

Deportment, Emotion and Moderation at the Glasgow Assembly, 1638

In an order of 22 September 1638, Charles I called a general assembly of the Church of Scotland to meet at Glasgow. Ostensibly, the purpose of the assembly was 'for removing all feares, doubts and scruples whiche may arise in the myndes of his subjects for preservation of the puritie' of 'true religion'.¹ Over the previous two years, Charles had attempted to introduce a new liturgy into his northernmost kingdom and sought to reinvigorate the powers of his episcopate. Petitions from regions across Scotland flooded into the privy council in response. An increasingly organised backlash against royal policy culminated in the National Covenant, a document that bound subscribers to protect the unique Scottish ecclesiastical settlement from external threats, signed first in Edinburgh and then across Scotland over the course of 1638. Covenanter leaders had been preparing for an assembly since the middle of the year, had organised elections for lay commissioners to attend it and collected allegations against the conduct of Scottish bishops ready for the meeting. The assembly met on 21 November, chaired by James Hamilton, marquis of Hamilton, as commissioner to Charles I. Within days, Hamilton would attempt to dissolve the gathering, unhappy that lay members were admitted to vote in the meeting and that all the Scottish bishops had been excluded. Nevertheless, the assembly continued to sit. By its close on 20 December 1638, the assembly had declared episcopacy unlawful in Scotland, excommunicated most of the Scottish episcopate and wholeheartedly rejected the ecclesiastical policies of Charles I and his key adviser William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury.

The assembly is a regular fixture in modern historical assessments of the period. While more recent analyses have moved away from claims that the assembly was indicative of the 'resilience of spirit native to the Scottish race', there is near universal consensus that the meeting was a masterclass of 'gerrymandering' and preplanning.² Covenanter leaders controlled elections of local commissioners to ensure their candidates would be returned, barred opponents from sitting and steered the assembly's agenda throughout its meeting.³ It is highly likely that Covenanter leaders had made 'fairly detailed plans' to cover a range of possible outcomes, to ensure full control over the assembly's activities.⁴ Those dictating the assembly's business were obsessed with 'the appearance of social strength, respectability, and unanimity', with the arrangements made in Glasgow Cathedral carefully reflecting the social station of the assembly's participants.⁵ Moreover the resulting 'Glasgow Declaration' served to adjust the text of the original National Covenant to push it towards a far more radical interpretation, driven by hardliners in the movement.⁶ These assessments present the assembly as a *fait accompli* and another step towards conflict between the supporters of the National Covenant and the Crown.

Recent studies have suggested that spaces like the Glasgow Assembly could be hotly contested and rather less easily managed. Assessments of gesture and deportment have revealed the dynamics of

¹ *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, ed. P. Hume Brown, VII (Edinburgh, 1906), p. 72.

² James King Hewison, *The Covenanters* (Glasgow, 1913) I, p. 306.

³ Allan Macinnes, *The British Confederate: Archibald Campbell, Marquess of Argyll, c.1607-1661* (Edinburgh, 2011), pp. 114-15; Walter Makey, *The Church of the Covenant, 1637-1651: Revolution, and Social Change in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 50-1. David Stevenson, 'The General Assembly and the Commission of the Kirk, 1638-51', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 19 (1977), pp. 59-63; Laura A. M. Stewart, *Urban Politics and the British Civil Wars: Edinburgh, 1617-53* (Leiden, 2006), p. 312.

⁴ David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-1644: The Triumph of the Covenanters*, second edition (Edinburgh, 2003), pp. 115-16.

⁵ Roger Mason, 'The aristocracy, episcopacy, and the Revolution of 1638', in Terry Brotherstone (ed.), *Covenant, Charter, and Party: Traditions of Revolt and Protest in Modern Scottish History* (Aberdeen, 1989), p. 9; Laura A. M. Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637-1651* (Oxford, 2016), p. 92n.

⁶ Jamie M. McDougall, 'Covenants and covenanters in Scotland 1638-1679', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Glasgow, 2017), p. 48.

spaces and the complexity of the relationships within them that have hitherto remained hidden. As Jason Peacey has shown, official records may have ‘flattened the tone’ of particularly acrimonious exchanges in the English Parliament giving a potentially misleading sense of harmony to proceedings.⁷ Members of the Westminster Assembly of Divines that met between 1643 and 1652 were similarly unruly, laughing at badly drafted papers, involving themselves in acrimonious exchanges and being generally disorderly in both the open assembly and in its smaller, private, committees.⁸ These interactions are replete with meaning for the historian. Contemporaries in the early modern world had a sophisticated behavioural lexicon and understood how deportment, as well as words uttered, could convey and withdraw honour or respect in a given situation.⁹ While historians can usually recover what was said at key moments, contemporaries were remarkably concerned about how speech acts were framed: the ‘ensemble’ in which behaviour and speech were ‘employed together as partners in a single rhetorical enterprise’.¹⁰

Scholars are beginning to appreciate the close relationship between behaviour, emotion and rhetoric in the early modern period. Recent studies have replaced the image of a dire Calvinism, devoid of the emotional exigencies of pre-Reformation religiosity, with one that consisted of a range of often passionate experiences.¹¹ Protestantism, as a religion experienced, was not exclusively ‘wrapped up in sola scriptura and sola fide’ but could be characterised by periods of great emotional intensity.¹² Regulating these passions – and the ways in which they were expressed – involved treading a fine line, especially by those in positions of authority. On the one hand, emotions and the ways in which they were expressed should be moderated in a way that involved ‘taking responsibility for oneself in a very detailed way’.¹³ Regulating one’s passions reflected one’s ability to rule over others and added credence to the words uttered in certain venues.¹⁴ On the other hand, the relationship between emotion and rhetoric was not simply one of repression. Passions, correctly delivered through speech, tone and decorum, were ‘part and parcel of the armoury that served to govern the concupiscent passions of the state at large’.¹⁵ In the ‘emotional communities’ explored by Barbara Rosenwein, rhetoric, decorum and emotion were interconnected.¹⁶

This article explores the Glasgow Assembly as a distinct ‘emotional arena’ and the ways in which emotions were expressed through behaviour.¹⁷ Participants were aware of the rules that governed behaviour in the space and sought to adhere to them through their speeches, gestures and general deportment. Whereas scholars have understood the importance of printed polemic in this period, this article aims to show how behaviour served as a proxy by which Covenanter leaders and the Crown could parade the legitimacy of their political actions at the assembly. However, rather less moderate displays of emotion and decorum still had a place in the meeting. The assembly sat in a highly-charged political climate and leading members of the nobility, in particular, were unsettled and critical of any perceived slight against them. Above all, despite calls for restraint, emotional outpourings were part and parcel of

⁷ Jason Peacey, ‘Disorderly debates: Noise and gesture in the 17th-century House of Commons’, *Parliamentary History*, 32 (2013), pp. 69-70.

⁸ *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly 1643-1652*, 1, ed. Chad Van Dixhoorn (Oxford, 2012), pp. 47-9.

⁹ Krista J. Kesselring, ‘Gender, the hat and Quaker universalism in the wake of the English Revolution’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 26: 2 (2011), pp. 299-322; Greg Koabel, ‘The treasonous hat: Interpreting gesture in the treason trial of the Earl of Strafford’, *Canadian Journal of History*, 51 (2016), pp. 243-67.

¹⁰ Anna Bryson, ‘The rhetoric of status: Gesture, demeanour and the image of the gentleman in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England’, in Lucy Gent & Nigel Llewellyn (eds), *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Cultures, c. 1540-1660* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 136-7; Adam Kendon, *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 127.

¹¹ Abram C. Van Engen, *Sympathetic Puritans: Calvinist Fellow Feeling in Early New England* (Oxford, 2015).

¹² Patrick S. McGhee, ‘Unbelief, the senses and the body in Nicholas Bownde’s “The Unbeleefe of S. Thomas” (1608)’, *Studies in Church History*, 52 (2016), p. 269; David G. Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism, 1590-1638* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 16-18.

¹³ Stephen Gaukroger, ‘Introduction’, in Stephen Gaukroger (ed.), *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1998), p. 4.

¹⁴ Mark Greengrass, *Governing Passions: Peace and Reform in the French Kingdom, 1576-1585* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 40-3.

¹⁵ Greengrass, *Governing Passions*, p. 58.

¹⁶ Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 9.

¹⁷ Mark Seymour, ‘Emotional arenas: From provincial circus to national courtroom in late-nineteenth-century Italy’, *Rethinking History*, 16 (2012), pp. 177-91.

what Jennifer Vaught would describe as the assembly's 'emotional register'.¹⁸ The most intense moments of emotional and behavioural theatre served to delineate the boundaries of the Covenanters' political movement and to reinforce the notion that God was overseeing – and steering – their actions. Nevertheless, the final days of the assembly reflected the ways in which Calvinists wrestled not with the place of emotion and passion in their discourse, but with how much of it should be permitted without undermining their actions. In the case of the Covenanting leadership, the legitimacy of their presbyterian project was at stake as the Reformed world watched their actions.

Discerning the ways in which members of the assembly behaved and how they expressed emotion is remarkably difficult. Sir James Balfour of Denmilne's style of reportage was typical in recording only 'the most important and memorable things and passages'.¹⁹ The subsequent acts and decrees promulgated after the assembly are also flawed, salvaging only the 'dry bones' of debates to convey 'but a faint and feeble impression' of the convention's 'real character'.²⁰ Moreover, although many ministers who were present at the assembly noted their experiences in diaries and then passed them from hand to hand, only a select few of these papers survive.²¹ Nevertheless, the surviving documents that record all or part of the assembly's month of meetings often make reference to the deportment of the assembly's members, the tenor of the debates and the postures of the assembly's main participants. Much of this material is found in archival collections from across Scotland that remains largely untouched by historians. From this material, it is possible to reconstruct the main contours of the behavioural politics of the Glasgow Assembly and to lay a foundation for future work that seeks to understand the importance of behaviour and deportment to ecclesiastical politics in Scotland and beyond.

General assemblies were the most senior, and rarest, of Church meetings in Scotland following the Protestant Reformation. The *Second Book of Discipline* recorded how general assemblies were a national means 'to keep comeliness and order in the Kirk' and a venue in which the Kirk could 'make certain rules and constitutions appertaining to the good behaviour' of all of its members.²² This emphasis on decorum filtered down into how a general assembly was meant to conduct its business. In common with debates in parliament, motions at general assemblies were put to 'voicing', a method that was distinct to more modern 'voting' by an overriding desire to find consensus, where members would express their opinions and a 'reasoned debate' would ensue in the main hall of the assembly.²³ The idea was that consensus and compromise would emerge from learned conversations on the assembly floor.

The practical aspects of general assemblies also encouraged good order and, where possible, concord. Protocol for general assemblies was inherited from meetings of the Convention of Royal Burghs and these borrowed rules meant that members knew how to behave.²⁴ The practical arrangements made in Glasgow prior to the assembly's sitting in 1638 reflect this interest in social harmony. In the month and a half preceding the assembly's opening, the burgh council of Glasgow made the requisite alterations to the cathedral interior, encouraged locals to keep the streets clean, paid to ensure 'that the poor be keipit and sustenit in thair houssis', and agreed to post counsellors at the doors of the assembly to maintain good order 'to the great credit of the citie and contentment of all strangeris resorting heir for the tyme'.²⁵

The seating arrayed in Glasgow Cathedral reflected this interest in maintaining the social status quo. The commissioner to Charles I, James Hamilton, marquis of Hamilton, was seated in a chair of state set atop a dais and surrounded by a retinue of members of the privy council, including the Earl of Traquair

¹⁸ Jennifer C. Vaught, *Men who Weep and Wail: Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (Abingdon, 2008), pp. 2-4.

¹⁹ Sir James Balfour, *The Historical Works of James Balfour*, ed. James Haig (Edinburgh, 1824), p. 301.

²⁰ Alexander Peterkin (ed.), *Records of the Kirks of Scotland, Containing the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies, From the Year 1638 Downwards, as Authenticated by the Clerks of the Assembly* (Edinburgh, 1838), p. 272.

²¹ Robert Baillie, future principal of Glasgow University, recorded that numerous 'Diaries gathered in the tyme, by the hands of many wrytters' existed. See Robert Baillie, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, A.M., Principal of the University of Glasgow*, ed. David Laing, 1 (Edinburgh, 1841), p. 118.

²² James Kirk (ed.), *The Second Book of Discipline* (Edinburgh, Saint Andrew Press, 1980), ch. 7.

²³ Julian Goodare, 'Parliament and politics', in Keith M. Brown & Alan R. MacDonald (eds), *Parliament in Context, 1235-1707* (Edinburgh, 2010), pp. 265-6.

²⁴ Duncan Shaw, *The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, 1560-1600* (Edinburgh, 1964), pp. 309-12.

²⁵ James Marwick (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, 1573-1642* (Edinburgh, 1914), pp. 391-6.

as chancellor, all organised in order of precedence. In front of the commissioner was a pulpit and a small desk for the moderator and clerk. A long table was set in the middle of the cathedral nave, around which over two hundred ministers, noblemen and lay commissioners from presbyteries sat. The two long sides of the table were flanked by five or six tiers of seating and at the far end was a number of boxes for young noblemen with large numbers of onlookers – some female – in the vaults above.

As the assembly convened on 21 November 1638, the ideals of harmony and good order so common in discussions around general assemblies were not always achieved. It is well known that prominent observers like Robert Baillie, future principal of Glasgow University, were unhappy with the carriage of many of those present at the opening of the assembly. Many members were unable to find their seats, despite having attendants appointed by Glasgow Burgh council to help them. Once sat, ministers conferred by whispering, laughed in derision and jeered motions they disliked.²⁶ The noise was so loud that it drowned out the first sermon by John Bell, the elderly minister of Glasgow. Bell's sermon 'was not heard by a sixth part of the beholders' through a combination of the minister's failing voice, the acoustics of the medieval cathedral and the hubbub of the assembly.²⁷

While Hamilton carried orders to delay and obfuscate the assembly's business to give Charles I time to prepare a suitable response, he sought to discredit the *behaviour* of prominent members of the meeting and ensure that his own conduct reflected positively on the authority of the Crown. He was in regular contact with William Laud throughout the assembly and wrote to Charles I to record how he sought to 'demonstrat to the world the unjust proceedings of this assemblie'.²⁸ Hamilton was the focal point of the first days' meetings and used his posture to control proceedings. From his position in the chair of state, he was free to speak whenever he desired to do so by interrupting other members' discussions. His posture only changed when entering a protestation, standing on each occasion to emphasise his position in the assembly. He 'rose' to deliver his protest against noble members of the assembly calling the Scottish episcopate 'pretended', while onlookers frequently noted how he 'cried out' against certain acts of the assembly. Hamilton's gestures registered his distinct place in the assembly and his awareness of the 'strong political element' in his non-verbal conduct.²⁹

Wrangles over precedence dominated the first and second days of the assembly and manifested themselves in the deportment of the members. Hamilton demanded that a paper presented to him should be heard prior to the selection of a moderator. Covenanter leaders, standing in turn to make their orations, rejected his request in obsequious terms, telling him that the assembly was not properly constituted while it sat without a moderator. Hamilton threatened the assembly with a change of posture, warning members that he would get up from his chair of state and take the paper from the supplicant at the door personally. The petitioner, Dr Robert Hamilton, was admitted to walk through the assembly to present the protestation from the absent bishops to the commissioner. Hamilton's gestures suggested that he was about to read the protestation without the assembly's consent, to which 'the quhole Multitude rosse upe and anssewred in a tumultuous voyce No reding, No reiding, no reding at all'.³⁰ Hamilton took the opportunity to criticise the deportment of the members, shouting over the din that 'such a noise became not the gravitie of kirk men'.³¹ Writing six months after the assembly, Robert Baillie recorded how the 'barbarous crying' of the assembly offended most of the ministers sitting around him, as well as the commissioner.³² Rather than being indecisive, Hamilton's constant emphasis of his moderation was intended to promote himself as the proponent of the status quo.³³

The appointment of Alexander Henderson as moderator highlighted the Covenanters' need to control the tenor of the debate and counter Hamilton's accusations that their actions were without

²⁶ James Gordon, *History of Scots Affairs*, ed. Alexander Thomson, 2 (Aberdeen, 1841), pp. 98-9.

²⁷ Baillie, *Letters* 1, p. 124.

²⁸ Samuel R. Gardiner (ed.), *The Hamilton Papers* (London, 1880), p. 61; Leonie James, *'This Great Firebrand': William Laud and Scotland 1617-1645* (Woodbridge, 2017), p. 136.

²⁹ Erin Griffey, 'Express yourself? Henrietta Maria and the political value of emotional display at the Stuart court', *The Seventeenth Century* (forthcoming), pp. 18-20.

³⁰ National Library of Scotland [hereafter NLS], Adv. MS.33.2.1, f. 3v.

³¹ NLS, Wodrow Oct. X, fols. 7-8.

³² Baillie, *Letters*, 1, p. 126.

³³ Pace Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, p. 33.

moderation. Henderson sought to guide the Covenanters' agenda through this initially nervy part of the assembly by strictly controlling members' behaviour. Each local representative who was sent to the meeting came with a commission outlining the extent of their authority. While historians usually mention this aspect of the assembly's procedure with little comment, its significance in showing the battle for control over the members' behaviour warrants further examination.³⁴ As the representative from Duns was asked to read his commission, Henderson interjected and told the assembly that 'we need not crave the voyces of the assemblie anent everie particular commission'. Rather, 'if ther be none that speaketh against the quomission, we shall hold silence' as a sign of their consent.³⁵ By insisting that the assembly should put aside those commissions that members could not agree on pending a separate investigation, Henderson attempted to avoid any gestures of discontent sullyng his agenda for the assembly. Hamilton, however, also saw in Henderson's order a way to marginalise royal influence. He answered 'If ye appoynt that silence shall be taken *pro confesso* that the Commission is valide, I protest that my silence be not so exponed, but that I may have libertie to object against any Commission or Commissioner, in my owne tyme'.³⁶ Henderson's attempts to restore harmony to the assembly would also reduce the opportunity for debate and, recognising this, Hamilton reserved his right to open up fractures in the assembly whenever he saw fit.

Unfortunately for Henderson, while the assembly was usually compliant with his pleas for silence, two of the thirteen rejected commissions produced ferocious responses that reflect how the assembly's agenda, while pre-planned, was prone to slip.³⁷ The first related to the commission sent from the presbytery of Peebles as Robert Elliot, minister of Kilbucho, complained that the earl of Traquair, one of the members of the Privy Council sitting next to Hamilton, had obtained it illegally.³⁸ It was not just the contents of Elliot's petition that caused an uproar but that it was conveyed 'in boisterouse and uncivill tearmes'.³⁹ Elliot's behaviour surprised many in the assembly because petitions were usually presented in 'cautious and deferential terms'.⁴⁰ Traquair immediately protested and 'inveighed sharplie' against the minister claiming he was 'much wronged', being 'calumnat be such a man, whom he would prove to be both a bryber and ambitious; and that he should be by him brought upon the stage before so reverent and grave ane auditour'. In a pertinent metaphor, the commissioners from the burgh of Peebles told the assembly that Elliot 'hes now brought us on the stage, and spitted on our face, and brought us in suspition' by questioning their actions.⁴¹ In the days that followed, Henderson advised that Traquair should 'speake of the man in no other terms then were due to a minister of Jesus Christ' and act with sufficient deference when addressing Elliot and others in the assembly.⁴² While both men backtracked from their aggressive postures, the episode reveals how the assembly's proceedings could be easily overwhelmed by interpersonal disputes and the gestures and noises with which they were communicated.

The second instance occurred around two competing commissions given in by the presbytery of Brechin, the one in favour of the laird of Dun and the other in favour of lord Carnegie. The former had an inscription written on the reverse side of the commission that the clerk read aloud that provided a glimpse into the ways in which the Covenanter leaders in Edinburgh were influencing local elections. Hamilton's requests for a copy of the inscription were quickly denied by leading nobles in the assembly. Unlike Traquair, however, Carnegie insisted so vociferously that the case be heard that the atmosphere deteriorated rapidly, creating 'such noise' and growing 'so great' that it 'terrified the whole Assembly'.⁴³ Even Covenanting leaders disagreed as the marquis of Montrose 'hotlie' disputed with David Dickson,

³⁴ One prominent historian claimed that discussion about members' commissions 'barely disturbed the calm' of the assembly. Makey, *The Church of the Covenant*, p. 49.

³⁵ Edinburgh University Special Collections, Laing iii. 207, f. 27.

³⁶ Peterkin, *Records*, p. 135.

³⁷ For all the commissions, see NLS, Adv.MS.49.7.4, fol. 8v.

³⁸ Elliot's role in one of the flashpoints of the assembly is rarely acknowledged. See Scott, *Fasti*, 1, p. 244.

³⁹ James Gordon, *History of Scots Affairs, from 1637 to 1641*, 1 (Aberdeen, 1841), p. 150.

⁴⁰ Alasdair Raffae, 'Petitioning in the Scottish church courts, 1638-1707', *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, 8 (2018), pp. 327-8.

⁴¹ Peterkin, *Records*, p. 140.

⁴² Baillie, *Letters*, 1, pp. 132-3.

⁴³ James Gordon, *History of Scots Affairs, from 1637 to 1641*, 1 (Aberdeen, 1841), p. 151n.

minister of Irvine, over the details written on the back of Dun's commission. Henderson's ability to control this episode was undermined by his own, visible, frustration. He lamented that such discussions had overtaken the 'weightie matters' of the day and that 'it had been better to have wanted all the Commissioners from Brechin' than them becoming embroiled in such a dispute. Immediately, the earl of Southesk, one of the commissioners from Brechin arrayed near to Hamilton, stood to reply 'unreverentlie' that the moderator 'wronged them that wronged not him, and whom he had no reason to wrong'. David Dickson, minister of Irvine, warned that Southesk and others should 'brydle their affections' lest 'they should steare the Lord up to wrath therby who wes graciouslie pleased to put it in the heart of their sovereigne to grant them an fre [sic] assemble'.⁴⁴ All onlookers reported that the dispute 'was like to have drawen to a great heat' if Hamilton had not intervened by 'commanding them to silence'. The controversial commissions had worked in Hamilton's favour by delaying the assembly's core business, but they also served to undermine the Covenanters' attempts to present their protest as warranted, lawful and, above all, moderate. Hamilton was quick to parade his moderating influence on the assembly's tumultuous carriage by proclaiming 'he behoved to take on himself to play the Moderator'.⁴⁵ Hamilton's careful cultivation of his behaviour was intended to reflect precedence in the assembly. Most of all, however, Hamilton's behaviour was intended to underline the moderation – 'simultaneously...a state of equipoise and an act of control' – and a 'willingness to abide by tradition and precedent' that was so important to the self-image of Stuart monarchy.⁴⁶

General assemblies were stages where values of order and moderation were frequently promoted. The peculiar circumstances of the assembly in 1638 placed greater prominence on these issues, making the assembly a showground on which the king's commissioner and Covenanter leaders could parade themselves as moderate defenders of the status quo. Physical movements were considered manifestations of internal emotional states: sensible deportment was a visible sign of a moderate inner self.⁴⁷ The behavioural jostling that took place within the Glasgow Assembly was part of a tussle regarding who had control of the meeting, as well as a way of signalling to the assembly's members which side was the most acceptable. While historians have understood how the Covenanters were eager to 'maintain a rhetoric of legality of precedent' in their printed works, an analysis of behaviour at the Glasgow Assembly shows how such sentiments were conveyed in utterances, actions and gesture.⁴⁸ Assessing the more explosive moments of interaction in the assembly shows how the Covenanting agenda was not quite the *fait accompli* we imagine, but was often led astray by vicious interpersonal disputes that threatened to derail the whole meeting.

Following the examination of the commissions that had proved so contentious, the deportment of the assembly's membership underwent a number of drastic changes that underline the importance of emotion and the ways in which it was expressed to early modern Calvinists. Alexander Henderson, the moderator, moved the assembly towards voicing on whether it was entitled to discuss the position of the controversial Scottish episcopate. Hamilton interrupted Henderson's first attempt to get the assembly to affirm if it could judge allegations against the bishops, probably by standing to enter a protestation.⁴⁹ His own efforts to get a reading of the bishops' protestation on 27 November, by contrast, were greeted with 'much laughter' of derision by the assembly's members.⁵⁰ As Hamilton's protestations did not appear to shake Henderson's confidence or undermine the legitimacy of the assembly's actions, the gestural politics of the assembly swiftly changed.

⁴⁴ Edinburgh University Special Collections, Laing iii. 207, fol. 31.

⁴⁵ NLS, Wodrow Oct. X, fol. 19.

⁴⁶ Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 9; Richard Cust, *Charles I: A Political Life* (London, 2007), pp. 118-20.

⁴⁷ Alison Findlay, 'Prayer, performance and community in early modern Drama', in Joseph William Sterrett (ed.), *Prayer and Performance in Early Modern English Literature: Gesture, Word and Devotion* (Cambridge, 2018), p. 87; Ted Vallance, 'The captivity of James II: Gestures of loyalty and disloyalty in seventeenth-century England', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), pp. 849-50.

⁴⁸ Sarah Waurechen, 'Covenanter propaganda and conceptualizations of the public during the Bishops' Wars, 1638-1640', *Historical Journal*, 52 (2009), pp. 69-70.

⁴⁹ NLS, Wodrow Oct. X, fols 30-1.

⁵⁰ Spalding, p. 66.

Hamilton attempted to regain the moral high ground, for both himself and the king, through emphasising his moderation and the benevolent generosity of Charles I. He passed the clerk a declaration of concessions made by the king, including the discharge of the hated Prayer Book and Book of Canons. He asserted 'Now, I hope all these to all aspertions, anent change of religion, are declared to be unjust; so, if any change of religion had bein intendit, this Assembly had never been granted, nor yet these offers made unto yow'. He opined that 'I have not found that respect dew to ane Commissioner, and know what prejudicat opinion these here hes of me present'.⁵¹ He insisted that Charles I intended only 'the maintenance of the puritie of religion' and described the 'quyet maner' and implicit restraint of royal policy. This may have been an attempt to flush out royal support within the assembly, but it was performed with gestures of moderation.⁵² Hamilton then reminded his audience of his own self control, denying he had 'spoken any thing in passion ... albeit I be naturallie pasisonat; yet I thank God there hes not much passion escaped me heir'. While accepting his fallibility, Hamilton's deportment and words were all intended to represent the king's concessions in the way most likely to gain support. Hamilton's conduct was on a par with other public pronouncements that sought to 'appease moderate opinion' and reduce the detrimental impact of Laudian religious innovations on the status quo.⁵³

Leading Covenanters jockeyed for the centre ground by responding with gentle and deferential requests that Hamilton remain with the assembly. Henderson told the audience that 'in all thinges', the assembly 'shall be so moderat', that 'the word of God and reason shall seeme to proceed in everie thing, and that we shall not goe forward ane steppe, but as a clear light shall be holden out before us'.⁵⁴ One account suggested that Henderson's pleas to the commissioner were feigned, but his desire to appeal to a broader sense of moderation and restraint were genuine.⁵⁵ The Covenanter leaders continued, however, to press Hamilton to allow them to judge the bishops' conduct. After lengthy speeches to the commissioner, Hamilton threatened drastic movement: 'if they proceed in the censure of their persones and offices, I must remove myselfe'.⁵⁶

Hamilton's increasing frustration with the assembly was accompanied by a dramatic change in the way he chose to manifest his emotions. His conduct suggested that he was becoming increasingly impatient with the assembly.⁵⁷ Gilbert Burnet, recalling Hamilton's final moments at the assembly, recorded how the commissioner's 'Heart was so full of grief' that onlookers could easily observe 'by divers indications' in his speech and deportment.⁵⁸ The commissioner told the assembly 'the contrarietie of his steering affections, joy and greiff: joy that he saw the day wherein he might make good before the world, all that his Master had promised by him; greiff, that he could not bring this toylsome business to such ane end as he heartilie wished'.⁵⁹ From his chair of state, he began to weep. Hamilton's tears registered the severity of the situation in which he found himself, a fact not lost on other members of the assembly, some of whom felt moved to tears by the sudden shift in Hamilton's deportment.⁶⁰ Hamilton's emotional display underlines the amount of agency the King's commissioner had in dealing with the assembly but also theatrical power of tears in such a context.⁶¹ Finally, Hamilton rose to his feet and proclaimed the meeting to be closed, warning members that 'nothing be done ... praejudiciall to the king, his Majestie, his royal praerogatives or to anie of his subjects whatsoever'.⁶²

⁵¹ Peterkin, p. 142.

⁵² Chris R. Langley, *Worship, Civil War and Community, 1638-1660* (Routledge, 2015), ch. 1.

⁵³ William White, 'Parliament, print and the politics of disinformation, 1642-3', *Historical Research*, 92 (2010), pp. 726-7.

⁵⁴ Peterkin, *Records*, p. 143.

⁵⁵ John Spalding, *The History of the Troubles and Memorable Transactions in Scotland, from 1624-1645* (Aberdeen, 1830), p. 67.

⁵⁶ Peterkin, p. 143.

⁵⁷ Spalding, p. 67.

⁵⁸ Gilbert Burnet, *The Memoires of the Lives and Actions of James and William Dukes of Hamilton and Castleherald* (London 1677), p. 106.

⁵⁹ Baillie, *Letters*, 1, p. 141.

⁶⁰ Bernard Capp, "'Jesus wept'" but did the Englishman? Masculinity and emotion in early modern England', *Past & Present*, 224 (2014), pp. 107-8; Vaught, *Men who Weep and Wail*, p. 2.

⁶¹ John Scally, 'Counsel in crisis: James, third Marquis of Hamilton and the Bishops' Wars, 1638-1640', in John R. Young (ed.), *Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 18-34.

⁶² Edinburgh University Special Collections, Laing iii. 207, f. 67.

The gestural theatre of Hamilton's departure is well known, as the dignity of his exit was undermined by the cathedral doors being locked, forcing the commissioner to demand that they were broken down in order to leave. What is less discussed is how Hamilton's departure sparked a number of gestural and behaviour modifications in the assembly. The first response, as one might expect, was from the moderator who stood to deliver an encouraging oration, followed by a range of senior ministers and laymen standing to express their opinion. More dramatic was that the roll listing the names of the members of the assembly was then read by the clerk, who 'desired them to declare their opinions'.⁶³ Here, the previous invocations to silence were overruled and each member was asked to stand to verbally express their agreement to the assembly's continued sitting.

The divergence from protocol culminated in a remarkable piece of liturgical theatre that runs counter to the assembly's previous calls for moderation and reflects the place of emotionality in early modern Calvinism. The leaders' orations were immediately welcomed, or 'seconded', 'by the working of God's Spirit upone the hearts of some quho wer present, quho had not yet subscribed the Covenant'.⁶⁴ At least four men – a combination of noblemen and laity – stood and requested to be admitted to the National Covenant. One of the men, Lord Erskine of Dun, begged and wept as he 'confessed' his sin of failing to adhere to the Covenant.⁶⁵ Through his tears, Erskine apologised with a gestural metaphor by telling the assembly he 'would have taken that cause by the hand as soon as any of them did'.⁶⁶ Onlooking members of the assembly reciprocated and 'shed teares of joy' for such a providential sign of God's divine sanction of their actions. The other men, ministers who had preached to Scottish merchant congregations in the Netherlands, also approached from the seating at the far end of the table in the centre of the cathedral nave and asked to be received. Like signings of the National Covenant earlier in the year, these actions followed the trope of the prodigal son with an emotional outburst marking the final moment when the Holy Spirit moved their souls to conversion.⁶⁷ Presiding over the spectacle as moderator, Henderson completed the drama by approaching them, reaching out and taking them 'all by the hande' in a show of reconciliation and fellowship.⁶⁸ Extending the right hand was a gesture typically reserved for forgiving penitents in Reformed discipline and 'signified their welcome back into the community of the godly'.⁶⁹ While Alexander Henderson is well known for moderation in his written work, it is important to appreciate that Henderson (among many other Scottish divines) was not averse to more emotional forms of piety. This shift in the emotional register of the assembly was manifested in the gestures, speeches and behaviour of those present.⁷⁰

The emotional outpouring, its accompanying gestures and speeches served to galvanise the remaining members by reminding them of divine oversight of their proceedings. Robert Baillie observed the 'timeousness of God's comfort and mercies towards us' in offering such a change in the assembly's deportment at a time of great 'perplexitie'.⁷¹ Just after receiving the four men to the Covenant, Henderson 'desyred the whole audience for to admire God's approbatione and sealing of ther proceedings, that even at that instant, when they might have feared some shrinking and backsliding, because of the present rupture, He had moved the heartes of thes men'.⁷² This rare break of protocol reminded members of the power of God to introduce informality into their proceedings. Henderson's reference to a divine seal is

⁶³ National Records of Scotland [hereafter NRS], CH1/1/6, fol. 13.

⁶⁴ NLS, Adv. MS.33.2.1, fol. 14.

⁶⁵ John Row, *The Historie of the Kirk of Scotland, MDLVIII - MDCXXXVII*, ed. William Fleming (Edinburgh, 1842), p. 285.

⁶⁶ *The Memoirs of Henry Guthrie, Late Bishop of Dunkeld*, ed. G. Crawford (n.p., 1748), p. 47. Erskine of Dun's actions have some parallels with the appearance of the former Jesuit, Thomas Abernethy, in front of the Tables in Edinburgh in August 1638. Abernethy confessed his 'fearfull apostacie' and asked 'for Christ's sake' to be admitted to subscribe the National Covenant. Row, *Historie*, pp. 498-9.

⁶⁷ Nathan Hood, 'Corporate conversion ceremonies: The presentation and reception of the National Covenant', in Chris R. Langley (ed.), *The National Covenant in Scotland, 1638-1689* (Woodbridge, forthcoming).

⁶⁸ Gordon, 2, p. 4.

⁶⁹ Nikki M. Macdonald, 'Reconciling performance: The drama of discipline in early modern Scotland, 1560-1610', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2013), pp. 96-7.

⁷⁰ L. Charles Jackson, *For Kirk and Kingdom: The Public Career of Alexander Henderson* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leicester, 2012), pp. 257-8.

⁷¹ Baillie, *Letters*, 1, p. 145.

⁷² Gordon, 2, p. 4.

reminiscent of language around the sacramental power of the communion or baptism. Henderson hinted that this gestural and emotional drama either created, verified or simply reflected a divine bond between the members of the assembly and God. The assembly's unanimity was a powerful reminder that all of Scotland was in a covenanted relationship with the divine.⁷³

The assembly responded enthusiastically. The bodily posture of the assembly's members changed and, in a mirror image of some of the Covenant signings earlier in the year, members stood and 'with uplifted hand' swore to abide by the assembly's discussions.⁷⁴ Robert Douglas, minister of Kirkcaldy, recorded how this motion of standing with hands aloft was not solicited by the moderator but was done 'unrequyred' and in a voluntary fashion.⁷⁵ Members of the assembly were reliving the experience of signing the National Covenant earlier in the year, renewing their commitments in the charged atmosphere of the assembly. Conversely, those who may have not wished to stand and raise their hand – none of whom are mentioned in any of the surviving accounts – would have made themselves highly visible. Such moments remind us that 'the performance and action' of texts like the National Covenant are often more important than the document itself.⁷⁶

The absence of the King's commissioner certainly changed the dynamic of the assembly, but it did not remove the importance of moderation and decency. Disorderly passions remained 'mirrors' for political disorder.⁷⁷ Nor did such dramatic pieces of theatre contradict Henderson's calls for order: they sat alongside them. Leading Covenanters appreciated the ways in which the behaviour of members of the assembly would be increasingly scrutinised in order to undermine its legitimacy and Henderson was keen to bring the newly-galvanised meeting back to order. He made an oration that related explicitly to members' behaviour, especially concerning the assessment of commissions in the preceding days:

I must intreat yow, honourable and welbeloved, to consider yow are in the sight of God, who not only requires inward reverence, but also outward respect; because these who hath beene our old adversaries, and hath now declaired themselves to be so, hath spoken reproachfullie against this Generall Assembly, especially because of the *tumultuous carriage* of the Members thereof, when they speake concerning the suffrages. But that no such occasion may be given to them heirafter, let your carriage be grave as in the sight of God. *Keep yourselves quyet*; because ye ought to have your judgements exercised about the matter in hand, and elevating your mynds to God to send downe light.⁷⁸

He closed by recommending that those members intending to speak should 'expresse it with gravitie' and, preferably, do so one at a time. Henderson's message was echoed in the publication of *The Protestation of the Generall Assemblie* that explained the assembly's unwillingness to disperse following Hamilton's departure by stressing how all decisions made at the meeting 'shall be according to the word of GOD, the lawes and constitutions of this Church, the confession of faith; our pulpits, oath, and that measure of light, which GOD the father of light shall grant us, and that in the sinceritie of our hearts, *without any preoccupation or passion*'.⁷⁹ This was no mere polemical strategy: Like most Reformed divines in early modern Scotland, Henderson's desire for moderation was not in contradistinction to embracing the more affective forms of piety witnessed by Erskine of Dun's actions.⁸⁰ Scottish Calvinists could hold both to be critical aspects of practical divinity.

⁷³ R. Scott Spurlock, 'Boundaries of Scottish Reformed orthodoxy, 1560-1700', in David Fergusson, Mark W. Elliott (eds.), *The History of Scottish Theology*, 1 (Oxford, 2019), pp. 359-76.

⁷⁴ Row, *Historie*, p. 285.

⁷⁵ NLS, Wodrow Oct. X, fol. 35.

⁷⁶ Jane E. A. Dawson, 'Bonding, religious allegiance and covenanting', in Steve Boardman & Julian Goodare (eds), *Kings, Lords and Men in Scotland and Britain, 1300-1625: Essays in Honour of Jenny Wormald* (Edinburgh, 2014), p. 172.

⁷⁷ John Staines, 'Compassion in the public sphere of Milton and King Charles', in Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe & Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia, 2004), p. 103.

⁷⁸ Peterkin, *Records*, pp. 147-8. My emphasis.

⁷⁹ *The Protestation of the Generall Assemblie of the Church of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1638), n. p. My emphasis.

⁸⁰ Louise Yeoman, 'Heart-work: Emotion, empowerment and authority in covenanting times', unpublished PhD thesis (University of St Andrews, 1991), pp. 133-71.

The presence of Archibald Campbell, earl of Argyll, was a stark reminder of the necessity of good order. Argyll had originally attended the assembly in the marquis of Hamilton's retinue but returned after the commissioner's departure as a guest of the assembly. Like Hamilton, Argyll was lauded for his 'quiet deportment' while at the assembly.⁸¹ If his behaviour did not underscore his commitment to a decorous assembly, on 3 December he was more explicit. He stood in the assembly (the precise location in the cathedral interior is unknown) and warned members 'to speacke respectfully and sparingly of the King and his royal praerogative' telling them 'that ther wer spyes upon the Assembly, who tooke particular notice, and related all that was spokne, either in privat conference, pulpits, or Assembye, or whatever was done'.⁸² While this was partly a warning that 'the clergy should stay in their place', Argyll's speech warned those present about how their words, gesture, deportment and emotional utterance could all bring the assembly – and its decisions – into disrepute.⁸³ Careful maintenance of the *status quo* was necessary in such unusual circumstances.

Henderson's earlier attempts to obtain silence as affirmation were now renewed with a considerable degree of success. Ministers who had returned to Scotland after being tried by the High Commission in Ireland were accepted back into the fold with no debate, while the decision to annul previous 'incorrectly constituted' assemblies was passed 'without so much as ane hoist [cough]' in opposition.⁸⁴ Moreover, two more petitions to join the Covenanting cause were passed over with little comment, let alone the gestural theatre that accompanied the Erskine of Dun days before.

Nevertheless, the gestural and emotional genie was out of the bottle. Despite the assembly leaders renewing their recommendations for moderation and restraint, the highly choreographed demonstrations of emotion and movement witnessed after Hamilton's departure continued to encourage other, more spontaneous, outbursts on the assembly floor. On 12 December, the assembly heard allegations of erroneous doctrine against Henry Scrimgeour, the disgraced minister of Forgan in Fife. Unlike so many of the other ministers processed by the assembly, Scrimgeour answered the summons personally by presenting a written and oral defence. With 'many tears', the minister apologised for his conduct and appeared 'so penitent that he was most willing to undirgoe quhatsoever censure the assemblie could lay upon him to restoir God his glorie'.⁸⁵ Scrimgeour's tears, however, were divisive; his patrons were not as sympathetic to his plight as the onlooking ministers and laymen in the assembly and they demanded that he be deposed for misconduct. Despite being overwhelmed by Scrimgeour's demeanour and worried that the minister might struggle under the weight of the sentence, Henderson acquiesced to pressure and deposed Scrimgeour from his ministry.

It was not just ministers like Scrimgeour who became more emotional or passionate following Hamilton's departure. On 15 December, one minister complained in his recollections of the assembly that the whole day was spent in 'gangling' – wandering about – because of 'earnest and violent' attempts by lay members of the assembly to pursue certain ministers out of office.⁸⁶ The following week, on 19 December, the assembly received a request from the burgh commissioners of St Andrews requesting the transportation of the godly minister Robert Blair from the parish of Ayr. Upon the public reading of the petition, the commissioner from Ayr, John Stewart, protested 'with tears' that they should lose so godly and committed a minister.⁸⁷ Blair responded with prayers asserting how the success of his ministry in Ayr meant that he was 'as farr engaged in affection with Aire ... as any minister could be'.⁸⁸ Despite Henderson's efforts to channel the emotional and gestural theatre following the commissioner's departure, these episodes attest to how outbursts of pious tears could also derail the assembly's agenda.

The assembly was a microcosm of Scottish Protestant piety: while invoking the importance of moderation and restraint, members could also embrace more affective forms of behaviour. This could

⁸¹ *The Memoirs of Henry Guthrie, Late Bishop of Dunkeld*, ed. G. Crawford (n.p., 1748), p. 47.

⁸² James Gordon, *History of Scots Affairs*, ed. Alexander Thomson, 2 (Aberdeen, 1841), pp. 45-6.

⁸³ Mullan, *Scottish Puritanism*, pp. 306-7.

⁸⁴ Peterkin, p. 150; *Religious Controversy in Scotland, 1625-1639*, ed. David George Mullan (Scottish History Society, 5th ser., 11) (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1998), p. 147.

⁸⁵ NLS, Adv.MS.49/7/4, fol. 14.

⁸⁶ NLS, Wodrow Oct. X, fol. 67.

⁸⁷ Baillie, *Letters*, 1, p. 174.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

sometimes manifest itself quite dramatically. This was most notable in the liturgical theatre that accompanied the actions of the laird of Erskine, which precipitated a quasi-re-enactment of the Covenant subscription. If most members of the assembly 'had little chance to open their mouths except when voting', then it is quite clear that their body language and behaviour were understood as offering affirmative signs of their commitment to the cause.⁸⁹ This leaves the intriguing possibility that some of those who remained present at the assembly used the lack of verbal affirmation as a way to avoid public scrutiny and to sidestep delicate issues of conscience.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, such responses indicate that Calvinist views of gesture and deportment went far beyond mere repression towards a more complex relationship, in which affective forms of gestural and emotional piety could be embraced while moderation was still promoted.⁹¹

Unsurprisingly, opponents were keen to emphasise the behavioural details of the assembly and were quick to criticise the more unruly aspects of the members' conduct. Walter Balcanquhall, Dean of Rochester, who left the assembly alongside Hamilton, mocked how the elderly Andrew Ramsay, minister of Edinburgh, stood on a stool or form to make 'a very great bragge' about the lawfulness of the assembly and the election of lay elders.⁹² Balcanquhall's criticism of the deportment of the assembly's members went further, as he noted with some horror how those present were not properly dressed. In a well-known letter sent to Hamilton, William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, told the Commissioner that Henderson 'hath shewed himself a most violent and passionate man, and a Moderator without Moderation', who had failed to bridle his own affections and the more offensive tendencies of his brethren.⁹³ A satirical account of the assembly published in the following century undermined the members' intellectual capacity by describing one minister who, sitting next to Andrew Cant, minister of Pitsligo (and later a prominent Covenanter leader in Aberdeen), 'touched him on the Elbow' and gave him advice during one speech.⁹⁴ Like Hamilton during the assembly, opponents revelled in highlighting indecorous behaviour and emotional excess of the meeting's members, pointing to it as a symptom of the Covenanters' moral and political failings.⁹⁵

Faced by such attacks, the period just prior to and after the closure of the assembly was marked by a rewriting of the prominence of gesture, behaviour and emotion. More affective forms of piety were largely expunged from the narrative and prominent members of the assembly instead celebrated the orderliness and uniformity of its proceedings. Andrew Ramsay, the sixty-four-year-old minister of Edinburgh, warned members that despite the assembly's achievements 'let us not sing a requiem to ourselves, nor yet be insolent in our carriage, but behave ourselves wiselie and prudentlie towards our superiors'. For Ramsay, this meant recommending that 'our carriage be modest and our speach seasoned with grace'.⁹⁶ As Ramsay sat down, Henderson rose to his feet again and agreed with his colleague's advice by recommending 'it becomes us not to be insolent'. Modesty was one of the key traits expected of the Reformed ministry: delegates at the assembly were advised to walk circumspectly and to not boast of the Assembly's achievements.⁹⁷

⁸⁹ Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, pp. 125-6.

⁹⁰ Alexander D. Campbell, *The Life and Works of Robert Baillie (1602-1662): Politics, Religion and Record-Keeping in the British Civil Wars* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 41-4.

⁹¹ Pace Peter Burke, 'The language of gesture in early modern Italy', in Jan N. Bremmer & Herman Roodenburg (eds), *A Cultural History of Gesture: From Antiquity to the Present* (Ithaca, 1992), p. 79n.

⁹² Balcanquhall, *Large Declaration*, pp. 246-7.

⁹³ Burnet, *Memoires*, pp. 108-9.

⁹⁴ Anon., *An Account of the Proceedings of the General Assembly at Glasgow 1638* (no place, 1724), p. 13.

⁹⁵ The attacks on extreme behaviour by observers of the Glasgow Assembly bear some resemblance with Laudian divines' hostility toward what they considered emotional excess in puritan devotion in England. See Angus Gowland, 'The problem of early modern melancholy', *Past and Present*, 191 (2006), pp. 106-7.

⁹⁶ Peterkin, *Records*, p. 192.

⁹⁷ Michelle B. Brock, "'Pastors according to mine heart': Constructing the ideal minister in post-Reformation Scotland", in Chris R. Langley, Catherine McMillan & Russell Newton (eds), *The Clergy in Early Modern Scotland* (Woodbridge, forthcoming); Neal Enssle, 'Patterns of godly life: The ideal parish minister in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English thought', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 28 (1997), p. 15; Janay Nugent, 'Reformed masculinity: Ministers, fathers and male heads of households, 1560-1660', in Lynn Abrams & Elizabeth L. Ewan (eds), *Nine Centuries of Man: Manhood and Masculinity in Scottish History* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 39-52.

Crucially, the leaders of the assembly stressed how their orderliness in transacting business was a reflection of God's approval of their activities. Henderson observed 'I feir it should be hard for us to keip ourselves within boundes. But the Lord, knowing our weaknes, keipes us in this temper'. He wondered 'if we cary ourselves worthily ... who knows but He will graceously grant us all our desires'.⁹⁸ Henderson's comments underline how decorum in the assembly was directly connected to God's overseeing of the event. In his final sermon, Henderson told his audience:

Ye know we use to observe, that there be two sorts of speech or sayings: one that is secret within our breasts, and which we keep in silence within ourselves, as long as we think convenient; another is the expression of our thoughts, when we think meet to make them known. Like unto these two, there is in the Lord, (1.) His purpose, counsel, and decree, kept secret within him self. (2.) There is the expression, or the manifestation and proclamation of his purposes and decrees unto the children of men, after what manner, and in what measure it seems good unto his wisdom.⁹⁹

In one of the committees held after the assembly had formally concluded, Robert Douglas preached on Psalm 23 and told the members around him 'The Lord hes gathered us, that we serve the Lord with one consent, and we were like to be scattered with wolves but God be thanked he hes scattered them and gathered us'.¹⁰⁰ He recommend that the assembly's members 'send the joy of our love to rejoice in God our Saviour, let us rest in our Love, and boast in no other'. The assembly's decisions, in this scheme, were overseen by God.

Accounts of the assembly published after it closed further flattened the rich gestural and emotional detail of the event. In its place was a carefully crafted narrative emphasising unity, loyalty to the King and a divine mandate for the assembly's actions. One of the assembly's last acts was to devise a letter to be sent to Charles I to explain its proceedings after Hamilton's departure. The letter explained that following the 'extreamitie' of the commissioner's leaving:

we made choise rather of that course which was most agreeable to your Majesties will revealed unto us, after so many fervent Supplications, and did most conduce for the good of Religion, your Majesties honour, and the well of your Majesties Kingdome; then to give way to any sudden motion, tending to the ruine of all: wherein wee are so far from fearing the light, least our deeds should be reproved, that the more accuratly that we are tryed, and the more impartially our using of that power, which God Almighty, and your sacred Majestie, his Vice-gerent had put in our hands, for so good and necessarie ends, is examined, we have the greater confidence, of your Majesties allowance...and so much the rather, that being in a manner inhibited to proceed in so good a work, we doubled our diligence, and endeavoured more carefully then before, when your Majesties Commissioner was present, in every point, falling under our consideration, *to walke circumspectly*, and without offence, as in the sight of God, and as if your Majesties eyes had been looking upon us, labouring to proceed according to the word of God, our confession of Faith, and nationall oath, and the laudable constitutions of the lawfull Assemblies of this Kirk.¹⁰¹

The letter omitted to mention the effect of extreme displays of gesture that had proved so important in confirming the members' membership in a divinely-sanctioned meeting. Instead, the letter underlined how 'the harmonie and unanimitie was rare and wonderfull' and that for members to reject the motions of the assembly would have meant being 'found fighting against God' and rejecting His approbation of

⁹⁸ Peterkin, p. 192.

⁹⁹ Alexander Henderson, *The Bishops Doom: A Sermon Preached Before the General Assembly which sat at Glasgow anno 1638* (Edinburgh, 1762), n.p.

¹⁰⁰ NLS, Wodrow Oct. X, fols 88-9.

¹⁰¹ *The Principall Acts of the Solemne Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1639), p. 49. My emphasis.

the assembly.¹⁰² The pamphlet's author and the clerk of the assembly, Archibald Johnston of Wariston, recorded in his diary that the concord in the assembly was a 'great and wonderful work of God'.¹⁰³ The unity of the assembly reflected a divine mandate that gave the actions taken at the meeting legitimacy. The assembly's harmonious discussions reflected unity and, above all, its divinely sanctioned nature. Moreover, the lack of significant detail about indecorous behaviour represents a deliberate attempt to steer the Covenanters' message in a broadly appealing direction.

The concept of unity continued to be a central theme as the assembly's decisions in the acts and decrees of the assembly that were promulgated across regional synods, presbyteries and parish kirk sessions in the first three months of 1639. The text of the acts continued to reference how the assembly's decisions had divine sanction, but they omitted to mention the gestural and emotional acts that were used to convince members of the assembly of the fact. For example, the preface to the acts referenced how the assembly's decisions represented 'notable manifestations of the divine presence' and completed only with the 'assistance of Christ'.¹⁰⁴

Flattening the gestural texture of the assembly had an important purpose. For its leaders, the Glasgow Assembly was a shop window for presbyterianism in which emotion, gesture and deportment had a key role to play in countering allegations that adherents to presbyterian ideas were radicals. In anticipation of the meeting, Robert Baillie wrote that 'the superstitious designs of our adversars are greatly promoved, for they proclaim us men, who are content with all confusion and open misorders in Gods house and service'.¹⁰⁵ While he was writing here about his opposition to Laudian liturgical reforms, this may explain his horror when seeing the deportment of people when the assembly opened in November 1638. Covenanter leaders were very aware that their opponents would mock any perceived impropriety in their conduct, especially in as prominent a forum as a General Assembly. In 1642, Henderson was at pains to tell readers that matters in all general assemblies were discussed 'in an orderly way' and that no member should be interrupted while speaking 'unlesse he speak too much'.¹⁰⁶ The broader concern of Henderson's pamphlet was to show how presbyterianism was not about 'disorder and confusion' or anything 'destructive...[to] all Ecclesiasticall and Civile Order'.¹⁰⁷ The behaviour of members of any Church Assembly in Scotland therefore reflected directly on the wider presbyterian project. The impulse to promote a moderate, decorous presbyterianism was probably also behind the decision to draw attention away from the ecstatic forms of prophecy that had obsessed Covenanter leaders earlier in 1638, but that were so easy for opponents to attack.¹⁰⁸

Despite the ease with which Scottish Calvinists could move between urging moderation to highly affective, emotional forms of piety, members of the Glasgow Assembly understood how their gestures and deportment remained the primary way for opponents to criticise their loyalty to the monarch and highlight the unruly underpinnings of presbyterian ecclesiology. As a consequence, subsequent records unpicked much of the assembly's rich gestural tapestry and worked to stress the concord, amity and divine sanction given to the assembly's activities. Unfortunately, viewing these records in isolation is rather misleading because it deletes the gestures and actions that convinced members of the assembly that God was watching over them and guiding the actions of the assembly in the first place. It reflects how the Covenanting movement, very early on, was acutely aware of the need to win public support for their endeavours.

The preoccupation with deportment and moderation seen at the Glasgow Assembly in 1638 was not unusual.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, General Assemblies and other gatherings of leading clerics and statesmen formed

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 49-50.

¹⁰³ Archibald Johnston of Wariston, *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, 1632-1639*, ed. George Morison Paul, Scottish History Society (Edinburgh, 1911), pp. 400.

¹⁰⁴ *The Principall Acts of the Solemne Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1639), preface.

¹⁰⁵ NLS, MS.1908, fol. 281.

¹⁰⁶ Alexander Henderson, *The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1642), p.33.

¹⁰⁷ Alexander Henderson, "The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland" (Edinburgh, 1642), epistle.

¹⁰⁸ Louise Yeoman, 'A godly possession? Margaret Mitchelson and the performance of covenanted identity', in Chris R. Langley, *The National Covenant in Scotland, 1638-1689* (Woodbridge, forthcoming).

¹⁰⁹ The moderator of the General Assembly held in Edinburgh the following year urged members to 'sitt downe, and keepe your ordor'. See NRS, CH1/1/8, fol. 25.

distinct emotional arenas in which emotion, deportment and gesture met. The records detailing such events are not ordinarily the focus of historians of emotion but exploring them reveals a multi-layered context where the manifestations of emotion – movements of the body and rhetorical flourishes – were constantly on display and well understood. The context of the Covenanted protest in 1638 made ecclesiastical leaders at the Glasgow Assembly more attuned than ever to the legitimising power of gesture and behaviour. Leaders of the Covenanted movement knew that opponents, a wider politicised public and, above all, God were scrutinising their every move. In the face of such opposition, they were eager to present the normality and moderation of their actions. The assembly's invocations to history and precedent attest to its desperation to not appear as a disruptive force but to bring about a restoration of a lost Protestant purity.¹¹⁰ The assembly's obsession with decorum can be seen in the same terms.

What was unique to the context of this meeting of ecclesiastical authorities was the way in which some of the most dramatic behavioural flashpoints – considered by some as divine providence – effectively stretched the limits of the assembly's emotional arena. The emotional outpouring that followed the departure of James Hamilton, commissioner to Charles I, served to underline divine sanction for the continued sitting of the assembly, but also changed the emotional and behavioural register of the gathering. This opened the floodgates for other important elements of behavioural theatre throughout the remainder of the assembly. Ultimately, however, while gestural and emotional outbursts were useful in galvanising those present at the assembly, these actions were largely written out of subsequent official narratives of the meeting. As such an easy target for their opponents' ire, key moments of drama were replaced with more generic references to God's providence and divine sanction for the assembly's activities. Such a rewriting of behaviour at the assembly reveals the ways in which early modern Calvinists understood the significance of gesture and bodily deportment and would readily amplify (or understate) certain aspects of their behaviour to achieve political, religious or personal goals.

¹¹⁰ Chris R. Langley, 'Reading John Knox in the Scottish Revolution, 1638-1643', in Chris R. Langley (ed.), *The National Covenant in Scotland, 1638-1689* (Woodbridge, forthcoming).