



Abstract from Article

FROM HEINRICH BULLINGER TO SAMUEL RUTHERFORD: THE IMPACT OF REFORMATION ZURICH ON SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTTISH POLITICAL THEORY

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Abstract

Sixteenth-century Zurich established a significant network which effectively contributed to the development of a distinct theologico-covenantal approach to politics. In this circle of theorists were Heinrich Bullinger, Martyr Vermigli, Christopher Goodman, John Knox, John Hooper and George Buchanan. Not only did this Zurich circle further the idea of political federalism in their personal correspondence, they also produced influential writings that established the paradigm of theologico-political federalism as a legitimate mode of thinking in the Reformed tradition. Particularly in Reformation Britain, the idea of the Biblical covenant and its political connotations found fertile ground in which it developed into a credible tradition of theology and political theory. In addition, the seventeenth-century Scottish Presbyterian divines resorted to this tradition for guidance in matters theological and political, which included pertinent themes such as church governance, liberty of conscience and the relationship between church and state. It was especially in the works emanating from the Scottish Presbyterians who attended the Westminster Assembly, as well as in the deliberations of the Assembly itself, that theologico-political federalism became exemplified in the British Isles. This was, to a large extent, attributable to Bullinger and the Zurich circle of theologico-political federalists, coupled with the richness of the Scottish tradition of banding and the reception of federal theology.

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