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The Female Kirk: Women's Participation in the Early Scottish Presbyterian Church

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The Female Kirk: Women's Participation in the Early Scottish Presbyterian Church

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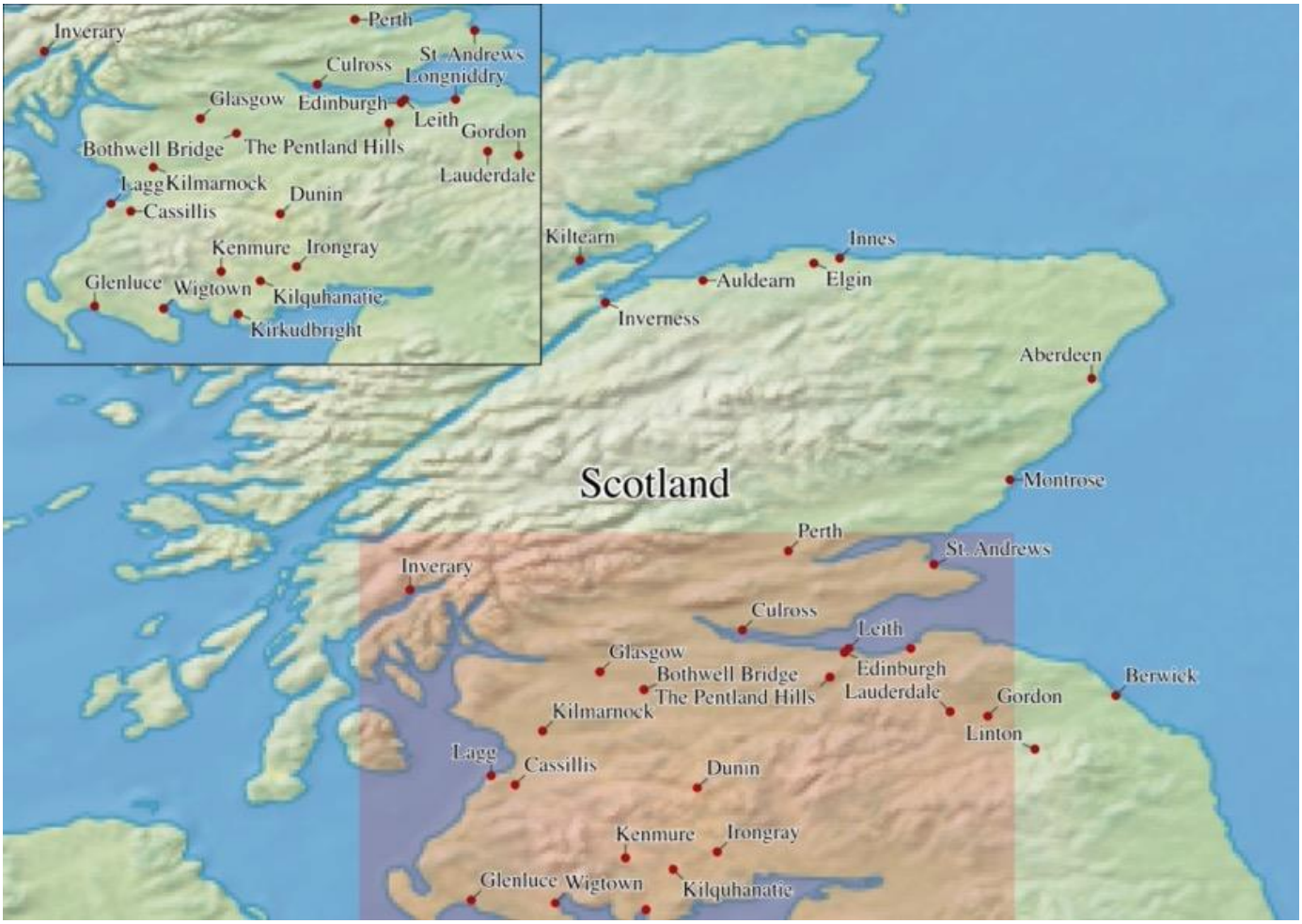
Map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Introduction

In June of 1639, Lady Anne Cunningham rode out to meet her son along the eastern coast of Scotland near Leith. This was not a friendly meeting between mother and son, but rather one between political enemies. Lady Anne was a Covenanter, a supporter of the National Covenant of 1638, a document opposing Charles I's reforms to the Scottish Presbyterian Church. She had attended several meetings in support of the Covenanting cause and was prepared to defend her religious beliefs even against her family.[1] Her son, James Hamilton, the third Marquess and first Duke of Hamilton, was an advisor to Charles I and was tasked with leading the king's fleet to Scotland to defeat those in opposition to the King, who resided in England. Lady Anne gathered support and rode out at the head of a calvary charge, armed with pistols that she intended to use to shoot her son should he step foot on Scottish soil.[2] Upon seeing the number of troops gathered on the shoreline, James Hamilton retreated and avoided physical altercation with his mother.[3] Lady Anne acted to defend her religion even at the expense of her family. Her actions reflect the complexity of women's participation in Presbyterianism, as women were active and involved members who made autonomous decisions.

The Presbyterian church in Scotland was founded in 1560 by John Knox, a reformer who studied under John Calvin in Geneva.[4] Knox began his career as a Catholic priest and most likely converted to Protestantism in 1545 when he was a tutor to the sons of the Laird of Longniddry

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[1] Rosalind K. Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne: Life in the Household of the Duchess of Hamilton 1656-1716* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1973), 21.

[2] Cathy Hartley, *A Historical Dictionary of British Women* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 257.

[3] James Anderson, *The Ladies of the Covenant* (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1851), 12.

[4] Jane Dawson, *John Knox* (New Haven, CT: Yale Scholarship Online, 2015), 83-85.

and heard the preacher George Wishart in Leith, who was influenced by Calvin and the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli.[5] He began preaching Protestant ideas in St. Andrews in 1547 and he followed Reformed sacrament practices.[6] However, his time in St. Andrews was short as he was captured as a part of the siege of St. Andrews' Castle and forced onto a galley ship.[7] In 1553, he fled to Europe, first to Dieppe and then to Geneva, where he met John Calvin.[8] He returned to Scotland in 1559 following Elizabeth I's coronation. While in Scotland, he gathered support from several Protestant lords against the Queen Regent, Mary of Guise, and her death in 1560 resulted in the official conversion of Scotland to Protestantism.[9]

In the following months, the Scottish Parliament passed *The Scots Confession* which outlined some of the basic beliefs of the new Scottish Church, which would be Calvinist in foundation. The next year, *The First Book of Discipline* described the beliefs and practical application of the church, including the establishment of elders, deacons and the congregation's right to elect their own ministers.[10] The new Presbyterian Church of Scotland had a church structure based on courts with varying levels: the parish level kirk session with local elders; a higher level of group of ministers from several parishes called a presbytery; followed by synods; and then finally led by the general assembly on the national level.[11] Presbyterianism focused on

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[5] Dawson, *John Knox*, 28.

[6] *Ibid.*, 51.

[7] *Ibid*., 52.

[8] *Ibid*., 83-85.

[9] David D. Hall, "Reformation in Scotland," in *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History*, David D. Hall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019): 83.

[10] Robert M. Healey, "The Preaching Ministry in Scotland's First Book of Discipline" *Church History* vol. 58 no. 3 (September 1989): 343.

[11] Margo Todd, "The Church and Religion," in *The Making and Unmaking of the Nation c.1100-1707*, eds Bob Harris and Alan R. MacDonald (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 114.

the importance of the local congregation in church structure. It saw this structure as prescribed by the Bible, which was the primary source of religious authority even above the church.[12] Knox's goal was to reform Catholic Scotland to return it to "the primitive church" through removing idolatry, reforming worship, and creating a church structure that would encourage a society similar to that in Geneva, also modeled on scripture.[13] Part of Knox's doctrines included the concept of predestination where God had already determined those who had salvation and were therefore part of the "elect."[14]

The Presbyterian church structure offered little to benefit women.[15] Under Presbyterianism with the destruction of monasteries and nunneries, women lost opportunities for official religious positions, like those of abbess and nun.[16] Knox infamously wrote a pamphlet in 1558 titled *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* specifically targeted at contemporary Catholic female monarchs: Mary Queen of Scots, Queen Mary I of England and Mary of Guise.[17] His language was derogatory towards women as he believed "that in her greatest perfection woman was created to be subject to man. But after her fall and rebellion committed against God, there was put upon her a newe necessitie, and she was made subject to man by the

[12] Healey, "The Preaching Ministry," 343.

[13] Hall, "Reformation in Scotland," 78.

[14] Dewey D. Wallace Jr., "The Doctrine of Predestination in the Early English Reformation," *Church History* 43, no.2 (June 1974): 201.

[15] Michael F. Graham, "Women and the Church Courts in Reformation-Era Scotland," in *Women in Scotland c.1100-c.1750*, eds Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 187.

[16] Wiesner, "Women and Gender," 215.

[17] Chad Schrock, "The Pragmatics of Prophecy in John Knox's 'The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women,'" *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 30, no. 2 (Spring/Printemps 2006): 83.

irreuocable sentence of God."[18] In his opening sentence he claimed that "to promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion or empire aboue any realme, nation, or citie, is repugnant to nature, contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reueled will and approued ordinance, and finallie it is the subuersion of good order, of all equitie and iustice."[19] Not only was a female monarch contrary to Knox's understanding of an orderly society, but it was apparently contrary to everything good in heaven and on earth.

Knox's perspective on women in *The First Blast of the Trumpet* was long taken by scholars to determine that of the Presbyterian church, and scholarly studies of women and Protestantism in general remain a relatively recent field with much of the foundational work beginning in the 1980s. This reconsideration coincided with broader scholarly developments in the field of gender history. Joan Kelly's article, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" argues major periods classified by historians do not always apply to women, in this case, the Renaissance.[20] Joan Scott, in her 1986 article "Gender: A Useful Category for Analysis," argues that sex and gender play an important role in the way people experience the world around them and should be used as important tools for analysis.[21] Kelly's question "did women have a Renaissance?" directly influenced Merry E. Wiesner to write *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* one of the foundational works on women in early modern Europe.[22] Wiesner's sixth chapter titled "Religion" discusses the impact

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[18] John Knox, "The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women" in *John Knox: The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women,* ed. Edward Arber (London, 1878), 15.

[19] Knox, "The First Blast of the Trumpet," 11.

[20] Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" in *Women, History, and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press 1984).

[21] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (Dec. 1986): 1053-1075, 1053.

[22] Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 2nd Edition), 8.

of the Protestant Reformations and Catholic Counter-Reformation on women, namely in how they were empowering while also limiting for women. As she notes, they lost access to official religious positions, like that of nun, but often became key figures in newly secularized charity organizations and contributed to theological discussions, especially in the early years of the Protestant Reformation.[23]

Many scholars have studied women and the Protestant church. However, the vast majority of these studies primarily focus on the Holy Roman Empire, Switzerland, France and England. They explore how women created their own roles within an often-restrictive patriarchal structure. Patricia Crawford examines the changes in religion in England and how this affected women as Protestant teachings emphasized women's role within the home and their responsibility for their own faith.[24] In *Patterns of Piety,* Christina Peters also studies English women and argues that piety was increasingly associated with women in England following the Reformation.[25] Ulrike Zitzlsperger studies early Protestant German female pamphleteers and how they emphasized their roles as mothers and wives to balance gender restrictions on teaching.[26] Natalie Zemon Davis also examines how women used the early Reformation for studying and writing, with a focus on sixteenth century France.[27] Rachel Adcock's chapter "Women and Gender" in *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions* argues that nonconforming Presbyterian women in mid-

[23] Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 214.

[24] Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England, 1500-1720* (London: Routledge Press, 1993): 42, 69.

[25] Christine Peters, *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 195.

[26] Ulrike Zitzlsperger, "Mother, Martyr and Mary Magdalene: German Female Pamphleteers and their Self-Images," *History* 88, no. 3 (July 2003): 379-392.

[27] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975): 81.

seventeenth century England adapted to increased restrictions on their positions within their nonconforming groups, including Presbyterianism.[28] These scholars depict a trend in several other Reformations of women grappling with drastic changes in religion and how to determine their own level of involvement.

Some recent scholarship has combined early modern Presbyterianism and women through a focus on individual Scottish women. Many of these concern Knox and his letter writing, his mother-in-law Elizabeth Bowes and a close friend Anne Locke. These authors argue that Knox had a more complicated relationship with women than is evident in his *The First Blast of the Trumpet* and these letters depict him as respectful and reliant on women for advice in some cases.[29] Other notable women who have also received individual attention include some of the more famous authors like Esther Inglis and Elizabeth Melville who will be covered in chapter two.[30]

However, the largest area that scholars have studied women and Scottish Presbyterianism is through the courts, especially in relation to the infamous witchcraft trials. Much of this began with Christina Larner's 1981 *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland*.[31] Her comprehensive analysis of the Scottish witchcraft trials throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries studies the trials through three main themes. Firstly, that most of the accusers were part

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[28] Rachel Adcock, "Women and Gender," in *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions, Volume I: The Post-Reformation Era, 1559-1689,* ed. John Coffey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[29] A. D. Frankforter, "Elizabeth Bowes and John Knox: A Woman and Reformation Theology," *Church History* 56, no. 3 (1987): 333-347; Jane Dempsey Douglass, "Christian Freedom: What Calvin Learned at the School of Women," *Church History* 53 (1984): 155-173; Richard Greaves, "John Knox and the Ladies, or the Controversy Over Gynecocracy," *Red River Valley Historical Journal* 2 (1977): 6-16; Stanford W. Reid, "John Knox, Pastor of Souls," *Westminster Theological Journal* 40, no. 1 (Fall 1978): 1-21.

[30] Sarah G. Ross, "Esther Inglis: Linguist, Calligrapher, Miniaturist, and Christian Humanist," in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, eds Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Karen Rae Keck, "Elizabeth Melville's Ane Godlie Dreame: A Critical Edition" (PhD diss., Texas Tech University, 2006).

[31] Christina Larner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

of the elite; secondly, that witchcraft was an idea and concepts of its practice could vary widely, and lastly that witchcraft accusations primarily targeted women.[32] Larner argues the trials in Scotland were unique in many ways, one of which was the involvement of the Presbyterian church. She describes how when a witchcraft accusation was brought forward "the Kirk session then had to decide whether or not to take the matter further."[33] Another significant factor was the spread of church structure with Calvinist emphasis on personal salvation and the people's covenanted relationship with God.[34] Julian Goodare in his article "Women and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland" also argued for the importance of the kirk sessions in witchcraft trails as "they strove to enforce godliness on the people, punishing all kinds of moral lapses . . . detecting the witch in the first place, gathering evidence and arranging for the trial."[35] Goodare integrates women and witchcraft trials into broader trends after the Reformation with women increasingly blamed for moral misconduct. He argues the Presbyterian Reformation played a key role in the increase targeting of women as witches. Part of his analysis includes the development of the kirk sessions which he argues often targeted women for female specific crimes, like scolding, infanticide and prostitution.[36] Goodare also discusses the crime of scolding, or being argumentative, which was only used against women.[37] These are certainly important aspects of the early kirk sessions, but most focus on the conflict between women and the kirk and neglect to include the many examples of women who were prominent leaders in their religious communities.

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[32] Larner, *Enemies of God*, 1-3.

[33] *Ibid*., 103.

[34] *Ibid*., 157, 172.

[35] Julian Goodare, "Women and the Witch-Hunt in Scotland," *Social History* 23, no. 3 (Oct. 1998): 290.

[36] Goodare, "Women and the Witch-Hunt," 294.

[37] *Ibid*., 299.

Other scholars have studied this tie between women, morals and the kirk sessions in general, like Michael Graham's 1999 article "Women and the Church Courts in Reformation-Era Scotland."[38] Graham argues that women used the kirk sessions as they "found kirk sessions much more approachable and responsive to their needs for justice, support and protection."[39] Alice Glaze likewise studied the complex relationship between the kirk sessions and women in "Women and Kirk Discipline: Prosecution, Negotiation, and the Limits of Control."[40] Like Graham, she argues women often did face serious prosecution, but also took advantage of the kirk sessions for their own benefit.[41] These studies are particularly important for their inclusion of lower class women, and both Glaze's and Graham's illustrate how women used the courts to their own advantage. Yet their recognition of women's use of Presbyterianism for their own benefit can be applied far wider to other areas of women's experiences.

A few historians have branched beyond the context of the kirk session courts in their analysis of women in the early modern Scotland with primarily a focus on women in the non-conforming faiths of the seventeenth century. David George Mullan is one of the recent historians who has studied women in Presbyterianism with several of his books centering on women's writing in the seventeenth century and the importance of women's spiritual autobiographies as a way for women to engage in literary work.[42] His 2003, *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland,* compiled the spiritual autobiographies of eight Scottish women from the late seventeenth

[38] Graham, "Women and the Church Courts", 187.

[39] *Ibid.,* 187.

[40] Alice Glaze, "Women and Kirk Discipline: Prosecution, Negotiation, and the Limits of Control," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 36, no. 2 (2016): 125-142.

[41] Glaze, "Women and Kirk Discipline," 125.

[42] David George Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's Narrative: A Scottish Puritan Autobiography," *Bunyan Studies* 7 (1997): 15

century. In his introduction, he argues "religion may have served to constrain women; it worked also to embolden them" referring to women's choices in religion in the seventeenth century.[43] Along a different line, Alan McSeveney in *Non-Conforming Women in Restoration Scotland 1660-1679* examined female covenanters and rioters not as rule breakers, but as followers of their religious convictions. McSeveney argued that non-conforming women in the Restoration period found ways to circumvent restrictions on their official participation in religion and "showed their ability to overcome strictures and assert themselves on their own initiative."[44] Chastity Hunt also argued women created religious authority, but she studied it through women's evocation of the Holy Spirit within the seventeenth century and eighteenth century Presbyterian churches of Scotland, Ireland and North America.[45] These three works provide a similar argument to what this essay will argue; however, this essay hopes to widen and combine the focuses of these historians to provide a much broader and more complete picture of women and Presbyterianism in all its aspects. When the period from 1550 to 1690 is taken as a whole, I argue, women's activism emerges as part of the Presbyterian tradition entirely and not only as a part of the non-conforming community.

This essay will show how a study of women's interactions with the Presbyterian church outside of the kirk sessions, namely in their public, written and private lives, show women as independent decision makers and involved participants in their religion throughout the first century and a half of Presbyterianism. Women were active members within the Presbyterian church and

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[43] David George Mullan, *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c. 1670-c. 1730* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 17.

[44] Alan James McSeveney, "Non-Conforming Presbyterian Women in Restoration Scotland 1660-1679" (PhD diss., University of Strathclyde, 2005), 72.

[45] Chastity Hunt, "Moved by the Spirit: Evangelical Women and Authority in the Early Modern Atlantic World" (Master's Thesis, Eastern Kentucky University, 2015), 4.

shaped their experiences based on their morals and understanding of Christianity. When all aspects of women's religiously motivated actions in early modern Scotland are taken together, women are not seen merely as subject to the mercies of the court or patriarchal society. Instead, they become active figures independently and proactively making their own decisions on their faith and their behavior in religiously charged situations, particularly when their involvement is studied over the course of a longer period.

The first chapter will provide background on the political events in sixteenth and seventeenth century Scotland; the religious ideas of the Presbyterian church and its ministers concerning women during this period; and analyze women's actions in the public sphere between 1550 and 1690. For the purpose of this essay "public sphere" will refer to women's actions both in their local and Scotland-wide community. Most of the examples used in this chapter refer to women's revolts, political involvement and women martyrs. As I will argue, women exploited tensions in church doctrine regarding their submission in social order and as members of a Christian community for support in their decisions to break expected gender behavior.

The second chapter will analyze women's religiously motivated writings and how these depict women's engagement with the church. These include letters to ministers, poetry, illuminated manuscripts of religious texts and spiritual autobiographies. Many of these authors intended their writing to guide readers towards spiritual enlightenment. It was their own form of evangelism and preaching as they were not allowed to speak from the pulpit. Kirsi Stjerna presents a similar argument in her article, "Reformation Revisited: Women's Voices in the Reformation" as she argues that continental European women used writing as a form of lay preaching.[46] Presbyterian women also used writing as a form of lay preaching, like Elizabeth Melville and her poem *Ane*

[46] Kirsi Stjerna, "Reformation Revisited: Women's Voices in the Reformation," *The Ecumenical Review* 69, no. 2 (July 2017): 201-210.

Godlie Dreame. This level of evangelism escalated through the three categories of writing; firstly, letters to ministers being to the weakest; followed by artistic expression; and lastly, spiritual autobiographies, which had the strongest elements of evangelism. Through their writing, women sought to explore their own spirituality and influence that of others in an independent and autonomous way, while also displaying their involvement in a broader Presbyterian community.

The final chapter will focus on women's private lives, namely their relationships with their husbands, children and ministers. One significant topic in this chapter is the instruction of women's submission to their male family members, specifically husbands. The rhetoric from the pulpit did not always match actual practice. Many of the woman mentioned in this chapter did not always follow the directives of their husbands or mention men having an impact on their decisions. Rather than always being submissive in their personal lives, women acted on their own initiative to place their convictions of their faith above those of church doctrine on submission.

The period of focus for this essay is between 1550 and 1690, or immediately before the foundation of the Presbyterian church to the period of the Glorious Revolution, the Act of Toleration and the end of "the Killing Times." While this is a broad time frame, it includes the major developments in the early Presbyterian church, including splits within the church itself and religiously motivated wars. The way women participated in these developments changed, but throughout there is still an underlying tone of women as active and independent. The majority of the examples mentioned throughout this essay are women who were predominantly elite, English or Scots speaking, and from the Scottish Lowlands. Records from other women are rare, but the author has included them whenever possible to achieve a wider perspective. The term "Presbyterian" presents some challenges, as the Presbyterian church was not a unified entity. This essay will analyze women from religious groups descended from the Church of Scotland initially

begun by John Knox. This will include many Protestant groups from the seventeenth century who did not belong to what was then the Church of Scotland but saw themselves as the true form of Presbyterian practice.

This essay seeks to fill the historiographical gap on women and Presbyterianism in early modern Scotland as a whole. In nearly all aspects of their lives, women found ways to circumvent their exclusion from official church positions to play an active and independent role in their religious lives. From rioting to poetry, women were certainly not silent in the early modern Presbyterian church, despite rhetoric from the pulpit calling for it.

Chapter 1

From Advising to Rioting: Women's Involvement in the Wider Community

Jenny Geddes was a stall owner in Edinburgh and an attendee of St. Giles' Cathedral, the main church in the capital. On July 23rd, 1637 the minister announced the introduction of an Episcopal Book of Common Prayer to Scotland. Enraged at this threat to Presbyterian expectations of worship and fear of the threat of perceived "catholic" practices, Geddes threw her stool at the minister, inciting others to throw objects at the minister as well.[47] Riots erupted across the city and the country, later called Prayer Book Riots. This unrest culminated in the National Covenant of 1638, a document outlining the structures of Presbyterianism and rejecting the reforms of Charles I and the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was quickly adopted across much of Scotland and sparked Charles I to take military action beginning with the First Bishops War.[48] Beyond the consequences in her own time, Geddes's actions had a lasting impact and remembrance. In 1886 a plaque was erected in her honor in St. Giles' and in 1992 women raised funds to donate a bronze stool engraved with her name to the cathedral.[49]

Geddes's actions and the response to them did not develop on their own, but rather in parallel with religious and political changes that had occurred over the previous century. This chapter will cover the political and religious background of the period, study attitudes about women from a few Presbyterian ministers and end with an analysis of women in the public sphere.

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[47] Martyn Bennet, *The Civil Wars Experienced: Britain and Ireland, 1638-1661* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 2.

[48] Leonie James, *'The Great Firebrand': William Laud and Scotland, 1617-1645* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brew, 2017), 112.

[49] "Jenny Geddes," St. Giles Cathedral, accessed December 17, 2020, https://stgilescathedral.org.uk/jenny-geddes/.

Women's actions in the public sphere were shaped by the often-conflicting rhetoric from ministers that urged both order through gendered behavior expectations and defense of the faith. Women balanced these and this chapter will study the areas where women acted out of the confines of women's roles, but still defended some aspects of church teachings.

Religious and Political Setting of Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Scotland

Between 1560 and 1690 Presbyterian history was often characterized by disagreements on religious direction between some Presbyterians and government, whether that be the monarch or parliament. The foundation of the Presbyterian church in the early 1560s did not end disagreements between the church and the Crown. In 1567, backlash against Mary, Queen of Scots, a Catholic for her marriage to the Earl of Bothwell, known for being violent and for possibly playing a part in the murder of Mary's second husband Lord Darnley, turned the church increasingly Calvinist as the General Assembly of the Kirk gave more resources to the military and pushed ideological reforms in universities. Mary was forced out of Scotland and her infant son took the throne. However, the following decades developed tensions between James VI and the church, as he sought to establish his own authority through a more episcopalian structured church even though he was a Calvinist.[50] This would reach a breaking point in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

In 1603, James VI and I became the monarch of both England and Scotland. Yet nearly every other aspect of governance and culture was separate including religion. James' attempts to bring Presbyterianism closer to Anglicanism were often met with resistance, like the Five Articles

[50] Jenny Wormald, "The Reign of James VI: 1573-1625," in *The Making and Unmaking of the Nation c.1100-1707,* eds Bob Harris and Alan R. MacDonald (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 27; Jeremy J. Smith, "From 'Secreit' Script to Public Print: Punctuation, News Management, and the Condemnation of the Earl of Bothwell," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (2017): 223-224.

of Perth in 1618. One of the Articles was the requirement to kneel for communion, a practice that felt far too Catholic to many Presbyterians.[51] Not all Presbyterians agreed with the Five Articles of Perth, but it represents some of the deepening divides in the church that would continue and cause significant strife throughout the seventeenth century.

In 1625, Charles I became king, and his reign brought tensions between the Crown and some Scottish Presbyterians to a breaking point. Charles's main goals for Scotland during his reign involved reforming Scotland's religion and conventicles, which were religious meetings not associated with the main Presbyterian church that sprang up around Scotland. This was all with the instigation of his Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud.[52] Part of Charles's reforms included introducing the Book of Canons in 1636, imposing more ecclesiastical practices, and the Book of Common Prayer in 1637.[53] The Book of Common Prayer marked a turning point as Jenny Geddes threw her stool in protest and launched a series of riots.[54] Those against the Prayer Book developed into a new faction with the support of some of the nobles and called for the removal of many of the recent reforms.[55] They created the National Covenant of 1638, whose supporters were called "Covenanters." Its main goal was ensuring independence for Scotland in terms of religion and government, namely their general assembly and parliament, but they still supported having a monarch.

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[51] Alexander D. Campbell, *The Life and Works of Robert Baillie (1602-1662)* (Bristol: Boydell and Brewer, 2017), 149.

[52] David Stevenson, "Charles I, the Covenants and Cromwell: 1625-1660," in *Scotland: The Making and Unmaking of the Nation c. 1100-1707 Vol. 2*, eds Bob Harris and Alan R. MacDonald (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 37-40.

[53] Stevenson, "Charles I", 43.

[54] Bennet, *The Civil Wars Experienced*, 2.

[55] Stevenson, "Charles I", 44.

Not everyone agreed with the dramatic turn the religious fervor was taking.[56] But in 1639, the First Bishops' War erupted between the Covenanters and Charles I, aided by some Royalist, mostly episcopalian, Scots. It began following the Prayer Book Riots and the National Covenant, but the turning point was the Glasgow Assembly. Covenanters and royal representatives met to negotiate over pressing issues like the Presbyterian desire for annual assemblies and the issues with bishops and the Prayer Book, but Charles refused to concede. Royalist representatives dissolved the assembly, but the members refused this and continued the session in rebellion.[57] Both the Covenanters and the Royalists were armed, but military escalation halted after a period of negotiation. The peace was short lived, however, as the Second Bishops' War erupted in 1640 after the Scottish Parliaments' abolishment of bishops and invasion of northern England.[58] Tensions in England continued to rise and in 1642 civil war erupted following years of conflict between Charles and the English Parliament over negotiations over parliament's ability to meet, and Parliament's denial to give Charles funding unless he agreed to several reforms, including making the English church conform to a more presbyterian organization. This was not unlike many of the Covenanters' issues with Charles as they believed he was overstepping his powers in his changes to the church.

A year later, Scotland promised to send troops to aid the Parliamentarians in the Solemn League and Covenant. In return, the Parliamentarians agreed that upon victory, England would protect Scotland's interests and encourage Presbyterianism in England.[59] Scottish support was by

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[56] *Ibid*., 45.

[57] James, *'This Great Firebrand': William Laud and Scotland*, 138.

[58] *Ibid*., 46.

[59] Naomi Tadmor, "People of the Covenant and the English Bible," *Transactions of the Historical Society* 22 (2012), 96.

no means unified as a strong Scottish Royalist group, with one army led by the Earl of Montrose won victories against the Covenanters between 1644 and 1645.[60] Scottish support for Charles I increased as concerns that the English parliament would not uphold its promises grew. Many Scots saw negotiating with the King as a far safer choice than with the English parliament. This distrust of the English parliament was proved correct when the parliamentarians executed Charles I in 1649 and abolished the monarchy to end a constitutional crisis, but without the Scots' support.[61] Charles II returned to Scotland and Cromwell invaded soon after. A military defeat at Dunbar in 1650 crippled the Kirk Party and the Covenanters as the English occupied Edinburgh and conquered much of the Scottish Lowlands.[62] What had started as a debate between Presbyterians and the Crown under James I had escalated under Charles I into a full-scale civil war.

The Covenanters were divided between supporting Charles II and supporting the English parliament. One of the most significant splits was in 1651 over the rescinding of the Act of Classes, which had prevented Royalists from serving in public office. Those who supported the Act, and therefore did not want it rescinded, were the Protesters, typically more strict Covenanters, and those who opposed the Act were the Resolutioners. Royalist revolts continued throughout the 1650s and most Scots supported the restoration of Charles II, who returned to the throne in 1660 along with the restoration of the English crown.[63] Part of Charles II's policies for the church included the reinstallation of bishops and exclusion of any ministers who still supported the Covenanting Presbyterian structure from the late 1630s. This hardened divisions between

[60] Stevenson, "Charles I," 48-49.

[61] Stevenson, "Charles I," 50.

[62] *Ibid*., 52; Laura Stewart, *Urban Politics and British Civil Wars Edinburgh, 1617-53* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006), 300.

[63] Stevenson, "Charles I," 54.

Presbyterians who conformed, supporting the Restoration Church, and nonconforming Presbyterians who rejected any notion of the Restoration Church.[64]

Uprisings in 1666 at Pentland Hills and the Battle of Bothwell Bridge in 1679 grew out of resentment over Charles II's religious policies. Some of these included forcing ministers and university instructors to support episcopacy, fining those who did not attend church, and preventing private house conventicles. The Pentland Hills rebellion was, in part, a response to Charles II sending troops to southwestern Scotland to stop conventicles where they were most prevalent.[65] Part of the reason for failure was a lack of strong support from elements of the episcopalian nobility who were concerned about the extreme direction some of the field preachers' rhetoric had taken. Yet, many still allowed conventicles on their land and the government issued a Bond in 1674 and another in 1677 forcing landowners to prevent conventicles. The conflicts between the Covenanters and the Church of Scotland escalated with the assassination of the Archbishop of St. Andrews, James Sharp, in 1679.[66] The Test Act of 1681 proved to be another blow as office holders were now required to swear an oath to conform religiously and politically.[67] Persecution of the most radical Covenanters continued in the early 1680s with Charles II's command for the military to execute field preachers referred to as "the Killing Times." This period lasted between 1684 and 1685, in which the death penalty was mandated for anyone who refused to renounce their support for the Cameronians, a more radical Covenanting group mostly based in the south and west. Cameronians were strong supporters of the Covenant and rejected many of

[64] Alasdair Raffe, *Scotland in Revolution, 1685-1690* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2018): 10.

[65] Tim Harris and Stephen Taylor (eds), *The Final Crisis of the Stuart Monarchy: The Revolutions of 1688-91 in Their British, Atlantic and European Contexts* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), 111-117.

[66] Harris and Taylor, *The Final Crisis of the Stuart Monarchy*, 112.

[67] *Ibid*., 113.

Charles II's reforms leading towards statue control over the church.[68] The victims of this persecution included two female martyrs who will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.[69]

James II's reign began in 1685 and he quickly encouraged the use of the Test Act, which Catholics were exempt from. James also attempted to repeal laws against Catholicism which only angered most Protestants against him while also not uniting the different Presbyterian factions.[70] The breaking point was the birth of James's son in 1688, which meant the continuation of a Catholic monarchy. Several members of the English aristocracy travelled to the Netherlands to invite protestant William of Orange, who had married James II's daughter, to become the next king.[71] The Glorious Revolution aided Scottish Presbyterians as there would no longer be a Catholic monarch and the Presbyterian church was strengthened again, but many Catholic Scots still supported James II and William invaded Scotland to quell his supporters.[72] With William and Mary came the Act of Toleration of 1689, legalizing worship for Protestants who believed in the Trinity, almost all Protestants.[73]

Politics and religion were deeply intertwined in Scotland between 1550 and 1690. A change in the legality of certain religious practices or attempts to impose a new church structure

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[68] Christopher A. Whatley, "Reformed Religion, Regime Change, Scottish Whigs and the Struggle for the 'Soul' of Scotland, c.1688-c.1788," *The Scottish Historical Review* 92 no. 233 (April 2013): 72.

[69] Raffe, *Scotland in Revolution,* 15.

[70] Derek J. Patrick, "Restoration to Revolution: 1660-1690," in *The Making and Unmaking of the Nation c.1100-1707,* eds Bob Harris and Alan R. MacDonald (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 63.

[71] Charles Carlton, *This Seat of Mars: War and the British Isles, 1485-1746* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 195.

[72] Robert Barnes, "Scotland and the Glorious Revolution of 1688," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 3, no. 3 (Autumn, 1971): 9.

[73] Ralph Stevens, *Protestant Pluralism: The Reception of the Toleration Act, 1689-1720* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer Press, 2018), 14-15.

often resulted in rebellion and, occasionally, full-scale war. With the turbulent nature of the period, came increased opportunities for women's participation in unique ways, often out of necessity. Religion became about survival, identity and occasionally martyrdom. Women identified with individual factions, lent their support in any way they saw possible and often in ways that defied expectations and instructions from the pulpit. The turbulence of the period shaped the different ways women interacted with the church and the rhetoric surrounding expected Presbyterian behavior.

Theological Rhetoric: The Pulpit's Opinion on Women

Just as not all Presbyterians agreed on politics and church structure, ministers had varying opinions on women's religious participation. This next section studies several ministers: Calvin, Knox, John Wemyss, Samuel Rutherford, Donald Cargill and John Welsh. They were instrumental to the foundation and development of Presbyterianism, yet represent different opinions on a variety of subjects. Some emphasized women's submission more than others, but this variance depended on different contexts. Women interpreted these messages differently and balanced decisions based on their own priorities.

Two of the most foundational ministers for the Presbyterian church were John Calvin and John Knox. Calvin originally trained as a French lawyer and began his studies in Orléans in 1528 where he most likely converted to Protestantism sometime in the 1530s. He settled in the Protestant city of Geneva where he was soon resented by the local government who felt he was threatening their power. He left for Strasbourg in 1538 where he was a minister to other Protestant exiles. Returning to Geneva in 1541, he established new reforms in public worship, the sacraments, the

role of elders, and consistory courts for moral behavior.[74] Many of Calvin's opinions on women and their actions in the church are revealed by his biblical commentaries, which he delivered in lectures beginning in 1540 with his *The Commentary on Romans*.[75] Through these commentaries he provided his own interpretations of scripture to better aid students. Calvin argued both men and women were "created in the image of God" and both were expected to follow similar guidelines regarding sin and piety. However, Calvin still supported patriarchal order and encouraged the readers to "accept it as a rule of nature that a woman is man's helper" and that "by God's law woman is given to man as helper, so that he may do his part as the head and leader."[76] Furthermore, in his commentary on 1 Timothy he also struck a balance between his directives on prohibitions against women teaching specifically, namely in his interpretations of Paul's "let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness" from 1 Timothy 2:11. Calvin believed this applied to women's role in public office as they "are not to assume authority over the man . . . it is not permitted by their condition. They are subject, and to teach implies the rank of power or authority."[77] However, Calvin believed women could still teach their family. Calvin was careful to avoid a blanket approach in terms of Christian behavior. In his *Institutes on the Christian Religion Book IV* Calvin warned against strict rules and used women as an example:

> Is religion placed in a woman's bonnet, so that it is unlawful for her to go out with her head uncovered? Is her silence fixed by a decree which cannot be violated without the greatest wickedness? . . . By no means. For should a woman require to make such haste in assisting a neighbor that she has not time to cover her head, she sins not in running out with her head uncovered. And there are some occasions on which it is not less seasonable for her to speak

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[74] Elsie McKee, "(Re)Introducing Pastor John Calvin," *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 81, no. 2 (2009): 53-61.

[75] John Calvin, *Calvin: Commentaries*, Joseph Haroutunian (trans and ed) (London: S. C. M. Press, 1958), 16.

[76] Calvin, *Calvin: Commentaries*, 358.

[77] 1 Timothy 2:11 ESV; John Calvin, *Commentary on Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1856), 68.

> than on others to be silent . . . if any error is committed through imprudence or forgetfulness, no crime is perpetrated; but if this is done from contempt, such contumacy must be disapproved.[78]

While Calvin upheld issues like women having their heads covered and their silence in church, he did not believe in completely outlawing opportunities for women to act otherwise. He saw the dangers in complete restriction and the value of women's opinions in certain cases.

Addressing Knox's relationship with women is difficult as his pamphlet, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, contains many derogatory remarks about women. First published in 1558, Knox railed against women in positions of leadership. In his opening sentence he claims that "to promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion or empire aboue any realme, nation, or citie, is repugnant to nature, contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reueled will and approued ordinance, and finallie it is the subuersion of good order, of all equitie and iustice."[79] Perhaps most influential of all of his statements regarding the relations between man and woman, which he characterizes as one of pure submission: "So, I say, that in her greatest perfection woman was created to be subject to man. But after her fall and rebellion committed against God, their was put upon her a newe necessitie, and she was made subject to man by the irreuocable sentence of God."[80] In subsequent pages he urged for women's silence in church, the illegitimacy of women holding a position traditional held by men in terms of monarchy, and the image of God only applying to men. [81] All of these tenets reduce women to their relationship to men. Knox's whole treatise firmly places him in a stance of excluding women

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[78] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion Vol. II*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), 436-437.

[79] Knox, "The First Blast of the Trumpet," 11.

[80] *Ibid*., 15.

[81] *Ibid.* 20-21.

from leadership within the church and opportunities for religious discussions. However, Knox's pamphlet quickly caused problems as Elizabeth I, a Protestant, came to the throne in England. Many Protestants came out in opposition to it, including Calvin, who saw it as a political liability.[82]

Calvin and Knox were both crucial theologians in the establishment of the Presbyterian Church, but other ministers also added their own opinions on women within the church in the decades to follow. One such minister was John Wemyss (1579-1636) who attended the University of St. Andrews and became a minister in Berwickshire in 1608. He strongly opposed the Five Articles of Perth, and he was later dismissed from his ministerial position in 1620 for his opposition. He devoted himself to scriptural study and writing, becoming well-known for his Biblical interpretations.[83] His 1632 *An Exposition of the Morall Law, or Ten Commandments of Almightie God, Set Downe by Way of Exercitations* highlighted commandments throughout the Bible with scriptural interpretations and explanations.[84] One section focused solely on Ephesians 5:22: "Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."[85] He interpreted this verse strictly through the lenses of order and submission as "the inferiours are bound to give honour to their superiours" according to the fifth commandment. He also outlined women's duties to their husbands as "subjection, obedience, and reverence."[86] Wemyss relied on multiple verses and examples to justify women's submission, one being that "the man is the image of God above the

[82] Schrock, "The Pragmatics of Prophecy," 84.

[83] Sidney Lee, ed., *The Dictionary of National Biography Vol. 60* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899), 250.

[84] John Wemyss, *An Exposition of the Morall Law, or Ten Commandments of Almightie God, Set Down by Way of Exercitations* (London, T. Cotes, 1632), 1.

[85] Ephesians 5:22 ESV.

[86] Wemyss, *An Exposition of the Morall Law*, 337.

woman, and he is more the glory of God then the woman."[87] However, Wemyss did not believe this relationship was one sided and in the next section outlined husbands' duties to their wives as including providing for them and teaching them as "the head giveth influence to the body, so should a man teach and rule his wife."[88] Wemyss believed in women's submission in nearly every aspect of marriage and life based on his interpretations of Biblical texts, but in return husbands were to provide for and protect their wives.

One of Wemyss's contemporaries, Alexander Henderson, was selected as moderator of the General Assembly in 1638.[89] In a sermon on Psalm 123 from May 20th, 1638 Henderson outlined his position on women and spiritual equality arguing:

> Not only may men be confident in the power of God, but even women also, who are more frail and feeble. Not only may women mourn to God for wrongs done to them, and have repentance for sin, but they may be confident in God also. And therefore see, in that rehearsal of believers and cloud of witnesses, not only is the faith of men noted and commended by the Spirit of God, but also the faith of women.[90]

Henderson saw women as also having control over their practice of worship and personal relationship to God.

Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) frequently published his sermons and wrote to a number of women, with several of the women included in chapter two.[91] In several tracts on church government, he outlined his belief regarding the position of women. One such example from his *The Due Right of Presbyteries* is his examination of Acts 15:22 and 1 Corinthians 14:23; he argued

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[87] *Ibid.*, 338.

[88] *Ibid*., 344.

[89] David George Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 26-27.

[90] Alexander Henderson, *Sermons, Prayers, and Pulpit Addresses by Alexander Henderson, 1638*, ed. R. Thomas Martin (Edinburgh: Turnbull and Spears Printers, 1867), 335.

[91] Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 39.

that women and children should not speak or command in church but that the church should not "exclude women and children from being parts of the Church."[92] In *The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication* he criticized Christian women who marry a non-Christian as "she sines in her choise; and as a sinful woman chuseth a Pagan who hath no other then a Pagan conscience, to be the guide of her youth, and her head, and to love her, as Christ loved his Church, and to rule her according to his marital and Husband-power in some acts of her Christian conversation."[93] Rutherford argued women were to be submissive to and taught by their husbands. Yet women still had choice in her husband (or should) as she was the one who made the error in marrying him. Rutherford takes power away from women within a marriage but interestingly gives them sole responsibility for their choice of marriage.

Alexander Peden was a Covenanter minister who participated in the Pentland Rising in 1666.[94] In 1682, Alexander Peden preached a prophetic sermon in Glenluce about God's vengeance on Scotland for its sin. Throughout this sermon he addressed the people as "sirs" but used inclusive language of "young men and young women" and mentioned "the lads and lasses that have followed Him in this stormy blast, and have laid down their lives for Him."[95] Peden saw Scotland's future fate in the hands of all the people including women, particularly poignant given the unrest at the time.

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[92] Samuel Rutherford, *The Due Right of Presbyteries: Or A Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland* (London: E. Griffen, 1644), 39-40.

[93] Samuel Rutherford, *The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication* (London: John Field, 1646), 625.

[94] Alexander Peden and Patrick Walker, *The Life and Prophecies of Mr. Alexander Peden* (Glasgow: Joh Pryde, 1872), 9.

[95] Alexander Peden and Jaen L. Watson, *Life and Times of Rev. Alexander Peden (the Prophet) and Rev. James Renwick* (Glasgow: Dunn and Wright, 1889), 127.

Calvinist and Presbyterian ministers had differing views on women's participation and activism in the church. Most of the differences surrounded exceptions to the rule of submission and where to draw the line. Some believed women should be submissive to men in all things, and others found exceptions to these rules and occasionally encouraged women as part of the defense of their faith. In the public setting, as the rest of the chapter will show, women were active in many of the events of the sixteenth and seventeenth century through influencing members of the government, rioting and martyrdom. These women used loopholes articulated by ministers to defend their faith, while still maintaining what they saw as acceptable behavior due to their unique circumstances.

Women and Government Intervention

In the turbulent years of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many women found ways to voice their own opinions through attempts to influence the government, whether that be through close relations with men in power, petitions or leading an army. These women did not see their actions as contrary to their expected behavior as Presbyterian women, but rather as placing the defense of their individual beliefs as greater than gendered roles, as in accordance with Calvin's perspective that in special circumstances the rules could be bent.

Two women in particular influenced important members of the government, including the King. In June 1592, eighteen-year-old Helen Guthrie approached King James VI while he was hunting with a letter chastising him for "unchristian" behavior like "the sinnes raigning in the countrie, swearing, filthie speeking, profanatioun of the Sabbath." When the King asked who she was she replied that "she was a poore simple servant of God." Guthrie's actions were part of a

larger cause of Presbyterian concern about the King's behavior.[96] The timing of Guthrie's petition is of particular relevance as in the same year James VI reversed some of his previous policy by passing the "Golden Acts." These revoked the early Black Acts of 1584 which had issued an episcopal system of government for the Scottish Church and replaced many of the preferred presbyteries.[97] Only two years earlier, a series of witchcraft trials began in North Berwick.[98] Guthrie's petition was part of a much larger tide of religious tension in Scotland, so while her behavior does defy Knox's attitude towards women's involvement in politics, she felt she was following a greater calling of defending her religion. Women were not isolated from the religious and political debates of the period and took action where they believed it was necessary.

Lady Margaret Kennedy Burnet also hoped to influence high members of government to change some of their attitudes and policies; however, her strategy and approach was different as she used her connections and elite status as an aid. Burnet's father, John Kennedy the sixth earl of Cassillis, was involved in significant political events of the 1640s through the 1660s and had Covenanting leanings. He supported the National Covenant, signed the Solemn League, supported the Act of Classes, refused to take the oath of allegiance in 1661 and was not allowed to hold any public office as a result. Burnet's connections and influence in the 1660s over the Earl of Lauderdale emerged following the political fall of her father with the potential threat to her family. In a letter to the Earl of Lauderdale, the state secretary of Scotland, from May 7th, 1662, she urged him to offer more moderate treatment to nonconforming Presbyterians, which she reminded the

[96] Sue Innes and Rose Pipes, *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 153.

[97] Wormald, "The Reign of James VI," 26.

[98] Julian Goodare, "The Framework for Scottish Witch-Hunting in the 1590s," *The Scottish Historical Review* 91, no. 212 (October 2002): 240.

Earl he had already done for her father's minister. [99] Her letters illustrate a woman who was well-versed with the intricacies of religious politics within kirk sessions. One minister Burnet brought to the Earl's attention was Mr. William Adam, who many considered not conforming enough. She believed the difficulties were due to the "Provest Cunningam [who] is so incensed against him, because he fansys Mr Adam hath put some Kennedys on ther kirk sessions, whom he would have off it."[100] Like her father, Burnet was a part of a larger movement of nonconforming Presbyterians, and she used her position to influence members of government. Her influencing of the Earl of Lauderdale in hopes of aiding nonconforming ministers came at a time when they were under increasing threat. Burnet was acting in a way that defied expectations for women and their involvement in the government of the Presbyterian church in hopes of rescuing those of a similar belief to her own.

Other women took a more collective role in petitioning the government as with the Women's Petition of 1674, a further example of women placing defense of their beliefs above the expectations of women to remain outside of politics. Following the increased suppression of covenanting activities in 1674 with increasingly constrictive bans on field conventicles, an estimated two hundred women petitioned the Privy Council in Edinburgh over their anger with the restrictions on nonconforming ministers. They physically blocked the entrance to the councilors' chamber in Parliament Close, later facing prosecution for their actions.[101] For these women, their actions had a personal edge to them as many were the wives or widows of nonconforming ministers

[99] Lady Margaret Kennedy Burnet, *Letters form Lady Margaret Burnet, to John, Duke of Lauderdale* (Edinburgh: The Bannatyne Club, 1828), 23.

[100] Burnet, *Letters from Lady Margaret Burnet, 23.*

[101] Alasdair Raffe, *The Culture of Controversy: Religious Arguments in Scotland, 1660-1714* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2012), 216; McSeveney, *Non-Conforming Presbyterian Women*, 141.

and believed that their gender would make them more likely to face less severe consequences.[102] These women saw a threat to their family and tried to influence the government in hopes of changing it.

Unlike the previously mentioned women, Lady Anne Cunningham relied on military action as a means of protest when she led a calvary charge against Charles I and her son.[103] Her actions were a part of the larger Battle of Berwick leading to the Treaty of Berwick ending the First Bishops' War.[104] For Lady Anne, though, her decisions to defy the king and her son were part of the larger disputes over the governing of the Presbyterian church and the issues of the National Covenant.

Women's Riots

Women's riots sometimes played a powerful role in seventeenth century Scotland's political framework, like those begun by Jenny Geddes. Part of her influence is due to the chain of events her actions caused, but she also presents an interesting study of the various ways women reacted to religious change.[105] Yet, Geddes was not alone as a woman defining her own place within the framework of the Presbyterian church. Other women too did not see the church's teachings on women's silence and removal from church office as preventing them from protesting significant changes they believed were a threat to their religion.

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[102] McSeveney, *Non-Conforming Presbyterian Women*, 140-149.

[103] *Ibid.*, 124.

[104] Jenna M. Schultz, *National Identity and the Anglo-Scottish Borderlands, 1552-1652* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2019), 212.

[105] Bennet, *The Civil Wars Experienced*, 2.

In the case of Dunin in 1652 one hundred and sixty women marched on the town and armed with clubs to attack the local minister, a more moderate Presbyterian. The women of the town gathered together in the woods at four in the morning carrying clubs and bagpipes. They then marched to the town, surrounded the church, attacked the minister when he came out to speak and took him prisoner. The women did not go unpunished as a later vote from the church declared "that ever hereafter the whole Sex shall be esteemed wicked, and for a Penance be condemned to weare (if not the Breeches) at least Calsones as a signe of their miscarriage."[106] It is an interesting form of punishment as it requires the women to be stripped of marks of their gender, in some ways saying they were not fit to be women. These women were most likely Independents, and not associated with the Scottish Presbyterian Church at the time, and were emboldened after Cromwell's recent victories in Scotland and the English parliament passing the Toleration Act of 1650 abolishing required attendance at parish churches.[107] While they were most likely not Presbyterians, their actions were in protest to the rights that Presbyterians expected to have from their church structure, namely the ability to elect their own minister. These women acted in defense of their individual church and placed their own convictions above that of following the specific guidelines of gender.

[106] A. B., "A Fight at Dunin Scotland, between the Scots Women, and the Presbyterian Kirkmen." (Edinburgh, 1652), *British Library*, Early English Books Online, 5.

[107] Jeffrey R. Collins, "The Church Settlement of Oliver Cromwell," *History* 87 no. 285 (January 2002): 21.

Fig. 1. Image from pamphlet describing the riot at Dunin[108]

Two further examples of women rioting took place in 1663: one in the town of Kirkcudbright and another in Irongray.[109] These riots came as a part of significant religious changes in Scotland with the Restoration of Charles II and a new push for episcopacy with Parliament's restoration of the bishops in 1662.[110] A large percentage of Presbyterian ministers refused to conform and either willingly left or were forced out with most of those leaving in the southwest where Kirkcudbright and Irongray were located.[111] Kirkcudbright's minister, John

[108] A. B., "A Fight at Dunin Scotland," 6.

[109] McSeveny, 21.

[110] Raffe, *Scotland in Revolution, 1685-1690*, 11.

[111] McSeveny, 21.

Wylie, held a communion service as an act of defiance to the enforcement of episcopacy, and he was threatened with arrest. He fled and wrote letters to his parish, incensing his former parishioners who rioted when the new episcopal minister came to the town. Twenty-three women were brought before a commission in Kirkcudbright with five later brought before the Privy Council in Edinburgh in 1663 and were subsequently sentenced to stand for two hours on two market days in Kirkcudbright with papers on their face saying they were at fault for rioting.[112] They had a choice between following gender directives or defending their beliefs in the face of what they saw as a threat, and they chose the latter. A similar incident occurred in nearby Irongray in 1663 with the women likewise leading the resistance in their decision to forgo gender expectations in favor of defending their church structure and faith. The introduction of a new Episcopalian minister was met with some resistance by the local townspeople, and when the minster attempted to bring soldiers with him to occupy the church, the women hid behind a nearby fence and attacked the soldiers with rocks.[113] Both of these cases exhibit women who defied government and church directives on behavior, turning to what they believed was justified violence.

Female Martyrs

Women's resistance to church instruction extended even to the sacrifice of some women's lives. Female martyrs illustrate just how far many women were willing to go to in support of their own beliefs. These women were executed for rejecting tenets of the new episcopalian reforms on the church. Two women, Margaret Wilson and Margaret MacLauchlan, were executed in 1685 in

[112] McSeveny, 75-88.

[113] *Ibid*., 101.

Wigtown, Scotland and later called the Wigtown Martyrs.[114] Like Jenny Geddes, they have since been remembered and celebrated as female heroines in the name of Presbyterianism. Part of their celebrity is due to the nature of their deaths and accusations.

Wilson and MacLauchlan were executed in 1685 for supporting the Covenanters. Both women were from the same village of Wigtown in Scotland. Margaret Wilson was twenty-three years old and arrested in February of 1685 along with her siblings for their refusal to take the Test Act, participation in covenanting meetings and supposed presence at Bothwell Bridge, although this was disputed. Margaret MacLauchlan was sixty-three and arrested for similar practices. They were indicted by the local powers: the sheriff, the Laird of Lagg, and two military officials, Major Winram and Captain Strachan. The Laid of Lagg was Sir Robert Grierson who was well-known for his anti-covenanting actions.[115] Before their execution on May 11th of 1685, both women went to trial where witnesses urged them to recant some of their statements and take the oath. They refused and MacLauchlan was executed first in hopes of convincing Wilson to change her mind. Wilson did not and was also tied to a post to drown with the incoming tide but before she did:

> they pulled her up, and held her till she could speak, and then asked her if she would pray for the king. She answered that she wished the salvation of all men, but the damnation of none. Some of her relations being on the place, cried out, 'She is willing to conform,' being desirous to save her life at any rate. Upon which Major Winram offered the oath of abjuration to her, either to swear it, or return to the waters. She refused it, saying, 'I will not; I am one of Christ's children; let me go.' And then they returned her into the water, where she finished her warfare.[116]

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[114] John H. Thomson, *A Cloud of Witnesses* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1871), 436.

[115] Thomas, *A Cloud of Witnesses,* 438; Sidney Lee and Leslie Stephen, eds, *Dictionary of National Biography Vol. 8* (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1908), 664.

[116] Thomson, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, 441.

Wilson and MacLauchlan were not extraordinary in their beliefs for refusing to take the Test Act and attend conventicles, but their execution reveals the importance of women's orthodox theological understandings to courts along with the potential they had to garner further support as the witnesses of their execution demanded their release. Part of what so sensationalized these women's story was their dignity and age, particularly the young age of Wilson. Of particular issue was that MacLauchlan was executed first with Wilson forced to watch in hopes she would take the oath. The court seemed more hesitant to execute Wilson on account of her age than MacLauchlan who was far older, even going so far as to prevent her from drowning momentarily to offer her a last chance. A further detail is Wilson's emphasis on Christian piety, saying she "wished the salvation of all men" and "I am one of Christ's children."[117] However, her priorities even in death align with many of the other women who also placed their own personal convictions above those of more restricting aspects of the church. This is certainly a case where women faced severe consequences by choosing personal faith over church doctrine, but they did make the choice none the less. Martyrdom was an extreme case, but it illustrates how dedicated some women were to their church.

Conclusion

Early modern Scottish Presbyterian women's actions did not always conform to the gendered standards expected of them in terms of submission and obedience. Often women ranked their own spiritual connections and personal piety above issues of household order expectations and church order doctrines. The same can be said for the wider experiences of women in Scotland as many of their daily lives did not always follow the exact guidelines as women found ways to

[117] Alasdair Raffe, "10 Scottish State Oaths and the Revolution of 1688-1690," in *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolutions,* eds Sharon Adams and Julian Goodare (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 175.

make their own independent decisions, while still upholding aspects of their religion that mattered the most to them. Certainly, in some cases they faced harsh consequences, as with Margaret Wilson and Margaret MacLauchlan, but this was not always the case. While the Presbyterian church in early modern Scotland expected certain restrictions on women's behavior, the lived experiences of many women did not conform to the guidelines. For many of them, their faith took precedence over doctrinal expectations of gender and they used their circumstances to find loopholes and ways they could participate in the defense of their faith.

Chapter 2

Women's Writing: Ministering from the Page

Martin Luther in his *Sermon on Keeping Children in School* from 1530 urged parents to educate their children, especially their sons. Luther remarked on the importance of books and education:

> It is especially easy in our day to train persons for teaching the gospel and the catechism because not only Holy Scripture but also knowledge of all kinds is so abundant, what with so many books, so much reading, and, thank God, so much preaching that one can learn more now in three years than was formerly possible in twenty. Even women and children can now learn from German books and sermons more about God and Christ.[118]

Luther emphasized the need for both the spoken and the written word in educating people "even women and children." His emphasis on women now having the opportunity to learn reveals the limited options for religious education women had. Protestant rhetoric tended to encourage literacy for the purpose of reading the Bible for oneself, and sparked increases in literacy as a result.[119] As women were not permitted to be preachers or theologians in the mainstream Protestant churches in the early modern period, their thoughts are not often recorded. Yet the few examples that do exist can be revealing of women's engagement in new churches. Women used different formats of writing to express their ideas to their audiences. The wide variety of Presbyterian women's writing reflects their application of religion in their own lives and their hopes of influencing others. Women's letters to their ministers, poetry and spiritual autobiographies depict women as independent and active members of their faith and fully part of the Presbyterian church throughout

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[118] Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School (1530)" *Luther's Works vol. 46* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967): 213-257.

[119] James S. Mosher, "The Protestant Reading Ethic and Variation in Its Effects," *Sociological Forum* 31 (June 2016): 402.

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Women used writing as a way to convey spiritual messages and instruct an audience when they were prevented from doing so from the pulpit throughout early modern Scotland.

The women's writing analyzed in this chapter does come from a small elite. Most of the surviving written records from women are from the elite as literacy, especially for women, was not often widespread despite reformers attempts to encourage it. Heidi Brayman Hackel presents the argument that many women could read but often not write. Hackel argues education began with reading, so anyone who left education early, frequently women, would not have learned how to write. Women's education did not often include writing. [120] R. A. Houston addresses the lack of consensus in the scholarly community on the best way to measure literacy. He addresses several methods such as signatures, book ownership in wills, rise in popular paper products, and library rentals. As a reference point for women's use of books he mentions a library in Perthshire who had one hundred and thirty patrons between 1747 and 1757, but only nine were women.[121] While this is only one small example from later than the period this chapter covers, it does demonstrate the lack of access to literacy education women typically had. The women that are addressed in the coming pages represent a well-educated elite who had the ability to read and write. These women would have had different experiences from their lower-class women as they had more resources to devote to personal study.[122] Unfortunately, most women from the early modern era were not able to record their voices for posterity, but by using those that have survived one gains a deeper

[120] Heidi Brayman Hackel, "Reading Women," in *The History of British Women's Writing, 1500-1610,* eds Caroline Bicks and Jennifer Summit (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 19.

[121] R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and Scottish Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 174.

[122] Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 159.

understanding of ways some women conceived of Presbyterianism and encouraged others to follow similar beliefs.

Through their writing, Presbyterian women pushed beyond the confines of church doctrine to appeal to their readers, namely through letters to ministers, artistic writing and spiritual autobiographies. Letters to their ministers show women as members of larger Christian communities, even playing informal leadership roles within them. Their artistic forms of writing, sonnets and illuminated manuscripts, brought their faith to a wider audience. Finally, their spiritual autobiographies, mainly from the seventeenth century, actively tried to convert their readers. There is also an escalation of evangelism through theses formats with spiritual autobiography relying on evangelism as one of its key components.

Women and Ministers: Close Pastoral Relationships through Letters

One of the earliest forms of women's religious writing from the early Presbyterian Reformation was pastoral letters. These letters were not unique to Presbyterianism but depict women's personal engagement with spiritual ideas and their level of involvement with the church. John Knox and Samuel Rutherford were both Presbyterian ministers who had their letters to their female parishioners published, with Knox writing in the mid-sixteenth century and Rutherford in the mid-seventeenth. Their correspondence with women shows another side to Presbyterian practice, one where women also explored deep theological questions, supported ministers in their struggles and advanced the Presbyterian message in their communities in their own letters.

One of Knox's most well-known correspondences with a woman was with his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Aske Bowes, whose letters from Knox reveal a close relationship built on mutual respect and intellectual pursuits. Born in 1505 to a wealthy northern English family, Aske married

Richard Bowes in 1521, who later became the commander of a castle on the border of Scotland. In 1549, Knox gained a position at a nearby parish church in Berwick and the two met and began exchanging letters mostly between 1552 and 1553.[123] Elizabeth Bowes encouraged the engagement between Knox and her daughter in 1553, but her husband withdrew his support after Mary I came to the throne which had downgraded Knox's position. Elizabeth Bowes, Marjorie Bowes, and John Knox all moved to Scotland, then to Geneva in 1556, and finally Elizabeth moved back to England in 1559 and Marjorie and John Knox to Scotland. [124] The close nature of Knox and Bowes's relationship is evident throughout their letters, which not only reveal important information about the reformer, but also about women's engagement with the changing religious climate. Unfortunately, Bowes's letters do not survive, but the contents of her letters can be inferred from Knox's responses.

Knox's responses to Elizabeth Bowes's letters centered on her own questions on the Bible and how to act out Christian teachings in her life. Knox continually referenced Bowes's "infirmities" and "trubillis" as a part of his attempts to direct her towards a correct Biblical understanding of an issue.[125] Knox played many parts in their friendship: spiritual teacher, friend and comforter. However, Knox did see a distinction in their positions as he called himself one "whom God hes gevin greater giftis."[126] Yet, their relationship was not as one-sided and misogynistic as his later *The First Blast of the Trumpet* would lead one to expect. Knox found

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[123] C. M. Newman, "The Reformation and Elizabeth Bowes: A Study of a Sixteenth-Century Northern Gentlewoman," in *Women in the Church on the Eve of the Dissolution*, eds W. J. Sheils and D. Wood(Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990): 325–33.

[124] A. Daniel Frankforter, "Elizabeth Bowes and John Knox: A Church History," *Church History* 56 (Sept 1987): 335.

[125] John Knox, *The Works of John Knox Volume 3*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895), 338.

[126] Knox, *The Works of John Knox Vol. 3*, 340.

comfort from their discussions and shared trials. In referencing a letter from Bowes he described "ane congruence betwixt us in spreit, being sa fer distant in bodie. For when [I examined] your letter, I did consider that I myself was complenying evin the self sam thingis at that verie instant moment that I ressavit your letter."[127] He continued on by praising God for bringing them together for mutual support. The language in this passage was far more one of respectful, friendly discussion. Knox continually called himself her "brother in Christ," while also not seeing her entirely as an equal.[128] In one case, he remarked how he and Bowes experienced similar temptations and trials while in Alnwick and he referenced a letter where he "heard procied fra your mouth the verie same wordis that he trubill, knowing in my selfe the dolour thairof."[129] There is again this level of similarity that Knox saw between himself and Bowes in their experiences that strike a remarkably different tone than some of his other writings on women. These letters display Bowes's commitment to her religion, but also to the wider Christian community, particularly through her support of Knox through his own trials.

Throughout all of their correspondence Bowes displayed an interest in deep theological questions. Far from demonstrating a lack of women's engagement in the theological debates of the Presbyterian Reformation, Bowes provides an example of a woman who had questions about both the Bible and the teachings she heard from the pulpit. In several letters, Bowes expressed anxiety over the issues of repentance and grace. In one case, she asked Knox for an explanation of why God allowed Saul to become king when, as Bowes seems to have used as evidence, God stated "It repenteth me that I maid Saule king." Knox answered her question more thoroughly by giving an

[127] Ibid., 339. Original phrasing, "For when that digestlie I did avys"

[128] *Ibid*., 352.

[129] *Ibid*., 350.

explanation of scripture while also supporting the concept that God cannot repent because He has not sinned.[130] This example certainly explained Knox's intellectual thought process, but it also shows Bowes's. She did not merely read the Bible passively, but actively engaged with the text and brought her views to Knox for discussion.

Nor was Elizabeth Bowes the only example of an influential woman Knox kept correspondence with, as he sent many letters to Anne Locke, even encouraging her to hold informal leadership positions. Born sometime in 1530s London to a wealthy and well-connected merchant family, Anne Vaughan married merchant Henry Locke, and they hosted John Knox in London between 1552 and 1553. Anne Locke too maintained correspondence with Knox, and she even visited him in Geneva during his stay there. Locke remained a strong member of the Calvinist community in England, and she later published several translations of Calvin's sermons and a sonnet based on Psalm 51.[131] As in the case of Elizabeth Bowes, Locke's letters to Knox have not survived, only his replies. Yet, these letters are a valuable addition to the understanding of Locke's theological perspectives and questions, and Knox's opinions on women in the wider Calvinist community. While she was not Scottish, she was deeply connected with the same theological foundations of the Presbyterian church through her ties to Calvinism and correspondence with Knox. Locke provides important further evidence of Knox's pastoral relationships with women and his encouragement of them in the Christian community.

Beginning with her theological perspectives, the letters between Knox and Locke place Locke's religious leanings in the reformed tradition and also connect her to the wider Reformation movement in the British Isles. In one letter from April 1559, Knox answered several of Locke's

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[130] *Ibid*., 358.

[131] Susan M. Felch, "'Deir Sister': The Letters of John Knox to Anne Vaughan Lok," *Renaissance and Reformation* 19 (Fall 1995): 47.

questions on church practices like the baptizing of children, the correct giving of communion, and whether "God or man ought to be obeyed in matters of religion."[132] As Locke was in the center of a changing religious order under the reign of Edward VI, her concern over certain practices of the Anglican Church appears in her letters to Knox. She was not satisfied with only the word of her local leaders on these issues. She carefully considered the events around her, was unsure with how they fit in with her own beliefs, and then contacted a close friend and theologian. Like Bowes, Locke was another woman who critically thought through the material she was reading and asked questions. Knox believed women should not have any kind of formal instructional role in the church and were inferior to men in social hierarchy, but he still praised these women for their thoughtfulness and spirituality. Knox later spoke of his arrival in Edinburgh and his attempts at reform through advocating for the destruction of images and the ending of certain "superstitious habits."[133] Knox began this letter with "yee hunger, I doubt not, deir Sister, to know the successe of Christ's Evangell," a statement knowing she would find approval in the early events of the Scottish Presbyterian Reformation.[134] Knox was not only informing Locke of recent events, but brining her into the successes of a shared goal of spreading Calvinism. Locke's apparent eagerness to hear from Knox about his efforts again connected her to a wider effort. Women were not entirely isolated from larger Presbyterian goals and contributed where they believed they could.

While Knox certainly acted as a teacher to Locke in many instances, his letters also depict her both as a woman he relied on and as an active member of the wider Calvinist community. Upon his initial return to Scotland in 1559, Knox wrote a brief letter to Locke detailing his location

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[132] Knox, John. *The Works of John Knox Volume 6*, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895), 14.

[133] Knox, *The Works of John Knox Vol. 6*, 25.

[134] *Ibid.*, 21.

and his fear of the task ahead. He asked her to "assist me, Sister, with your prayers, that now I shrink not when the battell approacheth. Other things I have to communicat with yow, but travell after travell doth so occupy me."[135] Knox turned to Locke for support in a moment of anxiety and prioritized his correspondence with her when he had little time. As Susan Felch argues, Knox wrote to Locke as a friend united in their beliefs and fight to maintain them.[136] While in Scotland, Knox wrote to Locke several times with the purpose of asking her to contact certain people and complete errands.[137] In one letter he instructed her to "communicate the contents heirof (which I write to you, least that by diverse rumors yee sould be trubled, and we slaundered), with all faithfull, but especiallie, with the afflicted of that little flocke now dispersed."[138] For Knox to ask Locke to complete such a task, she must be well-established within the reformed community both in London and abroad. Locke could not hold an official position within these churches, but she still held some level of informal leadership. Knox actively encouraged her to support the Calvinists in London and act as a leader in spreading their beliefs.

In Knox's correspondence with Bowes and Locke, there are two examples of women deeply engaged with the new Calvinist Reformation ideology in the British Isles. Both of these women are on the forefront of Calvinist ideology as they befriended Knox, traveled to Geneva and became ingrained in Calvinist communities in their own areas. Their correspondence with Knox reflects some of the emerging wider trends in Presbyterian women's writing. Their close relationship with Knox exemplifies what becomes a common thread in later women's writing of the period, using writing for evangelism. These letters also depict women as connected to a

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[135] *Ibid.*, 21.

[136] Felch, "'Deir Sister': The Letters of John Knox to Anne Vaughan Lok," 55.

[137] *Ibid.*, 56.

[138] Knox, *The Works of John Knox Vol*. 6, 27.

broader Christian network, where they were equally concerned with advancing Presbyterian messages.

Like Knox, Samuel Rutherford maintained correspondence with several women with a collection of his letters published. He frequently wrote to two women in particular, Marion M'Naught and Lady Jane Campbell, Vicountess of Kenmure. Both of these women wrote to him about difficulties in their lives, spiritual questions and to reassure him of his own fears and concerns. Rutherford was a Presbyterian minister whose theological and political treatises often placed him in difficult positions with religious and political authorities. In 1636, he published his *Excercitationes Apologeticae Pro Divina Gratia,* which argued for the practice of grace and predestination over the emphasis on free will in salvation. He was banned from his parish in Anworth and sent to Aberdeen until 1638 when he became a professor at the University of St. Andrews. [139] In 1643, he was a Scottish representative to the Westminster Assembly, which was formed by the English Parliament to create a directive for church government and worship as a part of the unification of the Parliamentarians and Covenanters against the Royalists.[140] A year later, Rutherford published *Lex Rex,* where he argued against absolutism and the concept that the King was above the law.[141] After the Restoration in 1661, he was summoned to appear before Parliament and charged with treason for his book, but died before his trial.[142] Rutherford's letters

[139] Paul Lagasse, "Rutherford, Samuel" in *The Columbia Encyclopedia,* ed. Paul Lagasse (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2018, 8th ed.), http://proxy.wm.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/columency/rutherford_samuel/0?institutionId=2170.

[140] Chad B. Van Dixhoorn, "Unity and Disunity at the Westminster Assembly (1643-1649): A Commemorative Essay," *The Journal of Presbyterian History (1997-)* no. 2 (2001): 104.

[141] Samuel Rutherford, *Lex Rex: The Law and the Prince* (London: John Feld, 1644): b5, Early English Books Online.

[142] Lagasse, "Rutherford, Samuel."

to Marion M'Naught, between 1627 and 1637, and Jane Campbell, between 1628 and 1660, follow a similar pattern to those of Knox to Bowes and Locke.[143] M'Naught and Campbell both appealed to Rutherford for guidance and answers to religious questions and to support him during trials. These women likewise were important to their communities and their letters show Rutherford encouraging them in their efforts.

Both M'Naught and Campbell turned to Rutherford for guidance during difficult periods in their lives. Marion M'Naught was the daughter of the Laird of Kilquhanatie and also connected to the Kenmures through her mother's family. She married William Fullerton, who was the Provost of Kirkcudbright and she became a leading Christian figure in her community.[144] M'Naught's involvement in her community is present throughout Rutherford's letters as in one instance he commented "ye write to me concerning your people's disposition, how that their hearts are inclined toward the man ye know, and whom ye desire most earnestly yourself."[145] Rutherford's advice to her on how she should proceed in the town's selection of a new minister reflected how influential women could be. He cautioned her "to ask of God a submissive heart" but to "employ all your endeavours for establishing an honest ministry in your town, now when ye have a few to speak a good word for you."[146] M'Naught then held a position as a passionate woman in her town, but one who needed to find others "to speak a good word." Like other women, M'Naught maintained a delicate balance between advocating for religious change through a leadership position in her community while still maintaining some expectations of women as subordinate to men.

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[143] Samuel Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, ed. Andrew Alexander Bonar (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1891).

[144] Rutherford, *Letters,* 44.

[145] *Ibid.,* 51.

[146] Rutherford, *Letters,* 51.

Rutherford likewise guided Campbell through difficult situations including a period of trials answering her questions on the importance of suffering. Campbell was the sister of the Marquess of Argyll who was beheaded in 1661 for his strong support of the Covenanters and resistance to Charles II.[147] While Campbell's original letter from 1630 does not survive, Rutherford's response alluded to her struggling with suffering, certainly a difficult theological question. Rutherford's answer that "we may indeed think, Cannot God bring us to heaven with ease and prosperity? Who doubteth but He can? But His infinite wisdom thinketh and decreeth the contrary; and we cannot see a reason of it, yet He hath a most just reason" shows his own difficulty with the issue.[148] Ultimately his answer was that humans can never know the reason for suffering.

As with Knox, Rutherford also sought support and guidance from women, who through this effort were also playing an important role within the church and Presbyterian community. When Rutherford's wife was severely ill in 1629, he wrote to M'Naught for support urging her to "entreat the Lord for me, now when I am so comfortless, and so full of heaviness that I am not able to stand under the burthen any longer. . . [and] Pray that God would not lead my wife into temptation. Woe is my heart, that I have done so little against the kingdom of Satan in my calling."[149] Rutherford turned to M'Naught in one of the most difficult periods of his life for help and reassurance. She was a trusted friend whom he called "loving and dear sister."[150] M'Naught stepped in as a support for Rutherford as another way women helped the broader Christian community. M'Naught navigated different expressions of gender in Christianity.

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[147] Caroline Erskine, "The Political Thought of the Restoration Covenanters," in *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolutions,* eds Sharon Adams and Julian Goodare (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014): 163.

[148] Rutherford, *Letters,* 52.

[149] *Ibid.,* 45.

[150] *Ibid.,* 45.

Women's letter writing to their ministers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries depicts women who were actively engaged in their church, community and personal study. These women were prohibited from holding official positions within the Presbyterian church, but this did not exclude them from participating in the wider church community. Women frequently consulted ministers in times of spiritual and personal crisis. Letters to their ministers show women as actively committed and engaged to their church, not an excluded party from official participation.

Evangelism through Poetry and Calligraphy

As Presbyterianism developed, women turned to poetry and calligraphy to advance their messages to a wider audience. Anne Locke, the close friend of John Knox, published a sonnet based on the Psalms and her own meditations in 1560 and Elizabeth Melville published a religious poem in 1603 titled *Ane Godlie Dreame*. Esther Inglis created many illuminated manuscripts of biblical and theological texts. These women used writing as a form of evangelism when they were blocked from the pulpit. Their choice of writing was a way that they expressed their own religious convictions and hoped to influence others.

Anne Locke contributed to wider efforts of evangelism through her translations of sermons and sonnets, intended to reach non-Calvinist people. In 1560, Locke published *Sermons of John Calvin, Upon the Songe that Ezechias Made After He Had Been Sicke*, sermons by Calvin translated by her into English. Towards the end, she included a sonnet, *A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner: Written in Maner of a Paraphrase Upon the 51 Psalme of David*.[151] This combined achievement of translating Calvin and writing her own spiritual meditations as a sonnet contributed

[151] Michael R. G. Spiller, "A Literary 'First': The Sonnet Sequence of Anne Locke (1560) An Appreciation of Anne Locke's Sonnet Sequence: A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner . . . with Locke's Epistle to the . . . Duchesse of Suffolke," *Renaissance Studies* 11, no. 1 (March 1997): 41.

to her hope of influencing others in a "Protestant mission."[152] In one study of her works, Michael Spiller emphasizes the remarkableness of Locke's achievements. She produced one of the earliest examples of an English sonnet along with translating Calvin's sermons with the intention of sharing them in England.[153] In the preface, Locke included several verses describing her emotional state with great distress as she cried out "But mercy while I sound with shrieking crye/ For grau[n]t of grace and pardon while I pray."[154] Throughout the sonnet, Locke reflected on her own perceived sinfulness and how she hoped to avoid punishment. She plainly outlined the consequences of her actions for her reader along with the solution "And damned downe to depth of hell to go,/ Thus tost with panges and passions of despair,/ Thus craue I mercy with repentant chere."[155] Locke emphasized the Calvinist teachings of salvation as only through the grace of God. Yet, as a woman she could not speak to her audience from the pulpit but used writing to convey the same message. She not only brought Calvin's sermons to a non-Calvinist audience, but also her own interpretations of scripture in an effort to convert her readers.

Like Locke, Melville published her *Ane Godlie Dreame* with the hope of influencing other people. She was born in 1578 in Fife, Scotland and married John Colville in 1597, becoming Lady Culross. Like other aristocratic women of sixteenth century Scotland, she held personal relationships with a number of prominent ministers, including Samuel Rutherford.[156] However, she is most well-known for her 1603 poem, *Ane Godlie Dreame*, which was one of the few

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[152] Spiller, "A Literary 'First'," 44.

[153] Spiller, "A Literary 'First'," 47.

[154] Anne Locke, *A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner* (1560), trans. Greg Foster, *Renaissance Editions* (2003) http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/locke2.html.

[155] Locke, *A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner*.

[156] Elizabeth Ewan, Sue Innes, Sian Reynolds and Rose Pipes, eds, *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women: From the Earliest Times to 2004* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 262.

publications by an early modern Scottish woman, and it was written with Scottish spellings, making it even more unique.[157]

Ane Godlie Dreame describes a dream Melville had using the religious experiences of the Calvinist "elect." Melville was one of only a few examples of Scottish women's publication from the period and an early example of a religious sonnet, which depicted her own religious convictions and struggles. This dream began with her inability to fall asleep because of her anxieties about the afterlife, only to have Jesus visit her to show her what lies beyond in both Heaven and Hell.[158] She continued on to explain her anguish at her sins, hope for heaven and the advice Jesus offers her.[159] Much of Melville's language aligns with her Calvinist leanings. In one such passage she references the Calvinist doctrine of predestination asking "Lord Jesus come and save thine owne Elect. For Sathan seekes our simple soules to stay."[160] Other references include scripture like "I am the Way, I am the Truth, and Life" from John 14:6.[161] Her choice of scripture reference here also points to her greater aims of converting her readers. This particular verse is in reference to the Protestant understanding of salvation and the Gospel. Melville hoped to direct her readers towards what she believed was the only route to Heaven. This again became evident in her often anti-Catholic language. In one such example she asks Jesus, "Is this, said I, the Papists purging place? Where they affirme, that sillie soules do dwell, To purge their sinnes, before they rest in peace" in

[157] Rebecca Laroche, "Elizabeth Melville and Her Friends: Seeing 'Ane Godlies Dreame' through Political Lenses," *CLIO* 34 no. 3 (2005): 286.

[158] Elizabeth Melville, *Ane Godlie Dreame, Compylit in Scottish Meter be M.M. Gentlewoman in Culros, at the Requeist of Her Freindes,* (Edinburgh, 1603), 2-3, Early English Books Online.

[159] *Ibid.,* 4-x.

[160] *Ibid.,* 4.

[161] *Ibid.,* 5.

reference to purgatory.[162] In a period of constant religious warfare and debate through Europe, Melville hoped to direct her audience to accept the religious beliefs she had. The full title of her poem ends with *at the Requeist of Her Freindes* a reference to part of her motivation for publishing. Like many other Presbyterian women, Melville was connected to a broader network of Presbyterians who valued her contributions to the community.

Like Locke and Meville, Esther Inglis used writing to advance the Presbyterian cause through creating illustrated manuscripts of the Bible and theological texts for wealthy Protestants. Inglis was born in 1571 to Huguenot parents who fled France in 1569 due to persecution. They later settled in Edinburgh and in 1596 she married Batholomew Kello, the son of a Presbyterian minister.[163] Inglis developed a career as a popular miniaturist, calligrapher, scribe and author for many Protestant elites. Scholar Susan Frye speculated she learned her writing style from her mother and drew on her knowledge of Biblical and Protestant texts based on her upbringing in a Calvinist household. Even after her marriage she continued writing, often aided by her husband with his ability to secure clients and his knowledge of Latin. Despite her illustrious clientele, Inglis and Kello struggled financially as did her parents.[164] Inglis was intimately connected to a broad Protestant community through her clients and her reproduction of texts.

Inglis's selection of works and illustrations reflects her involvement and dedication to the Presbyterian tradition. Many of her texts are transcriptions of books of the Bible, mostly Proverbs and the Psalms. One such example is her 1599 transcription of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon in French and Latin for Sir Anthony Bacon, a member of the elite of England through

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[162] *Ibid*., 12.

[163] A H. Scott-Elliot and Elspeth Yeo, "Calligraphic Manuscripts of Esther Inglis (1571-1624): A Catalogue," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 84, no. 2 (March 1990): 12.

[164] Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 104.

his family as his father was Sir Nicholas Bacon and the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England for Queen Elizabeth I. More significantly, he was the spymaster and main secretary for the Earl of Essex who was a major figure in England's foreign policy.[165] She included a portrait of herself, the heraldry of Bacon, highly decorative borders and varying handwriting in each chapter. Handwriting was occasionally tied to morality as it was an example of discipline, skill and education.[166] As typical for her work, her ornamentation of Biblical texts was minimal while typically remaining in the realm of natural elements and the secular.[167]

[165] William Patrick Tosh, "Testimonies of Affection and Dispatches of Intelligence: The Letters of Anthony Bacon, 1558-1601" (PhD diss., Queen Mary University of London, 2013), 19.

[166] Frye, *Pens and Needles*, 108.

[167] Esther Inglis, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon, (1599), Add. MS 27927, British Library, Perdita Manuscripts Online.

Fig. 2. (right) Self-Portrait [168]

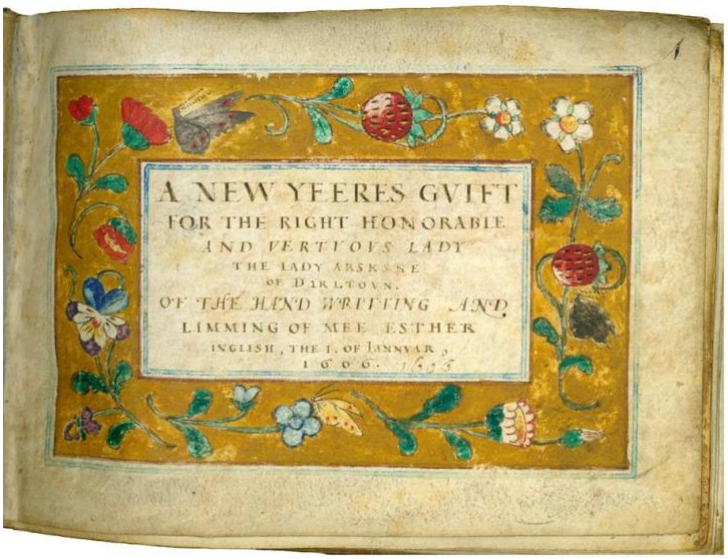

Fig. 3. (left) Title page to Inglis's *A New Yeeres Gvift* which was a copy of Proverbs[169]

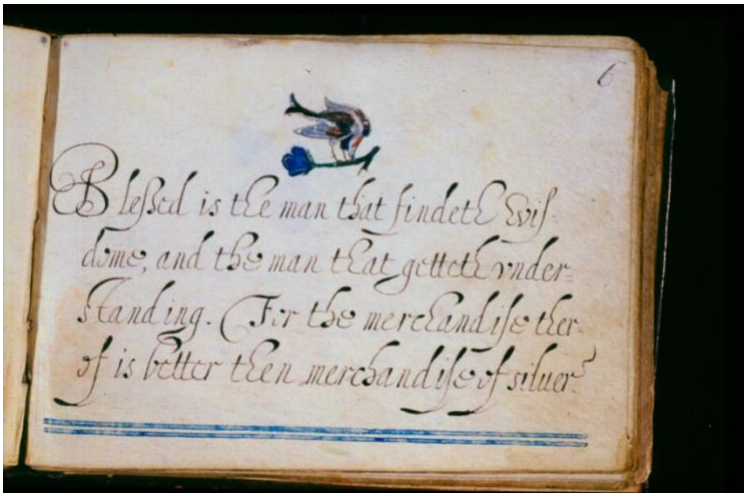

Fig. 4. (right) Proverbs thirty-one verse thirteen from the above-mentioned Proverbs book[170]

[168] Esther Inglis, *Argumenta Psalmorum,* (London: 1606) MS Typ 212, Harvard Library, accessed April 11, 2020, https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts/catalog/34-990098070930203941.

[169] Esther Inglis, *A New Yeeres Gvift,* 1606, illuminated manuscript, MS ZW 645.K29, Newberry Library John M. Wing Foundation on the History of Painting, accessed April 11, 2020,https://www.newberry.org/happy-new-yeeres-newberry.

[170] Esther Inglis, *A New Yeeres Gvift,* 1606, illuminated manuscript, MS ZW 645.K29, Newberry Library John M. Wing Foundation on the History of Painting, accessed April 11, 2020, http://www.newberry.org/renaissance-calligraphy-books.

Nor did Inglis only include transcription in her work as she wrote some of her own sonnets. While scripture certainly held an importance place in Inglis's work, she also included several examples of moralistic texts from a sixteenth century French scholar, Guy du Faur, Sieur du Pybrac. Susan Frye, in her chapter on female miniaturist artists in early modern Britain, believes Inglis most likely had a humanist-style education. She cites the importance of education, reading and interestingly handwriting. Additionally, Frye argues that Inglis relied on her Huguenot religious background as motivation for independence in her career. Frye's theory of Inglis's independent attitude is not without support, considering Inglis's inclusion of a self-portrait in many of her works. Inglis was certainly unique in her career choice and her proficiency for women of the period.[171]

Locke's, Melville's and Inglis's writings all hoped to engage their audiences with their Calvinist beliefs. Melville's sonnet emphasized Presbyterian concepts of salvation and a personal relationship with God in the attempt at converting readers. Her sonnet draws on scriptural references for support and follows in the same footsteps of Anna Locke's earlier religious sonnet. Inglis also uses scripture in her miniatures as she created copies of books of the Bible for the Protestant elite. All three of these women show strong connections to their local Presbyterian community and a desire to expand it. These women reflect deep personal engagement with the Presbyterian church, its ideas and a wider community of readers whom they hoped to convert.

Spiritual Autobiographies: Preaching from the Page

As with women using poetry and calligraphy as a way to evangelize to their audiences, women too used spiritual autobiography for a similar purpose, but in a different way as they hoped

[171] Frye, *Pens and Needles*, 107-108.

the story of their life would be a demonstration of the importance of faith and convert their readers. Spiritual autobiographies mainly depict the authors' life through the lens of their religion and spirituality. One of the key aspects was the centrality of spiritual conversion and acts of God.[172] This conversion narrative increased in popularity in seventeenth century England and Scotland due to rising literacy rates, urbanization, religious dissent and privacy.[173] Also of importance was the emphasis on "introspective piety" and "self-examination."[174] For the Presbyterian pietists increasingly involved in the Covenanting movement, these same motivations applied and they too believed in the importance of inward reflection for evidence of salvation and the Holy Spirit, which they emphasized for the reader.[175] Many of these also were intended to direct others to converting, as some of the women cite as their main reason for writing.[176] The following section will study the use of spiritual autobiographies by four women: Margaret Cunningham, Mistress Rutherford, Katherine Ross and Elizabeth Blackadder.

Margaret Cunningham wrote one of the earliest examples of a spiritual autobiography and her account described her marriage to Sir James Hamilton, which lasted from 1598 to 1608 upon his death.[177] She included little mention of her life before her marriage, nor after the death of her husband. Sir Hamilton was incredibly abusive according to her account, as he committed physical,

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[172] D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11.

[173] Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, 17, 21.

[174] *Ibid*., 36.

[175] Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, 54.

[176] Katherine Ross and Jean Collace, The Autobiographical Writings and Meditations of Katherine Ross and Jean Collace, (1704,) MS Adv. 32.4.4, folio 27r, National Library of Scotland, Perdita Manuscripts Online.

[177] Margaret Cunningham, Margaret Cunningham Manuscript, (1607-1608), MS 906, folio 1, National Library of Scotland, Perdita Manuscripts Online.

emotional and mental harm against her.[178] Cunningham's account shows the dangers in marriage women faced in early modern Scotland. Calvinism rejected the idea of marriage as a sacrament and the Presbyterian Church did offer the possibility of divorce, but it was rarely granted. It did have church courts designated for hearing cases like those of marital abuse, community disagreements and general misconduct.[179] Especially in cases of violence, these sessions could be helpful for women.[180] For Margaret Cunningham, the Presbyterian Church could work in her favor in protecting her.

Cunningham's case of domestic abuse and her descriptions of it show an occasional reliance on the church and her own religious convictions, which she hoped to impart on her husband. Cunningham's autobiography describes years of domestic abuse from her husband and her often reliance on the church for help in times of crisis. Cunningham relied on ministers for help as in one instance when her husband threatened to hit her with a sword if she did not leave and she fled to friends who "carried me to the ministers house in a very miserable estate as the minister and his wife can bear record."[181] Following her autobiography, she included a copy of a letter she sent to her husband where she continually urged him to convert. She instructed her husband to "bethankfull to [God's] majesty and be instant in prayer that it may plead him to continue his grace with you and he would remove all impediment that Satan our old enemy lays before you to hinder the work of your salvation."[182] Her particular choice of language in her letter

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[178] Cunningham, Margaret Cunningham Manuscript, folio 4v.

[179] Jeffrey R. Watt, *The Consistory and Social Discipline in Calvin's Geneva* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 223.

[180] Michael F. Graham, "Women and the Church Courts in Reformation-Era Scotland," in *Women in Scotland c. 1100-c. 1750,* eds Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 190-191.

[181] Cunningham, Margaret Cunningham Manuscript, folio 3r-4v.

demonstrated her strong connection to her faith and the wider Presbyterian Church. She held fierce anti-Catholic views and urged her husband to "flee from idolatry even that most detestable idolatry of the papists . . . I will beseech you not to dwell among these idolators, for it is hard to hand to pitch and not be defiled then with evill company corrupts good manners."[183] Cunningham's autobiography shows one format through which women interreacted with the church in its early years as a potential source of protection. Yet she sought this through depicting her life within a Presbyterian context by describing her own spiritual journey and attempts to convert her husband.

A later example of a female Scottish spiritual autobiography was by Mistress Rutherford and most likely written sometime in the 1630s. Little is known about her exact identity, including her first name, but she did come from an elite background. Both of her parents died when she was young, and she attended a girls' school in Edinburgh at the age of fourteen. She also witnessed much of the tension over the Five Articles of Perth during her time in Edinburgh in the 1610s and 1620s.[184] Rutherford's autobiography covers the period from her late childhood to early thirties and has many of the main characteristics of spiritual autobiography like a conversion narrative and acts of God.[185] Rutherford described her life primarily through a religious lens with her conveying her convictions to the reader. In her opening paragraph, she began with the events of her early life: the death of her parents, living with her religious grandparents, and her conversion during a bout of illness. She cited her grandmother as an especially important influence in her spirituality and

[182] *Ibid*., folio 9r.

[183] *Ibid*., folio 10v.

[184] Douglas W. B. Somerset, "Short Note: Mistress Rutherford and Ulster in the Summer of 1634," *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal* 1 (2011): 267.

[185] Mrs. Rutherford. Spiritual Journal of Mistress Rutherford, (c. 1630*)*, MS Laing III.263, Edinburgh University Library, Perdita Manuscripts Online.

prayer life.[186] Rutherford continued on by describing her education, temptations from the Devil, her marriage, the loss of her husband and child; and acts of personal piety, like self-reflection, prayer, Bible reading and attending church.[187] Throughout her autobiography, she viewed many of her life events as acts of God. She mentioned moments of great anxiety only to be relieved of them upon further reflection and personal prayer. In one instance she cited how "when it came to particular Application, then I was made to look by the Condition of the promises, and want of the lively . . . growth of the Spirit."[188] Rutherford described her personal choices in terms of religion, both in her daily practice, but also in her thought process. David Mullan argues Rutherford "had plenty of personal freedom; people looked after her but did not attempt to domineer."[189] Her spiritual autobiography was a reflection on the trials and moments when she saw God in her life, converted into text to hopefully influence others.

Another woman who also wrote a spiritual autobiography was Katherine Ross, whose writings also demonstrate many of the key elements of Presbyterian pietism and her own view of herself and her participation in the church. Ross was born in Edinburgh in 1635 to Francis Collace, the minister of Gordon on the Scottish Borders. She married John Ross and moved with him to Northern Scotland which she became involved with radical Covenanting groups and developed a close relationship with the minister Thomas Hog.[190] Ross opened with her purpose for writing, "I having been often challenged for not setting down some remarkable passages of my life to show

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[186] Mrs. Rutherford, Spiritual Journal of Mistress Rutherford, folio 1r.

[187] *Ibid*, folio 2r-8v.

[188] *Ibid*, folio 7r.

[189] David George Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's Narrative: A Scottish Puritan Autobiography," *Bunyan Studies* 7 (1997): 23.

[190] Mullan, *Women's Life Writing*, 39.

(when I am gone from this life what a good God I had to do with) to those who have seen and heard of my afflictions which all alongst my life have rather been preparations for mercy."[191] As with many other spiritual autobiographies, Ross hoped to use her life experiences as a method of converting others.[192] Ross was a woman dedicated to her cause and the rest of her account reflects what she interpreted as the direct actions of God. Using references to scripture, she continued to include examples of her conversion efforts as she was surrounded by people she described as not "knowing anything of God, when I came there, but shortly after the Lord sent the Gospell to that place, and polished a shaft for himself, and sent him to be the voice of one crying in that wilderness."[193] She included few biographical details and instead focused on the personal and emotional experiences of her life. In her words her "heart was wholly and constantly taken up with Christ, I saw no beauty in any thing but in him, I mett with extraordinary confirmation of his love."[194] Her evoking of emotion and continual references to God's actions during her suffering were to point the reader to self-reflection. As with other Presbyterian women, Ross used her writing to guide readers in ways she could not do from official positions. She was dedicated to her faith, church and community and acted in independent ways to influence those around her.

Elizabeth Blackadder too wrote a spiritual autobiography that depicted many of the common elements of the genre, particularly with her main motivation being to express the acts of God in her own life to the reader. Blackadder's life story reflected the dangers and involvement of women with the Covenanters. Her father was a minister who became a more radical field preacher and was imprisoned in 1681, later dying in jail. In one instance, a soldier for Charles II stormed

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[191] Ross, The Autobiographical Writings and Meditations of Katherine Ross and Jean Collace, folio 27r.

[192] Mullan, "Mistress Rutherford's Narrative", 17.

[193] Ross, The Autobiographical Writings and Meditations of Katherine Ross and Jean Collace, folio 32v.

[194] *Ibid.*, folio 33r.

their house and began running swords through all of the beds in hopes of catching her father, nearly stabbing Blackadder in the process.[195] As with other examples of spiritual autobiography, Blackadder opened by stating her reason for writing "being convinced that it is my duty to take notice of and record some things to show remarkable steps of providence towards me, I have reason to observe through this whole tract thereof much of divine wisdom and mercy."[196] She also frequently relied on self-reflection, including a severe case of illness as a child that she believed God used to help her become "more serious."[197] Ministers also played a crucial role in several moments in her life, directing her on spiritual matters or by offering encouragement. She mentioned one time when she "had a letter from a minister in the country, the subject of which was to encourage me in my grief and trouble." Too discouraged to reply at the moment, she consulted both scripture and the theologian Mr. Rutherford's *Letters* for advice.[198] As with other spiritual autobiographies, Blackadder's writing depicts Presbyterian women as active in their church and dedicated to their cause. They became key models of Presbyterian piety in an era where piety was defined through a masculine lens.[199] They saw their church as something to advocate and encourage others to join and did so through writing and reflecting on their own experiences.

Women's spiritual autobiographies depict women as active members of the Presbyterian church, who did all they could to influence others, even when they were restricting from teaching

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[195] David Mullan, ed., *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c. 1670-1730* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 384.

[196] Elizabeth Blackadder, "Elizabeth Blackadder, Mrs Young: 'A Short Account of the Lord's Way of Providence Towards Me in My Pilgrimage Journeys'" in *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c. 1670-1730,* ed. David Mullan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 385.

[197] Blackadder, "Elizabeth Blackadder," 386.

[198] *Ibid*., 395.

[199] Callum G. Brown, "Religion," in *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700*, eds Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon, Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes Yeo (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006): 90.

in church. As several wrote in their introductory remarks, their purpose was often for converting others and depicting their own spiritual journey. Spiritual autobiography depicts many of the wider trends of women's writing throughout the early modern Presbyterian church. They were active readers and listeners, used writing to influence those around them, and drew on their knowledge of the Bible and other theological texts. Through their spiritual autobiographies, women advanced their primary goal of converting their readers and contributing to the wider growth of the church.

Conclusion

Writing holds a unique position as it shows how many women interpreted their struggles and reflections on their faith. These trends were present throughout early modern Presbyterianism. Through examples from between 1550 and 1690, women's evangelical efforts are not just connected to moments of conflict. Women's connections to the wider Presbyterian community and their attempts to expand it, become evident in their early letters to ministers, but becoming increasingly apparent in their later trends in women's writing of artistic expression and spiritual autobiographies. While women could not speak from the pulpit, they could use the page and did so to attract other people to their same faith. Many of these women were dedicated to following the call to be part of the "royal priesthood" and this included trying to convert their readers and expand their church.[200]

[200] 1 Peter 2:9; Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 222.

Chapter 3

Independence and Influence in the Private Sphere

Reflecting on her life in her personal diary, Jean Collace did not reveal much regarding her upbringing but described moments of spiritual growth. While living with the family of the Laird and third Baronet of Innes, near Elgin, Scotland, Collace described a shift in her religious thinking influenced by personal prayer and reflection in the 1660s.[201] She discovered the "woeful and sad sin of hearing the curates . . . I heard that many people of God was leaving them. I began to consider what was my duty."[202] Charles II's introduction of an episcopalian form of church government in 1661-1662 with the Act of Uniformity in 1662 saw resistance from many nonconforming Presbyterian ministers who either left the church of their own free will or were forced out.[203] Elgin had felt the effects of religious war in the decades prior with the town barely escaping burning by the Marquess of Montrose's Covenanter forces in 1645, but the Laird of Innes had not been so lucky with his land plundered.[204] Collace recognized the constraints on her as a female member of a prominent household as "the eyes of many being upon me, I being in a public family . . . I could say nothing nor do anything until I committed the matter to be determined by the Lord."[205] She placed her personal convictions above those of society.

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[201] Collace, The Autobiographical Writings and Meditations of Katherine Ross and Jean Collace, folio 82v.

[202] *Ibid*., 82v.

[203] Alasdair Raffe, "Presbyterians and Episcopalians: The Formation of Confessional Cultures in Scotland, 1660-1715," *The English Historical Review* 125 no. 514 (June 2010): 570.

[204] Lachlan Mackintosh, *Elgin, Past and Present* (Elgin: Black, Walker, and Grassie, 1891), 122.

[205] Collace, "The Autobiographical Writings and Meditations", 82v.

Collace's concern was not unprecedented. On January 3rd, 1660, Margrat Dine was publicly scolded by order of the session for "her sine in being in the Chanrie church in tyme of divine service."[206] Collace understood she was risking her own reputation and that of the family she was with, but she still refused to attend church after much deliberation to follow her convictions. However, rather than receiving a harsh word from the family or the kirk session she "got more respect from all the family and others whom [she] conversed with then ever."[207] Furthermore, she claimed she was the first person in her family and the local community to stop attending church in exchange for periods of self-study and reflection.[208] Collace's decision to replace the formal teaching of the church with her own reading of Scripture, interpretation and prayer discipline provides an example of the ways women made their own autonomous religious decisions and were not necessarily punished for it.[209]

Presbyterian women grappled with doctrine calling both for their submission as women and for their piety and pastoral work as Christians. Expectations for women's personal lives included their role in religious instruction in the home according to Protestant rhetoric.[210] These roles could also be empowering situations for women as they took charge of their children's religious education. With Presbyterianism and its turbulent history of divisions, Presbyterian Scottish women also had to make decisions on personal piety in charged and occasionally dangerous situations. Piety within the home sometimes included facing persecution and defying

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[206] William Cramond, ed., *The Records of Elgin 1234-1800 Vol. Second* (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1908), 291.

[207] Collace, The Autobiographical Writings and Meditations, 82v.

[208] *Ibid*., 82v.

[209] Mullan, *Women's Life Writing*, 17.

[210] Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 224.

other aspects of gender expectations. This chapter will analyze women's actions in their private lives, how these reflect their roles within the church, and how women grappled with prioritizing piety over gender expectations. The analysis will also study how women bent Presbyterian rhetoric in different areas of their private lives: women in the home as religious models and instructors; women's relationships with their husbands; women's independent choices in what sects to join; and finally, women's actions to defend their loved ones.

Women as Spiritual Leaders and Instructors in the Home

Women were a crucial part to maintaining the spiritual life of the home in Protestant teachings. Most books targeted towards a female audience were devoted to religious themes and "how to be a Christian wife and mother."[211] Presbyterian rhetoric surrounding gender expectations did not always mean that women lost autonomy or piety. Presbyterian women played an instrumental role in the education of their children and influencing their husbands when their religious beliefs conflicted. These examples of women's piety in the home do not contradict Presbyterian rhetoric, but rather illustrate moments where women used church teachings to have an impact in their lives. As examined in other areas of women's lives, like rioting and writing, women used different religious messages to make their own choices.

Women's selection of church teachings and decisions of what courses of action to take for themselves extended to their children as well, with many taken the mantel of head of household and teaching when it came to their children's well-being. Especially in the case of absentee or abusive husbands, women would take command of their children and the responsibility of their spiritual education. Women did face certain restrictive gender role expectations but found

[211] Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 151.

empowerment and ways to express their spirituality through some of these roles. Katherine Ross prioritized her spirituality and religious practices and encouraged these in her children as well, often without the influence of her husband. One particular case was her sole decision in the baptizing of her children. She explained her dilemma to the reader as she "delayed it for some reasons till I had a more convenient occasion . . . and instantly sent for a minister . . . and he baptized the children."[212] Ross only came to this conclusion following her daughter reading a passage about God's promises to Moses, which she interprets as God's desire for her to baptize her children. Throughout her memoir Ross considered herself a devout woman as she continually mentioned seeking God's approval and mentioned numerous examples of Biblical verses and references to theologians. Yet, in this decision regarding baptism she portrayed herself as the sole decision maker and without the consultation of her husband. Ross was not looking to reject the teachings of the church, far from it. She carefully weighed the decision of baptizing her children as she was concerned over the issue of infant baptism. She gave the Presbyterian teachings of self-study above those of others.

For many women, reading theological tracts played an important role in their spiritual life and was crucial to sustaining their commitment to piety. Ross in her memoir mentioned moments when theology was particularly impactful by describing a time when she was greatly ill and mentioned several personal realizations following her recovery.[213] She only found peace in her desire to be with God after reading a section of Samuel Rutherford's *Christ Dying and Drawing*.[214] In 1699, Elizabeth Blackadder described finding solace in Samuel Rutherford's *Letters* following

[212] Katherine Ross, "The Autobiographical Writings and Meditations," folio 55r-56v.

[213] Katherine Collace, "Katherine Collace," 75.

[214] *Ibid.,* 75.

the death of her husband.[215] For both of these women, Samuel Rutherford's works provided spiritual direction and they deemed his influence so important they included it in their diaries for others to also receive similar benefits.

Ministers encouraged men to give religious instruction in the home, but women occasionally took this role in cases where they disagreed with their husbands or in cases where their husband was abusive or absent. Henrietta Lindsay faced the dilemma of having a different religious perspective than her husband, Sir Donald Campbell, as she was a devout Covenanter and he was not, as he even converted to Catholicism in the 1690s.[216] Her father, Alexander Lindsay the first Earl of Balcarres was a Covenanter, and she was also the stepdaughter of the ninth Earl of Argyll, Archibald Campbell, who was executed in 1685 for his role in leading an uprising against James II.[217] Lindsay was concerned for her husband's spirituality and she attempted to guide him. She wrote her memoirs after his death as a reflection on her life. Her concern for her husband's salvation is apparent in moments of reflection where she hoped she had some impact on him. Following a series of Sundays during a trying time in her life when her son had smallpox she reflected on her time and conversations with her husband:

> Whose eternal interest was no less coveted than my own, which though not to be rested on, being but the duty I ever thought due to so near and dear a relation as a husband, as yet when reflected upon has afforded often great peace of mind, solicitousness about his soul's concerns being often made strangely, with much enlargement not denied, as did ever endear the more to him, and as hath left savoury remembrance of after him whom I desire to hope obtained mercy.[218]

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[215] Elizabeth Blackadder, "A Short Account of the Lord's Way of Providence Towards Me in My Pilgrimage Journeys," in *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c. 1670-1730*, ed. David Mullan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 395.

[216] Henrietta Lindsay, "Her Diary" in *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c. 1670-1730*, ed. David Mullan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 206.

[217] Mullan, *Women's Life Writing*, 204; Adams and Goodare, *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolutions*, 174.

[218] Lindsay, 229.

In Campbell and Lindsays' marriage there was a reversal of roles as Lindsay took on the responsibility of spiritual guidance. Lindsay described this when "the Lord directed one of his faithful and chosen servants unexpectedly to our family (the Rd Mr Robert Muir, eminent in his day) and though the time was difficulting, yet Sir Duncan was moved to favour and welcome him, and would not part with him for some weeks."[219] Lindsay's priority of her own faith supports women's involvement in their communities. Margaret Cunningham's relationship with her husband was significantly different from Lindsay's as it was an abusive marriage. Her account described her marriage to Sir James Hamilton, and Cunningham believed she should try to convert her husband, but their attempts at doing so are different. Cunningham's main concern was her husband's association with Catholics, and she wrote a letter warning him of potential dangers. Lindsay spent more time dwelling on the subtleties of her conversations with her husband to determine his religious beliefs. These differences could be the state of their marriages with Cunningham's being abusive and most likely drastically shaping her approach to conversation with her husband. Women navigated tensions within religious rhetoric to gain some power within the household, particularly to lead their family members to their understanding of religion.

Not Always Submissive Wives: Women's Challenges to Gender Expectations in Marriage

Presbyterian women's relationships with their husbands did not always follow the strict submissive gender expectations established by ministers. Many women clashed with their husbands over decisions on which sects to join and support. Other women found a semi-formal role in the religious community through that of the ministers' wife. Women expressed piety through their marriage, both through following gender expectations and through subverting them.

[219] Lindsay, "Her Diary," 230-1.

One group of women that did have a semi-formal role in attachment to the church were ministers' wives, who not only acted in support of their husband, but often as leaders in the community. Many of these women came from wealthier backgrounds often bringing substantial dowries or prestige to the marriage.[220] In Ian Whyte and Kathleen Whyte's study on ministers' wives they found the top three qualities ministers sought in a wife as recorded in their diaries were piety, meekness and then frugality.[221] These qualities would have advanced their husbands' careers and causes, and they were often involved with the local community as evident in many widows of ministers donating money to the poor. Whyte and Whyte suggest this demonstrates "an active involvement in helping the needy rather than mere general piety."[222] These studies do not differentiate between conforming and nonconforming ministers, but they do provide a rare study on a connection some women had to early modern Scottish Christian society. One minister's wife, Marion Veitch, wrote a memoir concerning her life and trials faced as the wife of a Covenanting Presbyterian minister, William Veitch, who fled Scotland after taking part in the rising at Pentland Hills in 1666.[223] Part of her account included her thoughts on marriage as she believed God "seemed to call me to change my lot, because many suitors came, it was often my earnest supplication to the Lord, that I might be matched in him, and for his glory, which graciously he was pleased to grant me."[224] Her marriage to William Veitch was part of what she believed to be

[220] Ian D. Whyte and Kathleen A. Whyte, "Wed to the Manse: The Wives of Scottish Ministers, c.1560-c.1800," in *Women in Scotland c.1100-c.1750*, eds Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 227.

[221] Whyte and Whyte, "Wed to the Manse," 228.

[222] *Ibid*., 229.

[223] Marion Veitch, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs Veitch* in *Memoirs of Mrs William Veitch, Mr Thomas Hog of Kiltearn, Mr Henry Erskine, and Mr John Carstairs* (Edinburgh: The Assembly's Committee, 1846), 8.

[224] Marion Veitch, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Veitch,* 2.

her calling in life. Marion Veitch's memoir also clearly illustrated the importance of personal piety in her life. In times of danger, she frequently quoted Bible verse for reassurance as in one instance when her husband was finally freed from prison and she rejoiced by quoting a verse from Isaiah.[225] Along with frequently reading the Bible, Veitch mentioned several other theological authors such as Andrew Gray and Samuel Rutherford.[226] Her memoir serves as a deep reflection and spiritual description for readers of her own trials and tribulations and her ability to overcome them. While she could not formally minister from the pulpit, her memoir served as her own kind of evangelism to readers. These spiritual autobiographies by women are rare as only around fifteen from Scotland from the seventeenth century survive.[227]

Not all women had a marriage where they had the same religious and piety foundations as their husbands, and in these cases, many women prioritized maintaining their spirituality above marital submission. Helen Alexander prioritized her Covenanting beliefs through choosing to listen to Covenanter ministers. Alexander dictated her autobiography to her husband in 1729 at the age of seventy-five; it was a reflection on her life, particularly her activism as a nonconforming Presbyterian. She was born in 1653 in Linton, located in the Scottish Borders.[228] Shortly after her marriage at the age of eighteen in 1671 she moved to Pentland, the location of the defeat of a Presbyterian Covenanters' army numbering close to 1,000 troops in the 1666 Pentland Rising.[229]

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[225] *Ibid.*, 6.

[226] *Ibid.*, 29.

[227] Mullan, *Women's Life Writing*, 1.

[228] Helen Alexander, "Mrs Currie: Passages in the Life of Helen Alexander," in *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c. 1670-1730,* ed. David Mullan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, 190.

[229] Alexander, "Mrs Currie," 191; Alasdair Raffe, "'Who Were the "Later Covenanters'?," in *The National Covenant in Scotland, 1638-1689,* ed. Chris R. Langley (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2020), 203.

In the years following the Rising, Covenanting ministers were popular in the region, like John Welsh and Donald Cargill, both of whom Alexander mentioned hearing.[230] Cargill was a member of a more radical branch of the Covenanters, called the Cameronians who supported violence against the Stuarts.[231] Alexander believed hearing the episcopalian ministers was a sin when she visited her sister and "found the Lord was present with me where I was praying, and then, through the Lord's goodness, I found a great weight taken off me."[232] Her conversion and desire to listen to preaching only from nonconforming ministers and not "the evil of hearing the perjured curates" clashed with the decisions of her husband.[233] Alexander did not speak of her husband preventing her from attending nonconforming ministers, but their theologies did not align as she was angered at him in 1678 for giving "some money to the militia men that were going to oppress the honest people and the honest cause."[234] Her husband had aided the Royalist cause before the Battle of Bothwell Bridge in 1679, which was between the Covenanters and the Royalists. The Covenanters suffered a defeat and Alexander went to the aftermath of the battle to aide them with some supplies.[235] An additional consequence was a split amongst the Covenanters as persecution increased.[236] In the aftermath of Bothwell Bridge, Alexander supported those imprisoned for their

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[230] Alexander, "Mrs Currie", 191.

[231] Cadoc Leighton, "Apocalyptic and History Among the Later Covenanters," *Archivium Hibernicum* 68 (2015): 317.

[232] *Ibid.*, 192.

[233] *Ibid.*, 192.

[234] *Ibid.*, 193.

[235] *Ibid.*, 193.

[236] Caroline Erskine, "The Political Thought of the Restoration Covenanters," in *Scotland in the Age of Two Revolutions*, eds Sharon Adams and Julian Goodare (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 156.

part in the battle by visiting them in prison and collecting money and clothing.[237] Alexander's involvement in the religious and political events of the later 1670s depicts a woman who prioritized her own conscience over the decisions of her husband and family through weighing the different religious messages to determine her best course of action for her situation.

As with Alexander, Katharine Ross did not always agree with her husband's religious ideas and was also influenced by Covenanting ministers. Born in 1635 in Edinburgh, Katherine Collace, the sister of Jean Collace, had a disastrous marriage to John Ross whom she was encouraged to marry by others not specified. John Ross is rarely mentioned in Katherine Ross's memoir, but Jean Collace described him as "a wicked man."[238] She went with him north to Ross-shire, before moving back south to Fife in 1673.[239] In her time with her husband in the north, she described rarely meeting others with similar Covenanting Presbyterian sentiments, and she spoke of a number of trials including "many crosses from my nearest relations."[240] Ross also described important religious influences, including the *Sound Believer* by the Puritan Thomas Shepard. Still, she firmly identified as a nonconforming Presbyterian as "the Lord answered me, by making an impression upon my heart of the principal truths professed by the Church of Scotland, and persuaded me that these, and none but these, he would own as his."[241] Ross claimed her convictions of what church to follow came only through her own reasoning and the influence of God. Ross presents a unique case in her dilemma in choosing between following submission and her

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[237] Alexander, "Mrs Currie," 193.

[238] Katherine Collace, "Katharine Collace, Mistress Ross: Memoirs or Spiritual Exercises of Mistress Ross," in *Women's Life Writing in Early Modern Scotland: Writing the Evangelical Self, c. 1670-1730* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 39; Jean Collace, "The Autobiographical Writings," 83v.

[239] Katherine Collace, "Katherine Collace," 39.

[240] *Ibid.,* 46.

[241] *Ibid.,* 58.

perceived calling as a Christian as she had to strike the balance between submitting to a husband who was not a Christian in her eyes and following the teachings of the Bible. Ross chose the latter and demonstrated how when pushed to choose, many women prioritized religious convictions over gender expectations.

Autonomous and Independent Religious Choices

As in the case of women having differing religious beliefs to their husbands, many women also carefully selected what ministers they would follow. Depending on their circumstances, many Presbyterian women faced difficult situations as their devotion to a particular sect forced them into danger. Women careful considered which Presbyterian sects to join based on their understanding of Scripture and perceived callings from God. These instances depict women as autonomous thinkers and not only submissive to male relatives or leaders. It was a rejection of gender expectations, but in favor of upholding piety.

Henrietta Lindsay frequently mentioned hosting ministers and described one example when she "had a visit from Mr Alexander Wedderburn, that eminent shining light, who abode several weeks there, during which time O the power and presence that did accompany those sermons so as they were made unexpressibly sweet and satisfying."[242] Wedderburn was a minister in Fife who was dismissed from his position in 1665 and was later reinstated in 1670 at Kilmarnock and Lindsay met Wedderburn while she was visiting family in Inveraray.[243] A few sentences later she also mentioned another minister nearby whom she was interested in hearing, James Hutcheson, who also lost his pastoral position in 1662 for his nonconforming views.[244] Lindsay's desire to

[242] Lindsay, "Her Diary," 220.

[243] *Ibid.*, 220.

hear from these specific ministers shows her deep involvement in the Covenanting Presbyterian community, but also her own interest in hearing from different ministers and what she gained from their interactions. Her descriptions of Wedderburn's sermons as "sweet and satisfying" and having "power and presence" depict the influence sermons had on all listeners.[245]

Jean Collace followed what she believed to be God's calling in her life, especially in her decisions on attending field preachers and conventicles. After her time in Innes, Collace moved to Fife which, in the mid-1670s, was experiencing "hot persecution."[246] While in Fife, she listened to a number of field preachers, who were highly controversial figures, and describes one example:

> I heard there was sermon to be on the Lord's day at night with him four miles, and finding a need to encourage my inclinations after the preached word and to meet with the Lord therein, and finding also unexpectedly some fitness in my body, I thought I was called to go, and so I did before day, and when we came and stayed the whole day was disappointed, the troopers were so raging through these fields.[247]

Like many of the other women who chose to listen to field preachers, Collace described feeling called to go by God and making the decision entirely of her own free will. She was the one determining her own spiritual fate and religious actions, not the male members of her family or of society around her.

In Defense of the Family: Women's Actions to Defend Loved Ones

Finally, women also acted in their private lives to save their family members through capitalizing on their gender. Lady Grisell Baillie is one of the most celebrated examples of a woman resisting authority in the aid of her family and her grave is marked with a memorial

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[244] *Ibid.,* 220.

[245] *Ibid.,* 220.

[246] Jean Collace, "The Autobiographical Writings," 108.

[247] *Ibid.,* 109.

detailing her efforts to protect her father. In the early eighteenth century, her daughter recorded her mother's actions, describing how Baillie's father had been imprisoned for his religious and political beliefs. As a young teen in 1677, she passed notes for him as she was not viewed as a threat by the guards. He later escaped and hid in a church crypt, where she gave him supplies at night before they fled to the Dutch Republic.[248] She ranked the safety of her family and the upholding of their religious beliefs as more important than forgoing her commitment to her and her family's nonconforming faith. Baillie's gender and age played to her advantage as she was able to avoid suspicion, and she became a celebrated Presbyterian heroine. One of Baillie's contemporaries, Elizabeth Blackadder, also acted against the church to protect her family, in this case her brother. As a young girl, Blackadder had experienced persecution as her father was a field preacher and soldiers raided their house nearly stabbing Blackadder in the process. Her brother was later arrested in 1679 in Leith for spying as he had befriended exiled Presbyterians in the Dutch Republic. Upon Elizabeth Blackadder's visit to the prison her brother communicated to her to search his house for a hat containing criminating documents. She destroyed the documents at his house in Edinburgh just shortly before the arrival of a search party.[249] Both Baillie and Blackadder chose to play an active role in aiding their family in times of persecution under the episcopalian state church. They believed saving their family took far greater precedence over submitting to the authorities.

Women also acted as protectors and resources for minsters in times of danger. Helen Alexander was one such woman who hid a number of Covenanting ministers in her home and

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[248] Grisell Murray, *Memoirs of the Lives and Characters of the Right Honourable George Ballie of Jerviswood, and of Lady Grisell Baillies by their Daughter, Lady Murray of Stanhope* (Edinburgh: Pillans, 1824, 2nd edition), 34.

[249] John Blackadder, *Select Passages from the Diary and Letters of the Late John Blackadder, Esq*., ed. John Newton (Edinburgh: J. Ritchie, 1806), xiv..

visited others in prison. She described her relationship with several of these ministers throughout her autobiography detailing her life between 1653 and1729. One preacher, Mr. James Renwick, was imprisoned before his execution and Alexander visited him in prison and prepared his body for burial.[250] Nor was Alexander the only woman independently supporting ministers and visiting them in prison; it was a fairly common practice for Covenanting women in the later seventeenth century. Jean Collace also mentioned several moments where she visited close confidants in prison like Mr. Thomas Ross in 1676.[251] Collace did not mention a husband or any other male figure determining her thought process, and she was the one independently choosing which ministers to support and which not too. Both Collace and Alexander demonstrate how women found opportunities within the Presbyterian church to aide others often deemed as radicals as they placed personal piety far above more restricting gender roles of the church. Women's aide of family members and friends in difficult situations due to persecution demonstrates how their involvement in Presbyterianism was far from passive.

Conclusion

Ministers' sermons on submission, obedience and God-ordered societal structure impacted women in many aspects of their lives regarding what their expected position was in society, their interactions with their husbands and how they were treated by the kirk sessions. Many of the restrictions calling for women's submission centered on their roles as wives and mothers, relegating them to the household. Yet, these gender expectations could also be empowering moments for women as they influenced the religious direction of their family. Wives did not

[250] Alexander, "Passages in the Life of Helen Alexander", 192.

[251] Collace, "The Autobiographical Writings and Meditations of Katherine Ross and Jean Collace", 127.

always submit to their husbands and many played an active role in converting their husbands to a particular Presbyterian sect. Nor did women follow men's directives in choosing which sect they believed either, as many listened to particular ministers or avoided the episcopalian state church ones based on their own interpretations of religious texts and what they believed was a calling from God. Gender expectations could also prove to be an important tool for women as they used it to support those in prison or aide loved ones unsuspected. Women navigated the tensions in religious rhetoric of gender expectations to negotiate some power and leverage in their personal lives that their communities, or at least groups within them, rewarded them for.

Conclusion

Two of the greatest discoveries from research for this thesis were how many surviving records there are from early modern Scottish women, and the large variety in the kinds of surviving records. There was no single experience for Presbyterian women, disproving how some historians believe "Scotland seemed to exceed Calvin's Geneva and the Protestant Netherlands as a society controlled by religious men for the subjugation of women."[252] Esther Inglis's illuminated manuscripts and Lady Anne Cunningham's calvary charge to the coast are just two examples of the many women whose lives discredit the idea of Presbyterianism as entirely leading to "the subjugation of women." Even ministers' rhetoric had mixed messaging for exactly how women should behave. Describing Presbyterianism as exclusively contributing to control over women does not accurately depict women's relationship with the church.

Across nearly every aspect of their lives, women shaped their involvement and understanding of religion to support the expansion of their faith and carry out what they believed God was calling them to do. In their community, women petitioned the government and rioted in the defense of their religion. Others used writing, like poetry and illuminated manuscripts, to influence their audience. In their private lives and relationships, women also subverted gender expectations to expand their faith and influence those around them. All of these different formats show women not as passive members of the church, but as independent and proactive, using their circumstances to advance their religion to the best of their ability.

When all of the ways women interacted with the Presbyterian church are combined, there is a different narrative, one where women also contributed to the development of Presbyterianism

[252] Brown, "Religion," 85.

and played an active role in the church. Women not only shaped their own involvement in the Presbyterian church throughout its early period, but Presbyterianism itself as they evangelized and fought for their visions of the Scottish church.

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