



Abstract from Article

FROM HEINRICH BULLINGER TO PURITANISM: JOHN HOOPER'S THEOLOGY AND THE OFFICE OF MAGISTRACY

Andries Raath & Shaun de Freitas

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Abstract

The direct political influence of the Marian exiles in England and Scotland was the development of a theory of universal principles of right underlying all magisterial power and limited government based on Biblical law. However, it is not generally realized that the influence of the English reformer and martyr John Hooper largely contributed to the development of these notions in Reformed political circles in England and Scotland. The influence of Hooper on Reformers like Knox covered an extensive field. There are strong indications that Knox's doctrine of Scriptural authority was given impetus in the course of his work in Edwardian England. There, states Greaves, the views of Zurich (Bullinger) were expounded by the ex-Cistercian monk John Hooper, who was Knox's senior by some nineteen years. Greaves detects a further Swiss influence in this matter through Hooper in Knox's Scots Confession and Book of Discipline. He also mentions that Knox appears to have learned his doctrine of authority from the First Helvetic Confession and, among others, Hooper. Greaves also points out that Knox's doctrine of authority was closer to Zwingli (and Bullinger) than to Calvin, and this lends further support to the inference that the influence of Hooper must have played a most significant role in shaping Knox's views. The introduction of Bullinger's thought to England and Scotland also extended to the issue of predestination and the use of the sacraments. Probably the most important theological implication of the introduction of Bullinger's theology, was the acceptance of Bullinger's views on the covenant and the influence this exerted in the fields of theology and politics. The acceptance of Bullinger's theologico-political federalism, as the basis for political theory, also introduced the concept of the Biblical idea of magisterial office into Scottish and English Reformed politics, together with the theory of the limited powers of magistracy. The limited powers of magistracy and the approach to tyranny may, in a certain sense, be taken to represent the basic features of Reformed English and Scottish political theory. At the heart of this approach lies Heinrich Bullinger's theologico-political views on the office of magistracy and those of the Christian community as a political entity. His views on the office of magistracy and the Christian community soon attracted the interest of the Reformers in England and Scotland. It was particularly John Hooper, John Knox and the Marian exiles, John Ponet and Christopher Goodman, who developed Bullinger's views into a theory of legality. Later thinkers like Samuel Rutherford and George Gillespie fruitfully elaborated upon these ideas within the context of theologico-political federalism. In this paper the main focus will be on the fundamental contribution made by Bullinger and the perspectives developed by later generations of Reformers in England and Scotland on the basis of the Biblical covenant, with particular emphasis on the work by John Hooper.

articles related to biblical political and constitutional theory.