomianism of the Marrow Detected*." (Presbytery of Brechin.)—"That the fourth act, 1720, obliging only ministers, members of Assembly, to sign the Confession and Formula 1711 that the Assembly appoint all the ministers of this national church to sign it in their presbyteries." (Synod of Fife.)—"That the Assembly take to task the authors of all books containing heresy and error, particularly with respect to these antinomian errors contained in

the *Marrow*." (Presbytery of Chanonry.)—"That the Assembly enquire how the 9th act, 1717, relating to Mr. Simson, hath been observed and obtempered [submitted to] by him." (Presbytery of Biggar.)

Anno 1723.—"To bear testimony to the doctrine of this church against antinomianism and other errors, particularly the *Marrow*; and that that book be suppressed, and that the Assembly proceed, as accords, against all who defend it." (Presbytery of Sky.)—"That as our church hath appeared against antinomianism, they should likewise prevent Arminian, Baxterian, and other errors." (Presbytery of Forres.)—"Remonstrance against the omission of the act 1647, approving and receiving the Confession of Faith, of the Solemn League, and of the Acknowledgment of Sins, 'public and approved deeds of this church, and a part of our Standard,' and against binding up a large Preface before said edition, said to be done by a private hand, and not approved by any act of this church." (Synod of Fife.)

149. After stating that in the instructions of presbyteries to the Assembly there was a general inclination against Mr. Simson being reposed [i.e., restored to former office] even to preaching, Mr. Wodrow says, "on the other hand, by influence from Professor H. [Hamilton] who was for Mr. Glass, there is a great appearance from the Synod of Merse against the commission's procedure against Mr. Glass. Particularly, I am told that the Marrow brethren, M. Wilson, Mr. Boston, and Davidson, were very keen against the Synod of Angus' proceedings, and under pretext of liberty, and out of regard to the Independents, were violent against Mr. Glass' deposition. And the flaming instructions from the presbytery of Jedburgh, they say, were drawn by Riccarton, [Riccartoun] the author of the *Sober Enquiry* and the *Political Disputant*, who is thought to favour the *Marrow*. Whereas, the Marrow brethren in Fife are violent against Mr. Glass; and his opposition to our covenants and national establishments, they give justly as the reason of it. Whether this will create any misunderstanding among the twelve representers or not, I cannot say. Time will try."—(*Analeceta*, May 1730.) [*Analeceta*, volume 4 (1843), p. 80.]

150. Boston's *Memoirs* [1776], anno 1729, p. 442. Mr. Wodrow produces several grounds for thinking that Professor Hamilton was unsound in his creed, and secretly inclines to the tenets of Professor Simson. (*Analeceta*, vol. vi. pp. 167, 229.) They are now, however, decisive. [See *Analeceta*, volume 4 (1843), 139.]

151. "The affair of the *Marrow* is at some stand. The appearance of these brethren in the Synod of the Merse in favour of Mr. Glass, is disliked by Mr. Hog and the ministers representers in Fife, and I doubt will be the occasion of a coldness among the Marrow brethren. There seems to be an inclination in the ministers favouring the *Marrow* in Fife to confer with the brethren who differed from them, to renounce the things charged upon them as to assurance being of the essence of faith. And of late Mr. J. Hog, and Mr. Logan, and some others, are in tolerable terms; and Mr. Logan his joining in the dissent in the affair of Hutton is like to cement the differences in Fife. Certainly, if some new thing fall not in, the affair of the *Marrow*, and of representing brethren, will come to nothing; and the less it is noticed and meddled with, its like to dwindle more away." (Wodrow's *Analeceta*, May 1730.) [See *Analeceta*, volume 4 (1843), 135–6.]

Anno 1725.—A remonstrance similar to the above was sent from the synod of Perth, and presbyteries of Perth and Kirkaldy.—“That the overture of last Assembly for subscribing the Confession of Faith be enacted, on account of the progress of error, and opposition to Confessions in England and Ireland.” (Presbytery of Dunfermline.) – “That for healing the breaches of this church, and preventing of separation, etc., the subsequent Assembly make a full and formal act, narrating the substance of our Covenants, National and Solemn League, declaring our adherence to the same as agreeable to the Word of God, and the constant obligation thereof on all members of this church, and appointing this act to be subscribed by all ministers and elders of this church, and that others who are willing to join be invited to do the same, in such a way and manner as the Assembly shall think fit.” (Presbytery of Brechin.)¹⁵²

The Marrow controversy, after it had subsided in Scotland, was introduced, as to the substance of it, into England and America. In the former country, the celebrated

Mr. Hervey adopted the views of the Scottish representers as to faith and appropriating assurance, in his well-known work, entitled *Theron and Aspasio*,¹⁵³ which was assailed, with as much acerbity as ability, by Mr. Sandeman, one of the disciples of Mr. Glass. In America, the opinions of Marshall and Hervey were attacked by Mr. Bellamy, and defended by Dr. Anderson, in different publications, and particularly in a formal answer to the Letters and Dialogues of the last named writer, which was published so late as the beginning of this century.

It is not intended, however, to prosecute the history farther here, or to take notice of recent disputes which have a remote connexion with it; nor would it be proper, in a publication of this kind, to discuss the merits of the controversy, or to indulge in reflections on the manner in which it was conducted. Enough, it is presumed, has been said to make the reader acquainted with the facts of a dispute to which circumstances have of late called public attention, and to put him in possession of the sentiments held by the respective parties.¹⁵⁴■

152. Instructions by Presbyteries and Synods to their commissioners to the General Assembly, annis 1722–1725. [These instructions appear to be in the General Assembly MSS of the Church of Scotland. See General Assembly Papers, 1722, volume 2, NAS CH1/2/46, Instructions by presbyteries of Taine and Chanonrie, pp. 157–158. Overture and instructions of synod of Fife. pp. 219–221. Instructions of presbyteries of Lanark, Strathbogie, Brechin and Biggar, pp. 297–300. General Assembly Papers, 1723, volume 2, NAS CH1/2/48, Instructions, pp. 219–253. General Assembly Papers, 1725, volume 1, NAS CH1/2/50, Instructions, pp. 155–163.]

153. The following is Mr. Hervey’s opinion of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, with Boston’s notes:—“A book designed to guard equally against Antinomian licentiousness, and legal bondage. The thoughts are just and striking; the arguments solid and convincing; the diction is familiar, yet pernicious; and the doctrine exceedingly comfortable, because truly evangelical. The notes are, I think, a master-piece of candid and judicious criticism, in which the nice discernment of the logician sifts, distinguishes and adjusts the rich furniture of the divine. Perhaps, I may venture to say that this little treatise pours as much light upon the gospel and grace of Christ, and, together with the notes, affords as many important distinctions in divinity, as any book of its size whatever.” ([James Hervey,] *Theron and Aspasio* [or, a series of Dialogues and Letters upon the most important and interesting subjects, in two volumes], Dial. 18, vol. ii p. 358. Edinburgh, 1775.)

154. [M’Crie’s comments about recent interest and the need to bring

some clarity to The Marrow Controversy relate to the Row Controversy (1828–1831) previously noted involving Thomas Erskine and John McLeod Campbell. This controversy was unfolding as M’Crie was writing and publishing his articles in *The Edinburgh Christian Instructor*. The editor of that publication at that time was Andrew Thomson who had rebutted the “Row” view of universal atonement in *The Doctrine of Universal Pardon Considered and Refuted, in a Series of Sermons: with Notes, Critical and Expository* (Edinburgh: W. Whyte, 1830). “In 1825 he [Campbell] was ordained and inducted to the parish of Row (Rhu) in Dumbartonshire. Shortly afterwards rumours began to circulate that strange doctrines were being preached from the Row pulpit and Campbell was called to account by his local presbytery. The case eventually ended up in the General Assembly and Campbell was deposed from the ministry on 24 May, 1831. There is a superficial resemblance between the case of McLeod Campbell and the case of the Marrow Men, in that the case against him was based on the 1720 finding (the Black Act) which had condemned the Twelve Brethren. This, like much else in the proceedings against Campbell, was highly irregular: the Black Act was not part of the constitution of the Church, and had itself been condemned by such eminent nineteenth-century churchmen as Andrew Thomson. It was chosen because it included a formal Assembly condemnation of the two heresies of which Campbell was accused: universal redemption, and assurance being of the essence of faith. But Campbell was no Marrow Man.” Donald Macleod, “Reformed Theology in Scotland,” *Theology in Scotland* 17, no. 2 (2010): 11.