

THE BULWARK

MAGAZINE OF THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION SOCIETY



THE MAGDALENE CHAPEL,

as seen from the

Martyrs' Monument in the Greyfriars' Churchyard.



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MAGAZINE OF THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION SOCIETY

THE MAGDALEN CHAPEL41
COWGATE, EDINBURGH, EH1 1JR
TEL: 0131 220 1450

EMAIL: INFO@SCOTTISHREFORMATIONSOCIETY.ORG
WWW.SCOTTISHREFORMATIONSOCIETY.ORG
REGISTERED CHARITY: SC007755

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Magazine Editor: Rev Douglas Somerset

All literary contributions, books for review and papers, should be sent to:

The Magdalen Chapel
41 Cowgate, Edinburgh

EH1 1JR

info@scottishreformationsociety.org

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The section entitled "Young Bulwark" is edited by Matthew Vogan.

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

(a) To propagate the evangelical Protestant faith and those principles held in common by those Churches and organisations adhering to the Reformation;

(b) To diffuse sound and Scriptural teaching on the distinctive tenets of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism;

(c) To produce and distribute evangelistic, religious and other literature in connection with the promotion of the Protestant religion.

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Martyrs' Monument, Greyfriars Kirkyard



“For what
some men did die”

David Campbell

An address given to the Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Reformation Society on Saturday 7th September 2024 in the Magdalen Chapel. Part of this talk appeared in 'The Banner of Sovereign Grace Truth', Vol. 32:5 (September/October 2024).

“Halt passenger, take heed what thou dost see. This tomb doth shew for what some men did die...”

So read the memorable opening words of the justly world-famous Martyrs Monument

in the Greyfriars Kirkyard, a stone's cast from this famous Chapel. As we know, it was here that the bodies of God's dear saints were prepared by loving hands for burial. For what, we may well ask, did these men, so entombed, die? The answer lies in the further lines of our text:

“... their lives were sacrificed unto the Lust Of Prelatists abjur'd. Though here their dust Lies mixt with murderers and other crew Whom justice justly did to death pursue But as for them no cause was to be found

*Worthy of death, but only they were sound
Constant and steadfast, zealous witnessing
For the prerogatives of CHRIST their king
Which truths were sealed by famous
Guthrie's head
And all along to Mr Renwick's blood...*

For what some men did die? In a word –
“for the prerogatives of Christ their king.”
Let us examine both the expression and the claim.

1. THE EXPRESSION

The Reformed branch of the Protestant Church has historically drawn heavily from the extensive writings of John Calvin. His monumental Bible commentaries and his famous *Institutes* undergird much of the



John Calvin

foundational statement of doctrine in her creeds and confessional statements. Less familiar is the Calvinist emphasis on the doctrine of worship and its implications for the Churches adhering to the doctrines of Calvinism. Surprising to many will be the attention given to the reform of worship by both Calvin and others in the sixteenth-century Reformation in Europe. Far from dismissing worship as of secondary importance and a matter to be compromised on “for the sake of the gospel” or for some external unity, Calvin's doctrine of worship was at the front and centre of the clean break with Romanism which the Reformed insisted on.

This priority of worship in the reformed religion is perhaps most plainly expressed in Calvin's tract on “The Necessity of Reforming the Church” addressed in 1544 to Charles V and the Imperial Diet of Spire, “in the name of all who wish Christ to reign.” This exhortation sets out to accomplish three things: (1) to enumerate the evils which compelled the Reformers to seek for remedies; (2) to show that the particular remedies which the Reformers employed were apt and salutary; (3) to make it plain that the Reformers were not at liberty any longer to delay putting forth their hand to the work of Reform, “in as much as the matter demanded instant amendment.”

It is in connection with the first of these objectives that Calvin's distinctive position touching the regulation of divine worship comes into sharp focus. In what would today be most likely considered a reversal of priority, Calvin homes in on the evils which required immediate remedy by identifying the doctrine of worship as the first and primary concern (“Necessity of Reforming the Church”, *Tracts and Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 126):

“If it be inquired, then, by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence amongst us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity, viz., a knowledge, first, of the mode in which God is duly worshipped; and, secondly, of the source from which salvation is obtained. When these are kept out of view, though we may glory in the name of Christians, our profession is empty and vain.”

Why this emphasis and priority given to the mode of worship?

The answer lies partly in the high view of God which characterises all the writing of Calvin. It is this that informs everything in his approach to religion and the practice of Christians. The jealousy of God identified in the Second Commandment brings out what Prof. John Murray calls the crux of the Reformation – the question of authority (*Collected Writings*, Vol. 1, pp. 298-304). Identifying the term “jealousy” with the marriage relation between Jehovah and the Church of the Old Testament, and the consequent charge of adultery made by the prophets against Israel, Calvin presses the figure to its far-reaching consequences for worship in the Church. In his exposition of the Second Commandment in the *Institutes*, he explains the meaning of God's jealousy:

“The meaning here is the same as if he had said, that our duty is to cleave to him alone. To induce us to this, he proclaims his authority which he will not permit to be impaired or despised with impunity ... he calls himself jealous, because he cannot bear a partner.”

Extending the figure, Calvin expounds the doctrine regulating worship in stark terms:

“Therefore, as the purer and chaster the husband is, the more grievously is he offended when he sees his wife inclining to a rival; so the Lord ... declares that he burns with the hottest jealousy whenever, neglecting the purity of his holy marriage, we defile ourselves with abominable lusts, and especially when the worship of his deity, which ought to have been most carefully kept unimpaired, is transferred to another, or adulterated with some superstition.”

Returning to Calvin's exhortation to Charles V, what we rightly define as the regulative principle of worship is expressed in the plainest of terms (“Necessity of Reforming the Church”, p. 128): *“... the rule which distinguishes between pure and vitiated worship is of universal application, in order that we may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves but look to the injunctions of Him who alone is entitled to prescribe.”*

The plea to the emperor to restore the Church was made from a deep sense of “how difficult it is to persuade the world that God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by His Word.” Calvin is unequivocal (“Necessity of Reforming the Church”, p. 129): – *“Every addition to His word, especially in this matter, is a lie. Mere will-worship is vanity. This is the decision, and when once the judge has decided, it is no longer time for debate.”*

It was this Calvinist conviction that Christ was the only lawgiver concerning every aspect of his own worship that informed the creeds and the worship-order of the Reformed Churches in the first decades of the European Reformation. Christ alone had the authority to command. So, it was



John Knox

Covenants (both National and Solemn League) were signed before the framing and adoption of the standards produced at Westminster. These standards were the edifice built upon the older sixteenth-century foundations. The Genevan and Scottish groundworks and bulwarks are to be seen distinctly in every corner of the building.

To John Knox is attributed the plain and comprehensive exposition of the second commandment and the regulation of worship that it intends: *"All worshipping, honouring or other service invented by the brain of man in the religion of God, without his own express command is idolatry."*

Taking their ground on this, and on Calvin's broad and liberating foundation – that what is not expressly commanded is forbidden – our Covenanting forefathers were willing to die for purity of worship thus understood as much as for any other doctrine of divine truth. Claims to represent the Scottish regulative principle on any weaker or looser basis is a betrayal of these martyrs and a corruption of the truth. The impositions at Perth in 1618 and in "Laud's liturgy" in 1636 and in the Restoration episcopacy of 1662, define the Covenanting struggle over these decades. The Scottish contention was with imposed human ceremonies. It was in the cause of "the prerogatives of Christ their king" that they refused to perjure themselves in the days of the tyrannical Restoration episcopacy. Too many – far too many – took the Indulgence and sacrificed their consciences instead of their lives "unto the lust of Prelatists abjured." But from Guthrie to Renwick, a noble army of martyrs stand out as they who were "constant and steadfast, zealous witnessing to the prerogatives of Christ their king."

The connecting line between Calvin and Renwick

for the prerogatives of Christ their King that our Reformers contended and for this that so many who followed them, laid down their lives across the continent of Europe.

Here then, is the true origin of the expression we find on our Martyrs Monument –

*"Halt passenger, take heed what thou dost see
This tomb doth shew for what some men did die"*

2. THE CLAIM

Let us briefly refer then to the claim – that this same principle was that "truth" which was "sealed by famous Guthrie's head and all along to Mr Renwick's blood." That our Covenanting heroes laid down their lives for this sacred cause – Christ's prerogatives as king.

It was to the practice in worship taught by John Knox and his Scottish contemporaries and successors that the Scottish Covenanters turned for a consistent approach. We must remember that the

Where do we find the connecting lines to Renwick and the restored Presbyterian worship of the Revolution Settlement from the earlier testimony to it, so fervently espoused by Knox and Calvin and pressed so early in the Reformation struggle?

There can be no doubt that the high-water mark in the exposition of the doctrine of Christ's headship as King of his own Church and her worship, was reached amidst the conflict, war, and persecution of the Second Reformation era in Scotland. In the writings of George Gillespie, Samuel Rutherford, and Alexander Henderson and others a sharp and incisive sword of truth was wielded to cut through the intruded ceremonies of English episcopacy – ceremonies which had infiltrated other Reformed Churches over the previous century.

Let us just note their testimony, rooted in the Calvinist doctrine of worship, and resolutely adhered to by those persecuted Covenanters until James Renwick, who refused all Indulgences and who refused to sprinkle any salt on the sacrifices to Caesar's dominion. This testimony will serve as the outlines of a bridge from the first to the second cloud of noble witnesses in Scotland who laid down their life for Presbyterian worship and government. It will act as sufficient proof of the assertion and claim.

(1) *George Gillespie's* monumental and unanswered treatise on Presbyterian worship is sadly unread in Scotland today. We are in the massive debt of the American publisher, Naphtali Press, for the most recent and definitive scholarly edition of Gillespie's *Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies Intruded on the Church of Scotland*. With its powerful preface addressed to all the Reformed Churches of his day, this work demolishes the ground

on which the entire edifice of episcopal worship was standing – that of human authority. Contending against ceremonies imposed in worship without Scripture command, Gillespie exposes the infamous Five Articles of Perth as neither necessary, expedient, lawful, nor indifferent. In doing so he expounds the clear and strict limits to the authority of the Church in, over, and concerning all aspects of divine worship. The useful but much abused portion of our Westminster Confession of Faith identifying the discretionary power of the Church over some circumstances in the worship of God, is explained in restrictive terms, by one who was doubtless involved in its authorship.

"Besides all this, there is nothing which any way pertains to the worship of God left to the determination of human laws, beside the mere circumstances, which neither have any holiness in them, forasmuch as they have no other use and praise in sacred than they have in civil things, nor yet were particularly



George Gillespie



Samuel Rutherford

determinable in Scripture, because they are infinite; but sacred, significant ceremonies, such as cross, kneeling, surplice, holy days, bishopping, etc, which have no use and praise except in religion only, and which, also, were most easily determinable (yet not determined) within those bounds which the wisdom of God did set to His written Word, are such things as God never left to the determination of any human law."

One wonders how many things in today's Church would survive Gillespie's reforming scrutiny in prohibiting "the determination of human laws" in anything "which any way pertains to the worship of God." But there can be no doubt from reading Gillespie's masterly work that it was for this principle – for these truths which famous Guthrie's head sealed – that "some men did die."

(2) **Samuel Rutherford** nearly lost his life in the same cause as "famous Guthrie," and would doubtless have had his name

entered in the list of our Scottish martyrs had he not received a prior summons from that higher court, "where few kings and great folks come." He contended, alongside Gillespie and others, in the same cause, and suffered in soul and body for the same "prerogatives of Christ their king." Ever jealous over the intrusion of any other partner to his heavenly Bridegroom, Rutherford expressly warned against the danger of adopting a view of the Church's discretionary power over worship which had introduced Popery itself. By multiplying the number of things that men call "matters indifferent", a wide door was being opened for human inventions. Rutherford is no less assertive of the idolatry of this than was Knox.

In a letter to the Church in Ireland (Letter 284 of the Bonar edition) he spells it out plainly but with vivid and colourful language – "It was but man's wit, and the wit of prelates and their godfather the



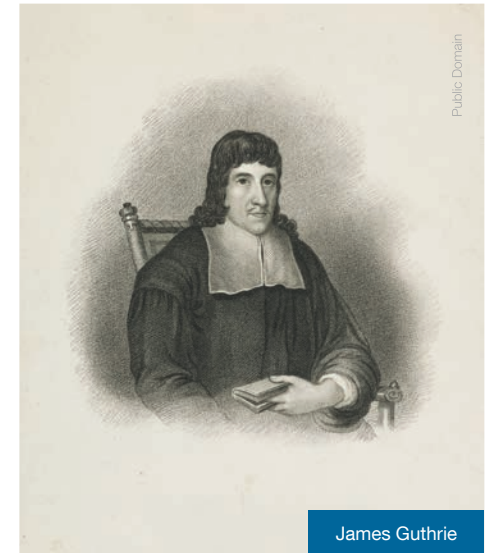
Alexander Henderson

Pope (that man without law), to put Christ and his prerogative royal, and his truth, or the smallest hairbreadth of his latter will, in the new calendar of indifferences, and to make a blank of uninked paper in Christ's testament that men may fill up; and to shuffle the truth, and matters which they call indifferent ... I am sure that when Christ shall bring us all out in our blacks and whites, at that day when he shall cry down time and the world ... there shall be few, yea none, that dare make any point, which toucheth the worship and honour of our King and Lawgiver, to be indifferent."

Was not this the truth "for which some men did die"?

(3) **Alexander Henderson** is justly esteemed to be "easily the most important covenanting minister" and "the fairest ornament, after John Knox, of incomparable memory, that ever the Church of Scotland did enjoy." His contribution should be better known than it is. To maintain brevity, we conclude with illuminating remarks to the Church and the rulers of his day from this giant on the "prerogatives of Christ their king." Preaching to the House of Commons on December 27th, 1643, from Ezra 7 v. 23 – "Whatsoever is commanded of the God of heaven, let it be diligently done, for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the King and his sons?" – Henderson asks concerning the "extent of this reformation" called for:

"Whatsoever God hath commanded. For what God has commanded must be done; what he has forbidden must not be done, but abolished; and what is in the nature thereof indifferent must be regulated according to the commandment of God, which is no less plain and peremptory in our practice of things indifferent than in other matters. Reformation therefore of religion



James Guthrie

must be thorough and perfect reformation. The particular reformations which were wrought by the Kings of Judah, are noted, and according to this rule, do they receive testimony from God ... Because God is not honoured by a begun, imperfect and half reformation. He is ready to spew out the lukewarm person, family or people. If we love the Lord with all our heart and strength, we will do everything that he commands. For what is it that hinders, but that our heart is parted or divided between two, and that we resolve to be almost, but not altogether godly."

It is for this that some men did die. Their deaths are alluded to on Henderson's grave, which the axe strokes of an inflamed Restoration bigotry could not entirely remove:

*"Reader bedew thine eyes,
Not for the dust here lies,
It quicken shall again,
And ay in joy remain.
But for thyself, the Church and States
Whose woes this dust prognosticates."*

ALEXANDER COMRIE

(1706-1774)

A Scot in the Netherlands

Jan Freeke

Alexander Comrie

On 10th December 2024, it was 250 years ago that Alexander Comrie died. This article explores his life and significance.

I. COMRIE'S EARLY LIFE

Alexander Comrie was born in Perth on 16th December 1706. His father was a landowner and a "writer" (legal officer) in the service of the Government. His mother was a granddaughter of the famous Andrew Gray, who was a preacher at Glasgow Cathedral and who died in 1656 at the early age of 22 years. He had one sister Joanna and two half-brothers James and Jean (from his mother's first marriage).

Alexander was converted at an early age. He writes about himself: "The Word of God was implanted in my heart in Scotland ... where I was under the teaching of the two brothers, the great Erskines." He describes

Ralph Erskine as "my faithful old friend, who was used by God for my instruction in my youth." Alexander attended the grammar school in Perth, where he got a thorough grounding in the classical languages. Possibly his parents were seeking to prepare him for the ministry. But after completing his study at the grammar school, Alexander had to break off his study and earn his own living.

The reasons for this change are unclear. It may have been due to money problems of his parents, or it could be that his father had a change of mind about the future occupation of his son. Initially Comrie was employed by a merchant in Edinburgh, who was involved in international trade. Through these contacts, he ended up in Rotterdam, in the Netherlands. There he found accommodation in the house of

Adriaan van der Willigen, a God-fearing merchant, who took Alexander into his service around 1726. This man took an interest in Alexander and, with the help of some friends, he enabled him to take up his study for the ministry at Groningen University in 1729.

II. STUDY IN GRONINGEN AND LEIDEN

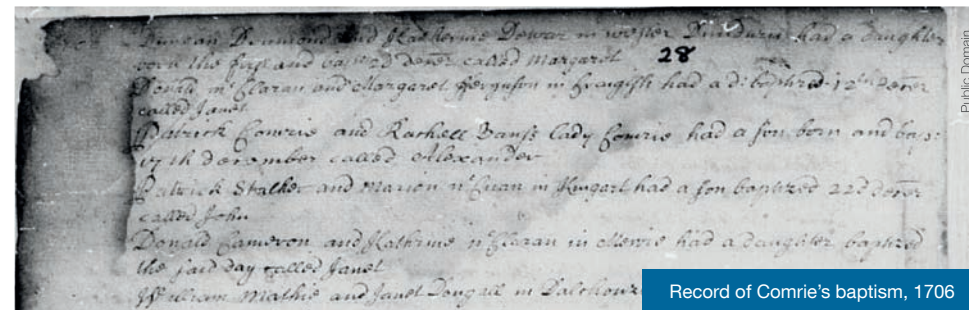
Groningen University had a good reputation. Two Professors in particular, were highly regarded by Comrie: Anthonius Driessen and Cornelius van Velzen. Anthonius Driessen was a vigorous defender of the Reformed faith, although he could be a bit excessive in polemics. He believed that a combination of doctrinal and practical theology enables us to drink from the fountain of Scripture. Cornelius van Velzen was focussed on practical theology and had a pietistic outlook. He was also interested in Scottish and English theologians. He wrote a preface to a translation of Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in its Fourfold State* when this was published in 1742.

After completing his study in Groningen, Comrie began to study Philosophy at Leiden University in 1733. He wrote a PhD thesis on "The basis of morality and the nature of virtue." At that time these theses were not as comprehensive as they are now. Comrie's thesis consisted of only two chapters of 17 pages. He

defended his thesis on 5th October 1734 and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. In his thesis, he opposed the rationalism of Descartes, particularly his ethical views.

III. ORDINATION AND INDUCTION TO THE MINISTRY AT WOUBRUGGE

After passing his initial Presbytery exams on 2nd November 1734, Comrie got a call to the congregation of Woubrugge, a village about nine miles east of Leiden. Comrie's final Presbytery exam took place on 12th April 1735, when he had to preach on Romans 5 verse 16. This exam he passed successfully and Comrie was ordained a pastor of the Woubrugge congregation on 1st May 1735 by his future friend and colleague Rev. Nicolaus Holtius. Woubrugge was a congregation of around 600 souls. It is of interest to note that under Rev. Carolus Blom, Comrie's predecessor, there was a revival of religion in the congregation. Comrie was to serve that congregation for 38 years. Although he received a few calls from other congregations, he never felt liberty to accept any of these. There is evidence that he was loved by his congregation. When Comrie did consider accepting a call to the congregation of Den Bommel, in 1748, every effort was made to persuade him to stay at Woubrugge.



Record of Comrie's baptism, 1706



Dorpskerk Woubrugge - Comrie's church

IV. FAMILY LIFE

Comrie married Johanna de Heyde, the sister of a fellow student, in 1737. But she died shortly after the birth of their daughter, Rachel Cornelia, the following year. This was a great blow to Comrie. They were very intimate, and in a preface to his book *The ABC of Faith*, Comrie speaks very highly of her love, dedication, and godliness. He found her a big support to him, “being a stranger in a strange land”. She also encouraged him to preach simply and not above the level that the congregation could take in.

His second wife Maria van der Pijll, whom he married in 1741, was a support to him during the difficult years 1753 to 1759, when Comrie got involved in religious controversy (see below). She died in 1764. His third wife, Catharina de Reus, whom he married in 1767, survived him.

V. EXPERIMENTAL PREACHING

We have already noticed that there was a revival of religion in Woubrugge under the ministry of Comrie's predecessor. But when Comrie took up the pastoral charge of the congregation, he found spiritual life at an ebb. Religious conventicles were not functioning well and there were controversies, such as whether personal assurance was essential to saving faith. Comrie preached a series of sermons on the exercises of saving faith. The substance of these sermons was published in 1739 in the book *The ABC of Faith*. Comrie had taken out the introduction and application parts of these sermons, as leaving these in would make the publication too big and unaffordable to the readers. Comrie found going out and visiting people difficult. He felt that he could be more useful to them by writing up and publishing the main content of his sermons. In his publication *The ABC of Faith*, Comrie choose to present these

exercises of faith in alphabetical order. He wanted to meet the needs of beginners and of those more advanced in the faith.

Another publication, *The Distinctives of Saving Faith*, contains the substance of sermons preached a few years later. This shows his pietistic emphasis as a pastor: to present Biblical truth experimentally; to awaken those who were indifferent or who had a faith which was not saving; and to encourage real believers, both the weak and the strong. These writings bear testimony to his godliness.

Despite his Scottish background, Comrie saw issues such as the independence of the Church from the civil authorities as being of secondary importance. His experience of landowners with a say in the calling of ministers, was of friends who were well disposed toward him and were a support to him during his life. It should also be noted that in Scotland, the Secession under Ebenezer Erskine took place in 1733, around seven years after Comrie went to the Netherlands. His focus was on the reformed doctrines that he had imbibed in his youth, and he strongly defended these, as a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ.

VI. CONFRONTING THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE (1753 TO 1759)

Comrie lived at the time of the Enlightenment. He was part of the Second Reformation movement, but he was different from earlier representatives of this movement. They tended to focus on practical living, for a Church which was orthodox in its doctrines and its confession of faith. Comrie lived in a somewhat later period, and he saw the orthodoxy of the Church, as it had been established at the Synod of Dort, being attacked even within the Church. There was a culture of tolerance for Arminian doctrines and other errors.

This came to the fore in the case of Rev. Anthonie van der Os, a minister in Zwolle. He was a popular preacher, but around 1750 he was accused by his fellow ministers of not being sound in the faith. This concerned an Arminian view of faith, denial of imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity, and questioning the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son. The Presbytery of Zwolle wanted to deal with this, but was told by the regional civil government not to proceed. When this was referred to Prince William IV of Orange, advice was sought on what to do from the Theological Professors at Leiden University. They tried to restore peace and unanimously advised not to discipline Rev. van der Os. This caused great concern among the Reformed, as these Professors were responsible for the training of future ministers.

Comrie and his colleague Rev. Nicolaus Holtius wrote a series of dialogues to awaken the public to the seriousness of the situation. These ten dialogues were published between 1753 and 1759 under the title *Examination of the Proposed Tolerance*. This concerned an attempt to harmonize the doctrines of the Synod of Dort with the condemned doctrines of the Arminians. Comrie and his colleague Holtius wrote these dialogues anonymously, as any publications from them had to be approved by either their Presbytery or the theological faculty of a university. This approval, they were unlikely to get. Their writings caused a great stir. When it became known who the authors were, Comrie and his colleague Holtius had to discontinue this publication.

In response to the prevailing attitude regarding Reformed doctrines, Comrie wrote a very detailed exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism. But he only managed to expound the questions



Dorpskerk Woubrugge, exterior

which is an exposition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. He also wrote a preface for publications translated by others, such as George Hutcheson's *Exposition of the Minor Prophets* and John Owen's treatise on *Indwelling Sin in the Believer*. In 1757, Comrie published Edward Fisher's *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, but it is not clear whether the translation was undertaken by Comrie himself.

VIII. RETIRAL AND DEATH

Ill health and an inability to attend to his duties made Comrie apply to the Presbytery for retirement. This was granted to him in 1773, when he went to live in Gouda. He died on 10th December 1774. Two days later he was buried in St Jan's Church in Gouda. At his own request there was no funeral sermon preached to honour him. Yet, as Rev. J. Schippers writes in his biography of Comrie, he was an instrument in God's hand to maintain and defend well established Reformation truths in the eighteenth century, an age of Enlightenment when departures from the truth and errors were prevalent.

We are grateful to Reformatorisch Dagblad for supplying the images.

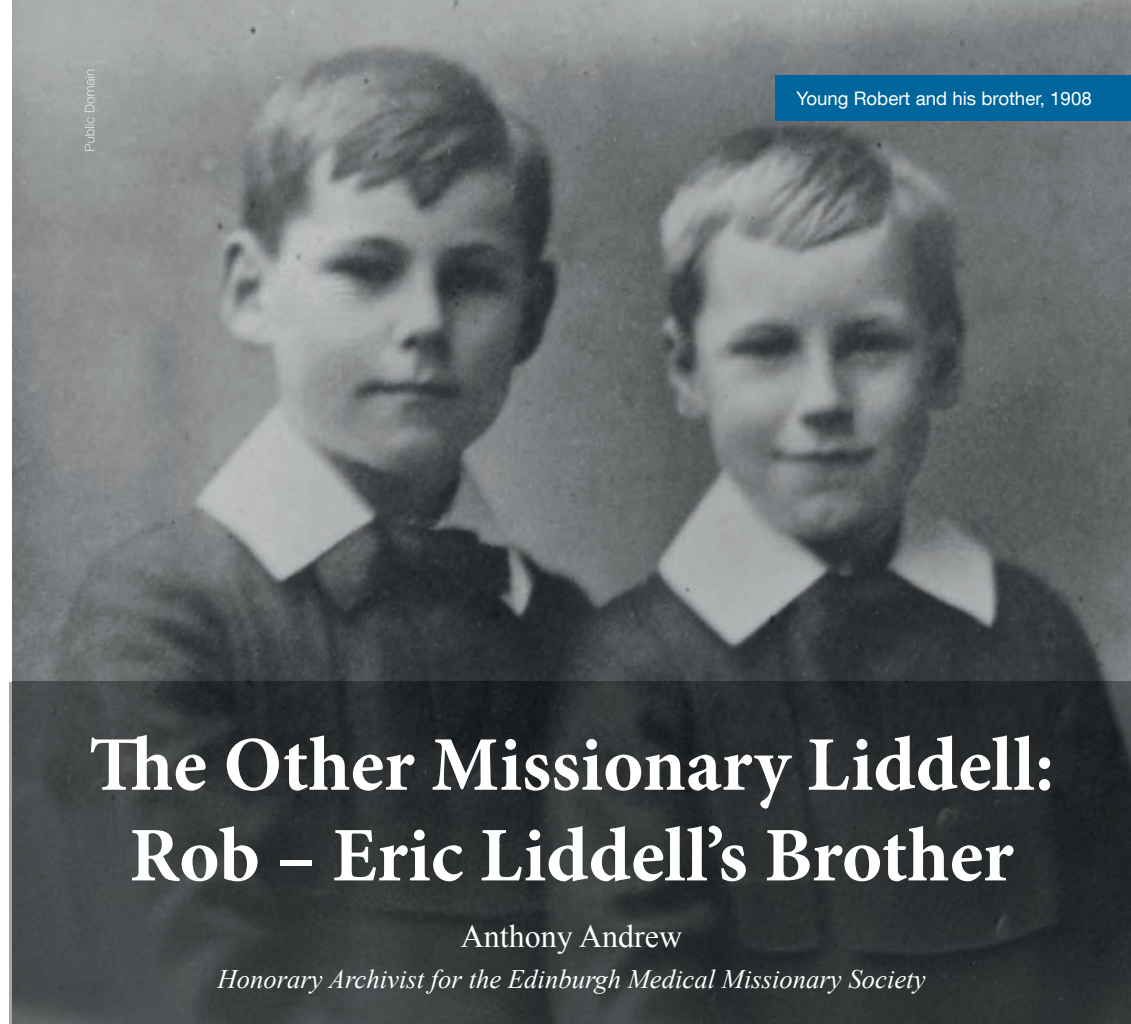


Comrie's grave in Gouda

and answers of Lord's Day 1 to 7. In this book he warned against the doctrines of Saumur in France. This was a centre for Amyraldianism and Comrie saw this as a major influence behind the departures from Reformed doctrine and the prevailing mood of tolerating false teaching.

VII. TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH PURITAN WORKS

Having grown up in a Scottish environment under the preaching of the Erskines and Thomas Boston, Comrie was active in translating and publishing Puritan literature from England and Scotland. The book of Walter Marshall, *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* was published in 1739. Then followed, in 1741, Thomas Boston's discourse on *The Covenant of Grace*. Comrie considered this the best work on this subject. He prefaced this work with an exposition of the Covenant of Works. The other publications translated by Comrie were Thomas Shepard on *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* (published in 1743) and Isaac Chauncy on *The Doctrine of Truth, which is after Godliness* (published in 1757),



Young Robert and his brother, 1908

The Other Missionary Liddell: Rob – Eric Liddell's Brother

Anthony Andrew

Honorary Archivist for the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society

Robert Liddell was the elder brother of the celebrated Eric Liddell. For a short part of his life, he worked at the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society dispensary, next to the Magdalen Chapel.

Disease and war-wounded patients beset Dr Rob Liddell at the Saiochang Mission Hospital (now Zaoquiang) in Northeastern China. Its extremes contrasted with his first posting as Superintendent of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society's (EMMS) dispensary in the Cowgate in 1924.

However, Chinese poverty and illnesses were familiar as he and his younger brother Eric had lived in that very village with their missionary parents, who served with the London Missionary Society (LMS).

The LMS was the first Protestant missionary society to enter China, through Scottish Presbyterian Robert Morrison. The LMS, with whom David Livingstone originally served, attracted Congregationalists like the Liddells. Mongolia and Northern China missions were demanding fields and two generations of Liddells lived with



The four children in 1913

lawlessness, robbery, kidnapping for ransom, rape, war, and violence.

1. BORN IN CHINA

The first of four children – Robert, Eric, Jenny and Ernest – Rob was born in the LMS' Shanghai compound on 27th August 1900 to Rev. James Dunlop Liddell and nurse Mary Liddell (née Reddin). They were LMS missionaries in Ch'ao Yang, Mongolia. They were soon threatened by the Boxer Uprising (1900) as Chinese resentments erupted over the First Opium War and its concluding Treaty of Tientsin (now Tianjin) (1858) and other western-imposed humiliations. Over two hundred missionaries and thirty thousand Chinese Christians died in the violence. The Liddells fled to Shanghai with Mary in a sedan chair seven months pregnant with Rob. After the Boxers' defeat, the "Boxer Protocol" (1901), fuelled yet more future anti-Western animosity.

Undeterred, the Liddells returned north to Tientsin, a port and hub of the Uprising, so that James could revisit Mongolia. In 1902, Rob's brother Eric, the future Olympic gold medallist, was born in Tientsin's mission compound. The LMS transferred their Mongolian work to Irish Presbyterians, so the Liddells travelled by wooden cart to Siaochang, a village in South Hopei. This extensive agricultural area was ravaged by bandits, dust storms, floods, droughts, and locusts. It normally grew wheat and millet and supported around ten million people. Rob and Eric lived within the mud-walled LMS compound with four big houses and a church. The Liddells had Chinese servants; the boys had a local amah (nursemaid), and Chinese playmates.

2. SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

The family enjoyed furlough at Drymen in Scotland in 1907. When James Liddell

returned to China in 1908, Rob (8) and Eric (6) remained at the School for the Sons of Missionaries at Blackheath. This relocated in 1912, becoming Eltham College, Mottingham, London. A year later, knowing that the boys were settled, Mary and Jenny followed James to China. Thereafter the boys saw their parents only once during their schooldays; otherwise, family ties were sustained by correspondence.

Eltham was home and school to many missionary children. Rob spent ten years there and was effectively Eric's parent. Rob was outgoing while Eric was shy and retiring. Rob enjoyed acting and debating and Eric leaned on him to a degree. Both brothers joined the cadet force which Rob relished, but Eric disliked.

In 1913, a year earlier than scheduled, the family returned to Scotland where Mary was successfully treated for gallstones. They had six weeks' holiday near Berwick-upon-Tweed, before returning to China in 1915 with sister Jenny who had not settled at boarding school. Rob's parting gift for her was a dolls' house stove and a ring.

During 1914-1918, the Great War haunted the school as old pupils became casualties. Eltham College sustained some of the highest casualties among the public schools as a percentage of those who served. Both boys excelled at school sport. In 1918 Rob won the Senior Championship with 27 points against Eric's 23 points. The pupils awarded Rob the Bayard Prize for exercising the best influence at school. The missionary emphasis continued into the vacations which they sometimes spent with Mr. F. H. Hawkins, the Foreign Secretary of the LMS. Academically sound, Rob passed the Senior Cambridge Local Examination which exempted him from the University of Edinburgh preliminary examination. As the



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Family group at Drymen, 1907

Great War dragged to a conclusion, Rob served briefly in the Artists' Rifles (2/28th London Regiment) in October 1918.

3. MEDICINE IN EDINBURGH

In 1920 Mary, Jenny and Ernest arrived in Scotland. They found Rob two years into his medical studies and with a girlfriend Ria (Maria) Aitken, while Eric was applying to Edinburgh University. James arrived the following year, and they rented a flat in Morningside near 'Holy Corner'.

With the family's approval, Rob resolved to become a medical missionary, but with limited family means, achievement was problematic. Rob was one of four children, and his brother Eric also wanted an Edinburgh University education. So, Rob applied to the EMMS for support. The LMS Foreign Secretary, F.H. Hawkins, wrote a supportive letter to the EMMS Secretary Sargood Fry, explaining that LMS missionaries were paid modestly on a local Chinese scale. Even this had diminished as sterling had depreciated about 50% against the Chinese tael between 1916 and

1918. Six days later, Hawkins wrote again, 'I can warmly recommend him (Rob) to your society'. His Congregational minister's letter also commended him, and his headmaster wrote that he did 'heartily and unreservedly recommend him for acceptance,' adding that 'he is a very good athlete'.

Founded in the early 1840s, the EMMS supported medical students who aspired to Protestant missionary service with financial aid towards medical training fees. Most EMMS candidates came from clerical or missionary families with limited resources for funding-fees and living-expenses. The EMMS assessed candidates' means, vocation, and potential support from friends, churches, and grants like the Carnegie Foundation. Students studied medicine, either at the University or through Edinburgh's Royal Colleges of Surgeons or Physicians for the "Triple Qualification" and gained ward experience at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. Additionally, EMMS offered holistic practical clinical and pastoral experience through the Cowgate dispensary (Livingstone Medical Missionary Memorial Institute), and the adjacent Magdalen Chapel.

On top of this, Rob gained midwifery experience at the Cowgate and the Simpson Maternity Hospital. He and Eric also stayed at the EMMS student hostel at 56 George Square during term time despite Eric's being a non-medical student. In vacations, Rob stayed in Alexandria near Loch Lomond and attended Morningside Congregational Church at Edinburgh's 'Holy Corner'.

Rob enjoyed university athletics and rugby between 1921 and 1923, sometimes appearing as centre three-quarter with Eric on his wing.

4. THE COWGATE DISPENSARY

The Cowgate dispensary was established to serve the poor Irish immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century. Students gained clinical experience in home visitation, consultations, diagnoses, drug preparation, dispensing drugs and applying dressings under trained supervision. Students led evangelism, worship, and pastoral care at the neighbouring Magdalen Chapel. So, the EMMS doctors were attractive recruits for missionary societies seeking well-rounded, practical medical missionaries.

In 1922, Rob joined the Glasgow Students Evangelistic Union's outreach in central Scotland. In 1923, its leading light, Rev. D.P. Thomson, visited the EMMS Hostel and persuaded Eric to preach at Armadale. Both brothers spoke there, but it was Eric's first public affirmation of faith and initiation into public ministry.

Rob's parents supported his medical ambitions. As graduation approached in 1922, his father wrote to the LMS in 1922 to suggest they approach him about missionary service. While the LMS felt that Rob's views were rather narrow, they concluded that they would mature in the field. While in Edinburgh, the brothers met Dr Ahmed Fahmy of the LMS who had thirty-three years' experience in Southern China, and he briefed them about the opportunities and dangers there.

After graduating in medicine from the University of Edinburgh, Rob served during 1924 as the Cowgate Dispensary's Superintendent. On 17th May 1924, Rob married the music teacher, Ria (Maria) Aitken with Eric as best man. The LMS posted the couple to Tingchou-fu (Tingzhou) in Southern China, a thousand miles from his parents' mission station. After years of separation, Mary wrote imploring the LMS

to send them to Northern China instead. James also told the LMS that between the age of eight and the last furlough he had only seen Rob for six months. The LMS suggested a northern China posting but, Rob preferred Tingchou-fu, so the LMS compromised and eventually sent the couple to Shanghai to be with their family.

5. BACK TO CHINA

Meanwhile Rob required surgery and convalescence, so the couple missed their first sailing, finally departing for China in December. Before they left, Eric won an Olympic gold medal for the 400 metres in Paris and Rob cabled the news to the family at Peitaiho (Beidaihe). Meanwhile Eric remained to graduate BSc in science, then to study for a year at the Congregational College and undertake evangelism.

Using the Trans-Siberian railway, Eric left to teach science and games at the Anglo-Chinese College, at Tientsin. On arrival, he enjoyed a family reunion with his parents, Rob, Ria, and Jenny and Ernest at Peitaiho, a summer resort where the LMS owned bungalows. Also, there was Annie Buchan, a nurse from Peterhead, who would closely support Rob as Matron of the Saiochang hospital. She and Eric were later interned by the Japanese, and she recorded details of prison-camp life.

In September, Rob and Ria left for Shanghai, Swatow, and Tingchou-fu. At Tingchou-fu, Dr G.W. Milledge, another EMMS-trained doctor, also served with LMS. In early 1927, hostility to foreigners erupted again, so Rob, Ria and daughter Peggy fled by boat through rapids before bandits destroyed the Tingchou-fu compound. At Tientsin, they gathered with other missionaries before LMS sent them to Pietaiho. After 18 months in the south, Rob and Ria were

exhausted and Rob had ear problems. Eventually LMS posted them to Rob's old hometown of Saiochang with Rob as Medical Superintendent of the hospital.

The brothers returned to Northeastern China in the closing decades of Imperial Chinese rule and uncertain times. Since the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), Japan had occupied neighbouring Korea and had a presence in the South Manchuria Railway Zone. Tientsin was a major port and administrative centre while Saiochang was a smaller rural community in an agricultural area. It was about 110 miles southwest of Tientsin and had been a centre of LMS outreach since their father's time. The Liddells were still remembered. Older women recalled nurse Mary using her son Rob as a model for her demonstrations of bathing babies.

6. MEDICAL MISSIONARY

Initially, the Liddell brothers had contrasting ministries. Rob was a traditional medical missionary providing healthcare as part of a wider rural evangelistic and pastoral ministry. In 1929, to matron Annie Buchan's delight, the hospital was recognised for nurse-training by the "Nurses Association". This was a major achievement because recruiting nurses was difficult since only Christian girls had unbound feet, so men were recruited instead.

In contrast, Eric had an urban posting at the LMS Anglo-Chinese College, Taku Road, Tientsin, established by Dr Lavington Hart. It offered a Christian education with a British syllabus, taught in English, designed to attract able Chinese boys to Christianity through a western education. This strategy was similar to the Rev. Dr Alexander Duff's pioneering top-down approach to evangelising India by educating elite Indian boys. Eric and his family enjoyed relative

comfort within the mission compound. He taught science and sport. Sport was not part of traditional Chinese education but as an Olympic gold medalist he became a role model. Teaching in English delayed Eric's Chinese language development, whereas Rob grappled with the language from the start. Eric continued running, and on one occasion Rob and Annie Buchan travelled to Tientsin on Rob's motorbike to watch him run. In that race Eric suffered concussion after colliding with a photographer's tripod thoughtlessly placed in the track.

After furlough in autumn 1933, Rob and Ria returned on the *SS Rawalpindi* and Rob went to Saiochang as Hospital Superintendent, with Dr Geoff Milledge, a contemporary from Eltham College, and Nurse Annie Buchan. Eric joined them that Christmas. Meanwhile, Rob's daughter Peggy (7) remained at Walthamstow Hall, the School for Daughters of Missionaries. In 1934, Eric married Florence Mackenzie, a Canadian missionary nurse, at Tientsin. Unfortunately, the situation in Saiochang precluded Rob from attending the wedding.

7. JAPANESE OCCUPATION

By 1935, LMS decided the school was consuming disproportionate resources compared to its rural pastoral and evangelistic work, so they pressured Eric to redeploy. He understood his Chinese language limitations and hesitated to leave his achievements at the school. However, now an ordained Congregationalist minister, he agreed and discovered a gift for the work.

From Tientsin, Rob and Eric planned to return to Saiochang. Their sister Jenny was forbidden by the LMS to accompany them. Two attempts failed due to bombing and flooding. However, the missionary in charge at Saiochang desperately



Liddell family, 1929

needed reinforcement so the brothers tried riverboats. In November 1937, they travelled through a devastated landscape stripped clean by war. Three times bandits robbed them, and they walked the last ten miles. The missionaries Geoff Milledge and Annie Buchan, matron of the now eighty-bed hospital, were amazed that they had succeeded. After two weeks without washing, soap was most welcome. Sadly, Rob's motorbike had been stripped by the Japanese. The situation was dire. Cholera ripped through the locality. Rob and Annie were kept busy. Thousands of Chinese died under the Japanese occupation, and the invaders sometimes violated the hospital. The brothers conducted worship together. Eric postponed his furlough to cover as evangelist for Will Rowlands. Simultaneously Rob moved to the Mackenzie Hospital, Tientsin because its doctor Dr John Wright (another EMMS alumnus) had died of typhoid. They had studied medicine together and John had married Ria's sister Margaret. Thereafter, Rob visited Saiochang to supervise the Chinese doctor until a replacement arrived while Eric supervised hospital building maintenance.

Rob's son James developed spinal problems, and x-Rays at Tientsin revealed spinal tuberculosis which was untreatable in China. So, in 1937, Ria accompanied young James encased in plaster to Scotland where Rob rejoined them on furlough in 1939.

8. WORLD WAR II

Eventually Eric's furlough arrived in November 1939, and he did deputation work. The following year, Florence and the girls arrived from Canada after a dangerous wartime trans-Atlantic voyage, for a month's holiday in the Borders before Eric returned to China.

Rob's son James needed hospital treatment for his condition, and lengthy convalescence. Rob did not want to leave Ria to nurse him alone in wartime so after much soul-searching and discussion with Eric, Rob reluctantly resigned from the LMS. Having always aspired to lifelong service in China, he, unfortunately, forfeited the LMS retirement allowance as he had served only sixteen of the twenty years required.

During the wartime, he served as a doctor. He established a medical practice and became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. Eric had died in Japanese internment so on Sabbath 27th May 1945, Rob attended his memorial services at Morningside Congregational Church with Ernest and Jenny, where nearly 1000 attended. The following day, he attended Dundas Street Congregational Church, Glasgow with D.P. Thomson, the evangelist, who had influenced both brothers and who became Eric's first biographer.

9. AUSTRALIA

Later, both of Rob and Ria's children, Jim and Peggy, became doctors. Rob emigrated to Whyalla in S. Australia to join his son Jim



After a harrowing journey in China, 1937

in 'pioneer medical work'. He died aged 73 on 30th May 1973 in Australia.

The EMMS, which supported Rob's training is the world's oldest surviving medical missionary society. As *EMMS International* it continues to provide holistic healthcare through Christian faith-based partners in Nepal, India, and Malawi, supporting and training local professionals to continue the work of dedicated medical missionaries like Rob Liddell to bring hope and health to disadvantaged people.

We are grateful to Rev. John Keddie for supplying the images.



Portraits of James Begg & James Wylie in the Magdalen Chapel

*The Magdalen Chapel has two very large portraits hanging side by side at the west end. These are of James Begg and James Wylie. Originally, the portraits hung in the Protestant Institute Building on George IV Bridge, but they were moved to the Chapel in the 1990s when that building was sold. A short account of these paintings can be found in chapter 46 of Thomas Smith, *Memoirs of Rev. James Begg, D.D. (1885-1888)*.*

At the annual meeting of the Scottish Reformation Society [in 1864], Dr Begg moved the adoption of the Report, and gave a cheering account of the work of the Society. He stated that the Society, etc...

One of the speakers, the Rev. Mr Traill of Elgin, made a somewhat enigmatical statement, which was afterwards explained.

There is one gentleman specially whom I do not need to name here, who, I think, is especially worthy of our thanks and gratitude. I believe he is here in a somewhat new character to-day, for, if I mistake not, he is to be two-faced. I

would venture to say that that is quite a new character for him; for, whether agreeing or differing from my friend on any point, I never did but admire the one-facedness, the heroic boldness, and frank outspokenness of the man.

The solution of this enigma is contained in the closing proceedings of the meeting, when we are told that “the presentation took place of a full-length portrait of Dr Begg to the trustees of the Protestant Institute.”

Most interesting addresses were given by Colonel Davidson, who made the

presentation, and by Dr Lindsay Alexander, who accepted it in name of the Directors, who vied with each other in bearing the strongest testimony to the esteem in which Dr Begg was held, and to the value of his services in support of every good cause.

I may notice in passing, that the portrait is now supported by a companion, that of Dr Wylie, presented to the Institute by some of his friends on the occasion of his attaining the semi-centenary of his ministry [1881]. It is well that these two friends should be associated in their “counterfeit presentments”, as they stood so long shoulder to shoulder in the battle against deadly error and wrong.

The only drawback to the satisfaction with which these portraits may be viewed is, that the hall in which they are placed, admirably constructed for its purpose as a lecture-room, allows none but a most unsatisfactory light – whether sunlight or gaslight – to fall on the pictures [a problem which persists with their new location in the Chapel].

The portraits were the work of Norman Macbeth (1821-1888) and Tavernor Knott (1816-1890), respectively, both of whom were well-known Scottish portrait painters. The inscriptions on them are as follows.

JAMES BEGG, D.D. EDINBURGH.

Presented by a few friends to
THE PROTESTANT INSTITUTE OF
SCOTLAND.

The establishment of which is chiefly
owing to Dr. Begg's
Long sustained and arduous efforts on its
behalf

And the Protestant cause at large.
Edinburgh, 4th February, 1864.
NORMAN MACBETH, PINXT

THE REV. JAMES A. WYLLIE [sic]. LL.D.
Professor to the Protestant Institute of
Scotland

Author of the “History of Protestantism” &c.
PROTESTANT INSTITUTE.

Founded by Free Church – the other
Protestant Churches Co-operating
Opened (1860) Ter-Centenary of Scottish
Reformation.

Dr Wyllie – (by appointment of Free
Presbytery of Edinburgh) its first Professor.
Presented by a Member of the Institute.
Painted by Tavernor Knott, 1881.

JAMES WYLIE

James Begg will be familiar to regular readers of the *Bulwark*, but a short account of James Wylie's life may be appropriate.

James Aitken Wylie (1808-1890) was born in Kirriemuir, Angus, on 9th August 1808. His father was minister of the “Auld Licht” Anti-Burgher congregation there. He attended university at Marischal College, Aberdeen, for three years, and then at St Andrews, where he came under the influence of Thomas Chalmers. In 1827, he entered the Original Secession Divinity Hall, Edinburgh and he was ordained minister of the Dollar Original Secession congregation in 1831. The congregation struggled for numbers, however, and in 1846, he resigned to become sub-editor of Hugh Miller's *Witness* newspaper, for which he wrote many articles. In 1852, along with the majority of the Original Secession, he joined the Free Church of Scotland, acting as editor of the *Free Church Record* from 1853 until 1860. Aberdeen University awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1856.

In 1860 he was appointed Lecturer on Popery at the newly formed Protestant Institute, a position that he held until the



James Begg



James Wylie

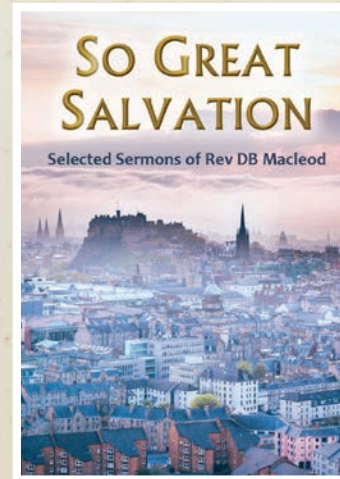
Public Domain

year of his death. The Protestant Institute was set up on the tercentenary of the Scottish Reformation in 1560, with the foundation stone of the building on George IV Bridge being laid on 17th August, exactly three hundred years after the abolition of papal authority in Scotland. A large public meeting was held at the time, with the organising committee including some interesting names such as F.B. Douglas (Lord Provost of Edinburgh), David Laing, and Hugh Martin.

Wylie was a prolific author. In 1852, he published *The Papacy: Its History, Dogmas, Genius, and Prospects*, which had won him a prize of 100 guineas from the Evangelical Alliance the previous year. His main work was *The History of Protestantism*, published in 1878. Other publications included *Modern Judea compared with Ancient Prophecy* (1841 and subsequent editions), *Pilgrimage from the Alps to the Tiber, or the influence of Romanism on*

trade, justice, and knowledge (1855), and *The Papacy is the Antichrist* (1888). He also edited several works, such as *Life and Missionary Travels of the Rev. J. Furniss Ogle, from His Letters* (1873) and *Disruption Worthies: A Memorial of 1843* (1877). He died on 1st May 1890 and was buried with his wife, Euphemia Gray (1808-1845) in the East Preston Street Burial Ground, Edinburgh – the same cemetery as James Begg.

Wylie was not as conservative as Begg. Indeed, few, if any, of the Original Secession ministers who joined the Free Church in 1852 were supporters of the “constitutional party”, as the Free Church conservatives were known. Begg was good at cooperating with people of different views, however, and while he and Wylie may have crossed swords on the Assembly floor, they were able to unite in their opposition to Romanism and their love of Scotland’s Reformation heritage.



So Great Salvation: Selected Sermons of Rev. D.B. Macleod

D.B. Macleod

2025, hardback, 550pp., £24 plus p.&p.
Ettrick Press
ISBN 978-1-915777-17-1

Rev. D.B. Macleod, who died suddenly in 1995 at the early age of sixty-four, was the Free Presbyterian minister in Edinburgh. His father, Finlay Macleod (d. 1956), was Free Presbyterian minister of Dornoch and Rogart, while his maternal grandfather was Rev. Donald Beaton (d. 1953), a central figure in the Free Presbyterian Church for many years. His widow, on the other hand, Mrs Una Macleod (d. 2020), had eminent Free Church connections. Her brother was Rev. D.K. Macleod, minister of Kingussie (d. 2018); her father was Rev. John Macleod, OBE, who died in 1939; while her maternal grandfather was the leading Free Church minister Principal Donald Maclean (d. 1943).

Mrs Una Macleod’s mother had exactly the same name as her daughter and died in 1983. She was a member of the Scottish Reformation Society Committee, and a notice of her death in the *Bulwark* for March/

April 1984 mentions that she had been on the Committee since 1945, and that “perhaps her greatest contribution, through the agency of the Women’s Protestant Union, was to sponsor the John Knox Essay Competition for schools in 1972 which was such a great success throughout Scotland.” Another lady member of the Committee, who died in the same year as Mrs Macleod, was Mrs Catherine Murdoch, the wife of Mr Alex B. Murdoch.

The present work has 50 pages of assorted biographical material, and then 500 pages of sermons, mainly transcribed from audio recordings. The biographical section is profusely illustrated. The book has only just appeared, and the present writer has not had time to read it, but he often heard Mr Macleod preach and has no doubt regarding the edifying nature of the sermons.



WALTER MILL

I. A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

We are used to having the Bible freely available. Perhaps we are so used to it that we do not give as much attention to it as we should. But imagine living in a time when simply reading the Bible in your own language could get you arrested. Some people in other parts of the world experience that today. Imagine a time when reading or teaching the Bible could lead to imprisonment—or worse, execution. There was such a time in Scotland. This was the time God had appointed for Walter Mill, a humble Scottish priest who stood boldly for his faith.

Walter Mill (sometimes spelled “Myln” or “Milne”) was born in 1476 in the small village of Lunan, beautifully situated on the east coast of Scotland between Montrose and Arbroath. At that time, Scotland was in darkness, a spiritual

darkness – a darkness of ignorance, in which the Roman Catholic Church made sure that it had full submission from everyone. And it was determined that no light of truth should penetrate through the darkness. They banned the translation of the Scriptures into English.

Walter Mill had spent a long time in that darkness but by the time that he was an old man, everything was beginning to change. A movement called the Reformation was spreading across Europe, and Scotland was not left untouched.

II. WALTER MILL'S EARLY LIFE AND FAITH

We do not know much about Walter Mill's childhood, but like many young men of his time who wanted to serve in the Church, he likely received an education in Latin and theology. Whatever that involved, it

did not mean opening up the Bible and studying it. He eventually became a priest and was appointed as the vicar of Lunan. For much of his life, he served in the Roman Catholic Church, but somehow he received the Scriptures. As he studied the Bible, he began to realize that many of its teachings did not match the doctrines of the Church.

Martin Luther had challenged the Pope's authority and taught that salvation came through faith in Christ alone, not through good works or indulgences (a system where people paid money to reduce their punishment for sins). Luther's writings and ideas spread quickly, inspiring others to challenge unbiblical church traditions.

Scotland, too, had its own reformers. Men like Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart began preaching that people should turn away from false teachings and return to the simple gospel message found in the Bible. Many of these men paid the ultimate price for their faith—being burned at the stake as heretics.

Walter Mill was one of those who embraced the truth of the Reformation. Though he had served as a Roman Catholic priest, he became convinced that many of the Church's teachings were wrong. He secretly supported the growing movement to bring biblical Christianity back to Scotland.

III. ARREST AND TRIAL

By the time Walter Mill was in his 70s, he was a frail and elderly man. In 1558, when he was about 82 years old, he was arrested in Dysart (a town on the Fife coast) and brought to St Andrews, the religious heart of Scotland. What was his terrible crime? He was charged with preaching against the Roman Catholic

Mass and refusing to acknowledge the Pope's authority.

You might wonder why the Roman Catholic Church leaders saw Mill as a threat, since he was just one old man. But it was not him that was the threat, it was his teachings. They knew that the Reformation was gaining strength in Scotland, and they wanted to make an example of him to frighten others. If they could silence Walter Mill, perhaps they could silence the Reformation as well.

At his trial, Mill boldly defended his faith. He declared that Christ alone was the head of the Church, not the Pope, and that salvation came through faith, not through the sacraments of the Church. He also spoke against the Roman Catholic practice of forbidding priests to marry, arguing that marriage was a gift from God. These were dangerous words in a time when the Roman Catholic Church held absolute power.

Despite his age and frailty, Mill refused to back down. The bishops and priests tried to intimidate him, but he would not deny his faith. His words were so powerful that even some of the people in the courtroom were moved by his courage.

IV. SENTENCED TO DEATH

The Roman Catholic authorities found Walter Mill guilty of heresy and sentenced him to death by burning at the stake. This was the same cruel punishment that had been given to earlier Scottish reformers like Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart in other parts of the town of St Andrews.

On 28th April 1558, Walter Mill was led to the place of execution outside St Andrews. Normally, such an event would draw a crowd, with people gathering to watch in

fear or a horrible curiosity. But this time, something was different. The people of St Andrews were beginning to question the Roman Catholic authorities. Many of them sympathized with the Reformers, and some even spoke out against Walter's execution.

When the executioners tried to gather wood to burn him, the local people were reluctant to help. In fact, the Church officials had to force a servant to light the fire. Even the town's magistrates hesitated, knowing that Mill's only "crime" was preaching the truth of the Bible.

As the flames rose around him, Walter Mill showed no fear. He reminded them that he was 82 years old and did not expect to live much longer naturally. Yet "a hundred times more gladly I choose to suffer this death for the truth's sake than to live and be the greatest man in Scotland," he said. "I shall not lose my life but change it for a better. I am sure of my salvation, for my cause is just in the sight of God. And I pray you, dear brethren, exhort others to fear God, forsake the errors of the Pope, and study the word of salvation."

He entered glory in this spirit, strong in faith, faithful unto death and refusing to deny the truth.

V. THE IMPACT OF HIS DEATH

Walter Mill's execution was supposed to silence the Reformers in Scotland, but like Patrick Hamilton's death thirty years before, it had the opposite effect. His death outraged the people of St Andrews and beyond. Unlike previous executions, which had instilled fear, Mill's burning stirred up anger against the Roman Catholic Church. If they could treat

this elderly man in such a brutal way, it showed a ruthless obsession with power rather than with the truth or spiritual things. Why could not they just try to reason with ideas they did not agree with?

Soon after Mill's martyrdom, the Reformation in Scotland gained unstoppable momentum. Just a year later, in 1559, John Knox returned to Scotland to help the Protestant movement bring in full Reformation. By 1560, Scotland officially became a Protestant nation, and the Roman Catholic Church lost its grip on the country. It became a nation where many began to fear God, forsake the errors of the Pope, and study the word of salvation – just as Walter had counselled.

Walter Mill was the last Scottish martyr of the Reformation, but his death was not in vain. His faithfulness inspired many others to stand firm in the truth of God's Word, no matter the cost. His burning was the final spark that ignited the flames of the Scottish Reformation, changing the course of history forever.

We need not only to know that salvation is by grace through faith but also embrace that for ourselves. No one is stopping us from reading the Bible or stopping us from reading it in English, but do we read it? We may not face the same kind of opposition but when the truth of God is denied we should stand firm, no matter the cost. We do not know much about Walter Mill but God did great things through him. Just as Walter Mill was not too old for God to use, you are not too young. We can learn a lot from someone like this. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:12).

Walter Mill
WORD SEARCH

CAN YOU FIND ALL THE HIDDEN WORDS IN THIS WORD SEARCH?



WORDS CAN BE FOUND IN ANY DIRECTION (INCLUDING DIAGONALS) AND CAN OVERLAP EACH OTHER.

I	A	M	I	C	S	L	A	F	M	O	A	A	E
N	H	A	A	N	A	T	O	I	R	N	M	M	A
O	A	R	R	I	O	C	L	S	A	A	U	O	M
I	R	T	T	T	A	U	T	H	O	R	I	T	Y
T	I	Y	I	A	T	N	E	A	T	R	O	E	L
A	A	R	E	L	C	I	C	E	E	M	H	X	U
L	R	F	A	Y	T	I	I	F	A	M	R	A	N
S	R	R	S	L	T	E	O	R	N	Y	A	M	A
N	R	L	C	E	A	R	T	A	R	T	E	P	N
A	G	Y	R	L	M	T	R	U	T	H	A	L	A
R	L	E	R	E	M	A	R	R	I	A	G	E	S
T	H	R	R	F	R	A	I	L	T	Y	U	C	C
Y	M	T	O	T	A	C	U	X	A	R	N	G	A
R	C	R	A	C	C	I	L	O	H	T	A	C	G



HERETIC
CATHOLIC
AUTHORITY

MARTYR
EXAMPLE
LUNAN

TRUTH
TRANSLATION
REFORMER

FRAILTY
MARRIAGE
LATIN

SOCIETY & BRANCH NEWS

VOL. 14 OF THE HISTORICAL JOURNAL

Vol. 14 of the Society's Historical Journal is now available. It contains articles on Calvin on War; John Forbes of Corse (1593-1648); John Brown of Wamphray – a provisional bibliography; Notes on some Scottish Covenanters and Ultra-Covenanters of the 18th century (part II); the writings of John Willison; Reformed and Presbyterian Christians in World War II; and Elizabeth West or Wast (1676-1715).

Copies can be ordered from the Treasurer (address on back cover) for £13.95 (inc. P&P, UK).

THE 2025 AGM

The 2025 AGM will be held on Saturday 6th September, DV, at the Magdalen Chapel. In addition to the business meeting, there will be a short public address.

ONLINE ADDRESS ON 18TH APRIL

One further speaker for the programme of online addresses is Isaac Gajendran (Inverness) who has agreed to speak, on Friday 18th April at 7.30 pm, DV, on the subject of "William Miller of Madras Christian College – a critical evaluation".

Thurso-born William Miller was a minister of the Free Church of Scotland. He was appointed as a missionary to Madras (present-day Chennai, India) in 1862. As Principal of the Christian College in Madras, Dr Miller took a foremost place in educational matters in India, and in 1893 was made a member of the legislative Council of the Madras Presidency.

Madras Christian College originated from the work of two Church of Scotland chaplains in 1835. They established St Andrew's School, seeking to attract students from the Hindu higher castes with the aim of "conveying as great as an amount of truth as possible through the channel of a good education especially of Bible truth". The school became Madras Christian College and grew into a large establishment under Dr Miller's leadership.

Details for joining the online meeting will be posted online, God willing.

ONLINE SUMMER CONFERENCE ON THE STEWARTON REVIVAL

The 2025 online summer conference will be held on Friday 22nd August, DV, from 7 to 9 pm (BST). The speaker will be Rev. Murdo Angus Macleod (Snizort) on the subject of "The Stewarton Revival of 1625".

MAGDALEN CHAPEL REPAIR FUND APPEAL

As intimated in December 2024 to members and friends of the Society, the Magdalen Chapel, the headquarters of the Scottish Reformation Society in Edinburgh, will require repair work to be undertaken to it. Following an investigation and professional survey it has been discovered that lead-sheeting covering the flat part of the roof above the Chapel Library has been pierced by fallen slates which have caused water ingress.

At this stage, based on professional advice, we are having to budget for £7,000 to £10,000 to cover the total cost of the repair and reinstatement works. It is hoped that the initial repair work will commence in April 2025, DV.

At its recent quarterly meeting, the Committee agreed to issue an appeal to members and supporters of the Society in an effort to raise money towards covering the cost of the repairs. A member has already kindly donated £1,000, of which we are deeply appreciative of, and has enabled us to set up a Repair Fund. Any donation, whatever the size, would greatly help ease the financial burden on the Society as we seek to reinstate the Chapel Library and preserve the Magdalen Chapel for years to come.

If you wish to donate towards the Chapel Library Repair Fund, donations (marked "Chapel Repair") can be made via the donation button on the website, or by bank transfer or cheque. For bank details, please contact the Treasurer, Mr Hugh Morrison, via email:

treasurer@scottishreformationsociety.com

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MEMBERSHIP & BULWARK SUBSCRIPTIONS

All correspondence regarding Membership and *Bulwark* subscriptions should be sent to the Treasurer, Mr Hugh Morrison, 288 South Gyle Road, Edinburgh, EH12 9DU. Email: treasurer@scottishreformationsociety.com. The subscription is £10 per annum for membership of the Society and £15 per annum for the *Bulwark*. Membership forms can be obtained from the Treasurer or downloaded from the website www.scottishreformationsociety.org