

The Life of James Renwick eBook

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[Illustration]

The Life of

JAMES RENWICK

A historical sketch of his life, labours and martyrdom and a vindication of his character and testimony.

by Thomas Houston, D.D.

Originally this life was written as an introduction to "The Letters of Renwick" Published by Alex. Gardner, Paisley, 1865.

Cover Picture: Execution of James Renwick, Edinburgh, 1688.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

The prophet's message to Eli, "Wherefore the Lord God of Israel said * * * *them that honour me, I will honour,*" (1 Sam. ii. 30,) declares a fundamental law of the divine government, which the history alike of individuals and of communities has illustrated in all by-past ages. The works of many men of eminent talent and remarkable energy—admired in their own day,—have speedily passed into oblivion, or have been productive of few permanently salutary results. Despising God, "they have been lightly esteemed." Those, on the other hand, who honoured God, and were devoted to His service—however humble their talents or position in society,—however contemned and persecuted by the world—have been honoured of God. Their labours have been accepted to advance His glory in the earth—their memories have continued long fragrant, and their principles and character have furnished the most valuable instruction and the brightest examples to future generations.

Of this we have a striking instance in *James Renwick*,—the last, and in various respects the most illustrious of the Scottish martyrs of the seventeenth century. Hated and persecuted in his own day, by the men in authority in Church and State—caluminated and reproached by ministers and others, who professed evangelical sentiments and affected piety—and his principles generally misrepresented and condemned even to our own day,—there is yet abundant evidence to show that the Master whom he faithfully served, and for whose cause he willingly surrendered his life, singularly owned and honoured him. His faithful contendings and arduous labours contributed not a little to subvert the throne of a bigot and tyrant, and to achieve the nation's liberties. They served also to secure the purity and independence of the Church, and to transmit a legacy of imperishable principles to future times, when “the handful of corn” upon the top

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of the mountains, “shall shake with fruit like Lebanon.” Scant and fragmentary as are the memorials of Renwick—clothed in the most homely garb, and written with no artistic skill, they have yet been the means of nurturing vital piety in many a humble breast and household, in these and other countries, from the martyr era, to our own day; and not a few of the most devoted ministers, who have earnestly contended for precious truth, and been wise to win souls to Christ, have received from the record of the labours and sufferings and testimony of Renwick, some of their first solemn impressions for good, and propelling motives to holy diligence and self-devotion. As the story of Joseph in the Old Testament has been remarkably blessed, above other parts of the divine word, for promoting the conversion and early piety of the young, so the unadorned narrative of the life, labours, and death of the youthful Scottish martyr, has led not a few to prefer the cause and reproach of Christ to the world’s favour—to imbibe his spirit, and to imitate him, in seeking ends the most important and glorious.

Renwick’s work in the Church is not yet fully accomplished, nor is the influence of his name losing its attractive power. On the contrary, there is evidence, increasing as it is cheering, that while the one is drawing to it more earnest regard and willing workers, the other is constantly becoming more powerful and widespread. Let any person compare the manner in which the later Scottish martyrs—Renwick and the Society people,—were spoken of in the histories, civil and ecclesiastical, emitted in these countries, forty or fifty years ago, with the altered tone of historians of a recent date, and he will see that posterity is beginning to do tardy justice to the memories of men of whom “the world was not worthy,”—who were the noblest, most disinterested patriots of which their country could ever boast, and whose services to the cause of pure and undefined religion were invaluable. Occasionally, we yet find, in the works of some popular writers, Renwick and his fellow-sufferers, designated enthusiasts and fanatics, their principles misrepresented, and some of their most heroic deeds held up to ridicule and scorn. Even the brilliant Macaulay, while exposing to deserved condemnation their cruel and heartless persecutors, and while depicting with graphic power some of the incidents of the deaths of the Scottish martyrs, yet shews his strong aversion to evangelical principle and godly practice, by applying to the honest confessors the same opprobrious epithets. The age in which the martyrs and their principles were kept entombed, by heaping on them reproach and slander, is past, however, not to return again. Their names are destined not to perish. God designs in his providence to honour them more and more, by bringing more clearly to light the great principles for which they contended unto blood, striving against sin. The era long predicted and desired is approaching, when the saints shall rise to reign with Christ on the earth, when the spirit which distinguished them shall be extensively revived, and the great principles of their testimony shall be triumphant.

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Meanwhile, the resurrection of the *names* of the confessors and martyrs of a former age, is a sure indication of the resurrection of their principles too. Through the evidence furnished by the faithful contendings and devoted lives of men of sanctified wisdom and high-toned piety, and the light reflected from the story of their sufferings and triumphant deaths, we cannot doubt that numbers will be led to earnest inquiry concerning the principles for which they testified in life, and in confirmation of which they willingly laid down their lives, that they might transmit the precious heritage to future generations. The result will be a wider appreciation of the value and excellency of a martyr-testimony; and in the period of promised light and enlargement, the lifting up of a standard in many places, and by strong hands, in behalf of the same great principles.

As prefatory to the memorials of the piety, wisdom, and devotedness of the martyr Renwick, it appears desirable to present a brief sketch of his personal history—to notice the particular time in which he laboured, and the principles for which he contended,—his martyrdom, character, and the distinct and honourable position assigned him in the great work of maintaining and advancing the Redeemer's cause in the earth.

RENNICK'S LIFE

James Renwick was the child of godly parents in humble life. His father, Andrew Renwick, was a weaver, and his mother, Elizabeth Corson, is especially mentioned, like the mother and grandmother of Timothy, or like Monica, the mother of Augustine, as a woman of strong faith, and eminently prayerful. As several of her children had died in infancy, she earnestly sought that the Lord would give her a child, who would not only be an heir of glory, but who might live to serve God in his generation. Her prayer was heard and graciously answered. The son of her vows was born at Moniaive, in the parish of Glencairn, Gallowayshire, on the 15th of February, 1662. His father died before he reached the age of fourteen, but not before he felt assured—probably from observing in the boy remarkable indications of early piety—that, though his course on earth would be short, the Lord would make singular use of him in his service. The early training of this distinguished martyr was, in a great measure, through the instrumentality of a devoted mother, who could boast of no worldly affluence or accomplishments, but whose heart was richly pervaded by the grace of the Spirit, and intensely concerned for the Saviour's glory; and who, in times of great difficulty and great trial, maintained unwavering confidence in the faithful word of promise.

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If James Renwick was not “sanctified from the womb,” there was clear evidence afforded, that, in early childhood, he was the subject of gracious motions of the Spirit. At two years of age, he was observed to be aiming at secret prayer; and as his childhood advanced, he evinced love to the ways of God, by reading and pondering the Scriptures, delight in secret prayer, and by reverential regard to the authority of his parents. Like Luther, and other eminent servants of God, Renwick was trained for his life-work in the school of *temptation*; he experienced painful mental conflicts, and the assaults of the tempter, at a very early period. It is recorded that, at six years of age, he was conscious of distressing doubts, in relation to the Divine existence and perfections. These exercised and agitated his mind for a period of two years. In answer to prayer, and by meditation on the power and goodness of God, as seen in creation, he overcame the temptation, and attained to internal composure and tranquillity. At a time of life considerably subsequent, when he had reached mature youth, and had acquired extensive acquaintance with Scriptural truth, a like temptation again assailed him. He himself relates that he fell into deeper perplexity and distress about these fundamental truths. Like the excellent Robert Bruce of the First Reformation, he was strongly tempted to atheism. So powerful at one time was the assault, that, being in the fields and looking to the distant mountains, he exclaimed, “Were all these devouring furnaces of burning brimstone, he would be content to go through them, if he could thereby be assured of the existence of God.” There was at length made for him a way of escape from this severe temptation, and not only did he attain to a full and joyful persuasion of God’s existence, but to the assurance of his personal interest in God as his covenant portion.

James Renwick was endowed with a vigorous reflective mind, and from his childhood he was devoted to reading and study. Amidst considerable difficulties, he commenced and prosecuted with ardour studies for the ministry. There is ample evidence from his writings that his attainments in learning were by no means superficial. Through the kindness of friends raised up in providence, he was enabled to pursue classical studies in Edinburgh, and while attending the University there, he maintained himself till he had finished the undergraduate course, partly by teaching and aiding others in their studies. When his scholarship entitled him to a University degree, he refused to receive this honour, because it was required at the time that students, on graduating, should swear the oath of allegiance, which expressly owned the royal supremacy. In company with two fellow-students, he sometime after received his degree privately.

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Continuing in Edinburgh to prosecute his studies, he was brought to attend the private fellowship-meetings of the persecuted covenanters. He met with the “outed” ministers, and was led to study, by the light of the Divine word and the teaching of the Spirit, the exciting and deeply important questions of the day. Thus did he become convinced of the numerous defections from the principles and ends of the Covenanted Reformation, of the majority of the ministers and Presbyterian people of Scotland; and he was persuaded that the stricter Covenanters,—the followers of Cargill and Cameron, and those associated in Societies, and who frequented conventicles,—alone consistently carried out the grand principles and aims of the national vows. At length, after much searching of heart, and according to his words, testifying to his deep conscientiousness, “with great grief, reluctance, and trembling of soul,” he became identified with the persecuted remnant. Soon after, while yet only *nineteen years of age*, Renwick witnessed the martyrdom of the venerable servant of Christ, Donald Cargill. He stood near the scaffold, beheld his courageous and triumphant departure to glory, and heard the clear and powerful last words, in which he nobly testified for the crown-rights of the Redeemer, and against Erastian usurpation. “As to the causes of my suffering,” said the dying martyr, “the chief is—not acknowledging the present Authority, as it is established in the Supremacy and Explanatory Act. This is the magistracy I have resisted, that which is invested with Christ’s power. Seeing that power taken from Christ, which is His glory, and made the essential of an earthly crown, it seemed to me as if one were wearing my husband’s garments, after he had killed him. There is no distinction we can make, that can free the acknowledger from being a partaker of this sacrilegious robbing of God. And it is but to cheat our consciences to acknowledge the *civil power* alone, that it is of the essence of the crown; and seeing they are so express, we ought to be plain; for otherwise, we deny our testimony and consent that Christ be robbed of His glory.”

These mighty utterances, so solemnly confirmed by the martyr’s blood, could not fail to make a deep impression on the heart of the youthful Renwick. His purpose was fixed, and his resolution taken, to maintain the same great principles; and reproach and persecution and death could not turn him aside. His Christian decision had its reward. He declared that he did not fully know what the gracious presence of God with His people meant, till he joined the fellowship of the persecuted remnant. A large measure of the spirit of the “faithful Cargill” rested on his youthful successor; and when, some two years after, he entered on the work of the ministry, it was justly said—“he took up the Covenanted Banner as it fell from the hands of Cargill.”

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At the time that Renwick united with the Society People, they were destitute of a public ministry. Cargill and Cameron had sealed their testimony with their blood. The Churches were either filled with Episcopal curates, or by time-serving Presbyterian ministers, who had accepted the indulgence flowing from the royal supremacy. By an act of Parliament passed in 1672 against “unlawful ordinations,” the way to the ministry was barred against all who could not accept Prelatical ordination. The Societies, having organized a general correspondence, earnestly desired a stated ministry, while they manifested the strictest regard to scriptural order. Animated by a noble public spirit, they selected James Renwick and two other young men, and sent them to complete their studies for the ministry in Holland, then renowned for its theological Seminaries, where deep sympathy was manifested for the suffering Church of Scotland. He studied at the university of Groningen, where some of the most distinguished theologians in Europe occupied professorial Chairs. Studying in the spirit of entire devotedness, and actuated by an earnest desire to return to Scotland, where there was pressing need for faithful ministerial services, he made such proficiency, that in a short time, he was fully qualified to receive ordination. According to the usage of the Dutch Church, he was ordained at Groningen, by a Classis or Presbytery of learned and godly ministers, who evinced their catholic spirit by yielding to his request to allow him to subscribe the standards of the Church of Scotland, instead of their own formula. There was remarkable evidence of God’s gracious presence being enjoyed in the solemn service. —It has been appropriately said, that as the conflicts of the German reformation were acted over by Luther in his cloister, before he was called to his public work, so the struggles of the covenanted cause in Scotland, were first engaged in by Renwick in his retirement and solitary chamber in Groningen. There he clearly foresaw the conflicts and trials that awaited him; and in near communion with God, he yielded himself up as an entire self-sacrifice, anticipating the blessed recompense of the reward. In the early Pagan persecutions, the church was sometimes symbolically represented by an ox with a plough on the one side, and an altar on the other, with the inscription, “Ready for either”—prepared for work or slaughter. Such was the spirit of Renwick, as he looked forward to the work that lay before him in his native land. In a letter written from Holland at this time, he says, “My longings and earnest desire to be in that land, and with the pleasant remnant, are very great. I cannot tell what may be in it, but I hope the Lord hath either some work to work, or else is minded presently to call for a testimony at my hand. If He give me frame and furniture, I desire to welcome either of them.”

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Renwick returned from Holland in the autumn of 1683. Escaping some dangers at sea, he visited Dublin, where he bore a faithful testimony against the silence of ministers in the public cause, and left behind him a favourable impression on the minds of some of his Christian zeal and devotedness. In September, 1683, he landed in Scotland, and on the 3d of November, he entered on his arduous work of preaching the Gospel in the fields, and lifting up the standard of a covenanted testimony. He preached on that day at Darmead in the parish of Cambusnethan. From that time, till he closed his glorious career and won the martyr's crown, he preached with eminent fidelity and great power the glorious gospel of the grace of God. His public labours were continued for a period of nearly five years, and extended to many districts in the east, south, and west of Scotland. In remote glens, unfrequented moorlands, often in the night season, and amid storm and tempest, when the men of blood could not venture out of their lairs, to pursue the work of destruction, he displayed a standard for truth, and eagerly laboured to win souls to Christ. His last sermon was preached at *Borrowstoness*, from Isaiah liii. 1, on January 29th, 1688.

Though he ever testified boldly against the defections of the times, especially the Indulgence, and insisted on disowning the papist James, as not being a constitutional monarch, and on maintaining fully Presbyterian order and discipline, and all the covenanted attainments, his discourses were eminently evangelical. His darling themes were salvation through Christ, and the great matters of practical godliness. With wonderful enlargement and attractive sweetness, he unfolded the covenant of grace—the matchless person and love of Christ—the finished atonement, and its sufficiency for advancing the glory of the Godhead, and for the complete salvation of elect sinners. Considering Renwick's youth, being but *nineteen* years of age when he entered on his great work, he was endowed with singular qualifications as a preacher of the gospel. These remarkably fitted him for the great work to which he was called—promoting the Redeemer's glory, in awakening and converting sinners, and in edifying and comforting the Church in a season of suffering and trial. He was, moreover, gifted with personal talents, natural and acquired, that rendered him an attractive and powerful preacher of the gospel. His aspect was solemn and engaging. His personal appearance, even when harassed by incessant labours and privations, night wanderings and hair-breadth escapes from enemies, was sweet and prepossessing. His manner in preaching was lucid and affecting. His whole heart was thrown into his discourses. He often rose to the height of the most moving eloquence; and with the constant reality of God's presence and love, and the dread realities of persecution, and violent death, and eternity, before him, he poured out his soul in such strains of heavenly enlargement, that his hearers were melted, subdued, and raised above the fear of death, and the terror of enemies.

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The following account of Renwick's manner of preaching, and of the impressions made on his hearers is taken from an unpublished *Ms.* of Ebenezer Nesbit, son of Captain Nesbit of Hardhill, and may be regarded as descriptive of the way in which he proclaimed the gospel to the "flock in the wilderness," during his brief but singularly efficient ministry. Need we wonder, after reading this narrative, at the spiritual effects of his preaching to thousands in his day, and at the precious fruits that resulted from his labours long afterwards, and the sweet savour of his name throughout subsequent times? "The latter end of this year, I heard that great man of God, Mr. James Renwick, preach on Song iii. 9, 10, when he treated greatly on the covenant of redemption agreed on between God the Father and God the Son, in favour of the elect; as also on the covenant of grace established with believers in Christ. Oh, this was a great and sweet day of the gospel! for he handled and pressed the privileges of the covenant of grace with seraphic enlargement, to the great edification of the hearers. Sweet and charming were the offers which he made of Christ to all sorts of sinners. There was one thing that day that was very remarkable to me; for though it was rain from morning to night, and so wet as if we had been drenched in water, yet not one of us fell sick. And though there was a tent fixed for him, he would not go into it, but stood without in the rain and preached; which example had a great influence on the people to patience, when they saw his sympathy with them. And though he was the only minister that kept closest to his text, and had the best method for the judgment and memory, of any that ever I heard; yet now, when he preached, the people crowded close together, because of the rain, he digressed a little, and said, with a pleasant, melting voice, 'My dear friends, be not disturbed because of the rain. For to have a covenant-interest in Christ, the true Solomon, and in the benefits of his blessed purchase, is well worth the enduring of all temporal, elementary storms that can fall on us. And this Solomon, who is here pointed at, endured a far other kind of storm for his people—even a storm of unmixed wrath. And oh, what would poor damned reprobates in hell give for this day's offer of sweet and lovely Christ. And oh, how welcome would our suffering friends in prison and banishment make this day's offer of Christ.' 'And, for my own part,' said he, 'as the Lord will keep me, I shall bear my equal share in this rain, in sympathy with you.' And he returned to his sweet Subject again, and offered us grace and reconciliation with God, through Christ, by his Spirit.

"Words would fail me to express my own frame, and the frame of many others; only this I may say, we would have been glad to have endured any kind of death, to have been home at the uninterrupted enjoyment of that glorious Redeemer who was so livelily and clearly offered to us that day.

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“He was the only man that I ever knew that had an unstained integrity. He was a lively and faithful minister of Christ and a worthy Christian, such as none who were acquaint with him could say any other but this, that he was a beloved Jedidiah of the Lord. I never knew a man more richly endowed with grace, more equal in his temper, more equal in his spiritual frame, and more equal in walk and conversation. When I speak of him as a man—none more lovely in features, none more prudent, none more brave and heroic in spirit; and yet none more meek, none more humane and condescending. He was every way so rational, as well as religious, that there was reason to think that the powers of his reason were as much strengthened and sanctified as any man’s I ever heard of. When I speak of him as a Christian—none more meek, and yet none more prudently bold against those who were bold to sin—none more frequent and fervent in religious duties, such as prayer, converse, meditation, self-examination, preaching, prefacing, lecturing, baptizing, and catechising; none more methodical in teaching and instructing, accompanied with a sweet, charming eloquence, in holding forth Christ, as the only remedy for lost sinners; none more hated of the world, and yet none more strengthened and upheld by the everlasting arms of Jehovah, to be steadfast, and abound in the way of the Lord, to the death; wherefore he might be justly called “Antipas,” Christ’s faithful martyr. And as I lived then to know him to be so of a truth, so, by the good hand of God, I yet live, thirty-six years after him, to testify that no man upon just grounds had any thing to lay to his charge. When all the critical and straitening circumstances of that period are well considered, save that he was liable to natural and sinful infirmities, as all men are when in this life, and yet he was as little guilty in this way as any I ever knew or heard of, he was the liveliest and most engaging preacher to close with Christ, of any I ever heard. His converse was pious, prudent, and meek; his reasoning and debating was the same, carrying almost with it full evidence of the truth of what he asserted. And for steadfastness in the way of the Lord, few came his length. He learned the truth and counted the cost, and so sealed it with his blood. Of all men that ever I knew, I would be in the least danger of committing a hyperbole when speaking in his commendation. And yet I speak not this to praise men, but for the glory and honour of God in Christ, who makes men to differ so much from others, and in some periods of the Church more than others.”

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The “*Lectures and sermons*” of James Renwick that remain were published from the notes taken, at the time of their delivery, by some of his attached hearers and followers. They were not prepared with any view to future publication; and the trying circumstances in which their devoted author was placed, wholly prevented any correction or revisal. Yet they contain not only remarkably clear expositions of the word, and a full exhibition of the scheme of salvation, but also many passages which, for searching application to the conscience, and moving eloquence, are unsurpassed in the discourses of eminent preachers either in ancient or modern times. As specimens of the matter of Renwick’s discourses delivered in the *Conventicles*, in the fields, amidst all dangers and incidents of weather, and by night as well as day, the following are selected from the published reports of his hearers:—

In a discourse on Song i. 7,—“Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon,”—he thus earnestly pleads, “Love Him, and you shall not come short of the enjoyment of Him hereafter. It is true, faith is that which, as an instrument, apprehends Christ and engrafts us in Him; yet it worketh by love, and love accompanieth faith, as the sunbeams do the sun. Oh what shall I say? Love him! love him! Ye cannot bestow your love so well. Turn others to the door, and take in this Beloved. Here I make offer of Him unto you, here I present Him unto you! Lift up your heads, O ye doors, that the king of glory may come in. I present a glorious Conqueror *this night*, to be your guest. O cast ye open the two foldings of the door of your hearts, to wit, that ye may receive Him; cast ye open the hearty consent of faith and love, that He may take up His abode with you. Oh, what say ye to it? Friends, will ye close with Christ? I obtest you by his own excellency, I obtest you by the joys of heaven, and the torments of hell, that you close with Him. *All of you come, whatever you have been or are; none of you shall be cast out.* Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

“Seeing it is the duty of people to set their love upon Christ, I exhort you to give some testimonies of love. Think ye that ye love him? Will ye then show that? I would expostulate for some testimonies of your love. When Peter confessed that he loved Christ, our Lord desires him to show that by feeding His lambs and sheep. It is true, you cannot show your love that way, for ye are not called to that office; but ye ought to show it in the way that is competent to you in your stations. So as I was saying before, I expostulate with you for some testimonies of your love. “Make a free and full resignation of yourselves and your all to Christ, that ye may say with the spouse, I am my Beloved’s! Oh, ye should not prig (higgle) with Him about anything. Some prig with Him about their hearts, and will have a part thereof

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in their darling idols, which they cannot think to quit. Some prig with Him about their time, and will make religion but their by-work. If their worldly employments be throng, they will neglect the worship in their families, and prayer in secret. Others, if they keep any family worship, it is in the evening: ordinarily they are impatient, and haste to an end in it: and neglect it in the morning altogether. Oh, what a sad priggish is this. Some prig with him about their relations. They will not quit these when He calls them to suffer for His sake; but will tempt them, or will insinuate upon them to comply, and deny His cause. Some prig with Him about their possessions, and yielding to this or that iniquity, will keep their houses and lands, they will not quit them. And some will prig with Him about their lives; and if the swearing of a sinful oath, the subscribing to an iniquitous bond, or denying of His cause, will save their lives, they will not lose them. Oh, what sad priggish is this! Oh, be ashamed of it. Will ye lay all at his feet, and count it your honour and joy that He dispose of the same as He pleaseth? Give this testimony of your love to Christ, rejoice in Him when present, and keep His room empty when absent. I say rejoice in him when present. I need not press you much to do this, for in his presence there is great joy: though the enjoyment of Him here be imperfect, yet it brings exceeding gladness with it. Therefore saith the Psalmist,—‘Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than when corn and wine are increased.’ But when He is absent, see that ye keep His room empty for Him. When He sees it meet at any time for your correction, trial, and instruction, to withdraw Himself, or hide His face, then idols or other lovers will readily present themselves, and seek to possess His room. But, be chaste and true to your Beloved, as the spouse who, in His absence, could not be contented, but used all means and diligence until she found Him.”

In a sermon on Song v. 16,—“His mouth is most sweet, yea, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,”—the following affecting views are presented: “The second property of Christ’s love is, that it is a *strong* love, which appears from what He hath done for sinners. He has done great things for sinners. He took upon Himself all the sinless infirmities of human nature—not sinful nature. Yea, He endured a shameful and lingering death, besides a flood of wrath that he waded through, such a flood of wrath as would have drowned all the sons and daughters of Adam to all eternity. Thus ‘He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.’ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Oh, my friends, if ye will follow Christ through all the steps of his humiliation, ye may see that the love of Christ is strong love, which makes him endure such things for sinners. He

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gives great things to sinners, whereby He shows the strength of his love to them; for He gives grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly; for He saith, 'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me.' Christ gives the believer union with himself and communion in glory with the Father, even a share of that glory which the Father giveth Him, He giveth them. He gives them a crown of righteousness which shall never fade away; and He gives them to drink of the rivers of his pleasures, that are at his right hand for evermore. Oh, my friends, Christ doth not prigg with His spouse: He will keep nothing back from them, that He sees to be for her profit.—Oh, but His love is *strong*. He requires no more for all that He has done, and all that He hath given, but that He see the travail of His soul. He will think but little of all that He hath done, if we will but accept of His love, and lay our love upon Him. Yea, so may be said of Him, as was said of Jacob,—the seven years that he served for Rachel seemed but a few days, for the love that He bare unto her. His love is so strong, that although thou shouldest run away from Him never so fast, yet His love will overtake thee, and bring thee back again. Paul ran very fast in opposition to His love, when he was going to Damascus to persecute the Church. But Christ's love overtook him suddenly. Manasseh ran very fast from Christ, when he made the streets of Jerusalem to run with innocent blood, and set up an abomination in the house of God, and used witchcraft; and yet Christ's love overtook him, and brought him back again from the pit. If thou art one of those that the Father hath given to the Son, though thou shouldest run to the brink of hell, He will bring thee back again from thence.

"Christ's love is *pure* and *sincere* love. 'Herein is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us;' not for any advantage that He can have by us, for He is infinite in all perfections without us; therefore we can neither enrich Him, nor add any more glory to Him. We may well magnify His power; that is all we can do, and all the advantage is our own. Christ's love is not a base love; He loves us not for His good or advantage, but for our real good and advantage. It is pure and sincere love, for all the advantage is ours.

"Christ's love is an *enriching* love, for those upon whom His love is bestowed are no more poor. How can they be poor who have Christ for their riches? for, saith the Apostle, 'All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' If ye have this love bestowed on you, then all other things are made to serve for your good—ye shall lack nothing.

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“Christ’s love is a *free* love. He gives His love freely, without any reward, and so it is free love; the offer is *alike to all*. If ye will but take it off his hand, He makes open proclamation of it to you all, saying, ‘Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.’ Oh, my friends, all other love is infinitely beneath this. He took not on him the nature of angels, but He took the seed of Abraham. Oh, my friends, God hath made us the centre of His love; and therefore, I beseech you, do not despise His love. He came not to redeem any of the fallen angels, but the seed of Abraham.”

In the following moving terms, he pleads with his hearers to accept of Christ and his salvation:—“Your eternal enjoyment of God will be your element, which ye shall for ever delight in, and this shall be to praise and admire his love. For, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that the Lord hath prepared for them that love Him. Oh, then, sirs, what think ye of Christ? Will ye not, at *this time*, say, He is your Beloved and your Friend? Oh, give your consent to become His friends, and accept of Him as your friend. I leave this offer at your door; He is willing to befriend you, if you will come into an estate of friendship with Him. Come, come, and take His offer off his hand. Say not that ye have continued so long in sin, that ye know not if He will befriend you now; for if ye will come to Him, He will yet befriend you. Therefore, for the Lord’s sake, put not away such an offer, but take it *in the present time*; for ye know not if ever ye shall have an offer again. If ye will not take his offer off His hand *this day*, I will be a witness against you in the great day of judgment, that this day, the Son of righteousness offered Himself to be your friend, and ye have made light of the offer. Yea, the hills and mountains about us shall be witnesses that ye had Christ in your offer such a *day*, in such a *place*; therefore, my dear friends, say now that He is your beloved, and that He is your friend.”

His close dealing with the conscience, and his solemn warnings and exhortations are exemplified in the following passages:—

“Consider your own condition without Christ. Ye are lost and undone, limbs of Satan, children of wrath, hell to be your dwelling-place, and devils and damned souls to be your company eternally, and where sin shall be your eternal torment. This is your condition without Jesus Christ. What think ye of eternal exclusion from the presence and comfort of God? What think ye of hell, where there is nothing but utter darkness, weeping and wailing for evermore, to be your dwelling-place? What think ye of devils to be your continual company? And what think ye of sin to be your continual life—always blaspheming the glorious name of God? And what think ye of your final condition—to be in continual torment—always weeping and gnashing

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your teeth? All this, I say, is abiding you who will not embrace Jesus Christ, whatever your profession be. For, believe me, a profession will not save you from this eternal misery, if ye receive not Jesus Christ. Whatever your sufferings be here, yet ye shall suffer this hereafter, if ye receive not Jesus Christ. My heart bleeds for many sufferers in Scotland, who shall suffer everlasting torment in hell, because they will not receive and embrace Jesus Christ, this gracious and free Saviour, who is now in your offer. Oh, embrace Jesus Christ, otherwise, be ye who ye will, and do what ye will, God's justice shall pursue you, and He shall have war against you without cessation: there shall be no discharge in that war. The great warriors of the earth are all lying with their weapons broken under their heads; but here is a war that hath no end. You who will not receive Jesus Christ, you will see that ye have made an evil choice, when ye pass through the dark gates of hell, to the inner chambers thereof. To move you, further consider, that if ye will take Him, ye shall have Him and all His. Ye shall drink of the waters of life; your feet shall stand on the sea of glass before the throne. Ye shall have His name, and bear His image, and wear a crown of pure gold upon your heads, and follow the Lamb with palms in your hands, saying, 'Hallelujah! and glory, and honour and power, unto the Lord our God.' Ye shall have the fine white linen garments of Christ's righteousness, to wear in heaven, in clothing eternally. Ye shall have the glorious cloud of witnesses—angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, for your continual company; and ye shall have a life of love and joy everlasting, with Him that is altogether lovely. Oh, then, come and take Jesus Christ. Would ye make a happy choice? Then take Him and embrace Him, old and young, man and woman, lad and lass. Now Christ is in your offer; and you are all invited to come to Him. And now I charge you all, as ye respect the glory of God, and as ye desire this happy condition that I have spoken of to you, slight not this offer. Now the golden chain of salvation is let down to you. Grip, grip it fast, before it is taken up again. Go not away fools, lest ye never be at such a market-day again. "What shall I say to persuade you? Let the excellency and glory of His great name do it. Be entreated to accept of Christ in this present offer. Here I obtest you, by what He hath purchased for sinners, and by what He has suffered, come and embrace Him. I obtest you by the blood He shed on the cross; I obtest you by the great drops of blood He shed in the garden, and by all the joys that are above the clouds in heaven, that ye put not this offer away. I obtest you, by all the torments of hell, that ye put not this offer away. I obtest you by the glory of heaven, and by the crowns which believers put on His head, that ye slight not this offer.

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“Here I take every man and woman to witness against one another, that ye had Christ in your offer; and I shall be a witness against all of you that have not received Christ *this night*. Yea, though he should never be glorified in such a sort by me, yet I will be a witness against you. Here, before the throne of grace, I declare in His name, that I have made an offer of Him unto you; and, therefore, your blood shall be upon your own heads if ye perish, and I shall be free of the same.”

In another place, he presses with like earnestness acceptance of the gospel offer:—“If ye would be rightly concerned, ye must at once come, and be a right son or daughter of the church, and member of Jesus Christ; until then, ye cannot have a fellow-feeling of the body. Come then, and Christ will give you a fellow-feeling with the sufferings of the church. Come and embrace Himself, and He will set the stamp of natural children upon you. Without Him, ye can do nothing; without Him, ye cannot be concerned with the sufferings of His name and members. Refuse not; reject not His offers, when He calls you to Himself. It is hard to say if some of you shall have an offer again. *Now* is the acceptable time—*now* is the day of salvation. He is *now* spreading his net, and will ye not come about the net’s mouth, that a catch of you may be gotten. He is proclaiming unto you that He hath invincible power, though managed by apparent weakness. Oh, find you any of this irresistible power of Christ? Oh, come unto Him who is the joy of heaven, and it shall be a joyful time in heaven. He will have a good report of you through heaven, if ye shall have it to say that some poor lad or lass hath put a crown upon His head in such a place. But oh, how sad will it be, if Christ shall have it to say, ‘I gave offer of myself to a people like stocks and stones, but they would not hear!’”

On the duty of devoting the best to God’s service, in another discourse, he thus forcibly reasons:—

“Observe, that it cannot but be a great injury against God, and procure a curse, when people employ not their best things in His service. This is clear from the words, ‘Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.’ So men that employ not their best things in the Lord’s service, believe it, they are chargeable with this. He calls for your best things in His service, and not that you should spend that upon your lusts. Ye are called to employ the best of your time in his service; and many of you give Him but the refuse of your time, or at least, He gets but your by-time for His service. But ye should give Him the best of your time and strength, and your hearts—all should be employed in his service. Do not say that you do the best that you can; for I am persuaded that there is none of you but may do more for Him than ye do. Do not say that ye improve the talent that He hath given you to trade with, for ye but misimprove

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it; and the best of you, we fear, come short of improving it. If ye improve it, ye should find it increase upon your hand, and you would appear like his children. But because people do not improve their time and abilities to lay them out for God, it procures a curse. For though our obligations go far beyond our duties that we do, yet when we do not lay out all our abilities for Him, and do not bestow our love, our affections, and our time, and all that we have for Him, but bestow them upon other things, we procure His curse. Young folks, set to the work, and be entreated to give up yourselves to his service, and employ your best things for Him, now when your desires are fast and quick. Oh, will ye bestow them on precious Christ? You have a brave prize put in your hand, if ye set aright to the work; ye may see Zion's King come back, and the crown set upon his head again."

Urging the necessity of being found within the kingdom of God, he says:—

"Seeing that the gate is very strait and narrow that leads to the kingdom of heaven, then what shall become of many of you, that never came the length that hypocrites have come? Oh, what will ye say, and how will ye meet with God, when He comes to count with you for a preached gospel? What will ye think of a Mediator that was offered to you, whom ye slighted and despised; when the heaven and earth shall melt away; and great men, and mean men, shall howl and cry, and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him? Oh! this will be the portion of hypocrites from God.

"It is of use for trial—for all of you to try yourselves, and ponder in your hearts, and say, 'Oh, soul, whether art thou in the kingdom of heaven or not?' Oh, be exhorted to this, whatever be thy state, O man and woman. It is safe for thee to search thy state; if matters be right betwixt God and thy soul, it will be thy peace; if not, thou mayest possibly get righted. For my part, I count him the best Christian that is most accurate in this searching and communing with his own heart; for if ye neglect this, ye may come to lose the sight of your interest in Christ, if ever ye had it. Do not satisfy yourselves with being near the kingdom of God, but go into it. For this end, break the bargain and peace with your lusts and idols; and make up your peace with God through Christ, our Peace-maker, and ye shall find great advantage in the exchange; for the wicked have peace, but with sin and sinful men, but the godly have peace with God. Oh, will ye quit all other things, and seek to be interested in Him? For it is to be feared that many here have proclaimed peace with sin, and some idol, or other. Oh, break the bargain, and make peace with Christ! Make choice of Him; for He can give you that which no other lover can give you. O break that peace with your lusts and idols, and make peace with Him. Remember, He offers himself to you freely this day. Choose, therefore, what ye will do. O seek for the fulness of the Spirit of Christ, and rest upon nothing but upon himself alone; and seek to be in the kingdom of God, by the thorough work of conversion upon your souls.

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“And now to all that are in the kingdom, I proclaim peace in the name of God, whatever troubles they are under here. So enter into the kingdom through Christ only, for that is the way to it. But as for you who will not come to him, and enter into the kingdom through Christ only, who is the way to it, I do, in like manner, proclaim war with that soul from God, whatever ye be in profession. O friends, lay it to heart, and choose you whether it be better to have heaven’s peace, and the devil and the world’s feud; or to have the devil and the world’s peace, and feud with God for ever! And now to Him who is purchaser of true peace, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.”

When it is understood that the discourses from which these extracts are taken were preached in the open air, and often in the night time, amidst the exposure both of the preacher and the hearers to all changes of the weather, not unfrequently in rain and tempest; and that the “Sermons and Lectures” that bear Renwick’s name, were not prepared in a quiet study, in peaceful times, but in the midst of frequent removings, incessant labours, and manifold dangers, and that they are transmitted to us from the imperfect notes, and the recollection of attached hearers,—themselves the objects of fierce persecution,—they cannot fail to impress us with a vivid idea of the remarkable power and fidelity as a preacher of the youthful martyr, and to account, at the same time, for the popularity and salutary effects of his preaching.

RENEWICK’S SPECIAL TESTIMONY.

To understand properly the position of James Renwick and his associates, and the distinctive testimony which they maintained at the peril of life, and transmitted, sealed with their blood, to posterity, it is necessary to advert to the particular time in which these devoted witnesses were called to appear in behalf of precious truth; and to the public measures which had been adopted at that period for extinguishing the liberties of the nation, and for destroying the independence and purity of the church.

The Prelatic persecution in Scotland, which commenced with the restoration of Charles II. to the throne of his ancestors in 1660, had continued for nearly *twenty-three* years, when Renwick entered on his ministry. Instead of the perfidious rulers in church and state being satiated with the number of the victims of their cruelty, their thirst for blood became more intense, as the time wore on; and when they found they could not crush the spirit of a free people, or extinguish the light of gospel truth, they had recourse to the most despotic and atrocious measures for effecting their diabolical purposes. What has been designated “THE KILLING TIME” of the Scottish persecution, embraced the greater part of Renwick’s public ministry. The graphic pens of such able writers as De Foe, Charles James Fox, and Macaulay, have but imperfectly sketched the barbarities perpetrated by the infamous royal brothers, and their base counsellors, and the sufferings of an oppressed nation, and of thousands of godly people of all ranks, during this dark and distressing period.

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Two matters of general public interest, and intimately connected with the position of Renwick and his associates, excited particular attention in the concluding period of the persecution. These were, 1, The measure called THE INDULGENCE; and, 2, The limits of Civil Authority, and of the allegiance of the subject.

I.—THE INDULGENCE.

When the power of the persecutors was unable to put down the preaching of the gospel in the fields, and to crush the spirit of liberty in the breasts of multitudes of the people of Scotland, the Indulgence was a master contrivance of the arch-enemy to divide the Presbyterians, and to seduce them to abandon some of their fundamental principles, for the sake of outward advantages. The first indulgence was issued by Charles II. and his council in June, 1669. It was proclaimed as flowing directly from the royal supremacy. The power was granted to the persecuting Council, at their discretion, to appoint certain of the ousted ministers to vacant parishes, on ensnaring conditions. In case they refused to receive collation from the bishops, they could not have the stipends or tiends, they were only to possess the manse and glebe, and be allowed an annuity. If they did not attend diocesan synods, they were to be confined within the bounds of their own parishes. They were not to dispense ordinances to persons from other parishes, nor, on any account, to hold conventicles. They were prohibited from speaking against the king's authority, or the public measures of the government; and they were to report their peaceable behaviour from time to time to the Council.

Two other indulgences were issued at intervals during the latter part of the reign of Charles II. All of them by public proclamation denounced relentless vengeance against the faithful men who refused the royal boon. They threatened utter extermination to all who pleaded for the independence of the Presbyterian Church, and who maintained the freedom of the gospel by holding conventicles, preaching and administering ordinances in their purity in the fields.

The indulgence unhappily proved a snare in which by far the largest number of the Presbyterian ministers in Scotland were entangled. We cannot hesitate to agree with the historian Hetherington, in holding that "It was offered on a principle clearly subversive of the Presbyterian Church, and that not one of the ejected ministers ought to have accepted of it, because it was impossible to do so, without sacrificing the fundamental and essential principle of the Presbyterian Church—that which constitutes its glory and its life—the sole sovereignty of Christ." [1] Three results followed the acceptance of the indulgence, which proved highly injurious to the Presbyterian Church, and which were, in all likelihood, foreseen by the contrivers of the measure, and led them to introduce it. These were—1. The constant interference of the government with the indulged in

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the discharge of their strictly ministerial functions. 2. A rupture between the indulged and the non-indulged, with many of the best of the people clinging to the latter; and, 3. The more systematic, virulent, and crushing persecution of those who, defying the tyrant's rage, bared their bosoms to the storm; and had the courage at all hazards to plead for the royal prerogatives of Messiah the Prince, and to contend for the chartered liberties of the Presbyterian Church. This honour belongs exclusively to Cargill, Cameron, and Renwick, and the Society people; when the large majority of the Presbyterian ministers in Scotland, followed by great numbers of the people, proved recreant to sound scripture principle, and unfaithful to the sacred engagements of their fathers. However belied and misrepresented the persecuted covenanters were in their own day, impartial history has not failed to do justice to their memory, and to show that their faithful contendings had no little influence in the nation's deliverance from degrading oppression.

II.—THE LIMITS OF PUBLIC AUTHORITY, AND OF A PEOPLE'S ALLEGIANCE.

A question was raised in the later times of the persecution of difficult solution, but of vast practical importance. This was the due limit of submission to civil rulers, and the withdrawal of allegiance and submission from those who had violated their compact with the people, and had trampled under foot their constitutional rights. It is ably shown by Dr. D'Aubigne,[2] as had been done before, that civil freedom and religious reformation, originating with the people, have ever been closely united and advanced together. Wherever the principles of evangelical truth have been rightly understood and firmly maintained, the people have refused to tolerate civil oppression. "*He is a freeman whom the truth makes free.*" All genuine civil freedom is based on religious liberty. Calvinism, as is admitted even by many who are opposed to it as a doctrinal system, has been the irreconcilable foe of despotism all over the world;—by the heroic struggles, and cheerful sacrifices of its adherents, the battle of freedom has been fought, and its triumphs achieved in many lands. Particularly in Scotland, where the Reformation, from the first, originated with the people, and was carried forward in opposition to the mandates of arbitrary rulers, and notwithstanding the relentless persecution of the civil powers, the eminent instruments whom God honoured for advancing the truth, all along contended for the liberties of their country, and earnestly pleaded that the duties of rulers and ruled should be clearly defined, and the rights of the people settled on a constitutional basis. This was the plea of the illustrious Knox, as is seen in his expostulations with the Queen and nobles of Scotland, and in his intercourse with the statesmen of the day—English and Scottish—and in his writings. The

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works of Buchanan, Rutherford, and Gillespie, bear ample testimony to the enlarged views of their authors in relation to the proper bounds of civil and ecclesiastical authority, and to their fidelity to the cause of genuine liberty. The same great principles were contended for by Alexander Henderson, embodied in the scriptural attainments of the memorable Second Reformation, and clearly enunciated in the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms, in which the covenanters explicitly bound themselves to support the king and parliament in “the maintenance of the true reformed religion.” When the Scottish nation, forgetful of their sacred vows, tamely submitted to the tyranny of the royal brothers, and Presbyterian ministers remained silent under an infamous indulgence, it devolved upon a few despised and persecuted covenanters,—the Society people,—to lift up and hold aloft the torch of freedom; and by their faithful testimonies and declarations uttered in fields and on scaffolds, and more still, by their blood freely shed to confirm their righteous cause, to sow broadcast the principles of genuine liberty. These, after lying buried in the earth for a time, sprung up vigorously, and bore fruit, when the perfidious race of the Stuarts was driven ignominiously from the throne; and, at the Revolution, some of the fundamental truths for which the martyrs of the covenant contended, became ascendant and triumphant.[3]

In the *Queensferry Paper*, penned by Cargill, in a rough draft, and found on the person of Henry Hall of Haughhead, when he was taken, the heroic sufferers expressly disowned the authority of Charles II. and his government. The terms employed, it has been remarked, very much resemble those used by the English nation when they rejected the Government of James II., and transferred the crown to William and Mary.

“We reject the king and those associate with him in government from being our king and rulers, being no more bound to them. They have altered and destroyed the Lord’s established religion,—overturned the fundamental and established laws of the kingdom—taken away altogether Christ’s church government, and changed the civil government of this land, which was by a king and free parliament, into tyranny.” The conclusion expresses sentiments worthy of the most distinguished patriots, and that are fit to be taken as the watchward of struggling freemen all over the world. “We bind and oblige ourselves to defend ourselves and one another in our worshipping of God, in our natural, civil and divine rights and liberties, till we shall overcome, or send them down under debate to posterity—*that they may begin where we end.*”

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The grand principle of the rejection of tyrannical power was boldly proclaimed by Cargill, in preaching to thousands of Conventicle hearers, and was prominently held forth in his last testimony:—"As to the cause of my suffering," said he, "the chief is, not acknowledging the present authority, as it is established in the supremacy and explanatory act. This is the magistracy I have rejected—that which is invested with Christ's power. Seeing that power taken from Christ which is His glory, and made the essential of an earthly crown, seemed to me, as if one were wearing my husband's garments, after he had killed him. There is no distinction we can make that can free the conscience of the acknowledger from being a partaker of this sacrilegious robbery of God. And it is but to cheat our conscience to acknowledge the civil power alone, that it is of the essence of the crown; and seeing they are so express, we *ought to be plain*, for otherwise we deny our testimony, and consent that Christ be robbed of His glory."

The same testimony against the Indulgence and against unconstitutional power was firmly maintained by RICHARD CAMERON, during the whole of his public ministry, and in the noble testimony emitted by him shortly before his death. Soon after his return from Holland in 1680, in one of his earliest sermons, he declared, "I know not if this generation will be honoured to cast off these rulers. But those that the Lord makes instruments to bring back Christ, and to recover our liberties, civil and ecclesiastical, shall be such as shall disown this king and the magistrates under him." He added this warning to the persecuting authorities, with the heroic resolve—"Let them take heed unto themselves; for though they should take us to scaffolds, and kill us in the fields, the Lord will yet raise up a party who will be avenged on them. We had rather die than live in the same country with them, and outlive the glory of God departing altogether from these lands."

A short month before his death, the intrepid Cameron, his brother Michael, and some twenty other covenanters, armed and on horseback, posted up at the market cross of the burgh of SANQUHAR, the "*Sanquhar Declaration*" in which are contained these ever memorable words:—

"We do, by these presents, disown Charles Stuart, who has been reigning, or rather tyrannizing in the throne of Britain, these years bygone, as having any right, title to, or right in the crown of Scotland, for government:—as forfeited several years since, by his perjury, and breach of Covenant both to God and His truth, and by his tyranny and breach of the very *leges regnandi*—the very essential conditions of government, in matters civil." This was a noble deed, and ranks Cameron and his followers with the purest and most disinterested patriots of any age or country. It has been justly remarked by an eloquent writer, "The real matter of fact for which the Cameronians contended was just the old claim of the Covenanters—'a free Parliament and a free Assembly.'" "It is the glory of the Cameronians, in which no other party shares, that when most people lay prostrate, and many of the bravest stood aloof, they were the first to hoist the flag, disowning the government of the Stuarts, without whose expulsion liberty was impossible." [4]

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The testimony which Cargill and Cameron boldly proclaimed and sealed with their blood, was cordially espoused by Renwick, and faithfully maintained by him during the whole course of his public ministry. He was called, besides, to the great work of preaching a full and free Gospel, throughout many parts of his native country, to multitudes who were hungering for the bread of life, when through terror of oppressive rulers, or from seeking their favour, others shrunk from the performance of so important and hazardous a duty. He was required, moreover, to dispense the ordinances of religion in Scriptural purity, to the scattered, persecuted remnant, and thus to repair “the desolations of Zion,” and to transmit the truth to future generations. In the year of Cameron’s martyrdom, the Societies framed their “General Correspondence,” and formed a simple but effective organization, for mutual fellowship and edification,—for preserving their precious gospel liberties, and for taking advantage of any event in public affairs, for re-establishing the Covenanted order in Church and State, which had been violently taken away, by despotic power and prelatic intolerance. The extent of this organization, in a time of great suffering is remarkable. Gordon of Earlston, when examined before the Privy Council in 1683, with the instruments of torture placed in view, testified that several counties were divided into districts, of which there were 80, with 7000 associated members. There is evidence that, chiefly through the Divine blessing upon Renwick’s faithful preaching, and his singular wisdom in council, those Societies increased, instead of diminishing, in the latter part of the prelatic persecution.

To the friends of evangelical truth, and the faithful witnesses for the Redeemer’s royal prerogatives, the services of Renwick, at the crisis in which he exercised his public ministry, were invaluable. He was eminently the man for the time. Through the influence of the unhappy Indulgence, the strict Covenanters were reduced to what they style themselves in the “Informatory Vindication,” a “wasted, suffering, anti-popish, anti-prelatic, anti-erastian, anti-sectarian remnant.” By the death of Cargill and Cameron, they were left as “sheep without a shepherd,”—broken and scattered. Through the fierceness of persecution, and the machinations of enemies, they were in danger of falling into confusion, and of being entirely wasted and destroyed. We admire the gracious providence of God in preparing, at this particular crisis, an instrument of such rare and suitable endowments for feeding “the flock in the wilderness,” and for unfurling and upholding so nobly the “Banner of truth” amidst hosts of infuriated enemies.

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James Renwick, though a very youth when he entered on his arduous work, and trained under great outward disadvantages, had a powerful and well-cultivated mind. He was endowed with singular administrative talent, and had great tact and skill in managing men. He was an acute and logical thinker, an eloquent and attractive public speaker, and was distinguished by fertility and force as a writer. The “Informatory Vindication”—his testimony against king James’s toleration, with his “Letters,” and “Sermons and Lectures,” bear ample evidence of his sound judgment, comprehensive mind, and ability as an author. His prudence, meekness and loving disposition, combined with his sanctified zeal, and heroic courage, deservedly gave him great influence among those to whom he ministered. He was eminently fitted to be “a first man among men.” The Lord held him in the hollow of his hand, and made him a “polished shaft in his quiver.”

The services which Renwick rendered to the Protestant cause were invaluable. He organized the scattered remnant, and imparted new life and ardour to their proceedings. He set forth clearly the principles of the “Society people;” and in a number of able and logical papers, clearly defined their plans of action. He rendered it, in a great measure, impossible for enemies to misrepresent and accuse them falsely to the Government. He was their Secretary in their correspondence with foreign churches; and he did much to evoke the prayerful sympathy of Protestants in other lands in behalf of the victims of persecution in Scotland. The presence and influence of Renwick among the suffering Presbyterians were of the highest importance in his own day; and not to them alone, but also to the whole church of Christ in these lands, and to the constitutional liberties of the nation. So far as we can see, but for the singular power and devoted spirit of Renwick, and the firm and unyielding position which the Cameronians through him were led to assume, the cause of truth would have been completely borne down, and Erastianism, and Popery, and Despotism had triumphed. Renwick and his followers were the vanguard “in the struggle for Britain’s liberties, and for the Church’s spiritual independence.” Though, like other patriots born before their time, they were doomed to fall, yet posterity owes to them a large part of the goodly heritage which they enjoy.

The *manifold labours and sufferings* of Renwick, which were ended by his martyrdom, deserve a brief notice. For a period of five years, after he entered on his public ministry, he was in constant movement and unremitting and exhausting labours. He was employed at all seasons, and often in the night time, and in the most inclement weather, preaching the gospel in the fields, visiting families, and conversing with the people individually and in groups, attending stated general meetings—taking part in their deliberations, composing differences, confronting gainsayers and opponents, and writing the papers and

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manifestoes of the persecuted party. His services were in constant and increasing demand, in various places widely scattered. After he had been engaged in the most arduous labours, he had little or no rest, and no comfortable place of retirement. He was obliged to lodge in moss-hags, sheils of shepherds, or holes dug in the ground by his followers; when sticks were kindled for a fire, and children conveyed to him food, not unfrequently without the knowledge of their parents. Naturally of a weak constitution, he was, at times, so borne down by sickness and total prostration of strength, that he was literally carried on the shoulders of faithful followers, or supported when on horseback. He had frequently to flee from one hiding place to another, barefoot, or without some of his garments, as he had also to travel in disguise. Letters of intercommuning were launched against him. A price was set upon his head, and persons were forbidden, on pain of death, to yield him shelter, or a mouthful of food, to converse, or correspond with him by writing, or offer him the smallest service of humanity.

It is recorded that in 1687, the year before Renwick's martyrdom, the royal troops, *thirteen times*, made the strictest search for him throughout all the country. To avoid the pursuit of enemies, he had to travel in disguise, and often in the dark night, and to seek shelter in caves, and rocks, and dens of the earth. Whenever he was engaged in his ministerial work, friendly watches were placed around him, to give the alarm on the approach of danger. When he preached, a fleet horse was standing beside him saddled and bridled, by which he could speedily distance the pursuit of enemies. He had, moreover, to suffer much from disputes, contentions, and reproaches among those for whom he was expending his energies, and for whom he was prepared to sacrifice his life. On one occasion, when entering the cottage of John Brown of Priesthill, he is said to have given momentary utterance to the pent-up grief of his heart by exclaiming, "Reproach hath broke my heart." "From an enemy," he added, "he could have borne it, but it was hard when it came from those whom he loved as himself, and for whom he was undergoing such privations and sufferings." From the Presbyterian ministers and people, who had closed in with the Indulgence and James's toleration, he received no kindly recognition, nor a single act of friendship. On the contrary, they heaped on him every term in the vocabulary of abuse, calling him "Jesuit," "devil," &c. They misrepresented his principles, and sought to excite prejudice against him throughout the country and among foreign churches, especially in Holland, where Renwick had many attached sympathisers and friends. What was the ground of such dislike and hostility? His life,—even his enemies being witnesses,—was blameless. He preached fully and powerfully the glorious gospel. He enforced a strict Scriptural discipline, and he

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was constantly careful to promote practical godliness. His sole fault in the eyes of the Indulged was that he strictly adhered to the great principles of the Covenanted Reformation, when his opponents had plainly abandoned them,—that he refused to accept a royal toleration which was designed to establish Popery and absolute power, and that he disowned a perfidious race of monarchs, whose oppressive and galling yoke was felt by many, and whose rule the whole nation soon after rejected. The fidelity of Renwick to the cause of God and truth powerfully reprov'd those who had made defection; while his holy living and devotedness strongly condemned such as, to secure immunity from suffering and the world's favour, were at ease in Zion. Therefore was it, that, in the spirit of apostates in all ages, they laboured to misrepresent and calumniate him and the cause which he maintained, and abetted the designs of those who persecuted him to the death.

RENEWICK'S MARTYRDOM AND TESTIMONY.

This devoted servant of Christ, though worn with incessant labours, was found actively engaged in his darling work when he was called to receive his reward. On the 24th and 27th of January, he preached in Fifeshire, and at Borrowstoness, on the 29th. The last night of the month, he lodged with a friend in Edinburgh. On the morning of the 1st of February, the house was beset with soldiers, in the employment of the persecuting Council. When Renwick attempted to escape, he was arrested near the Cowgate, and was carried by Graham the captain of the guard, before a quorum of the Council, by whom he was committed to close prison, and laid in irons. When he stood in the presence of those who had issued against him fierce proclamations, and had sought his life, they were surprised at his youthful appearance, and his comely countenance, and one exclaimed, "Is this the boy Renwick, that the whole nation was so troubled with," Renwick replied only with a quiet smile.

On the 3d of February, he was brought before the Council, and received his indictment. In it, he was charged with casting off the fear of God—disowning the king's authority—preaching in the fields—and teaching the people to refuse to pay cess, and to carry arms in self-defence. It is related of Renwick, when he became a prisoner, that, though he had grace given willingly to offer his life to confirm his testimony, he yet dreaded torture. Having in prayer freely surrendered his life to God, he obtained in answer the assurance that enemies would not have the power to inflict on him torture. This he afterwards told his mother in prison, shortly before his execution, when she was expressing concern about seeing his head and hands on the ports of the city. He said he was persuaded that the persecutors would "not be permitted to torture his body, nor touch one hair of his head farther."

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He was so open and candid hi his answers that the members of the Justiciary were to some extent favourably impressed, and this had doubtless some influence in preventing him from being tortured. He enjoyed so much of Divine presence from his entrance into prison, till his execution, that to his mother he said, “he could hardly pray, being so much taken up with praise, and ravished with the joy of the Lord.” When before the Justiciary, on the 14th February, he confessed to all in the indictment, save the first article, charging him with having “cast off all fear of God.” He said, “It is because I feared to offend God, and to violate His law, that I am here to-day, standing to be condemned.” When asked about disowning the king’s authority, he answered like a true Protestant and a heroic patriot—“I own all authority that hath its prescriptives and limitations from the word of God; but I cannot own this usurper as lawful king—seeing both by the word of God, such a one is incapable to bear rule, and likewise by the ancient laws of the kingdom, which admit none to the crown of Scotland until he swear to defend the Protestant religion, which a man of his profession cannot do.”

At the close of his examination, when asked if he would subscribe his Testimony, he did so, with protestation that he subscribed it as his testimony, but not as recognizing the authority of his judges. When condemned to be executed in the Grassmarket, on the Friday following, he was asked by the Justice General if he desired a longer time, he declared, “It was all one to him; if the time was protracted, it was welcome; if it was shortened, it was welcome too;—his Master’s time was the best.” Without his knowledge he was reprieved for ten days, till the 17th of February, as the persecutors were to some degree sated with blood, and perhaps somewhat troubled in conscience by the demeanor of the youthful confessor. After his condemnation was pronounced, many attempts were made to shake his constancy. Several petitions were written for him, but he refused resolutely to sign any of them. It was at one time proposed to him, that his dropping a few drops of ink on paper would be sufficient: this however, he promptly refused, alleging that it would be so far an owning of wicked authority, and a renunciation of his whole testimony.

His friends were denied access to him in prison; paper and ink were removed from him, and also part of his dying testimony which he had written. Others—persons in authority—prelates, curates, and popish priests visited him. His Christian firmness resisted all their attempts to make him swerve from his principles; while several of them were struck and overawed by the power of his singular wisdom, gentleness, and unaffected goodness. Viscount Tarbet, a man of intellect, but noted for his lax accommodating principles, said of Renwick, after several times visiting him, “He was the stiffest maintainer of his principles that ever came before us. Others we used always to cause at one time or other to waver; but him we could never move. We could never make him yield nor vary in the least. He was of old Knox’s principles.”

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The testimony of Renwick contained in the “CLOUD OF WITNESSES,” was written the night before he suffered, and in near anticipation of his martyrdom. His mother and sisters were allowed to be with him for a short time, on the morning of the day of his execution: In giving thanks at food in their presence, he said—“Lord! Thou hast brought me within two hours of eternity, and this is no matter of terror to me, more than if I rose to go to lie down on a bed of roses. Nay, through grace, to thy praise, I may say, I had never the fear of death since I came within this prison; but from the place I was taken in, I could have gone very composedly to the scaffold.” Again, he said, “Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. Could I ever have thought that the fear of suffering and death could be so taken from me? What shall I say of it? It is the doing of the Lord and marvellous in our eyes.” He asked, “I have many times counted the cost of following Christ, but never expected it would have been so easy. Now, who knows the honour and happiness of that—’He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father!’ Several times, he said, *“Now that I am so near the end of time, I desire to bless the Lord: it is inexpressibly sweet and satisfying peace to me, that He has kept me in the least from complying with enemies.”* On the morning of his execution, he wrote his last letter to his most attached friend, Sir Robert Hamilton, who was then an exile in Holland, for the sacred cause for which Renwick suffered. Every part of this brief epistle is calm and thoughtful, and bespeaks the joyful serenity of the martyr’s spirit. “This,” he writes, “being my last day on earth, I thought it my duty to send you this, my last salutation. The Lord has been wonderfully gracious to me since I came to prison. He has assured me of His salvation, helped me to give a testimony for Him, and to say before his enemies all that I have taught, and strengthened me to resist and repel many temptations and assaults.” He closes, with these simple, solemn, and affecting words —“But I must break off, I go to your God and my God. *Death is to me as a bed to the weary.*”

When the drums beat for his execution, he exclaimed, “Yonder is my welcome call to the marriage. The Bridegroom is coming. I am ready.” On the scaffold, he sung the first part of the 3d Psalm, read the 19th chapter of Revelations, and prayed. When he was rudely interrupted, he said, “I shall soon be above these clouds. Then shall I enjoy Thee and glorify Thee, O my Father, without intermission and interruption for ever.” In the few sentences that he was permitted to speak to the spectators from the scaffold, after commending the Lord’s special mercy to him, in washing away his sins, and honouring him to suffer for His name’s sake, he declared he laid down his life mainly for three things: 1. For disavowing

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the usurpation and tyranny of James, Duke of York. 2. Preaching that it is unlawful to pay cess, expressly exacted for bearing down the gospel, and 3. Teaching that it is lawful for people to carry arms for defending themselves in their meetings for persecuted gospel ordinances.” At the close, he said, “I leave my testimony against Popery, Prelacy, and Erastianism, and against all profanity, and every thing contrary to sound doctrine, and the power of godliness; particularly against all usurpations and encroachments made upon Christ’s rights, who alone must bear the glory of ruling His own kingdom, the Church; and in particular, against this absolute power, usurped by this usurper, that belongs to no mortal; but is the incommunicable property of Jehovah; and against this toleration flowing from this absolute power.” Here he was compelled to leave off speaking, and to go up the ladder. He then prayed again, and said, “Lord! I die in the faith that Thou wilt not leave Scotland, but that Thou will make the blood of thy witnesses to be the seed of the Church, and will return again and be glorious in our land. And now, Lord, I am ready; the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, hath made herself ready.” When the napkin was tied about his face, he uttered a few affectionate words to the single friend who was permitted to attend him on the scaffold; his last counsels then spoken to the suffering remnant, show how much his heart was with them, and the cause of truth in their hands. “As to the remnant I leave, I have committed them to God. Tell them from me, not to weary, nor be discouraged in maintaining their testimony. Let them not quit or forego one of these despised truths. Let them keep their ground; and the Lord will provide them churches and ministers. And *when He comes, He will make these despised truths glorious in the earth.*”

In the close of his testimony, written in prison, the day before his execution, there are those sublime and affecting expressions, which were designed to be his last words from the scaffold—“Farewell, beloved sufferers, and followers of the Lamb. Farewell, Christian and comfortable mother and sisters. Farewell, sweet societies and desirable general meetings. Farewell! night wanderings in all seasons for Christ, and all sublunary things. Farewell! conflicts with a body of sin and death. Welcome, scaffold, for precious Christ. Welcome, heavenly Jerusalem. Welcome, innumerable company of angels. Welcome, crown of glory. Welcome, above all, O Thou blessed Trinity and one God. O Eternal One, I commit my soul into thy eternal rest.”

The relentless persecutors of our Presbyterian forefathers were not content with removing this eminent servant of God, by a violent death; as if to throw upon him the utmost indignity, his body was buried in the common grave of felons, at the lower entrance of the Greyfriars Church-yard, a plain slab of stone erected over the spot, stating that the dust of the Rev. James Renwick lies interred with that of eight other martyrs, and with the remains of a hundred common felons. The emblem and inscription on the stone point, however, to the glory reserved for faithful servants of Christ, when the sufferings of the Church shall have been completed, and antichristian

power shall have been overthrown. The emblem is an open Bible, with the words in Revelation vi. 9, 10, 11, inserted underneath.

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Though enemies thus did their utmost to pour dishonour on the name and memory of Renwick, and to extinguish the cause for which he suffered, yet the Redeemer whom he intensely loved, and faithfully served, has in his providence, vindicated the one, as He has preserved, and will yet more extensively and gloriously display the other. Not only have eminent historians and other distinguished writers, in recent times, done justice to the character and labours of Renwick, and the contendings of the Society people; but within the last few years, by several public Commemorative services in Scotland, the spirit and testimony of the later Scottish martyrs, have been held forth as worthy of the grateful regard of posterity, and commended to their imitation and adoption. The Bicentenary of the SANQUHAR DECLARATION was commemorated with appropriate services,—upwards of 4000 persons of different religious denominations convening at the ancient burgh of Sanquhar for this purpose. The addresses delivered on the occasion by ministers and others, ably displayed and vindicated the position assumed by Richard Cameron, and his followers, and commended to public approval their testimony. Some three years ago, a like public commemoration of Renwick's birth and martyrdom was celebrated, at the place of his nativity near MONIAIVE, in the south of Scotland,—ministers and people of the Free, United, and Reformed Presbyterian Churches manifesting the deepest interest in the proceedings. Besides the ministers and large concourse of people—many of them gathered from great distances, that met in the open air, near the place of Renwick's birth,—numerous congregations assembled in different houses of worship, observed the solemn occasion with solemn devotional exercises. The addresses delivered were a suitable tribute to the spirit and conduct of the covenanted martyrs; and various articles of their special testimony were clearly displayed and ably vindicated. An admirable sermon was preached at this commemoration by Rev. WILLIAM ANDERSON of Loanhead, which has since been published under the title of "*the Voice of Renwick*," and extensively circulated. It contains a condensed, yet lucid sketch of the life, labours and sufferings of Renwick, a faithful portraiture of his character, and an able exposition and defence of the great principles of the testimony of the Scottish martyrs. There has been published in modern times no juster or more appropriate tribute to the character, principles, and heroic deeds of these faithful confessors, than is contained in this discourse. On this account, as well as for the weighty practical lessons which it enforces, it is of no local or ephemeral interest, but deserves to be transmitted along with the testimonies of the Presbyterian martyrs to future generations. These movements indicate the gracious design of Zion's King to put lasting and increasing honour upon those who cheerfully suffered the loss of all things in maintaining his cause, and of yet

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reviving the principles for which they nobly contended. Though the day may be distant when these nations shall voluntarily and generally return to allegiance to Prince Messiah, yet, as the dimness of the hour is the sure precursor of the perfect day, and the cloud like a man's hand betokened "abundance of rain," so these grateful reminiscences of the covenanted martyrs and their distinctive testimony, point to a day of deliverance and brightness approaching, when Antichristian error and idolatry shall be overthrown, and the reign of righteousness and truth shall be universally established.

CONCLUSION.

The record of the life, labours, and testimony, of James Renwick is fraught with *practical lessons* of the highest value to the Church in the present day; and ministers, theological students, and the rising youth of the Church generally have a special interest in pondering them deeply, and in seeking to reduce them to practice.

From Renwick's personal history, we see—1. An instance of the Divine blessing on parental dedication, and early religious instruction, confirming the truth of the Divine promise, and exhibiting the unspeakable benefit of the faithful labours of godly parents, especially of mothers, to the Church. 2. It is impressively shown too, that a person's work and influence for good, is not dependent on birth or station in life, or on outward advantages. Many of the most eminent servants of Christ, like Luther and Renwick, sprung from the humbler ranks of society, and before they came forward to public usefulness, had to contend with great difficulties. Grace ennobled them. God often chooses "the weak things" of the world to "confound the mighty." His servants are raised from the dunghill to sit among princes. In heaven's heraldry, a man's rank is taken, not from hereditary titles, or possessions, but from grace renewing and sanctifying the heart, and a life of true devotedness to Christ and his service. 3. We are taught to lay no stress on present prosperity, but to do God's work, looking for the recompense of reward which He gives. A noble forgetfulness of self, and mortification to the favour of the world, have characterized all Christ's most approved servants. Dr. Payson relates about himself, what has been experienced by many faithful men, "When I thought myself to be *something*, I never knew happiness of mind; since I came to feel myself nothing, and Christ all, I have realized full satisfaction and joy." Renwick reviled, calumniated, and persecuted in his day, while esteeming all but loss for Christ, enjoyed in life and death, peace surpassing understanding—his name will be ever fragrant, and his memorial everlasting.

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4. Again, Renwick's life presents a bright and attractive *example of the graces of fervent piety*. There shines forth in his character, in harmonious display and concentrated lustre, an array of lovely and ennobling features. To faith, he added virtue, and knowledge, patience, temperance, godliness, &c. (2 Pet. i. 5-7.) His Christian *wisdom* is singularly conspicuous. Renwick was blamed in his own day by time-servers and backsliders as imprudent; and those who maintain the same testimony even in our times, are characterized as foolish, imprudent, and infatuated. Certainly, if wisdom consists only in securing present temporal gain—fleeting pleasure and the applause of the world, then Renwick and his followers have no claim to be considered wise. But if the “beginning” and spirit of true wisdom are the “fear of the Lord;” and if it is shown in preferring the advancement of God's glory and the enjoyment of His favour to all else, and in seeking the attainment of those ends by means divinely appointed, and approved, then the persecuted remnant were eminently wise. By opposing Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, and arbitrary power, and pleading resolutely for the covenant liberties of the Church and nation, they proposed to themselves holy ends. Their faithful contendings; their stern denunciations of royal perfidy and tyranny; their organization of societies, and a general correspondence; their proclaiming open opposition to usurped authority; and, above all, their willing sacrifice of life rather than abandon right principles, evince true wisdom. These were the best means that could possibly have been adopted to expose the countless evils of the government of the royal brothers; and to rouse the dormant spirit of the nation, to hurl tyrants and oppressors from the throne, and to establish constitutional liberty. Then, the *fidelity* of Renwick and the Cameronians were seen in maintaining fully their testimony to the whole covenanted reformation, amidst manifold perils, when the large body of Presbyterians had made defection. The standard which they firmly grasped and refused to surrender had its glorious motto, “FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT.” The central doctrine of the Redeemer's Headship over the Church and the nations, occupied a first place in all the testimonies emitted in their general meetings, and uttered on scaffolds and fields of blood. Connected with this, as necessary corollaries, were the supremacy of Holy Scripture—the spiritual independence of the Church, and the subjection of rulers and national legislation to the sceptre of the reigning Mediator. On these grounds, they not only rejected infamous rulers, but condemned and rejected with utter abhorrence the royal supremacy. The sentiment expressed in the words subscribed to the minutes of their general meetings—“LET KING JESUS REIGN,[5] declare the leal allegiance of Renwick and the persecuted Covenanters to Prince Messiah. Earnestly did they seek to have the authority of King

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Jesus universally acknowledged, honoured, and obeyed. They believed firmly the sure word of prophecy that “all kings shall fall down before Him; and all nations shall serve Him.” “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” Psal. lxxii. 11, 8. So should we also aim to be faithful to Christ and His cause; to our own sacred vows; to the souls of men; and to the blood-bought privileges that have been entrusted to us to preserve and transmit. We are responsible, not for success, but for fidelity; and the promised reward will be a glorious recompense for all trial and suffering. “Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Renwick was, furthermore, distinguished by a *catholic, genial, loving spirit*. This characteristic is not generally thought to have been prominent in the spirit of illustrious reformers and suffering confessors. Luther, Calvin, and Knox, have been represented as unsocial, morose fanatics, and gloomy bigots. Renwick has been branded as rigid and austere, and those who have embraced and faithfully maintained the same testimony have been exhibited as sectaries of the deepest dye. No representation could be more unjust, and none is more opposed to historic truth. Luther was most genial and loving, as his “Table Talk,” and the record of his domestic life, abundantly testify. Calvin’s “Letters” collected by Bonnet, show how keenly and long he felt the death of his wife and infant child; how deeply his heart was affected with the sufferings of Protestants everywhere, even of those who differed from him in principle; and attest, moreover, the warmth and constancy of his friendship. Knox’s declaration before Queen Mary, that he was always affected by the crying of his infant children, shows his gentle and susceptible disposition; while his letters to his wife and mother-in-law bear witness, equally to his piety, and to the depth of tender feeling that filled his large heart. Renwick was, at all times, a loving, thoughtful, and confiding friend, as many passages in his “Letters” declare. The annals of the persecution, and the traditions of suffering times, testify to his genial disposition, even when he was harassed by relentless enemies, and his heart was overwhelmed with incessant cares and anxieties.

In proof of the catholic, unsectarian, Christian spirit of Renwick and his followers, the clear statements of the INFORMATORY VINDICATION, the work which most fully and clearly defines their position, may be referred to. After laying down an admirable platform of fellowship and discipline, the persecuted Covenanters declare in effect, “We are not a Church at present, and cannot act fully as an organized Church. We are a broken, persecuted remnant. Our societies are not a Church, but a temporary means of enjoying proper religious instruction and ordinances of worship. They are, besides, associations for self-defence, and

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for watching and taking advantage of any public movement for overturning the present despotism, and recovering our liberties, civil and religious. We require to make the terms of admission strict, to guard against spies, and those who are contentious or quarrelsome. At the same time they declare the close and hallowed relations that bound them to all the true disciples of their common Lord. In a noble spirit of Christian brotherhood, they virtually proclaim, "On the communion of saints, let us impose no new restrictions. Though others differ from us in the word of their special testimony, let us embrace and love them, and acknowledge fellowship with them as Christian brethren." [6] In these noble utterances, we have strikingly exemplified the true spirit of Christian brotherhood and Catholic communion. This is the genuine import of the vow of the Solemn League and Covenant, which binds Covenanters to regard whatever is done to the least of them, as done to all and to every one in particular. While firmly holding fast all Scriptural attainments, and contending "earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," we should cordially rejoice in the evidences of grace in Christ's servants wherever we find them. We should love them as brethren, fulfil the law of Christ by bearing their burdens, wish them God speed in all that they are doing for the advancement of His glory, and fervently labour and pray for the coming of the happy period when divisions and animosities shall cease, and when there shall be one King, and His name one in all the earth.

5. The testimony of Renwick and his associates is of permanent value and of special importance in our day, as it was directed against *systems of error and idolatry*, which serve to corrupt the Church and enslave the State. Against Popery in every form Renwick was a heroic and uncompromising witness. At the peril of life, he publicly testified against the usurpation of the papist James, and rejected him as having no claim to be regarded as a constitutional sovereign, and as utterly disqualified to reign in a Protestant reformed land. This was the main ground of his objection against James's toleration, for which the Indulged ministers tendered obsequious thanks to the usurper. Yet this edict of toleration was issued for the purpose of opening the way for the practice of Rome's abominations, and for the advancement of papists to places of power and trust in the nation. None of the Cameronians would, for any earthly consideration, even to save their lives, for a moment admit that a papist had any right to exercise political power in a reformed land. Our martyred forefathers we regard as worthy of high respect and imitation, for their deeply cherished dread of the growing influence of Popery, and for their determined resistance to its exclusive and extravagant claims. The system of Popery is the abnegation of all precious gospel truth; and is a complete politico-religious confederacy against the best interests of a Protestant

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nation. The boast of its abettors is that it is *semper eadem*—ever the same. Rome cannot reform herself from within, and she is incapable of reformation from external influences and agencies. The Bible never speaks of Antichrist as to be reformed, but as waxing worse and worse till the time when he shall be completely subverted and irrecoverably destroyed. Whatever changes may be going on in some Popish countries, whereby the power of the Papacy is weakened, it is evident that the principles and spirit of the Romish priesthood, and of those who are under their influence, remain unchanged. The errors of the Antichristian system, instead of being diminished, have of late years increased. Creature worship has become more marked and general. The Immaculate Conception has been proclaimed by Papal authority as the creed of Romanism. In these countries, and some other Protestant lands, the influence of Popery in government and education, and so on the whole social system, has been greatly on the increase. Among those who have most deeply studied inspired prophecy, there is a general expectation that the period of Babylon's downfall is hastening on, and is not far distant. There is a general presentiment too, that the Man of Sin, prior to his downfall, will make some dire and violent attempt through his infatuated followers against the truth, and against such as faithfully maintain it. The "*Slaying of the Witnesses*,"—which we are disposed to regard as yet future—may take place, not so much by the actual shedding of blood, though it is plain that Jesuit policy and violence will not hesitate to re-enact former persecution and massacre, to accomplish a desired purpose. It may mainly be effected, as Scott, the expositor, suggests, by silencing the voice of a public testimony in behalf of fundamental truths throughout Christendom; and of this there are at present unmistakeable signs not a few, throughout the churches in various countries.

The Protestant church in all its sections should be thoroughly awake to its danger from the destructive errors, idolatry and power of its ancient irreconcilable enemy; and should, by all legitimate means, labour to counteract and nullify its political influence. The ministry and the rising youth of the church should study carefully the Popish controversy, and should be intimately acquainted with the history of the rise and progress of the Papacy—its assumed blasphemous power—its accumulated errors and delusions, and its plots, varied persecutions and cruel butcheries of Christ's faithful witnesses. Above all, they should set themselves earnestly, prayerfully and perseveringly to diffuse the Bible and Gospel light in the dark parts of their native country, and among Romanists in other lands. By embracing fully and holding fast, in their practical application, the principles of the British Covenants, and by imbibing the spirit of covenanted martyrs—men like Renwick and the Cameronians, we will be prepared for the last conflict with Antichrist. The firm and faithful maintenance of a martyr-testimony will be a principal instrument of the victory of truth over the error and idolatry of Rome. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death," (Rev. xii. 11.)

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Finally—the testimony of Renwick is valuable, as throwing light on *great evils connected with systems of civil government*, and with *Protestant churches*, and as pointing out clearly the duty of faithful witnesses in relation to them. Two great principles—the one *doctrinal*, and the other *practical*, were essential to it, or rather constituted its whole speciality. These were—first—that, according to the national vows, and the reformation attainments, the whole civil polity of the nation should be conformed to the Scriptures,—and secondly, the positive duty of distinct separation from whatever systems in the state or the church that are opposed to entire allegiance to Messiah, the Prince. The civil constitution and the national legislation and administration, as well as the lives of rulers, were required to be in subjection to His authority, and in accordance with the prescriptions of His word. When such subjection is withheld, Christ's servants, if they would be faithful to the exalted Saviour, cannot do otherwise than refuse to incorporate with the national society, and to homologate the acts of its rulers; and from Churches that do not testify against national defection, they are constrained to maintain distinct separation. The past history of the Church bears clear testimony that truth has been frequently preserved, when it was in danger of being lost, by open separation from those who were bent on declension and apostacy.

In our day, it should not be regarded as enough to profess in theory the doctrine of Christ's Headship, or merely to speak in commendation of a martyr-testimony. We should aim, as Renwick and his followers, at whatever inconvenience and hardship, to give it *practical effect*. The reason why these honoured confessors disowned the authority of Charles and his brother, was, not solely or chiefly, because of their tyranny or persecuting measures, but principally because the authority assumed was opposed to the exclusive royal prerogatives of the Redeemer. The public evils against which Renwick and the later martyrs testified to the death, did not cease at the Revolution; nor can we admit that the Revolution Settlement embodied all the principles for which the Covenanted martyrs contended, and suffered, and died. On the contrary, there are essential and inherent evils in the Revolution Settlement, both civil and ecclesiastical, which exist to this day, and which render a decided testimony against it dutiful now, as it was at the period of the Revolution. The Act Rescissory, which was passed at the Restoration, is still retained in the Statute Book: the National Covenants were abandoned, both by the Church and the nation, and neither has returned to a sense of their obligation. The Scriptural attainments of the Reformation were left under a gravestone. Presbyterianism was established in Scotland—not because it was Scriptural or right in itself, but because it was agreeable to the wishes of the majority of the nation, and it was set up on an Erastian basis. By the introduction of the curates into the ministry of the Scottish establishment, at the king's behest, without any public confession or renunciation of Prelacy—the germ of Moderatism was laid, which, in due time, budded and brought forth bitter fruits, in numerous corruptions and oppressions, and in multiplied divisions and separations.

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Prelacy, abjured in the Solemn League of the three kingdoms, was, at the Revolution, established in England and Ireland, and the supremacy of the monarch as head of the National Church, and in “all causes, civil and ecclesiastical,” was declared to be an inherent prerogative of the crown. These evils yet exist in the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of these countries; and others have in recent years been added, such as the admission of papists to places of power and trust throughout the nation, the national endowment of popish institutions, and the public favour shown by rulers to the Antichristian system. The national policy in these instances and others that might be mentioned, is wholly inconsistent with the doctrine of the Redeemer’s Headship in its legitimate application, and is the source of many of the evils that in our day corrupt and degrade the Church of England, and that prevent the developement and prevalence of genuine Protestantism throughout the nation. The Presbyterian Churches that claim descent from the covenanting reformers and martyrs, should seriously consider whether they do not compromise a faithful testimony, and encourage national apostacy, by incorporating with a civil system that refuses homage to the reigning Mediator, and obedience to the authoritative prescriptions of His word.

The rising youth of the Church should carefully study in its legitimate application, and vitally important consequences, the grand article of Renwick’s testimony,—the Redeemer’s Headship over the Church and the nations, and the cognate principles of the supremacy of the word, the spiritual independence of the Church, and the claim of the subjection of the nation and its rulers to the authority of the reigning Mediator. Whether viewed in the light of the past or of the present state of the nations, as of America, and the kingdoms of the antichristian earth; or of prophecy yet unfulfilled, a testimony for these truths is of grand and overwhelming importance. This is emphatically, the *present truth*—the cause of God and truth, now to be pleaded in the earth. It is “the word of Christ’s patience,” which we are required to hold fast. It is at our peril If we be found neutral here; our preservation from the coming “hour of temptation,” is alone to be expected in fidelity to the great trust committed to us. We are assured in the faithful word of prophecy, that the Redeemer will ere long take to Him his power to reign. The “Little Stone” shall bruise and break in pieces the feet and toes of the “great Image,”—the representative of the world-powers,—and become a “great mountain,” and fill the earth. Then shall the cause for which Christ’s witnesses testified in sackcloth, and for which chosen martyrs died, gloriously triumph. “The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.”

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The peaceful, triumphant death of Renwick, shows impressively that there is a reward to the righteous; that a life of self-denial and devoted piety appears at the close, enstamped with heaven's approval; and that labours and sufferings for Christ's sake conduct to the joy of completed victory, and to perfect communion with the Redeemer, and the redeemed in glory. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." (Ps. xxxvii. 37.) "After this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kingdoms, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 9, 10.)

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: Hist of Ch. of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 64]

[Footnote 2: Calvin and Geneva, vol. I., II.]

[Footnote 3: See Appendix,—Note A.]

[Footnote 4: Dodds' "Fifty Years' Struggle," p. 275.]

[Footnote 5: See "Faithful Contendings."]

[Footnote 6: Dodds' "Fifty Years' Struggle," p. 275.]

APPENDIX.

It has been common in some quarters of late, to speak of Renwick and his associates in testimony-bearing and suffering, as only contending against the unconstitutional and persecuting measures of the government of the Royal brothers,—and to declare that, had they lived to witness the change of government which took place at the Revolution, they would have joyfully hailed it as the realization of their eager aspirations,—and would have incorporated readily with the national society. Thus, Dodds in his "*Fifty Years' Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters*,"—while acknowledging the important services rendered to the cause of the Prince of Orange, by the bold and resolute position taken by the Cameronians, represents Renwick, as not only "the last martyr of the Covenanting struggle," but also as "the *Proto-martyr of the Revolution*." He adds, "Like the shepherd overwhelmed in the snow-storm, he perished within sight of the door. The door of deliverance was speedily opened, on the arrival of William, in November, 1688." And, again, speaking of Cameron, Renwick, and the stricter Covenanters, he says, "So far, the REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT—in the main adopting what was universal, and rejecting what was exclusive, or over-grasping in their views,—was the consummation and triumph, civilly and politically, and to a large extent,

ecclesiastically, of the FIFTY YEARS' STRUGGLE OF THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS." These statements, though plausible, and such as seem likely to be readily embraced by those who have no relish for a full Covenanted testimony—or who desire to maintain fellowship with corrupt civil and ecclesiastical systems, are liable to one fundamental

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and unanswerable objection,—they are wholly unsupported by historical evidence. All pains were taken by Cameron and Renwick, in preaching and in their dying testimonies, and by the United Societies in their published declarations, to show that they testified not merely against the usurpation and blasphemous supremacy of the last of the Stuarts,—but likewise, principally, against all invasion of the Redeemer’s royal prerogatives,—and all departure from the scriptural attainments of the former happy Reformation. In nothing were they more decided than in testifying to the death, that the National Covenants were the oath of God, perpetually binding on all classes in the realm,—“the marriage tie,” which no power on earth could dissolve—that all departure from the principles of these federal deeds was sinful, and involved the land in the guilt of national apostacy and perjury,—and that the authority of the Scripture was supreme in constituting the national society, in enacting and administering the laws, and in regulating the lives and official acts of the rulers.

The Revolution Settlement, in both its civil and ecclesiastical departments, instead of being the exemplification and carrying forward of the work of the Second Reformation, —for the maintenance of which the Scottish martyrs shed their blood,—was a deliberate abandonment of it, and was established in open opposition to its grand and distinguishing principles. The faithful companions and followers of Renwick refused to incorporate with this Settlement, on the ground of adhering firmly to the scriptural vows of the nation, and the testimonies of illustrious martyrs. While giving the best proof of their genuine patriotism, they withheld allegiance from the government of William, and they took the name and position of “Old Dissenters,” for reasons which they clearly stated, which those who opposed and misrepresented them, were unable to answer, and the greater part of which are as applicable to the present British government, and existing ecclesiastical systems, as they were to the Settlement of the Revolution. Several of the political changes which have taken place in recent times, have supplied strong additional grounds for faithful Covenanters maintaining the position of public protest against, and active dissent from the establishments, civil and ecclesiastical, of the nation. The reasons of separation from the Revolution Church and State, as given by the “Society People,” are presented in a lucid and convincing manner, in the work entitled—“Plain Reasons for Presbyterians dissenting from the Revolution Church in Scotland, as also their Principles concerning Civil Government, and the difference betwixt the Reformation and Revolution Principles.” They are likewise exhibited in a condensed form in the “Short Account of Old Dissenters,” emitted with the sanction of the Reformed Presbytery, and in very luminous terms in the Historical part of the “Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.”

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No person who peruses these works, and ponders their carefully prepared statements, can with candour and honesty affirm that Renwick and his fellow-sufferers would have willingly incorporated with the Revolution Settlement; or that fellowship with the present British political system, by taking oaths of allegiance and office, and setting up rulers, is consistent with their declared and dearly prized principles. Let the “Plain Reasons” to which we have referred, be duly weighed—and it must be perfectly apparent, that Mr. Dodds’s oracular statement—that the “REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT” was the consummation and triumph, civilly, and politically, and to a large extent ecclesiastically, of the “Fifty years’ Struggle of the Scottish Covenanters,” is completely destitute of any solid foundation. These *reasons* are such as the following—The Scottish reformation in its purest form was deliberately abandoned in the Revolution Settlement—Both the Church and State concurred in leaving unrepealed on the Statute-book, the infamous Act Rescissory, by which the National Covenants were declared to be unlawful oaths, and all laws and constitutions, ecclesiastical or civil, were annulled, which approved and gave effect to them. The Revolution Church was, in every respect, an entirely different establishment from that of the Second Reformation. Its creed was dictated by Erastian authority—its government established on the ground of popular consent and not of Divine right—its order and discipline were placed in subjection to Erastian civil rulers—and the Scriptural liberties of the ministry and membership interfered with; and corruption in doctrine, and ordinances of worship, without the power of removing it, extensively spread throughout the ecclesiastical body. How sadly different a structure did this appear to the eyes of faithful men, who lamented that the carved work of a Covenanted Sanctuary had been broken down, and the “beautiful House where their fathers worshipped, was laid waste!” Nor could the civil and political part of the Revolution Settlement have any pretensions to be a proper carrying out of the civil system of the Reformation era. In this the federal deeds of the nation were the compact between rulers and ruled, and were an essential part of the oath of the Sovereign on admission to supreme power. Civil rulers were required to be possessed of scriptural and covenant qualifications—and were taken bound to make a chief end of their government the promotion of the divine glory in the advancement of the true reformed religion, and the protection and prosperity of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. They were likewise solemnly engaged to employ their official influence and authority to put away systems that had been abjured in the National vows,—Popery, Prelacy and Erastianism, and to discourage all profaneness and ungodliness. At the Revolution, all these engagements were deliberately set aside. The sovereign’s coronation oath, and the oath of

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allegiance of subjects, bind both equally to the support of Prelacy—which is declared to be established unchangeably in England and Ireland. The whole civil system is based on expediency and the popular will, and not on Scriptural principles. The authority claimed and exercised by the monarch over the Presbyterian Establishment in Scotland, and the National Church in England and Ireland, is grossly Erastian. The introduction of Popery into the bosom of the State—the admission of Papists to offices of power and trust in the nation, and the endowment of Popish Seminaries and chaplains—which the Revolution Settlement barred—but which the Antichristian and infidel policy of recent times has enacted, show still more clearly that the civil and political system established in these countries is diametrically opposed to that which was set up at the era of the Reformation, and was contended for by the Scottish martyrs—and impose on all who would honestly promote the ends of the National Covenants, the obligation to maintain distinct separation from it.