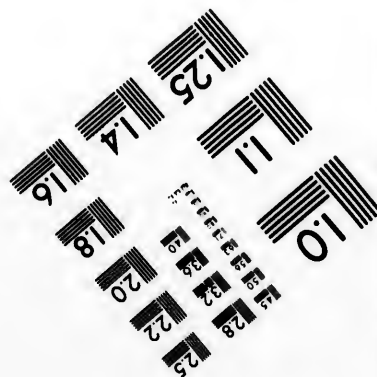
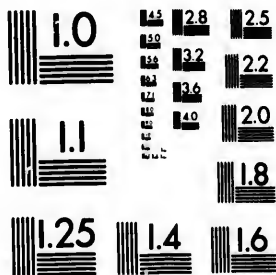


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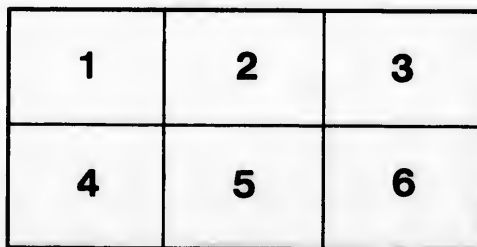
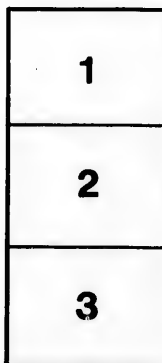
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SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE

St. Andrew's Society

IN KNOX CHURCH, OTTAWA,

BY REV. F. W. FARRIES,

Chaplain of the Society,

— ON —

Sunday Evening, November, 25th,

1888.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

OTTAWA:

PRINTED BY A. S. WOODBURN, ELGIN STREET.

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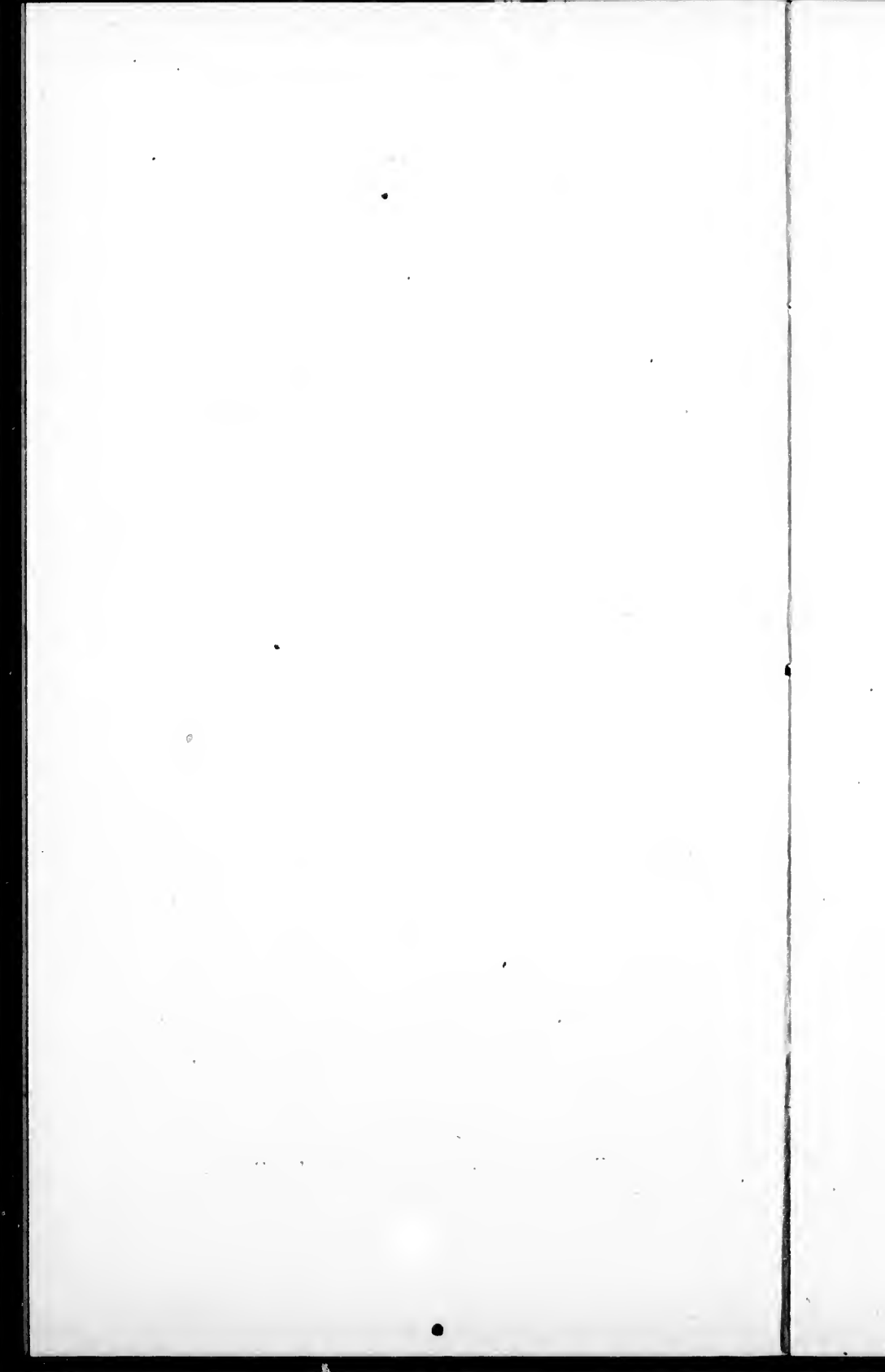
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ANDREW'S SOCIETY, SUNDAY EVEN-
ING, NOVEMBER 25TH, 1888.

“The Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus.”—
Rev. 17, 6.

The term *martyr* literally signifies a *witness*, one who gives evidence or testimony. In its New Testament and early Christian usage it denotes especially one who bears testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus. Thus our Lord, after he had risen from the dead, when defining the relation in which his Apostles and all believers stand to him, and, at the same time, prescribing the method by which they were to proclaim his divine and saving power and extend his Kingdom on the earth, declared, “Ye are witnesses (*martyrs*) of these things.” The word which he used for *witnesses* is the same word that is translated *martyrs* in the text. And the Apostle, on the day of Pentecost, when proclaiming the source and cause of the wonders which astonished the people, declared, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses (*martyrs*).” And thus again, when standing before the enraged and blood-stained Council at Jerusalem, the apostles proclaim their relation to the risen Jesus, and define the duties which they owed to him and to the world, saying, “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgive-

ness of sins. And we are his witnesses (*martyrs*) of these things." And thus, in many instances in the New Testament, the term *martyr* is used to denote a believer in the Lord Jesus-Christ; one who by his lips and life declares that he accepts the Bible as the Word of God, that he believes in Jesus as his Saviour, and lives in subjection to him. And in this sense all believers in every age are *martyrs*, witnesses to the truth as it is in Jesus. According to New Testament usage all believers are both *saints* and *martyrs*. But there is a difference in the degree of danger which men have to confront, and in the measure of suffering which they have to endure in witnessing for Christ. Whilst to all believers there is in this life a real measure of tribulation, of suffering connected with witnessing for Christ; yet to some there is vastly more than to others. To tens of thousands, faithfulness in witnessing for Jesus has involved the loss of all things which men count precious in this world, and of life itself. And hence in process of time, the term *martyr* came to be applied to, and is now generally used, by way of distinction, to denote, one who suffers and dies for the truth as it is in Christ, one who gives up all of earthly good, who braves all suffering, who dares death itself rather than deny his Lord, or suffer his glory to be tarnished and his rights to be trampled upon. And it is of such *witnesses* that the text speaks when it tells us of "*the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,*" for it proclaims that for Jesus' sake they suffered unto death, they witnessed with their blood. But it is not my intention, this evening, to trace the crimson line of martyr blood through all the centuries. This would be a

work, not for a sermon, but a history reaching through many volumes. It must suffice, at the present, to state that every century of the Christian era, and every land in which the banner of the Lord Jesus has been unfurled, are crimsoned with "the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." And during these centuries, the number of those who thus witnessed with their blood to the truth as it is in Christ, amounts even to millions. So that with regard to their numbers as well as their invincible faith, it is true, as we sing in the grand old "*Te Deum*" "the noble army of martyrs praise Thee." But we cannot review the history of this great army as they struggled, and suffered, and died with the courage and devotion of sublimest heroism. We fix our attention for a little upon a portion of the martyr history of our native land, the time of the ruthless and bloody persecution of the Covenanters of Scotland. This period extended from the Restoration of Charles II. to the Revolution of 1688, which swept the Stewart dynasty from the throne and gave William and Mary the sovereignty of Britain. This was a period of about 28 years, during which the most cruel and blood-thirsty persecution raged against the sons and daughters of the Covenants of Scotland. Hetherington, the historian of the Church of Scotland says, "Charles II. entered London in triumph on the 29th of May, 1660; and with his restoration to the sovereignty begins a new era of the Church of Scotland's history, the record of which is one of sufferings, and lamentations and woe."

And 1st we will notice the name by which "the martyrs of Jesus" during this period were known, the *Covenanters*. And to understand this title we

need to bear in mind that the Reformation in Scotland took a different form from what it did in England. "In England, the ceremonial of the Church of Rome had been retained, except in so far as it was conceived to be contrary to sound doctrine. The form of Church government was *episcopal*, according to which there are various ranks or orders among the clergy, from the curate up to the archbishop, or to the king who is acknowledged to be the earthly head of the Church. And the power of maintaining order and settling disputed questions is vested in the superior clergy." In Scotland the form of Church government adopted was Presbyterian, which recognises no visible or earthly head of the Church, but maintains that Christ alone is sole head and king of his Church on earth. It maintains also that all the clergy in the church are of equal rank and authority, and that the power of ordination and of maintaining order belongs to no particular class, but is vested in courts composed of a certain number of clergymen, sitting and voting in conjunction with an equal number of elders or laymen chosen by the members of the church. And at different critical periods in their history, the Church of Scotland drew up covenants in which they bound themselves to maintain the purity of doctrine and of government which they derived from the Word of God—and to resist all attempts to subvert or corrupt them. In 1581 the General Assembly of Scotland drew up a confession of faith, or national covenant, condemning episcopal government under the name of *hierarchy*, which was signed by James I, and which he enjoined on all his subjects. It was again subscribed in 1590,

and 1596. The subscription was renewed in 1638, and the subscribers engaged by oath to maintain religion in the same state as it was in 1580, and to reject all innovations introduced since that time. This oath annexed to the confession of faith received the name of the covenant, and those who subscribed it were called *Covenanters*. In 1643 the Solemn League and covenant was drawn up by the General Assembly in conference with commissioners from England. Of this document Hetherington says, "We may be pardoned by terming it the noblest, in its essential nature and principles, of all the documents that are recorded among the International transactions of the world. It was written by the Rev. Alexander Henderson, read by him to the Assembly on the 17th of August, received and approved of with emotions of the deepest solemnity and awe, with whispered prayers and thanksgivings and outgushing tears, then carried to the convention of estates, and by them unanimously ratified. It was subsequently sent to London, where on the 25th of September, it was accepted and subscribed by the English parliament and the Westminster Assembly of Divines. The Solemn League and Covenant bound the United Kingdoms to endeavour the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government * * * the extirpation of Popery and Prelacy, —the defence of the king's person, authority, and honour,—and the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the Kingdom in peace and unity." And it was in defence of the great truths and principles embodied in these different Covenants, that our forefathers suffered and died. They were

faithful to the Covenants they subscribed—witnessing with their blood to the truths they embodied.

The 2nd thing we notice is the reason why they were *persecuted*. Some have sought to disparage their character and belittle their sacrifices by branding them with disloyalty to their sovereign and with a narrowminded and fanatical bigotry for their religion. But never was any imputation more unjust when it is made to apply to the Covenanters as a whole. In considering the manner in which their perfidious and perjured kings dealt with them, the wonder is that they did not throw off all allegiance to them and rise more frequently and fully in rebellion against them. But so steadfast were they in their loyalty to the old line of sovereigns, that notwithstanding all they had suffered at their hands, on the 5th of February, 1649, only a week after the execution of Charles I., the Scottish Parliament proclaimed his son, Charles II., his successor, and expressed their determination to defend his rights with their lives and fortunes, provided he “gave satisfaction to the kingdom in those things that concern the security of religion * * * according to the Covenants.” And there was no concealment of the limitations which they held their allegiance to Jesus put upon the power of the king. When the commissioners met Charles on board ship, ere he landed in Scotland, they made known the terms of the covenant by which they were bound and which they required him to sign. And before the king set his signature to the covenant, Patrick Gillespie entreated him not to subscribe to the declaration—“No, not for the three kingdoms, if he was not satisfied in his soul and conscience, beyond

all hesitation, of its righteousness." "Mr. Gillespie! Mr. Gillespie!" exclaimed the youthful sovereign, "I am satisfied! I am satisfied! and therefore will subscribe," And so he signed the National Covenant "swearing to observe the same during his whole reign and never to innovate on the Presbyterian form of church government." Charles was crowned on the 1st of January 1651, at Scone, near Perth, where the coronation of the ancient kings used to take place. The Rev. Robert Douglas preached the coronation sermon, and solemnly warned the young king "that he received this day a power to govern, but a power limited by contract; that these conditions he is bound by oath to stand to, and that those kings are deceived who think that the people are ordained for the king and not the king for the people." The covenants were then read by Douglas slowly and distinctly, and the king, kneeling and lifting up his right hand, repeated the following words:—I, Charles, king of Great Britain, France and Ireland, do assure and declare by my solemn oath in the presence of Almighty God, the searcher of hearts, my allowance and approbation of the National Covenant and of the Solemn League and Covenant; and faithfully oblige myself to prosecute the ends thereof in my station and calling." He then subscribed the Covenants and the words of the oath. The people on their part, held up their hands and gave their solemn assent to the words of their oath of allegiance as read by the Lord of Lyon. "We become your liegemen and truth and faith shall bear unto you, and live and die with you against all manner of folks whatsoever in your service, *according to the National Covenant and Solemn League*

and Covenant.” And they were ever faithful to their oath. But the king in the very face of his repeated oaths set to work to compel the people of Scotland to accept the episcopal form of Church government. This they assured him they could not do. It would be disloyalty to Christ and a violation of their consciences. There is “another King, one Jesus” whom they must obey. There were two ways in which the king violated his oath and sought to constrain the conscience of the Covenanters. 1st, He sought to make them accept such a form of Church government as he was pleased to recommend. This they believed he had no right or authority to do. The Church is Christ’s kingdom, and He alone is the Church’s lawgiver. They believed that the king was guilty of usurping the crown rights of Christ when he attempted to give law in any way to the Church. And they would not suffer the Royal prerogatives of Christ to be invaded. And secondly, he strove to make them accept the Episcopal form of Church government which they believed to be unscriptural and contrary to the Covenants which he and they had bound themselves by oath to maintain. Not only was the king personally guilty of perjury in enforcing this form of government upon the Church, but he strove with every measure of violence and cruelty to make them perjure themselves by accepting a form of Church government which they believed to be unscriptural and contrary to their Covenants. But while these were the chief points at issue between the Covenanters and the king, they clearly recognised the fact that bound up with these things which the king sought to enforce, were all that they counted

dear in religion, the supremacy of God's word, liberty of conscience, and the purity and stability of the ordinances of God's house. And hence their rallying and battle cry, "For Christ's crown, and Covenants," included not only the royal prerogatives of Christ upon which they dared not infringe, the maintainance of the Presbyterian form of worship and government which they not only believed to be "founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God," and which they had bound themselves by Covenant to uphold, but also all that was essential and precious in religion. They could not yield to the king and be unfaithful to Jesus. And they made their choice. They chose to be loyal to Christ, to God's word, to their own consciences whatever it might cost. They could bear to suffer, to be hunted like wild beasts, to die, but they could not be unfaithful to Christ.

Thirdly, We notice the extent of their sufferings. But who can measure or describe what these "Martyrs of Jesus" endured? I can only mention a few facts. The detailed record is one of the darkest portions of human history. It is a scroll that is written "within and without with lamentations, and mourning and woe." You know the course of terrible injustice and heartless cruelty pursued by Middleton, by Landerdale, by the traitor Archbishop, Sharp, by the Bliudy McKenzie, by Graham of Claverhouse, by Grierson of Lagg, by the murderous Dalziell, by Johnston of Westerhall, and others, whose career was marked by plunder, and tortures, and murder, and whose names are still an execration and a scorn and a loathing to all men. But we cannot follow their bloody trail through the towns and villages, amid the homesteads

and shepherds' cots, over the bleak mountains, and through the deep glens and dreary moors, as they burned, and tortured, and imprisoned or slaughtered the sons and daughters of the Covenant. On the Martyrs' Monument which stands in the northern angle of Greyfriars' Churchyard, Edinburgh, and which was erected in 1771, to perpetuate the memory of these "Martyrs of Jesus," after narrating in somewhat rude rhyme their sufferings, the following facts are added. "From May 27th, 1661, that the most noble Marquis of Argyle was beheaded, to the 17th of February, 1668, that Mr. James Renwick suffered, there were in one way or other murdered and destroyed for the same cause about eighteen thousand; of whom were executed at Edinburgh about an hundred of noblemen, gentlemen, ministers, and others, noble martyrs for Jesus Christ, and most of them lie here." To these sad and terrible facts we may add that 400 ministers were driven from their congregations and homes in the winter of 1662, and when the days of peace returned only 60 of them remained, the rest were all exiled, sold into slavery or executed. By the issue of what are called "Letters of Intercommuning" in 1676 "it was calculated that at least 17,000 persons, including landed proprietors, ministers, and even ladies were deprived of the protection of law, excluded from society and from intercourse with their nearest relations, and compelled to take refuge among the hills and morasses, "destitute, afflicted, tormented." After the disastrous battle of Bothwell Bridge, 1,200 prisoners were tied two and two and marched to Edinburgh, where they were penned in the Greyfriars' Churchyard, for a period of five

months with no covering but the sky, and no couch except the greensward of the graves, stinted of their food, and watched day and night by sentinels, who treated them with great brutality. The horrors of the Bass Rock and of Dunottar Castle are familiar to you all. Such were some of the barbarous cruelties which the Covenanters experienced. And to these are to be added the countless tales of individual suffering that make the heart shudder with their horrid cruelty, and, at the same time, glow and thrill with admiration and reverence for their invincible and heroic endurance. "The Covenanters sought their God in the desert and on the mountains which he had reared ; they worshipped him in the temples which his own hands had framed ; and there the persecutor sought them, the destroyer found them, and the sword of the tyrant was bathed in the blood of the worshipper. Even the family altar was profaned ; and, to raise the voice of prayer and praise in the cottage to the King of kings, was held to be a treason against him who professed to represent him on earth." But as Defoe has beautifully remarked, "it would be endless to enumerate the names of the sufferers, and it has not been possible to come at the certain number of their ministers or others who died in prison and banishment, there being no record preserved of their prosecution in any court of justice. Nor could any roll of their names be preserved in those times of confusion anywhere, but under the altar, and about the throne of the Lamb, where their heads are crowned, and their white robes are seen, and where an exact account of their number will at last be found."

But now let us notice, very briefly, in the 4th place some of the facts and truths which these "Martyrs of Jesus" teach us. And, 1st, they teach us that Christ is a *real* person. He is not a myth or a phantom, but a living, loving person to whom every soul owes absolute allegiance and who is worthy of our trust, our worship, our service. 2nd, That Christ is a king and that he has a kingdom on the earth. This kingdom is the Church, and of this kingdom he is absolute head and lawgiver. This truth they embodied in their Covenants, and proclaimed in their declarations and protests, and attested with their blood. 3rd, That liberty to worship Christ and obey his laws is the inalienable right of every man. No king, no man has any right to coerce the conscience or to interfere with its liberty in the worship and service of Christ. 4th, That liberty of conscience in matters of religion is essentially necessary to all civil as well as religious freedom; that a people whose consciences are trammelled in religion can never be a free people. And that a people whose consciences are free can never wear the yoke of tyranny or sink into slavery. 5th, That Christ does sustain those who believe in and obey him in the midst of all the trials and sufferings in which his service involves them. The patience with which they endured privations and sufferings and the joy and conquering heroism with which they went to martyrdom proves that, as with the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnaces, there was one with them, "like the Son of God." 6th, That the hope of the faithful christian cannot be quenched. By every blandishment of the tempter and every cruelty of the tyrant, the Covenanters

were urged to recant, to abjure their faith, to renounce their hope. But they stood firm. They "knew whom they believed." And they were ready, if the Saviour whom they trusted and adored so willed it, to go to the scaffold or rise to heaven on wings of flame, but they could not deny him. Hope, like a guardian angel, stood by them and pointed to the sky. And they knew that if they had fellowship with Christ in his sufferings here, they would have rest and glory and victory with him yonder. 7th, That it is best to love and obey Christ. The history of the Covenanters teaches us that truth is mighty and will prevail, more is for it, than all who can be against it. If crushed to earth it rises again. The living God guards his own ark. And thus in many ways and with many voices "the Martyrs of Jesus" not only "*praise God,*" but *preach to us.* But we will not canonize them, we will not worship them, but we will remember them, we will cherish the memories of their heroic endurances, and seek to warm our own cold hearts at the fires of their unconquerable devotion and loyalty to Christ. And in so doing we will not only cherish in our memories the past achievements and glorious history of the martyr heroes of our fatherland, but best fulfil our part in maintaining the truths and the liberties for which they suffered and died, and in furthering the best interests of this great Dominion in which with our fellow citizens from other lands we have our peaceful and happy homes.

"For noble acts and fervent faith
 Dear hearts ! do perish never ;
 The Scottish Martyrs in their death
 Speak to the world for ever."

