

kept alive in Scotland the flame of a true and pure religion when the whole land was prostrate at the feet of men whose chief aim was to drag the British isles back into papal bondage. In the face of tremendous odds the Covenanters proclaimed the rights of Christian men and contended for those rights to the death. True to their Church, to their country, to their vows, they refused all compromise with the foe, and maintained their principles until that foe was overthrown.

In 1580-81, the Protestant religion being in great danger in Scotland, those who were true to that faith bound themselves by a solemn covenant to defend it in case of need with their lives. In 1638, when Charles I and Laud tried to impose upon the Scottish Church and people their "black prelacy," the "covenant" adapted to the circumstances of the time, was renewed, and the "Second Reformation" inaugurated. There is not in the annals of the Church of Scotland a more touching episode than the signing of the covenant in Greyfriars Churchyard, Edinburgh. The multitudes were stirred with intense enthusiasm, and many signed the covenant with their blood. In 1641 the "covenant" became the law of Scotland. In 1643 the "Solemn League and Covenant" was concluded between Scotland and England. We need not trace, even in outline, the story of the Westminster Assembly, the overthrow of Charles I, the administration of Cromwell, the "Restoration" of Charles II. Charles II had himself solemnly sworn to the covenant. But he was not long upon the throne when he commenced a war of extermination against the Church of Scotland. The persecution continued with little abatement for twenty-eight years. When archbishops and bishops were preaching passive obedience to the perjured and wicked king whom they devoutly honoured as the Lord's anointed, the Covenanters were preaching a free and pure Gospel on the moors and hills and in the lonely glens of Scotland, and also declaring the right of true men to the protection of the law, to liberty of conscience, and freedom to worship God. It is stated that during the persecution which raged so cruelly, up to the glorious Revolution of 1688, no fewer than eighteen thousand suffered death. About two thousand were banished. Three

thousand six hundred were subjected to imprisonment. About five hundred were killed in cold blood without process of law, as for example John Brown, of Priesthill, "the Christian carrier," of whom Macaulay tells. One cannot read to-day the story of that "killing time" without shame and wrath that a British king and British men should be capable of inflicting such cruelties upon a godly and law-abiding people, because, forsooth, they would not forswear their faith and their love of liberty.

When the adherents of prelacy succeeded by force of arms in taking possession of all the parish churches, the covenanting ministers preached in far off solitudes, and preached as often as they could, to as many as would hear them. Vast numbers of the most devout and earnest people risked their lives in attending "conventicles." Remarkable revivals of religion were of very frequent occurrence. Men preached and heard the Gospel at the risk of their lives, and both speakers and hearers were in earnest, in "these ages of darkness and blood when the minister's home was the mountain and wood."

RICHARD CAMERON was one of the most notable of the "conventicle" preachers. He was the son of a merchant of Falkland, and was "of the Episcopal persuasion at first—a schoolmaster and precenter under an Episcopal curate." But having heard some of the field preachers his soul was stirred to make common cause with them. He was licensed by John Welch and Mr. Semple. He preached with great power, and was extremely severe on those who conformed to the established prelacy. After a time he sought refuge in Holland where he preached with great acceptance to the exiled Presbyterians. He was ordained by Mr. McWard and others at Amsterdam, and shortly returned to Scotland. This was in 1680. Field preaching had been almost suppressed. Persecution seemed to have done its work. Still there was a brave remnant, and Cameron became their leader.

On June 22, 1680, Cameron and his associates issued the "Sanquhar Declaration," renouncing their allegiance to the king, and avowing their resolution to oppose the succession of the Duke of York to the throne. This was followed by prompt measures on the part of the authorities to secure his ar-