



## Abstract from Article

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### **TRADITIONALISM AND THE SEEDS OF REVOLUTION IN THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLES OF THE GENEVA BIBLE**

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## Abstract

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Tudor religious leaders regarded the Bible as a universal text to regulate behavior and inculcate social principles. The social importance of Scripture was recognized by William Whittingham and his fellow translators at Geneva, with the consequence that the 1560 Bible includes marginal notes running to some 300,000 words, aimed in part at explaining its social principles. The numerous marginal notes conveying social principles reflect an amalgam of traditional, conservative values and potentially revolutionary ideals. The resulting tension was a basic characteristic of English Puritanism until the strain became excessive in the seventeenth century and Puritanism ruptured. The pronounced affirmation of traditionalism is evident in the emphasis on a predetermined social hierarchy, bolstered by right religion, the proper use of oaths to support legitimate authority, and the wearing of apparel befitting one's social estate. For the annotators society ought to be characterized by discipline and order, building on the conviction that man's status and condition are predetermined, with each estate having its own responsibilities. The rule by which society must be governed is sola Scriptura, for "without Gods expresse worde nothing oght to be attempted." Applying this criterion to society carried, of course, distinct implications of social change, creating tension with the quest for an orderly, predetermined society. This strict adherence to the rule of Scripture is closely associated with the belief that without right religion a stable social order cannot exist.

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