



THE

**Reformed Presbyterian Church;**

**AN HISTORICAL SKETCH,**

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH—SESSION OF 1860-61.

BY

**REV. JOHN NIEL McLEOD, D.D.**

ONE OF THE PROFESSORS OF THE SEMINARY.

PHILADELPHIA:  
PUBLISHED BY THE STUDENTS.  
1860



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CORRESPONDENCE.

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*Philadelphia, November 8, 1860.*

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER:--The undersigned, as President of the joint meeting of the Boards of Superintendents and Trustees of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, in which you are a Professor, hereby takes the liberty of requesting you, in the name of said meeting, to publish forthwith, in the *Banner of the Covenant*, the valuable lecture which you delivered before them on last evening, for the benefit of the public. This, he doubts not, would have been unanimously done by the meeting, had not its varied and important business, and the late hour of its adjournment prevented the matter from being brought before it. Such history needs and merits to be before the minds of the members of our church.

In hopes of your compliance with this request, I remain yours, &c., WILLIAM WILSON.

REV. DR. MCLEOD.

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*Philadelphia, November 10, 1860.*

PROF. J.N. MCLEOD, D.D.:

Rev. and Dear Sir:--We, the undersigned students of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, would respectfully request, for public-

cation, a copy of your lecture on the History of our Church, delivered at the opening of the present session of the Seminary.

And in thus asking your permission for its publication, it is with the desire to diffuse a knowledge of the early history of our church more widely among its members, and also to benefit ourselves by a perusal of its valuable and interesting information—information calculated to aid us as students in the study of our own Church History.

A. BAIN      W.G. SCOTT  
JAMES C. WYATT      ROBERT WHITE  
D.C. COOPER      S.R. STORMONT,  
S.D. YATES.

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Philadelphia, November 12, 1860.

To the above respectful requests, I cordially reply by sending the manuscript to the printer.

JOHN N. MCLEOD.

## INTRODUCTION.

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BEFORE proceeding to the lecture Dr. McLeod remarked as follows:

I do not present myself this evening before this numerous and respectable audience with any elaborate theological essay. The discourse which I am about to give forms no part of the course of instruction prepared for the students of divinity now about to enter upon another session in the Seminary. I am quite aware that it contains very little deserving the attention of my learned brethren of the Board of Superintendents and of the ministry whom I see before me. Its object is popular, and designed to call the attention of the members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church generally, to the Seminary, and its connections with the progress and prosperity of the church. After consultation with my respected associate, Professor Wylie, whose temporary absence I very much re-

gret, it was agreed between us that our addresses on this occasion should be to the people who might assemble, rather than to the superintendents and students for whom other exercises would be prepared. We desire that the entire membership of the church should take an interest in their School of the prophets, and in their place sustain and give vigor to its operations.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS  
OF THE  
**Reformed Presbyterian Church.**

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It has been said, and not without a show of propriety, “that the First Reformation in Scotland was commenced by a stone cast from the hand of a boy, and the Second Reformation by a stool from the hand of a woman.” By causes in themselves so insignificant does God often produce the grandest results. Detach them from their connections, and they are nothing. Associate them with the other links in the chain of providential influence to which they belong, and they become mighty for good or for evil. The bite of a spider has caused the death of a monarch, and the monarch’s death a revolution in his empire. The history of the throwing of the stone by the boy, and its connection with the First Reformation, were in brief, as follows. In the month of May, 1559, John Knox arrived unexpectedly from France, and having passed immediately from Leith by Dundee to Perth, he announced his intention to preach a ser-

mon there on the idolatry of the mass and image-worship. The sermon had been heard in quietness, though the populace had been greatly excited on the subject of the reformed opinions now spreading among them. After Knox had concluded his discourse, and the audience had dispersed in peace, a priest came forward and began to celebrate the mass, as if in defiance of the preacher's expositions. A boy standing by made some observations which was deemed disrespectful, and was struck by the priest. Resisting this, the boy cast a stone at the priest, which, missing him, struck and broke in pieces one of the images in the building in which this service had been held. This at once raised a tumult. The people attacked the church, stripped the ornaments from the altar, threw down the images of the saints, and in contempt, trampled them under their feet. Nor was this all, swelling into a multitude that could not be resisted, they fired the monasteries and reduced them to a heap of smouldering ruins. This movement of the "rascal multitude," as they are styled by Knox, was evidently unpremeditated, and was disapproved by Knox and the other Reformers generally, who had made every effort for its suppression. The Queen Regent, however, who had been desirous for some time of finding a pretext for bringing down the displeasure of the government upon the Reformers, proclaimed it an intentional rebellion, and proceeded to raise an army to put down the

treason. She avowed her intention to suppress the Reformation by Rome's usual instruments of conversion—the sword and fire; this precipitated the crisis, and induced the Reformers to combine and arm themselves in self-defence.

Prior to this the Protestant movement had no political character. Its friends did not desire to overthrow the existing government. All they sought was to reform the abuses in the church, and practise their own religion without molestation. This was refused them. Their non-conformity to the Papal establishment was proclaimed to be a crime to be punished by civil pains and penalties, and thus the alternative was forced upon them, either to abandon the faith which they had just deduced from the Bible, and submit to the bondage of anti-Christian superstition, without reserve and without inquiry, or to assent, defend, and maintain their conscientious liberties, let who might oppose them. The latter was their choice. In conformity with the example of the Waldenses of old, and of other Protestant Churches on the continent of Europe whose light they enjoyed, the Scottish Reformers entered into a solemn covenant with each other and with God to maintain the true religion and encourage its professors. And these combinations under the oath of God became one of the principal means of furthering the great and holy enterprise in which they had embarked. From this period the progress of the Reformation

in Scotland was rapid and decisive, and in a short time the dominion of the Italian priest, who styles himself the Vicar of Christ on earth, but who has more frequently been a son of Belial, was completely overthrown. In the year 1560 the authority of the Roman Pontiff was renounced; Popery was abolished; and a Confession of Faith and Book of Discipline, giving to the church a Presbyterian constitution, were adopted. In all this, the great body of the people, and large numbers of the nobility and gentry, most cordially concurred, and thus arose the "*Reformed Presbyterian Church*." The agents in the reform were human, and their work was mingled with imperfection. They never claimed for it entire exemption from defects. But they did erect a mighty temple, of fair proportions, of durable material, and of ample room. It does indeed contain no carnalizing decorations, no sensible images of spiritual things imposing on the outward senses, no robed priesthood, no smoking incense, no victim of sacrifice, bringing back the Jewish ceremony, or commingling the abrogated rites of ancient Paganism with the simplicities of apostolic worship. But in it may be seen, what is far better than all this, an open Bible, a living teacher; and intelligent masses of immortal men worshipping the true God, and undergoing an education which is designed and calculated to prepare them for the life to come. Behold it! It is filled with the cloud of glory; the spiritual pres-

ence of Israel's God; of which faith, not sense, makes discovery. Its inscription is, "*To Jesus Christ, the alone King and Head of His Church.*"

It was the glory of the *First* Scottish Reformation—the *Reformation from Popery*—that it was *the work of God*. A great revival of evangelical religion.

*The Second Reformation* in Scotland was a *reformation from Prelacy*—a Prelacy very near akin to Rome, forced upon her by unprincipled politicians.

The interval between the first and second Reformations embraces the period between the years 1592 and 1638. It was a period of conflict and of gradual decline, the causes of which are to be found almost entirely outside of the church's organization. The Church of Christ is never in greater danger than when religion has become popular, when her members count majorities, and when the opposition of the outward enemy has been suppressed, or at least silenced. In such a condition of things her communion becomes crowded with irreligious men, and she is in danger of being converted into a worldly sanctuary. While the Reformed Covenanted Church of Scotland was comparatively poor; while she had to contend with the enemies of the truth; while the government of the State opposed her, and while John Knox lived to waken up her piety in danger of slumbering, by the arousing blasts of his silver

trumpet, she continued pure, spiritual, awake and zealous for the truth of Christ. But Popery is now almost powerless. The regents of the kingdom, and succeeding them the King himself, James VI., are members of the church herself; the enticing couch of a civil establishment is prepared for her; and John Knox, having finished his work, has gone to his reward, with many of his faithful coadjutors. The world presses in upon the church, and her piety declines; and so it has always been. It is the constant effort of the world to make the church like itself. Conformity to the world is like the ashes to the fire. They may smother it out, but if this is not effected, they will bury and hide it, and prevent its heat and light from being seen and felt.

The principal agent in corrupting the Church of Scotland at this period was James VI., the reigning King. He had been educated in the Presbyterian Church, and for a long time had professed a strong attachment to her simple worship, and Scriptural order; but after his accession to the throne, and particularly after his removal to England, on the death of Queen Elizabeth, when he became the monarch of that kingdom also, he changed both his principles and his conduct, and became one of the strongest assertors of arbitrary power. He took offence at the strictness of the church's discipline, and at the fidelity of her ministry in reproving the vices of his court. He avowed the

belief that Prelacy was essential to monarchy, and held that most despotic maxim—that the King is Head of the Church, and that it is his prerogative to dictate to his subjects in matters of religion, and prescribe for them their faith and worship, according to his royal will and pleasure. “No Bishop, no King,” was his maxim; while he declared “that Presbytery was fit only for a nation of republicans.” In these views he was strengthened by the prelatical Church of England, which was even now persecuting the Puritans for their non-conformity, and whose favor he desired to secure, for the support of his own throne. Thus we find him deliberately resolving to overturn Presbyterianism in Scotland, to introduce Episcopacy, and “to impose on the Church of Scotland the whole system of superstitious and fantastic rites observed in the English Church” as Henry VIIIth and his immediate successors had left it. And there was no craft, in which King James excelled, nor violence which he did not employ to effect his darling object.

In the beginning of the year 1617, James came down in state from London, to visit his native country. In order that his reception might be as marked as possible, he directed the palace of Holyrood house, in Edinburgh, to be prepared, and that he might give the weight of his example to the Episcopal ceremonial, he ordered the chapel to be duly decorated and furnished. An

organ had been sent from England, and a set of finely gilded statues of the Twelve Apostles began to ornament the walls, under the hands of the English carpenters. But the people began to threaten. They saw a gorgeous altar erected, and two closed Bibles, two lighted candles, and two empty basins set upon it, and they permitted all to pass. But when the carved and tinsel images began to go up, they broke out in open murmurs, saying, "First came the organ, now the images, and ere long we shall have the mass." The Bishops took the alarm, and the images were laid aside, very much to the mortification of the king, who was greatly incensed at the opposition made to his wishes. The English liturgy was, however, read every day in the chapel; the communion was received kneeling before the altar; "and for the first time since the reformation, the sound of instrumental music was heard in the Royal Chapel."

Had the king and his English ecclesiastics observed these forms simply as their own private modes of worship, it would not have been looked upon as so obnoxious to censure; but the nation saw that it was the prelude merely to the grand attempt to impose the same upon themselves.

And this was really the principle of all the resistance made to the arbitrary edicts of the throne and the mitre, throughout the whole struggle of the reformation. Even John Knox and the Lords of the congregation would not permit Queen Mary

to be disturbed, while she had the mass celebrated in her own chapel with her household. But her attempt to impose the papal ceremonies upon others, they did resist and forbid. The rights of conscience, and the proper limitations to their exercise were not, indeed, as well understood then as they are now, for it required the discussions, and struggles, and martyrdoms of centuries to bring them forth in their true light before the world. But the germ was there. And the seed became in time the mighty tree of religious freedom, under whose branches we are now sitting, and whose precious fruits we are enjoying.

“Go home,” said the Queen Regent to Lord Ruthven, the Provost of Perth, when the Reform was just commencing, “and suppress the reformed opinions within your jurisdiction.” He promptly answered in substance, “In what concerns their bodies my charge is to keep them in order, but what concerns their souls is neither in my commission, nor shall I meddle with it.”

There were acts and ordinances of a penal character passed by the Parliaments, from time to time against the papists in the realm, but after all they had more reference to their civil, than their religious conduct. We would not regard them even in this light as justifiable now, but after all that has been said and written on this very much misunderstood subject, it is a fact worthy of being mentioned, “that there is no authentic record in

Scottish history of any papist being punished with death in Scotland, on account of his religion.”

In the Parliament held while the king was in Scotland, an ordinance was passed requiring “that whatever his Majesty should determine in the external government of the Church, with the advice of Bishops, and a competent number of the ministry, should have the strength of law.” This virtually abolished the General Assembly, and of course, the Presbyterian organization of the Church; and James himself explained its meaning when he said, as Calderwood records in his manuscript history of the year 1617, “to have matters ruled as they have been in your General Assembly, I will never agree; for the bishops must rule the ministers, and the king rule both.” And now the monarch proceeded to deeds of oppression. He called, adjourned, and dissolved the General Assemblies by his royal proclamation, and at length abolished them altogether. The Order of Bishops had already been restored by an act of Parliament, under the king’s direction, and to them submission was required under pain of being regarded as rebellious. Many of the more faithful and influential among the ministers had been imprisoned, banished from the country, or otherwise removed under various pretexts. An extraordinary and unconstitutional court, called the “High Commission,” and composed of bishops and laymen, who were creatures of royalty, was established.

And it soon appeared that their chief business was to harass, suspend, and banish those ministers who remained faithful to the cause of God.

Three members of this Commission formed a quorum. They had jurisdiction over the whole country. They were often formed of profane and profligate men, and they had the power of putting to the torture of their discretion. One of the instructions given to this infamous body was, “that they should take cognizance of, and reform all opinions and practices at variance with the established religion, and punish every breach of uniformity in the celebration of public worship.” More arbitrary power in theory, and more palpable injustice and cruelty in practice were not found in that fearful engine of papal persecution—the Spanish Inquisition—than were embodied, and acted out from this infamous tribunal. Established in the reign of Elizabeth in England, revived by James, and continued in exercise by his son and grandson, the First and Second Charles, the Court of High Commission was an instrument of despotism for more than half a century. And it is worthy of remark, “that it was founded on a clause in a statute vesting the ecclesiastical supremacy in the crown, and empowering the Sovereign to appoint Commissioners for the exercise of the prerogative.” Its theory was that the Sovereign exercised supremacy by his Commissioners. And the principle is in the British Con-

stitution to the present hour. If it is supposed to be a dead letter now, it is simply because the Christian public opinion of the world controls it.

In the year 1618, an Assembly held in Perth, and composed mainly of minions of the crown, passed certain acts for the introduction to Scotland of some English ceremonies. They were kneeling at the sacrament; the private administration of baptism; private communicating; the observance of holidays, and confirmation. These acts are known in history as the "Five Articles of Perth."

To all these our fathers intelligently objected, as unscriptural and dangerous, and they would have objected to them even if they had not regarded them as so important in themselves, on the ground of their illegality, as imposed by usurped authority. They protested against them as an imposition on conscience, and as compelling them to submit to the dilemma, either of violating their conscientious convictions, or disobeying the laws of their country.

All these articles were ratified by the Parliament, and became the law of the land, to which obedience was to be enforced. But this, after all, was not so easy in a country which furnished so many martyrs for the truth of God. Christmas day, one of the prescribed holidays, came round, and the churches of Edinburgh were thrown open. But very few, either of the ministers or the peo-

ple, could be prevailed upon to attend the service. The people generally pursued their ordinary business, or flocked out of town, and the churches were almost deserted. Nor were they more disposed to submit to the royal order to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper kneeling before an altar. They saw no reason for this ceremony in the original institution, and it brought up before their minds the adoration of the host in the Roman Catholic worship, from which it is undoubtedly derived. History informs us that in some churches the people refused to attend, and left the ministers alone: in others the elders refused to officiate, and everywhere the piety of the Church shrunk from the observance, and the abused worldly authority by which it was commanded. The Five Articles of Perth were enforced with rigor; very many excellent ministers of the gospel refused to submit to them, and were consequently banished from their flocks, exposed to great hardships, and often compelled to seek a refuge in foreign countries. Some of these, men of eminent learning, piety, eloquence, and other ministerial qualifications, repaired to the Reformed Churches on the Continent of Europe, and were welcomed there; and several found refuge in the North of Ireland, where they laid the foundations of the Presbyterian Church of that country, in which the truth of God has so long found a home, and from which it has been carried abroad to this and other lands.

While this condition of things existed in Scotland, the King, James the Sixth, passed to his account, and was succeeded by his son, the First Charles, who subsequently lost both his crown and his head, by insisting on the royal supremacy which his father had so much abused.

In this there was righteous retribution.

In the year 1625, Charles ascended the throne of the three kingdoms, but he added to, rather than diminished the burdens under which the prostrate Presbyterians were labouring.

Charles was from principle a tyrant. He had a popish Queen, by whom he was greatly influenced. That haughty prelate, Laud, who administered the affairs of the Church of England, was now in power, and under his despotic sway, the Puritan non-conformists were persecuted to the death, while the established Church itself is turned into a mere worldly sanctuary. And it is soon seen to be the aim of the Archbishop and his master to force the Scottish Church into a complete conformity to the English Prelacy, which was really popish, only without the name. In 1633, Charles and Laud visited Scotland, and they proceeded at once to impose upon a country a "Service Book," as it was styled, which destroyed the last vestige of the ancient worship so solemnly adopted by the Reformation Church. The service book was a transcript of that of the English Church, with some additions and alterations taken from the Roman

breviary. It contained a liturgy of prayers, and it was preceded by a book of canons for the regulation of the clergy, in which it was enjoined that every minister should procure and use the liturgy prepared by Laud, under pain of banishment from his congregation. And all this was to be done simply by a royal proclamation, without consulting either the Church or the nation. Arminian in doctrine, popish in form, and encumbered by ceremonies derived from the ancient Anti-christianism, the imposition of this Service Book on the people of Scotland, without their even knowing what it was but by general report, was a virtual undoing of almost all that had been accomplished by the Protestant Presbyterian Reformation some forty years before. Tyrants are often infatuated. Charles and Laud had pressed the matter too far. The Scottish people will not bear it. They will rather make a revolution.

Prelacy, as we have seen, had now been established in Scotland for thirty years; and yet the mass of the people had never been reconciled to it. During the whole period it had been resisted by many excellent and able men, in both Church and State. The people had their Bibles. They came together for prayer and religious conversation in their fellowship meetings. They received the instructions of some of the most holy men in the Christian ministry, whom Scotland ever possessed. The banished ministers themselves were

accustomed to meet in small numbers, for social prayer and confession of sin. The lamp of Scotland's spirituality had never gone out, and some of the most remarkable revivals of religion known to the Church, had taken place in this interval of darkness. A spirit of penitence, of prayer, of zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of the Redeemer, was poured out upon her, and the down-trodden Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland arose in her majesty, threw off her burden, and once more reformed herself. The Reformation from PRELACY began.

We have said that the *Second Reformation in Scotland* commenced by the throwing of a stool from the hand of a woman, and the reason of the declaration is the following fact in history. The language may seem to be figure and poetry, but it expresses after all, more fact than fiction.

The 23d of July, 1637, was the day appointed for commencing the use of the "Service Book" in the Scottish churches. It was the Sabbath. The High Church of St. Giles, in Edinburgh, was crowded with people. Mr. James Hanna, the Dean of Edinburgh, came forward to commence the exercises, with the "Service Book" in his hand. He was clothed with his surplice, and had moved through the crowds of people from the vestry to the reading-desk with great solemnity. Henderson, the reader in the High Church, and who was a great favorite with the people, had just dis-

charged his duty and retired, saying, with tears in his eyes, "Adieu, good people; for I think this is the last of my reading to you in this place." The Dean began to read, but a shout from the multitude like the sound of many waters, drowned his voice. And at the same moment an old woman, of the name of Janet Geddes, who sold greens in the high street, seized the stool on which she had been sitting, and discharged it at the Dean's head, while she cried out, "Villain, dost thou say mass at my lug?" Her example was followed by others. The Dean threw off his surplice, and fled in consternation; and when the Bishop of Edinburgh came forward, and from the pulpit attempted to allay the excitement, he was answered with a volley of sticks and stones, and other missiles. "A pope, a pope! Anti-christ! pull him down!" were the cries which reached his ear. He was, however, permitted to pass to his carriage and retire. And it does not appear that in all the tumult any bodily injury was inflicted.

We have seen what is said to be Jenny Geddes' veritable stool, in the Museum of the Society of Antiquities in Edinburgh. It is a dangerous-looking weapon, and we subscribe to the declaration of a sarcastic writer of the day, as he tells of its use: "It was weel for the Dean that he had learned to jouk." Had it stricken him in the head, it would certainly have given him what the same writer styles "a ticket of remembrance."

Happily the stool missed the Dean's head; but it was the death of the "Service Book." It struck down Prelacy in Scotland. And from that day to this it has been but "the shadow of a shade." There should be no doubt, after the ample investigations that have been made on this subject, that this whole movement in St. Giles' was unpremeditated. It is one of those popular occurrences which often take place in times of great public excitement, and which can be no more foreseen than the storms of the ocean. And after all the attempts of the frightened bishops and their modern apologists to magnify it into a grand scheme of insurrection and violence, it is shown by solemn history to have been a mere popular outbreak, which no one had prepared, whose primary agents were impulsive and indignant women, and for which the church had no responsibility.

Similar occurrences, however, took place in Glasgow, and all over Scotland, for the prompting causes were the same throughout the kingdom, and the result was the great moral revolution of 1638.

But let us look at this occurrence—so simple, and even ludicrous in itself—from a higher standpoint. God, who sometimes uses the most insignificant instruments to effectuate his highest purposes, was overruling all this for the honor of his name, and the progress of his cause. Janet Ged-

des' stool was like a friction-match: rub it upon the hard surface, and it ignites, and you may use it to explode the mine. In the adorable providence of the Divine Mediator, without which even a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, the impromptu movement of the woman in St. Giles, was made the starting point of a glorious reform, whose fruits of incalculable blessings were to gladden future ages. As a primary result, it gave Laud's Liturgy its death-blow.

The excitement, begun in Edinburgh, soon extended over the whole country. The people are thoroughly aroused. They seem to rise in mass, and the roads are filled with crowds proceeding to the capital to see what can be done. And now the great and the good men of the country come out from their retirements. The ministers return from their banishment. The people need leaders, wise, moderate, unselfish, zealous for the glory of God, and able to command. And they have them. The movement receives a religious direction. The piety of Scotland falls on its knees, and rises refreshed and assured for service.

The first movement of the leaders of the people is to petition the king to suppress the "Service Book" and allow the people to worship the Lord of their fathers, in what they deemed a better way. They take the humble name of "Supplicants," and seek to effect their object by peaceful negotiation. But Charles and Laud stand upon their

mistaken dignity, and refuse the concession. A new proclamation is issued, commanding the reception of the "Service Book," and the strictest observance of its forms. All the proceedings of the "Supplicants" are condemned, and they required to cease their meetings under pain of high treason. And now the "Supplicants" take the higher character of "Protestors." Lindsay and the Earl of Home, two of the Presbyterian Lords, proceeded as commissioners to the privy council at Sterling, and, in the name of the church and kingdom of Scotland, entered their protest against the proclamation, while they boldly avowed their intention to secure for themselves the liberties which they sought. But the court, though it temporized for the moment, insisted on its despotic assumptions, and the result was a civil war and revolution. A revolution which did not cease until the crown of Charles and the mitre of Laud—and these contained the heads of both—were laid in the dust.

As we have said, it was the piety of Scotland, which was now in the ascendant. It took the lead, and called the people to the *great expedient of* COVENANT RENOVATION.

The principle of covenanting is a principle of man's nature as a social being. It is essential to society, and meets with every day exemplifications. It is simply the principle of *combination* to accomplish a proposed object. A covenant is

an agreement, bargain, mutual engagement of two or more parties to act together in a prescribed way, and for the common good. When men make an engagement, they become covenanters. Every co-partnership in business, every association which they form under a definite constitution, every promissory note they issue make them covenanters. As members of the Church, we are in covenant with one another in reference to religion, and as citizens of the State we are in covenant to promote the ends of our political association. The Federal constitution (and federal means simply *covenanted*, belonging to a league) of the United States of America, is a great national covenant into which several independent States have entered, and by which they bind themselves to act together, for securing the objects of their union. Apply this to religion, add to it the solemnity of an oath, and connect with it the idea of *reform* in Church and State, and of protection to civil and religious rights and privileges, and you have the whole reason and essence of the Scottish covenants, which many so greatly misunderstand. The Old Testament history is full of the covenants of Israel with one another and with God, and so is the entire history of the Reformation churches in all lands. Like the oath which binds men to tell the truth, covenanting is an ordinance of God, and in its more social aspects, intended for great occasions

like that which existed in the Scottish history which we are now considering.

The national covenant was first subscribed and sworn to by the king and people of all ranks in the year 1580, and defined and gave stability to the "First Reformation." And now that the nation is returning to the ancient ground, they have recourse to it with appropriate additions, to combine themselves in the maintenance of the "Second Reformation."

The phraseology of the document is peculiar to the time and place of its birth, but the amount of it is that the covenanters solemnly bind themselves to adhere to, and defend the true religion as expressed in the Confession of Faith, and to forbear from the practice of the innovations recently introduced. They declare their belief that these innovations were, to use their own language, "contrary to the word of God, and tending to the re-establishment of the Popish religion and tyranny." They swear by the great name of the Lord, to continue in the profession and obedience of the aforesaid religion; and in the defence of the liberties and laws of the kingdom; and they promise that in public, and in their families, and in their personal carriage, they would endeavor to keep themselves within the bounds of Christian liberty, and to be good examples to others of all godliness, soberness and righteousness, and every duty which

they owed to God and man.” The solemn transaction of subscribing and swearing the covenant took place at Grey Friars Church in Edinburgh, on the 1st of March, 1638. A fast had been appointed. Sermon being ended, the Earl of Loudon, after the covenant had been read article by article, made an address to the people, of peculiar impressiveness and power. Alexander Henderson, minister of Leuchars, and afterwards distinguished as the John Knox of the “Second Reformation,” then led the vast assembly in prayer, under which they were alternately melted into tears, and agitated with gratitude and joy. The noblemen present then stepped forward to the table, and subscribed the document, while with uplifted hand they swore to fulfil the duties it required. After them came the gentry and ministers, and people of all ranks. Thousands of names were signed, and when the immense sheet of parchment was almost filled, those who could do no more appended their initials. The city was in an ecstasy of holy joy, and the whole land, as it caught the spirit, resounded with hosannas to the Son of David. “Great was the day of Jezreel.”

The large majority of the people were on the side of the reform. Its opponents were comparatively a handful, though they enjoyed the countenance of the court. The Spirit of God was poured out, and Scotland was revived throughout all her borders. It was at this time that the

Scottish Presbyterians began more emphatically to be styled "*Covenanters*." The occasion of the designation, which was at first a nickname of the enemy, was the transaction we have just described.

First "Supplicants" for the unmolested exercise of their right to worship God according to the Reformed Presbyterian constitution of the Church, and next "Protestors" against the arbitrary denial of this right by a demoralized and tyrannical State, the Reformed Presbyterians of the day became "Covenanters," and by a league of friendship among themselves, and under the oath of God, expressed their determination to defend, propagate, and in perpetuity maintain the civil and religious freedom which are the common property of all men with Holy Scripture in their hands. How they and their successors have done this, let the world's history since declare.

And now the work of reform went on with but little molestation. The first Free General Assembly that had met for many years, was held in Glasgow, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, 1638. Alexander Henderson was chosen Moderator. It redressed the wrongs and reformed the abuses of the past years of defection. The exiled ministers were recalled. The ordinances of religion were re-established, and having broken off from her neck the double yoke of Prelacy and Erastian power, the Church was once more free.

Nor was the effect of these transactions confined

to Scotland alone. The blessed influence extended to Ireland, and in Presbyterian Ulster greatly revived the cause of God. England, too, felt its power. The Scottish Presbyterians and the English Non-conformists, the majority of whom were Presbyterians, became *one* in their opposition to arbitrary power, and in their profession and enforcement of the truth of God. The Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms; the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and the works of blessed memory which they put forth, were all results of the second Reformation of which we have been speaking. Nor were its blessed consequences confined to the British Isles. The English Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians, both of whom were actual Covenanters, brought its principles, memories, and attainments with them to the American continent, when they came across the sea, and these were with them when they laid the foundations of the American republic whose citizens we are.

Hawks and Bancroft, and Smith and others who now write impartial history, are beginning to give its due place to the Presbyterian element in American institutions. It will be one day known that the Scottish, English and Irish Presbyterians did more than any other set of men to produce, and give character to the American Revolution. "Let any man," says Dr. Smith, of Charleston, "attentively compare the solemn leagues and covenants

by which the Continental and Scottish Reformers and the Puritans and Non-conformists of a later period, pledged themselves to one another, by their lives, property and sacred honor, to spend and be spent in the cause of civil and religious freedom, with our Declaration of Independence, and he will, we think, allow, that in the former we have the plan, the spirit, and the prototype of the latter.

We had ourselves said this some time before in print, and the Dr. himself has given us credit for it in his book, of no small merit, which he calls "Ecclesiastical Republicanism."

Had Senator Seward, when he stood, some two years since, beside Plymouth rock, and on forefather's day delivered his eloquent oration on the Puritanism of New England—had he, we say, on that occasion cast his eye across the border into Scotland, he might have perceived, what he does not appear to have discovered, whence came that *principle of combination* and *confederacy* for good, which gave the Puritan movements all their power. The Scottish Covenanters gave it to England, to Ireland, and to ourselves.

And now, in conclusion, is the question asked, what is the relation which the Reformed Presbyterian Church, now existing in various lands, sustains to the Church of the First and Second Reformation? Our answer is, she is the lineal descendant of that ancient church, and

more than any other, the representative of its principles, its order, and its contendings for the rights and prerogatives of the Prince of the kings of the earth, and the Governor among the nations. While all the other bodies called Presbyterian, are more or less remotely connected with the same parent stock, she proceeds directly from it. From this honorable parentage have come all the Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, England and Ireland, -- in the British Provinces of North America, the United States, Northern India, Syria and Palestine, and the Islands of the New Hebrides, in the South Pacific Ocean. Through many and strange vicissitudes, her organization, her name and her principles have been maintained. And He who has sustained her through the trials of the past, is able to sustain her still. Only let those who profess her principles, be true to Messiah's throne.

"To what branch of the Presbyterian Church, Sir, do you belong?" said a distinguished clergyman to the late Dr. Alexander McLeod. "To no branch, Sir," was the answer; "I belong to the root."