

Now, amongst the most rigid adherents of the Covenants, there was not one who had any disposition to cast off the king's authority, in the constitutional government of the kingdom. There was nothing in the Covenants, by which they were bound, that was of a seditious character. In the *Solemn League and Covenant*, they say: "We shall, with the same sincerity, reality, and constancy, in our several vocations, endeavour with our estates, and lives, mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the parliaments, and the liberties of the kingdoms, and to preserve and defend the king's majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion, and liberties of the kingdoms; that the world may bear witness with our consciences, of our loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his majesty's just power and greatness." It is a calumny on these people to assert that they were opposed to a monarchical form of government. They loved a monarchy guarded by proper restrictions, and regulated by Scripture principles. They were even attached to the house of Stuart. They were not satisfied with the Protectorate of Cromwell; and they rejoiced with unfeigned joy when that protectorate was abolished, and monarchy restored in the person of their constitutional and acknowledged king.

And it was not until Charles II. had proved himself a tyrant and a traitor—it was not until he had violated every constitutional pledge to his people—broken his coronation oath in the most glaring manner—blasphemously usurped the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of Zion—and during twenty years of despotism and tyranny, trampled upon the dearest rights and liberties of his people—that they saw it to be their duty to cast him off and even to declare war against him. And if they had reason for renouncing the authority of Charles, they had stronger reasons for denying allegiance to his successor James; for he was a professed papist, and as such, according to the acknowledged constitution of the realm, could not be a lawful king. "Shall the end of government be lost," said they in one of their public declarations, "through the weakness, wickedness, and tyranny of governors. Must the people, by an implicit submission, and deplorable stupidity, destroy themselves, and betray their posterity, and become objects of reproach to the present generation, and pity and contempt for the future. Have they not in such an extremity, good ground to make use of that natural power they have, to shake off that yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." "Such," says the impartial historian Hetherington, "were the sentiments of that greatly oppressed and much slandered people, and instead of condemning severely the strong language which they use, we may rather admire their free and manly sentiments which they so well express, at a time when nearly the whole aristocracy of the land were bowing their necks beneath the most degrading bondage, and uttering the language of fawning and sycophantic slavery."

But whether these people did right or wrong in casting off the authority of king Charles and his Popish brother James, the historic fact is certain, that five years afterwards, the whole nation endorsed their deed. Cameron, Cargill, and Renwick, and their followers, only took the initiative in that undertaking which the whole nation shortly afterwards perfected, when rising in its might, it hurled James the second from the throne,