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## THE SUCCESSORS OF KNOX

### I

ANDREW MELVILLE

KNOX was honoured to be the leading man among the instruments who achieved the Scottish Reformation. If his words took concrete form in things, he left to his successors an accomplished fact. And yet there was much to be done before the Reformation could be said to be at all complete. The foundations, however, were laid. The Confession of the Reformed Church was published to the world. The lines along which the movement was to go were marked out. There was a programme sketched, the carrying out of which was the task of those who had something to build upon and were not called to start from the very beginning. The Reformed Church, though still in its infancy, let the world know what it held, what it stood for and what it aimed at. Yet when the Reformer laid down his armour in 1572 he left behind him in the Scottish Ministry no outstanding man to carry on his work. The work, however, was not of man and it was to be carried on, and if a man was needed to champion the good cause the Scottish Church had not long to wait for him. The times called for a man of grit, and a man of grit came forward. This was Andrew Melville.

With George Buchanan, Melville stood in the front rank of Scottish humanists. The two, however, were more than scholars of the humanistic Renaissance. They were Reformers; and they led the Reforming movement along the lines that in after years were to be characteristic of the stand made by the Reformed Church in defence of its Faith and freedom against the encroachments of Royal supremacy. Buchanan's *De jure regni apud Scotos* was the forerunner of the *Lex Rex* of Samuel Rutherford, and *A Hind Let Loose* of Alexander Shields. The principles that were in those works set forth and expounded and defended set limits before the authority of the Crown

that were not at all to the liking of the Court and its partisans. But in the end of the Constitutional struggle these principles were vindicated, and in spite of men in high places and their obsequious tools, they were accepted by the nation. They set forth the essential system of Constitutional liberty.

Melville, who was Buchanan's younger contemporary, after a sojourn of about ten years overseas, came back to his native land two years or so after the death of Knox. He had studied in France. He had taught in the Academy of Geneva. He was the friend of Beza on whom rested the mantle of John Calvin. And when he came back to Scotland, still a young man not yet thirty years old, he brought with him a reputation for learning that won for him the Academic posts at Glasgow and St. Andrews Universities that he was fitted to adorn. The Jesuit reaction to the Reformation was in full flood, and as the strength of the early Reforming movement was to be found largely in the ranks of those who were conversant with the Greek culture of the Revival of Learning, the Jesuit leaders laid themselves out to capture the blue riband of scholarship that the Church might have at its call men who would outshine the scholars who had wrought such havoc on the Medieval system. This policy of theirs called for every effort on the part of the Reformers to maintain their ground and to train a generation of educated men who could speak to the enemy in the gate. It was in this field of polemic activity that Andrew Melville found his first and fundamental task when in the two oldest of his country's Universities he was entrusted with the work of adjusting the curriculum to current needs, levelling up the standards of learning, and bringing the Colleges of Glasgow and St. Andrews abreast of the scholarship of the Continental Schools. He met with conspicuous success in this academic work, so that students from the lands overseas to which his countrymen had been wont to resort began to frequent the Scottish seats of learning.

The impetus that Melville gave to sound scholarship was felt not only in the ministry of the Home Church, but in the standing that Scots came to enjoy in the Colleges of Huguenot France which then were second to none in the Reformed world. Besides, his work told on a line of his pupils who while they responded to the stimulus of his learning and example were not prepared to stand at his side or take up his place in the

defence of the spiritual freedom of the Church against the policy of King James. Thus though Patrick Forbes of Corse became a Conformist and died Bishop of Aberdeen, he owed his scholarship to the teaching and influence of Melville. As Bishop, Forbes was instrumental in founding the Aberdeen school of Theological Scholarship of which his eminent son John was the most distinguished ornament. Indeed, in the field of Patristics and Church History he was the finest scholar that Scotland had yet produced. His great, but unfinished work, *Instruktionen Historico-Theologicae* was still referred to in the Theological schools of Europe a century and a half after his death. The Aberdeen doctors, though they were so thorough in their Erastian Conformity to Court measures, were thus in their learning the product at the second remove of the work done in his St. Andrews days by Melville.

Great, however, and beneficent as the influence was that he wielded in College and Educational life, the great work done by Andrew Melville was his masterly guidance of the Church in her contendings with secular aggression. He led in the fight for the maintenance of Presbyterianism as the government of the Reformed Church. He was at the head of his fellows as they stood for the intrinsic freedom that resides in the Church of God to do the will of her Head as He has made it known in His Word. It was in the *Second Book of Discipline* that the banner of the freedom of the Church was definitely unfurled. This historic work was produced in the early years of Melville's effective leadership in the Courts of the Church. To say that he and not Knox was the father of the Puritan and Presbyterian tradition in the Church of Scotland would be to speak very wide of the mark. Knox was as surely both a Presbyterian and a Puritan as Melville was. For any temporary departures from the practice of pure Presbytery for which his example is pleaded, such as the place given to Superintendents and the modified acknowledgment of an Episcopacy in the Leith agreement which was reached shortly before his death, were but concessions to the dire need of the times. It was no honorific sinecure to be a Superintendent in Knox's days. It meant a real increase of work and responsibility and when it was all done the Superintendent was subject to the oversight, the authority and the censure of the ministry and the eldership met in their General Assembly. With parishes not

half staffed, and when staffed provided often only with lay readers, there was room for special measures by way of itinerant preaching and visitation on the part of the Superintendents. Again, the type of Bishop to be recognized after the Leith Convention was more or less of a legal figment whose name as a Church official was needed for the legal tenure of the lands which had belonged to the Medieval Bishoprics and were not yet alienated by royal grants to secular holders. His office was more or less of a sinecure. He was a convenient liaison officer to pass on to laymen the fruits of ecclesiastical endowments, but it could hardly be said that the sinecure of a Tulchan Bishop was honorific. Presbytery was the undoubted government of the Reformed Church.

The practical difficulties that confronted the leaders of the Reformation would account for their resort to the device of having Superintendents. And when the proposals of the Convention of Leith were discussed on the floor of the General Assembly, Knox made quite clear his opposition to the introduction of even a titular episcopate whose powers were as limited as those of the Superintendents. He saw what the possible developments were that might be looked for from such an interim restoration of the old hierarchy in name.

In spite of all that he did, the fact remains that what the wily Lethington spoke of as a devout imagination did not mature in Knox's life, and his *First Book of Discipline* for which he has been so often praised, and rightly so, as a Christian statesman was more an ideal than an achievement as far as the successful carrying out of his programme was concerned. He had to deal with a greedy set who saw to it that of the patrimony of the Church the third part should be divided between the Court and the reformed ministry. Two-thirds were to go to the "outed" priests. It was of this arrangement that the Reformer said: "Two parts were given freely to the devil, and the third part was to be divided between God and the devil." Those in power saw to it that as far as they could bring it about they would keep the Reformed ministers poor. The battle, however, that Knox fought did not end with his death, and when Melville's time came, he led the fight that issued in the definite establishment of the Reformed Faith and Church in Scotland. The issue of this conflict told on the whole future record of the country. In particular, it secured that a doctrine of Church and State

came to be recognized as what might be called the distinctively Scottish doctrine on the subject.

The Scottish doctrine of Church and State is one that sets itself over against, on the one hand, that Erastian system which would make the government of the Church but a department of civil management, and, on the other, the scheme of Indifferentism that aims at putting no difference by the nation as such between one form of religious profession and another. In regard to the former of these contrasts, the Scottish Church had its long warfare to wage with the Court party and the feudal ideas that were entrenched in the privileges of the landed aristocracy. In regard to the latter, the opposition of the Indifferentism of the voluntary system came to be active as it wrought for the subversion of the alliance that the Reformers aimed at between the Divine ordinances of Civil Magistracy and Church Government. This opposition, however, did not need to be taken into account until the eighteenth century had accustomed men to look upon the visible Church as no longer an unbroken unit. Dissent and Separation and Secession had, by that time, changed the earlier face of National Church unity.

The ideal of the Reformation and Puritan ages was that there should be one "Face of Kirk" in the nation. With such an ecclesiastical unit confronting the civil unit, it was easier then than it is now to see how there might and should be a friendly alliance between Church and State, an alliance in which each of the contracting units recognized its own duty and that of the other, its own bounds and those of the other. With one Church over against one Kingly throne, Melville in resisting the invasion of the province of the Church by the aggressive policy of the King could use his oft-quoted words as he dealt with the aggressor. It was a private interview. Calling the King "God's silly vassal" and taking him by the sleeve, he spoke the words that lose nothing by being quoted again: "Sir, we will always humbly reverence your Majesty in public; but since we have this occasion to be with your Majesty in private, and since you are brought into extreme danger both of your life and crown, and along with you the country and the Church of God are like to go to wreck, for not telling you the truth and giving you faithful counsel, we must discharge our duty or else be traitors both to Christ and you. Therefore, Sir, as divers times before I have told you, so now again I must tell you, there are two kings

and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James, the lord of this commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose Kingdom he is not a King, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. We will yield to you your place, and give you all due obedience, but again I say, you are not the Head of the Church; you cannot give us that eternal life which we seek for even in this world, and you cannot deprive us of it. Permit us, then, freely to meet in the name of Christ, and to attend to the interests of that Church of which you are a chief member. Sir, when you were in your swaddling clothes Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land, in spite of all His enemies; His officers and ministers convened for the ruling and welfare of His Church, which was ever for your welfare, when these same enemies were for your destruction. And now when there is more than extreme necessity for the continuance of that duty, will you hinder and dishearten Christ's servants and your most faithful subjects, quarrelling with them for their convening, when you should rather commend and countenance them as the godly kings and emperors did?" It took grit to beard kings who aspired to be tyrants. But whatever was not to be found in the manful and heroic figures of our Scots Worthies, this grit was not wanting. They would without fear and without favour speak to kings the Word of God.

Melville has met with much unfriendly criticism for the freedom that he took with his sovereign. But it is only to the soul of the flunkey that such outspoken manliness is repulsive. The encroachments of the monarchy invited such candid speech on the part of the defenders of the freedom of the Church of God. And we find the roots of the free constitutions of our day in the spirit that could deal thus faithfully with the highest in the land. What had in it the potency of such free and frank speech to kings served to make the holders of feudal superiorities make common cause with the Crown in the endeavour to keep down the spirit of freedom. This will help to make clear what was so often and so long the attitude of the nobility and the landed classes toward the spiritual independence of the Kingdom of God in their midst.

The doctrine in regard to the Church of God for which Melville and his followers were honoured to make a stand, became in later days the word of their Lord's patience for

witnesses in all ranks of society who loved not their lives to the death. They believed it to be the truth of God that their Lord is the Head of His own Church and to preserve this truth and pass it down to later ages intact they were willing to lay down their lives for it. And such is the revenge that the whirligig of time brings with it that the Scottish Episcopacy which in its days as the State Church could not be too obsequious or courtly in bowing to the royal prerogative, has swung round from its old Erastianism and may be heard putting in the claim that the intrinsic rights of the Church should be conserved from the unholy hands of secular domination. The burden and heat of the day, however, in making a stand for these rights was borne by the men of the Knox and Melville tradition; and the ages are the heirs of the liberties for which they fought so strenuously and, in the end of the day, with such success. It was a long-drawn-out battle before it came to a definite issue, and ere it ended, Scotland became a land not only of Covenanters but of Confessors and Martyrs.

We owe it to the vivid, naïve and picturesque diary of James Melville that we have such a clear and consecutive account of the long fight in which his uncle Andrew was the leader. Uncle and nephew were in affection and years like a pair of brothers, and a champion such as Andrew Melville has seldom had such a trusty henchman as his brother's son proved to be. In his quiet resolute way, the younger Melville was no unworthy second to his uncle. To be a leader a man needed to have a following, and there were in that generation faithful Ministers who stood side by side with Melville. Among these were a few good Theologians who carried on the best traditions of the Reformed Theology. In this group were such men as John Welsh of Ayr, John Craig, Robert Bruce of Edinburgh, Robert Rollock and John Davidson. As the almost Apostolic ministry of Bruce lasted with interruptions until the fourth decade of the next century, he may be left to find his special place as a link with the men of the following generation. Welsh of Ayr, to whose work we shall now look, also lived until the third decade of the seventeenth century, but the last fifteen years of his life he had to spend in exile, so that his work in Scotland belongs to the generation of Knox's successors.



## II

## JOHN WELSH

John Welsh was the son-in-law of John Knox; and his wife was the worthy daughter of such a father and the worthy wife of such a husband. Among the scholarly saints of the Kirk, none held a higher place in the esteem of the godly than did Welsh. There is a biography that does justice to his work and memory from the pen of James Young who in his literary and historical work wrought in the vein of the McCrie tradition. But when we look for early traditional information about this worthy minister, we should seek it in John Livingstone's *Characteristics* where we find authentic traces of the glory and the afterglow of the great days of the Gospel that marked his brief but prayerful and powerful ministry in Ayr. His work there was done in the compass of three years. Yet the memory of it has persisted as one of the brightest times of spiritual enlargement that the Church of his land ever enjoyed. The monuments that survive of that ministry are about forty or fifty sermons which used to be in great demand in the reading of the peasant patriarchs of rural Scotland.

Welsh was well versed in the early Protestant theology, both practical and polemical. Of the latter kind there exists to show his quality his volume of controversy with Gilbert Brown, a Romanist polemic. This was published at the beginning of his ministry in Ayr in 1602, re-issued as edited by Matthew Crawford in 1672, and re-issued yet again as recently as 1878 under the oversight of Dr. Moir Porteous, who gave it the title of *The Morning Star*. Its title, or at least the first words in Matthew Crawford's title, are "Popery Anatomized". The title-page to the first edition styles it, "A Reply against Mr. Gilbert Brown, Priest". This work lets one see that our early Scottish preachers were not at a loss when they were challenged to stand up for the faith that was in them. It is one of the first fruits of the teaching of Rollock in the University of Edinburgh, for the writer was one of the very earliest students that took their academic course at Edinburgh.

Welsh, for the part that he took in the Aberdeen Assembly, which was held in defiance of the King's embargo, was silenced,

imprisoned and exiled. After years of service among the Huguenots he and his wife made their way to London to seek leave from the King for a dying man to go home to breathe his native air. Mrs. Welsh presented her petition. The King asked who her father was. When he was told that Mrs. John Welsh was the daughter of John Knox, he said: "Knox and Welsh! the devil never made such a match as that." "It's right like, sir," was her reply, "for we never asked his advice." When the King enquired about her father's family and was told that there were only three daughters, James, lifting up his hands, said: "God be thanked, for if they had been three lads, I had never enjoyed my three kingdoms in peace." When the royal buffoon asked what her petition was and she told him that she sought for her dying husband leave to go home to breathe his native air, the answer she got was surly and unkindly: "Give him his native air! Give him the devil." "Give that to your hungry courtiers," was the rejoinder. Then, as if relenting, James said that if her husband would be submissive to the bishops he might go to Scotland. Lifting up her apron and holding it out to the King, she answered: "Please, your Majesty, I'd rather kep his head there."

Such is the tale of a king when face to face with the rugged and stubborn Scots who were not prepared to truckle to him when he put forth his secular claim to spiritual supremacy over the Reformed Church. The son of those devoted parents was one of the men so highly honoured in the Evangelical awakening of Northern Ireland where, as yoke-fellow of Robert Blair of Bangor and John Livingstone of Killinchy, Josias Welsh did his share at Templepatrick in founding that Presbyterian Church which more than the mother Church in Scotland helped to build up Presbyterianism of a believing, orthodox type in the States of America. His son in turn was the second John Welsh who was, at the Restoration of Charles II, driven from his charge at Irongray, and who, with his comrade in arms, John Blackader of Troqueer, was among the first of the "outed" Presbyterians to take to the fields to hold there the conventicles which did so much in the dark days of the despotism of the later Stuarts to keep alive in Scotland the witness of the Church for the Headship of her Lord. The tale of his hair-breadth escapes which brought it to pass that, uncaptured to the end, he was able to keep the blue banner of the Evangel flying on

the moors of the southern uplands of his country is one of the most picturesque stories in the romantic history of his persecuted Church.

### III

#### JOHN CRAIG

John Craig, who once was a monk, was converted in Italy by reading the Institutes of John Calvin. He made his way home to Scotland and was one of the leading successors of Knox to keep alive the Reformed witness. It fell to him to draft the first National Covenant, or as it was called, "*The King's Confession*". This document forms the first part of the Covenant as drafted and buttressed and punctuated by Henderson and Wariston, which rallied the nation to its standard in 1638. What they did issued in the downfall of Laud and the convening of the Westminster Assembly and all that the Assembly of Divines stands for in the Reformed Churches of Britain and America. John Craig was the author also of a Catechism which was widely in use in the sixteenth century and which is to be found in Dr. Horatius Bonar's Collection of Catechisms of the Scottish Reformation. This handbook of the faith is remarkable for the clearness and pith, the point and the brevity of its answers. Its author had a place among the mighties who carried on the work of Reformation.

### IV

#### ROBERT ROLLOCK

Nor should we forget the place held among the successors of the great Reformer by the first Principal of the Town's College of Edinburgh. This was the first Protestant University founded in Scotland. It dates from ten years after the death of Knox. It was built in troublous times. The councillors of the capital city did not show themselves backward, however, in the institution of this seat of learning, and they found in their first preceptor a competent divine who excelled in his gift of exposition. Some of his discourses are to be found in the two volumes of his work which the Wodrow Society issued a century ago, where we have also translated from his Latin original his accurate and careful treatise on Effectual Calling. It does credit to the standard of Theological learning of the Scotland

of his day. In discussing the question as it is put in its Latin wording, "*Qui constat Scripturam esse Verbum Dei?*", he strikes no uncertain note as he asserts the self-evidencing light to be found in the Scriptures which bears witness to the divinity of their origin. This was the common teaching of the Reformed Schools. They resolved the question of the divine warrant of Christian faith into the witness of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the believer bearing witness to the evidence of the sacred books themselves which contain in their body and framework the token of the fact that they have come from God's own hand as their supreme Author. Rollock is also the author of a Latin commentary on the Gospel according to John, several of Paul's Epistles and the Book of Daniel. This latter work might be thought to speak in particular of the polemical interest that our early Protestants took in hunting down the Papacy as the Antichrist. Their historical method of expounding the seventh chapter of the book of the statesman Prophet often discovered the Roman Antichrist in the Little Horn whose look was more stout than his fellows and who had a mouth that spake great things and who made war with the saints and prevailed against them. Our Reforming fathers were well assured, as Knox had been from the days of his first preaching at St. Andrews and his disputation with the Romanist staff of the University, that the identity of the Man of Sin and the great Antichrist was a matter as to which there did not need to be any doubt. In his Latin commentary on the Thessalonians, the teaching of Rollock cannot be misunderstood. On this topic as one that was part of the burning controversy of the times, he would be diligent in teaching his young men. Yet in dealing with Daniel vii, he finds in the Little Horn Antiochus Epiphanes. He was an eminently sober teacher. And one that trained such a preacher and champion as John Welsh for the work of his office could not be said to have laboured in vain. In the public conflicts of his age he took a less share than some of his fellows, but in respect of sound Theology he did his part in training a race of divines who did credit to his instruction and oversight. He was a faithful man who was able to teach others also.

## V

## JOHN DAVIDSON

Another of the godly succession from Knox, and by no means the least striking of the company, was John Davidson of Prestonpans. From his own time onward he always had a place in the mind of his countrymen as one of the noted Scots Worthies.

If it was said of James Renwick, the last of the martyrs of the Covenant, that he was of old Mr. Knox's principles this might equally be said of John Davidson. There is not much by way of literary output to be ascribed to his pen. But the unflinching faithfulness of his ecclesiastical record marked him out as one worthy to be classed with the Melvilles as an unbending and unfaltering champion of the spiritual freedom of the Church. There was a scene that was long kept in memory when in 1596 he preached to the conscience of the General Assembly so that his hearers' hearts were moved as the heart of one man and the place was a veritable Bochim. One of his publications should not be overlooked. It was a Catechism which continued to be quoted for more than a century after his death as an authentic specimen of how the early Reformers set forth the doctrines of the Faith and in particular the nature of that faith which saves. Thomas Boston, for instance, in his notes on the Marrow of Modern Divinity, which he published in 1726, quotes Davidson as an authority of weight about a dozen times altogether.

The doctrine of saving faith which laid stress as an element which enters into it of an assurance of one's own good state in Christ came into his definition of faith, though at the same time, and almost in the one breath, he speaks of it as a receiving of Christ. In his days there was the beginning of the process that issued in greater care on the part of the Protestant Divines in their statement of what saving faith is. The assurance of personal salvation that was so common a feature of the inner life of the Reformer was not the universal and undisturbed attainment in experience of many of the best of their disciples and successors, so that in dealing with the trials that Christians met with on the ground of their want of the assurance of conscious salvation they had to learn to use greater care in the way

in which they expressed themselves. They needed to be more guarded in their definitions that they might shun casuistical difficulties which they met with in the course of their pastoral work, difficulties that arose from the high place that they assigned to the assurance of personal salvation as necessary to the working of saving faith. They were not called upon to lower their doctrine of assurance so as not to find a place for it at least in a germinal form, wherever faith is present and at work. They did not need to deny that the beginning of a true assurance is found in all true faith of the Gospel. But they felt that they were shut in to look upon it as only rudimentary or seminal in the earlier and weaker exercises of saving faith in the case of many whom they could not refuse to look upon as true believers. It is of interest to observe how Davidson, 1549-1604, and his strict contemporary, William Perkins of Cambridge, 1558-1602, gave the alternative definitions of faith which without being identical were equivalent.

The selfish and greedy nobility of Scotland and its mean and grasping Court would have turned the Reformed Church of their country into a convenience, a mere engine of statecraft and mercenary exploitation. They would have made it only a feeble copy of the Erastianized Establishment of the Anglican Church as Reformed. It would have been at the mercy of secular schemers. And in the course of their many intrigues they might easily have driven things to such a pass as that the power of Rome would have been restored and so the work of the Reformation would be undone. Were it not for the open-eyed watchfulness of the Reforming leaders of the Church and the stand that was taken by them, the work of the Counter-Reformation might have met with success, and Scotland, as the catspaw of the Papacy and the French and Spanish Courts, would have been used as an instrument to overthrow the Reformation in England and elsewhere. The work of Davidson and his compeers was thus of first-rate, even of cardinal, importance in securing the maintenance of our Reformation and in laying the foundation on which the ordered civil liberties are built, that have been since the Reforming and Covenanting struggles the inheritance of the free peoples of the British race. Indeed the whole course of world history since the sixteenth century has been, as we may venture to say, determined by the results of their faithful witness. And it is but right that those

who enjoy such a goodly heritage as constitutional freedom should not forget the men of heroic soul and temper to whose vigilance and faithfulness it is under God's hand due that the plots and schemes and intrigues of Popes and potentates, kings, princes and nobles were successfully met.

#### THE CONFORMISTS AND THE ROYAL POLICY

The leading men as far as weight of character went who conformed to the policy of the Court were the family of Forbes of Corse in Aberdeenshire. John Forbes of Alford, however, the brother of the future Bishop, was one of the sturdy witnesses that were exiled for their opposition to the King's plans. Yet his brother Patrick, the Laird of Corse, was a Conformist. He was, as we have seen, one of the young men that sat at the feet of Andrew Melville in his St. Andrews days. As his pupil, he imbibed a love of sacred learning and was a convinced Protestant though he did not follow his master in his anti-Erastian militancy. As parson of Keith in Banffshire, he made a more than local name for himself so that he was not long in the ministry before he was appointed Bishop of Aberdeen. In this function he was perhaps the most exemplary of the Episcopal bench and used the influence that he derived from his position not only for the ordering of his diocese but for the promotion of education in his See. Aberdeen, which was the seat of his diocese, had two Colleges, each of which was looked upon as a University. The older of them was King's College which was the last founded of the pre-Reformation Universities in Scotland. The other was founded as a Protestant College about ten years later than that of Edinburgh. Its founder was the Earl Marischal after whose title it was called Marischal College. The Earl Marischal had been himself one of the wandering Scots students who, like Melville, had spent some time at Geneva. On his return to his country he set up in Aberdeen the new College which still goes by his name. Under Bishop Patrick Forbes the two seats of learning in Aberdeen and Old Aberdeen felt the touch of a kindly fosterage. But the type of men and scholars that as a class were the product of this influence were such as the Aberdeen Doctors of Covenanting days. They, owing to their loyalty to their Erastian ideal, showed themselves the leaders of the opposition to the great movement that roused

the rest of Scotland in defence of the independence of the Church. There was, along with the five Doctors who stood up against Henderson and Dickson, another of the School who went further than the rest in his conformity to the policy of Laud and the Court. This was William Forbes, who became the first Bishop of Edinburgh and who was one of the most definitely Arminian and the Medieval of the conforming clergy. In these respects he was in marked contrast to his clansman, John Forbes of Corse, the son and heir of the Bishop of Aberdeen, who, though a strong Erastian partisan, was neither an Arminian nor a high Prelatist. Of John's *Instructiones* we have spoken already. That monumental work of historical and doctrinal learning appeared from the Elzevir Press in 1645 when its author was an exile in the Netherlands. He was there owing to his loyalty to Charles I in his usurping Church policy which would make the king in Scotland what he was in England, the Supreme Governor in the Church. Dr. Forbes' Erastianism kept him from taking the Covenant, although the popular leaders did what they could by patience and considerateness to win him to their side. He was a man of weight, but he was a stubborn royalist.

In defence of the royal policy which made for the adoption of the Anglican principle that regulates alike the Order and the Worship of the Church, John Forbes wrote his *Irenicum* which is one of the ablest presentations of the case in whose defence it was written. It called forth as a reply to its teaching in regard to the Church's worship the first work of George Gillespie; and it has had the distinction of being re-issued within our own time, edited by Dean Selwyn, as an Anglican classic. Forbes' treatment of sacramental doctrine has also been translated from the Latin of his *Instructiones* and published by Dr. W. L. Low of the Scottish Episcopal Church. This publication is significant, as John Forbes was by no means a High Sacramentarian while the Scottish branch of the Anglican Communion is noted for its extreme teaching on the Sacraments. Dr. Forbes was ordained in his early days in the Netherlands as a Presbyterian and was never Episcopally ordained so that the most learned champion that Scottish Episcopacy has produced was in striking contrast in regard to his orders and to his doctrine of the Sacraments to the present-day Episcopal body that claims him as one of its chief ornaments. Indeed, with the present anti-Erastian movement in the circles of High Anglicanism it



has quite broken with what was the salient and regulative feature of the Church Principles of the Forbes family. At the same time as Dr. Forbes was a Reformed Divine, definitely Augustinian in his doctrine of grace, he held on the subject of imputation of our Lord's active obedience with that wing of Rhineland Calvinism which followed the lead of Piscator or Wendelinus. In this he diverged from the accepted Scottish teaching of his day. Rutherford, in his letters from his exile in Aberdeen, seems to make the Aberdeen Doctors out to have been Arminian. Yet it could hardly be made good of Dr. Baron, and certainly it was not the case with Dr. Forbes, that they were Arminian in their doctrine. The influence of Patrick Forbes made the family policy one that told for long years on the north-east of Scotland and kept it, out of sympathy with the stand that the Covenanters made for the intrinsic freedom of the Church, as a visible kingdom of our Lord. The sounder class who came under this influence might be spoken of as Evangelical or mystical Erastians, such as Henry Scougal or, in another circle, Robert Leighton. Others, however, were clearly Arminian in their sympathy, and they paved the way for the unmitigated Moderatism of later days. This latter type was for a while mystic also in its tendency, and the teachings of Antonia Bourignon found a champion in Dr. Garden who edited the collected works of John Forbes. His Jacobite and Episcopal tendency ended in the removal of Dr. Garden from his Chair at Aberdeen. The mystical stage, however, was only a half-way house of Latitudinarianism that prepared its guests for the cold unbelief of the Moderate Apostasy.

## THE MEN OF THE SUB-REFORMATION AGE

### I

#### *Robert Bruce of Kinnaird*

Those who may be called the men of the sub-Reformation age link the successors of Knox with the men of the Second Reformation. Robert Bruce we have reserved for this category though he was the age-fellow of John Welsh and much of his life's work was done before the end of the sixteenth century. He was, however, the most outstanding of the preachers and witnesses of the first third of the seventeenth century. He owed

his position of pre-eminence alike to his personal qualities and to the great work that he had done in the course of his ministry in Edinburgh. From his post in the capital he was driven by the mean and malicious tyranny of the petty despot who held the throne. The king did his worst to put out of action as a minister the man who had shown himself to be his own best friend and the best friend of his country as he held the reins of power in the king's own absence. He was, however, a man who would not bow to the caprice of the royal will. And as he would not bend, he must be broken. So his ministry in Edinburgh came to an abrupt end, Yet in his exile at Inverness—it was exile in those days to be sent from the south to the north—his mouth was opened and he did a work, the remote fruits of which may be traced after the lapse of three hundred years. When he was allowed to go to his own house of Kinnaird near Stirling, he found an outlet for his calling as a brother helping his brethren at their Communion services. When it was known that Bruce was to preach, the people of the country around would flock together to hear him. So his ministry came to be very fruitful in various parts of Scotland that most likely would not have heard his message were it not that in his own charge his voice was silenced. The popularity of such preaching as his was one thing that helped to originate the great Communion gatherings that came to be such a marked feature of later Scottish religious life. It was on the occasion of one of these casual opportunities that he had of preaching that his word was blessed to the conversion of Alexander Henderson who was destined to be the leader of Scotland when a long-suffering people were at last goaded to defy the tyranny of the mitre and the crown. Bruce is said to have been the means of converting several thousands of souls. His influence was that of the holy life and of the spoken word clothed with power. There is a volume of his pulpit work in print. It belongs to his early ministry and gives seventeen of his discourses. These give an idea of what and how he preached. They were written in standard Scots. The sermons, however, that deal with the Sacraments were issued by Dr. Laidlaw in the past generation in an English dress and so are accessible to the English reader. There had been a previous re-issue of the seventeen Sermons in Scots in the volume of the Wodrow Society devoted to Bruce. This was edited by Dr. William Cunningham. The Sermons

on the Sacraments have been looked upon as being as accurate and clear an exhibition of the Reformed teaching in regard to the Sacraments as any of the Reformed Theologians of Scotland ever produced. The life of the author in Cunningham's edition is from the pen of the indefatigable Wodrow. There appeared also about thirty years ago a life of Bruce by A. J. MacNicol who was the son of a worthy Free Church minister and the son-in-law of Dr. Horatius Bonar. It is quite a careful and sympathetic account of the life and work of one of Scotland's truly great men.

Among the contemporaries of Bruce there were some Conformists whose works came within the ken of the curious, such as Patrick Forbes of whom we have already spoken, and William Cowper, Bishop of Galloway, and Dr. John Weemse of Lathocker, and William Nairne and David Lindsay. Another of the Conformists of his day was Walter Balcanquha who attended the Synod of Dort. He was Dean of the Diocese of Ross and he held the Evangelical orthodoxy of the National Church of his day. As yet the Arminian influence of Laud had not begun to tell on the Scottish Conformists. Indeed the Confession of Faith that was drawn up by the Assembly of Aberdeen in 1616—said to have been the work of Principal Howie of St. Andrews who had been one of the wandering Scots that had studied in the Rhineland—is definitely Augustinian in its doctrine of grace. It was a document, however, that could hardly be spoken of as one of great authority, for the Aberdeen Assembly which adopted it was one of those that were set aside in 1638, and the successors to those who at that time were the Episcopal Conformists were little inclined to be positive in their avowal of the Reformed Faith. Yet it is plain that in the first part of the seventeenth century they were as definite in their profession of the Calvinistic Faith as they came to be hazy and indefinite on the subject of doctrine in later days. Indeed, from the days of Queen Anne they made no attempt to hide their Arminianism as over against the Calvinism of earlier days.

## II

*David Calderwood*

Among the contemporaries of those Conformists who drafted the 1616 Confession there were noteworthy upholders

of the purest strain of the Reformed Faith who preserved its tradition and passed it on. In the field of literary activity none of them was greater than David Calderwood, the historian and the defender of the Church of Scotland and its Faith and Order. He was silenced and exiled for his loyalty to his principles; but he lived to see the vindication that they met with in the Second Reformation. He is known as the historian of the Church. Yet, though his history is a most valuable work for the documents that it embodies, it is not by any means the most learned or finished production of his pen. The history appeared in 1678 as a folio but in a much shorter form than it found when the Wodrow Society functioned and issued it in full in eight substantial octavo volumes. The work, however, by which the author of the history was better known was one of his polemical pieces called forth by the determination of the King to impose a thorough Anglican model on the Church of Scotland. In this connection, also, Calderwood wrote in criticism of the Articles of Perth which innovated on the Reformed principle of worship; and he was the author of a vigorous pamphlet entitled *Pastor and Prelate*. Neither of these works, however, was his chief contribution to the defence of his Church and its government and worship. His *magnum opus* appeared bearing his name in an anagram. David Calderwood had become Edwardus Didoslavivus. This work was published in the Netherlands. It bore the title *Altare Damascenum*. In its own department it was held in about as high esteem in Holland as in Scotland itself as a solid and sufficient defence of the Reformed ideal of the Church and its worship. It got its name from the Bible story which tells how Ahaz, King of Judah, saw at Damascus an altar that took his fancy, and on his return to Jerusalem he set aside the brazen altar of the house of God and put in its place a replica of the altar that he had seen in Syria. Here was a parallel that hit off the Scottish situation. An alien model furnished the pattern after which the Church of Scotland was to be modelled. The King's authority prescribed the pattern and conforming Churchmen accepted it. In this work, which was looked upon in Reformed circles as a masterly statement of the doctrine of the Church, its ministry and worship, Calderwood gave to the world a monument to his thorough acquaintance with the controversy in which he took such a vigorous share. It contained a whole armoury of argument for the Presbyterian cause.

## III

*Robert Boyd*

Among the Scots divines who were the contemporaries of Calderwood, two of the greatest note, though for a time they taught in their home land, did most of their work in the service of the Huguenot Church and its Colleges. These were Robert Boyd of Trochrig and John Cameron. Each of these was for a while Principal and Professor of Divinity in Glasgow University. Of the two, Boyd was the less inclined to fall in with the King's policy of aggression on the Constitution of his native Church. Indeed, though he was not such an opponent of Episcopacy and its claims as either his bosom friend John Welsh or David Calderwood he was too far from being a hearty Conformist with the Court model to be at all a favourite with the King. James loved to have scholars in his Colleges, and Boyd was one of the most erudite Theologians of his age. But, if the King loved to have the Chairs of the Colleges filled by scholars, he loved also to have them tamely subservient to his own will; and Boyd was not sufficiently supple and compliant. So he did not long remain in his Scottish Academic Posts. Yet he did good work in training as theological scholars some young men who were in after years among the most eminent of the bright lights of the next generation. Robert Blair and John Livingstone and Robert Baillie were of the men that the Glasgow School which he influenced produced. His pupils who learned from him were imbued with a love of sound learning. Boyd's Latin Folio Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians remains as a monument of his sacred erudition. Like many of the massive commentaries of the two great Theological centuries, this volume is much more than a commentary. It contains elaborate discussions of the Theological questions of the age and these show how sound and ripe his judgment was as a Reformed divine. Boyd was one of the aristocracy of his native county of Ayr, being the cousin of Lord Boyd. He was cousin at the same time of the quaint if crabbed Zachary Boyd of Glasgow, who, like himself, served for some time in the ministry of the French Reformed Church. It was a veritable blue riband of the Theological schools to be called to teach in one of the chairs of Sedan or Saumur or Montauban. And not a few of the Scots

scholars shared with Andrew Melville in this honour. There were, for instance, Andrew Ramsay, who came back to be a Minister in Edinburgh, as well as Boyd and John Sharp, who was the fellow in exile of John Welsh and John Forbes of Alford.

## IV

*John Cameron*

There was another, however, who drew to himself more attention than all the rest. This better-known Scot was John Cameron. For one reason or another, his name came to be more noted than that of any other of those that we have just named. This was the case not because he was a finer scholar or a better divine than the rest of his countrymen who served overseas. Celebrity and notoriety are not quite synonymous. Cameron was a scholar of the scholastic type of post-Reformation days. For some years he was a Minister of the Reformed Church at Bordeaux, and he served in professional chairs at Saumur and Montauban. Restless and speculative, with a dash of ambition in his nature, and more or less, too, of the brilliant about him, he became a man of significance from the fact that he led a school of thought. He tried to steer a middle course of his own between the Calvinism of the Synod of Dort and the Arminianism which it condemned. So he became a leader of innovation in the Huguenot body. On one side he carried on the tradition of the teaching of Piscator. Among those that followed him were a number of the ablest men of the next generation in the ministry of the French Church. Claude, for example, and Dallaeus and Testard and Blondel were his followers, and above them all was Moses Amyraut who was so prominent that he gave his name to the tendency that derived from Cameron's teaching. John Cameron came back from France to Scotland to serve for a few years in the University of his native town, for he was born at Glasgow. He seems, however, to have been not at all satisfied with his position there, although he was sufficiently flexible to be a fit agent for carrying out the policy of the King. Robert Wodrow, in his rich legacy of material bearing on the Church of Scotland, gives the fullest account of his life and to some extent of his teaching that one can easily find. For half a quarto volume each is given in the books of the Bannatyne Club to the life of Cameron and to that of Boyd.

The influence of Cameron's teaching did not tell to any marked degree on the doctrine held in his native country until a century after his death it came into vogue as it was developed and moulded by the work of his followers in France and in England and much later as developed in New England. In England Richard Baxter assimilated the teaching of what went by the name of the New Method in France and his influence told powerfully in modifying the older Calvinism of Scotland from the first quarter of the eighteenth century onward. It was John Cameron, however, that set the tendency in motion which in different lands has tried to mediate between the consistent scheme of the Reformed Faith and the Arminianism which was set aside by the findings of the Synod of Dort.

The type of teaching which sprang from Cameron's attempt to improve upon the earlier Calvinism without committing the Church to the Arminian teaching which the consensus of the Reformed Churches had condemned went by the name of Hypothetical Universalism. It taught, among other things, an Atonement of universal extent with a definite saving reference in the issue to God's elect people. In other words, though the Atonement was universal in its range, yet, as being such, it was not held to be an effectual Atonement at all. For had it been effectual it would have issued in the salvation of all for whom it was made. It was limited in its effective result by the purpose of God to save His own. In such a case this purpose lay open to the charge of being on its negative side an intention to punish for their sins those whose sins on Cameron's hypothesis have been atoned for already and thus put away. The question of what the Atonement is, comes clearly up for discussion at this point, as well as that relating to the field which it covers. It is obvious to anyone who sees that our Lord's redeeming work in obedience unto death effects the end at which he aimed that it issues in the salvation of His redeemed ones. He came to redeem them from death and He did this by dying their death out and out, and winning life for them. This life He lives to bestow when He calls them to His fellowship. On Cameron's teaching the work of redemption did not save the lost so that his Universal Redemption was one that did not secure life and salvation for the redeemed. And in the case of those whom he acknowledged to be chosen and called and saved he could not ascribe their life from the dead to the sacrificial work of Christ as their

Redeemer. Thus his teaching went to evacuate the work of the Redeemer of intrinsic saving virtue and merit and content.

Redemption, however, was not the only subject in which his work as an innovator produced confusion. The issues of his mongrel compromising teaching were far-reaching. The Church of his adoption felt the effect of his teaching to such an extent as that the Theology of the later Huguenots was to a large extent revolutionized. Their influence in turn told on Richard Baxter and on all the varieties of teaching that can be traced back to his type of doctrine. It affected the thinking of New England; and as a return tide on its way back over the Atlantic it determined the teaching of the English Edwardians, both Independent and Baptist. The force of the current that was thus changing the older Calvinism beat at last on the Reformed teaching of Scotland in circles other than those of the Neonomians. It found more channels than one in which to flow. New England Revivalism did its share of the work; and the influence of modern Calvinism in England Nonconformity also contributed its quota. Along with the disintegrating work of the New Light movement which was of home growth and which spoke of an uneasy spirit of dissatisfaction with long accepted truth and of a restlessness that was in quest of something new, the various streams of influence that derived remotely from Cameron are responsible for the collapse of the Confessional orthodoxy which had for ages found a home in his native country.

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