

# TORCHBEARERS OF THE TRUTH



A. S. HORNE



## **THE AUTHOR AND HIS BOOK**

Over the years, the Rev. A. Sinclair Horne has made himself thoroughly familiar with the events of Scottish history which relate to the period of the Covenanters, and he is frequently being appealed to for lectures on the basic principles and outstanding personalities of the Covenanting movement. At the request of the Scottish Reformation Society, which he serves as Organising Secretary, he has made a selection, of these lectures available to a wider public in this attractive book.

The Society send it out with the prayer that it will serve to warm the hearts of many to Christ, and bring them into the goodly succession of the "men of the moss-hags" who, in testing times, counted not their lives dear unto themselves that they might win the day 'for Christ's Crown and Covenant'.



# **Torchbearers of the truth**



# **TORCHBEARERS OF THE TRUTH**

Sketches of the Scottish Covenanters

by

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# Preface

Originality is not claimed for these sketches of the Covenanters, but they are presented from the desire to awaken interest in a subject which is in danger of being lost to our present generation. They appeared originally to help young people study the story afresh in the 'Reformed Presbyterian Witness' and 'The Bulwark'. The articles as they now appear have been expanded. I must express my gratitude to the Scottish Reformation Society for publishing them in this more permanent form, thus making them available to a larger reading public.

The story of the Covenanters is a fascinating one, and, having travelled the length and breadth of Scotland to locate monuments and learn afresh about the background and location of many of the incidents recorded, I myself have often been stirred to the depths. Often I read the story just where the incidents took place and this added greatly to the interest. May the recalling of the events and personalities of the Covenanting times be used to stir up not only a new interest in the 'Men of the Covenant' but a new devotion to the God of the Covenant!

Gratefully I acknowledge the help given me in this, my first venture in publication. To Mrs. T. Moffett, M.A., who helped with the first draft of the sketches; to Mrs. G. Fairley, who typed the manuscript; to Professor G. N. M. Collins, B.D., who carefully checked the complete manuscript and made valuable suggestions; and to Mr. Murray Miller, D.A., who designed the cover and the maps, I express my cordial thanks.

A. SINCLAIR HORNE.



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# 1 Background of Events

*If we search for the secondary causes of such an excitement . . . the whole might be traced to three main sources of dissatisfaction and alarm—Arminianism, Popery and Despotism.*

*Dr. McCrie.*

No one can read the history of the Church in Scotland during the latter part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries without realising the important place the subject of Covenants has in the story.

There were many religious covenants or 'bonds' during this period and these must be referred to if the story of the Covenanters is to become meaningful to the present day reader. Some writers have shown that around 31 Covenants or 'bonds' were drawn up during the years 1556 and 1683. Not all of these were as important as the National Covenant of Scotland, for often they were the work of a few individuals, whereas the National Covenant, as the name suggests, involved the whole nation. There was, however, one thing common to them all, namely the pledge to defend and support the true religion against all enemies whether that enemy were popery or prelacy. Space does not allow detailed discussion of these various Covenants but reference must be made to the major bond upon which the National Covenant of Scotland was based.

Following the great work of Reformation in Scotland there was the movement known as the Counter Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church was determined not to allow the Reforming movement, which had broken the shackles of a dead religion, too much power. Through subtle intrigue, involving influential nobles, it set about to undermine the new-found freedom and faith which were being experienced throughout the land. Its set objective was the suppression of Protestantism amid the establishment once again of the Roman Catholic faith. Through secret agencies they almost succeeded. Such men as Andrew Melville, that doughty successor of John Knox as leader of the Reformed Church, saw the danger, and made the position clear regarding both the soothing words of the king and the intrigues of the bishops. It was Andrew



Melville who had been instrumental in having an Act passed in the General Assembly of 1580 declaring that the "office of a Bishop as commonly understood was without warrant or authority from Scripture." He also called for all who held such positions to demit office. Such conflicts were the breeding-grounds for the discontent of the time, and it was the King who stepped in and suggested that some kind of Confession of Faith be drawn up. This became known as the King's Confession or Covenant of 1581. It is a strongly worded document, in which the writers declared their adherence and allegiance to the Protestant faith and their abhorrence of the Roman Catholic Church. "We detest and refuse the usurped authority of that Roman Anti-Christ upon the Scriptures of God, upon the Kirk, the civil magistrate and conscience of men." By this Covenant, notice was served that the strategy of Rome would be observed very carefully and nothing would be surrendered which had been gained by the Reformation. From then on the struggle was to be a grim one to preserve the Protestant faith. It is noted that between 1581 and 1600 no less than thirteen of these Covenants were signed.

Behind all this, however, was the figure of the King. James VI openly asserted the 'Divine right of Kings' and was determined that he would have no 'competing authority in the land.' This competing authority in his eyes was the Kirk and its Presbyterian polity. So a new conflict arose which became associated with the title of the 'Two kingdoms'. Again it was Andrew Melville who took up the issue. It was not in the solemn surroundings of the General Assembly, but in the very 'lions' den' of Falkland Palace itself that he faced the king.

Addressing the monarch as "God's silly vassal", he said, "Sir. I must tell you there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland. There is Christ Jesus the King, and His Kingdom the Kirk, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a King, not a Lord, not a Head, but a member."

These views expressed by Andrew Melville were not peculiar to Scotland. Churchmen in other lands shared them; but for Scotland they were to inspire the stirring events of the next

century. Alas! The words so pointedly spoken to James made little impression upon him, for he was still intent on pursuing his policy of paying lip-service to the Church's legislation while at the same time seeking to exert complete domination over it. Thus a new and deeper issue entered into the conflict, that of political-ecclesiastical relationships. This conflict remained throughout the whole period of James' reign.

Charles I, who succeeded to the throne went a step farther. As Hector Macpherson puts it, 'James had chastised the Scots with whips; Charles seemed bent on chastising them with scorpions.' Not only was he bent on completely overthrowing Presbyterianism but he also sought to deprive the people of their civil liberties. He introduced a book of Canons which set out very clearly the consequences of non-acceptance of the King's supremacy. No one was to be allowed to teach or hold office in school, college or university unless he first of all took the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy. Private meetings for the expounding the Scriptures were prohibited since the Bishops were invested with the right to expound the Scriptures. A new liturgy was introduced which was nothing less than a Mass book. This enraged many people and in St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh an uproar was begun by some women, and from such action came the revolution Scotland was ready and waiting for. People flocked from every quarter to Edinburgh outraged by the innovations, and conferences were held in different places throughout the city. From these scenes of protest there emerged the most notable of all the Covenants, the National Covenant of Scotland. It drew very largely upon the King's Confession, or Covenant, of 1581, and enlarged upon it by drawing attention to the various Acts of Parliament which had established the Reformed Faith and form of Church government.

The scene on 28th February, 1638, must have been a moving one as men from every part of the land gathered together to swear to this Covenant. Let Dr. Hugh Watt take up the story here. 'There, (in Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh) after devotional exercises by Alexander Henderson, and a speech by Loudon, Johnston of Warriston produced the Covenant. At



four o'clock the signing began—the noblemen beginning and after them the 'barrons'. It was nearly eight when the last had signed. From the contemporary records it is perfectly plain that all the proceedings of that afternoon were within the Church, and that the gathering consisted of the nobility, greater and lesser, of the realm. It is perfectly plain also that scribes were set to work to pen other copies, that the signing of the ministers began on the next day in the Tailor's Hall, and that of the other delegates and visitors to Edinburgh on Friday, 2nd March. From the available evidence it appears that it was not until the 1st of April that any general signing began in Edinburgh, though during March there were notable scenes elsewhere.'

The pent-up emotion of the people was let loose with the signing of this Covenant. 'Some wept aloud, some raised a shout of exultation as from the field of battle and victory, some after their signatures added the words 'till death', some opened their veins and subscribed their names with their blood.'

This rightful appeal from the people to the king did not go unheeded and Charles tried to stall every effort for a return to rightful assemblies of the Church. Ratcliffe Barnett tells us that a 'great revival of religion followed the signing of the Covenant', and caught on this wave of enthusiasm arrangements were made for the holding of a General Assembly. Despite the King's efforts to prevent it, the Assembly was called.

Many have criticised those who attended the Assembly as being 'poor, plain, outed folk', but a look at the list of commissioners shows that the cream of Scottish character from every sphere was represented. The proceedings were carried out with solemnity and with the full authority of the people of the land. The trials of the Church over the past twenty years were recited and the personal misdemeanours of those responsible for this situation were read. The Assembly then took steps to purge the Church of scandalous and immoral ministers and set its priorities right. Alexander Henderson who was Moderator of the Assembly said at the close, "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho, let him that rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite".

This was open defiance of the King and his policies, but the people were prepared to take the consequences, rather than submit to an alien form of religion and surrender their precious liberty both in the civil and religious spheres.

It was against such a background that the struggle of the Covenanters took place—a struggle which brought forth some of the noblest leaders of the Scottish Church. It is to some of these leaders, ministers and martyrs that the following sketches are devoted.

## 2 Samuel Rutherford

*Scotland's sky will clear again: her moment must go over . . . Christ is but seeking a clean glistening bride out of the fire.*

*S. Rutherford.*

The name of Samuel Rutherford stands high in the history of the Covenanting period, even although it does not appear in the lists of Covenanting martyrs. His record of tireless industry during those troublous times, and his suffering in the cause of the Covenant make him worthy of inclusion among the very foremost of those noble martyrs whose names are inscribed on stones and monuments throughout Scotland. He has been described as a man who was 'centuries ahead of his time', and these are not empty words, for no one exerted a greater influence than he on both Church and nation.

As we consider the situation which prevailed in Scotland prior to the birth of Rutherford in 1600, we can see the beginnings of that struggle which was to continue long after his death. King James VI had set himself to become absolute head of the nation by seeking to add the headship of the Church to that of the State. To achieve this he had to crush and overthrow Presbyterianism. By subtle intrigue on the part of James and greed on the part of the nobility, the king went a long way towards accomplishing his purpose. The nobles by receiving gifts of land from James, land which originally belonged to the Church, were becoming the tools of the king. As a result, resistance to the moves of the king was gradually weakened, and far-reaching consequences were to be experienced throughout Scotland. Many faithful ministers were banished from their Churches and the whole structure of the Church government was weakened. The General Assembly was powerless to avoid the manipulations of the king, who had reminded them that he had the power to determine matters of policy within the Church without even consulting the Assembly. Gradually James was able to engineer the change from Presbyterianism to Episcopacy within a very short time.

Such events did not go unnoticed by the people and they were quick to register their protest by non-attendance at their



places of worship and their refusal to have their children instructed by those ministers who had accepted the new order. By these steps they showed the authorities that, although the monarch could force them to do certain things, they were justified, on conscientious grounds in refusing to do other things. Thus the seventeenth century in Scotland began with an omen of what was to follow in its long and weary course.

It was at the beginning of the century that Samuel Rutherford was born. His early years were spent in the village of Nisbet in Roxburghshire. These years, among the most impressionable of any child, must have been very difficult and, as Rutherford grew up the events just described would not go unnoticed. It seems rather a harsh coincidence, that in 1600, the year of Samuel Rutherford's birth, another historic person was born who was to affect the life of the Church profoundly, but adversely, at the time when Rutherford's influence was greatest. This was the son of the king, who later came to the throne as Charles I, and who was born in Dunfermline. On more than one occasion these two were to be locked in conflict in the struggle for civil and religious liberty.

Rutherford it seems owed little to his native Nisbet, for years later when writing to John Scott, minister at Oxnam he says, 'My soul's desire is that the wilderness, and that place to which I owe my first breathing, in which I fear Christ was scarcely named, as touching the power of godliness, may blossom as the rose.' He received his early education at Jedburgh and from there went to Edinburgh University. In 1621 he graduated in Arts, and some time later was appointed Professor (or Regent) of Latin at the University. Charges of irregularity led to his resignation from office. Not much is known of Rutherford's private life from this time, except that for him it was a time of real crisis. In any event his attention turned to Theology, and the experiences of this period laid the foundation for his future ministry in many fields.

In 1627 he was inducted to his first charge. It was the lovely little parish of Anwoth in Kirkcudbright, and the people of Anwoth never forgot his ministry of nine years spent among them. James Urquhart, minister of Kinloss, said of him, 'I

never knew one in Scotland like him. He seemed to be always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always teaching in the schools, always writing treatises, always reading and studying.' What a wonderful testimonial this was to the man who knew sorrow as few have ever known it at the beginning of a life's work. This perhaps explains his ready sympathy with those who were in need and sorrow. His wife suffered for 13 weary months before she died and no doubt the great burden of the home as well as the cares of the parish fell upon Samuel Rutherford. He loved his people, and none more than the boys who looked after the cattle, with whom he delighted to converse. His ministry in Anwoth brought him into contact with all levels of society, and not a few nobles and members of high ranking classes were counted as intimate friends. To all, whether high or low, he gave the same devoted service.

As a preacher Samuel Rutherford had the ability, despite poor elocution and a voice that was shrill at times, to arrest the attention of his audience. Wodrow's well known story of the English merchant, who describes the three preachers he heard in Scotland, bears repeating, with particular reference for our purpose, to Rutherford. "I went to St. Andrews, where I heard a little fair man, who showed me the loveliness of Christ." His dominating theme was the loveliness of Christ, and His love in all its breadth and length, its depth and height. Wodrow describes him as 'one of the most moving and affectionate preachers in his time or perhaps in the age of the Church'. It is, however, worthy of note that despite his winsome preaching and hard work, he saw little result for his labours. He put it like this in one of his letters, "I see exceeding small fruit of my ministry, and would be glad to know of one soul to be my crown and rejoicing in the day of Christ".

He was not just a preacher and pastor, however, for it is clearly seen that he was never far from the heart of controversy. The inroads of Arminianism and the power of Episcopacy were very real at this time, and Rutherford withstood the pressures from these forces both by writing and preaching. His books were not generally acceptable, and many of his critics have

denounced the language he used against these systems. It was, however, the age of controversy and the language was suited to the need. In one letter to Marion McNaught, he lets us into the heart of the matter when he says, "The Lord hath let and daily lets me see clearly how deep furrows Arminianism and the followers of it draw upon the back of God's Israel (but our Lord cut the cords of the wicked). Zion saith, "The Lord hath forsaken me and my Lord hath forgotten me . . . all outward helps do fail; it is therefore for us to hang ourselves as our Lord's vessels, upon the nail that is fastened in a sure place." Shortly before his main challenge to these forces in the Church, a new Bishop was appointed in Galloway. This man was no friend of Rutherford and did everything possible to thwart the efforts of the servant of Christ to retain the purity of the Reformed faith. Inevitably a clash had to come and when it did, it had serious repercussions for Rutherford and his people in Anwoth. He was summoned to appear before a court in Wigtown to answer the charge that he preached treasonable doctrine. His defence was made in true accord with his knowledge of the Word of God and his understanding of the kingly office of Jesus Christ. He refused to conform to the acts of Episcopacy, and the presence of the Bishop did not make matters easier for Samuel Rutherford. The court sentenced him to be deposed from his charge, but their decision could not be ratified until the High Commission court met in Edinburgh. Despite the weighted evidence against him, Rutherford did find one friend 'from the highlands of Argyle' who sought to help him in his hour of trial. He was banished to the city of Aberdeen almost immediately after the confirmation of the sentence. Banishment seems a strange word when we apply it to modern times and modes of transport, but for Samuel Rutherford, nothing could be more bitter than to be separated from his loving people in Anwoth.

No doubt those who proposed this sentence hoped that by sending him to this stronghold of Episcopacy, where his company would not be too congenial, Rutherford would have time to re-think his position. What was expected to cool his ardour and zeal had the opposite effect. It intensified his love for his



Lord. His place of banishment was 'Christ's palace' and it was from the place so described that he wrote most of his letters which have been preserved for us to day, and which are a real source of devotional inspiration. In these we see a man who was able to rise above his trials and rejoice that he was counted worthy to suffer for his Lord. He suffered much at the hands of the doctors of the University, both in private and public disputations on the controversies for which he had been banished, but they did not have it all their own way! It was a time of refining and he came out of it with faith undimmed and zeal unquenched. As Andrew Bonar puts it, 'he came out of it unscorched and as many of his letters show, greatly advanced in every grace.'

During this period, events in Scotland had taken a new turn, and once again the Reformed Faith was triumphant in the land. As a result of these events Rutherford's banishment came to an end, and after two years he returned to Anwoth. The National Covenant was signed in 1638 and this event was to mark another phase in the religious life of Scotland.

Later that year, after a brief stay in Anwoth, he attended the historic General Assembly, held in Glasgow Cathedral, and found that the Church required his services elsewhere. He was appointed Professor of Theology and later, Principal of New College, St. Andrews. But it was with sorrow that he left his dear people in Anwoth. Writing to Lady Kenmure he refers to this grief, "My removal from my flock is so heavy to me that it maketh my life a burden to me; I never had such a longing for death. The Lord help and hold up sad clay."

The position to which he had been exalted did not in any way cause him to forsake his calling as a preacher of the Word; in fact, he made the rather unusual request to the Assembly at his appointment, that he be allowed to preach regularly every Sabbath in his new sphere. What his time in St. Andrews meant for the Church in Scotland cannot be fully measured. Many were to share his fellowship and come under his influence, among them, many who in later years were to bear the brunt of the struggle for the Crown-rights of the Redeemer. All that they learned at the feet of Samuel Rutherford equipped them

for the work of contending for the faith. He occupied himself so much in the things of the kingdom in St. Andrews, that one wrote of it as 'a Lebanon out of which are taken cedars for the building of the house of God throughout the land.' But his influence was not confined to St. Andrews, nor indeed to Scotland. He was a commissioner to the great Assembly of Divines at Westminster which met from 1643 to 1647. As in all his work his diligence at the Assembly was marked by many. One has referred to it in these terms, 'For the parts which God has given us, Mr. Samuel's presence was very necessary.' He had one of the ablest minds and was one of the most scholarly exponents of the Reformed faith. On the death of Alexander Henderson in 1646, the mantle of leadership of the Scottish representatives fell on Samuel Rutherford. Despite numerous invitations to occupy other charges, and theological chairs at other universities, he refused to leave the helm of the Church in Scotland. Crisis was brewing, and his gifts and leadership were never more required than at this time.

During the period of the Westminster Assembly, Rutherford's most controversial book appeared. This was *LEX REX*, i.e. *The Law and the Prince, or King* as many have rendered it. This work was to mark out Samuel Rutherford as one suspected of treasonable activities, at least in the eyes of supporters of the royal house of Stuart. Later the book was burned by the public hangman as a warning of its treasonable nature. It ran to forty chapters, and every argument was solidly backed home to forty chapters, and every argument was solidly enforced by Scripture. Its instruction regarding the office of the king, although objectionable to Charles, sank deeply into the minds of the people of Scotland and fortified them for the struggles which lay ahead in their claim for religious and civil liberty, which Rutherford claimed was theirs by right.

The events of the 1650's were of great importance for Scotland. The crowning of Charles II at Scone was but the prelude to a series of events which were to have the unhappy consequence of splitting up lifelong friendships. As a result of these happenings, which would require a great deal of space to explain, owing to the frequency of such terms as, 'Protesters';

'Malignants'; 'Resolutioners'; and 'Remonstrants', Samuel Rutherford found himself on the opposite side to his friends, David Dickson and Robert Blair. He was a Protester and they were Resolutioners, and this cleavage grieved him sorely. Writing later he said, "A doubt it is if we shall fully have one heart until we enjoy heaven." This wrangle went on among the theologians but the land enjoyed comparative quiet. But it was the lull before the storm.

In 1660, Charles was brought back from banishment and restored to the throne, as he put it, 'untrammelled by Acts or Covenants.' Among his first orders was the burning of Samuel Rutherford's books, and Rutherford himself was summoned to appear before the Committee on Estates, but was unable to do so because of illness. In his absence he was found guilty of treason, and reserved for trial at Parliament. This Parliament, now known as the notorious, 'Drunken Parliament' abolished Presbyterianism, annulled the Covenants and brought in the infamous Rescissory Act, rescinding the legislation of the previous 20 years. Things were black indeed and it seemed inevitable that Rutherford must suffer a martyr's death. He prepared his final works, knowing that his race was run. Those closing days were full of wonder for him, as he meditated upon the glory of Immanuel's Land. In its light, all suffering and sorrow were softened.

When the messenger brought the summons from Parliament, he said, "I have got a summons to appear before a superior judge and judicatory, and it behoves me to answer my first summons, and ere your day arrive I shall be where few kings and great folks come." The fearless warrior faced death with a triumphant confidence. His faith was strong and his vision clear. As he thought of his Saviour, his expression of this inward serenity gripped the hearts of those who listened to his words. Among his words are these, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with His likeness."; "O for a well tuned harp." His old friend Robert Blair visited him and Rutherford anxious that the old differences be lost, he said to Blair, "I feed on manna, I have angel's food. My eyes shall see my Redeemer." He did not forget those whom he was leaving behind and in



whose hands the torch of truth would be held. His words of exhortation to them are these, "Pray for Christ; preach for Christ: Do all things for Christ; beware of men pleasing, the chief shepherd will soon appear." His last utterance is retained in the poem by Mrs. Cousins, "Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land."

He died on March 29th, 1661. The summons of the earthly king remained unanswered, and the evil intentions of his enemies were frustrated. Before he died he was in truly prophetic mood when he said, "This night I shall close my door and fasten my anchor within the veil and I shall go away in sleep before five o'clock in the morning."

Samuel Rutherford could have said with Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" Throughout his life he was conscious of his weakness more than of his success. Even in his wonderful ministry he had learned not to count success by large numbers as Mrs. Cousins puts it.

'If one soul from Anwoth meet me at God's right hand  
Then heaven will be two heaven's in Immanuel's land.'

At times he appears intolerant, at others as gentle as a dove. None knew this more than he himself for he said, "I am a man of extremes". Yet amid all these things, one thing above all others must be said, that when oppressed with weakness and disappointment he never flinched and to the end he remained loyal to the Lord he loved and served. His faithfulness, even when there was nothing to encourage, is one of the enduring lessons of his life. The secret lay in his deep, personal faith as expressed in the now familiar words,

'O Christ He is the fountain,  
The deep sweet well of love,  
The streams on earth I've tasted  
more deep I'll drink above,  
There to an ocean fullness  
His mercy doth expand,  
Where glory glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land'

### 3 First Martyrs

*The lover of freedom can never forget  
the glorious peasant band  
His sires, that on Scotia's moorlands met  
Each name like a seal his heart is set  
The pride of his fatherland.*

*Hugh Brown.*

After the death of Rutherford the struggle between the King and the Church was carried a stage further. Up to this point there had been verbal broadsides fired, but now the contest was one in which blood was to be shed. This struggle was to have serious consequences for the Church in Scotland over the next twenty-nine years. The period from 1660 to 1662 has been called a 'sifting time', and events certainly justify the description.

After the restoration of Charles II to the throne, it was not long until he showed what his intentions were. At this time the work of the Church was being hindered by divisions, and combined with this was the fact that the ruling nobles were experiencing a very lean time. These two things though in one sense widely separated were to play an important part in the next few years in Scotland. Other factors were involved which served as a prelude to days of bitterness, struggle and persecution, the result of which was to crimson the hills and moors of Scotland with blood.

With the Church to such an extent weakened by internal division, it was not too difficult for Charles to win over the nobles by bribery and corruption. These men, who had little sympathy with the Church, were only too ready to accept forfeited estates and places of importance to restore their much wanted wealth and prestige. But thereby they became simply tools in the hand of the king. Gathering his forces skilfully and carefully, Charles set about the task of setting himself up as supreme in every department of civil and religious life. His Commissioner to the Parliament called in 1661 was an equally astute, though in many ways unprincipled, man. Through the Earl of Middleton, Charles saw his aims achieved sooner than he had deemed possible. His first step was to formulate an Oath of Allegiance which was to touch every aspect of life, from

University graduation to Church affairs. This measure gave Charles the right to interfere in the affairs of the Church, which inevitably meant the breakdown of the Presbyterian system of Church government.

During this Parliament some three hundred and ninety three Acts were passed. Many of these which were of benefit to the country, are now largely forgotten. But the Rescissory Act is not forgotten. By this one Act, Middleton was able to break finally the power of the Presbyterian system and any power the Covenanters had. By it Parliament revoked, 'the pretendit Parliaments keepit in the years, 1640, 1641, 1644, 1645, 1647 and 1648, and all acts and deeds done in them . . . the same to be declared voyd and null.' Looking at these dates one cannot forget their significance. Charles had proudly declared that he was coming to the throne, 'untrammelled by Acts or Covenants', and these 'Acts or Covenants' were now annulled. Thus he almost dealt the death blow to the Church in Scotland. I say almost, for Charles was yet to discover that stubborn quality of the Scot which will not surrender something dearly bought and highly prized.

Against the background of these dreadful nine months of 1660–1661 it is easier to understand why men and women during the next twenty-nine years did not count their lives dear unto themselves, in their contendings for Christ's Crown and Covenant. The printed records of this period are ample evidence against those who were seeking, as one put it, "to instal their king as a sort of Pope." For those who do not have access to these records there are in Churchyards and lonely places, monuments and stones acting as solemn reminders of those days.

Among the most notable are those found in Edinburgh. The place of execution in the Grassmarket is still marked by an upraised circular stone with the simple words, 'On this spot many martyrs and Covenanters died for the Protestant Faith.' From the Grassmarket one turns towards Greyfriars Churchyard just one hundred yards away, where many of those who were martyred were buried, to quote the inscription on the monument



‘mixt with murderers and other crew,  
 Whom justice justly did to death pursue  
 But as for them no cause was to be found  
 Worthy of death; but only they were found  
 Constant and steadfast, zealous; witnessing  
 for the prerogatives of Christ their King  
 Which truths were sealed by famous Guthrie’s head  
 and all along to Master Renwick’s blood.’

Below the famous inscription this note is added:—

‘From May 27th, 1661, that the Noble Marquis of Argyle suffered to the 17th February, 1688, that Mr. James Renwick suffered, were executed at Edinburgh about one hundred of Noblemen, Gentlemen, ministers and others, noble martyrs of Jesus Christ—The most part of them lies here.’

From Wigtown in the south, to the Orkney Islands such monuments recording many or just one single name are the silent witnesses of those perilous years.

As can be seen from the inscription in Edinburgh, the purge was under way even before the decision of the Parliament regarding the Rescissory Act. The Marquis of Argyle, was the first to be chosen. He was one of Scotland’s leading noblemen, and indeed just ten years previously he had the honour of placing the crown on the head of Charles at Scone when he accepted the Covenants and promised the maintenance of true spiritual religion. Now the tables had turned. From being one of the king’s intimate friends he was now treated as one of his avowed enemies. This brave nobleman, who had given unswerving support to the policies of the Covenanters, was to show equal bravery in the face of death. When he was sentenced he faced his judges and declared “I had the honour to set the crown upon the king’s head and now he hastens me to a better crown”. His execution was to be the first of many such solemn events to be witnessed in Edinburgh. His companion in prison was James Guthrie who was to suffer a similar end just one week later. These two had much in common, not least the dignity they showed when facing their adversaries. Archibald Campbell, the Marquis of Argyle died not only as a gentleman but as an outstanding Christian. His closing words

on the scaffold surely bear this out, when with no trace of bitterness, he said, "I bless the Lord, I pardon all men as I desire to be pardoned myself." He always sought to show that his loyalty to the king could not be questioned, but he also showed where his first loyalty lay. "It is the duty of every Christian to be loyal; yet I think the order of things is to be observed as their nature. Religion must not be in the cockboat, but in the ship. God must have what is His as well as Ceasar what is his". The fearless example of this man must have meant much to those who in days to come were to face a similar fate.

From the noblemen Charles turned his attention to the ministers. We have noted his treatment of Samuel Rutherford; the next on the list was James Guthrie. Little is known of the early life of this man except that he was very small in stature and gained for himself the name of 'the little man that could not bow.' It is clear, however, from what we know of his life and ministry that what he lacked in physical build was more than made good in the realm of the spiritual. He was one of the giants of this period both intellectually and spiritually. One writing about him who had noted his gifts of learning said that 'if James Guthrie had continued fixed to his first principles he had been a star of the first magnitude in Scotland.'

He had been brought up in the strict Episcopalian tradition and his father cherished the hope that one day his son would become a minister of this Church. But this was not to be, for while he was studying at St. Andrews, James Guthrie made contact with Samuel Rutherford and his attendance at such activities as Prayer Meetings and Society activities soon altered the whole course of his life. This was the beginning of an eventful ministry for this fearless warrior for the Reformed Faith. Two months before he died he told that fateful Parliament of 1661, "until the year 1638 I was treading other steps: and the Lord did then recover me out of the snare of Prelacy, Ceremonies and the Service Book". In this year he passed his trials, and settled in his first pastorate in the Border town of Lauder. But before going to Lauder a strange event took place, strange in the way that it cast a shadow on James Guthrie's life. It was to him a prophecy and how truly it was fulfilled. Taking

opportunity to show which side he was on, he signed the National Covenant, but on his way to sign, he passed the public hangman. This troubled him a little; but his decision was taken and he threw in his lot with the persecuted Kirk.

His ministry in Lauder lasted from 1638 to 1650 when he moved to Stirling, the grey fortress town of Central Scotland. The Church of the Holy Rude is a church with a long history, and those who act as guides to the visitors take great pride in mentioning the fact that it was here James Guthrie ministered, and point to the very pulpit in which he preached. Behind the Church there is a statue of James Guthrie, not an outstanding work, but fittingly situated in the place where he is remembered most for his faithfulness to the Word of God and to the Crown rights of the Redeemer.

He is not only remembered for his wholesome ministry in the pulpit, but also for the way in which his home was ordered. The Manse at Stirling, Alexander Smellie tells us, was a 'little Church of God'. Those who lived closest to James Guthrie and his wife have handed down to us records which show that this man was no mere 'pulpit Christian', but everything about him was marked by devotion to his Lord and Master, in the pulpit, and in the work of the Church in general.

He was an active man, both by sermon and pen. One of the works which came from his pen in Stirling was 'The causes of the Lord's wrath against Scotland.' This was a book which took its place alongside the great 'Lex Rex' of Samuel Rutherford and suffered a similar fate, that of being burned by the public hangman. To hold this book was regarded as treason to King and Government. Very soon James Guthrie was to find the opposition ranged against him. When someone questioned him regarding his disowning of the King's authority in the realm of the Church, his answer was clear and definite. "Christ being the Head of the Church, it behoves us that to Him only we render obedience."

He was imprisoned for a time, and his denouncing of those in authority was to bring him further trials. He had taken a very bold step in that in his own Church he read the Church sentence of excommunication on the Earl of Middleton. That

day, before he was to undertake this difficult and unpleasant task, he received a letter requesting him to delay the excommunication. It had come from Charles himself. Whatever were the contents of the letter Guthrie went through the task and after the sermon proclaimed the excommunication. As the news spread and the reasons for this action detailed it was soon clear that James Guthrie had added another to his list of enemies. The Earl of Middleton's scheming ways and the manner in which he had inveigled himself into a position of power with the king was not glossed over by Guthrie as he delivered what was the Assembly's verdict that day. Middleton for his part was not to forget it.

Soon there was a head on clash with Charles himself. Guthrie rendered to the king the obedience which was right and proper, but where the king's commands clashed with his allegiance to Christ then Guthrie was Christ's man through and through. There could be no compromise and Guthrie maintained this principle throughout his life. It cost him much; even those he had counted as friends turned against him; and in 1657, this courageous man was deposed from his charge by the Assembly whose verdict he had been asked to declare just a short time previously. A strange turn of events if ever there was one.

Guthrie was a true patriot and at no time did he give any indication of being a disloyal subject of the King. He had many interviews with Cromwell at this time, and set forth the position of the Church of Scotland, when the Protector, it would seem, was about to foist Independency upon Scotland. Those who were not only strong Presbyterians but strict Covenanters would have none of this, and, though they endured much hardship as a result, James Guthrie and others made Cromwell realise just where they stood. Whatever emerged from these discussions with the Lord Protector, one thing is certain, he never forgot James Guthrie, for it was he who when referring to him spoke of him as the 'short man who could not bow.' James Guthrie also went to London to defend the King's right against Cromwell and he remained a loyal royalist so long as the King did not attempt to interfere in the affairs of the Church.



Indeed his capture came when he and a number of his own spiritual kinsfolk were gathered in Edinburgh to draw up a paper of supplication to the newly restored King. There was no sign of any underhand movement. Their desire was clearly indicated in the paper, which was merely a plea that the King would do all in his power to conserve the Reformed Faith in the land. The wording of the document is most impressive and it concludes thus, 'It is our desire, that your Majesty be like David, a man after God's own heart; like Solomon, of an understanding heart to betwixt good and bad; and like Jehosophat whose heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord; like Josias who was of a tender heart and did humble himself before the Lord.' Alas! for them and for Scotland, such pleadings were of no avail. Charles did not think of theocracy as Guthrie and his companions had portrayed it. Middleton had men despatched to the house and James Guthrie and his companions were captured with the exception of one man who escaped. He was taken to Edinburgh Castle and later taken to Stirling Castle where he was held for six months. James Guthrie was never set free again and his confinement was never relaxed during those six months.

He appeared before Parliament on two occasions, in February and April of 1661. He conducted his own defence and had such a wealth of knowledge of the law and various acts of Parliament that he baffled his lawyers with his knowledge. He had six charges to answer under the general charge of treason. In his defence he made it quite clear as to why he had taken the action complained of and gave his authority for so doing. "I never did propose or intend to speak or act anything disloyal, seditious or treasonable against His Majesty's person, authority or government, God is my witness; and what things I have spoken, written or acted in any of these things wherewith I am charged hath been merely and singly from a principle of conscience, that according to the light given me of God, I might do my duty as a minister of the Gospel. But because the plea of my conscience alone, although it may extenuate, cannot wholly excuse, I do assert that I have founded my speeches, writings, and actings in these matters, on the Word of God, and

on the Doctrine, Confession of Faith, upon the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant betwixt the three kingdoms. If these foundations fall I must fall with them." The trial dragged on until the time came when he made his final plea to his judges to come to a decision. It was a moving utterance, "I humbly beg", he said, "that having brought so pregnant and clear evidence from the Word of God, so much divine reason and human laws, and so much of the common practice of the Kirk and Kingdom, in my defence, and being already cast out of my ministry, out of my dwelling and maintenance, myself and my family put to live on the charity of others, having now suffered eight months imprisonment, your Lordships would put no other burden upon me. I shall conclude with the words of Jeremiah, 'Behold I am in your hands, do to me what seemeth good to you': I know for certain the Lord hath commanded me to speak all these things; and that if you put me to death you shall bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon the inhabitants of this city.

"My Lords, my conscience I cannot submit; but this crazy old body and mortal flesh I do submit to do with it whatever you will, whether by death, or banishment or imprisonment or anything else; only I beseech you to ponder well what profit there is in my blood, it is not the extinguishing of me, and many others, that will extinguish the Covenant and work of Reformation since the year 1638. My blood, bondage, or banishment will contribute more for the propagation of these things than my life or liberty could do, though I should live many years."

The judges took counsel together. Some voted for banishment, but nothing short of death would satisfy the revengeful Middleton. Guthrie was sentenced to be hanged at the Cross with the date of his execution still to be fixed.

When his sentence was announced he turned to his judges and said, "My Lords, never let the sentence affect you more than it does me, and never let my blood be required of the King's family". So, far from gaining the mitre that his father had dreamed about, he was to gain the martyr's crown.

Desperate efforts were made to save Guthrie, for he was looked upon as one of the indispensable leaders of the persecuted Kirk. Some had ideas which would have achieved his father's longing as they induced him to renounce his position and accept a bishopric. Such things, however, were insufficient to turn Guthrie in the slightest. In fact he made a declaration that if any thought he would 'recede from these (authorship of the Causes of Wrath and the Supplication paper) they have wronged me as having any ground from me to think or report so.'

June 1st was fixed as the date for the execution and no one showed more courage than did James Guthrie as the day approached. He had seen the Marquis of Argyle leave for his execution, and later he confessed to his wife that he himself was more fortunate than Argyle "for my lord was beheaded, but I am to be hanged on a tree as my Saviour was."

On the evening prior to his execution he took time to dictate a few last letters and then retired to sleep. His faithful companion James Cowie asked about four o'clock in the morning how he was "Very well" answered James Guthrie, "this is the day the Lord hath made; let us be glad and rejoice in it." What a triumphant way to greet his day of execution!

Later that day as the drums began to roll their beat of death James Guthrie was led to the scaffold. It was a moving scene as he and Captain William Govan who was to die with him, marched up the High Street to the place of execution. When he had gone a few steps up the ladder, James Guthrie halted to make his final speech. "I take God to record upon my soul," he declared, "I would not exchange this scaffold with the palace and mitre of the greatest prelate in Britain." As he climbed higher up the ladder his voice was heard loud and clear as he said, "Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God my Holy One? I shall not die". Then with the final acts carried through he lifted the napkin from his face and shouted, "The Covenants, the Covenants, they shall yet be Scotland's reviving."

After his death his body was removed from the scaffold and his head cut off and hung on the Netherbow which stood just a few yards from John Knox's house in the High Street.

Tradition has it that after his death Middleton was driving through the Netherbow and drops of blood from Guthrie's head fell on to his coach. Nothing it would seem could ever remove these stains from the coach. A weird tale no doubt but there is one incident which brings a homelier touch to the scene of tragedy and death. It concerns little Willie Guthrie. While in prison James Guthrie took his young son and spoke to him concerning what was about to take place, "Willie", he said, "the day will come when they will cast up to you that your father was hanged, but be thou not ashamed lad, it was in a good cause." Could this have been why young Willie, after his father's head had been hung on the Netherbow, often resorted to that place so that he could look upon his father's face? No doubt he was reminded very deeply what it meant to be a Covenanter's son. The death of his father was a sore trial to the men whom Guthrie had led, but it inspired them to greater things, making the timid heroic and the weak strong. Even in death he furthered the cause he loved so much.



## 4 The Pentland Rising

*Then may we trust His guidance  
Trust Him with faith serene  
His guidance e'en through failure  
like the men of Rullion Green  
Stewart Robertson.*

Events following the death of James Guthrie made life well-nigh intolerable for the Covenanters. The fateful Rescissory Act was beginning to make its effect felt in the land. It would be true to say that its aim was to purge the land from all influences stemming from the National Covenant, and the Solemn League and Covenant. Presbyterianism was to be superseded by Episcopacy. Those staunch adherents of the principles of John Knox, Andrew Melville and Alexander Henderson refused to accept this policy which was being forced upon them. Their great predecessors would no doubt have reacted in the same way. The situation was further aggravated by the passing of another Act of Parliament which placed almost impossible demands upon the ministers.

Summarised briefly, these were,

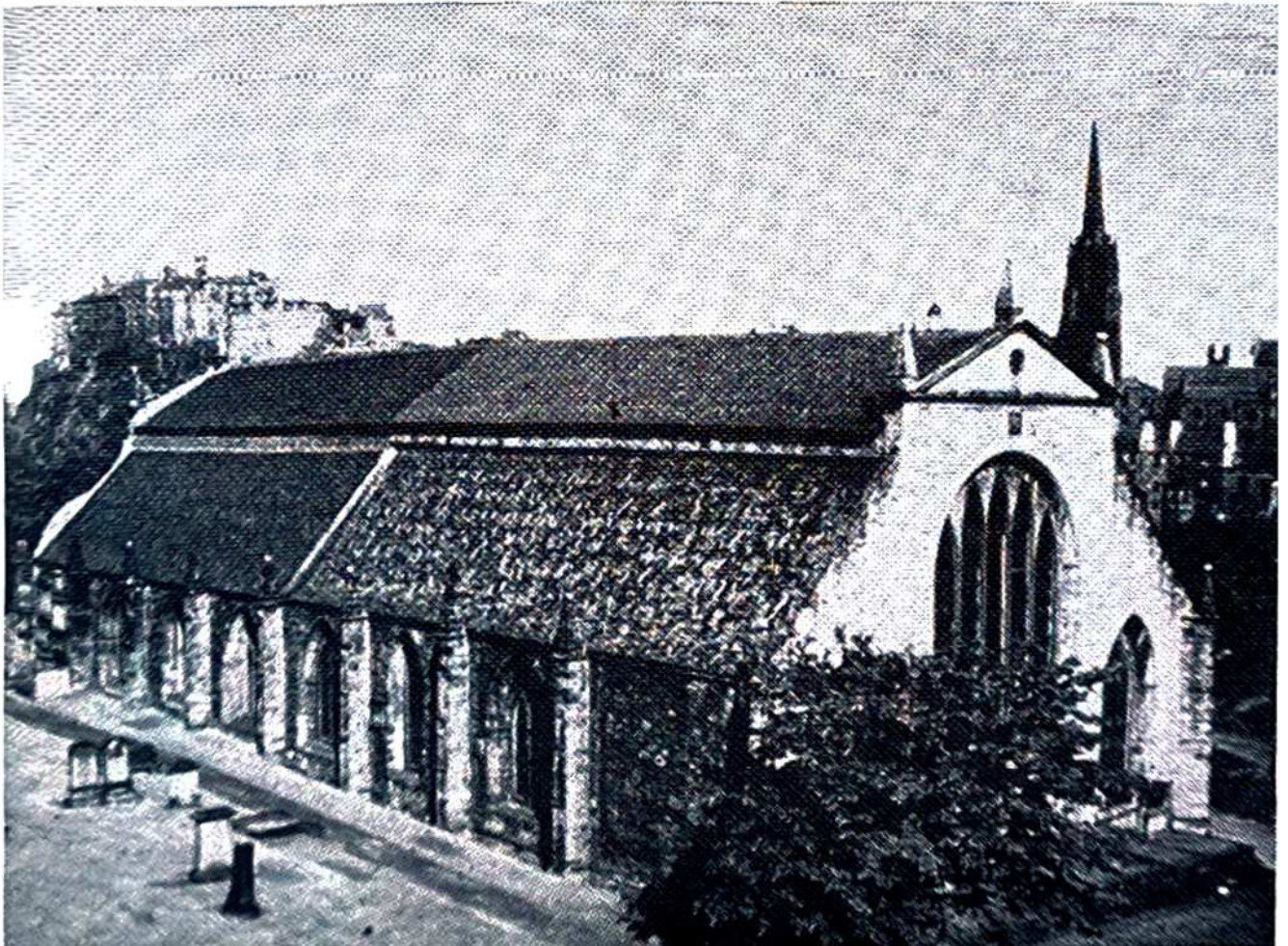
- (a) Public sins of King and Parliament were not to be mentioned in prayers or sermons.
- (b) Episcopacy was to be acknowledged, and,
- (c) No edict of the King would be questioned.

As can be seen these demands were in effect a call to the unconditional surrender of the Covenanters, and a renouncing of the principles which had motivated their stand all along the pathway of their history. The King had also decreed that every minister ordained since 1649 would have to receive presentation from a Bishop or Patron. Furthermore, a royal proclamation was made in October 1662 setting out all these separate items of legislation in more precise terms. This was brought to the people and not least to the ministers. Refusal to accept these terms would bring hardship, but the mood was such that many did not have even a second thought as to what their course of action should be. It meant not only banishment from their pulpits but also from their manses, but they reckoned that it was better to worship in the open fields, in the



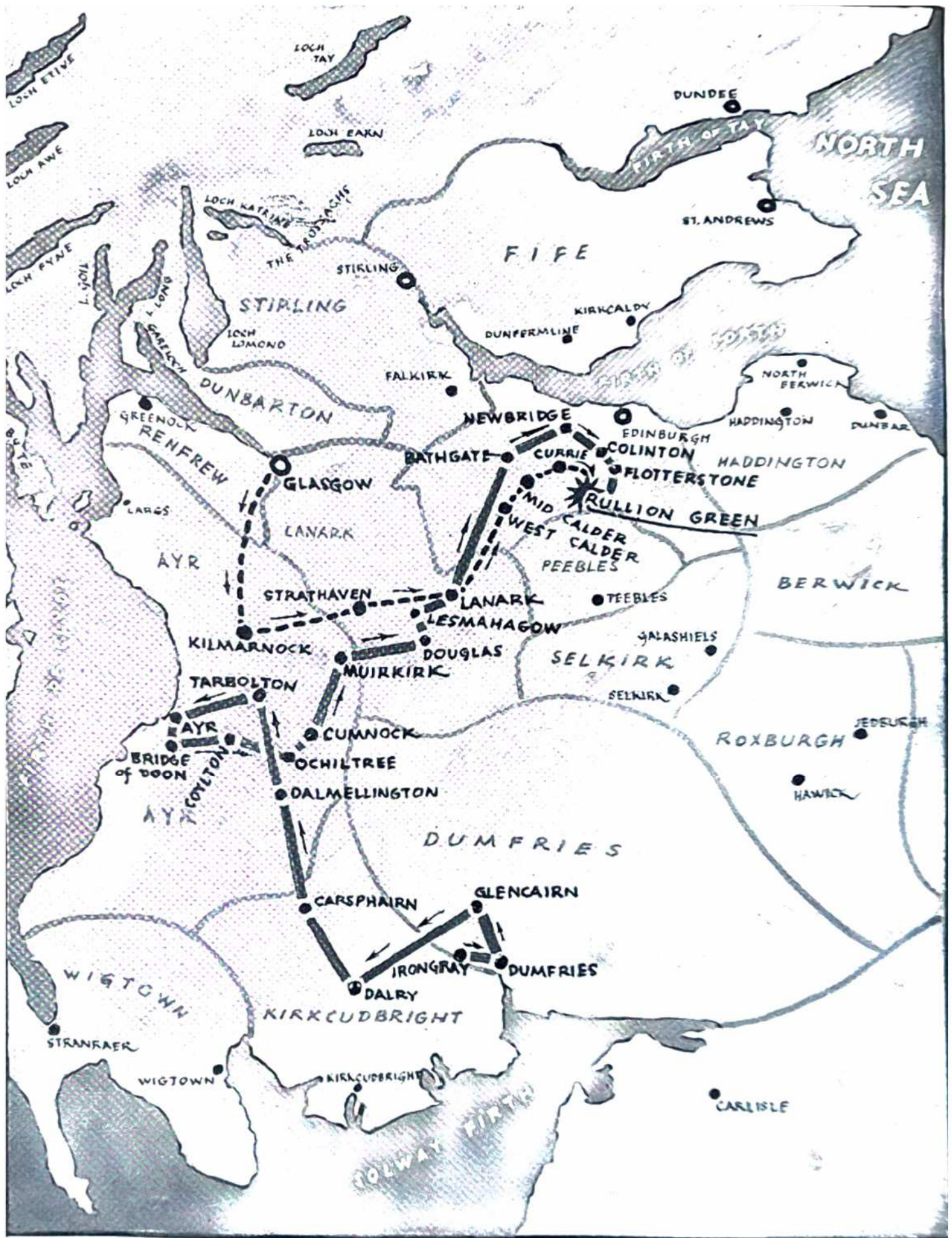


Andrew Melville before King James. (Page 10).



Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh. (Page 11).





Map showing route of Covenanting and Government forces at Battle of Rullion Green. Government -----, Covenanters ————, (Page 33).

glens and dales of their beloved land than to submit to such tyrannical demands.

On the last Sabbath of October, 1662, 200 ministers preached their last sermons from their pulpits. It was a day of lamentation and sorrow. In many cases the people followed their ministers far from the village and one records that "in more than one place the air was rent with their bitter wails." A few weeks later another 200 ministers joined them. To make the situation even more perilous, the authorities had decreed that anyone who was found where 'unwarrantable preaching and praying was taking place would be guilty of sedition.' This decree was never rescinded all through the dread years of the Covenanting struggle and was enforced in the most bitter fashion, with tortures which were among the most barbaric ever known.

If one blots out this background, it becomes easy to stigmatise the Covenanters as 'intolerant' and to regard them as a group of fanatical nationalists. But when viewed against this background such an estimate is unjust and unkind when dealing with men and women who were prepared to give up their all to maintain the Crown Rights of their Redeemer.

It was against this background of oppression that the Pentland Rising took place. The battle ended on the slopes of the Pentland Hills, and has been named the Battle of Rullion Green, but it began in Dalry in Kirkcudbrightshire. Plundering and torture were being carried out in this area against those who had not conformed to the decrees of the authorities. In Dalry one old man was found, who refused to attend the Parish Church and the usual penalty was being exacted. One record tells us, 'that having arrested the absconding defaulter they were about to bind him and set him bare upon a hot iron grid, there to torment him in his own house.' Four Covenanters, who had been hiding in the hills, came into the village for some refreshment, when they heard the news of this action. They moved quickly. Reaching the house, they challenged the action of the soldiers, and swords were drawn. One Covenanter took his pistol, and loading it with broken pieces of the stopple of his tobacco pipe, fired. Some pieces entered the



body of one soldier as one record shows, 'ten pieces were afterward removed by a surgeon from the body of one of the soldiers.' The encounter may seem amusing to us, but with the firing of that pistol the battle commenced. There was no turning back for the Covenanters.

Events moved quickly. Moving towards Dumfries, the Covenanters ordered a company of soldiers to surrender, which they did. Gaining support all along the way, they assembled in Irongray Churchyard and formed themselves into a volunteer army. The next stop was Dumfries where Sir James Turner, their arch persecuter, was stationed. The Covenanters knew that Sir James would take terrible reprisals for the action at Dalry and it was with a view to availing themselves of the element of surprise that they marched to Dumfries. It was about nine in the morning of the 15th November, 1666 when they approached the town. Turner was aroused by the clatter of horsemen in the street below his house and looking out demanded their business. He was not long in knowing that it was his surrender the Covenanters demanded. Details of Turner's reaction have been preserved for us. 'Several of them, especially Neilson of Corsock, told me that if I pleased, I should have fair quarter. My answer was, I need no quarter, nor could I be prisoner, being there no war declared. But I answered, that prisoner I must be, or die; and therefore if they wished me quickly, to come down stairs.' Turner did as requested and was met with a mixed mob. Some were determined to keep their word that no harm should befall Turner, but others 'presented a pistol or carbine,' and would have shot him immediately. Reason prevailed and Turner was held prisoner. After celebrating the King's health at the Town Cross they then passed out of the town, little knowing what the next few days held for them. That evening after seeing Turner more fitly attired for the journey, since he had been captured in his night attire, they set off on the long, weary march. Turning northwestwards through Glencairn, they came to Carsphairn where they remained until the 17th November. At Dalmellington they met John Welch, the ousted minister of Irongray, who had some conversation with Turner. The records of

Turner indicate that Welch, 'prayed for my conversion and that repentance and remission of sins might be granted me.'

From here the party moved to Tarbolton where volunteers from Ayrshire joined forces with them. Hopes were mounting that their venture would be successful and some even went as far as to suggest a march on Glasgow. News had been received that General Thomas Dalziel, who was later to be the scourge of the Covenanters, was in the city, and considerable forces would be joining him the next day. Instead of advancing on Glasgow, they turned toward Ayr. By this time their numbers were about 700. Here a most valuable recruit joined them in the person of Colonel James Wallace. He had considerable experience of action in the field of battle and his joining the Covenanters gave them new hope and promise. Wallace organised his forces and they set off once again. Through Coylton, Ochiltree and Cumnock their route was planned. It was when they halted at Ochiltree, Colonel Wallace tells us, that 'after prayer to God for direction what to do next, it was concluded that we should march eastward. For there was no staying where we were, and there was no expectation of any further help from the south and west.'

This step was necessitated by the fact that the King had received news of the uprising and had spoken of it as a 'formidable insurrection' and troops were being rushed under General Dalziel's command to crush the rebellion. Wallace was doing everything he could to avoid a direct confrontation with Dalziel and his men, hence the delay, and the planning of the next strategic move. From Cumnock the company moved to Muirkirk and there they began to encounter the rigours of the wintry weather. It was hard going over the rough and mountainous roads as the force moved eastwards towards Lanark. On the 24th November a council was summoned to listen to the pleas of the fainthearted in the company. Wallace again writes, 'We met together and after most serious incalling of the name of God . . . without one contrary voice all resolved on this, that the coming forth to own that people in Galloway, they were clear, was of the Lord . . . So there was no more of that.'

Among other proposals discussed was the possibility of solemnly renewing the Covenants on the Sabbath Day at Lanark. This they did 'with as much joy and cheerfulness as may be supposed in such a condition.' By now the force had reached a total strength of eleven hundred men. Their arms were a strange mixture; muskets, pikes, scythes, pitchforks, swords; some simply had 'staves, great and long.' The confrontation with Dalziel was not far off as the forces seemed to close, but contact was avoided until Pentland. From Lanark the Covenanters marched wearily towards Edinburgh, stopping at Bathgate to rest and pray. Edinburgh was still their objective, but in the city plans were being drawn up which did not indicate a very hospitable welcome for the 'rebels'. On 21st November a proclamation had been issued against anyone who assisted the rebels, and, in many places, mobilisation of the Government forces had taken place. No person was allowed to pass in or out of the city without permission. Such news for the insurgents was both dismal and hopeless.

On 27th November the company reached Colinton just outside the city and here they hoped others would join them. Instead they were met by men who tried to dissuade them from continuing the march. Others who held out vain promises of help tended to discourage rather than encourage the marchers.

At this point negotiations were entered into with Dalziel through an intermediary called Blackwood. Wallace did not trust Blackwood although he used his services. The letter sent by the hand of this emissary explained the grievances of the Covenanters and the reason for their march. The communication was passed to the Council; but this body was wholly dissatisfied with the terms of the letter and their only concession to the Covenanters was that if they laid down their arms they would be allowed 'to petition for mercy.' This act of surrender was equally unacceptable to the Covenanters and in the early hours of 28th November they moved to a position of safer surroundings. The old records describe the night as being a 'sore night of frost and snow' but the morning of the 28th was a 'fair frosty day'. From Colinton the forces moved along the road to Flotterstone and at the point called Rullion Green the

company halted. Here they were to face the might of Dalziel's company.

While the Covenanters were at Colinton, Dalziel had pushed behind them through the glen and as a result he was able to cut off their line of retreat. Very soon they appeared in full view of the Covenanters and they tried to move to higher ground. Reaching Turnhouse hill the Covenanters prepared to engage the enemy. They encouraged themselves with the words of the Psalms, and Psalm 74 seemed much on their lips and in their hearts at this time. Imagine the scene. Nine hundred men, weary though they were, singing these words:

'O God, why hast Thou cast us off?

Is it for evermore?

Against Thy pasture-sheep why doth

Thine anger smoke so sore?"

The first thrust was made and Colonel Wallace's men repulsed it successfully. The ranks of the Government forces were broken. They retreated to lick their wounds but Dalziel realising that daylight was fading gathered his forces together and hurled them at the Covenanters. They were met by a firm line of Covenanters, but sheer superiority of numbers threw the Covenanting force into confusion. With darkness falling there was no time to rally, and many of the insurgents taking advantage of the gathering gloom broke from their ranks and fled the best way they knew. So the fifteen days rebellion ended on the slopes of the Pentlands and over fifty of the Covenanters were left lying dead on the blood-stained snow.

The authorities did not relax their pressure against the insurgents for many months and during this time the 'prisons and executioners had their prey.' The battle was lost, but not the cause, as the inscription on the monument at the site of the battle reminds us:—

'A cloud of witnesses lies here,  
Who for Christ's interest did appear  
For to restore true liberty  
Overturned them by tyranny  
And by proud prelates who did rage  
Against the Lord's own heritage



## TORCHBEARERS OF THE TRUTH

They sacrificed were for the laws  
Of Christ their King; His noble cause  
these heroes fought with great renown  
By falling gained the martyr's crown.'

## 5 Hugh McKail

*Bear aloft Christ's royal banner  
Crimsoned o'er with martyrs blood  
It hath waved through lapse of ages  
Undestroyed by fire or flood.*

*Mrs. H. S. Menteath.*

One of the things which is so often forgotten in connection with the struggle of the Covenanters, is that the authorities had very long memories. The uprisings, and the sermons which were preached, and which showed defiance of the King and his policies were not forgotten, and it is clear that long after, and far from the actual scenes of the uprisings or preachings, the Covenanters were hounded like beasts of prey by the authorities. Under such men as Sir James Turner and Graham of Claverhouse, these hunts became more cruel than many of the battles. Those who were under even the slightest suspicion of having a connection with any of the Covenanting events were regarded by the authorities as despised and contemptible persons. This was particularly true after the battle of Rullion Green.

Tension and strain were high at this time. Many who had taken part in the battle and had been captured suffered excruciating torture. Many, in different parts of the country, were hanged, and even after the hanging, cruelty was not fully satisfied. After the hanging of some of the men at Lanark, their right hands were cut off and fixed to the doors of the prison—hands that had signed the Covenant.

Among those who escaped from the ranks of the Covenanters was Hugh McKail. His escape was not prompted by cowardice or fear, but was the result of sheer physical exhaustion. Visitor's to two of Edinburgh's museum's can see items which are full of interest to the student of Hugh McKail's life. In one there are the instruments of torture from which he suffered, while in the other his Bible. These items are striking symbols of his life, for we can only understand how one so frail in body endured such trial by relating the fact to his indomitable faith in God through the promises of His Word. This, however, is to anticipate events and so we shall go back to the beginning of the story.

Hugh McKail was born in the manse of the parish Church of Bothwell. His father like so many of his colleagues was forced to leave his church when they refused to conform to the law of the day. It is little wonder that Hugh McKail became such a shining star among the Covenanters, brought up as he was in an area which was so full of the traditions and principles of the Covenanters. Little is known of his early days, but he was sent to Edinburgh to be educated, and, like many another of his day, was soon marked out as a young man of exceptional ability. One has left us words which show what his example meant to those around him;

‘A fairer mind dwelt in that lovely case;  
A sprightly mind and unacquaint with guile;  
Which no baseness did itself defile.’

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, at the time, Sir James Stewart, desiring a chaplain and tutor for his family chose Hugh McKail. This appointment to a home, where sympathy with the Covenanting cause was deep, was a blessing in many ways for young Hugh. Here he met with many of the leaders of the land and was able to listen to their careful analysis of the situation. Sharing such company and gaining such valuable information, his concern for his native land increased as he saw the crisis develop which lead to the shattering events of 1660.

In 1661 young Hugh applied to the presbytery for license to preach. He was accepted and licensed towards the end of 1661. As a preacher he was marked with great ability, and warmly accepted wherever he went. His life as a preacher was to be short, for like his father in Bothwell, he too refused to acknowledge the claims of prelacy, and he knew that his days as a preacher were limited. His last sermon in the High Kirk of Edinburgh, the last Sabbath before the deposing of the ministers, was never forgotten either by those who listened or by those referred to in the sermon. Speaking of the Church and her persecutions he made reference in veiled terms to those in authority, in this fashion, “The Church is persecuted by a Pharaoh on the throne, a Haman in the State and a Judas in the Church”. It was not difficult for those referred to to identify themselves, and with the identification, came

danger, for the bold preacher. The language Hugh McKail had used was regarded as abusive and insulting to the King and his government. McKail decided to leave the country and he escaped the ambush which surrounded the home of Sir James Stewart by just a few minutes. His destination was Holland, that land of refuge for many during those troublous times. He remained there for three years.

On his return to Scotland, any hopes he might have had for an improvement in the situation were soon to be dashed. The people, it was clear, were looking for any occasion which would free them from the yoke of bondage. The events prior to the Battle of Rullion Green seemed to provide the occasion, and they took up arms. Hearing of the events in the West, Hugh McKail made for Ayr and joined forces with the men of Rullion Green. One, writing of this event, said, 'Several that were not used to such hardships were like to turn valetudinary (i.e. a person of weakly and sick constitution) and the worthy Hugh McKail would have fallen from his horse if one had not laid hold on him and held him up'. From this it is clear that Hugh McKail was not one who was equipped physically for the rigours of such an expedition, and, least of all in the month of November. He continued with the insurgents as long as he could but on the west side of Edinburgh, at Cramond Water, he was forced to give up. He made his way across the boundaries of the city, but while at Liberton, on the south side of the city, he was captured and taken prisoner by an officer of the dragoons. Here he was searched and interrogated for any information which might lead to the reasons for the uprising and the indentification of the ringleaders. Hugh McKail gave nothing away and he was committed to the Old Tolbooth prison. Near where he was captured, Hugh McKail's father had a temporary home and if he could have reached there he might well have escaped his capture and its consequences. In this connection Alexander Smellie says, 'It is indisputable that, had he but retained and observed the least of that advertency and caution wherein at other times he was known to be both ready and very happy, he might, without hazard or trouble, have escaped.' But such was the faith of these men in the

sovereignty of God that they did not regard things as happening by chance. So Hugh McKail was prepared for the worst that might befall him.

It was not only his association with the insurgents of Rullion Green that led to the first brutal period of torture, for he was remembered for the sermon he had preached in the High Kirk. One who had sworn to investigate the whole cause of the uprising, even under the application of torture to suspects, was the Earl of Rothes. But when Hugh McKail appeared before the investigator, this stubborn youth refused to betray his fellows. McKail was ordered to be tortured by the Boot, and while he was undergoing this cruel torture Rothes plied and pressed him with questions. The operation of the Boot has been thus described by Sir Walter Scott: 'The executioner enclosed the leg and knee within the tight iron case and the placing a wedge of the same metal between the knee and edge of the machine, took a mallet in his hand and waited for further instructions. A surgeon placed himself by the other side of the prisoner's chair and applied his thumb to the pulse in order to regulate the torture according to the strength of the patient'. Even the sight of such a machine of torture might well make one's blood run cold. But when young Hugh was called to undergo this torture he neither showed impatience nor anger. Eleven blows were struck with the mallet until his leg was smashed. He refused to submit, declaring, "I protest solemnly in the sight of God, I can say no more though all the joints in my body were in such great anguish as my leg". He was taken to his cell to suffer in silence, but his thoughts were with those of his companions who were at that time under the sentence of the gallows.

On the 18th December, after another examination and interrogation he admitted that he had been with the insurgents and had a sword in his hand when captured. His answers to those who judged and questioned him were in true Covenanting fashion and he reminded them that the last words of the National Covenant had been his guide in these matters and were binding upon him still. Hugh McKail was declared to be guilty of the crime of rebellion and was sentenced to die at the



Merchat Cross on December 22nd, 1666. His reception of the news shows his unquestioning allegiance to Jesus Christ. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord", were the first words on his lips. As friends visited him he had a message for each one. On one occasion he exclaimed to a friend, "O how good the news; to within four days' journey to enjoy the sight of Jesus Christ". It seems incredible that the thought of death could be greeted in this fashion by one so young.

His father visited him, and his words to his son, so soon to leave him, are very moving and touching. He said, "Hugh, I have called thee a goodly olive tree of fair fruit, and now a storm hath destroyed the tree and his fruit". This tender bond between father and son surely betrays something of the anguish through which many passed in those days, when their loved ones were snatched from them. There were many who did their best to have Hugh McKail released, but their efforts were of no avail. He was content to know that the God whom he served would not leave him desolate: indeed, the very opposite was true for the Lord was specially near him during this trying time in prison. He witnessed to those around him and his testimony was used of God as a blessing to many. The last night of his life was a time when he sought the mind of his fellow prisoners both as a means of encouragement to them and himself. Later that night his father visited him and read the 16th Psalm. He retired about 11 p.m. and was awake at 5 o'clock the next morning. He reproved his fellow prisoner, John Woodrow, for being asleep too long, saying, "you and I do not look like men going to be hanged this day seeing we lie so long." Again his father visited him and bade him farewell, reminding him that his death would do more hurt to the prelates and be more edifying to God's people than if he were to continue in the ministry for twenty years.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon of that fateful day when Hugh McKail was brought to the scaffold. He spoke courageously to the crowd assembled at the place of execution seeking to bring home to them the purpose and meaning of his death.

He had already sung part of the 31st Psalm and this had caused the crowd to groan in sympathy as they saw the godly youth ready to face death in this way. Mounting the ladder and hearing a groan from the crowd he shouted to them, "Friends and fellow sufferers be not afraid, every step of this ladder is a degree nearer heaven". As he reached the top he took the rope in his hands and said, "And now I do willingly lay down my life for the truth and cause of God, the Covenants and work of Reformation, which were once counted the glory of this nation: and it is for endeavouring to defend this and extirpate that bitter root of prelacy that I embrace this rope."

Then came his final word to the crowd. "I have," he said, "one more word to say to my friends. Ye need neither lament nor be ashamed of me in this condition, for I make use of that expression of Christ's, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'—to my King and your King, to the blessed Apostles and martyrs and to the city of the living God".

This was not his final word, however, for this was reserved for the most intimate fellowship of all, his fellowship with God in Christ. His last utterances were the best words of all. Those who heard them could not help but be comforted by them. The closing section is given here, "As there is a great solemnity here, a confluence of people, a scaffold, a gallows, people looking out of windows; so there is a greater and more solemn preparation of angels to carry my soul to Christ's bosom . . . Farewell father, mother, friends and relations; farewell the world and its delights; farewell meat and drink; farewell sun, moon and stars; Welcome God and Father; welcome sweet Jesus Christ the mediator of the New Covenant; welcome blessed spirit of grace, the God of all consolation; welcome glory, welcome eternal life; welcome death! Into Thy hands I commit my spirit."

So at 26 years of age Hugh McKail gained the martyr's crown. It was a costly price the Covenants were demanding but there were those who were willing to pay that price rather than compromise on any account. His part in the Pentland rising was a small one but it shows the extreme way in which men were called to suffer for their part in the work of the Covenants.

## 5 Battles and Butchery

*Their names shall nerve the patriot's hand  
Upraised to save a sinking land  
And piety shall learn to burn  
With holier transports o'er their sun.*

*A. B. Todd.*

Following the events which led to the martyrdom of Hugh McKail, there appears what seems to be a lull in the struggle. But if there was, it proved to be 'the lull before the storm'. For twelve years this situation prevailed but after that the fury of the government was again unleashed in all its vehemence against the Covenanters, whose forces were weakened by more than one subtle move during this time.

The principal cause of this weakening was the Indulgence. Six times during these twelve years this lure was used to bring back the expelled ministers to the pulpits. Many accepted the Indulgences and by so doing accepted also the principle that the king had the right to appoint, expel or recall any minister at will. This was of course a complete reversal of the position for which the Covenanters stood, taking their example from such men as Andrew Melville and Alexander Henderson of an earlier day, not to mention Samuel Rutherford and James Guthrie. It is easy for us to criticise the men who went back and seemingly betrayed the cause, but consideration must be given to the strain under which many of them were living. Extreme hardship was the lot of all who had refused to conform to the desire of the king and had suffered expulsion rather than take their place beside those who owned the monarch's supreme authority in Church and State. It is little wonder that men wilted under such pressure at this time.

One writer summing up the position has said, 'The Indulgence did what sword, pillage, prison, torture, exile and gibbet all could not do; it shattered the Covenanter forces and weakened their power'. This was the boast of Archbishop Sharp, once a Covenanter minister, but now a tool of the king; he said "he would throw a bone of contention among the Presbyterians by means of the Indulgence".

To those who refused this bait of the king, life became more rigorous than ever and their responsibility increased. Prices were put on the heads of the leaders, while legislation was introduced which made attendance at field meetings an offence punishable by death, torture or imprisonment, as such attendance was regarded as rebellion against the King. This, however did not deter the people in any way from gathering to their field meetings. Records show that attendances, far from falling, actually increased. On one occasion in one county alone it was reckoned that 16,000 people attended conventicles on one Sabbath day. Time and distance meant little to either preachers or listeners in those days, for they never knew when it might be the last opportunity to share in such fellowship together. The preaching of the Word was fired with the urgency of eternity and the people hung on to every word.

While this was going on, sterner measures were being taken by the authorities to deal with 'the rebels' as they were called. One man who was given special authority at this time was John Graham of Claverhouse, later to become known as 'Bloody Clavers', and whose name will appear frequently in the rest of the story. At first acquaintance with him one might think that he was a brave and courageous man, but those who have studied his life and character most closely do not see these two qualities dominating his life. Dr. King Hewison in his work on the Covenanters, quoting from reliable sources sums it up most aptly when he says that far from being a champion and courageous man, Claverhouse, 'considered himself to be an armed high priest. An Episcopal crusader . . . a man followed by a troop of daredevil riders who wreaked havoc on the lives of the Covenanters . . . whose constant monitor was self-interest.' His name and actions will long be remembered by those whose sympathies lie with the Covenanter cause and it was in Claverhouse that the greatest power against the Covenanters was vested.

From 1678 onwards there were many meetings of the Covenanters to consider the propriety of rising in arms to defend themselves. At Rutherglen in Lanarkshire, on 29th May 1679, a company of horsemen who were armed rode into the town

and at the town cross read a declaration. In this they condemned the conduct of the Government since 1660, again as King Hewison puts it, 'As true members of the Church of Scotland, they added their testimony to that of the martyrs against all statutes overturning the work of Reformation, establishing Episcopacy; renouncing the Covenants; ousting the ministry; imposing Restoration Day; setting up the royal supremacy, authorising the Indulgence and against all illegal acts of the Privy Council.' Such a move could not escape the notice of the civil authorities. The Covenanters meanwhile returned to the moors to brood and pray over the wrongs which goaded them into becoming revolutionaries.

Already Claverhouse was on his way to avenge the affront to the authorities, and he pursued the Covenanters to the moors. On his way he took one, John King by name, and fourteen others, tying them together and driving them on before him. While this was going on a conventicle was taking place at Loudon Hill. The places the Covenanters selected for such meetings were not rashly chosen. They were strategic sites both for observation and shelter. Loudon Hill was such a place. There was ample space for assembly and height to see any advancing force; also plenty of boggy ground which the unsuspecting rider could not see and which could bring havoc to any combined operation. The preacher on this occasion was Thomas Douglas, who had scarcely begun the services of the day when it was apparent that something was afoot. The sermon was half finished when the warning shot was fired. They knew then that the forces of the realm were soon to break upon them. Closing his Bible, Douglas turned to the assembled company and said, "You have got the theory; now for the practice. You know your duty, self defence is always lawful".

Those were the words they needed at this time, for Claverhouse was approaching with 250 resolute men. While waiting for the attack to be made they sang the 76th Psalm to the tune Martyrs:

'In Judah's land God is well known,  
His name's in Israel great;  
In Salem is His tabernacle,  
In Zion is His seat'.



Equally matched as far as numbers go, the Covenanters advanced still singing the Psalms they loved so much. As they came down the slopes the troopers fired the first shots. Claverhouse was not content with this and he was determined to wipe out the Covenanters. He led his men closer to the foe but found the going tough. He sent some horsemen ahead to find a firmer place to cross, but as the horses staggered and stumbled in the treacherous bog, their riders fell from the saddles becoming sitting targets for the marksmen of the Covenanters. The government forces were routed as they turned and fled as best they could. The chase was kept up for miles and John Graham learned that day of the grim determination of the Covenanters to see this struggle through to the end.

The battle of Drumclog, as it has become known, gave new heart to the men of the Covenant, but in later days it was to bring problems which were to be the undoing of this part of the Covenanting struggle. Flushed with success, there arose within the ranks, rivals factions which were to weaken the whole cause for which they fought. It is at this point in the story that we find names and personalities becoming predominant, rather than the cause. It was the old story of the extremist trying to push his views but finding his rivals closing their ranks against him and in so doing causing division among the rank and file as they sought out their leader. For weeks this bitter wrangling went on among the Covenanters who all the time were unaware that even greater pressure was to be exerted by new forces which would require a united front in the Covenanting ranks. Government forces had been sent from London to join the Scottish contingent and they numbered around fifteen thousand. This was to be the prelude to the battle of Bothwell Bridge.

Before the battle, a somewhat unusual incident took place. Two of the leaders of the Covenanters sought to interview the Duke of Monmouth and negotiate with him. They took with them the Declaration which they had drawn up a few days before. The document, which can still be seen today, is an impressive statement in defence of the Covenanting position,

including that of taking up arms. It is a lengthy document but the important sections are quoted here.

'We being continually sought after while meeting in houses for Divine worship, ministers and people frequently apprehended and most rigorously used for necessitated to attend the Lord's ordinances in the fields and in most desert places. We of absolute necessity are forced to take this last remedy. We do most solemnly in the presence of the Almighty God, the searcher of hearts declare the true reason for our coming to arms, candidly and sincerely are these.

1. The defending and securing of the true Protestant religion and Presbyterian government as being based upon the Word of God: and the kingly authority of Jesus Christ.
2. Preserving and defending of the King's majesty. We have no thought or intention to diminish his power or greatness.
3. Obtaining a free and unlimited parliament: a free General Assembly in order to redressing of our aforesaid grievances: for preventing the imminent danger of Popery and extirpating of Prelacy from among us.'

Monmouth listened, but advised that their petition was worded in harsh terms; but if they were willing to lay down their arms he would not deal with them harshly. On returning to the main body and giving them the news, the Covenanters soon found that disarming was the last and most formidable obstacle. Sir Robert Hamilton, their leader, laughed at the suggestion and made the remark, "Yes! and hang next".

The discussion soon ended and it was not long before the two forces stood face to face across the river Clyde. Between them lay the Bothwell Bridge, not the bridge as we know it today, but an old steep, narrow bridge not more than twelve feet wide. It was imperative that this be held if anything was going to be gained. The Covenanters' only armour against the well-officered and disciplined army of Monmouth was a single cannon on the bridge and the remainder of the Covenanters behind them in solid squares, their banners proudly waving over them. They were inadequately prepared for battle and

it was obvious that very soon the struggle would be over. One wrote, "I do really think that there were few or none that had both powder and ball to shoot twice."

To cut the story short, the Covenanters soon had the full force of the government troops hurled against them, and it was not long before they were retreating in complete chaos and disorder. The battle had been lost, not on that tragic Sabbath morning of 22nd June 1679, but long before in the bitter wranglings already referred to . . . Wodrow's comment on events is both pointed and true. 'Never was a good cause and a gallant army generally speaking hearty and bold, worse managed: and never will a cause though never as good, be better managed when divisions, disjointings and self creep in among the managers.'

Those who were captured were brutally treated. The usual practice being that they were bound two by two and dragged wearily eastwards to Edinburgh. Soon the jails were too full to accommodate them all, and a part of Greyfriars Churchyard, still known as the 'Covenanters Prison', was utilised to make a prison for them. Here they lived, let the weather be what it might, their beds being the bare ground. So rigorous were the conditions that out of twelve hundred who were taken prisoner only two hundred and fifty seven remained. These were to suffer further ignominy and shame, when they were taken and battened down in the hold of a ship to be transported to the Barbadoes. But after weeks of torture in such conditions, they were shipwrecked and lost in the Pentland Firth.

Many others died long after Bothwell. For example, six miles from St. Andrews, there is a stone in a lonely spot which reminds us that five men died there for their faith and part at Bothwell Bridge. The inscription on the stone makes it appropriate to conclude our account of this tragic part of the Covenanting struggle.

'Cause we at Bothwell did appear, perjurious oaths  
refused to swear

Cause we Christ's cause would not condemn, we  
sentenced were to death by men

## BATTLES AND BUTCHERY

Who raged against us in their fury, our dead bodies  
they did not bury,  
but upon poles did hing us high, triumph of Babel's  
victory.

Our lives we feared not to the death, but constant  
proved to the last breath.'

## 7 Richard Cameron

*In a dream of the night I was wafted away  
To the muirland of mist where the martyrs lay;  
Where Cameron's sword and his Bible are seen  
Engraved on the stone where the heather grows green.*

*James Hyslop.*

At this point our story deals with the prominent personalities of the Covenanters from the Battle of Bothwell Bridge to the end of the struggle. Many notable names appear during this period when the real brunt of the struggle was borne, but none is more prominent than that of Richard Cameron. It was but for a short time that this lion-heart of the Covenant fought, but what a glorious time it was for the Church in Scotland. His life makes but a brief appearance on the screen of history, but it leaves a lingering impression of singular beauty and devotion ere it passes from view.

Richard Cameron was born in Falkland in Fifeshire, a notable village for many reasons. Here there was a constant coming and going to the Palace which stands as impressive as ever today. It was also notable because on one occasion when the King was present that doughty warrior for the Reformation principles, Andrew Melville, spoke fearlessly to him, telling him his rightful place in the life of the Church, the Kingdom of Christ, was, "Not a Lord, but a subject." The boy born in this picturesque little village was destined to become one who would truly follow the line of Andrew Melville and others like-minded. In addition he was to become—at least in the life of the Church, one of Scotland's greatest sons. His birthplace is still carefully tended and preserved on the edge of the village square of Falkland. Its well-inscribed doorway makes it a place which cannot be missed as one passes through the village.

Little is known of his early life, save that he was one of a family of four, three boys and a girl. His father was a merchant and it would seem that the family's religious sympathy was with Episcopacy.

After completing his education, Richard Cameron returned to his birthplace to take up the post of village schoolmaster, as well as acting as precentor to the curate of Falkland. This



did not mean he was fully sympathetic with the Episcopal view, for he often made journeys to hear the field preachers of his day. There are no clear indications of where these meetings took place, but one can imagine that the most notable place of meeting would be that of Glenvale, where there is an almost natural amphitheatre and natural rock pulpit. Across the fields this would not be a long journey from Falkland, and it would seem that this, having been chosen by John Knox as one of his many centres of open air preaching, would be the natural follow on for the Covenanters. This, as regards the place, is only conjecture, but there is no doubt whatever about what was happening to Richard Cameron at this time as a consequence of his attendance at such meetings. There was awakened in his heart the deep consciousness of his own sin, and soon he was won to the side of Christ. This experience was to introduce great changes into his own life, and also on his views with regard to the Church.

Having seen the error of Prelacy and the sin of indulgence, he reached the crossroads where he had to decide where his future Church associations were to lie. Those who knew him in Falkland were conscious of this change in his life and did everything possible to retain him. One writer puts it like this, 'partly by flattery and partly by threats, and last of all by persecution, they sought to forbear him from attending those field meetings'. Cameron refused to yield. His desire was to speak out against the system which the Lord had shown him to be contrary to the way which brought true honour to Christ. He left his native Falkland and we next find him in the Border country. There he was engaged as a tutor to one of the notable families in the village of Harben who were connected to the local Church, the minister of which had accepted the Indulgence. This did not appeal to Cameron, who had nothing but contempt for compromise. Given opportunity to explain his views to his master, he was told his services were no longer required. Thus, within a period of a few months, Cameron had faced a double crisis because of his faith in Christ. For him it became clear that his future lay with the Covenanting cause. For many it was an occasion for regret that such an able and

clear thinker left the ranks of the Church of his youth, but for the Covenanting cause a new star began to shine amid the gloom of that period.

Travelling south he was soon among sympathetic friends. He met John Welch of Irongray, and soon a warm friendship sprang up between the two men. With penetrating insight, Welch noted the rising flame of zeal for the Lord Jesus Christ, and he pressed Cameron to accept license to preach. Cameron at first refused on the grounds that he would 'only be a root of bitterness in the camp' because of his clear, decisive views, especially regarding the sin of Indulgence. Welch continued to plead with him and eventually prevailed. Richard Cameron was duly licensed by two of the ousted ministers of the Church, John Welch and a Mr. Semple. The moving service took place in the home of one, Henry Hall, in Haughhead in Teviotdale.

There was no dubiety at all in Cameron's own mind as to what this step meant for him or even the Church in Scotland, and a great sense of his own responsibility and that of those who had licensed him possessed him and he spoke firmly when he said to them, "You must not blame me if I declare all that God has put into my heart". Despite a certain hesitancy when called upon to preach, it is clear that his preaching was acceptable to all who came to hear him and especially those who knew what the Indulgence had done for them. There was, however, one notable occasion when, before he accepted an invitation to preach in Annandale, he doubted his powers to face the people. He said to Welch and others, "How can I go there? I know not what sort of people they be". Welch's answer had a decisive ring about it. "Richie", he said, "go your way and set the fire of hell to their tails". Strong words, but these two now understood each other, although, unfortunately, others did not. There were occasions when Cameron was called to explain and answer charges laid against him for his scathing denunciation of the Indulged ministers. Those who met him in Edinburgh pointed out that he was only creating division in the Church. Their words are so like those of men who still favour the way of compromise, especially in Church and religion. They said to Cameron, "Unity is our need just now. There are more

essential things to preach about than Indulgence.” (Though spoken nearly three hundred years ago how contemporary these words sound!). Cameron reluctantly agreed to deal less with the subject of Indulgence. He never lacked a congregation, for wherever he preached great crowds assembled to hear this fiery servant of the Lord. Records show that among the most impressive services he conducted were those Communion services in the open air. The first one took place near Maybole in Ayrshire. The scene must have been impressive to any who witnessed this great and solemn service. The tent was set against the hill and two tables were laid out, covered with spotless linen while the ministers and elders who dispensed the bread and wine stood like silent guards over the tables. On this occasion Cameron preached on the great sacrifice offered by Christ when He died on the Cross, and thereafter the congregation came forward to partake of the bread and wine.

Despite these mountain-top experiences, however, Cameron was uneasy in his own mind. Like many another of his day, ‘he was caught in the dilemma betwixt conscience and expediency’. Having given a promise to those in Edinburgh he felt that he was being restricted, and thereby unable to declare the full counsel of God. He realised the need to go away and get things clarified in his own mind. He went to the land of refuge for many of like persuasion during those troublous times, the land of Holland. Here he met with many who befriended him and encouraged him to continue preaching. The Scots Kirk in Rotterdam was a haven for Cameron in those days, and when opportunity presented itself he preached for the scattered community in the city. There was an immediate recognition of his gifts, not only of preaching but also of learning, and his friends were anxious to know something of his background and his call. Having got this from Cameron, they persuaded him to receive ordination at their hands. Despite his natural diffidence, Cameron agreed and there was never a more solemn ordination service or charge given as at that service. Robert McWard, who gave the charges, turned to Cameron and laid this additional charge upon him, “Richie”, he said, “the public standard of the Gospel is fallen in Scotland today, and if I

know anything of the mind of the Lord, ye are called to undergo your trials before us, and go home and lift the fallen standard and display it publicly before the world."

After the ordination had been completed, McWard kept his hands on the fair head of Cameron and called on all who had witnessed the ceremony to heed his words, "Behold all ye beholders, here is the head of a faithful minister and servant of Jesus Christ, who shall lose the same for his Master's interest; and it shall be set up before the sun and moon in public view of the world". How true these words were to be, but far from causing young Cameron to shrink from the task solemnly entrusted to him, they fanned the flame of devotion afresh in his heart to God who had called him to serve the cause of Christ's Crown and Covenant. He returned to Scotland, and, for a brief nine months, displayed this banner of the Lord.

Scotland was passing through yet another period of discontent when Cameron arrived, and he immediately flung himself into the controversy. There was little rest or peace for him during the next few months, but his burning desire to win men and women to Christ drove him relentlessly forward, while there was still time and breath available to him. One can understand something of the passion of the man as we read words like these. Speaking from the text John chap. 5 verse 40, at one point he says, "It may be that ye think ye have enough and stand in no need of preaching . . . I would not have the accounts on my head that you professors in Clydesdale, Ayr, Galloway and Tweeddale have for all the world. He has been crying unto you 'but ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life'. And what say ye unto us? Are there those here that say, 'We will not?' Shall we go away and tell our Master that ye will not come unto Him? O ye professors and elders, ye are a shame and a disgrace to religion. The truth is that ye have got that which ye shall never cast. Are there those herewho are at this with it, 'Indeed I find it very difficult to close with Christ'." At this point it seems that Cameron could not go on any further but called the congregation to prayer, during which the preacher and congregation broke down weeping. Yet from that service and preaching of the Word, such blessing followed that



it was one of the outstanding occasions of preaching in the life of Cameron and also of the Church.

This was a man fired with the passionate love of Christ, seeking only that which would bring glory to His Lord and Master. This point is made for without it, it is possible for us to get the life of this 'Lion Heart' of the covenant out of focus a little as we come to the concluding part of his life.

While Cameron was engaged in such a mission of evangelism throughout the country, it did not cause him to lose sight of the pressing problems of the hour. He was not oblivious of the seething discontent, nor of his responsibility to do his part in lifting this yoke of oppression. It is at this point that we find Cameron's name being closely associated with the names of two other prominent men, who for a considerable time had laboured in obscurity. One of these was Donald Cargill, and the other was Alexander Peden. These three men planned their strategy and it is obvious that at times the patient Peden and skilful Cargill were overshadowed by the impetuous Cameron. King Hewison sums up Cameron in this way, "Cameron expected victories to be won by dash and never contemplated triumphs to be won by waiting and diplomacy".

In April 1680, these three convened a fellowship meeting of the Lord's people at Darnead in Lanarkshire. This lonely and desolate spot was the scene of many such meetings, and more than one Covenanter minister preached his trial sermon at this spot. On this occasion the purpose was to hold a time of fasting and humiliation before the Lord. They mourned-over the sin of the land and in particular over the fact that the nation had so joyfully received the Duke of York, 'a sworn vessel of Anti-Christ'. Soon after this, another day of fasting was held on the moors at Auchengilloch near Lesmahagow in Lanarkshire. These were serious days for the Covenanters and they took time to decide on the next step in the struggle.

The leaders, shortly after these public meetings, separated and went to different parts of the country, to preach and declare anew the royal prerogatives of Christ their King. This was a clarion call to the nation. But even more positive action was being taken. At Queensferry, Donald Cargill had in his

possession the Queensferry Paper. In this document, what some have called the 'New Covenant', the terms of the previous Rutherglen Declaration were homologated. Cameron was also busy, for he had compiled the famous Sanquhar Declaration. These two documents were similar in content although in some places different expressions were used. Essentially they declared afresh the insistence of the Covenanters that their actions were governed by their loyalty to the Word of God. They were, 'declaring to the world our hearty desire to embrace and adhere to the written word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the only complete rule of faith and manners'.

At this stage the varied temperaments of the leaders begin to emerge. Whereas Cargill wanted to discuss the matter of future action, 'Cameron had declared war'. There was a revolutionary call to overthrow the king. In this call they openly disowned Charles and made their position absolutely clear. As one has put it, 'in these declarations they were nailing their colours to the mast.' They, as representing a loyal Protestant, Presbyterian and Covenanted nation, disowned Charles who 'hath been tyrannising the throne of Scotland'. They themselves put it more bluntly 'Under the standard of Christ we declare war against such a tyrant and usurper'.

The next scene in this drama took place in June 1680. On a fine summer's morning the village of Sanquhar in Dumfriesshire was stirred by the clattering hooves of twenty horses with their riders. The leader was soon recognised and the cry went up, "It's Richie! It's Richie Cameron. Here are the hillmen." The date chosen was a significant one, for it was the first anniversary of the slaughter at Bothwell Bridge. This was Cameron's answer to this slaughter. Richard's younger brother Michael was among the group that day, and when they reached the village cross Michael was entrusted with the task of reading the declaration which would soon be affixed to the cross itself. The solemn words of the declaration were read as a challenge to the Duke of York who had uttered the callous words that he would make Scotland like a hunting field. After the reading they sang a Psalm, uttered a prayer and disappeared

to the hills, no doubt to await the consequences. During this waiting time Cameron made the prophecy that what they had done would ere long shake the throne of Britain. It was a bold statement to make but later events were to prove its correctness. Whatever may be said about the propriety of such actions, there is no doubt that in this Sanquhar Declaration there was, as Johnston has so ably put it, 'the very soul of liberty unwearied—invincible and immortal.' The times were desperate and called for resolute action for the preservation of liberty of worship and the rights of men. It was left to the fearless Cameron to light that torch which was to burn more brightly after this Declaration until, eight years later, what he had prophesied actually took place. Indeed the Sanquhar Declaration was an anticipation of what the whole kingdom eventually did. And why did they take this revolutionary step of disowning the king? The simple answer is that it was the natural outcome of their personal union with Jesus Christ. They had covenanted themselves to Him and they regarded no one else as having the right to usurp what belonged to Christ. What was true in their personal lives they recognised as true also in national life. Up to this point the Covenanters had recognised Charles as their king but now, even though it seemed a forlorn battle, they declared that he had forfeited his right to the throne. This was revolution, but it won through in the end. Surely the very outcome must bring home to those who criticise the steps taken by Cameron and others, that their course of action was not just some rash impulse but something which was truly ordered of the Lord. The principles they laid down in these Declarations were designed and worked out for the nation's good and the cause of righteousness in the land.

Needless to say the step was not disregarded. The Covenanters had unfurled the banner, 'For Christ's Crown and Covenant', on higher ground and they knew that persecution would not be long in following them. And they had not long to wait. The price placed on the head of Cameron was too great a prize to miss, and many were searching for this man with a view to their own enrichment. One month passed before the final skirmish took place. The scene of it was the lonely and

bleak moor of Ayrsmoss. Every man in Cameron's party had his sword and was skilled in its use. The government forces had located him and his men and they closed in for the attack. As they approached, the Covenanters challenged them. This took them by surprise. Before the skirmish took place there seemed an ominous note in the voice of Cameron as he left their farmhouse hideout that morning. He had just finished washing his hands and, turning to the farmer's wife and daughter, he said, "This is their last washing. I have need to make them clean, for there are many to see them". In the afternoon as they were confronted by the government forces that same note crept into his prayer as his men prepared to do battle. The prayer was brief but moving. "Lord", he prayed, "Spare the green and take the ripe". Turning to his younger brother Michael he said, "Come Michael let us fight it out to the last; for this is the day I have longed for, to die fighting the Lord's avowed enemies; and this is the day we shall get the crown".

They approached their enemies still singing the songs of Zion, but the superior forces soon took their toll. The lonely monument on Ayrsmoss reminds us that nine fell on that sad day, among them the two Camerons. Richard fell pierced by a dozen swords, but in falling gained his crown. This was not the end, however, as their victors had yet to claim their reward, and proof of their triumph must be produced. The head and hands of Richard Cameron were cut off and taken to Edinburgh, where, as they lay on a table, an observer remarked, "These are the hands and head of one that lived praying and preaching and died praying and fighting".

Cameron's aged father was at this time held in prison for the help he had given to organise conventicles near Falkland. As authorities were taking the head and hands of Cameron to the Netherbow, where they were to be affixed, they paused at his prison and, showing them to Richard Cameron's father they asked, "Do you know them?" He looked affectionately at them, kissed them and said, "I know them, I know them. They are my son's, my dear son's. It is the Lord. Good is the will of the Lord who cannot wrong me, nor mine, but has made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days".



So came to an end, prematurely one might say, the life of one of the most fearless contenders for the cause of Christ during this dread period; a man who, despite his impetuous nature, would allow nothing and no one to come between him and his Lord; a man whose endeavours for the cause of Christ make us realise more fully what we today owe to such as he; a man whose death, far from bringing despair to the supporters of the cause for which he gave his life, inspired them to new heights of living for Christ, and to renewed determination in the struggle for the faith.

## 7 Donald Cargill

*From his youth he was much given to the duty of secret prayer for whole nights together.*

*Sir Robert Hamilton's testimony to Donald Cargill.*

Reference has been made to the association between Richard Cameron and Donald Cargill, and it was on Cargill that the full burden and responsibility of the Covenanter cause fell following Cameron's death. It was a dark hour when Donald Cargill took over and he has been named the 'lone star of the Covenant' during this period.

Donald Cargill was born in Rattray in Perthshire, and although from the records there seems to be at least three Donald Cargills born and baptised between 1610 and 1619 in this district, opinion has now become very firm in the view that Donald Cargill the Covenanter was born at the 'Ha'town' of Rattray around 1619. His father seems to have been a small land-owner. He aimed at providing his son with a good education, and, accordingly from Rattray Donald went to Aberdeen and then to St. Andrews where he was a distinguished student. His father was anxious that Donald should devote his life to the ministry, but this was not Donald's inclination. After pleading with him to consider the matter his father left Donald to make his own decision. This he did by setting aside a day when he would give the matter the most serious consideration and he sought guidance from God as to the direction he should take. It would seem that this was a high moment in the experience of this young man, for as he prayed, these words of Ezekiel made a deep impression upon him. 'Son of man eat this roll, and go speak to the house of Israel.' With such direct words coming to his soul at this time there seemed only one course open to him and he set about making his preparations for becoming an ambassador of Christ. Another remarkable thing came at the time of his trials by Presbytery, for this was the very text chosen for him—surely an indication of the duty required of him.

Right from the start of his ministry it was clear that Donald Cargill was a man, who though somewhat reticent and unassuming by nature, would stand by his convictions. He soon showed his resistance to the innovations which were being thrust upon the Church at this time. His first charge was that of the Barony Church in Glasgow. He had considered carefully and at first was disinclined to accept the charge but after being reproved by a woman in the district he returned to preach the Word.

Donald Cargill was a somewhat older man than many of his day in assuming the duties of his first charge, but his more mature experience of life was to stand him in good stead in the days to come.

His ministry in the Barony Church lasted from 1655 till 1662—years when it was far from easy for anyone who held Covenanting views to maintain a ministry without incurring the wrath of the authorities of the day. Donald Cargill was no exception. Though there was a strong Covenanting section in his congregation, the divided state of this group did not make Cargill's task any easier. Still he laboured with great patience for the souls of men, and had a measure of success in his work. Here was a man who once having put his hand to the plough would not look back.

In the year 1661, the first anniversary of the restoration of Charles, on the day when he usually delivered a lecture, great crowds flocked to hear Cargill. They had come to hear something which would commend the king, but what they heard was something quite different. The text was announced from Hosea, chap. 10 and verse 1. "Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy as other people". The preacher's opening words were stern. "We have come," he said, "to keep this day upon the account for which others keep it. We thought once to have blessed the day wherein the King came home again, but now we think we have reason to curse it: and if any of you come here to the solemnising of this day, we desire you to depart". Later in the sermon he said. "The king will be the woofullest sight that ever the poor Church of Scotland saw. Woe! Woe! Woe! unto him, his name shall stink while the world stands, for treachery, tyrrany and lechery".

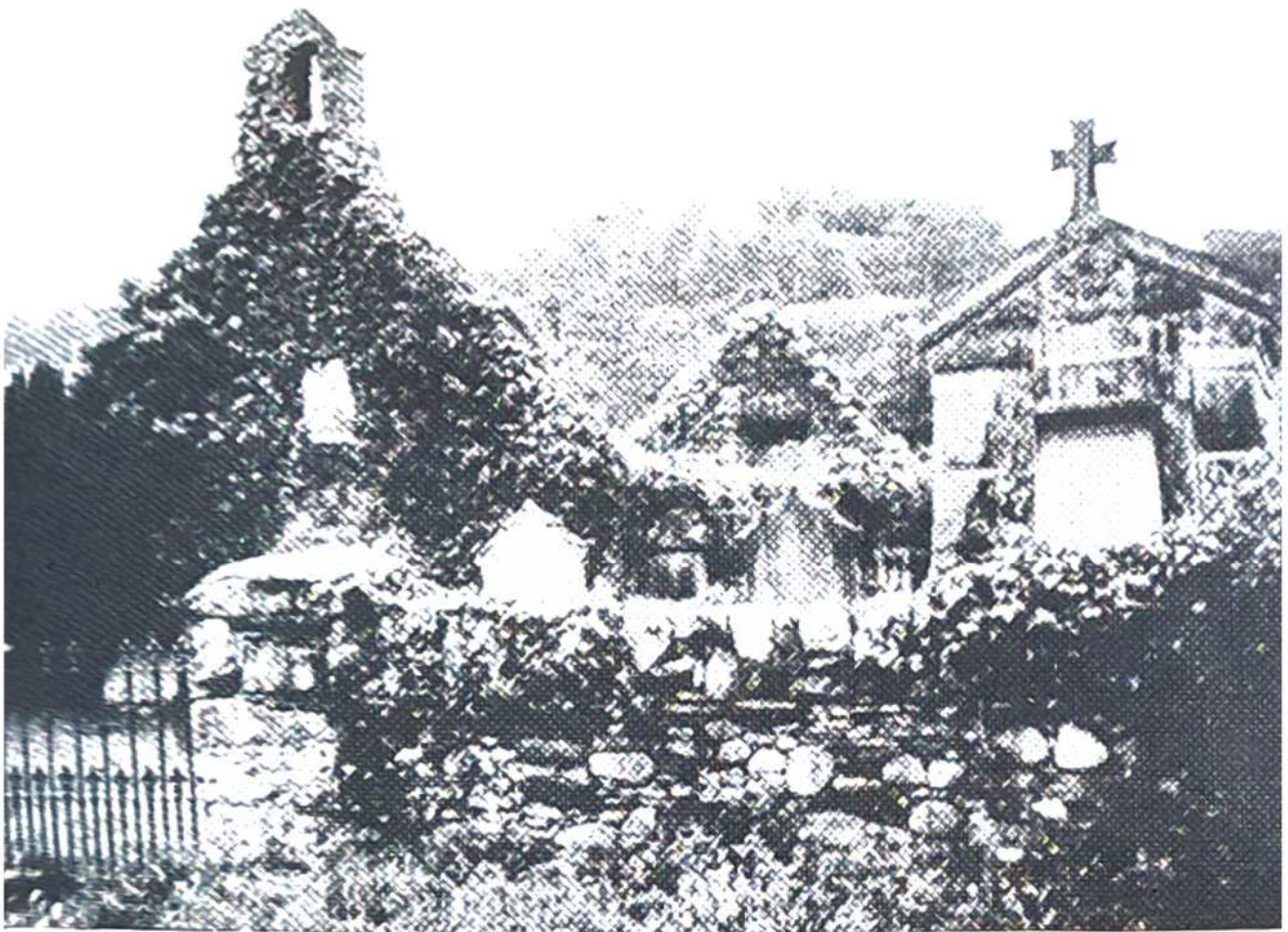
It was not surprising that such words raised the wrath of the Royalists against Cargill. To his own mind they were true—and they contained an almost prophetic picture of what took place later—but such a ministry could not expect to go on interrupted. He had not long to wait for reaction, for on the following Monday the troopers were out searching for him. Cargill by this time, had gone into hiding for his own safety.

On one occasion he was in lodgings in Glasgow when a hue and cry was raised for him. Coming to his landlady the troopers declared their mission, but they were already foxed, for Cargill had donned the good lady's apron and answered the soldiers without being recognised in his disguise. He then fled to the home of his friends in the city.

The next few months were not idly spent, for we find Cargill engaged in evangelistic work in the city of Glasgow, preaching in the courtyards and streets, under the watchful eyes of sentries posted at the various corners. Some today would regard it as a waste of time and talent for a preacher of Cargill's calibre to hold forth to small groups of people in this way, but he did not judge it so. The very fact that he escaped is evidence of the loyalty of the people among whom he ministered.

Such a ministry, however, was to be short lived, for with the passing of the Middleton Act of 1662, Cargill could no longer continue to teach and preach in Glasgow. He was declared to be an outlaw, and banished to the North of the Tay. This was done with the threat of imprisonment and persecution, but it took more than a mere threat to discourage and daunt this brave soul. In fact the more they threatened, and the more soldiers they sent to search for Cargill, the more friends he found flocking to his support. Eventually, however, Cargill declared to the Council that he would not reside in Glasgow or Edinburgh if they in turn agreed to withdraw their order of banishment to North of the Tay. Without knowing what it all meant the council agreed. This of course gave Cargill a much freer hand, but it was with this expulsion order hanging over him that Cargill's true ministry began. From 1668 onwards he was never away from the place of duty, and it was clear that





Anwoth Church. (Page 15).



Samuel Rutherford. (Page 14).





Martyrs Monument, Grassmarket, Edinburgh. (Page 23).



Marquis of Argyle, First Martyr of the Covenant. (Page 24).



James Guthrie on the scaffold (Page 30).



a man of such a timorous disposition would have desired a much quieter situation. But the time was soon approaching when Donald Cargill was to don the mantle of leadership of the Covenanting cause.

He took to the fields and hills of Scotland and came to be known as the flying evangelist of the hills, welcomed by the hill folk wherever he went. From North to South, East to West he travelled to preach the Gospel, and from the written record of his sermons at this time it is clear, that he was an outspoken witness of the truth as revealed in Jesus Christ. High and low came under his denunciation and none more so than those ministers who had accepted the Indulgence.

Yet all this was done under great strain; for his own life was often clouded by sorrow. Within a year and a day of their marriage, his wife was taken from him, and Donald Cargill though wrapped up in so much activity became a very lonely figure. On more than one occasion he escaped death by the proverbial hairbreadth. Several notable escapes are mentioned as the struggle of the Covenanters was intensified. He was at Bothwell Bridge when the fateful battle was fought and was severely wounded in the head: after the rout he was taken by a dragoon but when he declared himself to be a minister he was released. On another occasion his horse was shot under him near Linlithgow. But his most dramatic escape must surely have been when he evaded capture by leaping the river Erich in his own home district of Blairgowrie. The records show that he had been conducting a service at Haerchen Hill, when a troop of armed men made a rush for him. They almost captured him and it was only his intimate knowledge of the district that saved him. He fled down the slopes towards the river and, at a point where the waters rush impetuously down between overhanging rocks, known locally as the Keith, he leaped the gap which though not more than eight feet wide, is treacherous in that the rocks rise so steeply on both sides that one slip could have meant instant death in the raging torrent. Thus Cargill escaped and to this day that spot is affectionately known by the inhabitants of the area as 'Cargill's Loup'. Long after the event someone is reputed to have remarked to Cargill:

“That was a guid loup ye loupet the Ericht?”. “Aye”, was the hero’s reply, “but I took a lang race till’t for I ran a’ the way from Perth”. No doubt in this remark there was an oblique reference to his banishment north of the Tay.

This shows us one side of Cargill, but if there were occasions when he showed bravery and courage there were others when he was weakened and oppressed by lack of assurance. When these times of depression came on they brought on deep soul exercise and on one occasion he actually tried to do away with himself. On the morning in question he went to a nearby coalshaft and there he heard, as it were, a voice from the sky, “Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee”. From that moment there was no longer any doubt and he retreated from the dark abyss into which he had meant to throw himself. From that time it seems that Cargill lived in close fellowship with His Lord, and one nearer has left this impression of his preaching, ‘When he preached the eternal world seemed irradiant about him.’

Such an experience was vital for Donald Cargill for the developments in Church affairs brought the necessity for clear and uncompromising action upon the Covenanters. It was at this point that the collaboration between Richard Cameron and Donald Cargill emerged. While Cameron was engaged in the West, Cargill concentrated his activity around the Lothians in the east. Yet another narrow escape came to him at this time. He was at Queensferry, a town in West Lothian, with some friends, no doubt discussing the future plans for the Church and Covenanters. The location of the house where they were meeting has been lost but the ancient priory, which still stands gives an indication of the place. Donald Cargill had the Queensferry Paper in his possession, a document which the authorities regarded as seditious. In the main it was not dissimilar from the Rutherglen Declaration, and the Sanquhar Declaration; but it was regarded, as one observer put it, as ‘strong in its affirmations and denials’. Whether Cameron and Cargill collaborated on their separate papers will never be known, but it certainly appears that their meetings at Darroch and Auchengilloch had something to do with later developments at Queensferry.

Donald Cargill and Captain Hall had been spotted and recognised. The message that they were in the vicinity was passed to the Governor of Blackness Castle, and soon a troop of soldiers were on their way to apprehend the two men and their companions. When they encountered Cargill and Hall a scuffle ensued in which Captain Hall, defending Cargill, suffered mortal wounds. In the confusion Donald Cargill escaped. Captain Hall died on the way to Edinburgh and it was while his possessions were being searched that the Queensferry Paper was discovered. Cargill became a hunted man, just as Cameron was. But this association was not to last for long, for in just a few weeks Cameron was to 'gain his crown' on the bleak Ayrsmoss.

With Cameron's death a great sense of loss came to Cargill and he made this evident when he preached at Shotts the Sabbath after Ayrsmoss from the text, "Know ye not there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel". Cargill now stood alone as the leader of the persecuted people. Every step was watched and he could not move from one place to another without tidings of some new plan of capture coming to him. On more than one occasion he had to disband a meeting when he saw the heavy dust from the horses' hooves on the distant road. He also had to stand bravely and fearlessly against those who would betray him.

Many incidents stand out at this point of his ministry, but one especially deserves mention. It took place at Torwoodlee, near Stirling. It was a great occasion for the Covenanters and there was a large gathering to listen to the Word of God being proclaimed by Cargill. His text was from Ezekiel, "Thus saith the Lord, remove the diadem and take off the crown." After preaching, he prayed, and, as always, the burden of his prayer was for the persecuted people and the woes of the country. The prayer being finished, he spoke strongly and with well-weighed words. One can almost sense the hush that would fall on the great gathering as they heard him say, "I, being a minister of Jesus Christ, and having authority and power from Him, do, in His name, and by His Spirit excommunicate, cast out of the true Church, and deliver to Satan, Charles the Second . . . The



Duke of York, the Duke of Monmouth, the Duke of Lauderdale, the Duke of Rothes, General Dalziel and Sir George Mackenzie. And as the causes are just so being done by a minister of the Gospel, and in such a way as the present persecutions would admit of, the sentence is just. And there are no kings or ministers on earth who, without repentance of these persons can reverse these sentences. God, who is their author, is more engaged to the ratifying of them: and all that acknowledge the Scriptures ought to acknowledge them". This was inflammatory language, and some have criticised Cargill for taking this step, but when we remember—as we have to do all through this story—the situation in which the Church was placed, and how low the standards of discipline had sunk, it is good to learn that here was one who, not in the spirit of revenge, but by the authority given to him by God, and in the name of Jesus Christ, carried through this brave action. The causes, as Cargill stated, were just, and, as if to give further evidence that he had acted on God-given authority, the following Sabbath, he made what seems to have been a truly prophetic utterance, "If these men die the ordinary death of men, then God has not spoken by me."

How strangely that word was fulfilled! King Charles was poisoned: the Duke of York died raving under the sentence: Mackenzie died with blood flowing from many parts of his body: the Duke of Monmouth was executed: while Dalziel died drinking, without a moment of warning: Lauderdale sank into dotage through excessive indulgence, and Rothes passed into Eternity in despair. Coincidence, some may say, but surely there is a point beyond which such an argument cannot go.

Far from restricting Cargill, the experience following Torwoodlee showed him that there was a great hunger on the part of the people to hear the pure Word of God, and he was willing to extend his boundaries to fulfil their longing. One experience which made a deep impression upon him at this time is preserved for us. He had given a somewhat shorter sermon than usual and, leaving the conventicle, he was approached by a lady who said, "Oh sir, it is along time

betwixt meals and we are in a starving condition and it is sweet and good and wholesome which ye deliver; but why do ye straiten us for shortness". Cargill's reply is noteworthy, "Ever since I bowed the knee in good earnest to pray, I never durst pray or preach with my gifts; and when my heart is not affected and comes not up with my mouth, I always thought it time for me to quit. What comes not from my heart I have little hope that it will go to the heart of others."

But such rigorous experiences as he was facing at this time could not continue for long and it was clear that the end was fast approaching.

Donald Cargill tried to evade the publicity which he had brought upon himself, but he could not forsake his beloved people, or his beloved Scotland. His heart was with them and he gave them everything he had in the way of ministering to them. His last sermon was at Dunsyre in Peeblesshire. Patrick Walker heard that sermon preached and has given us his impressions. The text was from Isaiah 22 v. 20 "Come my people enter into your chambers". Cargill had lost none of his urgency or zeal for the Gospel as he preached. As Walker puts it, 'He insisted what kind of chambers these were of protection and safety, and exhorted us all earnestly to dwell in the clefts of the Rock, to hide ourselves in the wounds of Christ, and to wrap ourselves in the believing application of the promises flowing therefrom, thus to make our refuge under the shadow of his wings until these sad calamities pass over and the dove come back with the olive branch in her mouth.'

The following day Donald Cargill was apprehended at Covington Mill in Lanarkshire. The writer was shown there what was claimed to have been the actual room where Donald Cargill slept on that fateful night, and the bed which he occupied. While the accuracy of this information cannot now be proved, it is by no means improbable. The person who apprehended Cargill was James Irvine of Banshaw, whose enthusiasm seems somewhat bizarre as judged by the words which he uttered after finding Donald Cargill, "O blessed Bonshaw—and blessed day that ever I was born—that found such a prize!" Those captured were taken to Lanark under

circumstances which prevented any possibility of escape, but Donald Cargill did not desire to escape, for he knew his race was run. From Lanark they were taken to Glasgow and from there to Edinburgh, where the punishment appointed them was duly meted out. Death on the scaffold was the prize demanded. But Donald Cargill's faith remained undimmed, and the same prophetic spirit he had shown at Torwoodlee expressed itself again as he was taken by Bonshaw. His legs had been tied under the horse's body and in this position he turned to Bonshaw and said, "Why do you tie me so hard? Your wickedness is great: you will not long escape the last judgment; and if I am not mistaken it will seize you in this very place." This accordingly came to pass, for within a year, one of Bonshaw's comrades ran him through with a sword near the place where the words were spoken. Then at Glasgow, while waiting for one of the magistrates to receive him, another person taunted him, to whom Cargill replied, "Mock not lest your hands be made strong. The day is coming when you will not have one word to say though you would." This man died in a torment, unable to command one word.

The hanging was ordered to take place at the Cross and his head to be hung on the Netherbow. Lord Rothes, one of those excommunicated by Cargill, hissed to him as his sentence was passed. Calmly Cargill turned to him and said, "My Lord Rothes forbear to threaten me, for die what death I will, your eyes will not see it." Rothes was taken strangely ill and died before Donald Cargill's hanging.

The day of his death drew near and Cargill faced it, prepared both in body and mind for the terror of the scaffold. Taking his Bible, he turned to Psalm 118 and commenced to sing from verse 16 through the following 16 lines. How wonderful to think of this noble martyr singing with confidence:

'This is the gate of God, by it,  
The just shall enter in;  
Thee will I praise, for thou me heardest,  
and hast my safety been.'

Mounting the ladder he said, "God knows that I mount this ladder with less fear, less perturbation than I ever mounted a

pulpit to preach". When he reached the top he sat down and said, "Now I am near the getting of the crown of which I shall be sure; for which I bless the Lord and desire all you to bless Him that hath brought me here, and made triumph over devils and men and sin. They shall wound me no more. I forgive all men the wrongs they have done me and I pray the sufferers may be kept from sin and helped to know their duty". He then engaged in silent prayer and then, with a note of exultant triumph ringing in his voice, he cried, "Farewell all relations and friends in Christ. Farewell all acquaintances and earthly enjoyments; Farewell reading and preaching, praying and believing, wanderings and reproaches and sufferings. Welcome Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Surely it is wrong to say that the last sermon Donald Cargill preached was at Dunsyre, for this last word of his was to have a great effect on all who listened that day and witnessed his martyrdom. One especially was to come under the power of those words and to resolve to give his life for the cause to which Donald Cargill had given his. His name? James Renwick.

The final scene was one of cruelty and almost barbarism. The hangman hacked and hashed at the head of Donald Cargill so that it might be publicly displayed to all at the Netherbow. Men did their worst, but for him the scaffold, so full of dread and fear became a place of vision and entrance into the presence of the Saviour he loved and served.



## 9 The Society People

*Their meetings were homes of earnest prayer and patient study of the Scriptures.*

*Alexander Smellie.*

The deaths of Richard Cameron and Donald Cargill were not without result in the religious life of Scotland. In their lifetime they had not only shown open defiance of the King and his ecclesiastical policies but they had also taken steps to gather together those who were not only sympathetic to their cause but also prepared to adhere to their principles. Those people became known as the Society People. Adherence to the National Covenant and the Sanquhar Declaration was required of those who desired to become actively associated with them, together with a willingness to testify publicly against the evils of the day.

Michael Shields, who has given to us much of the correspondence and activities of the Societies in his book, tells us how the Societies began and what their object was. 'The Societies in General Correspondence sprang from the desire of the seriously and zealously godly in the West who thought it their indispensable duty to give some public testimony against the blasphemies and self contradictory test of that day'. This no doubt refers to the larger 'organised grouping' of the individual societies but it indicates the motives which actuated these small and oftentimes isolated groups.

Many who have referred to the Society People have branded them as Extremists and censured them for their exclusiveness, but, when one considers the situation, this criticism loses its validity. Those days were marked by spiritual declension. The principles of the Reformation were largely swept aside and abandoned. The tide of unfaithfulness had to be stemmed and it was left to these people to do it. Granted, they gave every appearance of being exclusive, but why should they be so severely censured for refusing to associate themselves in worship with those who had accepted the Indulgence or to listen to any other minister but their own? One writer has summed

it up in this way, 'They stood alone because they were left alone'. The old paths had been forsaken and they believed that God had given them the responsibility of seeing that these paths were kept open for all who wanted to tread them.

Another criticism is that they were political agitators. This again cannot be justified when we get to the heart and life of the Societies. The dangers which confronted the Christian community in those days necessitated such people as the Covenanters taking precautions if they were to maintain their freedom. By forming themselves into little groups for fellowship and worship they endeavoured to achieve this purpose. The organising of themselves in this way had nothing to do with politics. When the facts are carefully examined the criticism of political agitation is seen to be wholly wrong. It has to be remembered that at any time these people could have been betrayed. Could anyone blame them in the circumstances for taking the stringent precautions they did when banishment, fines and even death could have been the result of neglect?

The Society groups were not large. From one source we learn that when any Society increased above 10 or 12 they were expected to divide into two groups as could best be arranged for all concerned. It is interesting to note something of the life and organisation of these little groups. Walter Smith, who was a contemporary of Donald Cargill, prepared certain rules and directions for these private meetings as they were called. From the long list it is helpful to recall a few.

To gain entrance to these Societies was not an easy matter. Scrupulous care was exercised and every member of the Society was involved in the final decision. 'None are to be invited, or upon his own desire brought into any Society, but by the advice and consent of all the Society; and that he be particularly known at least to some of the members; that he is one who makes conscience of secret prayer, and of prayer in his family and that he is of exemplary and blameless conversation and free from all scandal.' This rule of entrance shows the discipline which was exercised among the Societies.

This was not all, however, for in the meetings themselves similar care was to be exercised. What would many think if these rules were applied to worship today? 'Four hours at least should be seriously and closely spent about the work for which they meet, which is prayer and spiritual conference.' In the conduct of the meeting he again says, 'They are not to be diverted from their work by talking about their worldly affairs or public news until they close, except something fall for the informing of the meeting whereof may be useful for exciting to prayer and thanksgiving.' Another rule he gives is 'every one to take his turn at prayer. Every member may impart any light that he hath gotten.' Such were the rules for their meetings and these along with many others show that the primary concern of these Societies was spiritual edification. Above all, these people were exhorted that they should love, sympathise and pray for one another in secret. It was this bond which held them together and which was the means of making them strong and valiant for the Lord.

One source states that in almost every shire in Central and Southern Scotland there was a Society and that at one time their numbers rose to over 7,000. With such numbers it was essential that some kind of unifying organisation should be maintained so that 'Harmony in spirit, purpose and action should be preserved.' Thus there was established the General Correspondence which was to circulate through the whole of the Societies which owned the Testimony, every fourteen days. The first General Meeting of the Societies was held in Lesmahagow in Lanarkshire on 15th December 1681. So some two years after the death of Richard Cameron there was this strong organisation in the land.

Meanwhile, throughout the land there was great bitterness, for the day after Donald Cargill had been martyred, Parliament convened in Edinburgh and several harsh laws were enacted. One of the most notorious was the Test Act, which required anyone holding office to take an oath accepting the royal supremacy and promising loyal obedience to the King. When this fact is brought to light it is little wonder that the Society People were so bitter in their opposition and sought to maintain

a strong and organised body. The results of these actions by those in authority were to be but the prelude to the bloodiest years of the Covenanting struggle.

There were, however, compensatory circumstances which lightened the darkness of those days and it was from the Societies that they came. In a day when men were commissioned to carry through barbarous acts to enforce attendance at Church and to exact fines for non-compliance with the law, it is good to remind ourselves that faith and devotion to Christ were both strong and deep.

Fourteen girls, the oldest of them being little more than ten years of age, became as stars in the dark sky of those times. Between them these children composed and signed what history has called the **CHILDREN'S BOND**. The girls belonged to Pentland, a place referred to by Ratcliffe Barnett as 'a little old world acre outside Edinburgh.' It has already been noted in the story as being the name by which the Battle of Rullion Green was better known—this because it nestles at the foot of the same Pentland hills on which the battle was fought, but some four miles to the north. There is little left now of the village save the old Churchyard, and in it one can still see the stone to Beatrix Umpherston who is claimed to have drawn up the document. She died aged ninety, the wife of one of the first regular ministers of the successors to the Covenanters.

As one reads through this Bond, keeping in mind what has already been said about the Societies, one can understand a little more of the passion and love of these people for the Lord and His cause in Scotland. This love made their religion a truly family concern and permeated their lives and homes to such an extent that even the youngest had an intelligent grasp of the contendings of their Covenanter seniors. Breathing as it were the very atmosphere of the Covenants the children who drew up the Bond did what might have been expected in the circumstances. The emphasis which is given to the deep personal aspect of their faith and the depth of their response to God is noteworthy. What magnificent words these are, 'to give up ourselves freely to Him without reserve soul and body, hearts and affections to be His children and Him to be our God



and Father.' Surely here was the very secret of the Covenanters' Faith.

But the Children's Bond is worth reproducing in full.

'This is a Covenant made between the Lord and us, with our whole hearts, and to give up ourselves freely to Him without reserve, soul and body, hearts and affections, to be His children and Him to be our God and Father; if it please the Lord to send His gospel to the land again, that we stand to this Covenant which we have written, between the Lord and us, as we shall answer at that great day. That we shall never break this Covenant which we have made between the Lord and us, that we shall stand to this Covenant which we have made; and if not, it shall be a witness against us in the great day when we shall stand before the Lord and His holy angels. O Lord give us real grace in our hearts this day to mind Zion's breaches which are in such low case this day: and make us to mourn with her, for Thou hast said them that mourn with her in the time of trouble shall rejoice when she rejoiceth, when the Lord shall bring back the captivity of Zion, when he shall deliver her out of her enemies' hand, when her King shall come and raise her from the dust, in spite of all her enemies that oppose her, either devils or men. That thus, they have banished their King, Christ out of the land, yet he will arise and avenge His children's blood at her enemies' hands, which cruel murderers have shed.'

On the back of the document was written:

'Them that will not stand to every article of this Covenant which we have made betwixt the Lord and us, that they shall not go to the Kirk to hear any of those soul-murdering curates we will neither speak nor converse with them. Any that break this Covenant, they shall never come into our Society. We shall declare before the Lord that have bound ourselves in Covenant, to be covenanted to Him all the days of our life, to be His children and Him to be our Covenanted Father.'

'We subscribe with our hands these presents—

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| BEATRIX UMPHERSTON | MARGARET GALLOWAY |
| HELEN MOUTRAY      | JANET BROWN       |
| HELEN STRAITON     | HELEN CLARK       |

MARION SWAN  
JANET SWAN  
ISOBEL CRAIG  
MARTHA LOGAN

MARGARET BROWN  
JANET BROWN  
MARGARET McMOREN  
CHRISTIAN LAURIE

AGNES AITKEN'

Is there not here a lesson for the Church in our day? If the Church is to recover her vitality and be a power in the community, then she must rediscover the secret and power of family religion and the joy of personal piety, as seen in this relationship to Christ.

## 10 The Wigtown Martyrs

*As a lesson to posterity never to lose or abuse those glorious privileges planted by their labours, rooted in their sufferings and watered in their blood.*

*Inscription on monument in Wigtown.*

In our last sketch, the place of girls in the movement of the Covenanters was noted, and this, it seems is the appropriate time to speak of a few other women of the Covenant. Their place may not seem to have been an important one, yet of all the incidents which took place throughout these years of bloodshed, none has been subject to such scrutiny as the incidents which involved women. Many have attacked the story from the ethical as well as the historical standpoint, denying that the martyrdoms ever took place. If such criticisms were allowed to go unanswered, the very stones would cry out, for no events have been so widely commemorated by memorial stones as those involving women, especially those at Wigtown.

Below the town of Wigtown and beyond the railway line which runs by the shore of the Solway Firth, there stands a solitary monument. It is rough in structure and is composed of stones in the form of a cairn with a rough granite pillar on top. On the base there are just these words, 'This is the traditional site of the martyrdom.' Moving up towards the town in the old Churchyard we find another stone which marks the burial place of several Covenanters, not least among them that of Margaret Wilson and Margaret Lauchlinson. In the case of the latter there are variations in the name, but Lauchlinson is generally accepted, as this was her maiden name. Still further up the hill and behind the town, and visible for miles around, there stands one of the most impressive monuments of the Covenanters who died in Galloway. Here again the names of the two women appear reminding us of that dread deed carried through in May 1685.

Far from the town and site of the martyrdoms these women are remembered. In the old Churchyard at Stirling there is what is probably the most beautiful and best-maintained monument to any of the martyrs, a reminder that such acts of devotion and loyalty could not go unheeded or be forgotten by posterity.

With such evidence it would be reasonable to hold that the verdict of history was sufficiently substantiated, yet even as recently as 1962, there were letters in one of Scotland's leading newspapers denying the historicity of the martyrdoms and seeking to expunge the story from the annals of Scottish martyrology.

Where did all this begin? The first critic of any note was Mark Napier, Sheriff of Dumfries. He wrote a biography of John Graham of Claverhouse, in which he endeavoured to defend the character of the man who had wreaked havoc in the lives of men and women in the late 1680's. His approach to the story was obviously not one of sympathy for those who claimed the right to worship as they felt they should in accordance with the Word of God. After completing his main work he produced two pamphlets which dealt with the Wigtown martyrs. In these he stated in the most categorical terms that history was wrong and that Margaret Wilson and Margaret Lauchlinson had never been drowned. His telling of the story is in the crudest terms and he uses contemptuous phrases which certainly do not appear to be in keeping with the office he held. One such example which is often quoted is where he refers to Margaret Wilson as 'the prima donna of the water opera.' Little did Napier realise that his work, which he expected to end the story, would serve to rekindle the desire to ascertain the facts and put the story back where it belonged. Men of outstanding ability took up the task and with careful research and painstaking enquiry, they soon established that Napier was wrong and the challenged records were right. Among reports studied were Kirk Session records, local records and traditional writing closest to the events.

Among those who came to the support of the Covenanters was a writer better known for his Robinson Crusoe story, Daniel Defoe. He was not a Covenanter himself but his style of writing and his careful enquiry would seem to indicate that he was convinced that the stand maintained by the Covenanters was right. In his 'Memoirs of the Church', written about 1717, he claims to have written his story only after receiving his facts from creditable witnesses. His testimony is most moving and we shall return to it as our story unfolds.



Among the most convincing pieces of evidence are the Kirk Session records of Kirkinner and also those of Penninghame. In both sets of records for this period, we have a complete history of the steps which led up to the arrest right through to the actual martyrdom. In the records of Penninghame dated 19th February 1711, just sixteen years after the event, we have this note somewhat abbreviated for our purpose. 'In February 1685, Thomas Wilson of sixteen years, Margaret Wilson of eighteen years, Agnes Wilson of thirteen years, children of Gilbert Wilson.' Then follows the description of why these children had been arrested. Their parents had been warned not to harbour their children for they had been found guilty of non-compliance with the law regarding attendance at the place of worship. Then there is the note regarding the children's escape and arrest. 'The said Thomas keeping the mountains, his two sisters Margaret and Agnes went secretly to Wigtown to see some friends, these two were there discovered and taken prisoners and instantly thrust into the thieves' hole as the greatest malefactors.'

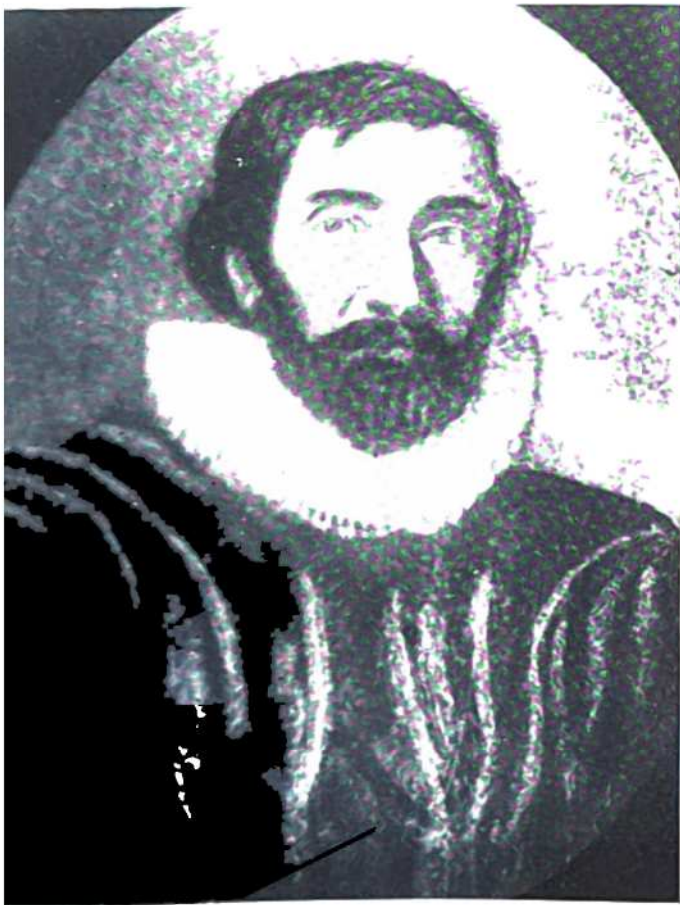
Then comes the actual indictment which now introduces Margaret Lauchlinson the widow of almost sixty years of age. 'These three women were guilty of rebellion at Bothwell Bridge, Airdsmoss, twenty field conventicles and twenty house conventicles.' Yet it was known that none of these women were ever within twenty miles of Bothwell or Airdsmoss and Agnes Wilson being only eight years of age at the time of Airdsmoss could not be deep in rebellion.'

From this statement there comes a heart-rending record of the torture the parents endured, not simply physical but mental. It records that the father died in great poverty after seeing his property spoiled by the soldiers who seemed to be his constant companions during these three months of 1685.

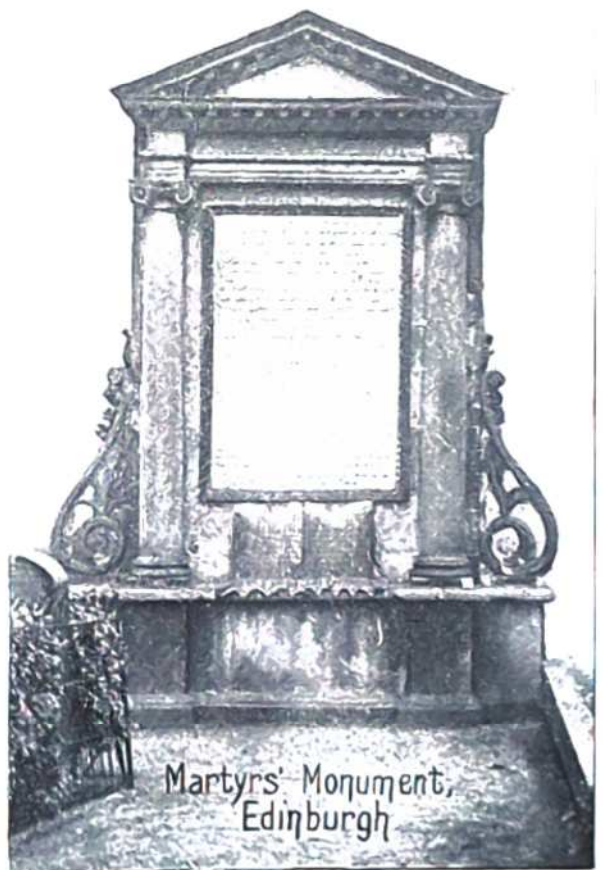
The three women also suffered hardship prior to the final steps which led to the full punishment being exacted for their 'crime' of faithfulness to the Crown rights of their Redeemer. These young members of the Wilson family, though brought up as Episcopalians, frequented conventicles instead of attending the parish Church. Because of their youth they no doubt were



The National Covenant of Scotland. (Page 11).



Alexander Henderson  
(Page 11).



Martyrs Monument, Greyfriars  
(Page 23).





**Torture by the Boot. (Page 42).**



**Monument at Bothwell Bridge  
(Page 49).**



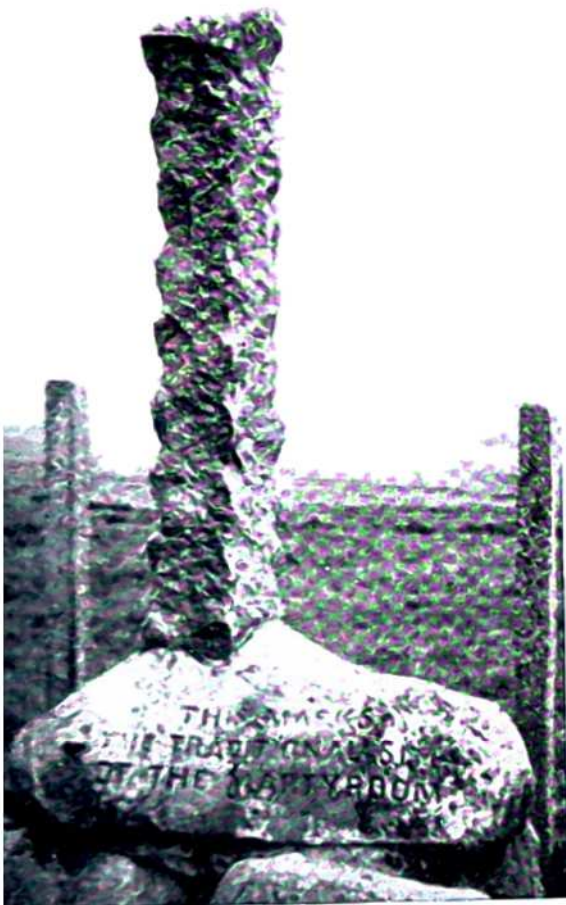
**Monument at Drumclog  
(Page 47).**





Cargill's Loup, Blairgowrie. (Page 65).

(Scots Magazine)

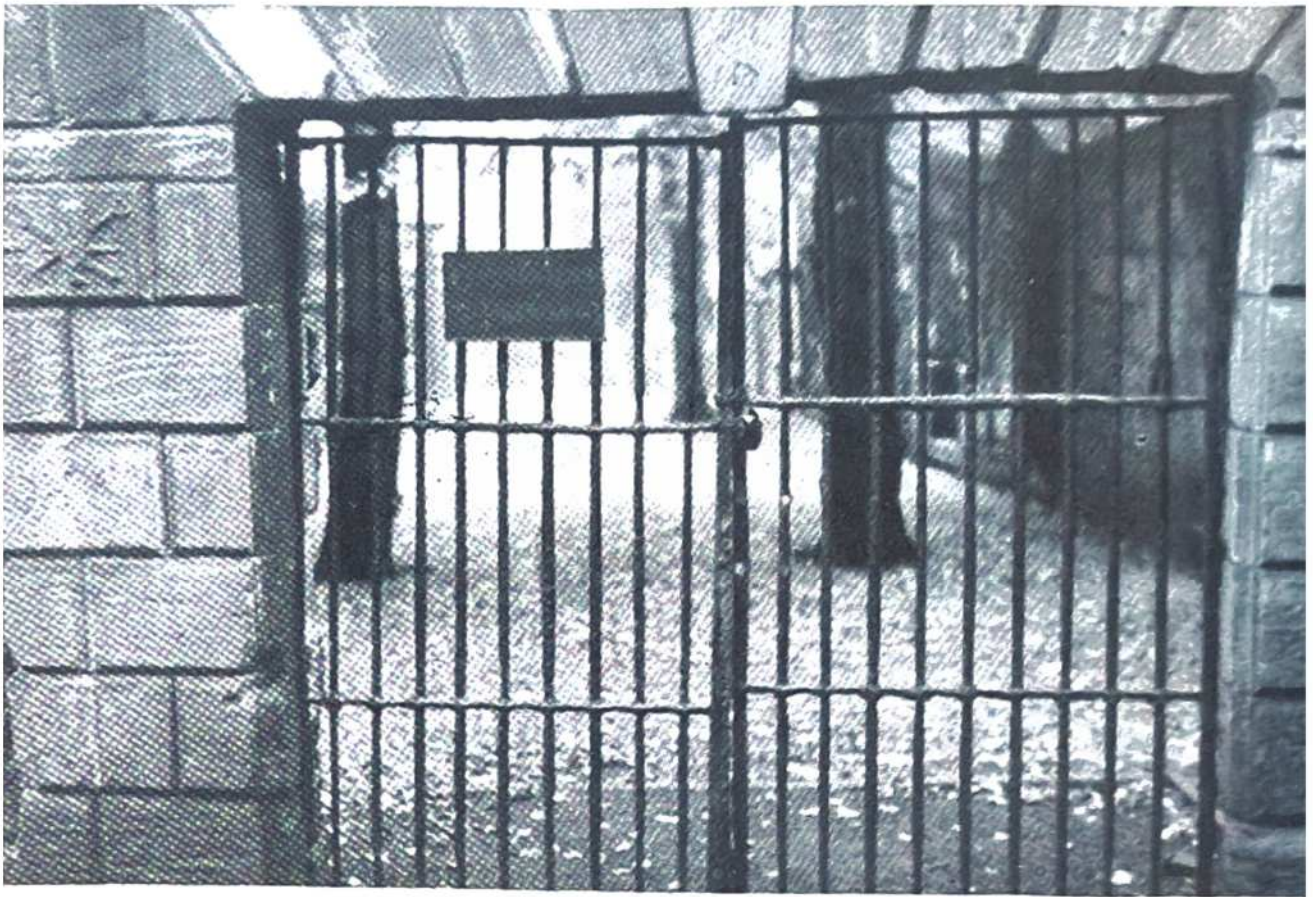


Site of Wigtown Martyrdoms  
(Page 82).



Monument at Stirling to Wigtown  
Martyrs. (Page 78).





Covenanters Prison. (Page 50).

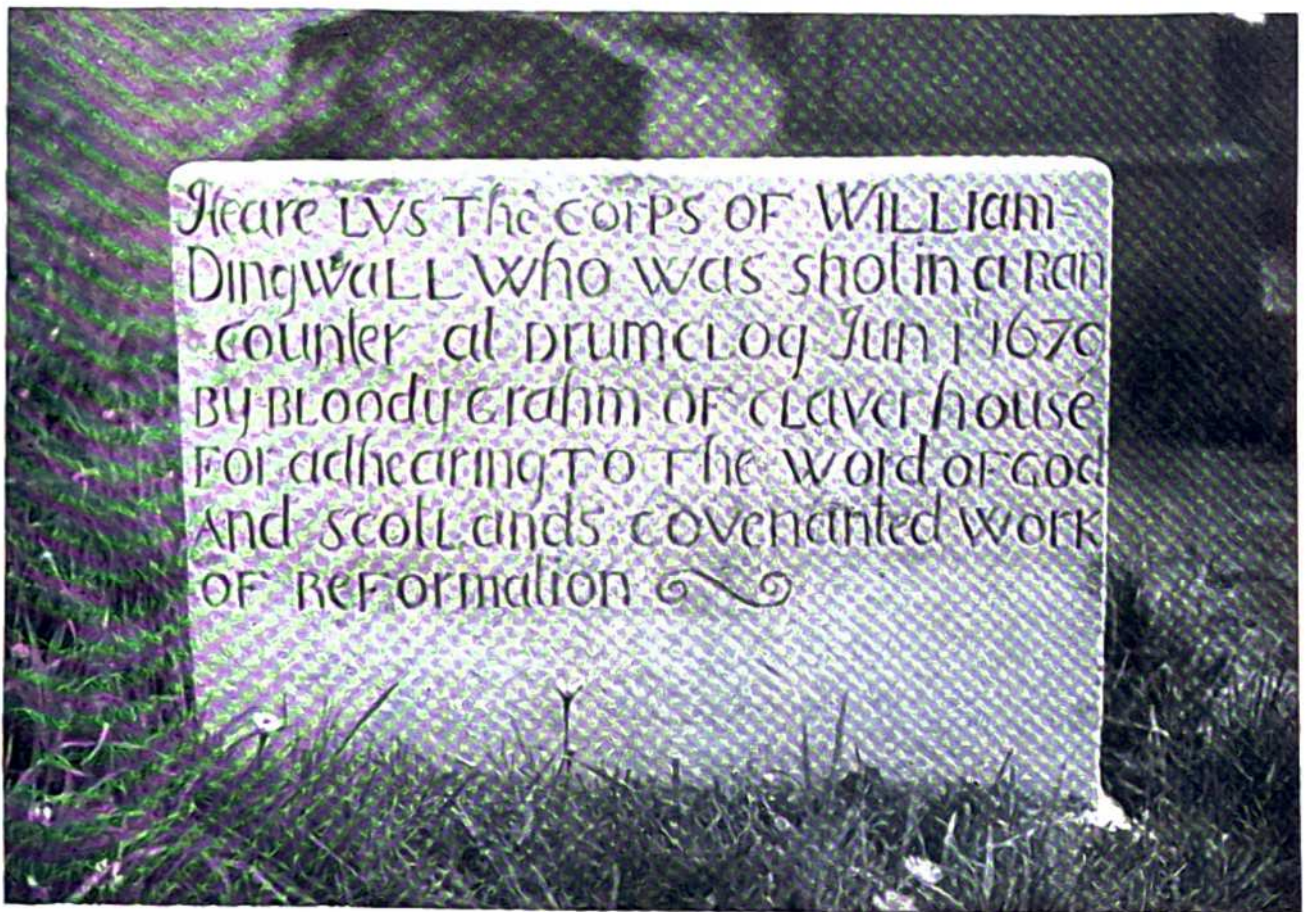


Richard Cameron's Prayer.  
(Page 60).

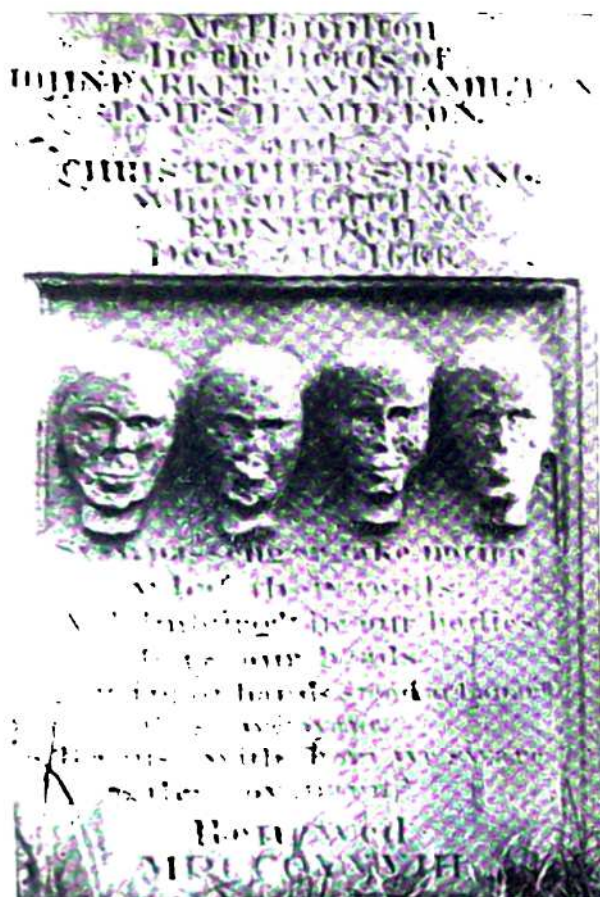


Donald Cargill's Birthplace  
(Page 62).

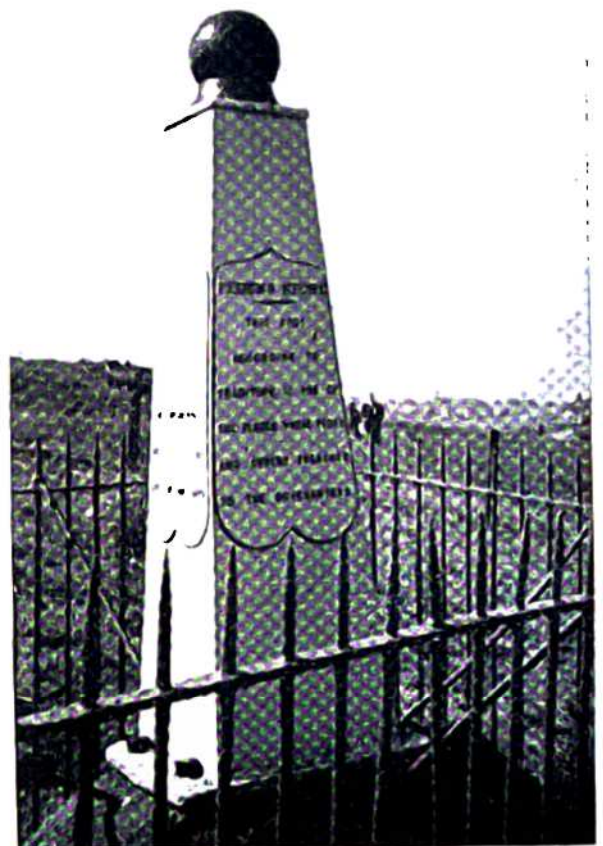




Covenanter Stone at Strathaven. (Page 47).



Covenanter Monument at Hamilton.



Alexander Peden Preaching Stone (Page 106).





Martyrdom of John Brown. (Page 91).



James Renwick. (Page 94).



Monument to 56 Nithsdale Martyrs.



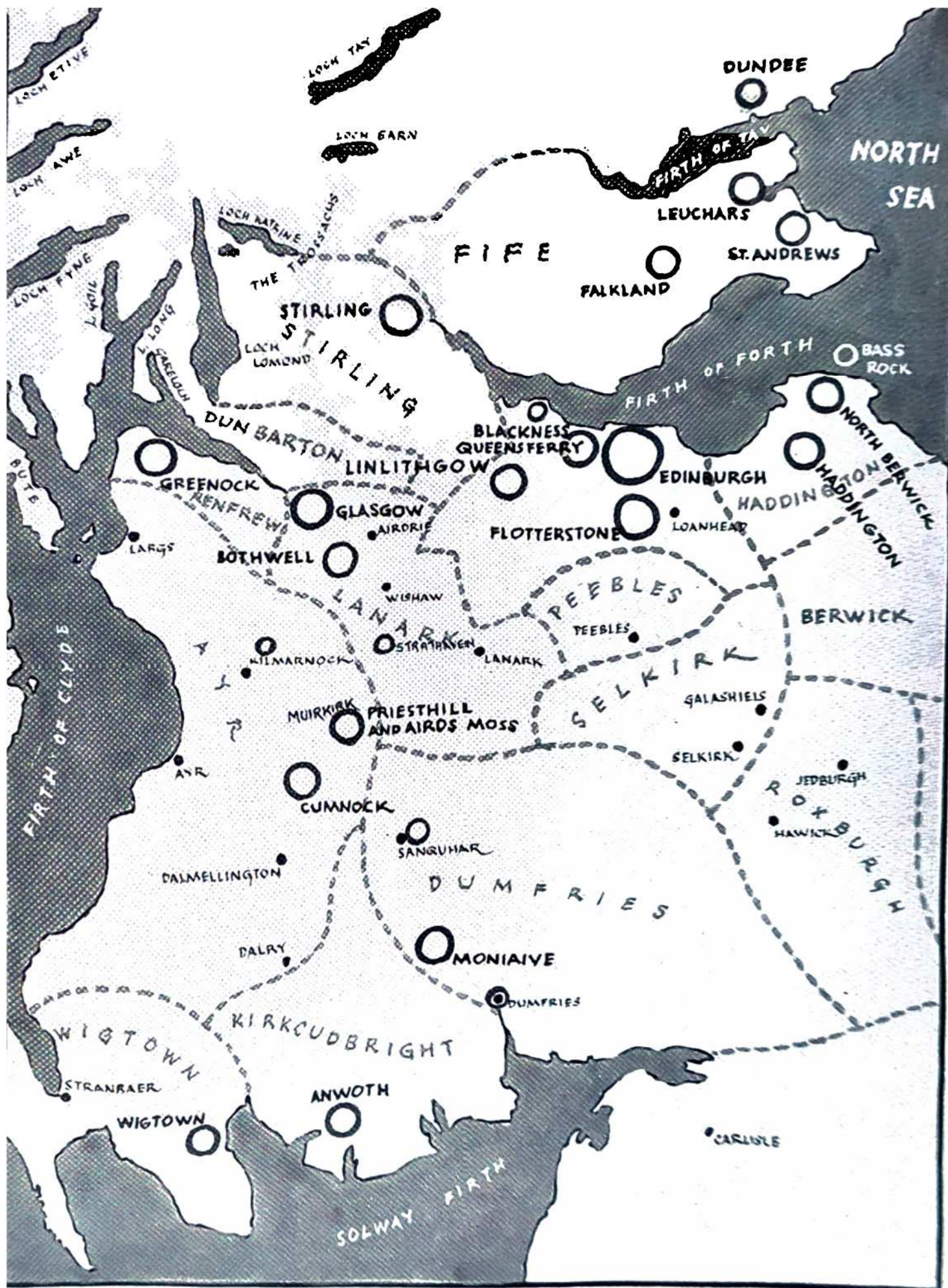


Covenanter Baptism.



Covenanter Preaching





Guide Map for location of main Covenanting memorials.  
See Appendix.

spared from earlier persecution, but eventually the hunt was on and they were marked out as defaulters. The Kirk-Session records again take up the story and remind us that the man in charge of the hunt was Grierson of Lagg, a cruel, callous man whose counsel regarding these children was 'Send the dragoons after them and we'll teach them their duty.'

The children, though young, were like their Pentland co-ages, well versed in Covenanting tradition and knew what to say when challenged regarding their non-attendance at the parish Church. Questioned regarding the curate they replied, "He neither teaches the Word of God, nor does he endeavour to live it as his drunken habits declare. To sit in his Church means acknowledging all that the king has done, which we cannot do. It sanctions the persecution of poor Covenanters whose only fault is they will worship God in as pure a manner as they possibly can. Our hearts are with these hunted men, and we will share willingly in their sufferings." It was with such words that they parted from their parents just before their arrest.

Non-conformity was their only crime, although the rolls describe it as being 'disorderly and absenting themselves from Church'. It may seem a flimsy charge, but in the previous year the Privy Council had issued the following instructions to the military commission. 'If any person own the principles (of James Renwick who was looked upon as the leader of the Covenanters at this stage.) or do not disown them, they must be judged by at least three, but at this time you are not to examine any women, but such as have been active in the said courses in a signal manner and those are to be drowned.'

With Grierson of Lagg and Major Winram already available it was not difficult for a third member to be found to make up the judiciary commission.

The Court was convened and the three women were examined. They denied that they were at Bothwell Bridge or Airdsmoss, but they did not deny being attenders at conventicles. This gave Grierson the opportunity he was waiting for "Give them the Abjuration Oath," he bawled. This oath was one by which the accused abjured the manifesto issued by the Covenanters in which they renounced the authority of King



Charles and in which there was a vehement condemnation of the killing of innocent people. It also included a strong affirmation of the fact that they would stand up for their rights as religious men and women. This the women refused to do and they were prepared to face the consequences.

"To death then, to death", shouted Grierson and sentence was passed. "Upon the 11th of May ye shall be tied to stakes fixed within the flood mark of the water of Blednock, near Wigtown, where the sea flows at high water, there to be drowned."

The sentence was severer than even their bitterest opponents had expected. It seemed inhuman, and the whole town was filled with excitement. Gilbert Wilson hurriedly prepared to go to Edinburgh to intercede on the behalf of his daughters. His efforts were successful for his younger daughter, for on the payment of a fine of 100 merks she was liberated. But the two Margarets were to die by drowning. Friends pleaded with the younger woman to change her mind and take the Oath, but to no avail. Her mother suffered greatly at this time and often rebuked her daughter for failing to obey her parents. Her answer to this was as clear as on any other point. "If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." she said with tears in her eyes. Her mother pleaded with her to relent and listen to the curate Sunday by Sunday, but again she replied firmly, "That were to acknowledge Prelacy as right, and deny that the hill folk (the Covenanters) are wrong." So the struggle went on but Margaret Wilson was unafraid of the consequences of her refusal.

After the failure of Gilbert Wilson to obtain the release of his daughter, the stage was set for one of the most dramatic and moving episodes in the story of the persecution.

The townspeople of Wigtown on that May morning of 1685 were prepared for the worst as arrangements were made for the final act. Yet all the time there was still hope that someone would come from Edinburgh with the reply to a petition seeking the women's release, but these faint hopes died as the day dragged on. Two stakes had already been driven into the sand, one farther out than the other for the older woman, and soon the final

formalities were completed. Margaret Lauchlinson was fastened to the stake farther out, no doubt with the intention of intimidating the younger woman. The people of Wigtown waited anxiously to see if either of them would recant or waver in their resolve to go through to the end even if it meant death, but their wait was in vain. The martyrs had put their hand to the plough and for them there could be no turning back. These two women encouraged themselves in the fact that they were to suffer for Christ's sake and that they would that day behold Him in all His glory. Slowly the tide turned and the water began to lap the feet of the older woman, then rising higher and higher. The courageous woman comforted herself with the words of the 23rd Psalm, 'Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, Thy rod and staff they comfort me.' Spoken quietly, yet with deep conviction, these words floated over the morning air and they no doubt encouraged Margaret Wilson as she too waited for the tide to reach her. Soon the waters had engulfed the widow and even as she struggled to keep herself from the final overflow the persecutors and their men made fun and looked upon her struggle as entertainment. Margaret Wilson prayed for the older woman, that God would take her to Himself. One of the soldiers at this point turned rather cynically to Margaret Wilson and asked, "What thinkest thou of that?" pointing to the widow.

"What do I think!" said Margaret Wilson, "I see Christ wrestling out yonder. Think you that we are the sufferers? No! It is Christ in us, for He sends none awarring upon their own charges."

Then came the most moving scene of all. She took her Bible and began to sing from the 25th Psalm. Those who had now lost some of their initial timidity joined in as she sang those words:—

'My sins and faults of youth  
Do Thou O Lord forget;  
After Thy mercy think on me  
and for Thy goodness great.'

She also read from Romans 8, that most lyrical of passages which includes those wonderful words. 'Who shall separate



us from the love of Christ?' Still the waters rose as she prayed that the Lord would take her, no doubt desiring that the end would come quickly. In the scenes which followed devotion and cruelty are intermingled. The former shown in the case of her mother who could stand the strain no longer and rushed to the water's edge pleading with her daughter that she take the Oath and say, "God save the King". Margaret Wilson's response to this plea was that prayer be made that she might stand firm to the end. As the water lapped her face she was heard to say, "God receive my spirit." But the end was not to be so quick. As she gasped, soldiers rushed to the stake and took her now almost helpless form and brought her to the shore. It seemed that the callous men had seen enough and that at last mercy was to gain the day. But it was the mercy not of a human heart but that of a fiend which had brought Margaret Wilson to the shore. The sport which Grierson and his friends had enjoyed was ending too soon and they now prepared to prolong it.

"Will you pray for the King?" he asked. "I wish the salvation of all men and the damnation of none," she said quietly.

Now the bystanders seemed to take up the same pleading note as had her mother previously.

"Dear Margaret," they said, "say 'God save the King!'" "God save him if He will, for it is his salvation that I desire," she replied.

This was taken by the crowd to be an indication that she had said the words, but the callous Grierson and Winram were not so sure. She was offered the Oath of Abjuration with the promise that if she took it there would be no drowning, but refusal would mean a return to the waters. But Margaret Wilson stood firmly to her convictions.

"I am one of Christ's children and have done nothing worthy of death. Let me go," she cried.

The response was given with brutality and curses.

"Back to the sea, back to the sea with the hag," roared Grierson, and with that two soldiers lifted her and, wading in as far as they could, thrust her into the sea. It was just then that one of the halberdiers said to her "Tak another drink hinny",

and then with his rifle butt pushed her head under the water.

Thus ended one of the cruellest deaths which had yet been seen in the persecuting times.

Many have urged that Margaret Wilson need not have died if she had only said, 'God save the King.' Let Daniel Defoe take up this aspect of the story.

"It has been a matter of censure among some and even of those otherwise in the same interest and of the same doctrinal principles with these people, when they found they were so severely nice in this particular praying for the King, seeing that they are bid to pray for Kings and all in authority . . . It is true they began with these two women upon that question of praying for the king, which was a wicked policy on their parts, because it was the most popular question and by which they thought they made these people odious to the King, and represented them as his particular enemies . . . I say this was a wicked policy on their part; for it is known they had three or four questions in their orders, any of which were of such a nature as that poor people would have suffered death rather than complied. For example had these two poor women answered, "Yes we will say God save the King"; the next question would have been, "Will ye renounce the Covenant?" . . . Further, it is evident that they refused praying for the King upon a religious principle, not upon a rebellious principle; and that they believed the King as before, to be an idolator, a persecutor and an enemy to God and His people. They believed that for them to pray to God to bless him would be either to mock God by seeming to pray for what they did not mean, or really to pray to God to bless the King even in his persecuting God's people which would be impious, and was against their consciences."

This lengthy quotation puts the matter clearly into perspective and demolishes those arguments which would seek to clear the reputation of the men who carried out such a callous act.

Tradition brings us yet another picture and the records of the Kirk Session of Wigtown corroborate it. It depicts a broken man, conscience stricken who appeared before the

## TORCHBEARERS OF THE TRUTH

Kirk Session asking for the privilege of the sacrament. This was one of the men who had taken part in the trial of these Wigtown Martyrs, and the application came nineteen years after the event. For these years he had often prayed for forgiveness for the sin in which he had a part.

Another tradition is that there was a man often seen wandering in the streets of Wigtown, who had such an insatiable thirst that he had to carry a flask of water about with him continually. He was both loathed and pitied by the people of Wigtown. This was the man who had said to Margaret Wilson, "Tak another drink hinny", before plunging her under the water. Yet another instance of the Scriptural warning, 'Be sure your sin will find you out.'

Far from the scene, as we have already noted, this tragic event was remembered. Far from causing interest to diminish in the Covenanting cause, it brought new followers to the standard. Many of those who were Royalists were the first to own the allegiance of Jesus Christ as supreme. Among them were the children of Major Winram, who from the day of the martyrdom became Covenanters in heart and died as such.

For Margaret Lauchlinson and Margaret Wilson they knew that the strong arm of Christ had saved them and they had gotten the victory.

On the monument in Stirling there is a short verse which sums up what this has meant for all ages.

'Love many waters cannot quench.'—God saves  
His chaste impeari'd One! in Covenant true.

"O Scotia's daughters earnest scan the page."

and prize this flower of grace blood bought for you.'

## 11 John Brown

*The martyr of Priesthill shall be a name  
In cloudiest times, to kindle Scotland's flame  
A sample of her ancient chosen seed  
Steadfast to truth, and strong in word and deed.*

*James Dodds*

We have already noted how the events connected with the Wigtown Martyrs have been scrutinised by the critics with a view to producing a denial of the facts. This incident was not alone in the treatment it received, for strangely enough another event in the same month in 1685 was similarly treated for the same reason. In this case, the purpose was to remove the blot from the character of Claverhouse. Mark Napier again comes into the story, but this time he is joined by one by the name of Aytoun who casually dismisses the martyrdom of John Brown by Claverhouse with such words as these, 'for 33 years after the rebellion the details of this atrocious murder were never revealed to the public.' After this statement he gives details of records he examined, but as Dr. King Hewison remarks, 'Aytoun's search must have been perfunctorily performed'. Why these men who seek to eulogise Claverhouse should ever try to exculpate this murdering fiend is difficult to understand, for at every turn they are confronted by irrefutable facts. Records of this tragic episode have been preserved from the period both through those near and dear to the one who suffered and also through his most intimate friends. The strangest fact of all is that Claverhouse himself admits to the crime, although seeking in his usual arrogant way to justify the shameful deed. But what justification can be found for an action which Gilbert Rule describes in this straightforward way, 'Graham of Claverhouse took John Brown of Priesthill in the Parish of Moorkirk and shot him dead in the presence of his wife without any shadow of a trial.' Is there any defence for actions such as this?

But what of the story itself? The horror of that May morning still brings a chill to one's blood as the story is retold. John Brown has been described as a Christian carrier who lived simply and happily in his little cottage at Priesthill. He



was only a boy when the first great Act against the Covenanters was being put into force. That was in 1662 when the ministers were expelled from their pulpits under the infamous Act of Charles II. The anguish of many of the ministers of that day made a vivid impression on young John Brown. His longing as he maintained his contact with the ministers was that he might join their ranks one day. Owing to an impediment in his speech this privilege was never to be his. What appears from those who knew him is that what he lacked in the gift of public speaking was certainly compensated by his personal character and Christian influence. Alexander Peden who perhaps knew him better than any of that day, speaks of him in this way, 'Brown was a clear shining light, the greatest Christian I ever conversed with.' While Wodrow taking the same line goes even further, 'He was of shining piety and a great measure of solid, digested knowledge and experience, and had a singular talent of a most plain and affecting way of communicating knowledge to others.' This may seem almost to contradict his refusal for the ministry, but his ministry was to be that of a godly personal character. In the realm of prayer he excelled, and was most gifted. His fluency and unction were so marked that he seemed a man apart.

His occupation as a carrier was an important one for him and for those who lived in those isolated valleys of Ayrshire and Southern Lanarkshire. He could bring back to the people news of the struggles that were going on, and in this way he was always informed of the happenings both among and against the Covenanters. Through time, and with events moving so quickly, many of those to whom John Brown brought the news secretly joined themselves to the loyal band of the Covenanters who awaited the time when they could make an open stand. In 1682 there was a meeting of the Societies at Priesthill and this gave many of them the opportunity actively to support the work. So conscious were they of their responsibility that they decided this meeting ought to show some practical expression of their concern. What form this was to take was discussed, and it was agreed that they should be responsible for the education of a young man for the ministry. This act was a

sacrificial one, for many of these people had little of this world's goods, but they knew that if this young man could be trained to minister to these scattered communities their sacrifice would be worthwhile. The young man who was chosen was James Renwick and he went to Holland to receive his training for the ministry. How well he repayed what had been spent on him in his brief but glorious ministry is well known. As a result of this action Priesthill became one of the strongholds of the Covenanting cause, and the home of John Brown was often frequented by those who were the leaders of the movement.

John Brown was married twice. His second marriage service was conducted by Alexander Peden and it is doubtful if there has ever been a stranger wedding speech than was made on that day. The prophetic note, which we associate with Peden's ministry, found expression in the hint he gave of what lay ahead for young Isabel Weir and John Brown. Addressing the bride, Alexander Peden said, "Ye have a good man to be your husband—value him highly; keep linen beside you to be your winding sheet; for in a day when you least expect it thy master will be taken from your head. In him the image of our Lord and Saviour is too visible to go unnoticed by those who drive the chariot wheels of persecution through the breadth and length of bleeding Scotland. But fear not, thou shalt be comforted." A strange wedding speech indeed, and how true it proved to be!

Many were the experiences the family shared in their devotion to the Covenanting cause. On one occasion while Isabel nursed their firstborn son, the dog barked and gave indication that a stranger was in the vicinity. Soon they had a young man in their house. He was exhausted by the long tiring walk toward the cottage, but was soon being attended to by the family. Isabel did not know what to make of the stranger. Was he a sufferer or was he a spy? In the midst of her questioning her husband came in and immediately the question was asked by the stranger, "Do you know me?"

"I think I do", replied John Brown. "It was in this house the Society met that contributed to send you to Holland, and now I fear that they have not received you as they ought."

Yes! It was James Renwick, and there he began to unfold to them what was in his heart at this time. It was to one and all a refreshing time, not only physically but spiritually. Not long after this the Societies around Priesthill broke up as some of its foremost men were killed. The times became increasingly difficult and John Brown could not continue his carrying trade. But worse was to follow.

The conditions of that morning of tragedy were not uncommon in these valleys of Ayrshire. The fog rolled across the peat-bogs and settled over the valleys making movements precarious, except for those who knew every step and footpath around their homes. Alexander Peden had been a guest at the Brown home the previous evening and when morning came he took his leave of his friends. Looking out, this weather beaten preacher uttered these words, "Poor woman, a fearful morning—a dark misty morning." Peden disappeared into the gloom but his words would not be easily forgotten especially after the dread happening just a few hours later. Whether Peden had some kind of premonition of danger or not is not known, but we shall see by his reaction later that he sensed something wrong that day. After family worship John Brown went out to cut peat. He was not long at the place when he and the young man with him were surrounded by horsemen. Little Janet at home alarmed her mother by telling her that horsemen were coming with her father. In the intervening period Claverhouse had already offered John Brown the Oath of Abjuration, but Brown refused to take it, declaring as every true Covenanter did that they knew no king but Jesus Christ. The trial and torture for John Brown had begun, for on that walk to his cottage he knew that the arrogant Claverhouse would not be satisfied until every Covenanter was removed from this scene of time. That walk must have seemed like many miles to Brown and especially when he thought of his wife and little ones at the cottage. The sight of the approaching company filled Isabel's heart with dread and she cried, "The thing I feared has come upon me. O give me grace for this hour." She met her husband and listened to the endless questioning of the callous Claverhouse. The questions were not at all unusual, for they were regarding the

failure of John Brown and his family to attend the curate and to pray for the king. The answers were in true Covenanting fashion. Having regard to the supremacy of Jesus Christ, John Brown declared that he could not attend any curate, nor pray for the king, who was an avowed Papist. Claverhouse had had enough and began to bawl angrily. John Brown showed remarkable composure and courage in the face of such force, and it is remarkable that in this, his most trying moment, he spoke without his usual stammer. This troubled Claverhouse a little for he was convinced by his manner of speaking that he was a preacher. Those who had directed Claverhouse across the moors confirmed that John Brown was not a preacher, to which Claverhouse replied, 'If he has not preached, mickle (much) has he prayed in his time'. Turning to John Brown, Claverhouse bellowed, "Go to your prayers, for you are going to die."

John Brown knelt down near his cottage and in true Covenanting fashion began to pray. After remembering his loved ones and commending them to their Heavenly Father's care, he prayed for the persecuted Kirk. He prayed that the Lord would bless His Church and look upon it in mercy and not let His anger smoke forever. While he was praying he was interrupted three times by Claverhouse. His patience exhausted, he spoke roughly to Brown, "I gave you time to pray, and you've begun to preach".

"Sir," said Brown, "ye neither know the nature of preaching nor of praying that calls this preaching."

The time for farewells came. It was a moving and poignant moment for all, not least for his beloved Isabel and the children. Turning to his wife he said, "Now Isabel, the day has come that I told you would come, when I first spoke to you of marrying me".

"Indeed John, I can willingly part with you," was the reply of this brave woman.

"That is all I desire, I have not more to do but to die. I have been in case to meet with death for many years," were the parting words of John Brown to his wife. He kissed them and faced the troopers and their captain. Two traditions come in here.



One says that six shots rang out; while the other says-that Claverhouse shot him with his own musket. What seems most likely, and borne out by Claverhouse himself, is, that after the order was given, his men refused to fire. John Brown's words had made such an impression upon them that they stood motionless, and Claverhouse fearing a rebellion fired himself.

In a letter dated 3rd May, 1685, written by Claverhouse to the Duke of Queensberry we find this reference to Brown's death. It says, "When asked if they would take the Oath of Abjuration the eldest of the two, John Brown, refused it. Nor would he swear not to rise in arms against the king, but said he knew no king. Upon which, and there being found bullets and match in his house with treasonable papers, I caused shoot him dead which he suffered unconcernedly." There we have his justification for this inhuman act, and it leaves us in no doubt as to who carried it through.

Isabel Brown knelt by the lifeless form of her husband seeking to bind up the bleeding head of one she loved dearly. Claverhouse, never one to be touched by sentimentality, said sneeringly at her, "What thinkest thou of thy husband now woman?"

"I thought much good of him and now more than ever," replied Isabel Brown.

Seeing her courage strong Claverhouse retorted, "It were but justice to lay thee beside him."

Quietly and bravely she replied, "If ye were permitted, I doubt not but that your cruelty would go that length. But how will ye make answer for this morning's work?"

Claverhouse, full of his own importance, replied, "To man I can be answerable, and as for God I will take Him in my own hands." These were the last words she heard from Claverhouse before he galloped away, leaving her alone with her children to mourn her loved one. With their mother they arranged the body and covered it with a plaid. Their sorrow was keen, but, as Alexander Peden had said, they were not alone, for the comfort and strength of their Heavenly Father were very real to them at this time. Soon friends came to visit and share their sorrow and they buried John Brown near where he had fallen.

Many shared the grief of that hour. Alexander Peden was ten miles away when engaging in prayer with a Covenanting family he prayed "Lord when wilt Thou avenge Brown's blood? O let Brown's blood be precious in Thy sight." His friends enquiring what he meant were told the story, but Alexander Smellie records that Peden, lifted into a kind of ecstasy, said "This morning after the sunrising, I saw a strange apparition in the firmament, the appearance of a very bright, clear, shining star fall from heaven to the earth. And indeed there is a clear, shining light fallen this day the greatest Christian I have ever conversed with . . .

"He saw", says Smellie, "by a spiritual intuition, the sorrows which were happening in other parts of the vineyard of Christ."

One cannot visit the site of this tragic scene without a deep sense of gratitude to God for this man, nor fail to give thanks for the courage of Brown's wife in her darkest hour.

What of Claverhouse? One source tells us that he was haunted not so much by the brutal act, but by the words and the manner in which John Brown had prayed that dying prayer. It was something that could not be effaced from his memory.

## 12 James Renwick

*The lyart veteran heard the Word of God  
By Cameron thundered or by Renwick poured.  
In gentle stream,*

Already the name of this young man has appeared in our story. At the hanging of Donald Cargill, James Renwick was more than an interested spectator. It was at this scene of sorrow that the first spark of conviction arose in his heart, that spark which was eventually to kindle into a flame of passion for his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Reference was also made to his preparation for the ministry, when the Society at Priesthill made the contribution to send him to Holland for his training.

Some have referred to James Renwick as being the last of the martyrs of the Covenant. This no doubt comes from the fact that he was the last to die on the scaffold in Edinburgh, But the honour of being the last Covenanting martyr belongs to George Wood who was so cruelly martyred at the age of sixteen. James Renwick was also a young man when he died, but what a tremendous amount of work he packed into these few years of his ministry!

He was born in the little village of Moniaive, in Dumfriesshire. Today one of the most impressive monuments to any of the Covenanters is found in the village, where the people sought to remember this son who had brought fame to their village and to the whole land of Scotland. James Renwick did not belong to any notable family. His father was a humble weaver, and his kinsfolk were people who loved the things of Christ and His Church. From his earliest days, James Renwick was dedicated to the Lord and prayer was made that he would be called to the ministry of the Church. The preparatory steps in his education followed the prescribed lines and through the help of friends he was able to enter Edinburgh University. After a distinguished career he refused, on conscientious grounds, to graduate. An Act of 1661 had decreed that every graduate was required to take an oath which acknowledged the supremacy of Charles over the affairs of the Church. To one

born and bred in an area where Covenanting principles were well known, this was an impossible stipulation, and Renwick refused to comply. But though he thus missed the public graduation ceremony he was allowed to receive his degree in theology. This step however, was the beginning of what was to be a career of non-conformity to the rule of the day.

It is at this time that we find the cause of the Covenant brought before him more clearly. Contemporary events no doubt hastened the moment of decision for him, and it was not long before young James Renwick took his stand on the side of the despised Covenanters. The fearless behaviour and undaunted spirit of Donald Cargill as he faced death left its own indelible impression and pointed very clearly the direction which Renwick ought to follow. From this time events moved quickly, for in less than six months he was actively engaged in the work of the Societies. He was one of a band of forty who rode into Lanark and affixed at the Cross a Declaration which renounced their allegiance to Charles and gave reasons for so doing. He was also a frequent attender at the meetings of the United Societies.

It was at this time that the proposal for his ministerial training was made by the Society at Priesthill and Renwick subsequently went to Groningen in Holland. He approached his task with great fear, and at times great doubts, as to his own ability for the task. This was no uncommon thing among those called to the ministry in those days, for such a call carried with it all the problems of opposition by those in authority. Hence much thought and prayer occupied the attention of those concerned. Writing from Groningen in 1683, James Renwick speaking of his feeling and sense of inadequacy said, "But I ought not to disbelieve; He can keep my feet from falling, He can perfect strength in my weakness. But this is the way that the Lord would have me to take; yea, I think assuredly this is the course the Lord would have me fall upon, to seek all that I need from Himself by prayer."

He was commended for his diligence in study and he was actually recommended for ordination before the period of his studies was completed. On the 10th May, 1683 he was ordained



in Holland but the way was not clear for his immediate return to Scotland. It was some months before he could make the journey and, when eventually he came to Scotland, it was by way of Dublin. He had even to assume another name when he travelled. While living in Dublin he took the name James Bruce and he lived quietly awaiting the call from those who knew the situation in Scotland. This call was important for it alone justified him in performing his ministerial duties; hence the delay until he received it. In October 1683, he was accepted by the United Societies and he made the journey home. It was at Darmead, a lonely spot in Lanarkshire that the people heard his proof for ordination read. His own testimony, a vital part of the proceedings, was also read, but this did not receive unanimous approval. Renwick himself on reflection at the end of his days regretted the manner in which he had expressed himself that day. He says, "I think the manner of expression is in some things too tart." This problem was soon overcome, for just one month later James Renwick preached his first sermon to the United Societies. It was a great day for the people and the listeners were gripped by his evangelical zeal and passion for the things of Christ. Strikingly enough, and to the great interest of his hearers, his text was that which Donald Cargill had chosen for his last sermon. We can, even yet, grasp something of the passion of the man as we read his words. "We must preach this word COME to you as long as you are here until you be transplanted out of this spiritual warfare into celestial triumph. Oh! Sir, Come! Come!" It was preaching in that true evangelical tradition which, unfortunately, has been overlooked by many critics of the Covenanters.

His call was sustained, and soon James Renwick was throwing himself into the work with all his strength. Perhaps no man has had so wide a parish as he had at this time. It took in all the Central and South West part of Scotland. His congregation comprised some 7,000 souls from the various Societies. James Renwick was not a robust man, and it is to his credit that he did such work with such limitations of physical strength. Exposed to all kinds of weather in his wide travels he faithfully ministered the Word and dispensed the sacraments. It is reckoned

that in the first six months of his ministry, Renwick baptised 600 children of Covenanting parents. His hairbreadth escapes could fill many pages of this story, but what emerges from it all is the fact that he could testify to the faithfulness of God. In one letter he writes, "The Lord's power and goodness was such toward us that we escaped their hands, which thing was a great matter of admiration unto us all and made me wonder not a little; that Scripture, Psalm 126 verses 2 and 3 being my companion, Then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them, the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad." Such was the faith and courage of this man in the face of the rigours and dangers of his days.

It was becoming all too obvious that such a life could not long continue without drawing the attention of those in authority. In August 1684, less than one year after he commenced his ministry, he was cited to appear before the Privy Council. His work was well known and the Council had tried to create a false impression regarding his ministry. They called him 'a pretended preacher and seditious vagabond.' They also tried to bring a cleavage between Renwick and his friends, by prohibiting all loyal subjects from having friendly intercourse with him. This was just the beginning of the hunt and from this point on he had to walk with great caution. The United Societies were, however, quick to act, and they asked James Renwick to draw up a statement which set forth their position. This declaration was posted on every Church door for all to see. It is called the 'Apologetical Declaration and Admonitory Vindication of the True Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland'. It is a strongly worded document, fearless in its denunciation of the practices of the authorities to hinder the freedom of religion in the land. It expresses abhorrence of the steps the Covenanters were forced to take in denouncing their enemies but to them these measures were deemed necessary.

This Declaration at first struck terror into the hearts of those who opposed the Covenanters, but gradually they regained control and actually used the Declaration as a justification of the torture of any who were suspected of association with those who drew it up. So cruel and bitter were the tortures both

mentally and physically that James Renwick declared that no matter how pure and peaceable had been the motives connected with it, he wished from the depths of his heart that it had never been published.

Renwick wrote many letters expressing the same sentiments as did the Declaration and though his actions may bring upon him the charge that he was a source of controversy, behind them lay the desire to see justice done for those who were the followers of Christ, and to maintain the religious liberty of the land at large.

From this time all the fury of the government was unleashed upon James Renwick and his followers. This period, moreover, was, for James Renwick, one of bitter struggle with himself. His enemies did much to malign his character, and nobody was more aware of his own faults than Renwick himself. He took every possible means to correct his failings. By visiting, writing and personal appeal to vindicate himself and his actions from the many and oftentimes wicked charges which were laid against him. He did not always share the popularity many would have expected for him among the leaders of the Covenanted struggle, especially those who were older men. Alexander Smellie, referring in particular to the rift between Renwick and Alexander Peden, says, 'They stood apart, these leaders in one army.' The difference was however, settled, when Peden now aged and soon to leave this earthly scene wanted all discord to be ended. He summoned the young Renwick to his side. When the boyish figure appeared before him, the older man was taken by surprise and exclaimed, "Are you the Mr. Renwick that there is so much noise about?"

"Father", replied Renwick, "my name is James Renwick; but I have given the world no ground to make any noise about me, for I have not expounded any new principles or practice but what our Reformers and Covenanters maintained."

The young man was asked to turn round, and with typical firmness, Peden said, "I think your legs are too small and your shoulders too narrow to take on the whole Church of Scotland. Sit down, sir, and give me an account of your conversion and call and the grounds for you taking such singular courses in

withdrawing from all other ministers.” What followed must have been a moving experience to both of these men as they shared together their common faith in Jesus Christ. James Renwick told, simply yet movingly, how the Lord had dealt with him and how he had been led to that very moment. Peden was obviously moved for he added among other words this comment, ‘Ye have answered me to my satisfaction and I am very sorry that I should have believed any ill reports of you. But sir, ere you go, you must pray for me’.

Renwick prayed and from every record given of this memorable meeting, he prayed with ‘more than ordinary enlargement as he poured out his soul for his aged friend and the cause of Christ in the land at this time.’ The farewell was equally moving. The aged man took his hand and kissed him, saying with the words, “Sir, I find you a faithful servant to the Master. Go on in single dependence on the Lord and ye shall win honestly through and cleanly of the stage.” So ended the interview which terminated the cleavage between these two men and which undoubtedly gave new heart to the young ‘Timothy’ who was taking over from the aged ‘Paul’ of the Covenanting story.

In 1687, James Renwick took steps to declare openly where he stood on the issues of the day. With Alexander Shields he compiled the famous ‘Informatory Vindication.’ The original document was taken to Holland to be printed and, when it returned, it sold at ‘eightpence per book or sevenpence unstitched’. In this document James Renwick sets forth his own assessment of the times. Under three separate sections he dealt with the various problems. Section 1 dealt with the Church’s defection; Section 2 dealt with the Covenanters’ testimony in the light of this defection and Section 3 dealt more specifically with the charges laid against the followers of Renwick. In this latter section Renwick takes great pains to show why the declarations at Lanark, and later Sanquhar, where he followed the example of Richard Cameron, were so necessary. In it he takes up the whole question of the powers of the magistrate, the call of ministers and many other kindred matters. Reading through this document is an enlightening



experience, for from start to finish there is only one basis upon which James Renwick builds his case, namely the Word of God. From this standard he never deviates, and anything which does not conform to this norm he rejects utterly. He finishes with these words, "Finally, we add not more but desire that this be taken as the unbosoming of the genuine thoughts and exhibiting the mind and sentiments (as to the controversies of the present time) of a poor, wasted, wounded, afflicted, bleeding, misrepresented and reproached remnant and handful of suffering people, who desire to throw down what God will throw down, and to build what He will establish when He comes; to Whom be the kingdom and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

As can be seen from this final paragraph, James Renwick was not lacking in confidence as to the final outcome of the struggle. It was because of this that he was willing to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and take what seems to be unnecessary risks in those dangerous times. Time and again we find him escaping by the proverbial hairbreadth, but these escapes are often colourful and not without their amusing side as well. One example of how he completely fooled those who were pursuing him is seen in the incident, when, after conducting a conventicle, troopers approached the scene. Stepping up to the officer, James Renwick asked them what their business was. He was met with the reply that they were seeking James Renwick. Renwick took the officer across the boggy ground and when he was near the conventicle he asked him to lay down his arms. When this had been done, he exclaimed, "I am James Renwick." The officer obviously surprised, exclaimed, "You are James Renwick! Impossible! A man so harmless, so discreet, so well informed. If you are James Renwick, I for one will pursue you no longer."

Risks notwithstanding, James Renwick never gave up. At different times we find him in Ayrshire, Peeblesshire and then Edinburgh and the surrounding districts. All the time he was anxious for only one thing, namely the pastoral care of those who were joined to him in the bonds of Christ. But the net was tightening around him and his movements were more closely

watched than ever. When his capture eventually came it is remarkable that it was his own voice which betrayed him while he was praying in the home of friends. What a wonderful way to be identified! He had been visiting the home of a man named Boswell on the Castlehill in Edinburgh. It was not the best of places to frequent, with the castle garrison stationed just a few hundred yards up the Esplanade, but it was like James Renwick to disregard personal danger when he was about His Master's business. Having identified him his captors moved in to make the arrest. Renwick escaped through the Castle Wynd but was dealt a heavy blow while doing so. His progress was slowed down and eventually he was caught in the Cowgate district of Edinburgh. When he was taken before the guard, the commander, Captain Graham said, "Is this the boy Renwick with whom the whole land hath been troubled?"

His imprisonment was perhaps the greatest trial for him. No doubt remembering the incidents which were associated with such men as Hugh McKail, he dreaded torture of any kind. He was also concerned about those who might be implicated by the papers he was carrying at the time. Among the letters from prison is one which regretted that he was carrying those papers. In it he says, "I desire that none be troubled on my behalf, but rather rejoice with Him, who with hope and joy, is waiting for his marriage and coronation hour."

On Wednesday, 8th February, 1688, James Renwick was brought before the Justiciary Court, where he listened patiently to the indictment brought against him. There was no problem for him about the charges, except that they were framed in such a way as to give the impression that he was not a God-fearing man. He took opportunity to answer this and said, "Where it is said that I have cast off all fear of God; that I deny. For it is because I fear to offend God, and violate His law that I am here standing to be condemned." Three distinct charges were laid against him.

1. Refusing to acknowledge the King's authority.
2. Refusing to pay War Tax.
3. Counselling his followers to come armed to field meetings.

As James Renwick listened to the speeches dealing with these charges he became increasingly aware what was in store for him. He defended himself stoutly against the charges and it was here that his true brilliance emerged. One comment heard frequently after his trial was, 'He was of old Knox's principles.' But his eloquence and sincerity failed to save him. He was condemned to die on the scaffold.

It was on 17th February that James Renwick died—a memorable day in Scottish history for, as has already been stated, he was the last to die on the scaffold for the cause of Christ. It was a memorable day also for those who witnessed his death, for scarcely had such courage been displayed by one so young facing so grim a death. He was not thinking of himself as the final formalities were carried out. He made reference to his testimony and engaged in prayer as he climbed the ladder. Having reached the topmost rung he was heard to pray in a manner so typical of the man, "Lord, I die in the faith that Thou wilt not leave Scotland, but that Thou wilt make the blood of the witnesses the seed of Thy Church and return and be glorious in the land again."

Even after the napkin had been tied around his face he still addressed those who were his friends and followers in Christ. "Keep your ground," he cried, "and the Lord will provide you teachers and ministers. And when He comes He will make these despised truths glorious on the earth."

The final act was carried through after he had prayed the prayer of his forerunners, "Lord into Thy hands I commend my spirit." James Renwick was only 26 years of age when he died, but it can truly be said that he gained the victory that day. His dying was to open the way for that event which, in truly prophetic mood, he anticipated in his dying prayer.

Alexander Smellie has preserved the words of one who knew James Renwick intimately and loved him dearly. "When I speak of him as a man there is none more comely in features, none more prudent, none more heroic in spirit, yet none more meek, more humane, more condescending . . . He learned the truth and counted the cost and sealed it with his blood."

One who heard him preach has tried to use the words of the poet to describe him,

‘A frail slight form—not temple he  
Grand for abode of diety;  
Rather a bush, inflamed with grace,  
And trembling in a desert place,  
And unconsumed with fire,  
Though burning higher and higher.’

Such was James Renwick, the last of the Covenanters to die in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh.



## 13 Alexander Peden

*Ease is never good for the people of God  
They still thrive under persecution.*

*A. Peden.*

In the story of John Brown, reference was made to Alexander Peden. In this man we have one of the most colourful personalities of the period. If one were to use one sentence to describe the life of this man it would be phrased in the following words—His life was one long story of struggle and escape, in which indomitable faith shone ever clearer the longer he lived.

Alexander Peden was born at Auchincloich in the parish of Sorn in Ayrshire in the year 1626. The house in which he was born has been long demolished, but a new farmhouse stands on the spot of his birthplace. Today the area is improved by modern roads and other developments, but in those days it must have been a wild and barren spot. Later that same district was to become one of the key centres of the Covenanted struggle, in which Alexander Peden was to play an important part.

Little is known of his early life, but when he was only twelve years of age an important event took place in his parish. The parish minister, Rev. George Young, received a copy of the National Covenant, and it is reputed that almost every one in that area signed the document. This event did not go unnoticed by young Peden. Later we find him at Glasgow University where, as Ratcliffe Barnett writes, this 'bonnet laird, a gentleman bred and born with respectable ancestry behind him', attended the various classes necessary for his course. Like many others however, it was not the classes which played such a part in the life of Alexander Peden. With such men as Robert Baillie and David Dickson, both friends of Samuel Rutherford, as Professors of Divinity, there is no doubt that the life of this young man was influenced by these two stalwarts of the faith.

After University we find him at Tarbolton, where he began teaching and also took an active interest in the work of the Church. From what we know of him it would seem that at least

for a short time he left this district to reside near Lanark. Whether he was a private tutor or not we cannot say, but he was for a time a representative elder to the Presbytery of Biggar and Lanark. It was this Presbytery that heard his plea to be licensed as a preacher of the Gospel. His plea was heard and accepted, and plans were made to hear the various trials appointed by the Presbytery. Such tests were not just the one-meeting affair as is so often the case nowadays. In Peden's case, they began in August 1659 and ended in November of the same year. Several meetings were held to hear discourses from the text Acts. chap. 5 verse 23. As he spoke of the trials which the Church faced in the imprisonment of the Apostles, it seemed that here Alexander Peden was giving a portrayal of his own life. His actual licensure was delayed from October until November owing to his non-attendance at the October meeting. On 17th November he was licensed after preaching from Colossians chap. 2 verse 12.

While he was in Tarbolton he had held the offices of schoolmaster, session clerk and precentor, and his knowledge of the Church, and her struggles was considerably extended at this time. He also suffered a personal blow there when falsely accused of misdemeanour, and would have been excommunicated from the Church had not the rightful offender been there to confess to the crime. This blow hurt Peden a great deal, but to his commendation it is noted that in later years no district received him more warmly than this one—truly a vindication of not only his innocence but of his worth as a man. Peden became a popular hero throughout this part of Ayrshire and one has described as having 'laid his hand on Ayrshire.' This surely shows the true greatness of the man who commanded such affection and loyalty throughout the land.

In 1660, Peden left Ayrshire for Galloway, and in that year he was ordained and inducted to the charge of New Luce. His ministry, however, was of short duration, for just three years later the dreaded Middleton Act was passed and enforced, which called for the ejection of ministers who would not conform, and their subsequent removal from their manse with cancellation of their stipends. Peden was just one of four hundred who refused

to accept this Act and it is significant that it was Peden and not Middleton who gained the day, when the final Sabbath came. The last Sabbath in New Luce was to be the most dramatic the people ever witnessed. In the morning and evening his lecture and sermon were from Acts chapter 20. In the morning he spoke to his people from verse 7 onwards to the end of the chapter dealing particularly with verse 31. This he took and applied in the most personal fashion to his own life and ministry. Then came the later sermon when he preached movingly from verse 32 of the same chapter. The people were reluctant to leave and great emotion gripped them, as they saw the time fast approaching when pastor and people must separate. It was nightfall before they left the Church and the last scene was to be the most dramatic of all. As Peden left the pulpit he closed the door, knocked on it three times with his Bible, and in solemn tones uttered these moving words. "In my Master's name I arrest thee; that none enter thee but such as enter as I have done, by the door." That strange and striking prophecy was fulfilled, for during the next twenty-seven years the pulpit remained unoccupied and no indulged minister ever entered it. The man who did was one after Peden's own heart, William Kyle by name.

This incident marked for Peden the beginning of a rich varied experience, and it is from this period of what might be called self imposed exile that the name prophet was associated with him. For the next twenty years and more Peden was content to have the moss as a bed and the rocks for a pulpit. Such a life as this demanded great endurance and strength and it seemed that Peden was equal to it. No portrait is available to give any indication of his physical stature but one remark by a friend may indicate that he was a man of heavy build. This friend remarked that Peden 'Laid his heavy hand on him'. His journeys were so numerous that it is difficult to trace them consecutively for any length of time.

The years following his ejection are among the silent years of his life and it is strange that our only clue as to what he was doing comes from official documents of the times. Peden, like many others, was wanted by the Council for what, in their eyes,

were miscarriages and wrongdoing although, in fact, they were part of the work to which God had called him. Though silent years, they were far from inactive, as can be seen from this extract from one document. Peden is named with ten other ministers as those who 'pretending to be ministers and not lawfully admitted by public authority to any charge within this kingdom . . . do yet still presume to preach.' A separate statement also records that Peden baptised 'the children of Adam Dickie, Robert Lymburner and many others . . . also kept a conventicle in Craigie Church, at the Castlehill where he baptised the children of William Gilmor in Kilmarnock and Gabriel Simpson in the said parish and besides that twenty-three children more.' It also goes on to speak of the way in which Alexander Peden went about the countryside. 'The said Mr. Alexander Peden rides up and down the country with sword and pistol, in gray clothes.' The men named in the document were hunted with a view to bringing them before the Council to answer charges quoted. With Alexander Peden the authorities were to find that they had an elusive prey to hunt, and there are many moving and striking accounts which show how near he came to being taken, and how his skill and knowledge enabled him to escape.

On one occasion Peden was out riding with his friends, among whom was Mr. Welch the preacher, and also the Laird of Glenover. In the course of their journey they went by a party of horsemen who were searching for him, but he encouraged his friends with the words, "Keep up your courage and confidence, for God hath laid an arrest on these men that they shall do us no harm." With such confidence it was not a surprise to his friends to find that Peden actually showed the dragoons the way to the place for which they enquired. His calmness is reflected in the reply he gave when asked if he did not fear being arrested. "I thought it better to go myself than send the lad, they might have asked him awkward questions."

His fearlessness and above all his indomitable faith is seen time and again in his life, but this gives us no reason to suppose that Peden openly preferred adventure. He would have been happier with a quieter life, but he was willing and ready to face



the rigours which those days brought to him, rather than surrender anything that was dear to him.

He was also involved in the Battle of Rullion Green. It is not clear where Peden joined the insurgents but there is no evidence that he went further than Lanark. This was no act of cowardice on his part, for his reasons were conscientious and he, in his later life, regretted that he did not go further with them. He had spoken to these men of their lack of readiness to take on this offensive and he warned them that they would only bring fiercer persecution upon themselves as well as defeat. No doubt many of them remembered his words when they scattered on the slopes of the Pentlands. Some chided Peden for not continuing the march and at times it seems he became a little impatient with them. To one his reply was a little abrupt. "Glory to God", he said, "that sent me not to hell immediately, for I should have stayed with them though I had been cut to pieces."

The next few years of Peden's life are difficult to follow for there are few notes of his escapades and we can only add to what has already been said, that his life was far from being inactive. Baptisms, Communion services and constant exhortation of the people filled his time. He scarcely lodged in homes for fear that reprisals might be taken against the occupants, although there were a few who laid claim to his friendship. Such homes as those of John Brown of Priesthill were havens of rest for this open-air warrior of the faith. Under pressure of the hunt he had on more than one occasion to leave his beloved Scotland and go to Ireland. These times were not only uneasy but also anxious for him; there was always the fear that someone would betray him when he was in this voluntary exile. He often hired himself to farmers in Antrim, not so much to get the necessary sustenance, as to obtain shelter for the night. He knew that with the day's work there would always be a meal and a bed in the barn for the night. Here again his witness was marked. One has reported that the stranger was continually praying for the afflicted Church of Scotland, 'naming a great many people who were in a furnace.' His identity could not long be kept secret, for, when the people

enquired, he revealed who he was, and why he was in Ireland. He was now a welcome visitor and honoured guest in many homes. Yet his own uneasiness and prayerful concern surely indicate that his first love was the blood-stained land of home, to which he took the first opportunity to return.

'Peden the Prophet' comes into his own in these later years of his life. His uncanny knack of sensing danger, of speaking words which can only be taken as prophetic became characteristic of his later years. There was a famous occasion when, meeting with a party of Covenanters, the warning was given that the dragoons were on their way. As the horsemen closed in on them, Peden and his friends waited and prayed. Peden's prayer contained the memorable words, "Lord, if Thou have any more for us to do in Thy world, twine them about the hill, Lord and cast the lap of Thy cloak over *puir* (poor) *auld Sandy* and these people, and we will keep it in remembrance and tell it to the commendation of Thy pity, goodness, and compassion, what Thou didst do for us at this time." By 'the lap of his cloak' he signified the mists which so often shrouded the moors where the Covenanters met. The prayer was answered, as the mists came down, confusing the horsemen in the mossy bogs, while Peden and his friends escaped. But it seemed inevitable that capture should come.

Peden was eventually captured at Carrick in June 1673. He was tried and ordered to be banished to the lonely Bass Rock, that desolate island-prison at the mouth of the Firth of Forth. Even today as one sees its ruins, one realises what a sore trial this period must have been for this fearless Covenanter. For five long weary years he was held on this island and then he was brought back to Edinburgh. After a brief stay in the Tolbooth prison he was sentenced to be banished to the plantations of Virginia. Here again the faith of Peden was to shine at its brightest. When sailing from Leith to London, he noticed that some of his companions were downcast. Facing them he said, "Why are ye so discouraged? . . . if we were once at London we will all be set at liberty." It took a great deal to accept and believe this, but it happened. At London there was a change of captain, and when the new captain realised they were good, Christian men

suffering for their principles, he refused to take them further. Once again the prophet of the Lord saw his word fulfilled to both the amazement and delight of his friends.

Following his escape, Peden returned to his home and led a somewhat quieter life than he had known previously. He was never an extremist and as a result his counsel was often scorned by the more extreme section of the Covenanters. This did not in any way deter him, for his interest and concern were with the Church he loved, and for which he continued to pray. After the Battle of Bothwell Bridge, he was some forty miles from the site of the battle and some friends approached him asking him to preach. To this request his answer was, "Let the people go to their prayers; for me, I neither can nor will I preach this day; for our friends are fallen and fled before the enemy at Hamilton and they are hacking and hashing them down, and their blood is running like water."

In 1682, Peden returned to his old haunts at New Luce, and though his old Church was closed against him, he preached to his own people. Two of his sermons from this period have been preserved, and serve to give us an insight into Peden the Preacher. They reflect something of the mind of this man who, though often 'flirting with death' never lost his faith in the cause for which he stood.

Preaching on one occasion from the text, Matthew chap. 21 verse 38 he says, "Now in the text there is fruit called for. What fruit is this? Ye see it is fruit in season. This fruit is called forth from thee, O Scotland this day . . . Well what fruit is called for? It is faith and repentance, love to God and obedience to His revealed will."

On another occasion, while exhorting the people to be steadfast in their faith he said, "Well then thou poor bodie, that will resolve to follow Him, pray fast; if there were but one of you, He will be the second; if there were but two of you, He will be the third. Ye need not fear that ye shall want company: Our Lord will be your company Himself. He will condescend as low as you like to you that will resolve to follow Him in this stormy blast that is blowing upon His poor Kirk in Scotland this day."

One of the great emphases of Alexander Peden's preaching was on prayer, as the following extract shows. "He is not worth his place in Scotland the day, that prayeth not half of his time, to see if he can prevent the dreadful wrath that is at your door coming to your poor motherland. O sirs: ye must pray, ploughing harrowing and shearing, aye and at all your labour, aye when ye are eating and drinking going in and in, and at all your employments; there was never more need than now."

These extracts give us a picture of this man whose love for his Master never diminished; whose enthusiasm never flagged and who kept the glory of his Master always before him.

In January 1686, Peden arrived at his birthplace sick unto death. His loneliness was made even more acute when he was not able to find rest in his old home and had to move to another house on the estate. Here he died after what was a full and eventful life, and even in death he did not know peace and rest. His remains were buried in the vault of a notable family in Auchinleck, according to one report, while another says that his grave was in the Churchyard; but wherever he was buried, he was not left long there. Six weeks after his death, soldiers discovering his grave took up the coffin and removed it to Cumnock. There they removed his lifeless form and hanged it from the gallows tree. This impious act so infuriated the local inhabitants that they decided to honour this faithful son of Ayrshire. As one has put it, 'the place where this gibbet stood became holy ground and the tree of shame became a cross of glory.' After the cruel period of public execution had ceased the people of Cumnock began to lay their dead around Peden and it became the most hallowed spot in the village.

Today a lovely granite monument stands to mark the site of his burial and an old thorn tree hangs over the monument. This was not the original stone that was laid over Peden's last resting place. Over the years accumulation of moss and grass had completely covered this stone and it was thought to be lost, but a few years ago it was uncovered and today the two stones mark the site.

Stones alone cannot bring home to us what the life of this man meant to Scotland at this time, although they may enable



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us to remember him with gratitude to God as one who, as the inscription puts it, was in the category of those,

Such were the men those hills who trod  
Strong in love and fear of God.  
Defying through a long dark hour  
Alike the craft and rage of power.

## 14 Epilogue

*The moss-hag mid the purple blooms  
Deep in the heathery hills  
The grey calm where the plover wails  
And fern or thistle waves  
'Mid green spots in the wilderness  
There seek the martyr graves.*

*Marion Paul Aird.*

Thus ends our story—a story which, in the telling, inevitably brings out the personal bias of the teller.

To some, the Covenanters have appeared as fanatical nationalists whose desire was to see their selfish aims achieved whatever the cost. To others, they epitomize everything that heroes should be. Such contrasted opinions cannot be avoided where bigotry is alleged on one hand, and an unquenchable zeal is indicated on the other. An honest look at the struggle of these years which have passed under review in the sketches will show that the days in which these people lived were among the most crucial for the cause of the Reformed faith in the land. Great principles were at stake both in the religious and civil sphere and it was inevitable that a great price had to be paid for such a stand. Our problem is that we look back from the stand of our own day, which is marked by an easy tolerance and a luxurious freedom which these people never knew, and to criticise them from this position. We must grant there were extremists in this movement. Every movement possesses such people but as Dr. Watt so ably puts it, 'that one should judge the Covenanters by Muckle John Gib or Margaret Mitchelson, would be as ridiculous as to assess the prophetic movement by the plausible Hananiah, or the cocksure Zedekiah with his symbolic horns of iron.'

Seeking to bring the struggle of these years before people today, does not mean that we condone all that was done by the Covenanters to defend their position. But we must recognise that it was 'a perilous margin between genuine suffering for conscience' sake and a sheer bigotry which was far from the spirit of the Gospel which they professed to uphold'. We are, however brought back to the fact that they were 'children of their age, however much they contributed to its advance.'

To these men and women there was no such thing as a dull shade of grey. Things were seen as black and white and they were utterly convinced that their stand was right; furthermore, they could quote Scripture to support their case. Like Luther, they knew full well the consequences of their action, and his words could be echoed many times during the Covenanting struggle. "Here I stand. I can do no other. So help me God."

There are, however, questions which have to be asked about these people, which in a large measure have been passed over. What made them what they were? What motivated them in their struggle, and sustained them through their years of struggle and persecution? Lengthy answers could be given to all these questions, but there are two short answers which accurately summarise them.

First of all, they were men and women whose faith was firmly anchored in God through Jesus Christ. To represent these people merely as fiery patriots is to miss the truth completely. Right through their struggle this indomitable faith shines through. The confessions of these witnesses and martyrs reveal this most clearly. Such a faith rang with confidence and was able to carry them through the fires of persecution and trial. Hector Macpherson sums up this aspect when he says, 'Among them spiritual religion was a reality; and among them the Christian virtues were honoured and practised up to a point . . . . The field preachers have often been blamed for, 'preaching to the times,' and taking occasion to confirm their hearers in their opposition to the excesses of arbitrary power in Church and state. Certainly they did so; in the nature of the case they were bound to do so. But their sermons were far from political speeches; these men were first and foremost preachers of the Gospel, and we have the authority of the leading historians and of those who left behind them memoirs and reminiscences for believing that many careless men and women were brought to Christ by the force of their oratory.'

The second thing is that their stand was based upon the Word of God. Some have spoken sneeringly of this attitude as being one that 'anything can be justified from the Bible.' This is a very shallow criticism indeed, for one cannot look at the

work of the Reformation throughout Scotland without recognising that the Word of God was the motivating power throughout all its achievements and these people were simply carrying on where Knox and Melville left off. This adherence to the Word of God was more than just a cold formalism; it was the very root of their whole life. Alexander Henderson set the pattern when he presented the National Covenant to the people. He said then, in 1638, "And because we cannot look for a blessing from God upon our proceedings, except with our profession and subscription we join such a life and conversation as becometh Christians who have renewed their Covenant with God." In such pledges they were acting not upon any man-made directive, but upon the very principles set forth in the Scriptures.

Because of their stand, Scotland, and indeed, the whole world owes a debt to these people who took as their motto, "For Christ's Crown and Covenant". The principles for which they died have been enshrined in the life of every freedom-loving country and especially that of the Church. Dr. J. H. S. Burleigh, while recognising the limitations of the Covenanters, pays them this tribute. 'They were extremists whose excesses were condemned by nearly all their Presbyterian brethren at the time. Nevertheless, though they were but a remnant, their loyalty to convictions more widely shared, their constancy under persecution and their warm if narrow, evangelical faith, must be recognised, and without their testimony the victory of Presbyterianism would have been impossible.'

They sealed 'freedom's noble cause,' as Burns put it, and one cannot visit a Churchyard where there are Covenanting memorials or the site of one of the battles without realising the debt we owe to these brave contenders for the Faith. How aptly the words of Abraham Lincoln sum up this struggle; words which were spoken at the dedication of the field of Gettysburg where so many brave men had laid down their lives. 'We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men who struggled here have consecrated it far beyond our power to add or detract. It is for us the living to be dedicated to the great task remaining before



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us, that, from these honoured dead, we might take increased devotion to the cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, and that we here highly resolve that these dead have not died in vain.'

Their fight has ended; many of the issues are resolved; the victory is gained; but the cause still remains. It is this cause, 'the faith once delivered to the saints', that still lays claim to our devotion.

May we be counted worthy to be 'Torchbearers of the Truth', and hand on to posterity this torch with undimmed light in an age of increasing confusion and bewilderment.

# Appendix

Because of increased interest in the story of the Covenanting struggle it was felt that a list of the principal monuments referred to should be included and others which are regarded as important to the story though not referred to in it. These are now given with their locations and directions with road numbers where possible. No up to date reference book deals with this subject and it is hoped that this will enable many to use the map and locations to real purpose in searching out these monuments.

## BACKGROUND OF EVENTS

**EDINBURGH.** **Huntly House Museum** Canongate, also **Museum of Antiquaries**, Queen Street, where relics of Covenanting banners and National Covenant are displayed. Hugh McKail's Bible is found in the Huntly House Museum.

**Greyfriars Church and Churchyard.** Small Museum in Church and also plaque on pulpit marking place of the Signing of the National Covenant. Alexander Henderson's burial stone; Martyrs Monument and Covenanter's prison found in Churchyard.

## SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

**ANWOTH.** A. 75 from Newton Stewart or Gatehouse of Fleet. Approximately 1 mile west of Cardoness Castle. Church; Monument and Rutherford's Walk.

**ST. ANDREWS.** Fife. A. 91 from Cupar.

St. Mary's College, also stone in grounds of Cathedral marking spot of his burial.

## FIRST MARTYRS.

**EDINBURGH.** Grassmarket. Upraised stone marking site of executions.

**STIRLING.** Church of the Holy Rude. Pulpit still in use which was used by Guthrie. Several small items associated with Guthrie found in this church. Also monument behind the church to James Guthrie.

**RULLION GREEN.** Site of the Battle. A.702 from Edinburgh. approx. 8 miles. Location of monument on right beyond House of Muir Farm. Also Monument at Colinton outside Dreghorn Barracks, Edinburgh.

Numerous monuments are found in different parts of the country where reference is made to the Pentland uprising and the sentences which many suffered for their part in the struggle.  
**Irongray Churchyard.** A76 to junction with B729 from Dumfries to Dunscore and thence by minor road to Churchyard. Marked on all main road maps.

### **RICHARD CAMERON.**

**FALKLAND, Fife.** A91 to Strathmiglo and A912 to Falkland. Family house stands in village square. (Also of interest is Falkland Palace where Andrew Melville addressed King James.)

**BURIAL SPOT.** A.70 from Cumnock to Muirkirk. Spot lies to left of railway approximately 2 miles from Muirkirk. Upright monument recording names of those who fell in the struggle and single flat stone to Richard Cameron alongside.

**SANQUHAR.** A.76 from New Cumnock and Thornhill. Monument in main street.

### **DONALD CARGILL.**

**RATTRAY** near Blairgowrie. Perthshire. Small Cairn marks place of his birth. Also Cargill's Leap at the Keith on the River Ericht.

Place of Capture. Covington Mill. A72 from Biggar, Lanarkshire to **THANKERTON** through village to farmhouse across bridge.

### **BATTLES AND BUTCHERY.**

**Bothwell Bridge.** Situated on main road between Hamilton and Bothwell A74.

**Drumclog.** A71 from Strathaven to Darvel. Spot signposted on right side of road.

## **WIGTOWN MARTYRS.**

**WIGTOWN.** A714 from Newton Stewart.

Large monument behind the town. Memorial stone in Old Churchyard and Stake in sand beyond the railway.

**STIRLING.** Churchyard of the Church of the Holy Rude. Monument with plaques.

## **JOHN BROWN.**

**PRIESTHILL.** Situated on A723 from Muirkirk to Strathaven. Approximately 2 miles from Muirkirk. Small farm road on right side then walking good distance over moors to monument.

## **JAMES RENWICK.**

**MONIAIVE.** A76 to Thornhill then B731. Impressive monument stands above village.

## **ALEXANDER PEDEN.**

**CUMNOCK.** A70 on Road to Muirkirk. Two stones at entrance to cemetery.

**PREACHING STONE**—Between Harthill and Shotts B717. Signposted.

**BASS ROCK.** From North Berwick, East Lothian, sails are arranged during summer months when good view of the Covenanter prison can be had from boat. (Also at North Berwick in old Churchyard stone to John Blackadder a contemporary of Alexander Peden.)

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It is impossible to list all the monuments to be found in Scotland but many can be found by consulting local reference books. The following are not so easily accessible. It is advised to check carefully with maps before trying to locate these.

**NITHSDALE MARTYRS.** Dalgarnock Churchyard from Closeburn A76 to Thornhill. Minor road to Kirkland on west side travelling north.



**COMMUNION STONES.** B729 from Dumfries to Dunscore. Then minor road to Maxwellton. Consult Ordnance map from this point. Sceoch Hill main landmark.

**DARMEAD.** Solitary monument where Covenanting ministers were ordained to the Gospel ministry. A71 to Allanton, Lanarkshire. Monument located on moorland south east from village.

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Other principal locations are:—

**FIFE.**

**CUPAR.**

**ST. ANDREWS.**

**MAGUS MOOR** (located at Ceres Moor, Pitscottie Cross-roads.)

**GLASGOW. Cathedral of St. Mungo.** Two stones are found here both bearing the same inscription. One outside Cathedral and one in the crypt.

**Castle Street.** Formerly located at a drinking fountain but now restored in present position since redevelopment.

**Cathcart Churchyard.**

**PAISLEY.** Old Churchyard.

**KILMARNOCK** Three monuments found in Laigh Kirk burying ground.

**FENWICK.** Fenwick Church. This is full of interest to the lover of Covenanting history. Monuments are all in excellent condition. The Church has also rich tradition being the Church of William Guthrie a cousin of James Guthrie who was martyred.

**IRVINE.** Parish Churchyard.

**AYR.** Old Churchyard.

**TARBOLTON.** Churchyard.

**DUMFRIES.** St. Michael's Churchyard.

With these as guides it is hoped that many will be able to visit these spots and recall the story for themselves.

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# **THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION**

## **SOCIETY**

For well over a century, this Society has been active in maintaining a Protestant witness, and disseminating Reformed teaching, in Scotland. Its Organising Secretary and Lecturer, Rev. A. Sinclair Horne, will be glad to respond to requests for information and service.

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