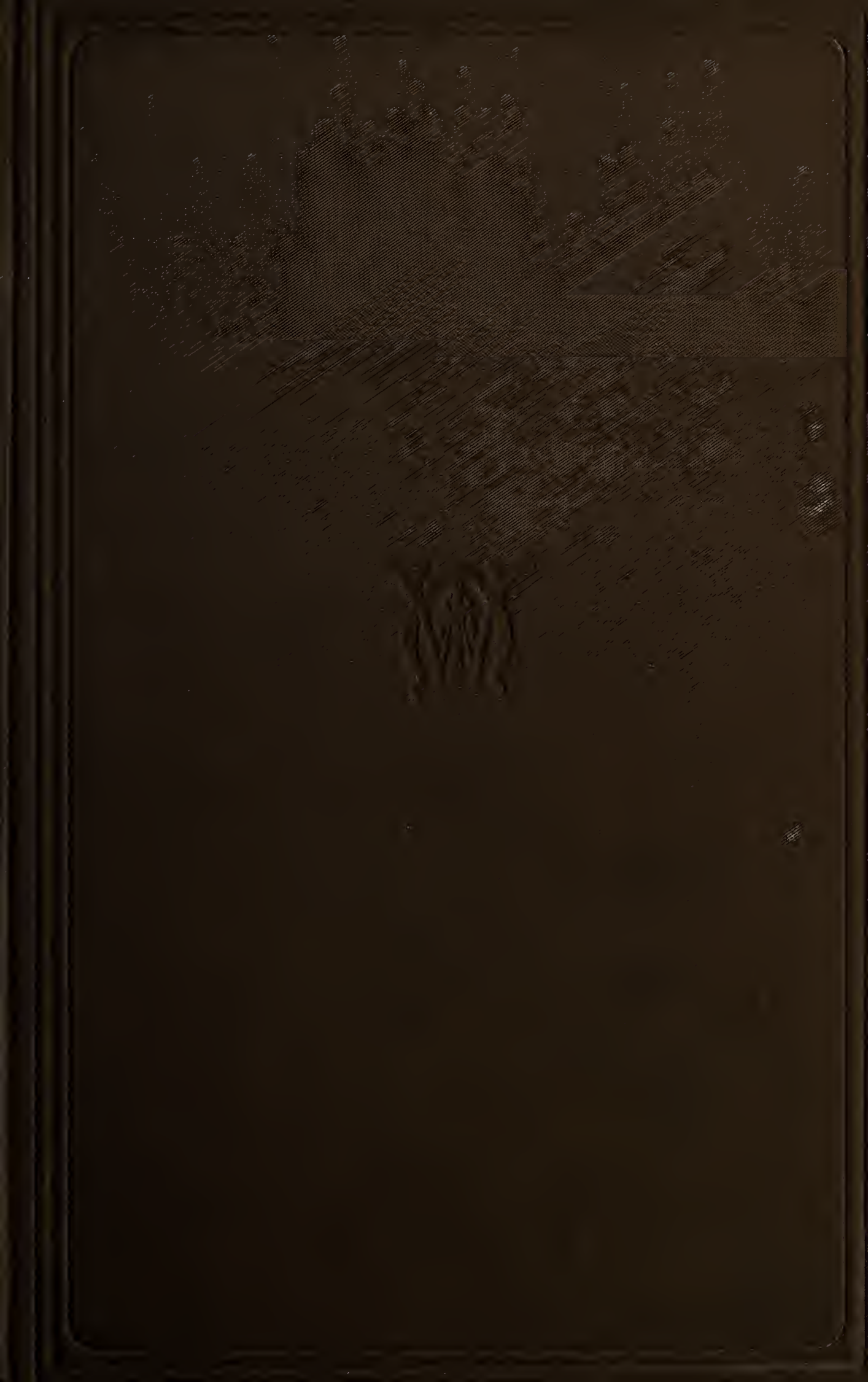

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T. F. Torrance

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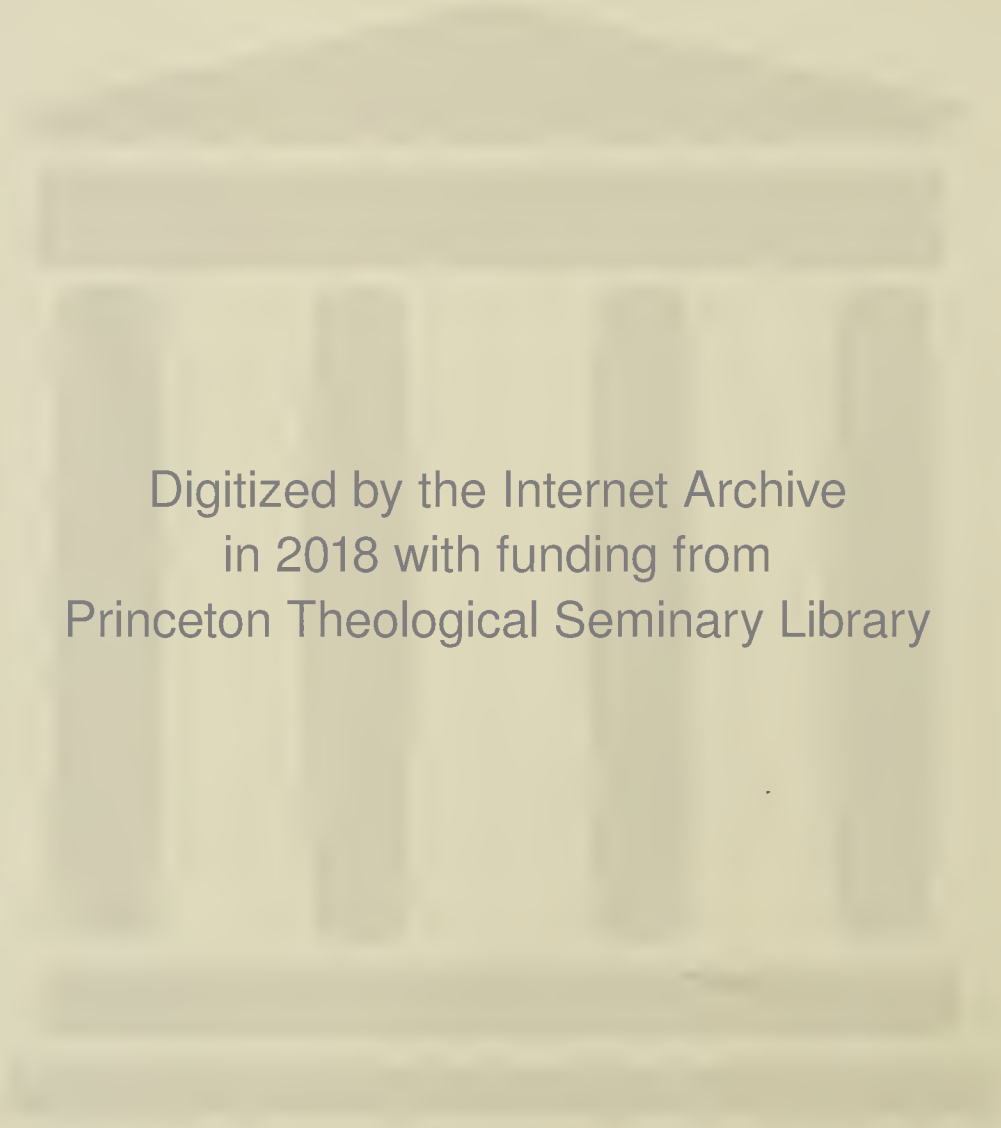
In accordance with the terms of the Deed of Trust by the late Mr Macfie of Airds, relative to the Chalmers' Lectureship, there is sent herewith a copy of Mr Macpherson's Lectures—"The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology."

Edinburgh, July 1903.



THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTTISH THEOLOGY

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTTISH THEOLOGY

The Sixth Series of the Chalmers Lectures

BY THE LATE

JOHN MACPHERSON, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS," "CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS," "A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND," ETC.

EDITED BY

C. G. M'CRIE, D.D.

Edinburgh

MACNIVEN & WALLACE

1903

EXTRACT FROM THE DEED INSTITUTING THE CHALMERS LECTURESHIP.

(*The Deed being dated 26th May* 1880.)

"I, ROBERT MACFIE, Esq. of Airds and Oban, considering that I feel deeply interested in the maintenance of the principles of the Free Church of Scotland, have transferred . . . the sum of £5000 sterling for the purpose of founding a Lectureship in memory of the late THOMAS CHALMERS, D.L., LL.D., under the following conditions: namely—1. The Lectureship shall . . . be called *The Chalmers Lectureship*; 2. The Lecturer shall hold the appointment for four years, and shall be entitled . . . to one-half of the income . . .; 3. The subject shall be 'Headship of Christ over His Church and its Independent Spiritual Jurisdiction'; 4. The Lecturer shall be bound to deliver publicly a Course of not fewer than six Lectures . . . in Edinburgh, in Glasgow, and in Aberdeen; 5. The Lecturer shall be bound, within a year, to print and publish at his own risk not fewer than 1500 copies . . . and deposit three copies in the libraries of the Free Church Colleges; 6. One-half of the balance of the income . . . shall be laid out in furnishing with a copy all the Ministers and Missionaries of the Free Church."

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Rev. John Macpherson was born at Greenock in 1847. After graduating at the University of Glasgow, and receiving his theological training in the Free Church Divinity Hall of that city, he gave four-and-twenty years of his life to ministerial work at Findhorn, a fishing village in Morayshire. On retiring from this sphere of labour, he found his home in Portobello, where he died suddenly on the 31st of March 1902.

As was written regarding him at the time of his death by one who knew him intimately, "Mr Macpherson was an accomplished scholar, a solid theologian, an able and wise defender of the faith, a thoughtful Evangelical preacher, a staunch and loyal friend, and a Christian man, absolutely true, fearless, and uncompromising." A diligent student and a copious writer, he enriched theological and historical literature with numerous translations of standard German works, with Commentaries, Dictionaries, and Handbooks of sterling value. The latest production of his pen was "A History of the Church in Scotland," published in 1901.

Before that date he had been appointed Chalmers Lecturer, and had chosen for the subject of his course

"The Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology." The lectures had been delivered by him in successive sessions in the United Free Colleges of Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

At the request of the Lectureship Committee, I undertook to read the lectures in the Glasgow Hall during the session 1902-3, and thereafter edit them for publication. In carrying out this trust, I have sought faithfully to produce the lecturer's final form of his work, a task of some difficulty, owing partly to the excessively minute handwriting of the author, and partly to the fact that at the time of his death he had only written out one lecture, the remaining five being in duplicate draft form. In the matter of footnotes, I have a strong impression that had Mr Macpherson been spared to publish his lectures he would have increased their value for students by supplying information with which he was so richly furnished. And so I have supplemented the few notes in the MS. with some of my own, chiefly of a bibliographical nature. My notes and references are marked with brackets. I also am responsible for the Table of Contents and the Index.

C. G. M'Crie.

Ayr, *May* 1903.

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTTISH THEOLOGY.

LECTURE I.

THE SCOTTISH THEOLOGY—ITS LITERATURE AND ITS DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS.

In Scottish history and in the writings of Scottish divines the idea of the Church holds a central and obtrusively prominent position. Those who made the history of Scotland by performing in her and on her behalf actions which have made her annals worthy of the name of history, whether the instrument by which these deeds were effected was the pen or the sword, set in the forefront of the battle and took as their battle-cry, Christ and His Kirk. To them the Church was as real, as essential, as important as Christ Himself. From their point of view Christ and the Church are mutually implicated ideas. We can no more conceive of Christ apart from the Church than we can conceive of the Church apart from Christ. Our old Scottish contenders for the truth, whether writing in the study, preaching from the pulpit, or fighting on the battlefield, maintained one constant and consistent doctrine regarding Christ and His Church. They thought of the two as they are conceived of

by the Apostle in his familiar figure, constituting one organism, of which Christ is the Head and the Church, the body comprising many members. It was as evangelical theologians that our Scottish thinkers, who have put their stamp upon the official documents of their Church and on the thought of their countrymen through all these centuries, made the idea of the Church so prominent in all their discussions, and treated questions about its nature and constitution as of vital importance to all who believe in Christ, and to whom, therefore, His cause is dear. It was their concern for the glory of Christ and for the preserving inviolate all His prerogatives that made them spend their strength and give their days to the unwearied vindication of that conception of the Church, in which alone, as they thought, Christ had scope to exercise His rights as their Head, their King.

These men are often represented as mere ecclesiastics fighting for an ecclesiastical theory, bent only on gaining a victory for Presbytery over Prelacy. This is one of the shallowest of misconceptions. On the part of those who repeat it, it is one of the meanest and most inexcusable of misrepresentations. The studies which these divines prosecuted were Christological rather than ecclesiastical. When they argued about the Church, it was in order to exalt Christ. It is this that gives lasting interest and importance to the writings of the Scottish theologians who thought, wrote, and contended during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and during the first half of

the century following. Had they been mere ecclesiastics, Donatists or anti-Donatists, ceremonialists or anti-ceremonialists, controversialists contending simply for Church theories, they would now have not a historical, only an antiquarian interest. But the central position which they gave to Christ in their theology, and their splendid loyalty to Him have kept that theology living for all ages, and ought to keep it warm in the affections of all those who serve and honour the same King and Master.

In the following lectures I propose to consider the special doctrine in regard to the character and constitution of Christ's Church, as originally stated by Knox and his coadjutors, afterwards elaborated and more exactly defined by Rutherfurd, Gillespie, Brown of Wamphray, Durham, Boston, and others of those periods. I hope to be able to show that there is a distinctive doctrine of the Church set forth and vindicated by these men, accepted and acted upon in the community which they represent; and that the contribution they made to this subject is of such a quality and of such extent as to deserve and reward careful and separate consideration.

That this is so may appear, even before we have entered upon the discussion, from the prominence which many of the problems dealt with by them have among us to-day, and from the help which their enquiries and conclusions afford us in adjusting questions which demand an answer from us at this present time. How are we rightly to think of the

Church? Are we to conceive of it as an institute of salvation, or as the communion of saints? What constitutes membership in the Church, and who may claim the right to her sealing ordinances? What is the distinction between the Church visible and the Church invisible, and how ought this distinction to be stated? What constitutes the sin of schism, and when is separation lawful and necessary? What is the Church's power of discipline? What is her rightful jurisdiction? How and when may she use her power to excommunicate? What are the limits of a legitimate, safe and wise toleration, and how can the liberty of conscience be properly asserted and maintained? What is of Divine Right and what may be imposed by human institution? Such are some of the questions which will emerge as we proceed, and which will mainly occupy our attention. All these questions are asked and every possible answer is discussed in present day theological writing, in great detail and from every conceivable point of view.

In this introductory lecture I propose to look at some general characteristics of the field in which our enquiries are to be conducted. I shall ask you to look at the books and at the men who wrote them—their modes of thought, their manner of speech, what in them repels their reader and what attracts him, their intrinsic excellencies and their ineradicable defects, what has to be borne with by the student of their works, and what reward comes to him who endures.

There is no doubt that the Scottish theological writings of two or three hundred years ago are now comparatively little known. Even divinity students who may be fairly well read in Patristic literature and in modern English and German theology are, in many cases, unacquainted with the very names of the works written by their forefathers. Students of our vernacular literature, who are familiar with Gawin Douglas, William Dunbar, Sir David Lyndsay, and William Drummond of Hawthornden, know little or nothing about Rutherfurd, Gillespie, Dickson, Baillie, Durham, Brown, and Boston. To literary students these last-named writers are not interesting because of the subjects of which they treat. But even to students of theology their writings have not proved attractive, although their themes are such as should have won for them attention and consideration. I am not sure that it is excusable even for literary men to neglect these writers as they have done. Whatever their defects from a literary point of view may be, I am inclined to think that their style of writing and their mode of reasoning, their choice of subjects and the vocabulary employed, are much more truly characteristic of the age to which they belong, than anything to be found in the more individual and occasional productions of the poets and literateurs of the same period. But the fact that not only those who naturally have but little sympathy with the religious character and contents of these books pass them by, but that even those who are making these

same subjects their study almost wholly ignore them, is a manifest proof that these writings are in some respects seriously defective.

To any one who has ever handled the books, some of these defects must be very apparent. Their general make-up is unattractive, if not repulsive. If the volumes are in their original bindings one is scarcely tempted to open them; and even when it happens that some lavish librarian has had them rebound in a somewhat elegant style, it is only necessary to pass within to find that all trace of elegance has vanished. The coarse, dull, yellow paper, through which the heavy type on the back of the page can almost be read, making the reading of the page before us difficult; the dim, faded ink increasing the difficulty and adding to the unpleasantness of the general effect, the profuse and often meaningless employment of italic printing, imparting to the whole a strange and forbidding look, marginal notes so crowded as to come into immediate contact with the text, sometimes allowed to cross over the whole page and cut the leaf in two, even in the middle of a sentence—such drawbacks as these, especially when they are all illustrated in the one volume, do not certainly help to win readers for it. This unattractiveness of printing, paper, and binding is more or less characteristic of all the publications of that age, whether printed by and issued from the presses of London or Edinburgh, of Leyden, Utrect, or Amsterdam.

When we pass from the get-up, over which perhaps

the writer had little control, and which was probably the best that the skill of these days, or at least that within reach, could afford—even after we have overcome our aversion to bad paper, indistinct and irregular printing, and such like defects, we immediately encounter other and more serious drawbacks of style and manner and taste, in respect of which we find these writers in almost all their books offending against all the canons which are now recognised as elementary principles of English composition. To say that the language is archaic, that it seems to us often grotesque and uncouth, is no more than to say that it is the language of writers who lived two or three hundred years ago. It would be absurd to call this a fault, though it cannot but have its influence in deterring some from the study of these books.

A very real fault, however, and a very offensive one is to be found in the lavish use of scriptural phraseology which takes away from the works in question the appearance of naturalness, and renders them seemingly unreal, affected, and pedantic. I am not for a moment forgetting that the phrases thus borrowed, taken by themselves, are, in point of style, out of all comparison superior to any which they themselves could have contrived; but as dragged in by them into their writings they are incongruous and absurd, and often have meanings attached to them in their new settings which neither the authors of them, nor any sane commentator upon them ever thought should be given them.

Samuel Rutherfurd is a great offender in this particular. His use of the figurative and poetical language of Scripture, and his accommodation of Old Testament phrases to express Christian ideas in his spiritual letters make these objectionable and even repulsive to many. But if even in his correspondence this practice of "the saint of the covenant" can scarcely be excused, how much more offensive is it in controversial writings and in the dedications and prefaces of such works. To give but one example. The dedication of his *Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication* is addressed to the Earl of Louden, Chancellor of Scotland, and a covenanting nobleman. In this writing we have some admirable and amiable sentiments expressed in this constrained and objectionable way: "Christ Jesus *is a uniting Saviour*, one God, one Faith, one Lord Jesus, *one Religion should be, and I beseech the* God of Peace, *they may be Chains of Gold to tie these two* Nations *and* Churches *together* in uno tertio, *that they may be concentered and united in one* Lord Jesus. *O that that precious* Dew of Hermon, *that Showers of Love and Peace may lie all the night upon the Branches of the two* Olive Trees, *that the warmnesse, heat, and influence of one Sun of Righteousnesse with healing in his wings, may make* the Lilly amongst the Thorns, the Rose of Sharon, *that is planted by the* Lord, *the Spouse of* Jesus Christ *in both Kingdoms* to spred its Root, *and* cast its Smell, *as green and flourishing to all the Nations round*

about. The Kingdom of God *is Peace.* The Lord *is about a great work in* Britain, *why should Divisions that proceed from the lusts of men, and the* enemies of the Lord *retard the wheels of the Chariot of* Christ? *Let us not water the Lilly with blood again. The* Sons of Babel *have shed our blood in great abundance, for the which doth the Church of* God *in the three Kingdoms stand and Pray and Prophecy in sackcloth.* The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon *Babylon*, shall the inhabitant of *Zion* say: And my blood upon the Woman arrayed in Purple and Scarlet, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth, shall *Jerusalem* say. *Happy we, if we could see the second Temple builded, and the* Lord *repairing the old waste places*, and *the* Gentiles beholding the Righteousnesse *of the Elder Sister the* Church of the Jews, *and both as a* Crown of Glory in the hand of the Lord, and as a Royal Diadem in the hand of our God."[1]

Now it may be said that such writing is picturesque, that there is in it a warmth of colour and a depth of tone that impart to it a charm, or at least render it interesting. And no doubt one who has come to love Rutherfurd for the substance of his writings, and especially for the heavenly spirit that underlies the best of them, comes to think kindly of the peculiar and fantastic language in which his ideas are expressed. Admiration of the writer begets

[1] [The capitals and italics, spelling and punctuation of the above quotation are exactly reproduced from the original, published in 1646.]

what seems almost admiration of his phraseology. And when we not only appreciate the thought, but also love the thinker, we are inclined to resent any suggestion that his conceptions might have been presented in a more adequate and a more becoming dress. But clearly this is prejudice—amiable, it may be, yet all the same, or rather all the more, prejudice.

Looking calmly and dispassionately at the matter, such language as we have quoted is a serious drawback in writings of any description, and especially in those that undertake to discuss and give a careful statement of doctrinal questions in which it is all important that clear distinctions should be made and accurate definitions should be given.

And so we may say that this is one of the characteristics of our old Scottish theologians—this interlarding of their pages with Scripture quotations and allusions, with passages and phrases of a pictorial and poetical and metaphysical character—which is calculated to repel even earnest-minded and patient students of theology. It was, no doubt, a vice of the age. We find it in the English Puritan divines, and also in many of the old Anglicans, not only in their sermons—where it might not be so much out of place—but also in their most elaborate theological treatises. We find it also to a considerable extent in the writings of the Reformed theologians of that period on the Continent. And this fault is largely the occasion of that unfortunate oblivion into which they all have fallen.

But in addition to such faults of form and style which render these books unattractive, the whole method of their writers is to most moderns well-nigh intolerable. To call that method critical would be seriously misleading. In an age in which criticism is so highly esteemed, when commentaries on Scripture that are to have any chance of being looked at or referred to must at least be called critical, we feel that the term could not be suitably applied to our old Scottish writers. Their commentaries on Scriptural books are not critical in the sense of to-day. And yet all their works with which we are to deal in these lectures are critical in the sense of being directly and pertinaciously controversial. It is criticism of an extraordinarily minute and detailed description. Anyone who has had occasion to go through the old Scottish books that defend Presbyterianism will understand what I mean. Principal Forrester's *Answers to Honeyman, Scott, and Munro*, and Gilbert Rule's *Good Old Way Defended*, go over the works which they controvert clause by clause, so that had these Erastian and Prelatical writings been lost they might be reproduced in an almost complete form from the pages of the vindicators of Presbytery.

But it is not only in works which are avowedly controversial, and which let it be known in their very titles that the positions and argumentations of particular writers are to be demolished that this method is pursued. It is more or less characteristic

of all the theological literature of that age. There is a way of being intensely polemical without encumbering the text with the names of opponents and with quotations from their writings. I have in view a notable example of this in Hofmann's *Commentary on Ephesians.* The text contains nothing but the positive statement of Hofmann's own views; but on page after page you have foot-notes, three or four—*gegen* Harless, *gegen* Rückert, *gegen* Meyer, *gegen* Olshausen, *gegen* De Wette, etc. If only it had occurred to our national theologians to do this, or if it had been possible for them do this, then to-day, I verily believe, for every one who reads them they would have had ten readers. But this was not possible. It would have been altogether contrary to their peculiar genius simply to state their own view and merely indicate by a preposition in a note that this was antagonistic to the view of some opponent. For in their estimation this opponent's view was pestilential, and they must tell you so, and hold up the objectionable and detestable proposition before you till you see, not only it, but also all the possible enormities of an intellectual, moral and spiritual kind that lie behind and are involved in it. Now, it cannot be denied that this makes these books often weary reading and not very profitable. There is an immense expenditure of subtle reasoning, of elaborate and ingenious arguing. You admire the cleverness and pertinacity of the controversialist. But the pursuit of the enemy seems endless. No sooner is

one objection disposed of than another, which to an ordinary reader has the appearance of being very much the same, is stated, characterised and confuted. These writers would have consulted the comfort of their readers very much more if they had only taken the trouble beforehand to determine what were the main principles of their opponents' positions and dealt with these on broad and comprehensive lines.

To mention just one more defect which renders our sixteenth and seventeen century theologians unpopular with students of the present day, we find that their use of Scripture and their principles of Scripture interpretation are often such as we cannot accept. Mere analogies, more or less disputable, are boldly used as arguments; Old Testament characters and institutions are freely allegorised, the structure of the ark, the pins of the tabernacle, the garments of Aaron are spiritualised; and our authors deal with the record of these things just as if they had been discussing New Testament statements of evangelical doctrine. Origen and even Phile, as allegorists, are not a bit more extravagant. This persistent exercise of a false ingenuity in turning to spiritual uses the least spiritual parts of Scripture results from an erroneous conception of the authority of the Divine Word according to which these divines felt themselves obliged to treat with the same reverence all kinds of statements occurring in the Sacred books. In his *Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication*, Rutherfurd lays down the position that

"there is nothing so small in either Doctrinals or Polocie, so as men may alter, omit, and leave off these smallest Positive things that God hath commanded."[1] But surely he commits himself to a quite needlessly extreme position when he says "I am obliged to receive this as Scripture, that *Paul left his cloak at Troas;* no lesse than this, *Christ came into the world to save sinners*, in regard of Canonicall authority stamped upon both."[2] But supposing it were discovered that Paul had made some mistake about the fortunes of that cloak. Supposing some clear evidence were forthcoming to show that he had left it in some other place, or that it had afterwards turned up in some corner of his luggage where it had been overlooked, surely no serious student of the New Testament would pass a sleepless night in consequence of that discovery. How different would the case be were it proved that he had no ground for his other statement as to Christ coming into the world to save sinners! To put the two statements on anything like the same level is sheer nonsense, if one may be excused speaking so irreverently of any utterance by such a man as Samuel Rutherfurd. What precisely the theory of inspiration is which underlies the statement appears from this, that in the immediate context the author condemns Cornelius a Lapide for admitting, as he does in his note on 2 Tim. iii. 16, degrees of inspiration as seen in the Law and the Prophets on the one hand, and in the Histories and moral ex-

[1] [Introduction, Sect. ii. p. 19.]

[2] [*Ibid.* Sect. iv. p. 64.]

hortations on the other, while he quotes with approval the note of Estius on that verse to the effect that "the Scriptures are given by divine inspiration, so as not only the sentences, but every word, and the order and disposition of words is of, or from God, as if he were speaking and writing himself." [1]

In perfect keeping with this doctrine of the verbal inspiration of Scripture, stated in the most rigid and most uncompromising form conceivable, is the position maintained in the same treatise, without qualification or reserve, as a ruling canon of interpretation that for God not to command is to forbid.[2] This is explicitly stated in the discussion of the question, "Whether or not Humane Ceremonies in God's Worship can consist with the perfection of God's Word?" Rutherfurd's first argument is that every positive religious observance and rite in divine worship not warranted by God's word is unlawful. On this point there are some six pages of extremely smart and clever writing, but it must be confessed that a great deal of it is quite irrelevant. The Scottish disputant "for the perfection of the holy Scripture in point of Ceremonies and Church Government" quotes God's words to Jeremiah with reference to the sacrifices on the high places of Tophet, "which I commanded not, neither came it into my heart," [3] as if they meant simply, I gave no commandment enjoining such human sacri-

[1] [Introduction, Sect. iv. p. 65.]

[2] [The Lord Commanded not this, *Ergo*, It is not Lawfull, *Ibid.*, chap. i. p. 95.]

[3] [Jeremiah, chap. vii. 31.]

fices. What he wants to make out is that the absence of a command is equivalent to a prohibition. But clearly the passages he quotes do not bear out his contention. There can be no question that those who were in favour of the ceremonies, such as Hooker, Morton, Burgess and Field, here scored a point against their antagonist. They were in this particular more correct in their exegesis when they interpreted "I commanded not" as meaning, I discommanded, or forbade; such worship is in direct conflict with the spirit of my legislation.

An extreme position like that assumed by Rutherfurd is not required by the exigencies of his argument. All that he needed to show was that certain of those ceremonies were regarded by him and by those who thought with him as involving the affirmation or approval of principles which are contradictory to the will of God as revealed in His Word. He does this, indeed, very abundantly throughout his writings. He shows that compliance with these ceremonies would mean for him idolatry, and that even those who vindicated their use and saw no idolatrous element in them admitted that they were not of divine authority. He was, therefore, quite entitled to maintain that it was inexpedient to demand uniformity in the observance of them, as though without them divine worship would not be complete. To such an argument there is no answer. But Rutherfurd, and Gillespie, and others of that school thought to make their position stronger by insisting that every act and observance

and ceremony of worship must have direct and explicit scriptural sanction in the form of an express divine command. It must be perfectly evident now to every one how seriously such a position hampers a Church in its conduct of public worship. It leaves no room for modification of any kind, such as may be demanded by the peculiarities of national character, prevailing racial distinctions, and special aspects of thought distinguishing particular ages. If rigidly carried out it would require that every feature of the worship of the Apostolical Age should be copied without addition and without omission even of the simplest detail. Quite a number of practices current and unquestioned in the services of the most conservative and primitive of congregations and denominations would be abandoned under this rule, as prohibited because not expressly commanded.

I have given this as a specimen of those extravagances which make the writings of our old divines unpalatable to modern readers. Even where the conclusions reached may be such as to command our approval and assent, we are irritated by the employment of arguments which involve more than the problem in hand requires, and imply assumptions that are utterly untenable.

In saying all this, however, I do not mean seriously to find fault with the theologians of a bygone day, but simply to show what defects in their books create a prejudice against them and hinder modern students from giving them that thoughtful and painstaking

attention which they deserve, and which they would abundantly reward.

Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, the Scottish theological literature of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth—from the period of the Second Reformation to that of the Secession Fathers—forms a contribution to theological science of first-rate importance, rich in its teaching with regard to questions that must interest and engage the attention of thinking men in all ages. There is a large amount of ignorance prevailing with reference to the matters which occupied the thoughts of our forefathers, and were the subjects of their apologies and attacks. Popular writers, and even others of whom better might have been expected, have given currency to the most extraordinary stories about the discussions in which these men delighted, and the language in which they were accustomed to express their thoughts. Unsympathetic historians of the period, or dilletanti reviewers and literateurs have often made allusion to the works in question in the flippant, superficial way in which Gibbon referred to the Nicene controversialists. Men like Mr Buckle, who entertained a fanatical hatred toward Christianity, are not only incapable of appreciating the character of Scottish theological thinkers, but have unfitted themselves by their prejudices from expressing any rational judgment on the matters which these men, by reason of the age in which they lived, were forced to face. There are not wanting, indeed, liberal and open-

minded men, who, though their own religious views may be as far as possible opposed to those of our reforming and covenanting fathers, yet recognise in their doings and in their writings the achievements of heroic souls, and of highly-endowed, richly-cultured scholars. It seems, however, to be very generally believed that the theologians of Scotland were men of narrow and sectarian interests, that they had no vision for anything outside of the most rigidly drawn lines of a doctrinal system which they had received by tradition from their fathers, that they were, therefore, devoid of all originality, that their books are full of wearisome reiteration of theological commonplaces, and that their commentaries on Scripture are simply pages torn from their dogmatics and set down under Scripture texts. If we were to take the word of certain popular writers for it, we would assume that these men were ignorant fanatics, without culture, men who had never been outside their own parishes, provincial in language and in thought, whose prejudices were inveterate, and who went through the form of an argument simply for appearance sake before setting down a conclusion transmitted to them, which no reasoning whatever would make them alter or modify.

To those who have really read the writings thus sweepingly condemned, and not merely books that have been written about them, such descriptions must seem exceedingly strange. Minute questions are, no doubt, laboriously discussed ; but this is not done in

the interests of these small points. The minutiæ with which they deal are not dealt with as an end in themselves or for their own sakes. If a minute point is settled after a careful and searching investigation, it is in order that the conclusion may be laid up as a contribution toward the settlement of some wider and more comprehensive question. The subjects which they discussed in their works were generally themes of supreme importance to men as men. The great historical controversies in which they took so distinguished a part turned upon matters of undying interest to the human race. As for the men themselves, they did indeed, all of them, bear the impress of their age. If they had not they would be of little value, and their works would not only be forgotten, but would well deserve to be so. If Rutherfurd's writings did not reflect the special religious condition of the middle of the seventeenth century, if those of Boston did not reveal the influence of the spiritual atmosphere of a period some two generations later, they would not belong to Scottish theology, they would only be isolated productions of individual thinkers.

The writers to whom we here refer were in a peculiarly favourable position for dealing with those great doctrinal and ecclesiastical questions on which they thought so deeply and wrote so largely. They had a distinct advantage over the early Reformers and over the men of the Church of the Revolution. Two circumstances contributed to confer this advantage

upon them—the period in which they lived, and the splendid scholarship which they had acquired.

As for the times, it was a distinct advantage that these men lived in that particular age. Certain great doctrinal controversies and certain important ecclesiastical developments had given prominence to particular theological problems, and had shed a bright light upon them. Circumstances national and social had then brought the discussion of the nature and authority of the Church of God to the front. It had become an imperative duty on the part of all thinking and capable men that they should give their strength to the examination of the principles which underly the most serious questions of civil and sacred polity. They were under obligation from the very necessities of their time, to seek out and give forth the best answers possible to enquiries as to what the civil magistrate may, and what he may not, enjoin, in what he is to be obeyed, and in what obedience to him must be refused, what the doctrines are which the Church is to receive, and what those views and notions are which she must reject, what the authority is to which the Church must submit, and how that authority is to be expressed. Hence we have not only elaborate treatises on Church Government, but also systematic treatises on certain doctrines. The doctrines of Providence, Sin, the Person of Christ, the Atonement, the ever-recurring problem as to the border line of philosophy and theology, about Liberty and Necessity, the question of the extent of Redemption, and

such like truly and profoundly religious matters, were debated, sometimes scholastically, sometimes practically, but always seriously, and with a solemn sense of their difficulty and of the responsibility that attached to their discussion. The Word of God, the sin of man, the work of Christ, conversion and regeneration, the means of grace, the hope of glory—these are the great themes on which our Scottish divines had something fresh to say, some original contribution to make.

In their theological studies they had the benefit of the discussions which had been carried on among continental theologians in Holland and France, by Arminians and Socinians, and their orthodox opponents. Nor were these merely academic disputes on subjects devoid of practical value and general importance. They bore upon matters which concerned the living and burning questions of that day. The principal points in these controversies were still subjects of vital interest, calling for further investigation in the elucidation of many minute but not unessential particulars.

At this time also there had arisen, both in the countries of the Continental Reformation and in England, a serious practical trouble to the Church from the appearing of sectaries — Antinomians, Familists, Anabaptists of various types—whose fantastic theories, some of them morally pestilential, others of them unsettling and anarchical, had secured in certain districts a widespread currency, and had

won, over a certain class of minds, a wonderful fascination. These had to be answered, and the answering of them gave an opportunity for dealing with many of the fundamental principles of Scripture interpretation and doctrinal construction, the disregarding of which had given occasion to some of the most preposterous caricatures of Christianity which its worst enemy could have desired. And thus the age supplied these theologians with abundant materials in the form of heresies, both of a doctrinal and of an ethical kind, to refute which they buckled on their armour and fought with a will, and they persisted in the struggle until their opponents were not only overthrown but annihilated. Indeed their vigour in controversy was so great that sometimes, fearing lest those whom they had laid low might yet have breath left in them, they returned to the fray, and were guilty of the folly of performing works of supererogation by slaying over again those they had already slain. It was a controversial age, and it called forth a race of controversialists. Protestantism in Scotland was not yet a century old. Not more than one generation had passed away since the Presbyterian polity of the Church of Scotland had been formulated in the Second Book of Discipline. The history of Calvinism had not reached further than its third or fourth generation. The foes of Protestantism, Presbyterianism, and Calvinism had not yet given up hope of winning back the Church and the people of Scotland. Romanists and Prelatists, Socinians and Arminians were in the

field. Ecclesiastically Scotland was in a state of siege. The circumstances of the age, therefore, favoured and required the minute study of all the salient points in the Church's creed, and of the principles which lay at the root of the constitution of the Church itself. Church questions were pre-eminently the questions of the day.

And in the providence of God there was a goodly number of men singularly well-qualified by intellectual endowment and scholarly attainments to enter the lists against all comers, and to fight on their own field the accredited champions of the opposing parties. It would lead us much too far from our proper subject were we to attempt to enumerate all the distinguished scholars who made the name of Scotland honourable in the most eminent seats of learning throughout the entire continent of Europe.

In Paris, Sedan and Saumur, in Leyden, Frankfort and Utrecht, and in many other famous universities, Scotsmen had long been occupying chairs of philosophy, classics and divinity, and making the seminaries in which they taught renowned.

Of the older men we only name Alesius, Major, Boece, Buchanan, Melville. Of the later generation we mention only two, whose contributions to the doctrine of the Church bring their works within the scope of the present course of lectures—Robert Boyd of Trochrig, who was for seven years professor at Saumur, with a reputation in all the universities of France, and Samuel Rutherfurd, who on two occasions

at least was invited to occupy chairs in the universities of Holland. But other Scottish theologians as well as these were known far and wide for profound scholarship, brilliant dialectic and warm evangelical piety—George Gillespie, James Durham, John Brown of Wamphray, Robert M'Ward, and Thomas Boston. For an inimitable description of these and most of the other great men of this period and of later periods in the Scottish Church, I refer once for all to Dr James Walker's first Cunningham Lecture.[1] Nowhere else shall we find so brilliant, so informing, so complete an account of our leading Scottish theologians and their works—a rapid sketch but by a master's hand, by a conscientious student who had patiently and sympathetically read all the literature that he passed under review.

All these men whom we have named and many of their fellow labourers were eminently qualified by natural ability and splendid scholarship for the task of expounding the principles of their ecclesiastical polity and of defending the crown rights of the Redeemer as Head and King of the Church. We cannot do more in what remains of this lecture than indicate the character and contents of the principal writings with which in the following discussion we shall mainly have to do.

An interesting volume might be written on the

[1] [The Theology and Theologians of Scotland chiefly of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Being the Cunningham Lectures for 1870-71. By James Walker, D.D., Carnwath. Edin., T. & T. Clark, 1872.]

literary life and scientific work in all the various departments of theology of Scottish divines during the period of that century and a half to which we have referred. But we must limit our view to the writers and writings which deal with questions immediately affecting the doctrine of the Church.

We may conveniently group by themselves three great men, Boyd, Cameron, and Baillie, who have several things in common. All three were born in Glasgow, all occupied the position of teachers in the University of Glasgow, and all of them wrote works of the utmost importance in connection with the subjects which will come before us in this course of lectures.

The first of these works to which we refer is the voluminous *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* by Robert Boyd. This great scholar was born in Glasgow in 1578. His father, who died when Robert was only three years old, was the proprietor of Trochrig and other Ayrshire estates. In accordance with the compromise in regard to Church government agreed upon at the Convention of Leith in 1572, he had been appointed first Protestant Archbishop of Glasgow. Though one of the Tulchan prelates, James Boyd was universally respected for his integrity and moderation, and was the only one of his order who ever enjoyed the honour of being chosen Moderator of the General Assembly. On the Archbishop's death his widow withdrew to the ancestral estate, two miles from the town of Girvan, and in due

time Robert and his elder brother were sent to the Grammar School at Ayr. It would seem that the Rector of this school influenced his pupil in favour of Presbyterianism, and young Boyd's predilections in that direction were confirmed by the famous Principal Rollock, under whom he studied in the University of Edinburgh. After taking his Master's degree he passed through a course of divinity. When in 1599 he went to France he was immediately recognised by the Protestant divines of that country as a learned and pious theologian, and although only about twenty-one years of age he was appointed professor of philosophy at Montauban. After serving in this capacity for some five years he removed to a little country town as pastor of the Protestant congregation. In 1606 he was elected professor of divinity at Saumur. Besides teaching in the University he ministered to the Reformed Church of France in that town. His command of the French language was perfect and his preaching in that tongue was greatly admired. Previous to this he had been carefully training himself for his life work as a theologian. Sparing of sleep, testifies his biographer, Andrew Rivet, he devoted his nights to the study of divinity. The influence of Rollock was seen both in his popular expositions of Scripture to his congregation and in the direction of his private studies in theological science. King James VI., anxious to be recognised as the patron of scholars, kept an eye upon those Scotsmen whose learning had made them famous in foreign

lands. He could not fail to hear of Robert Boyd, for France was ringing with his fame. He sent therefore in 1615 an urgent invitation to his countryman to return and assume the principalship of Glasgow University. His elder brother having died, Robert Boyd was now laird of Trochrig, and he had been strongly urged to return to Scotland in order to look after the family property. Much as he loved France, where he had been happy and useful, and contrary to the natural wish of his French wife that he should dwell among her own people, he yielded to the King's importunity.

It is interesting to notice that his cousin Zachary Boyd, the quaint sacred poet, some years younger than himself, was also distinguished as a scholar, and that a few years later he occupied a position as professor in the same college of Saumur, and came to Glasgow, during his cousin's principalship, as minister of the Barony parish. Along with the office in the University went the position of minister of Govan.

For six or seven years Robert Boyd laboured faithfully in Glasgow as principal and parish minister. But his Calvinistic doctrine and Presbyterian polity, and especially his determined opposition to the Five Articles of Perth, roused against him the ill-will of the Prelatical party. Nor was the work required of him altogether to his mind. "The bairns" angered him. Many went to college at the age of twelve years—Boyd himself matriculated in Edinburgh at that age—and many were rude and boisterous. And so in

1621 he resigned his office and retired to his country house. After a year and a half he was appointed by the Edinburgh authorities to the principalship of their University and to a city charge; but in a few months' time, by the King's imperious command, the Town Council, sorely against their will and only after being threatened with the severest penalties in case of refusal or delay, dispensed with the services of one whose preaching had filled the church and whose name would have shed fresh lustre on their seat of learning. Another short period of retirement was followed by his appointment to the Abbey Church of Paisley, but from this he was almost immediately driven by a Popish faction. He then withdrew finally to Trochrig. Falling sick and going for medical treatment he died in Edinburgh on the 5th of January 1627.

First in Saumur and afterwards in Glasgow Boyd delivered to his students over two hundred Latin lectures on the Epistle to the Ephesians. He lectured twice a week, devoting an hour and a half to each lecture. These were published posthumously in 1652 in a large folio volume, with two columns to the page, and 1236 pages in the book. Dr Walker calculates that there is more in the work than in the four quarto tomes of Turretine. For the information of those who are not students and may not know much about Turretine, I may best indicate its size by saying it contains about one and a quarter million words. Yet it is not verbose or spun out. The style is terse and condensed. The mistake consists in putting into the

commentary so much material. The author wished to draw his theology from the fountain of Holy Scripture, and so he gave his system of theology in the form of an exposition of a particular New Testament book. If we accept the work as it was expressly intended by the author, as a register of his learning and teaching in theology which he chose to put in this form rather than spread them over half a dozen volumes of doctrinal and historical contents, we may allow that we have by no means too much of it. On its ample title-page it is described as giving, in addition to an accurate analysis, and a copious and clear explication of the apostolic doctrine, and an apposite and practical statement of the doctrines, discussions dispersed here and there on the *Loci Communes*, questions and controversies, and also a large number of texts of Holy Scripture for proof or explanation. Quotations are made from two hundred and twenty-one authors. The author illustrates his meaning and adorns his pages by references to all the great classical writers of Greece and Rome, poets, orators, philosophers, historians, and not only to these works commonly read but to many more which are known now even by their writers' names to very few. He quotes largely from all the Christian Fathers, most frequently from Augustine, Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen. He uses freely the *Scholia Graeca*, is at home among the schoolmen from Aquinas to Biel, and quotes from Cardinal Bellarmine as often as from St Bernard. Of Scottish writers he makes use of Buchanan, Melville, Rollock, William

Scott of Elie, and Josias Welch; and of English authors Bede, Perkins and Whittaker, while he refers to George Wishart, the martyr, under the designation of Georgius Sophocardius. In this great theological work we have an elaborate excursus of eighty pages on Predestination; and as we might expect, very full and learned notes on the Head of the Church and its members, by way of exposition of the classical passage in the Ephesian Epistle which deals with these subjects. Boyd's lectures were not read from a manuscript, but were recited with perfect fluency, even Greek quotations, except the longer ones from Chrysostom, being given without any reference to the printed or written page.

And this great man, whose magnificent scholarship was everywhere recognised, in some wonderful way managed, in his short life of forty-nine years, to acquire and assimilate learning in almost every field in the wide domain of theology, though he was harassed and driven from place to place by those who ought to have been his patrons and his friends.

The next book of which we wish to say something is one even less known to readers of the present day —if that be possible—than Boyd's *Commentary.* Three large volumes in Latin, containing over thirteen hundred pages, present to us what remains of the *Prelectiones* of John Cameron, a vigorous thinker and a profound theologian, whose name has fallen into quite undeserved obscurity. He was born about 1579, studied in the University of his native city, Glasgow,

and, having finished his arts course, went over to France, where he taught classics and philosophy. Having gone through his divinity curriculum in one of the French colleges he served the French Protestant Church for ten years as pastor at Bordeaux. In 1618 he became a professor of theology at Saumur, and the singular greatness of the man is seen from the impression that he made on the minds and lives of such greatly gifted scholars as Amyraldus, Capellus, and Placæus, who as teachers at the college at which they were trained made that seminary one of the most famous in Europe. They all warmly owned their obligations to Cameron and acknowledged that his teaching mainly made them the men they were afterwards found to be. He had taught a modified Calvinism, which his disciples developed and which is known now in theology under the name of Amyraldism.[1] He lived in troublous times and owing to certain commotions in France he returned to Scotland and was appointed Principal of Glasgow University in 1622, after Boyd had been driven to resign. Cameron did not find himself in congenial quarters in the city of his birth. He was out of sympathy with the leaders of the Scottish Church of that time, and so, after holding office for a year, he withdrew again to France. In consequence of his views in regard to submission to rulers and passive obedience he became obnoxious to

[1] [From Moses Amyraut or Amyraldus, d. 1664. See Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, tome i. art. Amyraut. For statement of Amyraldism see Cunningham's *Historical Theology*, vol. ii. pp. 329, 364 ; Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, vol. ii. pp. 205 f., 322.]

the populace of Montauban, where he now taught, and as the result of injuries which he received from a violent mob, he died in 1625 in his forty-sixth year.

The whole of the first volume of Cameron's published lectures treat *De Ecclesia*, and we shall find much in it of first rate importance on the nature, visibility and power of the Church, on schism, and on scandal. In order to give an example of the literary style and gracious spirit of the man, it may be well just here to quote the closing sentence of a very rare treatise on the Romish controversy, written in French and translated into English. "It sufficeth me that my conscience leaveth me witness that I have proceeded in it without vain glory, in all sincerity, as speaking rather before God than before men. This maketh me hope for His blessing upon my pains, so much the more as He is jealous of His truth, at the clearing of which I have wholly aimed. Therefore I humbly entreat Him by His Spirit to supply all my defects and, notwithstanding my infirmities, not to fail to accomplish His power by weak means, whether it be in confirming those whom He hath already called to the communion of His grace, or whether it be in awakening others out of their security, to the end that they may seek His truth, and in seeking it may find it, and in it everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory eternally. Amen.[1]

[1 *Examination of Romish Church Doctrines*, 1626.]

The third of the Glasgow worthies is Robert Baillie; and his writings which will chiefly help us in our present investigation are: *A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time*, in two parts directed mainly against the Independents and Sectaries; *An Historical Vindication of the Government of the Church of Scotland*, and *A Review of Doctor Bramble* [*Bramhall*] *his Fair Warning against the Scotish Discipline*.

Robert Baillie was born in the Saltmarket of Glasgow on the 30th of April 1602. His early education at school and college in Glasgow was conducted under the influence of Robert Blair, first schoolmaster, then regent of the University. Baillie graduated in 1620 and immediately thereafter proceeded to study divinity under Robert Boyd. When the ponderous work on the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, of which we have already spoken, was published in 1652, Baillie wrote an account of Boyd's academic labours by way of preface to the volume. Although thirty years had then gone by since he sat in Boyd's classroom he retained a lively recollection of the power and attractiveness of his professor's lectures. He tells how large numbers of learned men and zealous students flocked to hear the prelections of the master.

Baillie was also a student under Cameron, the successor of Boyd in the principalship. For this great scholar and divine, though his residence in Glasgow was scarcely of one year's duration, the young divinity student had a profound respect.

Cameron's ecclesiastical views exercised a powerful influence upon his pupil, whose own inclinations were very much in the same direction. During this period Baillie was decidedly in favour of a modified or limited Episcopacy. But while these were his views, he was not called during the time he was regent in Glasgow University from 1625 to 1631, nor during his subsequent residence in Kilwinning, as parish minister, to subscribe to any engagement or to practise any of the objectionable ceremonies.

In 1643 Baillie was removed from his country charge to be Professor of Divinity in Glasgow University; but before the close of that year he was in London as one of the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly. He did not actually enter upon his professional duties till after his return to Scotland in 1646. During his residence in London Baillie wrote and published his well-known *Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time*, in which he deals with the Brownists, the Independents of New England and Holland, as also the English Independents. In this work there are chapters of special interest to us in our present inquiry, chapters in which Baillie urges against the Independents that it is unjust scrupulosity to require satisfaction of the true grace of every church member. Shortly after the publication of the *Dissuasive* Baillie turned his attention to a scurrilous and bitter tract by John Maxwell, formerly Bishop of Ross, in which that excommunicate of the Presbytery, who had been declared an incendiary by the

Parliament, sought to show that the Presbyterian government is inconsistent with monarchy.

Professor Grub describes Maxwell as the greatest Scottish prelate of the reign of Charles I., as a man of eminent ability, whose rectitude of conduct and dignity and consistency of character have never been sufficiently acknowledged. It does not seem that as a churchman or as a writer he deserves to be held in honourable remembrance. The two tracts which he is known to have issued are poor productions, distinguished only by their violent language and reckless, unprincipled misstatements, and by the fact that one called forth Samuel Rutherfurd's great work *Lex Rex*, and the other Baillie's *Historical Vindication of the Government of the Church of Scotland.* Maxwell's pamphlet bears the long title, informing us of its scope and contents : *The Burden of Issachar, or the Tyrannical Power and Practices of the Presbyterian Government in Scotland in their Parochial Session, Presbytery, Provincial Synod, and General Assembly.* Baillie shows in detail how calumnious and false Maxwell's description of the practices of presbyterianism is, and particularly vindicates the memories of such men as Knox, Welsh, Melville, and Robert Bruce from the charge of rude treatment of their prince. Of special interest to us is the statement and historical proof that discipline had never been exercised in an inquisitorial and offensive fashion in the Scottish Presbyterian Church, and that the passing of a sentence of excommunication was an event that might

not happen once in a whole generation. In 1649 Dr Bramhall, Bishop of Londonderry, published in Holland an extremely violent pamphlet, maintaining the same contention as Maxwell's pamphlet, entitled, *A Faire Warning to take heed of the Scotish Discipline, as being of all others most Injurious to the Civil Magistrate, most Oppressive to the Subject, most Pernicious to both.* The title indicates the contents and the spirit of the tract. The author concludes by suggesting that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has the attributes of Antichrist as much as the Pope or the Turk. Its members sit in the temple of God and advance themselves above those whom Holy Scripture calls gods. In the same year Baillie issued *A Review* of the *Warning*, in which he undertook to refute fully and convincingly the prelate's "malicious and most lying reports" which have been "to the great scandall of that [presbyterian] Government." He shows the real disloyalty and seditious character of the episcopal warner, who seeks to secure the privileges and position of the prelates at the risk of the overthrow of prince and people. Chapter by chapter he follows the accusations of the pamphleteer, and shows him to be ignorant and guilty of such wilful exaggerations and misstatements as are nothing short of malicious lying. It is one of the cleverest of Baillie's writings. To those who are inclined to suppose that the presbyterian writers were vulgar and uncouth in style, and the prelatists refined, cultured and dignified I commend a comparison of

these two moderately brief papers by Bramhall and Baillie.

After the Restoration, Patrick Gillespie, the restless ambitious intriguer, who held office during the Commonwealth period as Principal of Glasgow University, having been expelled, Robert Baillie, the quiet orderly peace-loving Resolutioner, was promoted to that academic dignity. But though ready to make any personal sacrifice in the interest of peace, Baillie was a man of strong convictions, and was in heart and life a thorough going presbyterian. So when one disaster after another fell upon the Church, and one difficulty after another in the management of the College pressed upon him, his bodily strength gave way, and he died in the autumn of 1662, before completing the second year of his principalship.

Next in order we may refer to the works of two great men who were associated with Baillie as members of the Westminster Assembly—George Gillespie and Samuel Rutherfurd. The works of both these men are for our purpose of the utmost importance in their bearing upon almost every question connected with the doctrine of the Church.

George Gillespie was born in the beginning of the year 1613, at Kirkcaldy, where his father was minister, and he was educated at the University of St Andrews. Before his ordination, which was delayed in consequence of the troubles of the time, he published his first work: *A dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies obtruded on the Church of*

Scotland. This valuable treatise appeared in 1637, when the author was in his twenty-fourth year. In it he discusses, in a wonderfully calm and orderly manner, the necessity, the expediency, the lawfulness and the indifference of the ceremonies. This is, perhaps, the greatest, most compact, most comprehensive work extant on the prelatical controversy. In 1638 Gillespie was ordained minister of Wemyss in Fife, and four years later he was translated to Edinburgh and became one of the city ministers. He accompanied Baillie, Henderson and Rutherfurd to London as a Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly in 1643, and although by many years younger than any of his fellow commissioners, he was able easily to take his place alongside of the best of them. During his residence in London, and as the outcome of his special studies in connection with controversies in the Assembly, he published his great anti-erastian treatise entitled, *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, a noble work, with a most absurd title, on Jewish Church Government, Christian Church Government, and Excommunication. It is distinctly the most complete and thorough confutation in our language, perhaps in any language, of the Erastian theory. The distinction between civil and ecclesiastical government, and all conceivable questions as to excommunication and suspension from Church privileges are fully debated and discussed from Scripture, from Jewish and Christian antiquities, from the consent of later writers, from the idea of the true nature and rights of magistracy, and from the

groundlessness of the chief objections made against the presbyterial government, as a domineering, arbitrary, unlimited power. It was published in 1646, in a large volume of nearly six hundred pages. We shall have occasion to use it largely in some of the following lectures.

Besides Prelatists and Erastians, the Independents also occupied the attention of George Gillespie, and against them he defended presbyterianism in his *Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland.* In this polemic, published in 1641, we have a singularly clear and methodical defence of the ruling eldership and of the authority of Presbyteries and Synods. The *One Hundred and Eleven Propositions concerning the Ministry and Government of the Church* give in short compass the main points in regard to Church polity which were subjects of controversy in that age. The twenty-two chapters of Miscellany Questions, issued as a posthumous work in 1649 under the editorship of his brother Patrick, besides discussing some of the points in *Aaron's Rod*, deal with several matters of permanent, practical importance. One other tract of this Westminster divine entitled *Wholesome Severity reconciled with Christian Liberty* we may have to consider when we come to deal with the views of Scottish theologians on liberty of conscience.

The breadth of scholarship shown in these works is very remarkable. Besides the special literature of his subject, with which he was naturally familiar, we find

that for purposes of occasional illustration, Gillespie had at his command the whole range of classical Greek and Latin literature, as well as that of the early Fathers, the mediæval writers, the Reformers, and later theologians. He quotes from Augustine, Hilary, Theophylact, Osiander, Davenant, and almost all the leading divines of all ages and of all schools. And be it remembered that all this theological literature was not read up for the occasion, but belonged in a legitimate way to the stores of his great learning. He died before he had completed his thirty-sixth year. Had it been given him, and had not the exigencies of the age bound him to one particular branch of doctrine, he was evidently well qualified to contribute to general theological literature, as an expositor, a systematic theologian, and a historian. He was a man of peace, and no intriguer, like his brother Patrick, with whom he is sometimes confounded. Though almost everything he wrote was controversial, there is a commendable absence of bitterness from his writings. Yet the unanswerable acuteness and soundness of his reasoning proved more irritating to his enemies than vulgar abuse would have been. And so Middleton's drunken parliament, in the beginning of 1661, after Gillespie's body had lain in its grave for twelve years, fetched his tombstone from the churchyard, and on a market day had it "*solemnly*" broken with a hammer by the hands of the hangman at the cross of Kirkcaldy.

Samuel Rutherfurd, although not the best writer,

was probably the most versatile genius and the most subtle and adroit controversialist in the list of our Scottish theologians. He was born at Nisbet, in the parish of Crailing, in Roxburghshire, in 1600. After studying and teaching in the University of Edinburgh, he was ordained, in 1627, minister of Anwoth in Galloway. Banished to Aberdeen in 1636, he carried on a controversy about the ceremonies, with Dr Robert Barron, one of the Aberdeen doctors, and wrote many of these *Spiritual Letters*, by which alone he is now known to many. He was a member of the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638. In the following year he was appointed professor and minister at St Andrews; and, in 1643, he was sent to London as one of the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly. He was made Principal of the New College, St Andrews, in 1647; and after this he declined an invitation from Edinburgh University, and two calls to professorships in Dutch colleges at Harderwyck and Utrecht. He continued in St Andrews till his death in 1661.

Unlike Gillespie, Rutherfurd has written on a great variety of subjects. In the department of practical and experimental religion, we have from his hand *The Trial and Triumph of Faith, Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself, The Covenant of Life Opened, Influences of the Life of Grace*, and his *Letters*, everywhere spoken of, if not everywhere read. We have also able and profound works in scholastic and polemic theology, chiefly in the Arminian and

Antinomian controversies — *Exercitationes Apologeticae pro Divina Gratia*, *A Survey of the Spiritual Antichrist*, *Disputatio Scholastica de Divina Providentia*, *Examen Arminianismi*, this last being a summary of the lectures delivered on the subject to the students of St Andrews.

But one work of Rutherfurd's stands by itself—his *Lex Rex : a Treatise of Civil Policy concerning Prerogative*, published in London in 1644, during the author's residence in the metropolis as a member of the Westminster Assembly. It is a contention for the just prerogatives of king and people. The immediate occasion of its preparation was the appearance of a pamphlet by John Maxwell, excommunicated bishop of Ross, entitled *Sacrō-sancta Regum Majestas*, in which abject, unquestioning submission to kings was proclaimed, the divine right of kings was asserted in the most absolute way, and any protest or even suggestion of reform on the part of the people was pronounced not only rebellion but sacrilege. An insignificant tract was thus the occasion of the writing of a very great work, one of the world's classics. In *Lex Rex* Rutherfurd discusses the question as to the source of human sovereignty, and shows that it is from the people, so that in cases of necessity the exercise of the power may be resumed by them. He shows that the monarch is not made such by the people absolutely, but conditionally, that the people and parliament have superior power, so that the king is not above law, either divine or human. He comes to the

conclusion that absolute monarchy is the worst of all forms of government, and that in matters unlawful, passive as well as active obedience must be refused to the commands of the ruling power. It cannot be said that in producing such a work as this the author was turning aside from the proper sphere of a theologian to that of a publicist or politician. All the questions discussed are fundamental, the answering of which was absolutely necessary in order that the attitude assumed by the Covenanters in opposition to the civil government might be vindicated. The treatise itself bears little trace of the circumstances which called it forth. It is written, upon the whole, in a calm and dignified, argumentative style, and in the body of the work the writer appears to lose sight of his immediate antagonist. In the preface, however, his contempt for the pamphleteer causes him to break forth in language that is certainly violent, and, even for the seventeenth century, somewhat abusive and coarse. "Any unclean spirit from hell could not speak a blacker lie." "Buchanan and Mr Melvin were doctors of divinity, and could have taught such an ass as John Maxwell." "This cursed prelate hath written of late a treatise against the presbyterial government of Scotland, in which there is a bundle of lies, hellish calumnies, and gross errors." Probably there was something about Maxwell's conduct and character peculiarly aggravating to those whose duty it was to criticise his writings, for Baillie, who was of a gentle disposition, and inclined to take a charitable

view of men and their doings, applies to him epithets scarcely less strong than those of Rutherfurd. The provocation may have been great; but the language ought to have been less vehement.

The writings of Rutherfurd which specially concern us in these lectures are those which deal directly with questions of church government and polity. In *A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbytery in Scotland*, published in 1642, the ecclesiastic sets himself to prove, against Independents and Separatists, that the presbyterian discipline is the true apostolic rule in the house of God, and that the government of the Church by presbyteries and synods has the sanction of Christ and His Apostles.

In the *Due Right of Presbyteries; or, a Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland*, published in London, 1644, he writes specially against John Robertson and the Independents of New England, in opposition to their theory of Congregational Independency. In the *Divine Right of Church-government and Excommunication*, to which is added *A brief tractate on Scandal*, published two years later, Rutherfurd enters into discussion with Erastus regarding the nature of excommunication and the power of the Church to administer it. He then enters the lists with Hooker, Morton, Forbes, and others, in regard to the use of ceremonies, and especially the Service Book. This treatise is specially valuable for its treatment of the relation of the civil magistrate to the Church, and the respective limits of

the civil and ecclesiastical powers. Finally, in *A Free Disputation against pretended Liberty of Conscience*, which issued from the London press in 1649, our author criticises the position of John Goodwin, Jeremy Taylor, and others, maintaining in opposition to them that errors in non-fundamentals obstinately held are punishable, and that only "some far-off errors may be tolerated." [1]

In all these writings Rutherfurd displays an amazing amount and variety of reading. He is equally at home among the early Church Fathers, the mediæval Schoolmen, the Reformers of Germany, France, and England, the Romish Doctors, the great Anglican Divines. Arguments elaborated in great Latin folios are often referred to in a single line, while the exact reference is given in the margin. Aquinas, Cajetan, Bellarmine, Vasquez, Joannes de Lugo—these are samples of the authorities of whose works he writes with the easy familiarity of thorough and long acquaintance. His quotations and references are evidently made at first hand, and none are bor-

[1] ["So it would appeare, that some lower errours, that are farre off, without the compasse of the ordinary discerning of man, and lye at a distance from the foundation (as fundamentals, and Gospell-promises lye neare the heart of Christ) may bee dispensed with." Chap. vii. p. 97. What in Rutherfurd's estimate came under the description of "far off errors" can be gathered from the subsequent mention of such questions as these: "What became of the meate that Christ eate after his resurrection when he was now in the state of immortality?" "Whether the heavens and earth, after the day of judgement, shall be annihillated . . . or if they shal be renewed and delivered from vanity and indued with new qualities?" . . . "The virginity of Mary for all her life."]

rowed from earlier controversialists. His learning was also quite up to date. He shows familiar acquaintance with the writings of contemporaries, like Salmasius, Forbes of Corse, Richard Hooker of that time and class, which makes it evident that his scholarship was not merely antiquarian. As we proceed, we shall find something in one or other of these works of Rutherfurd useful to us under each of the divisions of the subject which will occupy us in these lectures.

[We bring this introductory lecture to a close with brief notices of other three Scottish contributors to the theology of our period and our subject.]

(1) James Durham was born in the parish of Monifieth in 1622, and, after studying divinity under David Dickson in Glasgow, he was licensed to preach the gospel in 1646. In the following year he was ordained minister of a charge in Glasgow. Afterwards he was appointed chaplain to the king, and in 1651 he returned to Glasgow as minister of the Inner Kirk in the Cathedral. Like Gillespie, he died early, in his thirty-sixth year.

His sermons on *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ;* on *Christ Crucified: or, the Marrow of the Gospel;* his *Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments,* as well as his *Exposition of the Song of Solomon,* and of *The Book of Job* are still read; and to a yet narrower circle of readers he is known by his large *Commentarie on the Book of Revelation.* He is understood to have assisted David Dickson in draw-

ing up the admirable little treatise entitled, *The Sum of Saving Knowledge*—"the work," says M'Cheyne, "which I think first of all wrought a saving change in me." The work, however, which is of special interest to us at present is one published in 1659, the year after his death, by his father-in-law John Carstares, who was also his colleague. It is introduced with a preface written by the famous Robert Blair of St Andrews. This work is entitled, *The Dying Man's Testament to the Church of Scotland; or, A Treatise concerning Scandal.* Taken all in all it is the very best book we have on the subject. It is divided into four parts. 1. Concerning Scandal in the general. 2. Concerning Public Scandal, or Scandals as they are the object of Church-censures, and more particularly as they are in practice. 3. Concerning Doctrinal Scandals, or Scandalous Errors. 4. Concerning Scandalous Divisions. The fourth section is particularly important, and will receive careful consideration when we come to treat of the views of the theologians of Scotland regarding the Unity of the Church and the sin of schism. In it Durham shows himself, as he was preeminently in his life, a great peacemaker.

(2) John Brown, whose mother, a godly and talented woman, was one of Rutherfurd's correspondents, after being minister at Wamphray in Dumfriesshire for some time, was banished the kingdom and went to Holland in the beginning of 1663. He remained there till his death in 1679, having been for several years minister of the Scots Church

at Rotterdam. He wrote many admirable theological works, some of which, as for example, *Christ the Way and the Truth and the Life*, his *Commentary on Romans*, *The Life of Justification Opened*, still find appreciative readers. His most elaborate work is *De Causa Dei Contra Anti-Sabbatarios*, a huge work which would fill at least five goodly octavo volumes, full of interesting and important matter, especially regarding fundamental questions about the sanctions of law and the law of God. He also wrote a reply in Latin to a Socinian Rationalist, Wolzogius, on the interpretation of Scripture, and he left a large manuscript history—*Apologia pro Ecclesia*. But his best known work is his *Apologetical Narrative of the particular sufferings of the faithful Ministers and Professors of the Church of Scotland since August* 1660, which was published in 1665. This treatise is written with great clearness and vigour. It will prove in many ways serviceable to us in our present study. The other work of Brown which deals with the doctrine of the Church is a duodecimo of 716 pages, in Latin, published at Amsterdam in 1670, and bound up in one volume with the reply to Wolzogius. It was written in reply to a Dutch work by the physician Lambert Velthuysen, entitled *Idolatry and Superstition*, and vindicates in thirty-two propositions or "assertions" the orthodox theory of the nature of the Church against the exceptions of the Erastian. This is perhaps the very best book written by any of our Scottish divines on the

ministry, church government and ecclesiastical discipline. It embraces in one treatise a full review of all the topics discussed separately in many volumes by Gillespie and Rutherfurd. We shall have occasion to use it freely, especially the full and able preface in which the author discusses in thirty-two short paragraphs what may and what may not justify separation from a corrupt and faulty Church. In common with all the best Scottish theologians, Brown of Wamphray had a great horror of ecclesiastical divisions.

(3) Robert M'Ward[1] studied under Rutherfurd at St Andrews, and was afterwards Professor of Humanity there. He became minister of the Outer High Church in Glasgow. He was banished about the same time as John Brown, whose colleague he became in the Scots Church at Rotterdam. He survived Brown, and died at Rotterdam in 1682.[2] He was the first editor of the Letters of Samuel Rutherfurd, his edition being printed at Rotterdam in 1664. The only work of his which concerns us here is *The True Non-Conformist*, published in 1671, probably at Amsterdam, although the troubles of the times made it necessary to issue it without note of place, or name of author and printer. It is a reply to a small tract of some hundred pages—"a trifling babble," as M'Ward fairly enough calls it

[1] [In Wodrow's *Analecta* the spelling of the name is Macwaird; Baillie, in his *Letters*, has M'Quard, Makquard, Macquare, M'Quare, and Mackward.]

[2] ["or 1683." Wodrow's *Analecta*, vol. i. p. 170; "December 1681," David Laing, *Baillie's Letters*, vol. iii. p. 241 *n.*]

—published in 1669 in six dialogues, by *A Lover of Peace.* It is now known that the author of the tract was Gilbert Burnet, who, in that same year was made Professor of Divinity in Glasgow University. The title of Burnet's brochure is, *A Modest and Free Conference betwixt a Conformist and a Non-Conformist about the present Distempers in Scotland.* M'Ward's reply is executed with great care and moderation, and is particularly clear and exact in vindicating the Covenanters from the charge of separating from the Church on account of minor differences.

All those to whom in these sketches we have referred belonged to the seventeenth century, and for the most part to the middle rather than the end of that period. The Church of the Revolution produced no great theologian. In the generation following that of Carstares a new school of theologians sprang up in connection with what is known as the Marrow Controversy. This discussion did not bear upon the doctrine of the Church, but almost exclusively on the doctrines of grace and redemption. Of these eighteenth century divines only Thomas Boston is of interest and importance to us, and even he, voluminous writer as he was, calls for our attention simply as the author of a short treatise on the subject of baptism. In his *Sixth Miscellany Question* he considers: *Who have a right to Baptism and are to be baptized?* These discussions were written by Boston in his younger days, while minister of

Simprin, and therefore some time before 1707. When we come to discuss the doctrine of the nature of the Church we shall see that Boston, in accordance with the general principles of his school, gives a much narrower definition of the visible Church and its membership than that of Rutherfurd and his contemporaries.

In these brief notices of the works of our Scottish theologians which more directly deal with the question of the constitution and government of the Church of Christ I have sought to indicate the character of that investigation which is to be carried out in these lectures. Keeping these and similar writings in view, I propose in next lecture to treat of the idea of the Church, what it properly is, what is implied in the distinction between the Church as visible and as invisible, and what, in view of this distinction and of the right conception of the Church, membership means and necessarily implies. In the third lecture I propose to treat of the Unity of the Church, showing what importance our national divines attached to this doctrine, how vehemently they opposed all separation, and how sensitive they were to the charge of being schismatical. In the fourth lecture I shall deal with the question of the Purity of the Church, considering discipline and the infliction of censures as at once the duty and privilege of the Church, and discussing the range to which this Discipline extends, what true liberty of conscience is, and how far the claims of Toleration were understood and allowed.

In the fifth lecture the subject will be Church Power, what Jurisdiction the Church can and must claim, what the limits of the civil and the ecclesiastical kingdoms are, what the State ought to do for the Church and what she must leave the Church free to do for herself. The sixth and closing will discuss the question : What, according to Scottish theology is of Divine Right? It will be shown in what sense our divines deserve to be called High Churchmen.

LECTURE II.

THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH AND MEMBERSHIP IN IT.

The circumstances of the Scottish Protestant Presbyterian Church for more than a hundred years—from the Reformation to the Revolution—made, not only her ministers and theologians, but also all her more thoughtful and attached members study minutely and carefully the question of the prerogatives of the Church and the Crown rights of Christ the Mediator, her supreme and divine Head. During that whole period the liberty of the Church was threatened by statesmen and by Churchmen, by the selfish greed of the nobles and by the restless ambition of ecclesiastics, so that the rights of the members and the supreme claim of the Head of the Church had to be jealously guarded and valorously defended by those to whom the honour of Christ was dear, and who prized that liberty wherewith He has made His people free. In view of the opposition to which on every side they were exposed, the defenders of the true Scripture doctrine of the Church were obliged to begin with the most rudimentary principles by vindicating the real existence of the Church as an institution separate from all other institutions, and of a kind different from all others. They were required first to prove

that there is such a thing as a Church, and then to show what are its essential characteristics and its true constituents. They had thus to defend their idea of the Church, and to determine who, in view of this, were members of it.

Our earlier Scottish divines were, first of all, face to face with the doctrine of the Church maintained by Romish theologians, not as a mere matter of literary controversy, but as one of present living interest, on the issue of which their very existence as a reformed community depended. Their position was not like that of a modern Protestant theologian dealing with the doctrines of the Council of Trent in a purely historical and objective manner. On the contrary, they were dealing with a question which the constituencies whom they addressed were required to answer. What side the Scottish people would take in the religious conflicts of their times would largely depend upon the idea of the Church they would feel themselves obliged to adopt. Whether they were to decide in favour of Rome or in favour of the Reformation would be determined by the answer they gave to the question about the nature and membership of the Church. Knox, Melville, and all the leaders of the Scottish Reformation, Boyd, Rutherfurd, and all the great teachers who trained men for the ministry of the Scottish Church, in view of the notions that had previously been current throughout the whole land and were being ever revived by the active propagandists of the old

faith, found it necessary constantly to reiterate and elaborately to state the proof for the truth of the Protestant doctrine of the Church and who belong to it.

The leading points of difference between the reformed and Romish doctrine of the Church are clearly set forth in the sixteenth chapter of *The Scots Confession of Faith*, which was mainly the work of Knox. As all subsequent discussions on this subject in the writings of our Scottish divines proceed upon the lines indicated in this authoritative pronouncement of the Scottish Protestant Church of 1560, it may be desirable to quote it here at length. It runs as follows : "As we believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so do we most constantly believe that from the beginning there hath been, now is, and to the end of the world shall be one Ḳirk; that is to say, one company and multitude of men chosen of God, who rightly worship and embrace him by true faith in Christ Jesus, who is the only Head of the same Kirk, which also is the body and spouse of Christ Jesus; which Kirk is Catholic, that is, universal, because it containeth the elect of all ages, of all realms, nations and tongues, be they of the Jews, or be they of the Gentiles, who have communion and society with God the Father, and with His Son Christ Jesus, through the sanctification of His Holy Spirit; and, therefore, it is called the communion, not of profane persons, but of saints, who, as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, have the fruition of the most inestimable

benefits, to wit, of one God, one Lord Jesus, one faith, and one baptism; out of the which Kirk there is neither life nor eternal felicity. And therefore we utterly abhor the blasphemy of those that affirm that men which live according to equity and justice shall be saved, what religion soever they have professed. For as without Christ Jesus there is neither life nor salvation, so shall there none be participant thereof, but such as the Father hath given unto His Son Christ Jesus, and those that in time come to Him, avow His doctrine, and believe in Him (we comprehend the children with the faithful parents). This Kirk is invisible, known only to God, Who alone knoweth whom He hath chosen, and comprehendeth as well the elect that be departed (commonly called the Kirk triumphant), as those that yet live and fight against sin and Satan, and those that shall live hereafter." Again, in the eighteenth chapter, the notes by which the true Kirk may be distinguished from the false are declared to be these three: The true preaching of the word of God; the right administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus; and ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered. "Wheresoever," it is added, "these notes are seen, and of any time continue (be the number never so few, about two or three), there, without all doubt, is the true Church of Christ, who, according to his promise, is in the midst of them, not that universal, but particular, such as was in Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus and other places. And such Kirks we, the inhabitants of the realm of

Scotland, professors of Christ Jesus, assert ourselves to have in our cities, towns, and places reformed."[1]

This is that doctrine of the Church which is consistently set forth by our Scottish divines in opposition especially to the doctrine of Rome. In all their writings I have nowhere found this doctrine more clearly stated than in the polemic against the Romish theory by Boyd in his exposition of the closing section of the first chapter of Ephesians.[2] He there deals directly with Bellarmine's statement of the Romish position. In the second volume of his great work, *Disputationes de controversiis Christianae fidei*, published scarcely twenty years before Boyd's lectures were written, this distinguished defender of his Church's faith discusses the subject of the Church. Boyd takes up his statement and exposition of this doctrine and criticises it vigorously in light of the Scripture which he is expounding. Bellarmine thus indicates the difference between the Romish and the Reformed doctrine: "They (*i.e.* Protestants) to constitute anyone a member of the Church, require internal graces, and so make the true Church invisible; we, on the contrary, believe indeed that all graces, faith, hope, love, etc., are to be found in the Church, but we do not think that it is required, in order that anyone, in any way, may be called a member of the true Church, that he have any internal

[1] [Laing's *Knox*, vol. ii. pp. 108-109, 110-111. Dunlop's *Collection of Confessions of Faith*, vol. ii. pp. 59-62, 65-72.]

[2] [In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Ephesios Prælectiones supra CC. 1652.]

grace, but only an external profession of faith and the partaking of the sacraments, which is perceived by the senses."[1] In the same chapter Bellarmine, borrowing from Augustine, describes the Church as a living organism, made up of soul and body, the soul being the inward graces of the Spirit, the body an outward profession of faith and partaking of the sacraments. And he distinguishes three classes of members of the Church: (1) Those who are of the soul and of the body, members in the fullest sense; (2) those who are of the soul but not of the body, excommunicates and catechumens; (3) those who are of the body but not of the soul, who have only a profession without any real faith. These last may be hypocrites, heretics, even atheists, if only they are such secretly, not openly and by profession, and still they are true members of the Church, and in number, strength and influence may be preponderating. The faithless who feign faith are true members, though arid and dead. According to this theory of Bellarmine and the Romish Church there is no Church but the visible Church, the members of which profess the Catholic faith, receive the sacraments, and recognise the authority of the Pope. It is a *cœtus hominum* as visible and palpable as the *cœtus Populus Romanus*, or the Kingdom of France, or the Republic of Venice. The Church is an outward institution in which men are made holy, and of which good and bad alike are members.

[1] Book iii. De Ecclesia militante, chap. 2.

Boyd ridicules the idea of such a body as is represented by Bellarmine. Whoever dreamed, he asks, of an animated body of this kind, of which some of the members are of the soul and not of the body, and others of the body and not of the soul, while some have life but are without motion! Such a body must be mutilated, or monstrous, or paralysed, or apoplectic, some sort of animal preternatural or unnatural. He shows admirably how impossible it is to understand the Apostle in Ephesians first chapter and twenty-third verse, as if Christ's fulness could be in dead members who perform none of the functions of the living body. He illustrates his point from Aristotle, who says that an eye deprived of the power of seeing is not properly an eye any more than a stone eye or a painted one.[1]

The real cause of the difference between the Romish and the Protestant ideas of the Church is, as Boyd perceives, the different ideas of faith entertained by Romanists and the Reformers. The Romish idea of faith as essentially a mere intellectual assent allowed the Romanist to distinguish *fides informis*—a mere knowledge of and acquiescence in the authorised Church teaching, and *fides formata*—a knowledge of the truth powerfully affecting the heart and life. The Protestant doctrine of faith admits no such distinction, and refuses to call anything faith which worketh not by love. Consequently the Protestant theologian cannot recognise mere assent to Church doctrine,

[1] De Anima, ii. 1.

without reference to walk and conversation, as Christian faith, or as qualifying him who has that and nothing more to be a member of the true Church.

Here we have evidently two different views of the Church diametrically opposed to each other, the one defining the Church as an institute of salvation into which men are gathered that they may have the Gospel preached to them and the sacraments administered, that by the use of these, as means of grace, they may be saved, and the other defining the Church as a company of elect believers, chosen unto life, and all of them exercising faith in Christ to the saving of their souls. To the Church, as understood by the former, all belong who attach themselves to it by outward profession; to the Church, in the judgment of the latter, only those belong who truly believe in Christ.

The extreme opponents of Romish externalism, the polemical Congregationalists and Independents of New England, as well as the Separatists generally, refused to recognise any Church but that made up of true believers, who on seeking admission to its membership, not only profess their acceptance of the true faith, but give a personal testimony as to the saving work of the Spirit in their hearts, and are received into the communion of the Church as converted persons.

From the way in which Boyd contests the position of Bellarmine, it might seem as if he and his school had adopted this doctrine of a pure Church of true

believers. In the sense of the Independents, they were very far from doing so. In his *Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland*, Rutherfurd (as indeed all the other writers to whom we have referred do more or less directly) opposes the Independents and Separatists, not only in regard to their notion of congregational independency, but also in the matter of their description of a true Church and membership therein. The Separatists maintained that the rightly constituted Church must consist of the Lord's planting, of a redeemed people, that the true *visible* Church is a company of people called and separated from the world by the word of God, and joined together in a voluntary profession of faith, that if on trial one be found graceless and scandalous he is not presented as a candidate. The position maintained is that none can be members of the visible Church but such as be regenerate, so far as the Church can discern.[1]

Now we may say at once that Rutherfurd and Scottish protestant theologians generally sympathise with the Independents and Separatists against the Romanists to this extent, that they recognise as true members of the Church only genuine believers; but then this Church, of which only the faithful are members, is not with them the visible but the invisible Church, the members of which are known only to

[1] [Rutherfurd, *A Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbyterie in Scotland:* Lond., 1642, pp. 92 *et seq.* Comp. *The Due Right of Presbyteries:* Lond., 1644, pp. 241 *et seq.*]

God. The Romanists and the Separatists were agreed in recognising only the visible Church, which, according to the Romanists, is made up of all adherents of the visible society subject to the Pope, whether in character and life, good or bad, but which, according to the Separatists, is made up only of true believers or regenerate persons.

Our Scottish divines, in opposition to both Romanists and Independents, bring in the distinction of the visible and invisible Church. The criticism which they passed upon both the contrary theses which they rejected was that they ascribed to the visible Church attributes that were properly applicable only to the invisible; that they assigned to an object of sense characters that belonged, primarily at least, to an object of faith; that they identified or confused the Church *de facto* with the Church *de jure*. In answer to the assertion of those who define the visible Church as a company of true believers, Rutherfurd maintains that, while they should reject candidates that are scandalous, they cannot proceed in the same way with one held to be graceless, except in so far as his gracelessness has become matter of scandal. He points out that nothing of this kind was done in the receiving of the three thousand added to the Church on the day of Pentecost. Freedom from scandal is a visible thing, and is required in a visible Church member, but grace is invisible, and can be no note of a member of a visible Church, but only of a member of the invisible Church. It was not required by the

Apostles in the case of Simon Magus. In marking the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church, Rutherfurd points out that there are some saints by external vocation who are not chosen, some saints by internal and effectual vocation, called and chosen of God. Any who blamelessly profess Christ are ecclesiastically, *in foro ecclesiæ*, true and valid members of the Church visible, but unless they be *sincere* believers they are not, morally and *in foro Dei*, living members of the invisible Church. Hence the privileges of Christians, the covenant promises, the titles of spouse, bride, temple of the Holy Ghost, etc., belong to the members of the invisible Church, and not, as the Papists wrongly suppose, to members of the Church visible as such. A seen profession is the ground of admission to membership in the visible Church. Those who have such a profession are admitted as true members in the judgment of charity. A mere negative satisfaction, indeed, in the sense of not knowing anything to the contrary of persons of whom nothing is known either by sight or by report, is not enough; but, on the other hand, a positive satisfaction by assured signs of regeneration cannot be demanded. It is enough if, of one whose behaviour and general walk are known, we know nothing inconsistent with his profession. And so Rutherfurd distinguishes three classes of men: (1) Some professedly and notoriously flagitious and wicked, who, without lack of charity, may be excluded; (2) some professedly sanctified and holy, who as such may

be accepted and welcomed to the visible Church; (3) some between these two, of whom we cannot with any certainty or satisfaction to the conscience say that they are genuine believers, nor yet affirm that they are still in a state of nature. To reject a weak one and so break a bruised reed is no less a sin than, by laxity or an undue stretch of charity, to receive a hypocrite. To refuse such a one is materially the same as to excommunicate him.

From the position which he thus takes up, Rutherfurd was able to answer the Separatists as the Romanists could not do. Those who insist that the visible Church consists only of regenerate persons urge the consideration that as Christ is the Head of the Church those who are members of it are members of Christ's body. Against this Rutherfurd maintains that Christ is not Head of the Church as it is visible, but only of those members in that Church who are members of the Church invisible. That Christ is Head of the Church as visible he does not find anywhere in the Word of God. Only in a large sense can He be called Head of the visible Church as such, in respect of the influence of the common graces for the ministry, government, and discipline. And so he discovers in the theory that Christ is Head of the Church as it is visible the Arminian doctrine of universal grace. In like manner he answers the argument that as God added to the Church such as should be saved,[1] so also the Lord's

[1] [Acts ii. 47 : And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved. R. V.]

stewards should continue to do so in His house, by saying that God added those saved ones to the invisible Church. God's adding is by an internal operation, by the giving of faith and saving grace; but this cannot be a rule for our admitting to the visible Church. Just because we cannot *see* God going before in the bestowing of invisible grace, the ministers of the Church cannot here follow by adding such only and all such to the Church.

Rutherfurd having got hold of the position that an invisible grace cannot be of the essence of a visible association, presses the principle relentlessly to its strictly logical conclusion. The Independents had said that there might be a fully organised, local, visible Church consisting of seven members. Rutherfurd says that in such a congregation or visible Church the whole seven may be hypocrites and unconverted persons, and yet in it we have a visible Church performing all church acts of a visible profession. A community professing the faith in which the word is preached, the sacraments are administered, and discipline is exercised may not have in it one sincere believer, but only formal and heartless professors, and yet it is a true visible Church.

While Rutherfurd is thoroughly clear and logical in all his distinctions and arguments, it is evident that those against whom he writes are often confused and inconsistent in their statements. One of those opponents is John Robinson, many of whose companions had gone out to New England, and there

founded the congregational churches of the Pilgrim Fathers. Now Robinson, as well as all the saner and more capable men of that party, while he was a Separatist and maintainer of the theory of a pure church communion, was not consciously an Anabaptist, nor was he inclined fanatically to insist upon the absolute purity *de facto* of their Church membership.

It is pleasing to find Rutherfurd, keen controversialist as he was, and apt to rail against his opponents as though he could admit no good in any one who differed from him, speaking respectfully and kindly of Robinson and his friends. Even when he is urging that their position logically requires the conclusion that there is nothing that defiles, no sin, in the visible Church, he regards this as an inconsistency on their part. "This," he writes, "is the very doctrine of Anabaptists though we know our dear brethren hate that Sect and their Doctrine." And in his preface he says: "I heartily desire not to appear as an adversary to the holy, reverend, and learned Brethren who are sufferers for the truth, for there be wide marches betwixt striving and disputing. *Why should we strive? for we be Brethren,* the Sons of one father, the born Citizens of one mother Jerusalem. To dispute is not to contend. We strive as we are carnal, we dispute as we are men, we war from our lusts, we dispute from diversity of star-light and day-light." [1]

[1] [*The Due Right of Presbyteries or a Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland*: Lond. 1644, chap. ix. § 9, p. 267. To the Reader, p. ii.]

Some of the references to Scripture made by the Separatists really tell against themselves. They made the watchfulness of the officers of the Jewish temple to prevent any ceremonially unclean persons entering its sacred precincts, a type of the watchfulness which officers of the Christian Church should show in guarding it from the entrance of any that are sinful. But it is unquestionable that this uncleanness was an outward thing which could be seen and reported upon. Then again, they quote the passage from the Revelation in which the inhabitants of the city of God are described as all holy, while without are dogs,[1] whereas it is manifest that this cannot be applied to the visible Church, but only to the Kingdom of Glory, which is the Church invisible. Indeed many of the objections made by Robinson and his party against what seems to them the only alternative to their own doctrine really apply not to the Protestant doctrine maintained by Rutherfurd, but only to the Romish doctrine. Thus we find Robinson admitting that the purest Church on earth may consist of good and bad in God's eye. This surely is precisely what Rutherfurd and the Scottish divines generally contend for. But the English Puritan goes on to say that the question is about the true and natural members whereof the Church is orderly gathered, and that it would be bad divinity to make ungodly persons the true matter of such, and profaneness a property of the same, simply because many seeming saints creep in. This is a supposition

[1] [Apoc. xxii. 11-15.]

that no one in the least measure acquainted with the views of Rutherfurd and his school could for a single moment entertain. Who would ever dream of the Scottish divine making ungodliness and profaneness notes of members of the Church, or even admitting to the communion of the Church those whose outward walk gives evidence of ungodliness or profanity? Further, in his treatise on the *Justification of Separation*[1] we find Robinson saying: "All the Churches that ever the Lord planted consisted of good only, as the Church of the angels in heaven and of mankind in paradise. God hath also these same ends in creating and restoring His Churches, and if it were the will of God that persons *notoriously* wicked should be admitted into the Church then should God directly cross Himself and His own ends, and should receive into the visible covenant of grace such as were not of the visible estate of grace, and should plant such in His Church for the glory of His name as served for no other use than to cause His name to be blasphemed." Now here again it is quite evident that *notoriously* wicked persons are kept out of the visible Church just because the notoriousness of their wickedness has made that wickedness visible.

All this confusion arises in consequence of the refusal to acknowledge the distinction between the Church as it is visible and as it is invisible, in a thorough going manner. It is one of the grand excellences of the Scottish doctrine of the Church

[1] [A Justification of Separation from the Church of England, 1610.]

that this distinction is very clearly marked and most logically and consistently carried out. We can avoid the inconsistency of admitting on the one hand, that hypocrites and evil men may be in the purest churches on earth, and yet, on the other hand, claiming for the Church militant all the attributes of faultlessness and perfect holiness, only when we make the former statement with reference to the visible Church and the latter with reference to the Church as invisible.

A question has been raised as to the value and validity of this distinction of the visible and invisible Church. It may be disputed whether the phrase invisible Church is not a contradiction in terms. Is not a church *essentially* something visible, even though it may be that the qualities by which men are constituted members of it are in themselves invisible? Their faith, their saintliness, their spirituality are all hidden graces, but the men in whom these are present are visible and any association they may form is a visible thing. A church is a *coetus hominum*, whether we think of it as a *coetus electorum* or as a *coetus vocatorum*. An invisible association is nothing real. It is not conceivable as an association, for so soon as a uniting principle is introduced the quality of visibility necessarily appears. It can be nothing more, therefore, than an abstract ideal. While our Scottish divines used the terms visible and invisible to indicate the distinction of which we are now speaking, it is quite evident they did not employ them in a physical acceptation. All that they meant was

that the inward graces and spiritual qualities which are essential to membership in the Church before God are in themselves incognisable by any human faculty and cannot therefore be the condition of membership in any community formed by the association of a greater or less number of men. "It is not a distinction," says Brown of Wamphray, "of a genus into species, for then the Church would not be one, nor is it a distinction of a whole into its parts, as if one part of the Church were visible and another invisible; and yet, though this distinction does not make two churches, many things are said about the Church and attributed to it on account of the faithful and effectually called who are members of the Church as it is invisible, which do not apply to all the members of the visible Church."[1] If this is borne in mind we shall be able to distinguish in Scripture those passages which speak of the Church as made up of a company of elect believers and those which speak of it as composed of a company of persons who have been called and who profess the true religion. The latter is the Church in which a place is found for Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira and such like; the former is the Church which Christ sanctifies, and presents at last to God holy and without blemish.

It says much for the intellectual sanity, the level headedness of our Scottish divines that they were not driven by their polemic against Rome to any under-

[1] [Contra Wolzogium et Velthusium. Amstelodam, 1670]. Præfatio, 115, *et seq.*

valuing of the visible Church. Rome had recognised only the visible Church on earth. The only invisible Church according to Romanists was the Church triumphant which had been visible, or the Church of the unborn which would yet be visible. To the opponents of such teaching there was presented undoubtedly a great temptation to say that this visible Church, in large sections of which during many ages there might not be even one sincere believer, was no true Church at all. This was what the sectaries and separatists among the Independents as well as the Anabaptists actually said. But the Scottish presbyterians, on the contrary, while pressing the idea of the invisible Church against the Romish denial of it, insist, in opposition to the Separatists, upon the real existence of the visible Church as a true Church. The Church visible, they said, is properly enough called such, because the parts of which this whole is made up are visible, and while the elect are members of it they are such not as elect but as called. This visible company is the field in which not only good wheat, but also tares are seen, it is the household in which there are not only vessels unto honour, but also vessels unto dishonour. It is in this visible Church that the word is preached, the sacraments administered, and discipline exercised, for to it Christ gave the ministry and all the sacred ordinances as means of grace for the ingathering and binding together of the saints. By recognising at the same time the idea of the invisible Church they escaped

the absurdity into which the Romanists, for want of this distinction, were led of claiming for this Church, properly distinguished only by external notes, that holiness and that infallibility which could rationally be postulated only of those who have the internal qualifications and graces which are invisible.

In dealing with the Puritans, Rutherfurd, Brown, and the other Scottish divines manifested great tenderness and patience, not only because they recognised them as holy men and fellow sufferers for the truth, but also because they had much sympathy with their zeal for the purity of the Church and a strong revulsion from that laxity of discipline and irreligious indifferentism against which they had been driven vehemently to protest. We must beware of being driven by a reaction against the gross exaggerations too generally current of the severity and sternness of our covenanting forefathers in matters of discipline, into an equally unjust and incorrect representation of their principles, as if they were not earnest in heart and soul to secure as far as possible purity of doctrine and consistency of life among the members of the visible Church. This was the injustice to which Rutherfurd and his friends were actually subjected by their critics among the more extreme sectaries and independents.

It has always seemed to me that the misunderstanding of the Scottish doctrine of the Church on the part of English separatists was very similar to that which at present exists on the part of evangelical perfectionists in regard to the position of those who hold that Chris-

tian perfection is an ideal not fully attained unto by any, but very energetically and devoutly to be striven after by all. The Covenanters were just as anxious as any of the English brethren could be that the membership of the visible Church should correspond with the membership of the invisible, that the hypocrites in it, who were seemingly good but really bad, should become in reality as well as in appearance good; but they reverently and rightly shrank from putting themselves in God's place or attempting to snatch from Him His distinguishing prerogative by sitting in judgment, not on the outward conduct merely but on the secret thoughts and intents of the heart. The cause of this antagonistic attitude towards the Scottish divines on the part of men who were in principle and heart at one with them was a confusion of mind which, in the circumstances, was, to some extent, explainable if not altogether excusable. Anyone who reads the writings of the Separatists of the Puritan period, the writings of men who had recoiled from the externalism of the Romish corruptions which made a merely verbal profession of adherence to the Christian creed the one condition of membership, but who had no intention of adopting the Anabaptist position as to an absolutely pure visible Church, will see that they are constantly confusing the Church as it is invisible and as it is visible, and that they insist upon judging the Church visible by the marks that belong only to the Church invisible.

A very little consideration will show that extreme

care must be taken if, on the one hand, we are to avoid the mistake of the Separatists who sought to determine membership in the visible Church by the possession of invisible grace, and, on the other hand, to avoid reverting to the latitudinarianism of the Romish Church which made the profession of faith a purely formal and external affair.

The Scottish divine who does this more elaborately and clearly than any other is Brown of Wamphray. He argues strenuously against the idea that true and saving grace is to be regarded as of the essence of the Church as it is visible. He shows that if this be assumed, certain absurd results will of necessity follow. The administration of the word in the visible Church cannot be the ordinary means instituted by God for the conversion of sinners, if it be assumed that already all the members of the visible Church are converted and in possession of true faith. It would also follow that pastors should not present to their congregations anything calculated and intended to awaken the conscience of their hearers or aim at the conversion of any of them, but should only address the converted for their edification, confirmation and comfort; that Christ never appointed pastors for the collecting and ingathering of souls; and that faith does not come by preaching and hearing. The consequence of such a theory would also be to exclude many truly pious persons who are like bruised reeds and smoking flax, and who cannot articulately declare the mode and method by which they were converted to God, or who

by reason of certain vexing corruptions can scarcely bear judgment being passed upon their state by man. Further, on this theory it seems hard to say where the exercise of church discipline can come in. Those who are held to be destitute of grace are to be excommunicated, or, as graceless persons, they are to be regarded as non-members, whereas the openly wicked, of whom alone, judged by their works it can be safely said that they are destitute of grace, cannot be excommunicated, because those who are without are not to be judged by the Church. The members of the Church are not to be judged because as such they are pious, and the impious are also exempt because they are outside of the Church. If however, excommunication has been exercised upon anyone then, when he is restored, he must be rebaptized, because his excommunication proceeded on the ground that he was destitute of grace, that he had been no true member of the Church, and that his former baptism was null, in fact no baptism at all. And thus, however little they intended it, and however little they wished it, those holding this theory of church membership would be in consistency obliged in the end to adopt the most objectionable and the most revolutionary conclusions of the Anabaptists.

In view of these palpable absurdities and confusions to which the Separatist theory necessarily led, Brown stoutly maintained that saving grace is not of the essence of the visible Church as such. And in this contention he has with him, not only all the other

great Scottish divines, but all the leading Reformed theologians, from whose writings he quotes the clear statements of Amesius and Trelcatius—the former still well remembered by theological students, the latter probably unknown to most, but in his day a famous exegetical professor in Leyden, colleague of Junnius and Gomarus, and teacher of Vossius.[1] These divines were careful to distinguish the *coetus electorum* from the *coetus vocatorum*, and to insist that the visible Church is made up not of the elect as such but of the called.

I suppose there never was a body of men who regarded the partaking of what they called "sealing ordinances" with more reverential awe than did the old Scottish covenanters, or who were more intensely anxious that these ordinances should not be profaned by anyone coming forward thoughtlessly and without preparation. But they did not commit the mistake of narrowing their notion of Church membership so as only to include those whom they would admit to the Lord's Table. On the contrary they regarded these as forming only a part of the visible Church, so that what is distinctive about them, the declaration that they are possessed of saving grace, is not necessary to their admission into the membership of the Church. In other words, church membership is something wider than the list of communicants. It is out of the Church membership that communicants are drawn.

[1] [Trelcatius *Loci Communes Theologiae*, *Opuscula Theologica Omnia*.]

And yet it would be wrong to say that in these old Scottish books we find two different kinds of Churches distinguished—such a distinction as is often popularly represented by the figure of two concentric circles, of which the inner one represents the Church of those who are professedly regenerate, and the outer one that and in addition also the company of those who, without any such profession, wait upon the preaching of the word and enjoy other advantages that arise from a purely external atttachment to the Church. They simply say that so far as Church membership goes we have nothing to do with this distinction. It is not the profession of the possession of grace, but only the waiting upon the ordinances of grace that makes one a member of the Church. In short, the Church of Rutherfurd and Brown was made up of all baptised adherents, all, that is to say, of Christian descent, who continue to frequent the preaching of the word.

It might very naturally be objected that the Church membership here insisted upon was unreal and purely formal. In answer to this Brown calls attention to the distinction between calling and election. Many are called who are not chosen, and therefore not regenerate. But though calling in such a case may not he saving, it is yet proper to the Church and real because given forth by God and it produces real results even though these be not saving. Besides not only the truely pious, but others also have a certain relation to Christ as Head of the visible Church, for

from Him they have gifts, they are truly baptised, they truly exercise the ministry, are the object of ecclesiastical discipline, and so members of the Church or citizens and subjects of Christ.

But while the Scottish divines regarded it as extremely important thus to emphasise the significance of what in itself might be nothing more than an external and formal connection with the Church, they are very far from saying that such a merely nominal connection, when it is evidently and demonstrably nothing more, can be regarded as a real Church membership. They are careful to maintain that he only is truly a member of the visible Church who *seriously* professes the Christian religion and subjects himself to the institutions of Christ. Seriously, they say, not feignedly, theatrically or openly hypocritically, although there may not be any gracious sincerity or heart conversion. It is not right that anyone should be excluded or treated as a non-member, if only he makes such a profession, although he is not regenerate, nor to say of anyone on the sole ground or consideration that he is not regenerate that he is therefore not a member. And let us remember that no one could possibly have a more profound sense of the need of regeneration than Brown and Rutherfurd, who are thoroughly agreed in affirming that the fact of regeneration cannot be made a note or an essential requirement of Church members. In support of his position Brown advances five arguments.

(1) God desires even unregenerate persons to be

received into His Church that they may become regenerate, for the visible Church is like a workshop or laboratory (*officina*); (2) Pastors in the visible Church are the instruments of conversion and regeneration; (3) Formerly proselytes were admitted into the Jewish Church on making such a profession; (4) Such a profession makes one a disciple; (5) Such a profession was deemed sufficient in the times of the Apostles.[1]

The principle upon which all the Scottish divines who deal with this question proceed is a strictly and severely logical one, namely, that the notes of a visible Church must all be visible. If the distinction of visible and invisible is to be maintained in the doctrine of the Church it must constantly be remembered that what is invisible is accidental to the one, and that what is visible is accidental to the other. Only invisible grace is essential to the one and only visible profession is essential to the other. Possibly Rutherfurd pressed the consequences of this distinction too far. I cannot help feeling that he did not consider so carefully as Brown did the part which the individual conscience must play in a profession of any kind. So persistently did he follow up the idea of the purely external character of membership in the visible Church that he did not scruple to say that the civil authority might and should compel men to enter the membership. "Now seeing," he writes, "time, favour of men, prosperity

[1] Contra Wolzogium et Velthusium, Praefatio, Sect. 8.

accompanying the gospel, bring many into the Church, so the magistrate may compel men to adjoin themselves to the true Church."[1] In another work and in another connection he argues that religion in the sense of a saving acceptance of Christ cannot be compelled "by the dint and violence of the sword," but that negatively the magistrate may and should punish acts of false worship in those that are under the Christian Magistrate and profess Christian Religion." And by a somewhat singular casuistry he adds that the magistrate "does not command these outward performances as service to God, but rather forbids the omissions of them as destructive to man; he may punish omissions of hearing the doctrine of the gospel and other external performances of worship, as these omissions, by ill example or otherwise, are offensive to the souls of those that are to lead a *quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*"[2] It is evident that Rutherfurd could thus persuade himself of the righteousness of compulsion by the magistrate because he believed that one who was prevented saying anything against the Christian faith and peremptorily made to attend the preaching of the gospel was, by external performances which he

[1] *A Peaceable and Temperate Plea*, p. 111.

[2] *A Free Disputation* against pretended Liberty of Conscience, p. 51. ["Carnal weapons are not able, yea, nor were they ever appointed of God, to ding down strongholds, nor can they make a willing people . . . the sword is no means of God to force men *positively* to external worship; but the sword is a means negatively to punish acts of false worship. The magistrate does not command religious acts as service to God, but rather forbids their contraries as disservice to Christian societies," pp. 50-52.]

was not allowed to omit, constituted a member of the visible Church.

There is a difference between the earlier and the later Scottish doctrine of Church membership. The difference may be seen in the most convincing and interesting manner when we place side by side the twelfth chapter of Rutherfurd's *Peaceable Plea*, the title of which is put in the form of a question: "Whether or no do some warrantably teach that Baptism should be administered only to infants born of one at least parent known to be a believer and within the covenant, and who are to be admitted to the Lord's Supper?" and Boston's Sixth Question in the *Miscellanies*, entitled, "*Who have right to Baptism and are to be baptised?*"[1]

Rutherfurd begins the answer to his question by calling attention to the distinction between an inherent and a covenant holiness, which latter simply gives a right to the means of salvation; and then to the further distinction between those who are in the covenant by faith in Christ, according to the election of grace, and those who are there by profession as hearers of the word and members of the visible Church. He distinguishes a holiness of the nation or people from a holiness of the single person, a federal or covenant holiness *de jure*, such as goes before baptism in the infants born in the visible Church and a holiness *de facto*, a formal holiness after they are baptised. He maintains that the sins

[1] *Miscellany Questions*, 1767, p. 410.

of the immediate parents cannot exclude their children from the mercy of the covenant or from the seals of that mercy. He proceeds further to show how the seed of those who are within the covenant is differentiated from the seed of those outside the covenant by the enjoying of God's promise to be the God of the seed of His people, and by the assurance that the branches will be regarded as holy which spring from a holy root. He argues that the objection that only the infants of those who are in communion with some particular Church or congregation have a right to baptism proceeds from a wrong statement of the difference between Church communion and Christian communion. According to Rutherfurd, Christian communion carries with it the privilege of baptism. "Baptism," he says, "is not like Burgess freedom in a city. A man may be a free citizen in one town or city and not be such to have right to the privileges of all other cities; but he who is Christ's freeman in one Church hath Christian freedom and right to communion thereby in all Churches." To all, therefore, who have Christian communion, that is, to all who are in the widest sense within the covenant, the privilege of the seal of the covenant belongs. Just as all were circumcised who were born of circumcised parents within the Church of the Jews, so all are to be baptised who are born of Christian and baptised parents professing the faith. The text (1 Cor. vii. 14) which speaks of the unbelieving husband or wife and seems to require believing on the part of one parent if the

children are not to be unclean, he explains by regarding the unbelieving parent as a pagan or an unconverted Jew. The condition of covenant holiness for the children is simply that at least one parent be a Christian by profession, a hearer of the word of the Gospel.

While Rutherfurd contended for this wideness in the administering of baptism, he was very far from favouring any laxity of practice in regard to admission to the full communion of the Church by participation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. When it is a matter of admitting to the Communion Table he insists that only those are to be received of whom we judge that they are capable of examining themselves and have actually done so, that they can discern the Lord's body, and in the acting of faith show the Lord's death. This, he observes, at once debars infants and children, ignorant and scandalously flagitious persons, and insane people. The Lord's Supper is a seal of spiritual growth in Christ, presupposing faith and the new birth, so that to the openly profane and unbelieving it is not a necessary nor a possible means of salvation, for the elements are no more nourishing to an unbeliever than bread and wine would be to a dead man. But even in regard to the ordinance of the Supper, Rutherfurd is careful to declare that he does not make evidence of conversion a condition of admission. And so the Church passes no judgment on any man's spiritual state, but only on his visible profession and outward walk. Church officers may not seek to go beyond Apostles who

received Ananias and Sapphira, Demas, Hymenæus and Alexander, having them for a space in the communion of the Church, until they themselves went out of it, showing that they were not of it.

Turning now to Boston, we find him assuming an attitude utterly opposed to that of Rutherfurd. In his time a cold formalism had spread widely over the Church. The boundaries between the Church and the world were broken down. Many of the more spiritual men of that age, from among whom sprang the Marrow men, and those who sympathized with them, recoiled from the undisguised worldliness of the visible Church, and applied what had formerly been referred to it to the company of visible *believers*. All who were not Turks or Pagans or Jews had been called Christians, so that Boston could speak of openly wicked Christians, profane and grossly ignorant Christians. Now he raises the question whether those who could claim only the negative qualification of not being Turks or Jews or Pagans should have the right, *in foro ecclesiae*, of baptism for their children. Boston quotes from Zanchius,[1] a distinguished Calvinistic divine of the latter half of the sixteenth century. In his large doctrinal commentary on Ephesians he had maintained that in determining who are to be baptized the impiety of the nearest relatives is not to be considered, but the piety of the Church in which they

[1] ["The first parcel of books I got added to my small library, was in the year 1702. . . . Among these were Zanchy's works, and Luther on the Galatians, which I was much taken with." Memoirs, Period viii., 1700-1707.]

are born, as also that of their ancestors who have lived godly or holily. Bowles, Fullwood, and Baxter had all spoken in a similar strain. Boston summarises their arguments under eight heads. He does this in a style that might serve as an object lesson to modern controversialists. Without note or comment or even a single interjected critical remark he presents the arguments of the ablest defenders of this thesis with all possible fulness and force as though he were stating his own position. In form the arguments are mostly those of English and Continental divines of the strictly Calvinistic school. It is indeed rather remarkable that throughout his long and elaborate discussion of the subject of baptism, Boston does not once name Rutherfurd, although he shows his familiarity with his writings by quoting him freely in treatises on repentance and forgiveness. But in substance the arguments quoted by Boston are just those relied upon by Rutherfurd. Having stated them he proceeds to give reasons why he cannot accept them. He argues that on the principles professed by such divines even unbaptized parents may have baptism for their children, as also those whose ancestors for generations may have been known to have been grossly ignorant and profane, so that the God in whose name the infant is to be baptized is a God whom neither they nor their fathers have known. It would give right of baptism to children of some Pagans and Mohammedans whose remote ancestors may have been Christians. If the principle of regarding children from the standpoint

of their remote ancestry be consistently carried out, no children under heaven could be denied the ordinance. From this *reductio ad absurdum* Boston concludes that children derive their right to baptism not from their progenitors, but only from their immediate parents. His own position is expressed in the following propositions: (1) the children's right to privileges *coram ecclesiae* rests in the same person or persons by whom they fall. (2) The children of the promise are those whose parents have repented. (3) God's threatening of punishment to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him implies that each successive generation is ungodly. (4) That the children are unclean unless either the husband is sanctified by the believing wife or the wife by the believing husband shows that they derive their right to baptism from their immediate parents. (5) Children of ungodly parents as a cursed seed have no right to the seals of the covenant. Having thus cleared the way, Boston proceeds to discuss the question as to what qualifications are necessary in parents in order that they may claim from the Church the baptism of their children. He at once lays down the position that no children but such as have at least one parent *a visible believer* have any right to baptism before the Church. He casts ridicule upon every other interpretation of the phrase "born within the Church," [1] and

[1] ["The promise is made to believers and their seed, and the seed and posterity of the faithful, *born within the Church*, have by their birth, interest in the covenant, and right to the seal of it." *Westminster Directory for Publick Worship.*]

adduces an argument in favour of his own position under ten heads.

In carrying on his argument Boston is brought face to face with the question as to whether any difference should be made in regard to the qualifications for the Lord's Supper and for Baptism. We have seen how emphatically Rutherfurd insisted that a distinction should be made, and that many who must be rejected from partaking of the Lord's Supper might have a right to have baptism administered to their children. Boston, on the other hand, maintains that if the parents have no right to the table of the Lord then their infants have none to the ordinance of baptism. A distinction had been made between a *jus ad rem* and a *jus in re.* Thus Israelites as such had a right to the Passover, but if unclean they were debarred from enjoying the right. So some are habitually scandalous and have never given probable evidence of sincerity, but others have at one time given such evidence, though they have fallen into scandal. To these latter, even although they have not yet given evidence of repentance, Boston was willing to allow the right of baptism. He distinguished a visible state from a visible frame, and attached the right of baptism to the former. It might be said indeed that children have a right of their own ; but evidence of that right before the Church is only from the parents. And so, although the child of a profane parent may have the Spirit and thus have this right before the Lord, he has no

visible right, and, therefore, none before the Church until he is able to manifest it by his own life and profession.

Finally, Boston urges the practical advantages that attend the working out of his theory of Church membership. If profane parents, who are often anxious to obtain baptism for their children, are granted the privilege they are likely to be hardened in their impiety, and the Church is mocked by vows taken without serious intention of fulfilling them; whereas, if they are debarred, it may bring them to the performance at least of the external duties of religion, and even to the exercise of true faith and repentance. In regard also to the children themselves when they come to understand how their parents have lived, and that notwithstanding they had obtained baptism for them, they will be inclined to despise religion as an unreal thing; whereas refusal of baptism for their parents' wickedness may lead them to serious thought of God and spiritual things. And even upon others, especially those beginning family life, the effect will be most salutary if they know that it is really expected of those who receive the privilege that they be true believers and so qualified for training their children by word and life for God.

Rutherfurd and Boston were led to their respective and conflicting theories of the Church and membership in it by their evangelical sympathies and their longings for the salvation of sinners. To Rutherfurd

it seemed that the hearing of the word was so great a privilege, marking off a highly favoured class from those who did not hear because they had no preacher. Those who availed themselves of this privilege enjoyed therein already the *calling* of God. When God so favoured them it was surely the part of Church officers, who are labourers together with God, to treat them as within the circle of their care, and by the means of grace to endeavour that that calling should become to them effectual.

Boston's protest was against formalism and indifference. If hearing is not mixed with faith, of what avail is it? It was the agonized cry of a man yearning after reality. Men seemed to lull themselves into security and a false peace, and as mere hearers without faith, they sought to satisfy themselves, and even boasted that they were the temple of the Lord. Boston thought to give them a rude awaking. They are not of God's Church at all. Until they believe their place is with the pagans and the infidels. Was there not a note of impatience here? Rutherfurd would not shut them out until, like Simon Magus, Demas, the Antichrists who vexed St John, they went out of themselves by doing something that afforded visible evidence that they were not of God.

LECTURE III.

CHURCH UNITY—THE SIN OF SCHISM.

Our Scottish divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a singularly high and clear conception of the unity of the Church. The visible Church was with them the Church catholic. Melville, Rutherfurd, Brown, Gillespie, Durham, and all the rest, though their whole lives were spent in protests against ceremonial impositions and doctrinal defections, reiterate and emphasize the statement that the whole visible Church is one. They were scrupulous enough and watchful against any sort of connivance in acts of worship which they thought idolatrous, or in expressions of doctrine which they regarded as false; but in no case could they tolerate the idea of breaking away from the communion of the Catholic Church. They had a way of distinguishing between separation *in* and separation *from* the Church to which we shall afterwards advert. Meantime we shall look a little more particularly at the manner in which they express their doctrine of the catholicity of the visible Church.

It is interesting to observe the earnest way in which the Scottish Covenanters, so often maligned for their intolerance, and held up to public ignominy as the very incarnation of obscurantist narrowness, insist

upon the universality of the Church, and the oneness of all, in every place and under all names, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Historians and literary men have talked and still talk in their ignorance of our great Scotsmen—Knox, Melville, Henderson, Rutherfurd, Boston—as if their conduct, their thinking and their writing were so hopelessly provincial that the very mention of their names in those enlightened days required an apology. With certain popular writers of the day, some of whom at least wish to pass for serious historians, animus against the whole class of reformers and covenanters is boasted of as though these were the indispensable conditions for the writing of a fair and reliable history. Those who do this, or those who applaud their so-called histories, are always eager to find out in works which record facts unpalatable to them, instances of what may seem prejudice against their heroes and in favour of those whom they calumniate. I could easily enumerate sober, impartial historians who tell the actual truth about these men and their times. But I feel that I would serve the cause of truth better if I could persuade students to read for themselves and at first hand the works of these great men. It is a serious, but by no means impossible, task. I have said in my first lecture that there is much in the form of these writings that is repulsive, and I have showed you that not only are the printing and paper and exterior of the volumes fitted to cause irritation, but that there is much in the composition, plan, and arrangement of

most of heir productions that no modern reissue of them could make them popular or even generally readable. Still, anyone who will brace himself to the task will find it profitable and informing. He will rise from it with a new conception of the character of his ecclesiastical forefathers, with a fairer and more intelligent appreciation of their qualities of head and heart, he will know them as liberal and wise, combative and uncompromising only in the interests of truth and righteousness.

In the doctrine of the Church they were not, as we are often told they were, insularly Scotch. National or particular Churches—those of Scotland, of England, of France, and so on—were simply provinces of a great empire, the universal visible Church of God on earth. They were not regarded as so many species belonging to one genus, but they were parts of an integral whole—*totum integrale*—so that the qualities that were essential in the whole were essential in each part. Hence any ecclesiastical action of a particular or national Church was regarded as the action of the universal visible Church.[1] Brown of Wamphray sets

[1] ["The visible Church, in the idea of the Scottish theologians, is catholic. You have not an indefinite number of Parochial, or Congregational, or National Churches, constituting, as it were, so many ecclesiastical individualities, but one great spiritual republic, of which these various organisations form a part. The visible Church is not a genus, so to speak, with so many species under it. It is thus you may think of the State, but the visible Church is a *totum integrale*, it is an empire. The Churches of the various nationalities constitute the provinces of this empire; and though they are so far independent of each other, yet they are so one, that membership in one is membership in all, and separation from one is separation from all. . . . This con-

forth this view with admirable completeness, and with wonderful conciseness, in two small pages of a work already referred to.[1]

To this universal visible Church, with the oracles and institutions committed to it, Christ has given the ministry for the purpose of the gathering together and perfecting of the saints from among men, to the end of the world. And as this ministry is one, so also the Church is one. It is simply by accident, because all cannot be gathered together in one place, that several particular churches came to be formed. Whosoever, therefore, is a member in any one of these particular churches, in communion with it in the worship of God, is in the communion of the catholic visible Church. Rutherfurd and others of his school linger fondly over this point, and Brown gives more space to the reiteration of this statement than to anything else in the section of his controversial treatise devoted to the subject, evidently impressed with a sense of its practical importance. Members of the visible Church catholic or universal might be members of the Church of Scotland because they were born, and had lived, in Scotland. Had they been born in France and lived there, they would have been members of the Church of France. But if a member of that Church came to Scotland, he would be recognised as

ception of the Church, of which, in at least some aspects, we have *practically* so much lost sight, had a firm hold of the Scottish theologians of the seventeenth century." Dr James Walker in *The Theology of Theologians of Scotland.* Lecture iv. pp. 95-6.]

[1] *Contra Wolzogium et Velthusium.* Præfatio, § 23.

a Church member; and a member of the Church of Scotland in France would expect to be received of right as a member there. This shows how far from the principles of our covenanting fathers those have strayed who regard their communion table not as that of the universal or catholic Church, not even as that of the national Church, but simply as that of their denomination, to which none are to be received who do not join their particular communion. Brown and Rutherfurd would have denounced such as sectaries and separatists.

The same principle applies to membership through baptism. If any one has been solemnly received into the membership of a particular church by baptism, he is thereby admitted, not merely into that particular church, but into the membership of the universal visible Church.[1] Indeed it is into the membership of that universal Church that the child is admitted by baptism primarily and according to the order of nature. Hence, not only those who are joined together in one particular church, but all the members of all churches are brethren. They are all partakers of one and the same calling, and all have been received into the same outward covenant. The same gospel, with its promises, is offered to all.

From this it follows that there is to be no re-

[1] ["The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, *together with their* children." *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. xxv. § 11.]

baptizing. It ought to be remembered that in the history of the Church this question of rebaptizing proved one of the highest importance. It has been intimately connected with the question of Church unity with which we are now dealing. In Cyprian's time it was universally admitted that baptism should not be repeated. The only question that arose at this point was as to whether there had been any really valid baptism, a baptism worthy of the name. There were but two essential conditions to a valid baptism: it must be in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and it must be administered in a communion recognised as a branch of the Church of Christ. And it was on this question of what bodies are to be recognised as churches that Cyprian was led to construct his theory of the unity of the Church as a community bound together by an outward and visible bond, which has had such a mighty influence on the development of the papal claims.[1]

[1] ["The Bishop is the fountain of authority and centre of union in the Christian Church. The Bishop, the representative of the apostolic office, or the representative of Christ, within his own diocese, is the bond of life and order and unity in the Christian society. Such is the idea, first formally, perhaps, exhibited in the so-called Epistles of Ignatius, and more fully brought out in the writings of Cyprian. . . . The Pseudo-Ignatian and Cyprianic theory of the Church could only find its complete and consistent development in the Romish doctrine of one visible catholic society and one supreme head, under which all the inferior societies and authorities of a visible Episcopacy might unite. And hence the doctrine of the hierarchy embodied in the theory of Cyprian, grew, and was developed until it found its only consistent and perfect expression in the system of the Church of Rome.'" *The Church of Christ*, by Professor James Bannerman, D.D., vol. ii. part iv., chap. iii. pp. 251-2.]

Our Scottish theologians were so generous in their conception of what constitutes a true church of Christ that, keen as their antagonism to Rome of necessity was, they did not seek to unchurch her, or to treat her baptism as invalid. We might not have been surprised had they scrupled as to whether the priests of the Romish Church should be recognised as ministers of the word. But here again the recognition of the church in which they served as a branch of the Church of Christ, notwithstanding her manifold and grievous corruptions, weighed so heavily with them that they did not raise the question as to the validity of the orders of the priests of Rome. So little disposed were the divines of Scotland, and with them those of the Reformed Churches generally, to question the validity of baptism administered within any Christian Church that they even declined to pronounce baptism administered by a deposed minister invalid, and rather introduced a distinction, useful though somewhat fine, between a *valid* and a *lawful* baptism. The action of the deposed minister and the conduct of those receiving baptism at his hands was distinctly unlawful, but the baptism itself was valid, and as such could not be ignored. In the application of this distinction, however, they carefully restricted themselves to the recognition of baptism administered by those who had some claim to be recognised as men ordained by the Church. Women and laymen, who presumed, in accordance with Romish practice in cases

of emergency,[1] to dispense the ordinance, were not only themselves dealt with as profaners of the holy sacrament, but their action was regarded as invalid as well as unlawful. Any child who had received a so-called baptism from a woman or a layman must be presented in a regular way and receive baptism as a child not yet baptised.

It should not indeed be overlooked that the Scottish Confession of Faith of 1560 lays down two things as requisite to true baptism: (1) That it be ministered by lawful ministers, preachers of the Word, chosen thereto by some Kirk, and (2) that it be ministered in such elements and in such sort as God hath appointed. Then it proceeds to declare that Papistical ministers are no ministers of Christ Jesus, "Yea (which is more horrible) they suffer women, whom the Holy Ghost will not suffer to teach in the congregation, to baptize," and also they adulterate the Sacrament by using oil, salt, spittle, and such-like inventions of men.[2] And so in theory they make Romish baptisms not only unlawful but also invalid. In an exactly contemporary document, however, the First Book of Discipline, drawn up by the same six Reformers, it is only enjoined

[1] ["And quhensaever the tyme of neid chancis that the barne can nocht be brocht conveniently to a preist and the barne be feivit to be in peril of dede, than all men and women may be ministeris of Baptyme, swa that quhen thai lay wattir apon the barne, with that, thai pronunce the wordis of Baptyme intendand to minister that sacrament, as the kirk intendis." *The Catechism of John Hamilton*, 1552; The Sacrament of Baptyme, the fourt cheptour.]

[2] [Laing's Knox, vol. ii. chap. xxii. pp. 115, 116. Dunlop's *Collection*, vol. ii. pp. 84-86.]

that the introducers of these inventions be punished.[1] So far as appears, even from the beginning of the Reformation in Scotland, the idea of the unity of the Church so prevailed that even in regard to Romish baptism, against which so much could be said, only its lawfulness, but not its validity, was called in question.

The unity of the Church was further illustrated by this, that pastors when they are ordained are clothed with an office, not only in relation to those particular churches over which they are appointed, but primarily and in order of nature they are ordained in the Church catholic, and *in actu primo* are pastors of the universal visible Church. It was indeed emphatically declared in the Westminster *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government and of Ordination of Ministers*, approved by the General Assembly of 1645, that, "It is agreeable to the word of God, and very expedient, that such as are to be ordained ministers be designed to some particular church or other ministerial charge." Yet the ordination in itself is declared to be "the solemn setting apart of a person to some publick church office"; it is to the work of the ministry which, as we have seen, is given by Christ to the catholic visible Church.

It was regarded by Rutherfurd as one of the great offences of the sectaries, and at the same time a necessary consequence of their erroneous idea, that the Church consists simply of the body of believers

[1] [Laing's Knox, *Ut sup.* p. 187. Dunlop, *Ut sup.* p. 521. "Such as would presume to alter Christ's perfect Ordinance you ought severely to punish."]

meeting in one place, that they held that a minister cannot labour pastorally except over those who have called him, and that, should he be removed to another flock, he must there be not only chosen but also ordained anew. This matter is argued against the Independents by Rutherfurd in the seventeenth chapter of his *Peaceable and Temperate Plea for Paul's Presbytery.* The discussion there is very much about the seat of Church power, and the writer insists upon the distinction between the mystical and the ministerial Church. It is from the ministry that any man receives ordination, and the power bestowed is the same as that of those who confer it, and is not limited by the limitations of those who constitute the sphere to which he is immediately designed. Hence a congregation's forsaking of their minister by no means deprives him of his ordination. It must be observed, however, that in thus contending for the ecclesiastical as distinguished from the congregational theory of the ministry, Scottish theologians were not forgetful of the fact that it is for the Church that the ministry exists. It was just in consequence of their clear conception of the doctrine of the unity of the Church that our divines, holding that ordination is ordination to office in the Church universal, consistently upheld the view of the Reformers in opposition to that of the Papists that a ministry may be valid although irregular, that the observance of the ordinary rules must give way if necessary to the edification and well-being of the Church.

Again, this doctrine of Church unity involved the recognition by all churches of any disciplinary action of any particular church. This was regarded by our presbyterian fathers, not as a mere matter of inter-ecclesiastical courtesy, but as a matter of right. It was held that any offence which excluded one from the communion of any particular church excluded him from the communion of the whole Church. This, on theory at least, is admitted by all, so that when we find any disregarding it the ground on which they proceed, if they are pressed to give a reason for their conduct, is that they do not regard those who have exercised such discipline as constituting a branch of the Church of Christ. In short, no church can disregard the excommunication or other acts of discipline administered by any particular body until it has first unchurched that body.

Our own Church fathers had so firm a grasp of the doctrine of the unity of the Church that they would recognise the disciplinary acts even of a corrupt Church, if they were not exercised by the perpetuation of those corruptions against which they protested.

In all these several cases then, our divines in Scotland recognised in a thoroughly generous spirit the unity of the Church. The membership of baptised persons, the communion of those received to the table of the Lord, the orders of ministers regularly ordained to the pastoral office, and acts of discipline administered in particular churches were all conceived of by them as of obligation throughout the Church universal.

The idea of the Church was to them no mere vague generality, but the visible kingdom of God on earth, in which men of all nations and ranks had the gospel preached to them and the means of salvation put into operation on their behalf, in which all the members had the same recognised rights, to which also in a very real sense all the members of the particular churches belonged.

In regard to those particular churches which together constitute the one Catholic visible Church of Christ very definite and discriminating opinions were entertained. Brown of Wamphray refers to the fourth and fifth sections of the twenty-fifth chapter of the Westminster Confession, and adopts almost literally its admirable words:—"This Catholick Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and publick worship performed more or less purely in them. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to His will." This clearly raises the question as to what degree of impurity would warrant Christian men in ceasing to recognise a community of professing Christians as entitled to be reckoned a branch of the Church of Christ. It is evident that corruptions may so increase in a body

that was once acknowledged as a church that it may no longer be worthy of such a designation. In that case separation from it not only becomes allowable, it becomes a duty.

It is interesting to note how Rutherfurd, Brown, Gillespie, Durham, and generally all the best men of that school seek to multiply reasons against separation, and show themselves willing to bear the heaviest burdens and submit to the severest strain rather than take what to them is the most painful step in separating from communion with any body with which they had previously held church fellowship. Their dread of separation was not based on any merely speculative or abstract theorising. They had before them, in history ancient and modern, abundant evidence of its unhappy consequences. All these scholars were intimately acquainted with the history of the Novatian and Donatist schisms, and with all the deplorable details of the mad fanaticism of the German Anabaptists. In the proceedings even of contemporaries of their own, especially in England and New England, they saw to what revolutionary issues this separatist movement tended. Rutherfurd in particular had made a careful study of the history and teaching of the sectaries. He had met with some of them when he was attending the Westminster Assembly, and his *Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644) shows his familiarity with the writings of John Cotton and John Robinson. Indeed the subject seems to have had a wonderful fascination for him. He evidently regarded

the discussion as one of supreme importance for his own Church during that unsettled period when so many questions of an ecclesiastical description were agitating the public mind. It appears that for at least ten years the subject of separation in its causes and effects was more or less prominently before him. In 1648 he published a large and somewhat loosely compiled exposure of the wilder theories of the extremer sects—*A Survey of the Spiritual Antichrist.* The leaders of the Reformed movement in Scotland must have felt the danger of reaction among those who had been oppressed by ecclesiastical tyranny, and probably they had witnessed threatening movements and had heard dangerous mutterings against all constituted authority which made them tremble lest the last state of their Church might be, if that were possible, worse than the first. The fourth part of Durham's work on scandal[1] is entitled *Concerning Scandalous Divisions*, and here he distinguishes between heresy, schism, and division. All these are in different ways and degrees wounds of the unity of the Church. "Heresy is some error in doctrine, and that especially in fundamental doctrine, followed with pertinacity and endeavour to propagate the same,' whereby, as Hooker puts it, there is a loss of the bond of faith. "Schism may be where no heresy in doctrine is, but is a breaking of the union of the Church, and that communion which ought to be amongst the members thereof, and is either in govern-

[1] [Vide Lecture I. p. 48.]

ment or worship." "Division doth not at the first view differ from Schism," but applies to such "dissensions in the Church as are consistent with communion both in government and worship, and have not a divided government or worship following them, as in the former case." It may be either doctrinal or practical. Of the doctrinal sort "are the divisions that may be amongst godly and orthodox men in some points of truth, when they too vehemently press their own opinion to be received with a kind of necessity, or load the other with too many absurdities beyond what will follow from the nature thereof": practical divisions "do indeed imply some difference of opinion, but do also infer somewhat in practice." Of this latter sort "was the division about Easter in primitive times before it came to a Schism, some keeping one day, some another." These divisions have often been between good men on both sides. Durham instances the cases of Paul and Barnabas, and of Chrysostom and Epiphanius. Such divisions sometimes arise from "various and different apprehensions of truths that are less fundamental"; but most frequently "they are occasioned by a carnal and factious-like pleading for, and vindicating even of truth." The Glasgow theologian shows what manner of spirit he was of by censuring Pope Stephen for carrying his opposition to Cyprian so far as to endanger the unity of the Church by refusing communion to such as held with Cyprian that those who were baptised by heretics or schismatics ought again

to be baptised. According to the writer on Scandal no one should carry opposition even to an error like that of Cyprian so far as to "hazard the dividing and rending of the Church." And so he warmly commends Cyprian, who, because of the regard which he had for the unity of the Church, carried himself "meekly and condescendingly." When setting forth "the height of evil that division bringeth," Durham is led to observe that "although sometimes the fault may be more on one side than another yet seldom is any side free, at least in the manner of prosecution; and therefore often it turneth in the close to the hurt of both. The one side becomes more schismatical and erroneous, at least in many of their members: the other side more cold and secure in the practice of holiness, carnal and formal in pursuing ceremonies and external things, with less affection and life in the main, because the edge of their zeal is bended towards these differences."

In view of the terrible havoc wrought within and without the Church by all such breaches of unity every endeavour should be put forth to prevent a division being made and to heal it when it has taken place. "Never," writes Durham in a noble passage that well deserves to be quoted and pondered, "never did men run to quench fire in a city, lest all should be destroyed, with more diligence than men ought to bestir themselves to quench this in the Church; never did mariners use more speed to stop a leak in a ship, lest all should be drowned, than ministers especially, and

all Christian men should haste to stop this beginning of the breaking in of these waters of strife, lest thereby the whole Church be overwhelmed. And if the many evils which follow thereupon, the many commands whereby union is pressed, yea, the many entreaties and obtestations whereby the Holy Ghost doth so frequently urge this upon all, as a thing most acceptable to Him and profitable to us—if, I say, these and many other such considerations have not weight to convince of the necessity of this duty to prevent or heal a breach, we cannot tell what can prevail with men that profess reverence to the great and dreadful Name of God, conscience of duty, and respect to the edification of the Church and to their own peace at the appearance of the Lord in the great day, wherein the peace-makers shall be blessed, for they shall be called the children of God?" [1]

We shall, perhaps, best show how breaches of union may be prevented by considering the teaching of Scottish theologians as to what differences may exist and continue without giving just ground for division, or at least for refusing to maintain communion. And here we ought to notice at once that our covenanting forefathers, strict and even scrupulous as they were in regard to ceremonies in worship which had not the sanction of Holy Scripture, made the preaching of the word the principal, and sometimes, it would seem, almost the only absolutely indispensable note of the

[1] Durham on Scandal, Edin. 1659, pp. 313 f. [Part IV. chap. vi. p. 288, edition 1680.]

true Church. Hence they refused to unchurch any communion in which the word was preached, or to deny the name of a true Church to any body in which Christ was proclaimed as the Saviour, even though the proclamation might be very defective, and though it might be accompanied with many additions of doctrine that have no scriptural warrant, and with ceremonies which they could only regard as idolatrous. And so, as we shall see later on, and in fuller detail, they recognise the church standing even of the Church of Rome. Now if we only keep in mind the keenness of the opposition offered by these Reformers to the corruptions of the Papacy we shall understand, on the one hand, how strong their feeling was against causing any breach in the unity of the Church, and, on the other hand, how unhesitatingly they recognised the unique place which the preaching of the word occupied in the Church, so that where it was conserved the Church, in spite of all disadvantages and disfigurements, continued to exist.[1]

Our sixteenth and seventeenth century theologians clearly perceived that it is the preaching of the word,

[1] It is interesting to notice that in thus emphasising the importance of the preaching of the word our Scottish divines have the support of some of the most learned and most advanced of modern German theologians. "God's word," says Lipsius, "cannot be without God's people; where, therefore, the Gospel is rightly preached and the Sacraments rightly administered, there in the presence of the outward signs does faith mark also the invisible acting of God's Spirit. The regular presentation of the word in the widest sense is the one ordinance of the Church which is of divine right. All other ordinances are of human right and have nothing to do with the Christian Faith." *Die Hauptpunkte der Christlichen Glaubenslehre im Umrisse dargestellt*, Brunswick, 1891, p. 36. Comp. also *Lehrbuch der Evangelisch Protestanteschen Dogmatik*, Brunswick, 1876, pp. 820 f.

the announcement of salvation which is the distinctive message of that preaching, that forms the essential principle of the Church. By the hearing of the word men are made members of the visible Church, and by the receiving in faith of the word heard they are made members of the Church invisible. One great practical advantage of their doctrine of the visible Church is seen in the comprehensive view which it enabled them to take of the function of the preacher. I have seen it stated in some homiletical books that pastors of congregations ought to address themselves mainly to the edification of converted persons, that they ought to assume that the members and adherents of the Church are professedly, and in the judgment of charity regenerate, so that evangelistic appeals to the sinner can come only in by the way, be addressed, as it were, to casuals or those who in our country are called occasional hearers. But according to Scottish theology the minister is the sower whose field is the world, the visible Church, the members of which are simply hearers of the word, not necessarily distinguished as regenerate persons. The protestant principle of the unity of the Church, if intelligently held and applied, demands that prominence be given to the preaching of the word, inasmuch as that principle signifies, not an organic unity, but simply that which comes from the common presentation of the one message of grace. It is not only unpresbyterian, but it is antiprotestant to minimise, as in certain quarters is presently the fashion, the importance of

the sermon in public worship. It rests upon a conception of the Church entirely different from that of our reforming forefathers, to wit that the unity of the Church is to be found, not in the preaching of the gospel, but in the observance of a certain liturgical order. By common preaching rather than by common prayer the Church is one.

The leading theologians of Scotland found the principle of distinguishing between the presence of serious errors in a church, and the loss of all claims in the part of that body to be regarded as a true church, one of high practical value. On the strength of that distinction they laid down the fundamental position that while we must separate from all communion wherein we cannot but sin, this may be done without separating from the Church. There may be a partial or negative separation, one, that is to say, in regard to certain acts of public worship, in which we could not without sin take part. Rutherfurd gives as an example separation from an idolatrous communion where the sacramental bread is adored. The adoration of the material element makes the table of the Lord an idol's table; but while we must separate from that service we are not called upon totally or wholly to separate from hearing of the word, or from the prayers and praises of that erring Church.

It is well that at this point we should note the essential difference between the way in which our Reformers and Covenanters speak of the Church of

Rome and that in which Romanists and Anglicans refer to them. The universal catholic Church of Scottish Protestants embraces, as we have seen, all communions in which the gospel is preached, but that of Romish and Anglican churchmen consists only of those communions whose constitution is hierarchical and episcopal. Notwithstanding the attempts of amiable individuals in these Churches to express themselves in courteous and charitable terms towards those outside their pale, high churchmen speaking officially unchurch all other communions and treat them as sects not churches. This is the immediate and inevitable consequence of hierarchical principles. If the prelatic theory of the Church constitution be correct, if the possession of such a constitution is of the essence of the Church, then, of course, Presbyterians, established or non-established, and Congregationalists are members, not of the Church, but simply of societies for certain religious purposes. The non-hierarchical principles of the presbyterian Covenanters enabled them, nay rather obliged them to maintain that this belonged not to the essence of the Church, and that, therefore, communities which were hierarchical in principle and communities which were anti-hierarchical in constitution might both alike be recognised as true churches of Christ.

It is by no means unusual to hear our Scottish Presbyterian Church spoken of as narrow and sectarian, as advancing absolutist and exclusive claims with all the arrogance and narrowness of

hierarchical Rome against which she protested. It seems to me that this is an utterly false view of the matter, and that it has arisen from failing to appreciate and attend to the distinction to which reference has been made, that namely between the Church as a communion in which the word of God is preached, and that same communion proclaiming and practising errors, it may be of a very serious character. With these errors orthodox presbyterians can have no communion, but must protest against them and separate themselves from them. Nevertheless, this protest may not imply or necessitate a separation from the Church. This distinction was a very real and practical one. It enabled those who entertained it to think and speak graciously and tenderly of individual members of these churches which were most corrupt. It allowed them to perceive and acknowledge the presence of God's grace in the lives of many who along with fundamental doctrines joined much hay and stubble in their building. They unchurched no community which preaches Christ, not even Rome which unchurched them, nor the Separatists who unchurched them both. They repudiated the Romanist assertion that all separated from Rome are like withered branches severed from the tree; but they do not make a similar claim on their own behalf by asserting that those who separate from their communion are thereby separated from the one fount of life.

The charge of separation they threw back upon the

Romish Church. "Rome," says Samuel Rutherfurd, "made the separation from the Reformed Churches and not we from them, as the rotten wall maketh the schism in the house, when the house standeth still and the rotten wall falleth." [1] It was not Christianity that they left in Rome, but the leprosy of popery growing upon Christianity. They recognise too that in all the ages there were in the Romish Church representatives of evangelical truth, whose successors they claimed to be; they did not separate from Rome's baptism, nor even from its ordination of pastors according to the substance of the act, nor yet from the articles of the Apostles' Creed, nor from the contents of the Old and New Testaments, but only from the false interpretation of those who made themselves lords over the faith and the consciences of men.

The English Separatists brought a charge against Scottish Presbyterians that their ministers derived their ordination from Rome. The leading Reformers, they said, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and Knox, all had their orders from what they called antichrist, and so ministers, receiving ordination from them, had their calling from the same quarter. In answer to this Rutherfurd, after the example of some of the best continental divines, sets forth in detail the essential grounds of the calling and ordination of the first protestant Reformers. In their calling, he points out, there was something immediately from God; they were called to the ministry which is from Him. Then

[1] [*Peaceable and Temperate Plea*, p. 122.]

by the papal Church they were designed and ordained as pastors; and so, in the substance of it the act was of God, and in so far as she had to do with it the Church of Rome acted as a Christian Church. There were, no doubt, antichristian ceremonies in the way and manner in which the ordination was carried out, and those thus appointed to the ministry had taken an oath to maintain the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome. But this oath was essentially a promise to defend the truth—the truth doubtless of the Church as it then was—still always under the notion of truth. And so, when by spiritual illumination, they saw and renounced the error of the Church in their day, they still held the substance of their oath as obligatory and binding on their conscience. If the Roman Church were altogether antichristian, its ordination could not be regarded as in any sense conferring office in the Christian Church; a dead man cannot beget a living child. But the Roman Church was not like a dead man; it was like a sick or deformed man. It was not wholly antichristian, but kept some of Christ's truth, and that which is only in part antichristian may ordain ministers who have the true essence of a ministerial calling.

A very important step was thus taken in the direction of laying down a broad principle of Church unity, when the validity of ordinances such as baptism and ordination, which respectively admit to membership and office, was expressly recognised when administered in communities which had anything of

Christ in them. It is very much to the credit of our Scottish Presbyterians that they did not unchurch any community in which Christ was not altogether denied or ignored. And in regard to this they are all heartily agreed—not only Rutherfurd, Brown, and Durham, but even those Society men, Cameron, Cargill, Renwick, the authors of the *Informatory Vindication*, and the Rutherglen, Sanquhar and Lanark Declarations, men often represented as irreconcilables, exclusive, sectarian, and impracticable.

Some might be disposed to treat the declarations of Scottish Separatists as mere theorisings which were very glaringly contradicted by their practice. The Cameronians, Macmillanites, and the Society men generally, who claimed to represent the true Church of Scotland, were vehemently denounced as sectaries and charged with schismatical division, with recklessly, or at least needlessly rending the unity of the Church. There was no charge in regard to which they were more sensitive. There was no statement more persistently reiterated by them than this that the unity of the Church was most dear to them, that nothing was more abhorrent to them than the giving of any occasion to separation and the forming of sects. And that this was no mere sentiment, but the honest conviction of their hearts is shown by their generous recognition of the Church standing of all communities in which Christ was preached, to which we have just called attention, and also by the way in which they set themselves to explain how it came about that,

notwithstanding their appreciation of Church unity, they nevertheless refused to hold communion with many whose Church membership they acknowledged. In the first place they show in detail what errors and shortcomings they regard as insufficient to warrant separation ; and then what faults and corruptions are of such a nature as to justify and necessitate separation. We have already seen that they laid down the broad principle that they might and ought to separate only when their failing to do so could involve them in sin. We must now consider what they say in regard to that patient forbearance which must be exercised by members of the Church in order that they may be free from the charge of causing scandalous and sinful divisions.

Durham, in dealing with this subject, premises that there is no division among orthodox divines and Christians which may not be composed or healed, so as to make union possible. So, in endeavouring to bring about healing we must not insist upon agreement in every detail. Room must be made for many differences both in judgment and in practice. There may be differences of opinion with reference to persons, whether officers or members ; but to break away on that account would be to expect that the barn-floor should be without chaff. There may be defects in government, such as the sparing of corrupt officials and members, and even the unjust censuring of the guiltless, or the admission of the unfit to the ministry, yet these will not excuse schism and division. As

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea continued in the Jewish council, discountenancing the corrupt acts of their colleagues, so it is the duty of Christian men to remain in the Church even when seriously defective, dissenting and protesting against her defections. It may also be necessary to maintain communion notwithstanding defects in worship, measures of government and rules necessary for the management of the Church. So we find the Apostle urging the duty of union most strongly upon the members of the Church at Corinth, where many irregularities of worship and conduct prevailed. All such defects are to be remedied not by division but by union.

In seeking to determine more exactly what the defects are which should be put up with rather than to withdraw from Church communion, Durham lays down these six rules or considerations. "(1) What cannot warrant a breach where there is union, that cannot warrantably be the ground to keep up a division. Making up of a breach is no less a duty than preventing thereof; the continuing thereof is but the continuing in the same sin. (2) Such defects as do not make communion in a Church and in its ordinances sinful, will not warrant a separation or division from the same. There is no separation from a true Church in such ordinances as men may without sin communicate in, although others may be guilty therein. (3) Men may keep communion with a Church when their calling leadeth them thereto upon the one side and they have access to the discharge of the same

upon the other." A minister, for example, must follow the duties of his calling "whilst there is no physical or moral impediment barring him in the same and others being defective in their duty will not absolve him from his, which he oweth by virtue of his station. (4) While the general rules tending to edification, in the main, are acknowledged, union is to be kept, even though there be much failing in the application. (5) There may and ought to be uniting when the evils that follow division or schism are greater and more hurtful to the Church than the evils that may be supposed to follow in union." He speaks not of the "ills of sin, for the least of these are never to be chosen, but of evils and inconveniences that may indeed be hurtful to the Church in themselves, and sinful in respect of some persons, yet are not so to all. In such evils the lesser is to be chosen." Under this rule Durham utters many wise sayings. One sentence well deserves to be quoted and remembered. "The ills of division are most inevitable, for the ills that follow union, through God's blessing may be prevented, it is not impossible; but in the way of division it is because itself is out of God's way. (6) When men may unite without personal guilt or accession to the defects or guilt of others, there may and ought to be union, even though there be failings and defects of several kinds in a Church." Under this rule the author recognises three impediments such as "a tender conscience may be justly scared by from uniting. (1) If a person be put to condemn anything

he thinketh lawful in his own former practice, or the practice of others, or in some point of doctrine though never so extrinsic, if it be to him a point of truth. (2) If he be put to approve the deed and practice of some others which he accounteth sinful, or to affirm somewhat as truth which he doth account an error. (3) When some engagement is required for the future which doth restrain from any duty called for, or that may afterwards be called for." [1]

In order to find examples from the life and practice of the early Church to enforce and commend forbearance towards the weaker and faultier on the part of the stronger and sounder, Durham and his associates drew upon their stores of patristic learning. For a Council or Assembly to rescind a decision against a party without having received any satisfaction or acknowledgment of fault from that party cannot be an easy thing. And yet Augustine tells us how the bishops of Spain who had condemned Hosius,[2] did, on his acquittal by the French, fall from their first sentence lest they might cause a schism. Then Durham refers with warm and hearty approval to the conduct of the Church in bringing the Meletian schism to a close. In A.D. 361 two bishops were appointed to Antioch, Meletius and Paulinus. Although the prime movers in the appointments had been impelled by the supposed attitude of the rival bishops it was found that both were orthodox, and so their rival

[1] [*Concerning Scandal*, Part iv. chap. vii.]

[2] [Bishop of Cordova in Spain, member of the Council of Nice in 325.]

government and separate congregations were a serious scandal to the Church. Meletius made overtures in the interests of peace, proposing that Paulinus and he should be joint bishops, and that after the death of either the survivor should be sole possessor of the see. Paulinus, on the plea that his ordination was more in accordance with the ecclesiastical canons than that of Meletius, refused to acquiesce in the proposal. Accordingly he was accounted unworthy to govern such a church and was set aside, while Meletius, because of his consideration for church unity, was invested with the sole episcopal rank and government.

In a little book published anonymously, but now known to have been written by Bishop Gilbert Burnet, entitled *A Modest and Free Conference between a Conformist and Nonconformist*,[1] the Conformist, in answer to a statement of the Nonconformist that he will not quit one truth for the love of all men, acknowledges that if required to renounce what we judge the truth we must obey God rather than man, but declares that it is another thing to quit the communion of the Church because its teaching, according to our thinking, is not according to the truth, unless that truth denied in the Church is of greater importance than the articles of our creed, "the holy Catholick Church, the communion of saints."

To this M'Ward,[2] in his *True Nonconformist*:

[1] [*A Modest and Free Conference between a Conformist and Nonconformist, in seven Dialogues.* Glasgow, 1669.]

[2] [There are almost endless variations in the spelling of the name of this worthy Scot. Baillie, for example, has M'quard, Makquard,

Answere to the Conference (1671), replies that no true Nonconformists think they may quit the communion of the Church unless the difference be both real and in profession and practice, and also that it is not every real difference in these things they hold to be a sufficient cause of separation, nor do they hold that even where the cause is sufficient should separation always be carried to an extremity. On the contrary, says M'Ward, the sound and clear rule in the matter of church practice is that where the controverted difference is such as would render a conjunction therein either sinful or contagious, there a just and proportionate separation, precisely and with all tenderness commensurate to the exigence, is the safer course.

In the *Informatory Vindication*,[1] written, as is supposed by Renwick somewhere about 1686, all those belonging to the Societies disown a separation from communion with the Church of Scotland in her doctrine, worship, discipline, and government as she was in her purest and best days, and only oppose the

Macquare, M'Quare. In Wodrow's *History* he figures as M'Vaird; in the *Analecta* as Macwaird, and in the *Correspondence* as M'Ward. Robert M'Ward, a Regent in the College, and afterwards a minister in the City of Glasgow, was ejected at the Restoration, retired to Holland, and died an exile in December 1681.]

[1] ["An Informatory Vindication of a poor, wasted, misrepresented remnant of the Suffering, Anti-popish, Anti-prelatic, Anti-erastian, Anti-sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, united together in a General Correspondence. By way of reply to various Accusations, in Letters, Informations, and Conferences, given forth against them." This tractate was the most important of all the documents issued by the "United Societies" formed at the close of 1681, and the germ of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland. It was in the main the composition of James Renwick.]

errors and defections of that Church and endeavour to separate from these. It is also clearly shown what things are regarded as insufficient to warrant the withdrawing from ministers even in this covenanted land, and then what the grounds are which justify and necessitate such withdrawal. Infirmities, whether natural, spiritual, or moral, sins of ignorance, differences of judgment in things indifferent in themselves, controversial points not condemned or witnessed against by our Reformers, and even scandals not attended with obstinacy, but confessed and forsaken—all these are set forth as matters in regard to which forbearance must be exercised, and as differences which do not warrant separation. On the other hand, they refuse to hold communion with those who have no rightful call to preach—priests whose mission is from Antichrist, curates who have their calling from the episcopal hierarchy, and *gifted brethren* whose call is only from the people. They also feel that they are justified in refusing to hold communion with all who had laid aside their ministry or had taken it again at the bidding of a usurping authority, including all those who had taken the indulgence, refusing fellowship also with all who had allowed themselves to be silenced, and who had been lurking or in hiding in time of persecution, as well as all who had not preached against the sins of the times, or shown any degree of sympathy with the public enemies of the covenanted remnant. This list, which in the manifesto is set forth in abundant ampli-

tude of detail, certainly seems to embrace all ranks and classes in the land outside of the small handful that issued it. And so its authors have been most severely criticised as an impracticable, over-scrupulous set of irreconcilables, who recklessly and wantonly attacked and unchurched all who did not belong to their own little covenanted circle. Such sweeping charges betoken, in my judgment, a singular want of knowledge of the character of the men, a lamentable failure to appreciate the difficulty of the situation in which they were placed, and the delicate nature of the questions which they had to discuss. Their position was very similar to that of the faithful in the third and fourth centuries, after the early Christian persecutions, when they had to consider their attitude towards those who had been in varying degrees unfaithful—the Sacrificers, the Incensers, and the Certificated,[1] as the lapsed were designated. The subsequent course of church history in Scotland showed how much cause they had to dread reunion with Conformists even of the least aggressive type. It really was not in theory but in practice that those high-principled, self-denying men came short of the full maintenance of the doctrine of the unity of the Church. It is, doubtless, much easier to see two hundred years later than it was in the day of blood and terror, how the

[1] [Sacrificatores, Thurificatores, Libellatici. The last-named class consisted of those who purchased certificates from corrupt magistrates, in which it was declared that they were pagans, and had complied with the demands of the law.]

right rules of the persecuted remnant might have been logically carried out. It was easier even for Boston than for Renwick to show how the antischismatic principles of the Covenanters might be adhered to in the strictest and most literal fashion. For the Church of Scotland in Boston's time, with all its defects, and these were such as made Boston himself suffer severely, was distinctly more hospitable to men with views like his than that of the earlier period. And hence, although Boston's sermon on Schism,[1] in which he vigorously taxes the Society men of his time with that offence, may seem to be more in the spirit of Rutherfurd than in that of Renwick, I am not sure but it is one which Renwick, had he survived so long, would have been quite prepared to preach. There was certainly an excuse, perhaps also a justification for Renwick's position which the later Cameronians could not plead for theirs.[2]

[1] [The text was 1 Cor. i. 10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, that there be no divisions among you." It was directed against John Macmillan and John Macneill, "the two preachers of the separation," as Boston styles them. Several times reprinted, it is in the seventh vol. of his collected works.]

[2] [In the course of his analysis of the *Informatory Vindication*, the Rev. Mr Hutchison refers to the charge brought against its compilers of being schismatics, a charge, he says, they were well able to repel. "They," he goes on to remark, "still regarded themselves as a part of the historic Church of Scotland, and were wont to speak of it as the poor, torn, and bleeding mother. . . . They claim that they have not left the Church. . . . The declining and corrupt part has left them; they are separating only as refusing to follow in this evil course. . . . They did not claim to be a Church, but only fellowship societies of private Christians meeting together for mutual edification and strengthening, and having no idea of forming a separate Church." *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland*, chap. iii. sect. iii. pp. 75, 76.]

In the later history of the Church in Scotland it may be noted that this same horror of schism and division was manifested. The Seceders of 1733, when compelled to separate themselves from the Church of their fathers, persistently refused to admit that they had broken away from the Church of Scotland, but boldly and consistently made their appeal to the first reformed assembly. The Covenanters and the early Seceders successfully vindicated themselves against any charge of schism, and showed themselves earnest in their desire and endeavour to preserve and restore the unity of the Church.[1]

The same, I fear, cannot be said of those who are mainly responsible for the internal feuds and manifold subdivisions within the Church of the Secession. In

[1] ["And likewise we do protest that, notwithstanding of our being cast out from ministerial communion with the Established Church of Scotland, we still hold communion with all and every one who desire with us to adhere to the principles of the true presbyterian, covenanted Church of Scotland. . . . And we hereby appeal unto the first free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland." Protest of the Four Seceders when declared by the Commission to be "no longer ministers of This church," November 16, 1733. "It is one thing to depart from the communion of a church, and another thing to depart from communion with a party in that church. . . . The question is not concerning Secession from the Church of Scotland, but concerning Secession from the present Judicatories of this National Church. . . . It is one thing *to depart* from Communion with a particular Church on account of her Corruptions, and another thing to unchurch that same particular Church. . . . The seceding Ministers are neither afraid nor ashamed to own that they have made a Secession from the present Judicatories of this National Church ; but they refuse that they have ever seceded from the Communion of the Church of *Scotland*, or that they have made any Kind of Separation from her." *A Defence of the Reformation Principles of the Church of Scotland*, by William Wilson, M.A., Minister of the Gospel at Perth, 1739. W. W. was one of the Four Fathers of the Secession.]

this respect it seems to me that Adam Gib was an arch-offender. The admiration he has won from men like Dr James Walker and Principal Fairbairn should be enough to assure even those who are not acquainted at first hand with his writings that Gib was a man of no ordinary power. His success showed that in any theological or ecclesiastical conflict he was a man to be reckoned with. Yet I cannot help feeling that in regard to the important matter of the unity of the Church Gib contrasts badly not only with the Erskines, but also with all the great ecclesiastics of Scotland such as Rutherfurd, Brown, Durham, and even with the Covenanters Cameron, Cargill and Renwick in the times of their sorest straits. As contrasted with these he seems to have had little appreciation of the doctrine of church unity. He rent the church which he had recognised as the true Reformed Church of Scotland, and separated from the parent church only in respect of its corruptions, I would not say lightly or wantonly, for of his personal sincerity and intensity of conviction there can be no doubt, but certainly in a spirit far removed from that of Durham and others of his day.

At this distance of time, and amid the changed conditions of the present age we are apt to regard elaborate disquisitions like those of Rutherfurd, Gillespie, and such like, as purely antiquarian specimens of a misdirected ingenuity. We too often lose patience with the men who carry a discussion through hundreds of pages on what we now regard as no better than the Pharisees' tithing of mint and

cummin, with a scrupulousness and a persistency which we think might well have been reserved for the weightier matters of truth and righteousness. That heat of temper and violence of speech, as unnecessary as they were undesirable, were only too frequently exhibited is undeniable. But surely what has been gathered together in this lecture should be sufficient to show that all these men, even the most extreme among them, had such a conception of the importance of the unity of the Church, and such a horror of the evil of schism, and were so firmly convinced that any one who withdrew from church communion without absolute cause, that is without feeling assured that he could not remain in such fellowship without committing sin, was guilty of a most heinous offence, that they were ready to give their most favourable consideration to any sort of suggestion of reasons why they should refuse to go out of a church, notwithstanding the existence in it of many corruptions against which they must protest. The very elaborateness of their investigations bears witness to their anxiety to discover whether it might not be possible without sin to maintain church connection. If they differed among themselves they did so only because they were convinced that these differences involved some vital truth. When a compliance made or advocated by some was sternly and uncompromisingly resisted by others, it was because they regarded it as a surrender of their spiritual liberty or a betrayal of the cause of God.

John Welch of Irongray was the most conspicuous of all the field preachers, who defied the tyrannical laws of the land, a fanatic of fanatics his enemies called him; but, though he took his life in his hand every day rather than make the least compliance, he wrote this in the very midst of his fifty-two "Directions" to his parishioners (1662):—"If you shall see at this time a difference in opinions and practice among us who were ministers of the gospel, some standing and sticking at things that others can digest, be not offended at this. It has been so always since the beginning, it is no new thing. If there be some that leave off preaching when others do continue to preach though against law, I say, offend not at either when both keep right in the main thing." It was only when they thought that "the main thing" was in danger that they said even union that we prize so highly we dare not have at such a price.

LECTURE IV

CHURCH PURITY—CENSURES AND EXCOMMUNICATION

From all that has been said in our last lecture in regard to the warmth and eagerness with which the theologians of Scotland maintained the doctrine of church unity, and held in horror and detestation any movement or tendency that wrought in the direction of separation, it must not be concluded that they were in the very least inclined to entertain lax views concerning the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church, or to make light of the entertaining of such views on the part of others. No one who has the slightest acquaintance with the history of the Scottish Church and with the writings of its divines can for a moment suppose that there would be with them any sacrifice of the interests of church purity to those of church unity.

But unfortunately the popular estimate of the character and teaching of these men minimises their endeavours after unity, and exaggerates the story of their zeal on behalf of purity. In recent accounts of the religious and social Life in Scotland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the chapters on Church Discipline are out of all proportion to the

others in point of size, of piquancy, and of fulness of detail. Kirk-Sessions are commonly jested about as courts of scandal, and their members described as inquisitors, who were never happy unless they were unravelling the secret twistings of some unsavoury story, or running down some unfortunate misdemeanant who was vainly seeking to elude their detection. Even with historians and critics who are by no means inclined to deal in a frivolous way with moral and social questions there is a widespread notion that the reign of the Kirk-Session in the Presbyterian Scotland of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was one of terror, and its tribunal a spiritual despotism which exercised lordship over the consciences, and counsels, and conduct of men.[1]

The truth underlying all the gross exaggerations of such statements is just this, that the discipline of the Church was something thoroughly, even terribly real. Although, as we have seen, our church fathers rejected most decidedly every purest theory of church membership, they were by no means indifferent, their very enemies being witnesses, to the duty of requiring and maintaining a high moral standard, nor remiss in their endeavours to realise it. Whether they always took the wisest course in their efforts to secure the end contemplated is another question. What we call attention to here is the fact that this Church of

[1] [Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England*, New Impression, 1902, vol. iii. chap. iv. pp. 206-210. *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, by Robert Chambers, vols. i. and ii.]

true doctrine, which is often represented as interested only in the details of doctrinal belief, and as saying in effect to its members, Live as you like if only you accept our doctrinal shibboleth, was just as much concerned with men's conduct as with their creed, and did, in a manner most pointed and particular, take to do with the ethical as well as the religious life of the people.

Church purity in its widest sense was the aim of Scottish presbyterianism in all its ecclesiastical organisation. If the ecclesiastics resisted every proposal of the Sectaries to narrow the bounds of the visible Church of Christ by restricting church membership to those who were in the judgment of charity truly converted, or by unchurching all who did not in everything see eye to eye with them, it was in order that by the preaching of the word the healing influence of the gospel might be brought to bear upon the largest number possible of sinful men. Within the visible church on earth, which is the world-wide field of the sower, a discipline was exercised which they claimed to be worthy of recognition in all the particular churches. The exercise of this discipline was a privilege which all the members of the visible church could rightfully claim, a duty which the Church owes to all its members, an obligation which the Church may not without sin fail to discharge.

It may be well to inquire a little as to the *nature* of that discipline which was exercised in the early

Reformed Church of Scotland. We may compare and contrast it with the penitential exercises of the Roman Catholic Church which prevailed in Scotland previous to the Reformation, and has continued in all Roman Catholic countries, and, in a more or less modified form, in Papal communities in Protestant lands. It is, as we have already remarked, no uncommon thing to find the presbyterian discipline characterised as a spiritual tyranny, comparable to that of the papal Inquisition, and its exercise denounced as an intrusion into the secrets of the individual life as unwarrantable and as intolerable as that of the priestly Confessional. From some popular accounts given, with all the confidence of authority, of the supervision of its members taken by the Church of Scotland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, you might picture to yourselves the members of the Kirk-Session prowling about from place to place on the outlook for something which they might make matter of report when they next met in solemn conclave; you might conceive of them as eagerly emulating one another as to the number of cases which they could ferret out, and the skill with which they could perform a detective's part in worming themselves into the confidence of those who were in possession of secrets damaging to the reputation of the parties in regard to whom suspicion was entertained, and in diligently and carefully recording circumstances of speech or conduct on the part of the accused that might plausibly be

construed into evidence of guilt.[1] The elder was not only one of the bench of judges before whom the case was to be tried, he was also public prosecutor, who was understood to take a sort of professional pleasure in providing cases for the court in which he sat, and in making good the charges against the culprit at the bar.

Now it would be rash to declare that throughout the length and breadth of Scotland and throughout the centuries of the history of the Reformed Scottish Church there have never been individual elders who did not at some time or other act in the hateful and contemptible manner described ; but, hard as the task of proving a negative notoriously is, I venture fearlessly to affirm that never in north or south, in earlier or in later times, has there been a Kirk-Session which acted in such a way, and did not rather enter on cases of scandal with reluctance and bitter regret as on the

[1] [The meetings of Kirk-Session took up a preposterous amount of his [the Minister's] time. Every rumour of misdemeanour, every suspicion of Scandal was reported to and by the watchful self-important elders. . . . The lynx eyes of elders and deacons, to whom were assigned the spiritual superintendence of different parts of the parish, both to watch and to pray, were alert in every corner. Every rumour, every suspicion of ill-doing was reported to the Kirk-Session, and evidence of the most inquisitive kind was taken. . . . During services elders went out to "perlustrate" the streets, to enter change-houses, to look into windows and doors of private dwellings, and to bring deserters to kirk, or report them to the Kirk-Session. . . . Every night at nine o'clock or ten o'clock, elders went through the streets to see if any one loitered on the way ; they entered the taverns and dismissed the occupants home, a practice which originated a well-known phrase, "elders' hours." . . . There was not a place where one was free from their inquisitorial intrusion.—*The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, by Henry Grey Graham, 1899, vol. ii. chap. viii. *passim*.]

discharge of a painful duty which it was obliged to perform, as much in the interests of the individual concerned as of the church to which he belonged. We unfortunately know very little of the individual members of the Kirk-Session whose proceedings, ordinarily in a very bald and summary form, have come down to us; but from the few specimens of the presbyterian elders, whose names survive, and of whose general religious character and conduct we have more or less detailed accounts, we can well understand that the majority and the most influential portion of these office-bearers were men who loved righteousness after the pattern of Christ Himself, men who aimed at hastening the coming of the Kingdom of God and at bringing and keeping others as well as themselves within that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.[1] The compilers of the Books of Discipline regarded public procedure as warrantable only in the case of public scandal, and only after every endeavour had been made to prevent any fault developing to such an extent as to demand public rebuke.[2] If, however,

[1] [In this connection attention may be directed to a work of historical interest and value: *Glimpses of Pastoral Work in the Covenanting Times*, by the Rev. William Ross, LL.D., 1877, and especially to chaps. viii. and ix. "Work of the Kirk-Session: its Domain and pervading Spirit. Work of the Kirk-Session, in Ordinary Cases of Discipline."]

[2] ["First, if the offence be secret and known to few, and rather stands in suspicion than in manifest probation, the offender ought to be privately admonished to abstain from all appearance of evil; which if he promise to do, and to declare himself sober, honest, and one that feareth God, and feareth to offend his brethren, then may the secret admonition suffice for his correction." *The First Book of Discipline.*

the Church's confession, either in creed or in conduct, had been openly violated, then the public injury done must be atoned for by humiliation and repentance before all. James VI. caused a public scandal by persistently neglecting to bring George, Earl of Huntly, to trial for the murder of "the bonnie Earl of Moray." Patrick Simpson, minister of Stirling, preaching before the King, chose for his text the words, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" and pointedly addressed his Majesty, saying, "Sir, I assure you the Lord will ask at you, Where is the Earl of Moray, your brother." "Mr Patrick," answered the King before the whole congregation, "my chalmer door was never steeked upon you; ye might have told me anything you thought in secret." "Sir," replied Simpson, "the scandal is public."[1] In such a case as this it is surely quite evident that private dealing would by no means satisfy the requirements of Church discipline. There was no time at which it was a mere private scandal. By refusing to bring the guilty to justice the King had made himself before the whole people a party in the crime, and, therefore, in presence of the subjects before whom his offence was committed the rebuke must be administered.

The distinction between matters which should be the occasion of private admonition, and those which should be the occasion of public censure, is very

The Seventh Head, of Ecclesiastical Discipline. Laing's Knox, vol. ii. p. 228. Dunlop's Collection, vol. ii. pp. 569, 570.]

[1] Row's *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, 1592, p. 144. Wodrow Society Ed. M'Crie's *Story of the Scottish Church*, Part I. chap. v. pp. 83, 84.

carefully stated by Durham in his *Treatise concerning Scandal.* In the first part, "concerning Scandal in the general," he discusses the question as to what *offence*, in the ecclesiastical acceptation of the word, exactly is. Offence or stumbling, as he employs the word, "is something that doth or may mar the spiritual edification of another, whether he be pleased or displeased; anything that may be the occasion of a fall to another, and make him stumble, or weak, or to halt in the course of holiness, as some block would hinder or put a man in hazard to fall in the running of a race."[1] Such a scandal or offence may be either private or public, and that in respect either of the witnesses of it, or in respect of its own nature. A private scandal is one which offends few, because of its not being known to many, whereas a public one is a scandal known to many. Then an offence may be private in respect of its own nature if it is not of such a nature that it can be publicly, legally or judicially made out to be scandalous, as when, "the general tract of one's way and carriage" display "vanity, pride, earthly mindedness, untenderness, want of love and respect." On the other hand, offences may be public in respect of their own nature when there is such a way of bearing them out before others as proves them to be contrary to the rule, as in the case of drunkenness, swearing, and such-like offences.[2] Rutherfurd,

[1] [Part I. chap. i. Several Distinctions of Scandal. After giving sixteen distinctions the author adds a few more.]

[2] ["These [public scandals in their own nature] may be called ecclesiastical or judicial offences, as being the object of Church censure;

in his *Due Right of Presbyteries*, contends elaborately, in opposition to the Sectaries or Independents, that the keys of discipline were committed not to the Church, but to the officers of the Church. Robinson and his party argued that two or three making Peter's confession are a church, that these making such a confession may be without officers, and that, therefore, to these two or three without officers, the promises made to Peter must be fulfilled. To this Rutherfurd answers that these two or three professors without officers may be a church mystical, but that it is not to the church mystical but to the church ministerial that Christ gave the power of the keys, which includes pastoral authority to preach and baptise. The keys are given *for* the mystical church, but not *to* it.[1]

But, as we have said, it is the duty of members of the Christian Church and of the officers to do what in them lies, in cases where this is possible, to prevent private offences developing into public scandals. And so we find in the writings of our Scottish theologians

all the other may be called conscience or charity-wounding offences, because they are the object of a person's conscience and charity, and do wound them, and are judged by them, and may be the ground of a Christian private admonition, but not of public reproof, or rather may be called unconscientious and uncharitable offences, as being opposite to conscience and charity," Part I. chap. i.]

[1] *The Due Right of Presbyteries or a Peaceable Plea for the Government of the Church of Scotland*, 1644, pp. 176-185. ["Men may be a Church of Christians, and a mystical Church before they have a ministry, but they are not a governing Church, having the power of the keys, so long as they want officers, who only have warrant ordinary of Christ to use the keys. . . . We never find in the word of God any practice or precept that a single company did use the keys or can use them, wanting all officers," chap. viii. sect. 7, pp. 177, 179.]

much space given to discussions on our Lord's teaching in the gospel of St Matthew: "And if thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear *thee* not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the Church [Marg. or, *Congregation*]; and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican."[1] It was noted that here there are two preliminary steps prescribed. First, a purely private dealing, in which the Christian brother, who has been cognisant of another's fault, and who feels it laid upon his conscience to attempt to gain his brother, goes to the offender and endeavours to bring him to repentance; and, second, in case this private dealing fails, a semi-public admonition, in which the offended brother joins with himself one or two more, so that the agreement of these Christian men in condemning the offence may be more convincing with him who has committed the wrong.

These two steps may represent far more than two meetings with the brother offending. Indeed the first mode of procedure is to be persevered in and repeated so long as there is any hope of the offender becoming penitent and forsaking his evil ways. The procedure in Church circles should be distinguished from that in civil courts, as concerned not merely

[1] St Matthew xviii. 15-17 [R.V.].

with the good of the common body, but also with the restoration and cure of the erring member. And so it is noted that church censures have weight in proportion as they are seen to proceed from love, and that hasty bringing to public reproof is construed by many to be a seeking of their shame; whereas when it is rare, and done only when other efforts have been exhausted, and when such publicity of rebuke is reasonable, it affects the conscience instead of arousing prejudice.[1] It is also pointed out in this connection that public rebukes are rare in Scripture. Further, it is made to appear that Scottish ecclesiastics have always been most unwilling to go to extremes and rashly to inflict public censures, and that they were against the frequency of such rebukes inasmuch as in such a case they lose their power. One such act of discipline, solemnly and tenderly performed, would be in their judgment, far more effective than many such oftrepeated could possibly be. Scottish commentators found no difficulty whatever in using the passage in St Matthew's Gospel to which we have referred in support of their theory of Church censures. So far as I can discover there is no hint in any of their writings, doctrinal or exegetical, of any doubt as to the soundness of the view that the Church which, in the last

[1] ["If the crime be public and such as is heinous then ought the offender to be called in presence of the Minister, Elders and Deacons, where his sin and trespass ought to be declared and dwelt upon, so that his conscience may feel how far he hath offended God, and what slander [scandal] he hath raised in the Kirk." *First Book of Discipline.* The Seventh Head.]

resort, is to be told of the guilty brother's offence is the regularly constituted Church with its officers and courts. The reaction that has set in against an extreme ecclesiasticism has led recent expositors, Meyer, Alford and Bruce, to maintain very strongly that the *ecclesia* of the passage, if it is to be held as the word of our Lord, can only refer to the general community of His followers.[1] They give us the choice of understanding the word either of the twelve (not *qua* apostles but *qua* disciples) or of the larger circle of the disciples. Dr Bruce in particular, in his notes on the passage in question, denies that there can be any reference to ecclesiastical discipline and Church censures, charging the old expositors with treating it in a theologico-polemical interest in support of their developed ideas on these topics. He holds that the statement must be divested of all ecclesiastical reference if it is to be taken as a genuine saying of our Lord. On the other hand, Julius Müller and Professor Bannerman have stoutly maintained that the older exegesis, call it by what name you will, is the correct and natural one.[2] Cases of discipline

[1] [Certainly not the Jewish synagogue. Nothing could be further from the spirit of our Lord's command than proceedings in what were oddly enough called "ecclesiastical" Courts. Alford.]

[2] [According to Professor Bannerman there are five different senses in which the word Church is used in the New Testament Scriptures. After giving the fifth, in which it is applied "to the body of professing believers in any place, as represented by their rulers or office-bearers," Dr Bannerman remarks: "An example of this application of the term Church is to be found in Matthew xviii., when our Lord is laying down the principles on which a Christian ought to proceed in the case of a brother who has trespassed against him. . . . In such an injunction our

among the Jews in the days of our Lord were administered by regularly appointed officials or elders; and surely it is not putting an undue strain upon the passage before us to assume that when Jesus, without indicating any essential or radical change of constitution, speaks of procedure before the Church He gave it to be understood that the new society, which was to be inaugurated in His name and under His authority, would conduct its cases on the same lines as did that Church with which He and His hearers were familiar.

Strict the Scottish discipline of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries undoubtedly was, but inquisitorial it was not. This is shown very notably by what Durham says in his chapter "concerning what is to be done when offending persons give no satisfaction."[1] He strives to restrict the cases for public prosecution as far as possible. It is only when the parties seem themselves to court publicity and to flaunt their faults openly, and in this way evidently show contempt for the order and authority of the Church, that offences not in themselves peculiarly "horrid and scandalous," are to be dealt with by regular process before the court. Durham gives examples of the offences which he considers to be

Lord referred to the synagogue court known and established among the Jews, which had its elders and officers for the decision of such matters of discipline; and in the expression 'the Church,' which He made use of, the Jews who heard Him *must* have understood the authorised rulers, as distinct from the ruled, to be the parties who were to determine in such controversies." *The Church of Christ*, vol. i. chap. i. p. 14.]

[1] [*Concerning Scandal*, Part II. chap. v.]

such as do not call for correction by public process unless when accompanied by contempt of court. They are such as, though scandalous, "come nearer to sins of infirmity." Among these he names "officious lying, angry passionate words, the sparingness of Charity in Church members in giving little to the poor or less than proportionally they should, though they do not altogether shut their bowels." The ground upon which Durham would not proceed to excommunication in the case of such offences may seem rather peculiar. It is "because excommunication is a chastisement for some singular offences, and is not for offences that are so common." Now the frequency or infrequency of an offence cannot safely be made the rule according to which the measure of the discipline inflicted is to be determined. It is quite conceivable that the circumstances of an age or a community might be such that some very serious offence has become common, or that some fault, usually rare, has become abnormally frequent, and for that very reason it demands severely repressive treatment.

But the attitude taken up by Durham shows how anxious he was to avoid the infliction of extreme penalties. Not the authority and dignity of the Church, but the moral and spiritual well-being of the members of the Church lay near to his heart.

To the charge against the Scottish Church discipline of encouraging a prying scrutinising of the secrets of private and family life, and of developing in those

who carried it out a relish for scandalous details, I know no better answer than the reading of this chapter of Durham's treatise in which he shows how he would proceed in cases where first attempts at the correction of offenders by private admonition seemed to fail. Even in cases of contempt Durham pleads for much forbearance and patience, in the hope that such evident unwillingness to proceed to extremities, accompanied by serious and loving dealing, may soften the obstinate offender, and in order, in case of confirmed obduracy, to make it manifest to all that the offence had become altogether insufferable.[1]

It is important to mark carefully the limits of the satisfaction demanded by the presbyterian Church of Scotland. In thorough consistency with his view as to the terms of membership in the visible Church, Durham holds that the Church may not demand for her satisfaction evidence of the saving grace of repentance or godly sincerity therein. The discipline of the visible Church has to do with what is visible. A confession and a carriage which in the judgment of charity are morally serious, not openly simulated or hypocritical, must be accepted without the instituting

[1] ["What, when an offence is not gross, yet hath contempt with it? Much forbearance, and even a kind of overlooking (so far as is consistent with faithfulness), is to be exercised in such cases, in reference to some persons, for it hath prejudice with it to take notice of such scandals, and thereafter without satisfaction to pass from them, and it is difficult and not always edifying to pursue them: we conceive it therefore more fit not to take judicial notice (at least) of them all; but to continue a serious and loving dealing with such persons in private, because possibly more rigid dealing might wrong them and the Church more than edifie." Part II. chap. v.]

of any further inquiry. Such a sober, serious acknowledgment[1] of the offence ought to secure access for the party immediately to the enjoyment of all privileges. There may indeed be degrees of satisfaction, but this applies only to the process, not to the judgment. There may be enough satisfaction to warrant sisting procedure, though not enough to warrant full restitution. But in the end there must be absolution or continued suspension, usually called the lesser excommunication. Not proven is no verdict, but only a declaration of the existence of reasons for continuing the case.

An important distinction was drawn by the old theologians between the key of doctrine and the key of discipline.[2] As treated by Durham, the key of

[1] ["By Divines this is called moral seriousness or sincerity, as it is distinguished from that which is gracious." Part II. chap. viii.]

[2] ["What is called the power of the keys is a subject of much importance in the Popish controversy. The name and the doctrine are derived from the words addressed by our Lord to Peter: 'I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' Sometimes the power of the keys is employed by theological writers to describe the right to execute, and the actual execution of the whole of the functions permanently executed by ecclesiastical office-bearers; and it is to this wide sense of the expression that the division of the subject into the two heads of the key of doctrine and the key of discipline is usually applied—the former comprehending the preaching of the word and the administration of sacraments, and the latter including not merely the infliction and removal of censures—a limited sense in which the word discipline is sometimes employed—but the whole practical administration of the ordinary necessary business of the Church as a visible organised society. It is, however, more common perhaps to distinguish the power of the keys from the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments; and when this distinction is made, then the power of the keys just describes what, according to the former division, is comprehended under the key of discipline." Cunningham, *Discussions on*

doctrine or the word reaches to and judges the thoughts and intents of the heart; the key of discipline reaches "only to restrain, regulate, and judge the outward man." What the key of doctrine does immediately the key of discipline does at best mediately by condemning a man's outward practice. The key of the word debarreth from saving promises and the things contained in them; the key of discipline only shuts from outward privileges and does not shut from any spiritual interest in Christ. The key of doctrine opens to none but upon condition of sincere faith and repentance; discipline only absolves from outward censure and gives right to Church privileges. And finally, in using the key of doctrine a minister shuts out an offender "from heaven and saving privileges" only conditionally, not absolutely, and he cannot absolve absolutely by the key of doctrine, only conditionally; but in the exercise of the key of discipline no Church judicatory debars conditionally but absolutely, and "when they receive any into Church-communion they do not absolve them upon condition they believe, but absolutely that censure is removed, and they are admitted into these privileges." [1]

In view of these clearly marked distinctions Durham concludes that it is warrantable and necessary to distinguish between *saving grace*, which is the condition

Church Principles, chap. ix. Church Power, pp. 235, 247. See also Prof. Bannerman's *Church of Christ*, Vol. II. Part III. Div. iii. ch. i. pp. 194, 195.]

[1] [*Concerning Scandal*, Part II. chap. viii.]

of absolution in the exercise of the key of doctrine, and *serious profession*, a fair inoffensive carriage, which is the condition of absolution in the exercise of the key of discipline.

It may seem to some that these old theologians reiterate this statement needlessly. It is insisted upon, for example, by Durham, on page after page, sometimes repeatedly upon one page. It is illustrated by examples real and hypothetical; it is supported by arguments from Scripture, from doctrine, from life; it is shown that any other view of the matter lands in confusion and absurdity. These divines, though often charged with the fault, were much too clear-sighted controversialists to indulge in vain repetitions. In particular, they so kept the main end of their discussion before them that they would never have thrust forward into prominence a mere subsidiary point or a mere side issue. The reiteration of a statement like this can only be accounted for on the ground that very disastrous results would follow from a failure to observe the distinction, and that it would be a very dangerous and hurtful thing were the Church in the exercise of the key of discipline to make saving grace rather than a serious profession the condition upon which censure or absolution is pronounced.

It has always to be borne in mind that these old Scottish Presbyterians — Rutherfurd, Durham, and their brethren—had to deal with those who made the Church to consist exclusively of those who professed to be regenerate and who had been received into the

Church as such. To these Scots, with their strong common-sense and their precise logical habit of thought, it seemed an absurdity to make an invisible grace the condition or term of membership in a visible Church. But just because they would not go beyond requiring something visible as the condition of reception into a visible community, they sought to make it as sure as possible that this visible something is a reality. Only a *serious* profession was with them a visible one. It was seen in life and conduct from day to day. It might not in reality correspond to the inward and invisible quality which it professed; yet it was serious in the sense that no manifest incongruity between what was professed or the inward, and what was apparent or the outward could be detected. In short, what is to be demanded of a person under Church censure in order that he may obtain absolution is such a sincere and serious profession of repentance as will warrant the Church in declaring the scandal removed.

As regards the purpose of ecclesiastical censures as administered in the early Reformed Church of Scotland, the best commentary on the relative chapter in the *First Book of Discipline* is found in what is commonly called Knox's Liturgy.[1] As to the parties amenable to Church censure it was laid down that all baptised persons were under the jurisdiction of the

[1] [The work usually passes under the name of Knox's *Psalms and Liturgy*. In early times it was generally known as *The Book of Common Order*. Laing's Knox, vol. vi. p. 277.]

Church and subject to her discipline. And so the form in which the sentence of excommunication was uttered, "in public audience of the people," began thus: "It is clearly known unto us that N., sometime baptised in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and so reputed and counted for a Christian, hath fearfully fallen from the society of Christ's body." [1] And in the introductory address, giving instruction as to the exercise of discipline, speaking of the crimes that deserve excommunication, our Church Reformers say: "It is to be noted that all crimes that by the law of God deserve death deserve also excommunication from the society of Christ's Church, whether the offender be Papist or Protestant. For it is no reason that, under pretence of diversity of religion, open impiety should be suffered in the visible body of Christ Jesus." [2] Papist and Protestant alike belong to the visible Church. Protestant and Presbyterian John Knox claimed the right of dealing with any Papist guilty of crime and under condemnation of the law, as also of pronouncing upon him the severest censures of the Church. According to him and all the Scottish Reformers, excommunication, like all other Church ordinances, was not the action of a sect, but the action of the Catholic Church. On the same ground excommunication by the Church of Rome for an excommunicable

[1] [The Order of Excommunication and of Public Repentance used in the Church of Scotland, and commanded to be printed by the General Assembly of the same, 1569. Laing's Knox, vol. vi. p. 451.]

[2] [*Ibid.* p. 449.]

offence was held by these divines to be as strictly valid as excommunication pronounced by consistory or presbytery, in Geneva or in Edinburgh.

It was upon this principle, and not, as some seem to think, in a cold, reckless, meaningless manner, that Donald Cargill, at Torwood, in October 1680, pronounced his sentence against the King, the Dukes of York, Monmouth, Lauderdale and Rothes, General Dalziel and Sir George Mackenzie. Papists and Protestants, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, they were all equally amenable to Church censure, if guilty of crimes warranting such discipline.[1] The only questionable thing in regard to Cargill's action is as to his possession of Church authority for pronouncing sentence. It was distinctly ordained in *The Book of Common Order* that nothing should be attempted in the way of excommunication without the determination of the whole Church.[2] Cargill's apology for himself when he acted as if he were the whole Church was the distressful circumstances of the times.[3] But that it was competent for the Church of Scotland to give forth sentence against these men no

[1] [The Torwood Excommunication begins thus: "I being a minister of Jesus Christ, and having authority and power from Him, do in His name, and by His Spirit, excommunicate Charles the Second, King, etc., and that upon the account of these wickednesses."]

[2] [It is ordained that nothing be attempted in that behalf [Excommunication] without the determination of the whole Church. *The Form of Prayers*, etc. Laing's Knox, vol. iv. p. 205.]

[3] ["And as the causes are just, so being done by a minister of the gospel, *and in such a way as the present persecution would admit of*, the sentence is just." Sentence in closing paragraph of Cargill's Excommunication.]

minister or theologian in that Church for a moment doubted.

There was always great reluctance on the part of our Church fathers to proceed to the last extreme of discipline in pronouncing the sentence of excommunication. So far from taking a malicious pleasure and finding a cruel satisfaction in the infliction of this dread censure upon the obstinate and contemptuous offender, they showed themselves anxious to discover any good cause why they should not proceed, and in all cases delayed execution until every possible means had been used to win the offender to repentance, and to make it possible to retain him in, or restore him to, the visible Church, the body of Jesus Christ.

In the introductory section of *The Order of the Ecclesiastical Discipline* in the Form of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments, etc., used in the English Congregation at Geneva, 1556, it is ordained "that all punishments, corrections, censures, and admonitions, stretch no farther than God's Word, *with mercy*, may lawfully bear."[1] It is of the utmost importance in our estimating the spirit and character of our Scottish divines to emphasise, as they certainly intended to emphasise, the phrase so significantly inserted in this instruction to Church officers—"with mercy." They were not only not to strain God's Word so as to inflict a sentence which only by a very rigid and therefore somewhat disputable interpretation of Scripture might be warranted, but they were to in-

[1] [Laing's Knox, vol. iv. p. 206.]

terpret and apply the word lovingly, mercifully, in the spirit of Christ, who came not to destroy men's lives but to save. And the insertion of this phrase was no mere matter of form. It was really meant to indicate the spirit in which the whole proceedings were to be carried out. This is shown very evidently in the admonition to office-bearers to "beware and take good heed that they seem not more ready to expel from the Congregation than to receive again those in whom they perceive worthy fruits of repentance to appear."[1] Even in beginning a process of private discipline, office-bearers are to assure themselves that the fault is "reprovable by God's Word."[2] No doubt this gives a large discretion to ministers and kirk-sessions as to the range of offences with which it is required of them that they should deal. The word of God does not supply us with a list of indictable offences, but only with certain principles whereby we may discover for ourselves what in God's sight is right and what is wrong. But it is just at this point that the qualifying clause "with mercy" has most useful application.

A fair and dispassionate reading of the instructions about discipline, and especially of the order of procedure in the administration of it will show how real and effective this merciful spirit was in the Scottish form of ecclesiastical discipline as originally devised. The motive urging to action is to be carefully considered in order to ascertain if the "admonitions

[1] [Laing's Knox, pp. 205, 206.] [2] [*Ibid.* pp. 204, 205.]

proceed of a goodly zeal and conscience, rather seeking to win our brother than to slander him." [1]

That the main object in view in the infliction of such censures was the spiritual benefit of the offender, and that discipline was regarded chiefly as a means of grace can be gathered from this that even if the accused refused to express sorrow and repentance at his appearance on two successive Sabbaths his defection and contempt were to be made public only on the third Sabbath.[2] Here also all was to be done "with mercy." For on these two Sabbaths when the crime and the admonitions were stated in public, and the person was admonished to make satisfaction which he had refused in private, it was to be done "without specification of his name." [3] And when the preliminary procedure had a good effect, so that the offender, between the first and second Sabbaths, expressed his penitence, his name was not made public, and he was not required to make a public appearance. It was sufficient that on the following Sabbath the minister, "at commandment of the session," make declaration of his repentance and submission in these or other closing words: "But seeing that it hath pleased God to mollify the heart of our brother, whose name we need not to express, so

[1] [Laing's Knox, p. 204.]

[2] ["If he continues stubborn, then the third Sunday [not Sabbath] ought he to be charged publicly to satisfy the Church for his offence and contempt, under the pain of excommunication." *The Order of Excommunication.* Laing's Knox, vol. vi. p. 454.]

[3] [*Ibid.* p. 454.]

that he hath not only acknowledged his offence, but also hath fully satisfied the brethren that first were offended, and us the Ministry, and hath promised to abstain from all appearance of such evil as whereof he was suspected and admonished, we have no just cause to proceed to any further extremity, but rather to glorify God for the submission of our brother, and unfeignedly pray unto Him that in the like case we and every one of us may give the like obedience." [1]

I do not find that a careful reading of the constitutional history of the Scottish Church, nor an examination of cases and the procedure in them, so far as these are reported, warrants one to say that there was any real lack of tenderness in the law or in the administration of it.[2]

As Dr Edgar, in his extremely interesting and instructive lectures, points out, tenderness is a relative

[1] [*Ibid.*, pp. 454, 455.]

[2] [In the *First Book of Discipline* it is provided that when a penitent offender wishes to make public repentance, "earnestly desiring the Congregation to pray to God with him for mercy, and to accept him in their society, notwithstanding his former offences, then the Church may and ought receive him as a penitent; for the Church ought to be no more severe than God declareth Himself to be, who witnesseth, that, in whatsoever hour a sinner unfeignedly repenteth and turns from his wicked way, that He will not remember one of his iniquities. And therefore the Church ought diligently to advert that it excommunicate not those whom God absolveth." Then, in the case of a person who has been excommunicated being publicly restored, this striking injunction is given:—"The Minister ought to exhort the Church to receive that penitent brother into their favour, as they require God to receive themselves when they have offended; and in sign of their consent, the Elders and chief men of the Church shall take the penitent by the hand, and one or two in name of the whole shall kiss and embrace him, with all reverence and gravity, as a member of Christ Jesus." Laing's Knox, vol. ii. pp. 228, 229, 232.]

term, so that what was regarded as tender in a comparatively rude age would be differently designated in one of higher culture and refinement. "The discipline administered in the Church of Scotland in ancient times," Dr Edgar remarks,[1] "was not what most people would consider either tender or moderate. It is proper to remark, however, that people's notions of tenderness are constantly changing, and that in every age there have been men who have maintained that the discipline of the Church in their own day was tender enough. Whatever the Church may be or may do, whether she is tender or rigid, whether she punishes or passes over transgressions, she will always have enemies and detractors to speak evil of her procedure. When her discipline was strict, she was called intolerant and tyrannical; now that her discipline is milder, she is said to have lost her power and influence, and is blamed for leaving the masses to perish in brutality and atheism. There is no form of action on the part of the Church that will stop the mouths of gainsayers. All that the Church in her discipline can do is to seek men's good in the way that experience shows to be the most practicable."

One of the main charges brought against the discipline of our Church fathers is that of intolerance. It is said that no room was given for the exercise of individual liberty, that they insisted that every one should think precisely as they thought, and express

[1] [*Old Church Life in Scotland: Lectures on Kirk-Session and Presbytery Records.* By Andrew Edgar, D.D., Minister at Mauchline, 1885, Lec. iv. pp. 197, 199.]

their thoughts in exactly the same terms as they employed. This description of their attitude towards those who differed from them cannot be accepted without several large and important reservations. It would be easy to show that not only were there considerable differences in the views of the several members of the school in regard to doctrinal as well as practical matters, but that also they recognised the right of others, their predecessors and contemporaries, to advocate views differing from their own without feeling called upon to condemn them as heretical or antichristian. They did indeed make an honest distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals, although it must be confessed that they enlarged the list of the former in a way that can scarcely be regarded as defensible. It is only fair to state that there were things upon which they were willing to agree to differ. But no modern divine, historian or critic would maintain that the list of such things was not much too brief.

In his work, *A Free Disputation against Pretended Liberty of Conscience*, Rutherfurd begins with a discussion of conscience. It is, he says, "knowledge with a witness. It is not a distinct faculty from the understanding, but the understanding as it giveth judgment, in court of the man's state and of all his ways, as whether he be in favour with God or no, and whether he be in Christ or not, and of all his motions and actions within and without." Further, "Conscience is not the simple judgment and

apprehension of things, as things are honourable, but it is the power to know things ourselves, and actions, in order to obey God and serve him." Rutherfurd condemns scrupulosity as a "fault and disease of the conscience, as when it doubts and fears for trifles, where there is no grave and weighty cause."[1]

In the second chapter of the treatise there is a great deal that is admirably put in opposition to libertines and Anabaptists, whose objections to synods and ecclesiastical decisions of any kind took the form of individualism run mad. Rutherfurd here lays down certain principles whereby he would distinguish liberty from licence, the finding of conscience from the caprice of individual opinion. The author of *Lex Rex; the Law and the Prince* is the vindicator of law against the lawlessness of short-sighted enthusiasts. So far we can heartily go along with him. It is when we come to his application of those principles that we are constrained at times to part company with him.

As often as we do so it may be well for us to bear in mind the words of a nineteenth-century historian with which we may fitly bring this lecture to a close: "And now suppose the Kirk had been the broad, liberal, philosophical, intellectual thing which some people think it ought to have been, how would it have fared in that crusade; how altogether would it have encountered those surplices of Archbishop

[1] [*A Free Disputation, &c.*, chap. i. of Conscience and its Nature, pp. 2, 3, 21.]

Laud or those dragoons of Claverhouse? It is hard to lose one's life for a 'perhaps,' and philosophical belief at the bottom means a 'perhaps,' and nothing more. For more than half the seventeenth century, the battle had to be fought out in Scotland, which in reality was the battle between liberty and despotism; and where except in an intense, burning conviction that they were maintaining God's cause against the devil, could the poor Scotch people have found the strength for the unequal struggle which was forced upon them? Toleration is a good thing in its place; but you cannot tolerate what will not tolerate you, and is trying to cut your throat. Enlightenment you cannot have enough of, but it must be the true enlightenment which sees a thing in all its bearings. In these matters the vital questions are not always those which appear on the surface; and in the passion and resolution of brave and noble men there is often an inarticulate intelligence deeper than what can be expressed by words. Action sometimes will hit the mark, when the spoken word either misses it or is but half the truth. On such subjects, and with common men, latitude of mind means weakness of mind. There is but a certain quantity of spiritual force in any man. Spread it over a broad surface, the stream is shallow and languid; narrow the channel, and it becomes a driving force. Each may be well at its own time. The mill-race which drives the water-wheel is dispersed in rivulets over the meadow at its foot. The Covenanters fought the

fight and won the victory, and then, and not till then, came the David Humes with their essays on miracles, and the Adam Smiths with their political economies, and steam-engines, and railroads, and philosophical institutions, and all the other blessed or unblessed fruits of liberty." [1]

[1] James Anthony Froude, *Short Studies*, 1895. *The Influence of the Reformation on the Scottish Character.*

LECTURE V

CHURCH POWER—THE JURISDICTION CLAIMED

The separate jurisdiction of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities was a distinction firmly grasped and clearly expressed by the ministers and members of the Reformed Church of Scotland from the earliest times. During the pre-reformation period in Scotland this distinction was for the most part lost sight of. It was Rome's policy in every Catholic country to assume to herself the civil as well as the ecclesiastical power. Before the Reformation in Scotland, as in England, all the chief offices of State were held by Churchmen. In the northern kingdom during minorities bishops were regents and chief administrators, under the kings they dominated the councils, held the chancellorships, and sat as judges in the Court of Session, while they or other ecclesiastical persons presided in almost all the provincial courts of justice. No man could hope to win in any suit, however just his claim might be, if in any way the interests of Church or Churchmen would thereby be injuriously affected. Many of these ecclesiastical dignitaries were noble and honourable men; many of them were very certainly quite the reverse. But whether good or bad, it was the Church which through them considered and deter-

mined all civil causes. When, therefore, the Reformation was accomplished in this country there was no considerable body of the nobility qualified by training and experience to occupy the highest positions in the State, and the ministers of the Reformed Church, many of whom as Churchmen had previously served in offices of State, were consulted and looked to for advice by the lords of the congregation, on whom the government of the country and the guidance of affairs had devolved. This largely accounts for the frequent appearing of our Scottish reformers as political advisers in times of difficulty; and it also explains why on several occasions requests were made of the Assembly to allow certain of their number to act as judges in the Court of Session. Such employment of ministers, however, was regarded in the Reformed Church of Scotland as undesirable and ordinarily improper, and was permitted only in cases that were distinctly exceptional. From the very first our reformers recognised the separateness of the two jurisdictions, and deprecated any action that might tend to obliterate or confuse this distinction. In the *Second Book of Discipline*, agreed upon in the General Assembly of 1578, only six years after the death of Knox, it is expressly declared that the criminal or civil jurisdiction in the person of a pastor is a corruption. "We deny not," so this document proceeds, "in the meantime, but ministers may and should assist their princes, when they are required, in all things agreeable to the Word, whether it be in council,

or Parliament, or otherwise, provided always they neither neglect their own charges, nor, through flattery of Princes, hurt the public estate of the Kirk. But generally, we say, no person, under whatsoever title of the Kirk and specially the abused titles in Papistry, of Prelates, Convents, and Chapters, ought to attempt any act in the Kirk's name, either in Council, Parliament, or out of Council, having no commission of the reformed Kirk within this realm." [1]

In regard to this matter of ministers holding any civil office or political appointment, a clearly expressed enactment was passed by the General Assembly of 1638, declaring it both inexpedient and unlawful for persons separated unto the gospel to hold civil places or offices, as to be justices of peace, to sit and determine in council, session, or exchequer, to sit or vote in Parliament, to be judges or assessors in any civil judicatory ; and presbyteries are ordained to proceed with the censures of the Kirk against such as shall transgress herein in time coming.[2]

In August of the following year the Assembly passed an enactment entitled "Act containing the Causes and Remedy of the bygone Evils of this Kirk." Under the first of the evils is mentioned the "giving to persons merely ecclesiastical the power of both swords, and to persons merely civil the power of the keys and Kirk censures." The fourth cause of sore

[1] [*Book of the Universal Kirk of Scotland*, Part ii. p. 506. Dunlop's *Collections*, vol. ii. pp. 793, 794.]

[2] [*Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 1638-1842, pp. 29, 30.]

trouble to "the peace of this Kirk and kingdom" is stated to be: "The civil places and power of Kirkmen, their sitting in Session, Council, and Exchequer, their riding, sitting, and voting in Parliament, and their sitting on the Bench as Justices of Peace, which according to the constitution of this Kirk, are incompatible with their spiritual sanction, lifting them up above their brethren in worldly pomp, and do tend to the hinderance of the ministery."[1] This act of Assembly was ratified and approved by an act of the Scottish Parliament.

During the two periods of Episcopal domination in Scotland, in the reigns of James VI. and Charles II., there was a reverting to the old pre-Reformation practices. Prelates were promoted to the chief offices of State. In a few years after James VI. took possession of the English throne, John Spottiswoode was made Archbishop of Glasgow, a Lord of Session, and Privy Councillor for Scotland. In 1635, on the death of the Earl of Kinnoul, he was promoted to the high office of Lord Chancellor. In this capacity he presided over the Court of High Commission, which had unlimited jurisdiction, civil and ecclesiastical, in which his bishops sat, and which could be constituted with a quorum of five, all of whom might be, and generally were bishops. There was thus erected in Scotland an episcopal court which was absolute, and could execute the severest penalties, secular and spiritual,

[1] [*Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 1638-1842, pp. 36, 37.]

against any one who might be summoned to its bar. We find the same state of matters again in the years immediately following the Restoration. Archbishop Sharp, as President of the Council and then as Chancellor, along with his bishops in the Court of High Commission, condemned without any opportunity of appeal all who refused to bend to his views in regard to the constitution and management of affairs in church and state, with fines and banishment according to his arbitrary will. During the ascendancy of episcopacy the civil government of the country was virtually in the hands of churchmen.

It thus appears that under the domination of popery and prelacy in Scotland the two jurisdictions, civil and ecclesiastical, were not kept distinct, but that churchmen were allowed to exercise authority in both departments, and to judge in civil cases as well as in ecclesiastical. The presbyterian Protestant Church consistently opposed all such confounding of this distinction, and insisted that her ministers should take part in civil matters only on occasions of emergency, and never without the express permission of the Church. At the same time, as we have seen, the presbyterian Scots of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were equally resolved to prevent statesmen or any others not having the Church's authority from exercising jurisdiction or giving judgment in matters ecclesiastical. They were jealous of encroachment upon either side. The magistrate and the minister each represented a distinct and independ-

ent jurisdiction, and in their own province the one owed no subordination to the other. It will afterwards be discussed in what way and how far co-ordinate jurisdiction is possible in the country.

Meanwhile we turn to the history of the Reformed Scottish Church to see how the existence of two jurisdictions or kingdoms was understood and expressed. Reference has often been made to the conduct of Andrew Melville in his frequent and stormy interviews with King James VI., and in some quarters it has been represented that he made wild and impracticable demands on behalf of ecclesiastical liberty that no self-respecting sovereign could be expected for a moment to consider, that with ultramontane arrogance he claimed an authority for the Church and her decisions which would make that of a king shadowy and incomplete. Even a church historian ordinarily so fair-minded and calmly deliberative as the late Principal John Cunningham is inclined to regard Melville's attitude as preposterous and one which no one nowadays would think of defending.[1] Let us examine impartially some of the great churchman's encounters with his sovereign.

[1] ["The King was completely brow-beaten by the violence of Melville at Falkland, and was glad to lay aside his testiness and affect to look pleased. Such a scene as this reminds us of the days when popes put their feet upon the neck of emperors; or when Martin of Tours, at a public entertainment, after taking the wine cup himself, pushed it past princes to a presbyter, remarking that the humblest of the order was superior to kings. . . . The imperious advocate of High Church principles, he may be fairly regarded as the Hildebrand of Presbytery. He had acquired his opinions in Geneva, where he had lived and taught, and where Calvin, differing from the other reformers, had maintained the

In February 1584, soon after the young King's escape from the Ruthven lords and the regaining of ascendancy by the Earl of Arran, Andrew Melville was summoned before the Council, charged with having used treasonable language in one of his sermons. As Principal of the New College, St Andrews, he had preached there a sermon or lecture on the words with which Daniel reminded Belshazzar of the history of his father Nebuchadnezzar.

The Earl of Arran, now the King's chief adviser, and a bitter foe of the Church and of Melville in particular, sent out spies to listen to the public utterances of all the principal persons, and to report anything that might seem to afford ground for a charge of criticising or condemning any of his proceedings. The St Andrews preacher had been warned by one of the new courtiers, a friend and relative of his own,[1] that attempts were being made to poison the mind of the King regarding him, and he was advised to take the earliest opportunity of visiting the King and assuring him of his loyalty and good faith. This he declined to do, on the ground that it might be regarded as implying on his part a consciousness of guilt, whereas he was certain that none could show that he had ever uttered a disloyal sentiment. He would cheerfully obey the royal command were his advice required

autonomy of the Church, and left behind him this old Roman doctrine as a special legacy to the Scottish Clergy." *Church History of Scotland*, vol. i. chap. xv. pp. 433, 470.]

[1] [Sir Robert Melville.]

about the affairs of the Church, or any explanations of his conduct desired.

When, therefore, he received a mandate on account of charges brought against him by Arran's spies, he immediately appeared before the Privy Council. In a calm, respectful, and very complete manner he repeated the substance of the sermon, declaring that he gave the very words used as well as he could remember, that he had always maintained the lawfulness of the King's authority, and that he had spoken nothing then or at any other time derogatory to that authority.

He also produced a testimonial from the "Rector, Deans of Faculties, Professors, Regents and Masters within the University of Saint Andrews," bearing thirty signatures, in which they declared that they, "continual and diligent auditors of his doctrine, heard nothing out of his mouth, neither in doctrine nor application, which tended not directly to the glory of God, and to the establishment of your Majesty's crown"; that in prayer he always commended the King to the Divine protection; that he exhorted subjects to be obedient "to the meanest magistrates"; and that all alleged against him to the contrary was slanderous calumny.[1]

Then for the information of the King and the Government Melville made a full statement in regard to what he actually said on that particular occasion,

[1] [The testimonial with the signatures is given in full by Dr M'Crie in his *Life of Andrew Melville*, vol. i. note x. pp. 454-56.]

and also in regard to his ordinary manner of preaching.

When the Council, notwithstanding all this, proceeded to the trial of the case in a formal way, the accused preacher at once protested against the jurisdiction thus claimed, on the ground that he was not accused of a civil offence, but of false teaching uttered in the pulpit. Such a contention before a well-constituted and fairly conducted court is discussed without passion, and without any notion that the advancing of such an objection is in itself any slight or dishonour to the court. But on this occasion the King and his advisers chose to regard Melville's objection as a rejection of their authority, and an act of contumacy and disloyalty. His objection, however, to the jurisdiction of the Council was not a complete disowning the authority of the King and his Council. He simply maintained that *in the first instance* any charge of treasonable or objectionable utterance from the pulpit should be brought before those courts which had the direct oversight of his pastoral conduct. He contended that if the Council became aware of any such charge it should first call upon the Presbytery of the bounds to deal with the case. It is evident that this did not prejudice the action of the civil court, if, after procedure by the ecclesiastical authorities, it appeared that any ground still lay for prosecuting a civil suit.[1] Principal William Robertson will scarcely now be

[1] [The question is very fully discussed by Dr M'Crie in his *Life of Melville*, vol. i. chap. iv. pp. 206 *et seq.*]

quoted as an authority in Scottish history; but as a Church leader it might have been expected that he would have attended to the express words used by such a churchman as Andrew Melville. Yet he represents Melville as contending that "the Presbytery of which he was a member had *the sole right* to call him to account for words spoken in the pulpit." If this plea had been admitted, he says, "the Protestant clergy would have become independent of the civil magistrate," and might have taught "without fear or control the most dangerous principles."[1] Dr John Cunningham, of course, does not make this mistake, but he criticises Melville's declinature just as if it had been an absolute one.[2] It seems to me that the declinature on this occasion was eminently reasonable, and that in consistency with his principles, which are those of our presbyterian Church polity, he could not have done less. The meaning of the King's claim must be read in the light of "the Black Acts" passed by Parliament a few months later. In these infamous enactments the King was declared to be supreme in all causes and over all persons, and the declining of the royal judgment was pronounced to be treason. Without surrendering the case of his Church, Melville could not have recognised the King's supremacy over all causes. If the Presbytery, upon its attention being called to the matter, failed to take up the case or

[1] [*History of Scotland*, 1809, vol. ii. p. 425.]

[2] ["Few men will now defend the declinature of Melville: modern sense and modern legislation have decided against it." *Church History*, vol. i. p. 374.]

to give it adequate attention, surely it was time enough then for the Council to consider whether there were not in it points that fell under its jurisdiction.[1]

As to the dramatic style in which Melville indicated that he had scriptural authority for the plea which he advanced—"lowsing a little Hebrew Byble fra his belt and clanking it down on the burd before the King and Chancelar"[2]—we are not to take it for granted that he did this rudely or with violence, though the formal sentence pronounced against him makes this statement.[3] Melville himself promptly denied the charge of Arran that he meant to scorn the King and Council. "No, my lord," he answered, when the Chancellor, opening the book upon the table and finding it Hebrew, said, "Sir, he scorns your Majesty and Council"—"I scorn not; but with all earnestness, zeal, and gravity, I stand for the cause of Jesus Christ and His Kirk."[4]

He was really proceeded against for so often and so firmly declining his Majesty's judgment, and for

[1] ["The question was not, Whether ministers be exempt from the magistrates' jurisdiction, nor, Whether the pulpit puts men in liberty to teach treason without any civil cognisance and punishment. Since the Reformation of religion no man in Scotland did ever assert such things. But the question was, as Spotswood himself states it, Whether the Council was a competent judge to Master Melville's doctrine *in prima instantia:* these were the express terms." Baillie in *Answer to the Declaration* subjoined to Historical Vindication, 1646.]

[2] [James Melville's *Diary*, Bannatyne Club Ed., p. 101.]

[3] ["Ansuering alsua maist proudlie, irreueventlie and contemptuouslie." M'Crie's *Life*, vol. i. note v. p. 457.]

[4] [James Melville's *Diary*, *ut sup.*, p. 101.]

objecting to a witness,[1] against whom, as a malicious personal foe who had sworn to do him personal violence if he got an opportunity, he had surely good cause to object.

The head of his offending is concisely expressed in the form of his sentence to be imprisoned in the Castle of Blackness, when it is affirmed that "his Highness and not the Kirk is Judge in the first instance in causes of treason whatsoever."[2] Whether Melville was right in his view as to the court of first instance or not, let us understand that the making of this claim and not the manner of his doing so was the offence for which he received sentence.

It is to be noted that in 1596, twelve years after Melville's trial, David Black, minister of St Andrews, had the same charge brought against him of alleging that any accusation of uttering treason in the pulpit should be in the first instance investigated by the Ecclesiastical Court, and defended himself in precisely the same way.[3]

This was the unanimous opinion of all true Presbyterians, who were by far the most loyal of all the inhabitants of Scotland in those days. They could perceive no inconsistency between this plea and the profession and practice of hearty allegiance to their king.

Shortly before Black's trial, in 1595, Melville appeared at Falkland under a strong conviction of

[1] [William Stewart, one of the pensioners of the Abbey of St Andrews, known as *the Accuser* from his conduct on the present occasion.]

[2] [M'Crie's *Life, ut sup.*] [3] [*Ibid.* vol. i. chap. vi. pp. 395 *et seq.*]

the duty that he owed to his Church and his Prince to let the latter know plainly what, little to his liking, he had more than once before told him. Calling the King "God's silly vassal," and taking him by the sleeve, the undaunted presbyter, "through much hot reasoning and many interruptions," said this in effect:—"There are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland. There is Christ Jesus the King, and His Kingdom the Kirk, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. And those whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over His Kirk, and govern His spiritual Kingdom, have sufficient power of Him, and authority so to do, both together and severally, the which no Christian King nor Prince should control or discharge, but fortify and assist, otherwise they are not faithful subjects nor members of Christ. And, Sir, when you were in your swaddling cloths [cloutes] Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land in spite of all His enemies, and His officers and ministers convened and assembled for the ruling and weal of His Kirk, which was ever for your welfare, defence, and preservation also, when these same enemies were seeking your destruction and cutting off." [1]

To any one who reads the story of Andrew Melville's life as given in the wonderfully vivid record of his genial and talented nephew, he will appear as true a statesman as a churchman, loyal as very few,

[1] [James Melville's *Diary*, *ut sup.*, pp. 245-46.]

if any, of the Scottish politicians of that age were loyal. He was plain spoken in his interviews with King James, not because of any ignoble pleasure that he took in showing what liberties he could use with the highest in the land, but just because of his sincere endeavour to save his sovereign from the selfish designs of unprincipled courtiers and from his own inconceivable folly. That wretched kingcraft on which James prided himself, which was neither more nor less than common lying, was enough to rouse to indignation a much less inflammable spirit than that of Melville. We love him all the more for the violence of his ebullitions. "If my anger go *downward*," he said to one of his advisers counselling prudence, "set your foot on it and put it out; but if it go *upward*, suffer it to rise to its place."[1] Kings too often have been, and King James VI. and his unhappy son were in particular, surrounded by an atmosphere of falsehood. It is well for them now and again to hear the truth, and in such a case the truth could not be told in smooth and courtly language. Yet Melville, though plain and clear of speech as he needed to be if he was to be of any use, was always polite. He always respected, and insisted upon others respecting the royal prerogative. Dishonour to the King equally with dishonour to the Church was dishonour to God.

Robert Baillie, in his *Historical Vindication of the*

[1] [Livingstone's *Memorable Characteristics*. Wodrow Select Biographies, vol. i. p. 303.]

Government of the Church of Scotland (1646), wrote in reply to the calumnies of two reckless and unprincipled men, John Maxwell and Patrick Adamson. Dr John Maxwell, the deposed Bishop of Ross, declared to be an unpardonable incendiary by the Parliament of both kingdoms, had written an anonymous tract in 1644, which he republished with some alterations two years afterwards, and entitled, after the absurd fashion of the age, *The Burden of Issachar.* Patrick Adamson, Archbishop of St Andrews, had written a vindication of the Scottish Court under the title of a *Declaration of the King's Majesty's Intention and meaning towards the late acts of Parliament.*[1] Some hot-headed Independent or Sectary had republished these two pamphlets, thinking them injurious to the cause of the Presbyterians.[2] His reply to Maxwell, Baillie entitles *The Unloading of Issachar's Burden;* and certainly, if he tossed out the stuff somewhat roughly, he emptied the bag very completely and threw it aside quite collapsed. In dealing with Adamson's so-called King's Declaration, Baillie showed from the writer's own confession that the Archbishop was the actual author of it, and that it contained vile and unfounded aspersions on the banished lords and on the

[1] [Full information regarding this tract will be found in the Wodrow *Miscellany*, pp. 473-76. It is given at length in Calderwood's *History*, vol. iv. pp. 254-69.]

[2] ["At this time" (June 26th, 1646) "I yoke with Maxwell and Adamson, who, with based pamphlets, have done our Church here much harm. The Sectaries, of purpose, reprinted their books, and carefully spread them; but I shall make them repent it." Baillie's *Letters and Journals*, vol. ii. p. 7.]

proceedings of the Church. It was part of James's despicable kingcraft to authorise and make use of such a document as long as possible and when it became evident that it could no longer be used, to throw the blame of its design and publication upon another. In his replies to both these pamphlets, Baillie in a thoroughly manly and reasonable way defends Melville, upon whom a large share of the abuse had fallen. He repudiates as an utterly baseless calumny the statement advanced by both Maxwell and Adamson that the ministers of the sixteenth century claimed that any one preaching heresy should not be summoned before the civil authorities and punished by them. All Melville's plea, says Baillie, was that a minister of the Church of Scotland and a member of the University of St Andrews, being privileged by the law of the kingdom, was not necessitated at the first instance to answer before the Privy Council for a passage of his sermon which most falsely was said to be treasonable. This was just the position maintained by Scottish Churchmen without modification from the Reformation onward. Melville's claim was the claim of Rutherfurd, Gillespie, Baillie, and all true constitutional Presbyterians. What none of them happily could ever be persuaded to tolerate was the assumption on the King's part of universal supremacy over all causes civil and ecclesiastical. Had this been allowed it would have put an individual, the King, not always wise, indeed very seldom so, irresponsibly above all laws human and divine.

Well for us, surely as citizens as well as churchmen, that in this point our ecclesiastical forefathers resolutely refused to yield a single inch. Maxwell and Adamson were both influenced against the discipline of the Church of Scotland as a child's wrath is kindled against the rod that scourges him, and as a dog snarls at the stone that hits him. They represented the General Assembly as exercising a tyrannical power in matters alike of Church and State. Baillie answers that the Assembly never sought to exercise any powers but those which the King and the constitution of the realm authorise. At the same time our Scottish ecclesiastics have always been careful to maintain that this power did not come to them by the permission of the King nor from the authority of the State. They had their jurisdiction from the same source as the King had his. There was no idea on their part that they owed their jurisdiction to the civil power. With them ecclesiastical jurisdiction is an ordinance of God; it would be treason and disloyalty on the Churchman's part were he to submit himself to any human authority. Church and State have co-ordinate jurisdictions. Each had its own well-defined sphere. The duty of the State towards the Church is, not only to abstain from all interference, but also to take order that no one use violence in resisting or restraining the Church from the free exercise of her powers. Each may advise the other, but the one ought not to dictate to the other.

All our old Scottish divines use the term jurisdiction, and they all apply it to that power of govern-

ment that is inherent in the Church and which she has directly from God. Thus John Welsh of Ayr, writing from Blackness in 1606, states as the special cause of his imprisonment these two points: "First, that Christ is the Head of His Church; secondly, that she is free in her government from all other jurisdiction except Christ's." [1]

Precisely to the same effect had the Church of Scotland in 1585 addressed the King in certain *Animadversions of offences conceived upon the Acts of Parliament* [*Black Acts*] *made in the year* 1584. "The power of binding and loosing," said "the commissioners of the Kirk to the King's Majesty at the Parliament of Linlithgow," "which is called the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, consisteth not only in these points [preaching and ministration of sacraments], but also in judgment, jurisdiction and removing of offences out of the Kirk of God, and excommunication to be pronounced against the disobedient, by these that are office-bearers within the same. . . . To confound the jurisdictions civil and ecclesiastical, is that thing wherein all men of good judgment have justly found fault with the Pope of Rome, who claimeth to himself the power of both the swords; which is als [as] great a fault to a civil magistrate to claim or usurp, and specially to judge upon doctrine, errors, and

[1] [Letter to Dame Lilias Graham, Countess of Wigton. This famous letter of Welsh is given in full by Wodrow in his *History of Mr John Welsh.* Select Biographies, vol. i. pp. 18-26, and abridged in Young's *Life of John Welsh*, chap. viii. pp. 252-57.]

heresies, he not being placed in ecclesiastical function to interpret the Scriptures. . . . And it is of truth, that there is a spiritual jurisdiction granted to the Kirk of God by His Word (which maketh no derogation to the jurisdiction of earthly princes) whereof the office-bearers within the Kirk in this realm have been in peaceable possession and use these twenty-four years by-past, with the exercise whereof followed no trouble, but great quietness in the Kirk and Commonwealth." [1]

The *Second Book of Discipline*, "according to which the Church Government is established by law, 1592 and 1690," declares in the opening chapter that "the Kirk has a certain Power granted by God, according to the which it uses a proper Jurisdiction and Government, exercised to the comfort of the Kirk. This Power ecclesiastical is an authority granted by God the Father, through the Mediator Jesus Christ unto His Kirk gathered, and having the ground in the Word of God, to be put in execution by them unto whom the spiritual Government of the Kirk by lawful calling is committed. . . . This Power is diversely used. For sometimes it is severally exercised, chiefly by the Teachers, sometimes conjunctly by mutual consent of them that bear the office and charge, after the form of Judgment. The former is commonly called *potestas ordinis*, and the other *potestas jurisdictionis*. These two kinds of Power have both one Authority, one Ground, one final Cause, but are different in the

[1] [Calderwood's *History*, vol. iv. pp. 450-453.]

Manner and Form of Execution, as is evident by the speaking of our Master in the sixteenth and eighteenth of Matthew." [1]

In June 1592 the Scottish Parliament passed an act ratifying the General Assemblies, Provincial Synods, Presbyteries, and particular Sessions of the Church, and declaring them, *with the jurisdiction and discipline* belonging to them, to be in all time coming most just, good and godly, notwithstanding whatsoever statutes, acts and laws, canon, civil, or municipal, made to the contrary. This important statute was re-enacted and ratified in the Revolution Settlement of 1690, and still continues to be the charter of the Church of Scotland's liberties.[2]

At this point and in this connection I wish to call attention to a lecture by the Rev. Dr Mair of Earlston on *Jurisdiction in Matters Ecclesiastical.*[3] Dr Mair insists upon giving an extremely narrow and highly technical interpretation of the term jurisdiction. After calling attention to the fact that the Statute book of the kingdom makes acknowledgment of the truth that "The Lord Jesus, as king and head of His Church hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil

[1] [Dunlop's *Collections*, vol. ii. p. 760.]

[2] [*Act Parl. Scot.* iii. 541. "This statute has the vague and undescriptive title of 'Act for abolishing of the actis contrair the true religioun.'" M'Crie's *Life of Melville*, vol. i. chap. v. p. 319 n.]

[3] [*Jurisdiction in Matters Ecclesiastical being part of a Lecture delivered in the University of Edinburgh.* By the Rev. William Mair, D.D., Earlston. Author of "Digest of Church Law," etc. etc. William Blackwood & Sons, 1896.]

magistrate," he remarks that in his judgment "it ought to be very gratifying to the whole Church of Christ that the Statute-book of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland bears" such an acknowledgment. But important and gratifying as this acknowledgment is supposed to be to the whole Church of Christ, "it would be practically worthless," says Dr Mair, "but for another great fact." That great fact is stated in these terms: "The State not only acknowledges in the Church a right and power bestowed by heaven, but itself also *makes* a *grant* to the Church of another corresponding but distinct power, viz., the power or right to exercise within the kingdom of Scotland that power which is acknowledged to belong to it from its connection with the kingdom of heaven—to exercise it without challenge, as freely as the courts of the earthly kingdom execute their powers. It is evident from history and logic alike that the State might have refused this. It is this power granted by the State that is called jurisdiction."

Here I would call attention to a difference in expression which distinguishes the important Act of 1592 from the statement of Dr Mair. The statute of Parliament "*decerns* and *declares*" the jurisdiction and discipline "to be maist just, gude, and godlie in themselves." Dr Mair speaks of the State as making a grant of power to exercise an acknowledged right, and calls this the conferring of jurisdiction. It is evidently jurisdiction in one sense that the Act of Parliament declares, and jurisdiction in another sense

that according to the lecturer the State confers upon the Church. The jurisdiction of which the statute speaks is a power inherent in the Church of Christ, whether established or non-established. The Church has it altogether independently of any attitude hostile or friendly which the State may assume towards her. Of course the civil power may refuse to acknowledge it, just as Edward I. refused to acknowledge Scotland's independence; and it may, by the application of force, put an outward and physical restraint upon as many Church members as come within its sweep from exercising that jurisdiction. As Edward was able to torture and slay the patriot Wallace, but was not able to overthrow or destroy the independence of the nation, so James had it in his power to imprison and banish Andrew Melville. He could silence and outlaw godly ministers for affirming the independent jurisdiction of Christ's Church, but only in the same way as brutal highwaymen may overpower the unarmed and comparatively feeble wayfarer. It is certainly misleading to introduce the statement, as Dr Mair does, that the State *might* refuse to make a grant to the Church of power to exercise her jurisdiction. That statement ought to bear the meaning, which, however, it cannot bear that the State has it in its option to make this grant or to withhold it. For in reality the civil power has no grant to make; it has simply to observe and keep within the limits of its own jurisdiction.

The Church that stands by the *Second Book of*

Discipline, agreed upon in the General Assembly of 1578, revived and ratified by the Assembly of 1638, and recognised as the true and approved government of the Church by the Parliaments of 1592 and 1690, can never admit the conferring on her of a power by the State to exercise a right, or a power, or jurisdiction, or whatever else you please, for this she had exercised independently of any other, before ever the State had even declared her jurisdiction, or thought of offering to grant her the power of exercising it. For thirty years at least the Church of Scotland exercised this power before the State declared that she had it. The exercise of this Church power is in no way determined by the State assuming either to grant or to withhold it. During the period referred to the Church had her courts in which, and by means of which, she exercised the powers that she claimed to have of inherent right without waiting to obtain any power from the State, without apparently entertaining any notion that she had no jurisdiction until she received such grant of power from the State.

Then further, it is quite evident that our Church fathers and contemporary statesmen had no such understanding of the term jurisdiction as that which Dr William Mair assumes. With them jurisdiction did not mean a grant of power to use a power, but that power itself which they regarded as embracing in it the power to use it. According to them jurisdiction was the power to determine and judge in all matters pertaining to the Church; and the Church possessing

this exclusive power was not any particular church, or necessarily a church possessing any sort of State connection or sanction, but the Church of Christ, in her corporate capacity exercising her powers through regularly constituted courts. These courts were instituted by the Church herself. Such an institution of them made them courts of the Church. There were Sessions, Presbyteries and Assemblies in which jurisdiction was exercised, before any recognition was given to them by the State. They were as truly courts before, as they were after, that recognition was given.

Dr Mair says that to "managing bodies" of denominations in Scotland other than that of the Established Church "the word 'court' is not allowed except in courtesy."[1] If this were so, then it would necessarily follow—what some have actually said, though Dr Mair is too courteous to affirm it—that all religious bodies in Scotland except the Established

[1] [Dr Mair is explaining the position taken up by the Judges of the Court of Session in the Cardross case of 1858 and the Auchtergaven one of 1870. The position, according to Dr Mair, differed in these two cases in this way: "If the body complained of has jurisdiction in the matter in hand, whatever that matter may be, the civil court has not jurisdiction and will not interfere. This was declared to be the case of our Church [in the Auchtergaven case]. If the body complained of has no jurisdiction [the Free Church condition in the Cardross case], the relation of its members to one another and to its managing bodies (for the word 'court' is not allowed except in courtesy) is that of contract, and the proceedings are subject to review, and to reduction to the effect of giving damages, whatever the matter of the contract. The judges do not, as is asserted, insist on construing their relations as civil contract. The two positions (and there are no other) are jurisdiction or contract, whether in things spiritual or civil. In our Church it is jurisdiction, and in the others contract." Lecture, p. 15.]

Church are only by courtesy called churches. It is the Church as such that claims to constitute these courts, and if a religious body cannot itself constitute these courts it can only be because it is not a church in the strict and accurate use of the word.

The United Free Church of Scotland claims to be of the Church of Scotland, not in the exclusive sense of unchurching any Christian body in the realm acting through regularly constituted courts, but as being one of the branches of the Church of Christ in the land. All the elements of which the United Church is composed—Seceders and Relief men, Free Churchmen, Original Seceders, and Reformed Presbyterians—have never by their courts or in their authoritative documents said or done anything to invalidate their claim to be still within the Church of Scotland, though not within the Establishment. If they were of the Church before their repudiation of State encroachment and interference, they are of the Church still.

It seems to me that Dr Mair's endeavour to rid himself and his Church from the reproach of maintaining an Erastian theory of the relation of Church and State has not been successful. He not only allows the State to grant a power of exercising a heaven-given right, which right admittedly it never did and never can confer, he also allows the State to declare that *that* only is the Church which accepts of this grant of power, and then, by just and necessary consequence, he allows the State to un-

church all bodies of Christians who do not accept from it this grant of jurisdiction, by refusing to admit that they can exercise the rights of a Church by constituting their "managing bodies" into Courts of Christ's Church. This, in my judgment, is rank Erastianism, not a whit modified by the attempt to represent the assumption of the State as the granting of a power to exercise a power, and not the granting of that power itself.[1]

The earlier Scottish churchmen, Gillespie, Rutherfurd, Baillie, Brown, and a host of others are most pronounced in their opposition to Erastianism in every shape and form. Rutherfurd keenly opposes the views of the Anglican Erastians, Bilson, Hooker and such like, who made Christ's Kingdom altogether spiritual, mystical and invisible, so that Christ is not a King to bind the external man or to care for the external government of His own house, which, like all other external things, they understand to belong to the civil magistrate. This theory they had derived from Constantine, who said to the bishops of his day: "God has made you bishops of the internal affairs of the Church, but He has appointed me the bishop of its external affairs." In opposition to this the Scottish theologian maintained that "He who is the only Head, Lord, and King of His Church must govern the politic, external body His Church perfectly by laws of His own spiritual policy; and that more perfectly than any earthly monarch or state doth their subjects, or

[1] [See Note on page 190.]

any commanders, or any lord, or master of family doth their army, soldiers, and members of their family." [1]

As to the duty of the magistrate in reference to the Church there are differences of opinion and statement among Scottish ecclesiastical writers. They were all convinced that the magistrate ought to interest himself actively in the affairs of the Church, so as to secure to it the unhindered exercise of all its powers and privileges; that he ought not only to discourage but to suppress any sect or heresy whose presence in the land would be inimical to the interests of the Church; and that it is especially his duty to provide for the maintenance of ministers and for the erection and upholding of a sufficient number of edifices throughout the land, so that the people everywhere may conveniently attend the preaching of the Word. Durham, in his *Dying Man's Testament to the Church of Scotland, or Treatise concerning Scandal*, goes further. He holds that the civil ruler may order subjects "to keep the Ordinances." This, he says, "is but a constraining of them to the means whereby Religion worketh, and a making them, as it were, to give God a hearing, leaving their yielding and consenting to Him, when they have heard Him, to their own wills, which cannot be forced; yet it is reason that, when God cometh by His Ordinances to treat with a people, that a magistrate should so far respect His glory and

[1] Rutherfurd's *Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication*, 1646. Section II. p. 13.

their good as to interpose his authority to make them hear."[1] Besides this, Durham requires the magistrate in many ways to interfere in matters that to us seem quite outside of his jurisdiction. If ministers and Church officers are negligent then magistrates may and ought to "put" them to their duty in trying, discovering, convincing, etc., such as by their corrupt doctrine may hazard others."[2] He is to inhibit heretics from venting their doctrines, not forcing their consciences, but only restraining them from hurting those of others. If heretics utter and publish corrupt doctrine the magistrate "may and ought to destroy such books . . . and inhibit and stop printing of them, or actual selling, spreading or transporting of them," as he would stop the "carrying of suspected or forbidden goods. For it is no just liberty to have liberty to hurt others."[3] Again, the magistrate "may and ought to restrain idle and vagabond travelling of such suspected persons" and "constrain them to follow some lawful occupation and to be diligent therein."[4] Finally, the civil ruler "may and ought to restrain and censure all blasphemous and irreverent expressions and speeches against the Majesty of God and His Ordinances, and all calumnies and bitterness against faithful Ministers or Professors . . . and to make such incapable of public places of trust, and remove them from such."[5]

[1] [Durham on Scandal, Part III. chap. xiv. p. 231.]
[2] [*Ibid.* p. 232.] [3] [*Ibid.*] [4] [*Ibid.* pp. 232, 3.]
[5] [*Ibid.* p. 233.]

All these functions of the magistrate, however, are evidently not interferences with the external government of the Church, but rather assistance given to secure the execution of ecclesiastical decisions. The only apparent exception is the injunction to the magistrate to urge negligent office-bearers to take up and deal with cases of false teaching. At most this amounted only to the civil court calling the attention of ecclesiastics to some case apparently overlooked, and asking that an investigation should be made, without in any way interfering with the process or the judgment.

George Gillespie puts the relation of the magistrate to the Church thus: He is keeper, defender, and guardian of both tables, but neither judge nor interpreter of Scripture. The power of the Christian magistrate is cumulative not privative in relation to the Church. He may and ought to act with, but neither for nor against Church officers.[1] Gillespie expresses the distinction of things inward and things outward differently from Rutherfurd; but his meaning is found to be practically the same. According to him the external inspection or administration of the magistrate in relation to religion is twofold: First, corrective, by external punishment; second, auxiliary, by external benefit and adminicles. The Church's part is directive—she directs the magistrate. He says to the Church as Moses said to Hobab, *Thou mayst be to us instead of eyes.* The magistrate's

[1] *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, p. 116.

part is coercive in compelling the obstinate and unruly to submit to the presbyterial or synodical sentence.[1]

With all their differences in the practical working out of the doctrine the old theologians of Scotland were unanimous in maintaining that there is only one Head of the Church, and that He is Head over all that pertains to the Church. It is here, by their maintaining the exclusive Headship of Christ, that they show themselves thoroughgoing Anti-Erastians. Everything belonging to the doctrine worship, government and discipline of the Church must be determined by Christ as its Head. To Him the Church must be subject not in some things, but in all things. These divines are not forgetful of the universal Lordship of Christ. They are well aware of, and often bring to remembrance the fact that not only were all things created by Him, but also for Him, that He is Lord of all. He is Lord over all men, Turk and Pagan as well as Christian. The conduct of all His creatures ought to be determined by His will. He has expressed His will toward all as Lord, and upon them He may enforce His will by the outward influences of His providences and the external operations of His laws. But Christ is Head over all things only to His Church. As such He expresses and enforces His will differently from the way in which He expresses and enforces it as Lord. The Lord stands outside and issues His commands as to

[1] *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, p. 122.

subjects and servants who wait listening for the word of command coming to them from without. The Head is part of the organism from which go forth to the several members, not only directions but also inclinations and enablings for the doing of that which is required.

In opposition to the Socinians of their day, who held that Jesus Christ is King only as Mediator, with no such universal kingship as would prove Him to be the equal of God the Father, the early theologians of Scotland distinguished a twofold kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Eternal Son of God He is King over all creatures, but as Mediator He is Head of His own people in His own Church only. With the Reformed theologians generally they distinguished a Kingdom of Christ that is natural to Him and a Kingdom that is bestowed upon Him.

It is as Mediator that Christ governs His Church, ruling in it with undivided sway, through officers of his own appointment who govern in His name and according to His laws. No one can be allowed to share His rule. The one Head, the Divine Mediator, has no vicar upon earth, either Prince or Priest. The power of the Church, the sole source of her jurisdiction lies in this, that He to whom *All authority hath been given in heaven and on earth* is *Head over all things to the Church,* and has said to the members of His Church, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

NOTE.

It is right to say that Dr Mair, having seen a report of this Lecture as delivered, has written protesting strongly against his being ranked or regarded as an Erastian, and he claims to have made it manifest that he strenuously opposes what he is here said to have accepted. No one can wish to impute to Dr Mair an opinion he disclaims. But his statements and his arguments are open to discussion. Dr Mair based his defence of the position of his church on the distinction, as he explains it, between jurisdiction and power of government. Mr Macpherson held that Dr Mair's explanation and application of this distinction gave away the spiritual liberty which Dr Mair professed to defend. The reader must be left to form his own conclusion.

LECTURE VI.

WHAT ACCORDING TO SCOTTISH THEOLOGY IS OF DIVINE RIGHT.

One of the many interesting figures in the Westminster Assembly, of whom we know little and would like to know much, is Dr Thomas Coleman, Orientalist and Erastian. He was a man held in high esteem for his learning and his eloquence. From his early rural charge in Lincolnshire he had been driven by the Cavaliers. He then served the Church in one of the London parishes, and was chosen as a member of the venerable Assembly, and took an active part in its debates. He ranged himself as a vigorous supporter of Erastian views, alongside of Selden, Lightfoot, Hussey and Pryne. Of all the divines at Westminster, only Lightfoot and he advocated thoroughgoing Erastianism. Their arguments turned mainly upon a particular understanding, interpretation and application, of Old Testament institutions.

On the 30th July 1645 Coleman was appointed to preach before the House of Commons. In his auditory on that occasion he had a much larger number of sympathisers than he had among the divines. He took the opportunity to express his mind clearly and strongly as to the Christian magistrate as such being

a governor in the Church. Before this, on two important occasions, he had argued in the Assembly against the opinion that the eighteenth chapter of St Matthew and the fifth chapter of First Corinthians set forth any distinction between civil and ecclesiastical government. In his sermon he maintained that the pressing of the Divine Right was the chief cause of disunion and difference in the Assembly. Two parties, he said, had come up to their meetings with biased judgments. The Commissioners from Scotland were for the Divine Right of presbytery; the Independents for that of congregational government. His advice was that they should establish as few things as possible by Divine Right. If a claim of that kind be made on behalf of any institution let it be made good by Scripture that clearly proves the case. As for himself he could never understand how in one state there could be two co-ordinate governments exempt from relative superiority and inferiority. He knew of no Scripture which supported any such notion. The fifth chapter of First Corinthians did not lay hold of his conscience for excommunication; and as for the eighteenth chapter of St Matthew he wondered that anyone should ever have thought of so applying it. For ruling elders and church discipline he found no Divine or scriptural warrant. This being so, he said, lay no more burden of government upon the shoulders of ministers than Christ hath plainly laid upon them. Of other work they already have abundance to exercise their energies and occupy their

time. "As the King of Sodom said to Abraham, *Give me the persons and take the goods to thyself*, so say I, Give us the doctrine, take you the government." Christ has placed a government in the Church : but of government, said Coleman, distinct from magistracy, I find no trace. This government of the Christian magistrate is given to Christ as Mediator in His Church.

This, of course, was rank, undisguised Erastianism. It was not merely an avowal of State interference in Church affairs, but the denial of Church government altogether. It was an unreserved acceptance and application of the dictum of Constantine ; God made you churchmen bishops of the internal affairs of the Church ; but He has made me the bishop of its external affairs. By the internal affairs of the Church, Constantine and Coleman understood preaching and the administration of the sacraments ; by the external her government and discipline in all their departments. All this was perfectly to the taste of the Erastians in the House of Commons.

Coleman's sermon, however, was regarded as highly offensive by the Assembly of Divines. The delivery of it at that particular juncture and occasion seemed little short of contempt. For just before this the Assembly had been for some time occupied in drawing up a petition for presentation to the House of Commons. The object of the document was to secure the establishment of church courts by which discipline might be exercised so that ignorant and

scandalous persons might be debarred from the Lord's Table, and thus that holy ordinance guarded from profanation and contempt. It was ready for presentation when Coleman, apparently the only member of the Assembly who had opposed the petition, forestalled the action of the body to which he belonged by discussing the subject at length in his sermon, and endeavouring to prejudice the Commoners against the document which, only two days later, would be laid before them. This was sharp practice. Naturally the Assembly resented the unfair advantage of his position which the preacher had taken. On the day following the delivery of the sermon, Coleman was called to account in the Jerusalem Chamber, and it was proposed to make a representation to the House of Commons upon the subject. Meantime an opportunity was given the offender of explaining or retracting what had given offence. Although he could not conscientiously retract, he expressed himself as sorry for having given offence, and promised not to increase that offence by publishing the discourse. Those, however, who had been gratified by his exposition and defence of their Erastian opinions, prevailed upon him to withdraw this promise, and the sermon was published.

George Gillespie of Edinburgh had preached before the House of Lords shortly after Coleman's appearance in the other House. He took no particular notice of Coleman's performance or the subject with which it dealt. The publication, however, seemed to the eager

young Scottish controversialist a challenge to enter the lists and to demolish what appeared to him the groundless and mischievous statements of the Erastian champion. In the controversy that ensued Gillespie wrote three tracts: *A Brotherly Examination,*[1] *Nihil Respondes,*[2] and *Male Audis.*[3] Coleman, he contended, had offered four rules as tending to unity and the healing of prevailing controversies about Church government. But the proposed cure was worse than the disease. Instead of bringing about agreement he would have his hand against every man

[1] [*A Brotherly Examination* of some passages of Mr Coleman's late sermon upon Job xi. 20, as it is now printed and published. By which he hath to the great offence of very many endeavoured to strike at the very root of all spiritual and ecclesiastical government, contrary to the Word of God, the Solemn League and Covenant, other Reformed Churches, and the votes of the honourable Houses of Parliament, after advice had with the reverend and learned Assembly of Divines. By George Gillespie, Minister at Edinburgh, London, 1645.]

[2] [*Nihil Respondes;* or, *A Discovery* of the extreme unsatisfactoriness of Mr Coleman's Piece, published last week under the title of "A Brotherly Examination re-examined." Wherein his self-contradictions; his yielding of somethings, and not answering to other things objected against him; his abusing of Scripture; his errors in Divinity; his abusing of the Parliament and endangering their authority; his abusing of the Assembly; his calumnies, namely, against the Church of Scotland and against myself; the repugnancy of his doctrine to the Solemn League and Covenant:—are plainly demonstrated. By George Gillespie, Minister at Edinburgh. London, 1645.]

[3] [*Male Audis;* or, An Answer to Mr Coleman's Male Dicis; Wherein the repugnancy of his Erastian doctrine to the Word of God, to the Solemn League and Covenant, and to the Ordinances of Parliament; also his contradictions, tergiversations, heterodoxies, calumnies, and perverting of testimonies, are made more apparent than formerly. Together with some animadversions upon Mr Hussey's plea for Christian magistracy; showing that in divers of the aforementioned particulars he hath miscarried as much as, and in some particulars more than, Mr Coleman. By George Gillespie, Minister at Edinburgh. London, 1646.]

and every man's hand against him. Gillespie at once joins issue with the Erastian over his treatment of the *jus divinum*, the claim of Divine Right in the determining of Church government. Coleman had said, "Establish as few things by divine right as can well be." This would mean, said the Scot, "as little fine gold, and as much dross as can well be. What you take from the word of God is fine 'gold tried in the fire'; but an holy thing of man's devising is the dross of silver." And so Gillespie would have as many things established *jure divino* as can possibly be. With the skill of a trained and experienced controversialist he insisted in tying down his antagonist to the precise point in dispute. It was not, "Whether this or that form of Church government be *jure divino*; but, whether a Church government be *jure divino*."

This brings out clearly what our old divines mean when in their discussions on Church government they plead for a Divine Right. They insisted that any scheme of Church government which a particular or national Church proposed to set up must make good its claim from the precept and pattern of Scripture. This claim of a *jus divinum* is often represented as an arrogant assumption. But it should be remembered that it has been and is made, not only by presbyterians, but also by episcopalians and by congregationalists. It may be, and often has been very arrogantly expressed. The arrogancy, however, is in the manner of expressing the claim, not in the claim itself. To claim for presbytery, prelacy or congregationalism a

Divine Right is arrogant only if those making the claim have not considered and made good the fact as to whether there is such a thing as Divine Right in Church government at all.

Coleman says there is no such thing as Divine Right in the Church because there is no such thing as Church government. Government, according to him, is only in the hands of the Christian magistrate.[1] As Gillespie shows this is really equivalent to a fourth claim for Divine Right, that of the Erastian alongside of those of the Presbyterian, the Episcopalian and the Independent. The Erastian claims that there is a *jus divinum* for the magistrate rather than for the ruling elder, the prelate or the body of the Christian people exercising the government in ecclesiastical affairs. In contradistinction to the other three he asserts that of the four departments—doctrine, worship, government and discipline—only the first two are under the direction of Church officers, while the other two are under the control of the civil power. Thus the Erastian claims for his theory the sanction of a Divine Right.

Coleman, no less than Rutherfurd and Gillespie, argued from Scripture texts, and like them, too, largely relied upon Old Testament patterns and examples. Selden, Lightfoot and Coleman were all great rabbinists, and often dazzled and disconcerted

[1] ["A Christian magistrate, as a Christian magistrate, is a governor in the Church. Of other governments, beside magistracy, I find no institution ; of them I do. . . . To rob the kingdom of Christ of the magistrate, and his governing power, I cannot excuse, no, not from a kind of sacrilege, if the magistrate be His." Sermon *ut sup.*]

their opponents by displays of curious, out of the way erudition. Gillespie meets them on their own chosen field, and in the first Book of *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, consisting of thirteen chapters and an appendix, sets himself to prove that Jewish Church government supplies arguments in his favour rather than against his position.

Through seventy-four large, closely-printed pages he labours to show that the Jewish State and the Jewish Church were distinct, that there was among the Jews an ecclesiastical excommunication, and that scandalous, notorious and presumptuous offenders against the moral law, though circumcised and not ceremonially unclean, were excluded from participation in the sacrament of the Passover.

All the parties, therefore, who engaged in this debate were agreed that a Divine Right of Church government existed; they differed as to what form of government could make this claim.

The real point in dispute was not quite fairly put by Coleman when he said, Establish as few things as possible by Divine Right. But the question was not how many or how few things should have Divine Right claimed for them, but rather what things have a right to the claim. I am quite aware of the importance of forbearing to make a claim of right on behalf of details of worship and government which are not clearly determined by any principle laid down in the Word of God. I believe mistakes have been made by representatives of all the different parties

claiming Scripture prescription for institutions and ceremonies which are not prescribed, at least in regard to their particular pattern or details. We may consider at a later stage how far and in what instances our Church fathers erred in seeking to bind by an inflexible and unalterable rule of Divine Right what God had left unbound. Meanwhile we shall consider how the Scottish divines of the seventeenth century support their claim of a Divine Right on behalf of Presbytery.

It must be quite evident that such a claim when put forth in that interest is an exclusive one. So long as I make no claim for any one particular form of ecclesiastical polity as being of Divine Right and by Divine prescription, it is quite open for me to say that circumstances of time and place and varieties of national character and constitution may warrant the establishment here of the presbyterian probity, there of the episcopal, and elsewhere of the congregational. I have known ministers of the Established Church of Scotland who did not approve of the setting up of presbyterian charges in England, either in connection with the Scottish Synod in England or with the English Presbyterian Church, and who said very decidedly that if they were residing in England they would attach themselves to the Anglican Establishment. The attachment of such people is to the national or established church, not to the presbyterian or episcopal. If they believed in the Divine Right of episcopacy, they would be

episcopalians in Scotland; and if they believed in the *jus divinum* of presbytery, they would be presbyterians in England.

Our forefathers believed in the Divine Right of the presbyterian church polity, and it was upon the basis of what they held to be of divine institution that they sought to bring about uniformity of worship in the two countries of England and Scotland. They did not regard this matter of government as of the essence of the Church, and so episcopal and congregational churches were recognised by them as true churches of Christ. At the same time they were obliged not only to defend their own position in preferring the presbyterian system, but also to show that the principles of their polity were strictly in accordance with the divine rule and that other systems could not make this claim.

Hence the writings of Rutherfurd and Gillespie are not only argumentative, but continuously polemical. It was perhaps not possible—it certainly seemed to them impossible—to prove the Divine Right of presbytery without proving in every detail that episcopacy and independency, in all particulars in which they differ from presbytery, are without Divine Right, that the principles and prescriptions of the Divine Word are not only not with them, but are distinctly against them. This feature of the case should be attended to in estimating the genius of our old Scottish theologians. Some of them may have been by nature polemically inclined. I suppose

there are men in all ages, professional and non-professional, who are so disposed, who never become interested in the treatment of a subject unless they have an abundance of opponents whose weaknesses and fallacies they take pleasure in unravelling and exposing. But I do not think Rutherfurd, Gillespie and Baillie were of that sort. "I have often and heartily wished," writes Gillespie in the opening words of his preface to *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, "that I might not be distracted by, or engaged into polemic writings, of which the world is too full already, and from which many more learned and idoneous [qualified] have abstained; and I did accordingly resolve that, in this controversial age, I should be slow to write, swift to read and learn." Yet he felt controversy to be a public duty which he dared not put aside. "I have had much ado," he says, "to gain so many *horae subsecivae* from the works of my public calling as might suffice for this work. I confess it hath cost me much pains."

Baillie, in the dedication to Lauderdale of his *Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time*, says: "It has been of a long time the wish of my heart to have had nothing to do with polemic writings; the bodies of soldiers are not more subject to wounds and manifold hardships than the minds of disputant divines do lie open to various vexations. The weary, starved and bleeding soldier longs no more for a safe peace than a spirit harassed in the toilsome labyrinth of thorny debates pants for that quietness which only

the final overthrow and full subjugation of error can produce." It would be easy to multiply passages of a similar character to show that, keen and relentless as these men were in controversy, they never regarded this as their proper work, but looked upon it in the light of an interruption to their work which was thrust upon them against their will, and which they took up only by the way. They were builders of God's city, but the presence and venomous activity of the enemy made it necessary for them, like Nehemiah and his fellow-builders, to use one hand in building, while with the other hand they carried a sword, ay and used it too.

The principle of the Divine Right of Church government is discussed in great detail in two very important works of George Gillespie, to which we have not yet referred:—*A Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies*,[1] and *An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland*.[2] The *Dispute* was published in a stormy time. It appeared during the summer of 1637, when the attempt was made in Edinburgh to introduce the liturgy which roused the wrath of Jenny Geddes. When it was issued the

[1] [*A Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies* obtruded on the Church of Scotland; Wherein not only our own arguments against the same are strongly confirmed, but likewise the answers and defences of our opposites, such as Hooker, Mortoune, Burges, Sprint, Paybody, Andrews, Saravia, Tiler, Spotswood, Lindsay, Forbesse, etc., are particularly confuted. By George Gillespie, Minister at Edinburgh.]

[2] [*An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland*, in the points of Ruling Elders, and of the authority of Presbyteries and Synods. With *A Postscript*, in answer to a Treatise lately published against Presbyterial government.]

author was a youth of four and twenty, and as it was printed abroad it is supposed that it was written some two years earlier. There is no trace in it of crudeness or immaturity. The writer's own view is clearly stated and consistently maintained throughout the whole discussion. Whatever is of Divine Right in church government and worship, he contends must have a place given to it; whatever is not of Divine Right must have no quarter shown to it. And so he proceeds to deal with the arguments of those who sought to force on the Scottish Church those English ceremonies which he regarded as popish. Some of the advocates of these practices maintained that they were necessary; some only ventured to say they were expedient; some held they were lawful and therefore tolerable; while a fourth party regarded all ceremonies as matters of indifferency, and so not to be scrupled at. Gillespie addresses himself in four parts to the four questions as to whether the ceremonies were necessary, expedient, lawful, or indifferent. Under each of these heads he has something forcible, something to the point to say. The inexpediency of them, if not necessary, is easily shown by a reference to the enormous trouble which the obtruding of them occasioned. It is on the point of their lawfulness that the presbyterian disputant spends his strength. If the ceremonies be lawful it can only be by their having the sanction and authority of God's Word. He finds that they are devoid of this warrant, inasmuch as they are superstitious and monuments of a

by-past superstition. They occasion association with idolaters and from the significant and mystical nature of them they lead to idolatry. The great bishops and divines of the English Church, including such really great men as Andrewes and Hooker, make a very sorry figure when they attempt to obtain authority from Scripture texts for the sign of the cross in baptism—from the marking in the forehead mentioned in Ezekiel and Revelation, and for the observance of Easter—from the apostolic command to keep the feast in remembrance of our Passover, Christ. No more successful are they when they seek under cover of the injunction, Let everything be done decently and in order, to obtain Scripture sanction for all the ceremonies of their Church.

In this book Gillespie's work was wholly critical and destructive. The thesis which he had to maintain was simply that the supporters of the ceremonies in question had failed to show any Divine Right for them; and the conclusion reached was that Scottish presbyterians, who require a Divine Right for their worship and government, are entitled, and are indeed in duty bound to refuse to allow them. His other book to which we have referred, *An Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland*, deals constructively with the question, and shows how presbyterians can claim a Divine Right for the institution of ruling elders, and of the various church courts which form a part of their polity. To one not familiar with the ecclesiastical writings of the Scottish theologians

it must seem strange to find on a casual inspection of their books, the prominent place that is given to the ruling elder and the frequent occurrence of lengthy discussions on the necessity and nature of his office. But when we consider carefully the object which they have in their writings, the proving, namely, of the Divine Right of the presbyterian polity, we see at once that the determining the scriptural warrant of the office was to them of first importance. So soon as it was proved that there was a Divine Warrant for the eldership by which the discipline of the Church was conducted, and for the courts in which ministers and elders sat as members and governed the affairs of the Church, the case for prelacy and congregationalism was gone and the case for presbytery was won. Baillie in his *Dissuasive against the Errors of the Times*, James Wood in his *Examination of Lockyer's Lecture on the Church*, Rutherfurd in his *Plea for Paul's Presbytery*, and in his *Right of Church Government*, and many others deal with the question of the ruling elder; but nowhere is the question so methodically and thoroughly discussed as in Gillespie's *Assertion*. This very able and creditably concise work was published in 1641, four years later than the one of which we have spoken.

The author seems to have been provoked or stimulated into writing it by the appearance of a work entitled *Assertion of Episcopacy by Divine Right*,[1] which had been published during the previous

[1 *Episcopacie by Divine Right asserted.* In three parts. London, 1640.]

year. It was written by the learned, eloquent and pious Bishop Joseph Hall. It was a very pretentious and not a very wise book. The author offered to forfeit his life to justice and his reputation to shame if any living man could show that ever there was a ruling elder in the Christian world till Farrel and Viret created such an office-bearer. Gillespie had no desire to take him at his word in the matter of his life, but he had no scruple in saying that his own book was of itself, without any reply, quite sufficient to give sentence against his reputation for ever.

The first part of his treatise is devoted by Gillespie to the subject of ruling elders. It consists of fourteen chapters. He explains the different significations of the word in Scripture, calls the term "lay elder" a nickname, characterises the distinction of the clergy and laity as "popish and anti-christian," and insists upon its discontinuance. He then shows what the functions of ruling elders are, in so doing distinguishing "the power of order and the power of jurisdiction, which are different in sundry respects," and concluding that "the calling of ruling elders consisteth in these two things: 1. To assist and voice in all assemblies of the Church, which is their power of jurisdiction. 2. To watch diligently over the whole flock, and to do by authority that which other Christians ought to do in charity, which is their power of order." He then proceeds to prove the Divine Right of these elders of jurisdiction and order. He begins the proof by showing that the officers who sat with the Jewish

priests and gave their advice and votes in ecclesiastical courts, were not civil magistrates as Saravia and Bilson seek to make out, but distinctly elders. Then, in four consecutive chapters, he deals carefully and minutely with four separate New Testament passages, in which, under different expressions or terms, he understands our Lord and His apostles to speak of the office-bearers in question and their functions. He takes up first of all the passage in St Matthew xviii. 17, in which our Lord enjoins the brother who has failed by private admonition to bring an offender to repentance to "tell it unto the Church." This Church is a representative meeting called in 1 Timothy iv. 14 "the presbytery," consisting of pastors and ruling elders, a court entitled to be called "the Church," and to act in her name because both teachers and hearers are represented in its membership. Then the second Scripture argument is taken from Romans xii. 8, where the apostle urges that he who "ruleth" should do so "with diligence." The ruler, here distinguished from the pastor and teacher, corresponds exactly to the idea of the presbyterian elder. The third argument is based upon 1 Corinthians xii. 28, where a list of officers is given, in which list Gillespie identifies "helps" with deacons, and "governments" with ruling elders. The closing Scripture proof is the statement in 1 Timothy v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." This passage, I daresay, all will admit to be by far the most

important and explicit one in the New Testament on the subject under discussion. It shows, as the assertor maintains, that there were some elders in the Churches who did not labour in word and doctrine, and yet might be worthy of all honour simply for ruling well.

It must be admitted by every candid student of the subject that these passages taken together supply very strong and convincing proof that even in the Apostolic Church this distinction between teaching and ruling was made, and that separate offices were distinguished in which those could serve who had the gift of teaching and those who had aptitude for ruling. This in the narrow sense constitutes the proof for the Divine Right of the ruling eldership. But Gillespie proceeds to show that his, that is to say, the presbyterian interpretation and understanding of the passages in question determined the practice of the early Christian Church; and he quotes passages from Ambrose, Epiphanius, Basil, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Isidore of Spain and Origen. He comments upon the quotations in order to prove that in the churches known to these fathers there were rulers whose duty it was to inquire into the character of those seeking admission to Church membership, and to consider the debarring of the unworthy and disqualified. Further, in a very interesting chapter, he gives the opinions of Calvin and other prominent Continental and English Reformed theologians, and the practice of all the principal Reformed Churches on this subject. Gillespie's chief opponents, Coleman

and Hussey, as also Archbishop Whitgift, would allow ruling elders and a divine church government under pagan magistrates, but under a Christian magistrate they maintained there was no room for such.

Our Scottish presbyterian fathers are sometimes blamed for insisting upon a proof of the Divine Right of an institution in a narrow and ultra-literal fashion, by requiring perfect exactness of detail in the Scripture pattern. It would be very easy indeed to quote passages from the writings of Rutherfurd and Gillespie, and still more abundantly from the sermons and popular writings of our divines, earlier and later, in which they seek from Scripture texts and incidents literal and categorical injunctions in favour of some mere mode or detail in the observance of an ordinance or the practice of some act of worship. They often spiritualised historical persons and events, found types in colours and in shapes, in things on earth and in things in heaven, and in defence of this they were constantly quoting the words of God addressed to Moses: "Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." In many cases this is more than anything else a mode of speech—a fashion, and not a good one, which prevailed at that time in all schools, Romish, Prelatical and Presbyterian. It is none the more commendable for its prevalence. But we can easily understand that many who gave way to it as a habit were not bound to it by any far-reaching typological principle.

Figures were used in a loose way, and references to types were made with no more seriousness or studied care than a modern speaker takes when he uses an illustration. In serious argument, however, Rutherfurd and Gillespie were careful enough in limiting the application of Scripture proof and the claim for Divine Right to that which belonged to the essence of the institution or practice with which they were concerned.

An instance of this occurs in the beginning of the second part of Gillespie's *Assertion*. He is there dealing with the question of kirk-sessions and the eldership in particular congregations. It seems to him that the New Testament pattern of presbyteries, in the sense of elderships, recognised only one body and one common meeting for the multitudes of Christians in such large cities as Rome, Corinth and Ephesus, although in each of these centres of population there were several places of assembly in which the Christians were accustomed to meet as separate congregations. Had he regarded himself as bound down to every detail in the practice of the primitive Apostolic Church he would have insisted upon the institution of common sessions for cities and districts, by which all the discipline and government of the congregations within these bounds should be exercised. So far from doing so, however, this strenuous advocate of the *jus divinum* of presbytery distinctly recognises the right of taking into consideration the altered circumstances of the age, and of paying regard not to

the letter of the local and temporal application of the principle, but to the spirit of it. "We are to distinguish," he writes, "betwixt the condition of the primitive churches before the division of parishes and the state of our churches now after such division. At the first, when the multitude of Christians in those great cities of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, etc., was not divided into several parishes, the common presbytery in the city did suffice for the government of the whole, and there was no need of a particular consistory of elders for every assembly and congregation of Christians within the city. But after that parishes were divided, and Christian congregations planted in the rural villages, as well as in the cities, from henceforth it was necessary that every congregation should have at hand, within itself, a certain consistory for some acts of Church government, though still those of greater importance were reserved to the greater presbytery. . . . Now in this we keep ourselves as close to the pattern as the alteration of the Church's condition, by the division of parishes, will suffer us; that is to say, we have a common presbytery for governing the congregations within a convenient circuit; but, withal, our congregations have, *ad manum*, among themselves an inferior eldership for lesser acts of government, though, in respect of the distance of the seat of the common presbytery from sundry of our parishes, they cannot have that ease and benefit of nearness which the Apostolic Churches had, yet, by the particular elderships, they have

as great ease of this kind as conveniently can be."[1]

In the attitude thus assumed by Gillespie we have, it seems to me, a thoroughly reasonable and wisely moderate statement of the claim of Divine Right in Church government. So also Rutherfurd in his tract, *A Dispute touching Scandall and Christian libertie*, takes up the same ground. He deals specially with Hooker, and both in logic and common sense proves himself vastly superior to his antagonist. Hooker[2] charged his Puritan opponents with blaming the Prelatical party for using forms and ceremonies against which their only objection is that they are used in the Church of Rome. He represented them as saying: There must be no communion nor fellowship with papists, neither in doctrine, ceremonies, nor government. It is not enough that we are divided from the Church of Rome by the single wall of doctrine, retaining as we do part of their ceremonies and almost all of their government. Government, or ceremonies or whatsoever it be that is popish—away with it. This is the thing they require in us, he says, the utter relinquishment of all things popish. Rutherfurd gives an admirable answer to all this in general, that in doctrine neither likeness nor unlikeness to Rome is the rule, because it is not our religion, Romish or Protestant, that the Word of God is to be conformed, but our religion is to be conformed to the Word of God. In answer to the charge of rejecting ceremonies

[1] [Second Part, chap. ii. § 7. p. 44, Meek's Edition, 1846.] [2] IV. iii. 3.

and government as popish, though lawful and agreeable to the Word, if not expressly commanded by God, Rutherfurd maintains that we do not plead for a government to be in all things commanded in the Word, but for one warranted by the Word, either according to command, or promise, or moral practice. Scripture, he says, is our rule, not in any literal fashion, but in fundamentals of salvation, in all morals of both tables, in all institutions and in circumstantials of worship. Church government, therefore, is to be determined by, or to have warrant from Scripture, as an institution, because it is a supernatural ordinance or help above nature, to guide the Church to a supernatural happiness. And so the Church cannot be governed by the light of nature or by the laws of moral philosophy, or civil prudence, or human laws, as cities, commonwealths, and kingdoms are. Rutherfurd's contention is that everything in doctrine, ceremony, and government must have a warrant, not necessarily an express and literal command, in the Word of God. When Hooker says we retain certain ceremonies because we judge them profitable, we see what comes of abandoning the claim of a Divine Right, and being satisfied with a claim of convenience or expediency. Rutherfurd characterises this as "a proud reply." "Might not Pharisees say as much? We retain the precepts and traditions of men used by our fathers because we judge them profitable; and who authorised Christ and his disciples to judge the Church?" But, replies the

Scottish divine, "Christ said their ceremonies were the doctrines of men, and so unlawful, and the like argument bring we against the ceremonies, and so they must be unprofitable. They ought to give another reason of their laws than, 'we judge'; we affirm it is God's prerogative to say that."

In answer to the objection that the particulars of the Westminster Directory of Worship are not in Scripture Rutherfurd says, in another treatise, that we are no further commanded in point of uniformity than the general rules of the Word lead us, and compulsion, where God hath no compelling commandment, we utterly disclaim, nor can men or the Church, or all the assemblies on earth make laws in matters of God's worship, where the Supreme Lawgiver hath made none.

Such then is the reasonable and thoroughly workable principle laid down by presbyterian theologians as to when and how far they may and must advance the claim of a Divine Right for any institution or practice of the Church. Prescription of details or of every particular in worship and government is not expected or desired. What is wanted is a warrant in God's Word which need not be a new prescription. It may only be a consequence from some prescription or institution already established. In regard to matters of worship and government, surely we shall not quarrel with our ecclesiastical forefathers for requiring a warrant from the Scriptures. That all of them, on all occasions, observed the liberal

explanation which they had given to the idea of Divine warrant, would be to expect from them a consistency in reasoning and an evenness of temper in controversy altogether more than human. Narrow, no doubt, they sometimes were in consequence of mistaking small matters for things important and charging ceremonies possibly harmless with tendencies dangerous and deadly. But I am perfectly well assured of this that in the vast majority of cases in which charges of this kind are brought against them the accuser is wrong and they are in the right. Things that many are wont nowadays to call harmless seemed to them, and really were when rightly understood, anything but harmless. Nothing more weak or superficial can well be conceived than the scornful judgment often passed on these conscientiously-convinced, enlightened, much-enduring men. Scribblers, to whom these great thinkers and scholars would have scrupled to reply, regarding them as illiterate, ignoramuses whom it would be scarcely dignified to notice, take it upon them to arraign before the judgment bar of their conceit such protagonists as John Knox, Andrew Melville, and Samuel Rutherfurd; and doubtless they would summon many more if they only knew their names. Denounced as "narrow, scrupulous, bigoted," they are said to have rejected harmless things simply because their opponents held by them. This charge though often made is utterly and demonstrably untrue. In regard to what they rejected they believed that they had good reason to believe that

they were not harmless. Take one example. Everybody knows about the Five Articles of Perth.[1] Even critics of the Scottish Reformers and Covenanters, who know practically nothing about Scottish Church History, know the list of these points at which, according to the critics, the Scottish presbyterians of the seventeenth century so unreasonably and senselessly scrupled. Well, take the first of these articles which enjoined kneeling when receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. How silly and absurd, say the self-appointed and self-satisfied critics. Is there any difference between receiving the communion sitting or standing or kneeling? If any, is not the attitude of kneeling the most becoming? That is all that they see, and they think that that is all they need to say.

But in the Church from which this custom was taken kneeling was an act of adoration of that which was on the altar as unto God. The Romish worshipper knelt before the host because it was in his belief the very body of the Son of God. The presbyterian protestants, whose devotion had not overcome or beclouded their common sense, could see in the element

[1 "The finishing touch was given to the work of overthrowing presbytery in Scotland and conforming the Church in discipline and worship to that of England by the Assembly at Perth in 1618, the last that was held during the reign of James. The famous Five Articles of Perth were as follows:—1. Kneeling at the Communion; 2. Private Communion for the Sick; 3. Baptism to be on the next Lord's Day after the birth, and in cases of need in private houses; 4. Episcopal Confirmation of the Young; and 5. The Observance of Holidays, especially days commemorating the birth, passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord and his sending down of the Spirit." *The History of the Church in Scotland from the earliest times down to the present day.* By John Macpherson, M.A., 1901.]

only bread ; and, therefore, to them kneeling in adoration before it was idolatry, not a mere question of attitude, but one of worshipping what had been created and manufactured. In almost every case in which our fathers refused to allow a ceremony to be introduced it was a "nocent" or hurtful ceremony, one the observance of which was calculated to lead the worshipper back into those errors and superstitions, which, at so great cost, they had cast off.

In these lectures notice has been taken of only a very small department of Scottish theology. It would be a grave injustice to these great men to suppose that ecclesiastical discussions constituted the main work of their lives. They were not, as some seem to think, churchmen first and Christians after. These Church questions were of supreme interest to them simply because they believed—believed with all their heart—that they were essentially and inseparably bound up with the interests of Christ and His cause. It was in vindication of the crown rights of the Redeemer that they fought so tenaciously and uncompromisingly. When it was a matter that simply concerned their personal interests, when it was a slight or indignity cast upon their own persons they were forbearing, meek, unwilling to say a word or lift a hand in their own defence. Their unselfishness is one of their outstanding characteristics. All the most distinguished of them were tempted time after time with opportunities of splendid self aggrandisement. If only they had temporized a little, if they had been

willing to leave unsaid what was unpalatable to the powerful and the great, if they had agreed to compromises and accommodations, the highest dignities were within their reach, wealth and rank and honours would have been showered upon them. But being what they were this could not be. Capable they were as none else of that day and nation were capable. They could have filled, with distinction to themselves, and with advantage to the commonwealth, the highest places in the land. But the conditions demanded of those who would accept of such appointments made it impossible for them to entertain the idea for a single moment.

Robert Bruce [1] had shown his incomparable abilities as a statesman when he filled the king's place during his absence in Norway to meet his bride in November 1509, in a way that won the monarch's hearty thanks and the gratitude of all the people. He had shown his wonderful skill as a theologian and preacher, when he delivered those singularly profound, yet popular and instructive sermons on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which have attained the honour, not yet bestowed on any of his brethren, of being rendered in smooth and graceful language, so as to be read with ease and pleasure by all who are interested in their great theme.[2] And this great man, fit to

[1 The Rev. Robert Bruce, Minister of Edinburgh. A son of the Laird of Airth, Stirlingshire. Born about the year 1559. Died at his own house of Kinnaird in 1631. "Buried in an aisle of the Kirk of Larbert, biggit i his own time."]

[2 Sermons upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: Preached in

preside in the cabinet of State, capable of adorning any university as its head, able to guide the counsels of the Church and to preach the gospel to the poor, accused by base and baseless calumny of disloyalty, and losing royal favour because he sought to dissuade the king from following an unpatriotic and unkingly policy, was deprived of his ministry in Edinburgh, deprived of a life pension that had been bestowed upon him, sent for a time to banishment in the north, and then obliged to continue unoccupied in privacy and obscurity through all the remaining years of his life.

Andrew Melville had a grasp of principles and capacity for business in regard to the affairs of State as remarkable as his rare literary culture and mastery of divinity in all its fields. Calm, dispassionate historians, looking without prejudice on the record of the counsels which he offered to his sovereign, will tell you that had King James only been wise enough to take his loyal subject's advice, he would have saved his country much suffering and his own memory much disgrace. Not only was Melville an efficient professor in Glasgow, but under his energetic and most practical direction the whole course of studies and the method of teaching in the College was thoroughly reorganised,

the Kirk of Edinburgh be M. Robert Bruce, Minister of Christe's Evangel there : at the time of the celebration of the Supper, as they were received from his mouth, 1617. Republished from the original Scottish edition by the Wodrow Society in 1843 and edited by Dr William Cunningham. The same "Done into English, with a Biographical Sketch, by the Rev. John Laidlaw, D.D., Edinburgh. With Portrait and other illustrations." Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1901.]

so that, from being merely a school of mediæval metaphysics, it became, in the full modern sense of the word, a university fit to enter into comparison with any European seat of learning. Transferred to St Andrews, he conferred new lustre on its ancient halls. He might have confined himself to his ordinary collegiate duties, and in his study and classroom he would have found abundance of congenial occupation to fill the hours of his day and the years of his life. Had he done so, he would have passed a quiet and easy life without harassment or molestation. But knowing what he did, and conscious of his powers, he felt that he would be unfaithful to the trust which God had committed to him, and be a traitor to the cause of spiritual liberty if he did not speak out. He did speak out, and not too loudly, whatever men may say. For not then, if ever, would a simpering, subdued whisper have been heard. And his reward was the bitter hatred of the silly king. For years he suffered from the spiteful vindictiveness of one who knew not how otherwise to treat a faithful counsellor whose advice went counter to his short-sighted policy than by harassing and confining and ultimately hurrying him out of the land. It is humiliating for Scotsmen to read the story of the Hampton Court Conference, and to see the Melvilles and others, the greatest, ablest, and wisest of Scotland's sons, insulted and contumeliously used by the first Scottish King of England, who was not good enough or wise enough to know goodness and wisdom

when they were before him, or to make use of them when the opportunity was given him. After a year spent in fruitless wrangling, there followed four years' confinement in the Tower—the words are soon spoken, but they tell of a long and dreary period of inaction for one who was yearning with all his heart and soul to serve his generation. And then at last, when it became evident that no opportunity of serving in Scotland would be given, he accepted an invitation to fill the collegiate chair of divinity in the University of Sedan, and there, along with other two distinguished Scots,[1] he faithfully discharged the professorial office. Then, having glorified God and profited his fellow-men, Andrew Melville finished his course, a course of which his king and those in power had proved themselves unworthy.

Samuel Rutherfurd had not the same opportunity as Bruce and Melville of engaging directly in the political conflicts of his time. Before his public career began, King James had died and bequeathed to his unhappy son his notion that the right of absolute and despotic power formed a part of the royal prerogative. Charles, like his father, sought to assert his right as King to absolute supremacy over all persons and causes. Rutherfurd wrote his *Lex Rex: The*

[1] [Walter Donaldson, a native of Aberdeen, and known as the author of several learned works, was Principal and Professor of Natural and Moral Philosophy during all the time Melville was in the University. Another of his countrymen, John Smith, was also a Professor of Philosophy. Melville's colleague professor was Daniel Tilerus. He taught the system, while Melville prelected on the Scriptures.]

Law and the Prince against the tyranny and arbitrary government, against setting the King over the law, and in order to show that it is only according to law that the King must rule and judge. His views are what even now would be regarded as advanced. In his judgment the King's power is from the people: he preferred an elected to a hereditary King; parliament makes laws, the King can only execute them; the sovereign is not above law, nor is he its sole interpreter. Thus and in other ways Rutherfurd served—and served nobly—the interests of the State. But yet more extensive, and not less important, were his services to the Church. The lectures of this course have been largely an exposition of his views regarding the Church in its idea, membership, constitution, and independence, so I do not need to refer again to that department of his work. As a divine, his contributions to theological science have been great. Charles seemed as determined to press on the Church of Scotland Laud's Arminianism as he was to assert his own supremacy in the government of Church and State. Rutherfurd wrote elaborate examinations of the Arminian system, in which the principles of Calvinism are expounded with clearness and fulness, evidencing a splendid scholarship, and, up to his day, complete. These works may still be read by students with profit in not too easy Latin—valuable for their exactness of definition, their recognition of the essential elements in doctrine, and their vindication of its practical use. But, strange as it may seem and hard

to believe, these great ecclesiastical, controversial, and doctrinal works—works great in bulk and great in depth—were only the occupation of his leisure hours. The time for studying the controversies and writing the results of his studies he took off his sleep. His proper work in Anwoth and wherever he might be was preaching to the people the glorious gospel of the grace of God. He was unwearied in his labours for the conversion of sinners and the instruction of God's children. If, in controversy with those who were doing, as he thought, the enemy's work, his language seems sometimes harsh and severe, his preaching was of the love of God to mankind sinners. His *Letters* show how he luxuriated in the Divine love, and yearned after closer and fuller fellowship of love with Christ. It was of the love of God in Christ that he spoke to all men. He surely deserved well of his country; and yet he barely escaped the scaffold. *Lex Rex* had the honour of being burned by the order of dissolute cavaliers in London, Edinburgh, and St Andrews, who could scarcely read it, much less understand it. For himself the tyrant's summons came too late. He was already on his death-bed, and on hearing of it, calmly remarked that he had got another summons before a superior Judge and judicatory, and sent the message, "I behove to answer my first summons, and ere your day arrive, I will be where few kings and great folk come."

Such are some specimens of the work done by our Scottish divines, and of the rewards which in their

lifetime they received. But being dead, they are yet speaking. The civil and religious liberty that we enjoy we owe, under God, to them, and many of the familiar missions in which we give expression to that liberty are but the echoes of those voices which the noise and violence of tyrants could not drown. These lectures will have served no mean purpose if they awaken an interest in the story of our Reformed and Covenanting forefathers, and induce some to study at first hand the works about the Christian Church and Christian doctrine which these great men have written.

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