

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF PREACHING DURING THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION

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I. Introduction : Historical Outline of the Scottish Reformation Period.

The Roman Catholic Church controlled the religious life of Scotland for only a relatively short period of time. Scotland had received Christianity in its Celtic, non-Roman form from Columba and those who followed him. Celtic Christianity finally gave way to Rome in the latter part of the eleventh century under Queen Margaret. From then until the middle of the sixteenth century, Scotland was a land of dense spiritual darkness, a land of many priests but very few witnesses for Jesus Christ, a land of many churches but very little Gospel.¹⁾

The Reformation quickly spread from Germany to Scotland. The first protestant to witness, and then to be martyred for his faith in Scotland, was Patrick Hamilton. Hamilton had visited Luther in Germany, carried the message to Scotland, and was burned at the stake in 1528. Several others including George Wishart (1546) followed the footsteps of Hamilton in being martyred for the Faith. "In spite of these persecutions, perhaps even because of them, Protestantism continued to spread in Scotland and the day was hastening when Scotland would throw off the spiritual tyranny of the Church of Rome."²⁾

John Knox, considered the leader of the Scottish Reformation, openly attacked Rome not long after Protestant Nobles captured the castle of St. Andrews in 1547 and called Knox to be their minister. Whereas much of previous controversy between the Protestants and Rome had been concerned with details such as forms and ceremonies, Knox "Boldly proclaimed that the Church of Rome was no true Church, but Anti-Christ. He would allow no appeal to any standard but

1) Johannes G. Vos, *The Scottish Covenanters*, (Shanghai: J. Vos publisher; Evans Book Co., printer; 1940), p. 1.

2) *Ibid*, p. 3.

the Word of God, and proposed nothing less than the entire reconstruction of the whole doctrinal and ecclesiastical system of Scotland on the basis of Scripture and of Scripture only."³⁾

Soon the Catholic Party with the help of France captured St. Andrews, and Knox and others were made galley slaves. In 1549 Knox was freed, and finally in 1555 he returned to Scotland. Knox continued to oppose Rome, its doctrines and relics. Knox not only opposed Rome, but also the Erastian control of the Church by the State. In 1560 the Scottish Parliament under the guidance of Knox proclaimed that the Reformed Faith was the national religion. The Scots Confession was approved and Popery condemned. In Dec. 20, 1560, the General Assembly of the Reformed Church of Scotland had its first meeting. According to Vos⁴⁾ only six of the forty-two members at the Assembly were ministers. In fact at that time there were only twelve Protestant ministers in all of Scotland. The Reformation spread rapidly, however, so that by 1567 there were two hundred and fifty-two ministers, as well as four hundred and sixty-seven readers and one hundred and fifty-four exhorters.⁵⁾

Due to the lack of ministers, the offices of "readers" and "superintendents" had been set up by the Assembly. They were not to be prelates. They were to be only temporary officers responsible to the Church. In 1572, however, the Convention of Leith proposed the office of the Bishop. Knox, and then Andrew Melville who in 1574 took the place that Knox's death in 1572 left vacant in the Church, opposed the bishops and proposed the divine right of the presbytery.⁶⁾

From 1578 until 1638 there ensued a struggle between Court and the Church over the right of the Church to govern her own affairs independent of the civil powers.

James VI desired to be the head of the Church. He wanted to go back to the pre-episcopal organization (without the Roman Faith), and sought to control the Church through the bishops.

However, in 1580 the Protestant leaders pledged to support Reformed doctrine and discipline in the National Covenant. The Black Acts of 1584 took away the independence of the Church from the State, but this independence was re-established again in 1592. The National Covenant was renewed in 1596 and there was a good General Assembly at Edinburgh and a "revival of religion."

From 1603 to 1618, James VI was able to establish bishops again and changed the Scottish form of worship to that of the English Anglican Church.

3) Ibid, p. 4.

4) Ibid, p. 9.

5) Ibid, p. 9.

6) Ibid, p. 14.

James VI is followed by his son, Charles I, who continued the anti-Presbyterian policy of his father.

Vos⁷⁾ called the period from 1637 to 1651 the period of Second Reformation. In 1638 the National Covenant was renewed in Edinburgh. The people were stirred up against "Arminianism, Popery, and Despotism," and then Charles was forced to allow a General Assembly to meet.

In 1643 the English Puritans and the Scottish Presbyterians pledged their common Reformed Faith by the Solemn League and Covenant which had been prepared by Alexander Henderson. It provided for the preservation of the Reformed Faith and the extirpation of Popery and Prelacy.⁸⁾

From 1643 to 1649 at the call of Long Parliament in England, representatives from Scotland, England, and Ireland labored at the Westminster Assembly to formulate a statement of doctrine and Church government.

Following the "period of Second Reformation" the Church of Scotland enjoyed another period of spiritual prosperity from 1651 to 1660.

Then in 1660, Charles II is restored to the throne after the death of Cromwell. Then came a period of twenty-eight years of severe persecution for the Scottish Church until the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In 1662 four hundred ministers were cast from their churches. Many of these ministers began preaching out-of-doors in "field-meetings." The persecutions became most severe in the "Killing Times" of 1684 to 1685. Smellie⁹⁾ states that 18,000 suffered for their Faith during the period 1660-1688.

Different writers recognize different Scotch preachers as being famous during the Scottish Reformation Period. Dargan's list¹⁰⁾ includes: Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart, John Knox, Andrew Melville, James Lawson, Robert Rollock, Robert Bruce, Alexander Henderson, David Dickson, Samuel Rutherford. Beveridge¹¹⁾ gives some that Dargan does, and adds Richard Cameron.

In this paper I will try to analyse some sermons of some who are recognized as famous, as well as of some less widely known.

7) Ibid, p. 31.

8) Ibid, p. 41.

9) Alexander Smellie, *Men of the Covenant*, (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1895), Introduction p. xxii.

10) Edwin Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, Vol. I, II (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), pp. 510-512 of Vol I, and pp. 22-23, and 175-176 of Vol. II.

11) W. Beveridge, *Makers of the Scottish Church*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), p. 9.

II. An Analysis of a Few Sermons Given During the Time of the Scottish Reformation.

*The First Temptation of Christ by John Knox.*¹²⁾

This sermon was preserved as one of the world's greatest sermons written by one of history's outstanding preachers. The author, John Knox, was the "leader of the Scottish Reformation." This man was popular, and "his eloquence lashed the multitude to enthusiasm and acts of turbulent violence. As a preacher his style was direct and fearless, often fiery, and he had a habit of pounding the pulpit to emphasize particular truths."¹³⁾

The sermon is written in the popular style of the day; the points of the message are stated and elaborated upon, point by point. Careful and lengthy definitions of the terms are given, and long sentences are used.

The sermon is an exposition of Matthew 4:1, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." This particular sermon was relevant to that day and is always relevant because the "Tempter" is always near.

The author deals with the purpose of the law which is to be a bridle and schoolmaster. He deals somewhat with the doctrine of Satan and his work and power over man; also his limitations under God who is omnipotent and who cares for His own. He also deals briefly with the doctrine of the Atonement, God's mercy, and His goodness. He mentions the election of God, and God's providence. He speaks of the immutability and trustworthiness of God's promises. He criticizes the Papists' view of fasting, saying that the way we follow Christ is to obey His commandments, rather than to imitate all that He did.

Knox applies the message to individuals in need of help against Satan's attack, and shows God's assurance and comfort to Christians. His message is very scriptural, and he exhorts his hearers to believe and accept the plain teaching of Scripture.

*The Source and Bounds of Kingly Power by John Knox.*¹⁴⁾

This sermon is handed down to us as one of the most eloquent sermons of history written by

12) Compiled by Grenville Kleiser, *The World's Great Sermons*, Vol. I, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1908, pp.172-201.

13) *Ibid*, p.172.

14) Herry C. Fish, *History and Repository of Pulpit Eloquence*, Vol. II, (New York:M. V. Dodd,1857), pp.207-228.

one of the most famous preachers in history. It was preached in the church in Edinburg by the author, John Knox, in August, 1565. "He was arrested for preaching it, called before the council, and finally forbidden to preach in Edinburg so long as the king and queen were in town. For this reason he wrote out the sermon after having preached it, to the end, as he says, that the enemies of God's truth might either note unto him wherein he had offended, or at least cease to condemn him, before convincing him by God's Word."¹⁵⁾

Although many treatises, admonitions, exhortations, and letters were put forth, this is the only "sermon" he ever published himself. Two of his other sermons were published after his death.

This sermon is an example of forceful preaching. "As a preacher Knox possessed astonishing abilities. With the irresistible power of truth and of heaven, he took possession of the understanding, and captivated the affections. Undismayed by opposition, and unbribed by proffered favors, he overlooked all distinctions between high and low, and alike to the sovereign on the throne, and the poorest menial, preached repentance, and the need of a new heart. The multitude, not only, but the educated few were animated and influenced, if not convinced and convicted, by his rough but overwhelming eloquence."¹⁶⁾

The text of the sermon is Isaiah 26:13-21 which reads: "O Lord our God, other Lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of the name. They are dead, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish, Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them."

The sermon stresses obedience to God's Word, and mentions that all rulers must be subject to God and His Word. Knox applies this to his own country when he says, "Wouldst thou, O Scotland! have a king to reign over thee in justice, equity, and mercy? Subject thou thyself to the Lord thy God, obey His commandments, and magnify thou the Word that calleth unto thee, 'This is the way, walk in it;,' and if thou wilt not, flatter not thyself; the same justice remains this day in God to punish thee, Scotland, and thee Edinburg especially. [which before punished the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem."¹⁷⁾

Knox mentions that the ten tribes of Isreal "all degenerated from the true worshipping of

15) *Ibid*, p.206-207.

16) *Ibid*, p.206.

17) *Ibid*, p.211.

God," and were corrupted with idolatry, and he compares it with the Papacy of that day.¹⁸⁾

As Knox expounds his text, he brings out many Scriptural truths. He warns of God's punishment and destruction if one does not obey God gives the example of the Isrealites; he also assures of God's promises to bless one who does obey and keep God's Word. He deals with the hope of the Resurrection and the time when the enemies of God will receive "everlasting mourning," and the children of God will receive "happiness that shall have no end."¹⁹⁾

The relevancy of his message is clearly seen when he compares the attacks on God's Church in Scotland at that time to the bondage of Isreal in Babylon; he states that God's people should be armed with God's promises of protection, and goes on to say that God will multiply His church just when in man's eyes it seems to be exterminated.

He speaks of the reprobate and God's chosen. He speaks of the condemnation that comes to a hearer of the Word who does not obey. He also speaks of God's mercy, and exhorts them to have faith. The sermon brings comfort to a people in time of difficulty and persecution as it speaks of the short reign, and miserable end of evil civil government persecutors, and gives Julian the Apostate as an example of one who received such an end.

As he applies the message to the problem of the day, he says that the Church of God will be hated, mocked, despised, and a prey of the fury of the wicked, and that the believers must not only be ready to suffer, but they must completely commit themselves unto God, lay down their necks patiently, allow blood to be shed, and let God be the avenger.

The Solemn League and Covenant by Philip Nye.²⁰⁾

The author of this was an Independent and was a distinguished member of the Westminster Assembly. Mr. Nye delivered this exhortation to the House of Common and to the "Reverend Divines" of the Westminster Assembly before they took the Solemn League and Covenant. It was pulished by the order of the House of Commons.

In this exhortation, the author doesn't deal with any text in particular, but rather with the subject of the meetings, which, as the title suggests, is the Solemn League and Covenant.

It is obviously relevant to the day. The author deals with the Covenant (which involved England, Ireland, and Scotland) as a preservative of the Reformed Religion and as a national

18) Ibid, p. 212.

19) Ibid, p. 213.

20) James Kerr, *The Covenants and the Covenanters*, (Edinburgh: R. W. Hunter, George W Bridge, 1895), pp. 138-150.

reformer in doctrine, discipline, and worship.

The Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace are mentioned, and there is reference to the Kingship of Christ. The Prelacy is spoken of as being the common enemy.

The author exhorts the hearers to humility and practical Christian living. He encourages them to be courageous, constant, immoveable, and abounding in the work of God.

The National Covenant by Alexander Henderson.²¹⁾

This sermon was delivered at St. Andrews in March of 1638. St. Andrews was one of the three burghs in Scotland that did not have Commissioners at the renewing of the National Covenant in Edinburgh. Henderson was appointed to go to St. Andrews to secure its approval, and he was completely successful.

Henderson was born in Fifeshire, and was schooled in St. Andrews. Next to Knox and Melville, he was the most important and the most influential in the founding of the Kirk of Scotland. He was originally Episcopalian, but was converted under a sermon by Robert Bruce, becoming convinced that the Presbyterian faith was right. He was a leader in the framing of the famous Covenant of 1638 to resist "Prelacy" in Scotland. It was largely due to his efforts that the Solemn League and Covenant with England was secured. Of those working on the final form of the Westminster Confession and the two Catechisms, he did the most of the work.

"He served as pastor at Leuchars, near St. Andrews, and, after 1638, at Edinburgh, where he also was rector of the University. As a preacher he was both popular and powerful, balanced in thought, strong in argument, effective in manner. The published sermons of Henderson were all preached in that critical time in 1638 between the signing of the Covenant at Edinburgh and the meeting of the Assembly at Glasgow. They show a masculine intellect, a firm faith, a quiet but determined courage. The tone is noble and modest, the grasp of the subject is clear and firm; there is power of appeal and a secure sense of being right without pride or bitterness."²²⁾

The sermon is expository and reads almost like a commentary. The text of the sermon is Psalm 110:3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; Thou hast the dew of thy youth." This is dealt with thoroughly and in great detail. The author notes the setting and the immediate context. He follows the steps of his outline, stating each as he goes along in similar style to some Puritan writers.

In the introduction, the author brings out the three-fold office of Christ as Prophet, Priest,

21) Ibid, pp. 54-76.

22) Dargan, Op. Cit., p. 175.

and king as found in the first part of Psalm 110. He deals primarily with the Kingly (Princely) office of Christ.

When expounding the phrase, "Thy people," he gathers three points from the verse concerning the properties of the people which are: willingness of the people, holiness of the people, and multiplication of the people. I am not sure that his third point is valid; he seems to get it from, "from the womb of the morning; Thou hast the dew of Thy youth." On page sixty-nine he attempts to clarify it by referring to Psalm 133.

The sermon includes the great Biblical themes of the Resurrection, and the Second Coming of Christ (Parousia).

The sermon is very relevant in that it deals with the burning issues of that day—the defense of the National Covenant, and the repudiation of the Prelacy. He also speaks against Episcopacy. He makes specific application also to the Acts of Parliament, and to the Acts of the Assembly.

*The National Covenant by Andrew Cant.*²³⁾

This sermon was given in Glasgow in 1638, immediately after the renovation of the National Covenant. It is much longer than his exhortation.

This message, in contrast to the exhortation is expository and stays fairly close to the text which is Matthew 22:2-6, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servant, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them."

The sermon is relevant and generally practical. He exhorts the congregation to holiness with, "be Holy, be sober, be righteous," and "keep your garments clean." He lashes at worldliness and corruption. He also lashes at the Pope in Rome.

He deals with the doctrine of God's free grace to Gentiles as well as to Jews and with the universal offer of the Gospel.

He uses the typical style of the day stating the points of his sermon as he goes along, and then elaborating on them in much detail. He also gives the objections to his points, and answers them accordingly.

23) Kerr, Op. Cit., pp. 83-107.

*Discourse and Exhortation by Andrew Cant.*²⁴⁾

This message was delivered at the renewing of the National Covenant at Inverness on April 25, 1638. The author, Andrew Cant, was an ordained minister of Pitsligo, Scotland, and was inducted into St. Nicholas' Church in Aberdeen in 1664. He was a member of the Assembly at Glasgow (1638).

This message is really more of an exhortation than a sermon, and as such is not expository; in fact the author does not use any text or refer to any specific Scripture reference at any time. He does, however, disjointedly refer to persons and events in the Scriptures, and compares them to peoples and church situations of his day.

The message was relevant to the times as it was an exhortation to return and remain true to the Faith. It was also an exhortation for revival of pure doctrine and holy living.

The author began the exhortation by referring to the time when the Gospel was originally delivered to Scotland and was blessed by God in an unusual way so that it became about the most "spiritual" nation. Then he told of how Scotland lost the faith, almost departing completely from it. Finally he tells of how in the past few weeks there has been a great and massive nationwide revival and return to the Faith, and follows this by exhorting the congregation to the same.

*The National Covenant by Andrew Cant.*²⁵⁾

This sermon was preached at a "General Meeting" in Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh on June 13, 1638, following the Renovation of the Covenant.

The text of the sermon, which he expounds very well, is Zech. 4:7, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."

The sermon displays its relevance by making very practical application to the Scottish Reformation from the beginning to the end, step by step. In general the sermon is an exhortation to remove completely any hindrance or threat of the reformation, and it names Catholicism as the chief of these. He exhorts each member of the congregation to individually help in every way possible, if it be only by tears and prayers.

This sermon includes the themes of God's sovereignty, His omnipotence, His mercy, and His

24) Ibid, pp. 77-82.

25) Ibid, pp. 109-128.

grace.

The author uses typology, by equating the Temple in Jerusalem as Christ's Kirk. He also equates "mountains" as "kings" due to their strength, influence for peace, and sublimity. He refers to the Prelacy as the "artificial" and "false mountain" in the way of the reformation. He calls the Prelacy anti-Christian, and condemns Episcopacy. He refers to the Nobles as the "natural" or "true mountain." He says that the two chief marks of an anti-Christian Church are: False doctrine and tyrannical government; and Idolatry, superstition, and error. He later mentions pride as an additional mark.

He is very systematic and follows a detailed outline very closely, giving details almost to the point of being tedious.

The Heart's Engagement by Thomas Coleman.²⁶⁾

This long sermon was delivered at Westminster, at the public entering into the Solemn League and Covenant on September 29, 1643. It was given by Mr. Thomas Coleman, a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. This sermon was preached and published according to the federal orders of the House of Commons. This sermon, as one can guess from the title, was appropriate for the service during which it was given and was certainly relevant to the day.

The text of the sermon is Jeremiah 30:21 which reads: "and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this, that engaged his heart to approach unto Me, saith the Lord?" Much Scripture is used in expounding the text. The author deals with Calvinism and its emphasis upon the sovereignty of God in salvation. He mentions the impossibility of man drawing nigh to God unless God draws him, and show that the heart is deceitful and wicked. He mentions God's providence, mercy, and sovereignty, and the depravity of man.

The author deals with some objections and with some of the political difficulties of the day. He refers to the Covenant that Jehoida established in which liberties of the people were preserved in exchange for their preservation of his authority over them. He deals with other Old Testament Covenants also, relating and applying them to the present Solemn League and Covenant.

He speaks and makes application to all classes of people, exhorting them to practical Christian living and good works, and to complete submission of themselves to God.

26) Ibid, pp.158-189.

The Mystery of The Lord's Supper by Robert Bruce.²⁷⁾

The author of this group of sermons was born into one of Scotland's most noted and famous families. He was educated for law at St. Andrews, then took up theology, and became a pastor at Edinburgh. It has been said of him that no man in his day, or even since the apostles, spoke with such evidence and power of the Spirit. Bruce had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and a searching application to his hearers.²⁸⁾

The Mystery of The Lord's Supper is a book that contains a series of five sermons that Bruce preached on the Lord's Supper in the Kirk of Edinburgh in 1589. This series of sermons has been used as an authoritative study on the sacrament by individuals, universities, etc.

The individual sermon titles are:

1. "The Sacraments in General." (pp. 39-68)
2. "The Lord's Supper in Particular" (pp. 69-96)
3. "The Lord's Supper in Particular" (pp. 97-138)
4. "The Preparation for the Lord's Supper." (139-169)
5. "The Preparation for the Lord's Supper." (170-198)

The text used for the first three sermons is I Cor. 11:23, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the night in which He was betrayed, took bread..." The text for the last two sermons is I Cor. 11:28, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup..."

The second sermon points out the fallacies of the mass making it relevant to the Scottish Reformation Period in which he lived, when the Church was in the midst of its struggle against Rome.

The sermons are very thorough, dealing with each aspect of the subject in great detail. The sermons are very repetitious even within one sermon individually, almost to the point of being tedious. Each sermon almost seems complete within itself, and there is quite a bit of overlapping of material.

A Brotherly Examination of Some Passages of Mr. Coleman's Late Sermon upon Job 11:20. by George Gillespie.²⁹⁾

The author, Mr. George Gillespie, was a "thundering preacher" of Edinburgh and a member

27) Thomas Torrance (translator and editor), *The Mystery of the Lord's Supper*, (London: James Clarke & Co., 1958).

28) Dargan, Op. Cit., p. 24.

29) W. M. Hetherington, *The Works of Mr. George Gillespie*, (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1946), pp. 1-13 of that section of the book.

of the Westminster Assembly (1664). He wrote a great deal, including a lengthy article on the place of the Elder in Presbyterian Church Government. "Aaron's Rod Blossoming," is considered his greatest work in which he argued especially against the Erastians.³⁰⁾ He died at the age of 36 after being chosen moderator of G. A.

This is a good example of a controversial message. Gillespie criticizes several points of the sermon by Mr. Coleman. He argues against Independency and against the Erastians and the Papacy. It was certainly relevant as it was written during the time the Westminster Assembly was trying to determine a form of government and during the time when the Church was struggling against the Papacy.

Sermon (no title given) by Mr. George Gillespie.³¹⁾

This sermon was delivered on the day appointed for solemn and public humiliation before the House of Lords in the Abbey Church at Westminster in August, 1645.

Gillespie seems to deal pretty well with the text which is Mal. 3:2, "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap."

Repentance is emphasized, and there is an exhortation to holiness. The author speaks of being "Reformed" spiritually.

The sermon is difficult reading because each aspect of the subject is dealt with in such great detail. Gillespie uses Hebrew and Greek in this exposition.

III. Some Conclusions About Preaching During the Scottish Reformation.

The Protestant Reformation had a great influence on preaching. Dargan³²⁾ says that the Reformation resulted in a revival of preaching, a revival of Biblical preaching, a revival of controversial preaching, and a revival of preaching upon the doctrines of Grace. The Reformers in general placed a new and mighty emphasis upon preaching as a vital part of worship and life. There was a new emphasis on expository preaching. Because of the new emphasis on preaching in the worship service, there seemed to be a new emphasis on better intellectual and spiritual preparation on the part of the preachers.

Regarding the preachers of the Scottish Reformation, in doctrine they were Calvinistic.

30) Ibid, p. ix of the "Memoir of the Rev. George Gillespie."

31) Ibid, pp. 1-19 of that section of the book.

32) Dargan, Op. Cit., p. 367.

Most of the famous preachers during this time were Presbyterians. Most of them lived godly lives, and according to Smellie³³⁾ "were the best commendation of their message." Smellie ascribes the heroism in times of persecution and the beauty of character of the Covenanters to their Calvinistic training.³⁴⁾ Generally speaking the Covenanters were very patriotic and stressed the unity and purity of the church.³⁵⁾ These men were usually well educated. They often had a good working knowledge of the classics.

The Covenanters were exceptional Bible expositors. They, "delighted in leisurely going through entire books of the Bible, chapter by chapter, paragraph by paragraph, verse by verse. They missed nothing."³⁶⁾ Their sermons were usually long, well organized, carefully and well written, and soundly based on Scripture. They emphasized the word of God and Holy living according to the Word of God. They rejected all types of idolatry and wickedness. They spoke strongly against Rome, Prelacy, and any threat to their Presbyterian concepts of doctrine, church government, and practice.

They used lofty vocabulary in their sermons. Usually they were lengthy and written in great detail. Because of this you would think that the hearer or reader would lose interest. They usually used the "scholastic method" of minute and exhaustive division and analysis of their messages. Dargan says that this method was "offensive to modern taste".³⁷⁾

What made the preaching of the Covenanters great in spite of its "faults and blemishes?" Dargan, I think, gives us the answer.³⁸⁾ They were loyal to the Word of God recognizing the authority of God as revealed in His Word. They earnestly believed the message which they preached and in the movement which they promoted. Concerning the thought content of the sermons, Dargan says, "Notwithstanding the learned lumber, the tedious detail, the catchy and strained fancifulness that many of these sermons show, there is also, in many of them, a depth, fullness, comprehensiveness, but scarcely, if ever, surpassed, in the history of preaching." Concerning the language of the sermons, Dargan sums it up by saying, "It was the tongue of Shakespeare and of Milton, in the days when the work of those masters of speech was new, that these old English divines employed. Its wealth of words, its felicity of phrase, its flexibility of use, its music, its varied adaptation to thought, mood, and need all these were at the preacher's service, and for the most part he used his instrument well."

33) Smellie, Op. Cit., p. 250.

34) Ibid, p. 242.

35) Ibid, pp. 237-239.

36) Ibid, p. 240.

37) Dargan, Op. Cit., pp. 146-147.

38) Ibid, p. 148.

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THE SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE DIACONATE

Prof. Theodore Hard

OUTLINE

Introduction:

- Word sources, meanings and usages concerning service and the diaconate.
- The double meaning of "diakonos" and "diakonia"

I. The scope of the role and service of the deacon

1. The name deacon itself
2. The potential in so permanent, well-defined and spiritual an office
3. The qualifications and characteristics of the first deacons
4. The conversion of many priests in Acts 6 and implications
5. The difficulty of saying that deacons only wait on tables
6. Deacons are more than ministers of mercy
7. Broadening the permissible role of deacons on the basis of tasks and offices in the early church now defunct

II. The importance of the office and role of deacon

1. Historically in the N. T. church
2. Theologically the office focuses the church's role of communal care
3. Charismatically the diaconate looms large
4. Spiritually this office is intense

Suggested reading:

Dejong, Peter Y. *The Ministry of Mercy*. Baker Press, 1952

Huls, Albert. *The Christian Religion as Service*. Th. M, thesis at westminster Seminary, 1959.