ALEXANDER SHIELDS, 1660-1700

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It is much to be regretted that the name of Alexander Shields has been allowed to sink into comparative obscurity. This is due, perhaps, in considerable degree to the fact that the Wodrow Society, which rescued so many Covenanting classics from oblivion, did not issue reprints of his works, and we are obliged, if we desire familiarity with his thought, to wade through wordy treatises in old-fashioned type and on inferior paper. So far as is known, there is no edition of Shields' works later than the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Shields was a thinker of the front rank. Coming at the end of the Covenanting period, he gathered up all that was most characteristic in the thought of the past, and brought the Covenanting politico-ecclesiastical viewpoint to its final development. In *A Hind Let Loose* he presented in systematic form the considered attitude of the later Covenanting movement to the social and political problems of the day. Belonging, as he did, to the Cameronians—the party of the left—he carried Covenanting thought to its logical conclusion.

I

Alexander Shields was born in 1660 at Haugh-head in the parish of Earlston in the Merse. He came of border farming stock; his father, James Shields, was a tenant farmer on the Haugh-head lands. Alexander grew up to manhood under the shadow of the persecution in a countryside where the Covenanting spirit ran high, and where resistance to Stewart despotism was deep-seated,[1] for the south-east of Scotland, although it has not earned the fame of the south-west in song and story, was no less loyal in its attachment to the fundamental principles for which the Covenanters contended. Proceeding in due course to Edinburgh University, Shields took his degree of Master of Arts with high distinction,[2] and, like many other lads of promise, turned his mind to the study of theology with a view to the ministry. Conscientiously unable to enter the Scottish

[1] See J. Wood Brown: *Covenanters of the Merse*, pp. 250–59.

[2] *Scots Worthies* (Wylie and Anderson's ed.), p. 690.

Episcopal Establishment of the day, he crossed to Holland, where he continued his theological studies, and later made his way to London, where he acted for a time as private secretary to the famous Dr John Owen. While in London, he was licensed to preach by a number of Scottish ministers resident in the English capital. On January 11, 1685, at a private meeting in Gutter Lane, he was apprehended by the City Marshal who had received intelligence of the meeting. The Marshal, Shields related afterwards, " came running upstairs with his drawn sword in his hand, and his men at his back, crying and commanding that we should render ourselves prisoners. I was standing upon the stairs in the entry into two chambers, lecturing upon Genesis xlix. 21—' Naphtali is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words,' etc.—on which I was led to speak on the excellency of the blessing of liberty, the extent of Christian liberty beyond temporal freedom, a subject that I was very unfit to speak on, and therefore the Lord saw it good to interrupt me and sent me to school to learn it better since ; I was a great misimprover of liberty when I had it, and therefore since I have been made to prize it more by the want of it and to understand by some experience the excellency of that more lovely liberty of the spirit. But to return, I being the first man in the way of the Marshal's violent irruption, and thinking myself most concerned to answer, gave a reply to this effect, —' What King do you mean by whose authority you disturb the peaceable ordinances of Christ ? Sir, you dishonour your king in making him an enemy to the worship of God.' At which words the ruffian laid hands on me and violently thrust me in among the people, telling me he had other business than to stand up pratting with me. We were stupidly infatuate and deficient in our duty that we did not make a break and run him downstairs as we were in a capacity to do it against three men, and as I moved it to the people ; but the demur was that we thought there was surely a party to the guards downstairs waiting to assist him. Thus we were kept prisoner by three men, being in number about sixty men and women." [1]

After some time in prison in London, he was sent to Scotland to stand his trial before the Privy Council under Scots law. In his *Relation of His sufferings*, he left a long account of his experiences. On March 4, along with several other Scots prisoners, he was embarked at Greenwich. After a stormy passage and immediately after his arrival at Leith, he underwent a searching examination before the Privy Council. The upshot of the long and weary process was that he compromised, agreeing to take the Oath of Abjuration with reservations. But this availed him naught ; from the Tolbooth he was committed to the Bass, which he described later as " a dry and cold rock in the sea, where they had no

[1] *Relation of His Sufferings*, p. 3.

fresh water nor any provision but what they had brought many miles from the country, and when they got it, it would not keep unspoiled." [1]

We have no records of how he occupied himself on the Bass, but we may be allowed to surmise that the monumental work which he published a year after his transference from it was conceived and planned, if not indeed partially written, in the island-prison. In the autumn of 1686 he was removed to the Tolbooth, along with several others, and offered his liberty on condition that he would live in an "orderly" way. Declining to accept any such condition, he was recommitted to prison, but on October 22, 1686, he made his escape, disguised as a woman. Fleeing from Edinburgh in hot haste, he reached Galloway, where he threw in his lot with Renwick and the Cameronian party. He was not ashamed to make public acknowledgment before the United Societies of what he felt to be his lack of courage in compromising over the Abjuration Oath. Wodrow records that Shields was "extremely welcome to Mr Renwick and the more judicious people" among the Cameronians; "He was mighty useful to them and much against some of the lengths they ran to." [2]

During the next two years Renwick and Shields were closely associated; indeed, Shields appears to have been Renwick's right-hand man, and was joint-author with him of the *Informatory Vindication*. In 1687 he went over to Holland to superintend the printing and publication of this document, and of his own famous book, *A Hind Let Loose*, which appeared anonymously and is a monument of erudition and scholarship. After the execution of Renwick he became the recognised leader of the United Societies, and to the general meetings of the Societies his brother Michael acted as clerk. After the Revolution, on March 3, 1689, along with Messrs Lining and Boyd, the only other ordained man among the Cameronians, he renewed the Covenants before a large number of people.

The three Cameronian ministers attended the first General Assembly after the Revolution, which met on October 16, 1690, and presented a paper pleading for a redress of grievances and showing on what terms they and the Hillmen would conform to the renovated establishment. In this paper they earnestly desired the Assembly in order that "this happy and desirable might be holy and comfortable" to "condescend to them in some things" which they said were "very needful, just to be sought and easy to be granted." The paper concluded with the statement that even though what they desired be not granted by the Assembly they "intended not to separate from the Church but to maintain union and communion in faith and duty with all the ministers and members of this Church that did and in so far as they did, follow the institutions of Christ" resting satisfied with having given in their paper

[1] *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 133. [2] *History*, IV, p. 396.

as a " testimony against all the corruptions, defections and offensive courses " which they had mentioned. The Assembly's committee on overtures refused to read the paper, judging it to contain " peremptory and gross mistakes, unreasonable and impracticable proposals, and uncharitable and injurious reflections, tending rather to kindle contention than compose divisions." [1] A sub-committee requested Shields and his friends to draw up a shorter paper, and this was read to the Assembly. By a unanimous vote, Shields, Boyd and Lining were admitted as members of the Revolution Church. After their admission Shields would have addressed the Assembly, but he was not encouraged to proceed. He therefore sat down. " Some of our friends," he says, " were exceedingly offended at my silence." [2]

Shields came in for a great deal of censure on the part of the extreme Cameronians for his action in entering the Revolution Church. Patrick Walker insinuated that he was too much under the influence of Boyd and Lining, who were " in haste for stipends and wives." [3] And it has been alleged that he repented of his adhesion to the Church. Be this as it may, he was in no sense inconsistent, for although driven into the left wing of the Covenanting party by the force of circumstances, he was never an extremist, as Wodrow testified.[4] For some time, however, he was out of the arena of controversy, for he served for a considerable period as chaplain during William of Orange's campaigns in Flanders, in which capacity, as both Howie[5] and Wodrow[6] record, he was much valued by the king.

On his return to Scotland, Shields became minister of the second charge of St Andrews, where he was settled on September 15, 1697. His ministry there was brief, for in 1699 he, along with three other ministers, Francis Borland, Alexander Dalgleish and Archibald Stobo, was invited to accompany the ill-fated expedition to Darien. Howie insinuated that his appointment was really due to the ecclesiastical authorities who " soon found out a way to get rid of him," [7] but Borland in his narrative of the expedition expressly states that he was invited by the court of directors to " labour in pious, necessary and glorious work." [8]

This ill-starred venture, mismanaged from the first, seems to have been a bitter disappointment to Shields and his colleagues. They suffered much from privations. Their surroundings were most uncomfortable. While Borland and Stobo had a hut on shore to live in, Shields was obliged to have his abode on the ship, *The Rising Sun*. The journeys up-country from the coast seem to have exhausted Shields, who,

[1] *Scots Worthies, op. cit.*, p. 696.
[2] *Ibid.*, editor's footnote.
[3] Howie : *Scots Worthies*, p. 696.
[4] *History*, IV, p. 233.
[5] *Scots Worthies*, p. 696.
[6] *Ibid.*, IV, p. 233.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 697.
[8] *History of Darien*, pp. 34–5.

says Borland, became so feeble and spent, "so that we were much troubled about him." [1] More disappointing still was the moral condition of the Scots settlers themselves. Shields, says Borland, observed that "he had conversed with many sorts of people, in several parts of the world, and had served as a minister for several years in the army in Flanders, but he never had seen or been concerned with such a company as this was for the greatest part of them." [2] And this was not the complaint of the ministers only. The court of directors had reason, on the best information, to complain likewise of the licentiousness of the colonists.[3]

In a letter to the Presbytery of St Andrews, dated February 2, 1700, Shields wrote: "Our meetings amongst ourselves are in the woods, where the chattering of parrots, mourning of pelicans, and din of monkeys is more pleasant than the hellish language of our countrymen in their huts and tents of Kedar; and our converse with the Indians, though with dumb signs, is more satisfying than with the most part of our own people. Several of them came to our meetings for worship, and we have exercised in their families when travelling among them, where they behaved themselves very reverently, but we have neither language nor interpreter. But our people do scandalise them, both by stealing from them and teaching them to swear and drink." [4] In another letter written on the same day to the Moderator of the Commission of the General Assembly, Shields referred at greater length to the Indians, in whom he appears to have taken a kindly interest. He found them "peaceable and friendly to those that use them kindly, but very revengeful and covetous." [5] "There might," he said, "be some hope of doing some good among them if we had any that had their language and if our people's practice did not stumble them; but alas! we have reason to fear we shall do them more hurt than good, for the first of our language that they learn is cursing and swearing; and they have frequently complained of our people's going out and stealing and robbing from them. So that in a little while we shall make both ourselves and our religion odious to them." [6] Borland gives an account of a visit which he and Shields and a few others paid to the house of an Indian named Captain Pedro, "where we were pretty civilly entertained with such fare as is usual among them, such as dried fish and dried flesh, plantanes, Indian corn and potatoes; they gave us also hammocks to lie in and a fire by our beds, as is usual with the Indians at night." [7] Evangelisation, however, was out of the question, owing to the barrier of language.

After the final capitulation of 1700 and the escape of many of the

[1] *History of Darien*, p. 47.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[3] M'Crie: *Memories of Veitch*, p. 346.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 249–50
[5] Quoted by Borland, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

colonists to Jamaica, Shields, says Borland, was "heart weary and broken with this company of men among whom he had laboured and conversed so long with so little success." Accordingly, he set out for Port-Royal, intending to "take passage homeward by way of London. But men propose and God disposeth, for he had now done his work." [1] A few days after arriving at Port Royal, he was seized with what Borland described as a "violent and malignant fever" from which he died on June 14, 1700, at the early age of forty. He was buried by "kind and discreet English inhabitants in Port Royal in the burial-place near Kingston in Jamaica." A Scotswoman named Isabel Murray defrayed the expenses of the funeral. Borland added that Shields preached only once in Port Royal, from the text Hosea xiv. 9: "The ways of the Lord are right"—"which proved his last sermon in this world. . . . He had a strong impression for some years back (as I have heard from those who were intimate with him), that he should die about the middle of June, and so it came to pass." [2] His brother Michael, who had also accompanied the expedition, likewise perished.[3]

Borland, in his moving tribute to his friend, said: "Now he rests from his labours and his works do follow him. His work was little known or prized by the most of those he had sojourned and laboured among in the work of the Gospel, of whom they were not worthy." [4] Certainly it was a tragedy of the first magnitude that one of the greatest thinkers of the day should have perished in this miserable expedition, wearing himself out on behalf of a company consisting largely of unscruplous adventurers and drunken scamps. Wodrow referred to him as "a minister of extraordinary talents and usefulness. He was well seen in most branches of valuable learning of a most quick and piercing wit, and full of zeal and a public spirit, and of shining solid piety." [5] Had he been spared, he would in all likelihood have risen to the highest eminence in a ministerial or professorial career. It is, indeed, as a scholar and thinker rather than as a preacher that he will be remembered. He took his share in field-preaching after his escape from prison in 1686, and two sermons and a lecture by him are preserved in Howie of Lochgoin's collection reprinted in 1880 under the title of *Sermons in Times of Persecution*. But the sermons, while solid and serious, are not outstanding. It ought to be remembered, of course, that they were copied from notes taken down by hearers, and that possibly they have lost both in literary style and in logical arrangement. We cannot therefore form a just estimate of Shields as a preacher.

[1] Quoted by Borland, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 85.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[5] *Hist.*, IV, 233.

II

Of Shields' power as a historian, as a controversialist, and as a thinker, we have abundant evidence in his two chief works, *A Hind Let Loose*, and *An Enquiry into Church Communion*, which was published by his friend Lining a number of years after his death. The first of these volumes dealt chiefly with politico-ecclesiastical thought, while the latter dealt chiefly with ecclesiastical matters. *A Hind Let Loose* bears the stamp of deep reading and wide scholarship. The author makes many quotations, not only from Scripture but from the works of Continental and British writers on politics, both civil and ecclesiastical. He modestly disclaimed originality. "There is nothing here," he said in his preface "but what is confirmed by authors of greatest note and repute in our Church both ancient and modern, namely, Buchanan, Knox, Calderwood, Acts of General Assemblies, Causes of Wrath, Lex Rex, Apologetical Relation, Naphtali, Jus Populi, History of the Indulgence, Banders Disbanded, Rectus Instrumendum, and some other authors much respected. . . . I am content, yea, it is my ambition, that nothing here be looked upon as mine, but that it may appear this is an old plea." [1] At the close of the preface, Shields has the following: "It will not be unprofitable to the reader to cast his eye upon these sentences of great authors which relate to some heads of the following discourse." [2] These authors are Erasmus, Nazianzen, Bernard, Bracton, Cicero, Aristotle, Sueton, Ambrose, Chamier and Barclay,—a comprehensive list which indicates something of the width of scholarship which the youthful Shields brought to the making of his work.

The book is divided into a historical part and a theoretical part. At the beginning of the historical survey of the history of the Scottish Church from the Culdees downward, Shields briefly surveyed the European situation as he understood it. At the very beginning he distinguished sharply between two movements against which the Reformed Church was struggling,—"Antichrist, alias Pope, the Devil's captain-general, is now universally prevailing and plying all his hellish engines to batter down and bury under the rubbish of everlasting darkness what is left to be destroyed of the work of reformation: and the crowned heads, or horns of the beast, the tyrants, alias kings of Europe. . . . are advancing their prerogatives upon the ruins of the nations' and churches' privileges, to such a pitch of absoluteness." [3] Here Shields clearly differentiated between the crusade of the Roman Church to regain its lost supremacy and the political Absolutist movement of the seventeenth century. The historical survey is of necessity brief, but none the less

[1] *A Hind Let Loose*, p. v. [2] *Ibid.*, p. xii. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

authoritative ; but it is in the second half of the book that Shields' power as a thinker is manifested. Under seven heads, he discusses the fundamental social, political, and ecclesiastical questions of the day. These heads are concerning (i) hearing of curates, (ii) owning of tyrants' authority, (iii) unlawful imposed oaths, (iv) field meetings, (v) defensive arms vindicated, (vi) the extraordinary execution of judgment by private persons, and (vii) refusing to pay wicked taxations vindicated. The last-named section was added, Shields tells us, as an afterthought.[1]

In the section dealing with the owning of the authority of tyrants, Shields discusses the fundamental nature of man and society. He is careful to clear himself of the charge of propagating anarchist doctrines. "As tyranny is a destructive plague to all the interests of men and Christians, so anarchy, the usual product of it, is no less pernicious, bringing a community into a paroxysm as deadly and dangerous. We must own government to be absolutely necessary for the constitution and conservation of all societies."[2] But having said this, Shields makes perfectly clear that the only permissible form of government is government founded upon a "bottom of conscience," which will unite the governed to the governors "by inclination as well as by duty."[3] As to forms of government, Shields professed comparative indifference. "I shall not," he said, "enter into a disquisition, let be determination of the species of magistracy, whether monarchy, autocracy or democracy be preferable."[4] But that he inclines theoretically, at least, to republicanism, seems certain from his remark that "kings and tyrants for the most part are reciprocal terms."[5] He grounds his detestation of tyranny in his belief in the sacredness of human personality. "Every man created in God's image is a sacred thing." "Freedom," he said, is "natural to all," except, he added parenthetically, "freedom from subjection to parents, which is a moral duty and most kindly and natural, and subjection of the wife to the husband." But "as to civil and politic subjection, man, by nature, is born as free as beasts ; no lion is born king of lions, nor no man born king of men, nor lord of men, nor representative of men, nor ruler of men, either supreme or subordinate."[6]

The origin of monarchy Shields found in a social compact or contract. "The original of all that power that the primores or representatives can claim is from the people not from themselves. From whence derived they their being representatives but from the peoples' commission or compact ? When at the first constitution of parliaments or public con-

[1] *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 488. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 211.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 192. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 211. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 208.
[6] *A Hind Let Loose*, pp. 212–213. Note the similarity of Shields' teaching to that of the French thinker Duplessis-Mornay a century earlier. *Cf.* Murray : *Political Consequences of the Reformation*, p. 206, and Figgis, *From Gerson to Grotius*, p. 135.

ventions for affairs of State, necessity put the people, who could not so conveniently meet all, to confer that honour and burden upon the best qualified, and who had chief interest by delegation." But "the people's power is greater than the power of any delegated or constituted by them; the cause is more than the effect; parliament-men do represent the people; the people do not represent the parliament; they are as tutors and curators unto the people and in effect their servants, deputed to oversee their public affairs." Shields then goes on to mention that it is irrational to argue that when the people committed the administration of their weighty affairs unto them "they did denude themselves of all their radical powers." The people have powers to act without their kings or representatives "in things which they never resigned to them; for they cannot be deprived of that natural aptitude and nature's birth-right given to them by God and nature, to provide the most efficacious and prevalent means for the preservation of their rights and liberties." [1]

Still more definitely Shields elaborated the theory of the social contract further on in the same section, quoting the words of "our renowned countryman Buchanan, 'There is, then, or there ought to be, a mutual compact between the king and his subjects.'" From "the light of natural reason" Shields deduced that "from the rise of government and the interest the people have in erecting it by consent and choice, as is showed above, if a king cannot be without the people's making, then all the power he hath must either be by compact or gift; if by compact, then we have what we proposed and if by gift then if abused they may recall it." [2]

Coming from the moral and theoretical to the material and practical, Shields finds that kings "cannot be owned as masters or proprietors over the good of the subjects. . . . The introduction of kings cannot overturn nature's foundation." Then he proceeds, in a strain reminiscent of Locke, "by the law of nature, property was given to man. Kings cannot rescind that. A man had goods ere ever there was a king; a king was made only to preserve property, therefore he cannot take it away" [3] It is true that there is nothing strikingly original in all this. The theory of the "social contract" was in the air. Duplessis Mornay had elaborated it in France. Locke was engaged in formulating his political philosophy, of which it was a chief corner-stone. In Scotland, men like Sir James Stewart among the Covenanters had outlined the theory, as had Rutherford at an earlier date; and indeed, the Covenanters' political thought had been derived from an earlier and greater thinker, Buchanan. But Shields elaborated the argument for the social contract and drove it home with remorseless logic in page after page of his closely printed work.

Although Shields professed to indifference as to whether the ideal

[1] *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 213. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 240. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 269.

system of government be monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, his argument leads direct to the last named. He speaks of the " peers "as well as kings as made by the people. " The people have had power before they made peers and have done much without them. . . . The peers depend more upon the people than the people do on them." " All these primeve rights that gave rise to societies are equal to both people and peers, whereof the liberty to repress and reject tyranny is a chief one. The people as well as peers have a hand in making kings and other judges also. . . . Therefore they may unmake them as well as they." [1] In former days in Scotland the nobles had brought about revolutions. Shields sought to show that the people had a still stronger right than the peers to take the line of resistance to tyrannical authority. In a very weighty passage he dealt with the objection " that neither in history nor in Scripture we can find instances of private people then refusing to own the authority they were under, nor of their suffering for that refusal: yet nevertheless, it may be duty without example." Though Shields was very fond of quoting precedents from Biblical and general history, he took the line that " many things may be done, though not against the law of God yet without a precedent of the practice of the people of God. Though we could not adduce an example for it, yet we can gather from the law of God that tyranny must not be owned —this will be equivalent to a thousand examples. Every age in some things must be a precedent to the following, and I think never did any age produce a more honourable precedent than this beginning to decline a yoke under which all ages have groaned." [2]

In a closely reasoned argument in which Shields repeats himself fairly often, in order probably to drive home his points, he deduces from the doctrine of a compact which he opposes to divine right, the right of the subject to resist and even to rebel. If a king can rebel against a superior king, evidently subjects can resist a monarch. " What if I should adduce," he said, " the example of a king's rebellion against and revolt from a superior king to whom he and his fathers had acknowledged themselves subject ? Surely our royalists and loyalists would not condemn this, and yet in justifying they should condemn their beloved principle of uncontrolled subjection to uncontrollable sovereigns possessing the government." [3] There is nothing new under the sun, and here we see that Shields in his day was amused at the paradox of keen supporters of international war expressing a horror at rebellion.

Holding " rebellion to be a damnable sin," Shields yet maintained that there were good rebellions [4] and, taking lower ground than the ethics of the Gospels, he laid down the principle that " the love of self

[1] *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 213.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 194.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 313.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 406.

is nearer and greater, as to temporal life than the love of our neighbour ; that being the measure of this, therefore, it obliges us to kill rather than be killed." [1] This, of course, refers to extremities. Christ's servants, he admitted, were not appointed by him to propagate his kingdom by arms ; but he argued that " though they are not to propagate it as Christians and men by carnal weapons, yet they may preserve it with such weapons as men. Hence that old saying may be vindicated, prayers and tears are the arms of the Church ; I grant they are so, the only best prevailing arms, and without which all others would be ineffectual, and that they (together with preaching and church discipline, etc.) are the only ecclesiastical or spiritual arms of a church as a church ; but the members thereof are also men, and as men they may use the same weapons that others do." [2]

It is but a step from the vindication of rebellion in cases of necessity to that of assassination in cases of necessity, and this Shields did in the section of his book on " the extraordinary execution of judgment upon notorious incendiaries and murdering public enemies by private persons." Assassination in his view was a desperate remedy for a desperate case, " when the oppression of tyrants comes to such a height and pinch of extremity that it threatens a community with desolation." [3] In moving passages he describes the sufferings of the persecuted people, sufferings in which he had borne a share. " Seeing there was no access to address themselves to magistrates who by office are obliged to bring villains to condign punishment and none were found in public authority but such as patronised and authorised them ; whom in conscience they could not acknowledge and in prudence durst not make application to them for fear of their lives. What could they do ? What was left them to deliberate, but to fall upon the extraordinary course ? " [4] When public authority is not functioning, assassination is justifiable. " At the erection of government, though the people resign the formal power of life and death and punishing criminals over to the governor constitute by them, yet as they retain the radical power and right virtually, so when either the magistrates neglect their duty of vindicating the innocent and punishing their destroyers, or impower murderers to prey upon them : in that case they may resume the exercise of it, to destroy their destroyers, when there is no other way of preventing or escaping their destruction ; because extreme remedies ought to be applied to extreme diseases." [5] That it is a desperate and dangerous doctrine Shields seemed to be aware, for he expressly states that only the exemplary punishment of " some select and expressly distinguished kind of notorious villains, men of death and blood " could possibly be justified.[6] That this teaching while

[1] *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 417. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 413. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 445.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 447. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 468. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

thoroughly logical falls below the ethic of Jesus will be generally admitted. Shields shared with the men of his day a blindness as to the distinction between old and New Testament morality, a blindness which flowed from the doctrine of Biblical infallibility. And so he regarded the early Christian attitude to such questions as defensive arms as somewhat exceptional and the ordinary Biblical standard as binding on men. The early Christians, he said, "studied more to play the martyrs than to play the men." [1] Evidently he regarded their position as quite exceptional. The idea of non-resistance or of victory through suffering, which we meet with partially in the writings of Blackadder and Fraser does not seem to find any place in the thought of Shields. "We do not think it the way that Christ hath appointed to propagate religion by arms; let persecutors and limbs of antichrist take that to them; but we think it a privilege which Christ hath allowed us to defend and preserve our religion by arms; especially when it hath been established by the laws of the land and become a land-right and the dearest and most precious right and interest we have to contend for." [2]

In his handling of politics Shields is so advanced and almost modern in his outlook that we are led to expect an equally advanced outlook in regard to the subject of toleration. It is with not a little disappointment that we discover that on the question of toleration, Shields was a child of his time; for he was in bondage to orthodox theology and to the idea of Biblical inspiration. In common with the Covenanters as a whole, Shields thought heterodoxy to be unworthy of toleration, and there is a particularly jarring passage in one of his sermons, in which he denies the title of Christian not only to Papists, but to Quakers, Socinians, and Arminians.[3] A glimmering of the idea of toleration, however, is to be found in his advice to Renwick's critics to "contain themselves within Gamaliel's boundaries—that if this work be of man it will come to naught, but if it be of God it cannot be overthrown." [4] But he did not explore this promising line of thought, and despite the parallel between his political philosophy and that of Locke he failed to reach the idea of toleration to which the English philosopher was led.

III

When we turn to the question of Christian unity, which he discussed in his *Enquiry into Church Communion*, we cannot fail to be impressed by the common-sense attitude which he adopted. As we all know, the

[1] *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 426. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 412.
[3] *Sermons in Times of Persecution*, p. 105.
[4] *Life of Renwick* in *Biographia Presbyteriana*, II, p. 49.

Covenanters did not get all they wanted at the Revolution; the Covenants, for instance, were ignored and to many of the Covenanters the Covenants were almost idols, and to ignore them was sacrilege. And the Cameronians were even more dissatisfied. They objected not only to the neglect of the Covenants; they were wroth at the presence in the new Establishment of men who had accepted the indulgences and of men who had indeed conformed all along. They felt that they could not forgive such men. And so the bulk of the Hillmen decided to remain outside the Kirk altogether—rather to incur the charge of schism than to defile their garments by rubbing shoulders with ex-prelatists and weak-kneed brethren who had accepted the indulgences. To incur the charge of schism was no light matter, for the Covenanters had never reconciled themselves to the idea of two or three "churches" existing side by side. There was to them but one visible church under the headship of Christ, of which the Kirk of Scotland was a province and of which even the Papal Church was a branch,—a rotten branch truly, but a branch nevertheless. So when the extreme Cameronians after the Revolution remained outside of the Kirk of Scotland, they inaugurated the era of denominationalism which has lasted down to this day.

Now Shields entered the Revolution Church protesting against its corruptions and after considerable hesitation, but he entered it nevertheless with a clear conscience. And he did so not inconsistently, as some writers have insinuated, but in accordance with his own clear-cut convictions. For Shields drew a distinction between essentials and non-essentials, a distinction which some of the later Cameronians failed to notice. There are, said Shields, grounds which necessitate conscientious people to withdraw from some church communion at all times; and there are other grounds "which will only justify withdrawing at some times."[1] He placed in the latter category the defections of the past. It is, he reminded the Cameronian party, "the great command to love our neighbour as oneself." "Endeavours for union and concord among the lovers of truth are duties absolutely necessary." And he truly observed that "if there were more love, there would be more union and communion notwithstanding differences." The supreme need, he said, was reconciliation. "And if this reconciliation cannot be obtained any other way, there must be mutual forgiveness; not judiciary, to take away the guilt, that is God's prerogative; but charitative, which must be extended to many more offences and trespasses than are confessed and acknowledged to us." For after all, he said, there is another duty imposed upon Christians besides contending for truth; that is, seeking peace. "The want of peaceableness as well as the want of truth will make our salt to lose its savour."[2] Peace must be pursued and followed

[1] *Enquiry into Church Communion*, p. 24. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

"even when it seems to flee away" and to "be difficult to be obtained." [1] Amid the clash of ecclesiastical controversy these words sound like a benediction, and it is a tribute to Shields' vision and insight into the essentials of Christianity that he who had suffered in the hottest period of the persecution, and had led the remnant of the Hillmen at the hour of victory, should have written in so lofty a strain.

[1] *Enquiry into Church Communion*, p. 8.