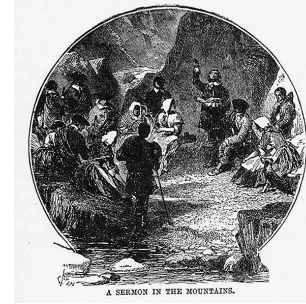


HEROES OF THE CHURCH: Scottish Covenanters

I. Overview of Scottish Reformation

A. First Scottish Reformation – Against Roman Catholic Church

1. Unofficial Motto: “None but Christ saves”
2. Dates: From the martyrdom of Patrick Henry (1528) to the death of John Knox (1572)
3. Major player: John Knox!



B. Second Scottish Reformation – For church independence (against Erastianism) and Presbyterianism

1. Erastianism = state supremacy in church affairs
2. Unofficial Motto – “None but Christ reigns in His Church”

“And he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.” (Col 1:18)

3. Early Dates: From death of Knox (1572) to Restoration of Stuart reign (1660) after English Civil War. Later Dates: The Restoration (1660) until Glorious Revolution (1688) of William/Mary
 - a. English Civil War (1642-1651) - King Charles I (after James I/VI Scotland), most nobles, and those of Anglo-Catholic bent against Scotland, the Puritans, and the middle-class.
4. Major players: Andrew Melville (1545-1622), Robert Bruce (1554-1631), Alexander Henderson (1583-1646)

Melville to King James VI in 1596: “...*Sir, as divers times 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.*”

“[T]here is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God...for he is God's servant for your good.” (Rom 13:1, 4)

5. The service at the National Kirk on July 23, 1637

Jenny Geddes to Dean of St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, Scotland: “Will ye read that book [the Prayer Book] in my lug (‘ear’)?”

II. The Scottish Reformation Post-1660: The Period of the Covenanters

- A. 1611 – Episcopalianism re-established by law. Over 300 ministers “outed” from parishes.
- B. 1670 – ‘Field-meetings’ made treasonable and preaching at such meetings becomes a capital offense.
- C. Scottish Covenanter Martyrs
 1. Hugh McKail
 2. Margaret MacLachlan and Margaret Wilson, the ‘martyrs of Wigtown’
 3. James Renwick, final martyr for Covenanter cause

“MY DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST, — It hath pleased the Lord to deliver me up into the hands of men; and I think fit to send you this salutation, which I expect will be the last... And now my blood shall either more silence reproachers, or more ripen them for judgment. But I hope it shall make some more sparing to speak of those who shall come after me; and so I am the more willing to pay this cost, both for their instruction, and my succeeders' ease... Farewell beloved sufferers, and followers of the Lamb. Farewell Christian intimates. Farewell Christian and comfortable mother and sisters. Farewell sweet societies. Farewell desirable general meetings. Farewell night wanderings, cold and weariness for Christ. Farewell sweet Bible, and preaching of the Gospel. Farewell sun, moon, and stars, and all sublunary things. Farewell conflicts with a body of death. Welcome scaffold for precious Christ. Welcome heavenly Jerusalem. Welcome innumerable company of angels. Welcome General Assembly and Church of the first-born. Welcome, crown of glory, white robes, and song of Moses and the Lamb. And, above all, welcome, O thou blessed Trinity and One God! O Eternal One, I commit my soul into Thy eternal rest!”

- James Renwick, in written testimony the day before his death, February 17, 1688.

III. The Glorious Revolution of 1688

- A. William of Orange and Mary, Daughter of James II ascend to English throne
- B. The Toleration Act of 1689 – *“The solution (wisely adopted by William and Mary) was that Scotland would never make England Presbyterian, and England would certainly never make Scotland Episcopalian.”* (Calhoun)

IV. Evaluating the Scottish Covenanters

“The Covenanters were the exact equivalent of the I. R.A. in Ireland. A small irreconcilable minority, and as bloodthirsty a crowd as ever disgraced a Christian nation.” - Josephine Tey, Scottish novelist, *The Daughter of Time*, 143.

“...though it is the fashion of the day to jeer and to mock, to execrate and to condemn the noble band of Covenanters—though the bitter laugh at their old-world religious views, the curl of the lip at their merits, and the chilling silence on their bravery and their determination, are but too rife through all society—be charitable to what was evil, and honest to what was good about [the Covenanters] who fought for life and liberty, for country and religion...”

- Robert Louis Stevenson, Scottish novelist and poet

“The Covenanters were often extreme in their opinions and violent in their methods; but it stands to their credit that they alone had the courage to challenge the oppressive policies of the later Stuarts long before James II so antagonized all Britain as to bring on the Great Revolution of 1688.” - John T. McNeill, *History and Character of Calvinism*, 329.

V. Further Reading

- A. *Fair Sunshine: Character Studies of the Scottish Covenanters*, Jock Purves
- B. *Light in the North: The Story of the Scottish Covenanters*, J.D. Douglas