

**THE ROYAL LAW OF LIBERTY:
A REASSESSMENT OF THE EARLY CAREER OF JOHN GLASS***

John Glass¹ (1695-1773) was the founder of an independent sect known in Scotland as the Glassites, and in England and America as the Sandemanians, after his son-in-law Robert Sandeman. In addition to continuing (in Edinburgh until just a few years ago) in its own right as a group of independent congregations, this denomination contributed in the 1760s to the origins of the Old Scots Independents under James Smith and Robert Ferrier, particularly with respect to ideas about the nature of Christ's kingdom; David Dale of Glasgow, Robert Owen's father-in-law, developed his independency in a Glassite direction through their mediation. Former Glassites established an Independent Society in Edinburgh in the 1760s, and Glassite notions also influenced the Scotch Baptists in the same period. With good reason Glass has been called "the Father of Scottish Congregationalism".²

In his early years as a pastor Glass challenged the national church to take a serious look at its past and its present. As a result of the Glorious Revolution, the Church of Scotland had again turned presbyterian, but on condition of laying aside its famous covenants, namely the National Covenant of 1638 and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643.³ This renunciation was a source of dismay to many

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1. While the modern spelling is commonly given as Glas, many of the earliest kirk records and publications report the name as Glass, and that is the form adopted here.
 2. Gavin Struthers, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of the Relief Church* (Glasgow, 1843), 181-3; James Ross, *A History of Congregational Independency in Scotland* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1900), 33-4; Derek B. Murray, "The Influence of John Glas", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 22, no. 1 (1988), 47-8; Harry Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow: Congregational Union of Scotland, 1960), 17, n.1.
 3. The revolution settlement affirmed the Westminster Confession, but did not rescind the 1662 act which condemned the National Covenant (1638) and the Solemn League and Covenant (1643). It did, however, abolish the 1669 Act of Supremacy, which had made the reigning monarch supreme over ecclesiastical affairs. William Law Mathieson, *Politics and Religion: A Study in Scottish History from the Reformation to the Revolution*, 2 vols. (Glasgow: James Maclehorse and Sons, 1902), ii, 355, 358; *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 872.

in the church. Some, including the radical Cameronians, insisted that there could be no true church in Scotland without an affirmation of those documents; others in the establishment would not go so far as schism, but they too looked back and longed to see a renewal of the church on a covenanted basis. With such ideas in the air John Glass reconsidered the covenants and the notion of national covenanting; his inquiry resulted in conclusions which led directly to his deposition from the ministry. This paper looks at his early career in an attempt to understand the nature and sources of his theological development; there emerges from his story an interesting view of ecclesiastical life in Scotland during the 1720s, including prominent figures in the national church, along with Cameronians, Jacobites and episcopalians.

Glass was the fifth generation of a clerical lineage, the son of Alexander, minister of the parish of Auchtermuchty in Cupar presbytery. When he was a young boy, the family moved to Kinclaven, Perthshire, where he took his earliest education, thereafter attending the Perth Grammar School and St. Leonard's College at St. Andrews. He graduated M.A. in 1713 and proceeded with his father's recommendation to theological study in Edinburgh.⁴ Later Glass reflected that he had never given serious consideration to anything other than the ministry, but he was inhibited from seeking a place due to a lack of confidence in his own fitness for the work. He commented on his being encouraged to enter into the trials despite his failure to meet either the Church of Scotland's⁵ or his own standards of preparation and experience. Thus it was not by his own doing but at the urging of the presbytery of Dunkeld that this "very hopeful youth" began his passage through the procedural thicket in August 1717.⁶ All along the way he impressed those with whom he had to do,⁷ and the presbytery sought permission from the synod of Perth and Stirling to subject him to the usual licencing trials; this was granted in October 1717.⁸ He then returned to his studies in Edinburgh.⁹ By the end of February 1718 he was back in the presbytery and was engaged to provide public demonstrations of his fitness for ministry.¹⁰ These were concluded without any problems, and on 20 May, "having signed the confession of faith and formula and having promised

4. Edinburgh University Library, Da. 41, Lists of Theologues in the University of Edinburgh, p. 11. See also J.T. Hornsby, "The Case of Mr John Glas", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 6 (1938), 115, and *idem*, "John Glas and his Movement" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1936), 1-4.
5. This may be a reference to his age, not yet twenty-five. See *A Compendium of the Laws of the Church of Scotland*, 2nd ed.; 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1837), ii, 227.
6. Scottish Record Office [SRO], CH2/106/3, Dunkeld Presbytery Records, p. 263.
7. SRO, CH2/106/3, p. 266.
8. SRO, CH2/449/6, Perth and Stirling Synod Records, p. 126.
9. Edinburgh University Library, Da. 41, p. 53.
10. SRO, CH2/106/4, p. 12.

subjection to this and any other presbytery where providence should cast his lot he was licenced to preach the gospel as a probationer".¹¹

These proceedings would generate some controversial statements. In 1726 Robert Wodrow made his first mention of what was quickly turning into a troubling situation in the presbytery of Dundee: Glass's alleged inconsistency with presbyterian tenets. He remembered "that Mr Glass's father was not very fond of his son's tryalls, and said to some he was not pleased with him",¹² an allegation repeated in a 1729 publication by one of Glass's opponents, James Gray, minister of Kettins (Meigle presbytery). After praising the accomplishments of Alexander, he stated that the father was moved to agree to his son's trials "by the Importunity of a certain Minister",¹³ suggesting a real lack of paternal enthusiasm which may have had something to do with Alexander's absence from the first three of the four public proofs of John's ability at presbytery meetings.¹⁴ It is not clear what to make of this shallow reporting by two hostile writers, the second of whom Glass would accuse of perfidy, and it is important not to read into the intimation a theological departure which would only be revealed later.

Glass stated explicitly that when he entered the presbyterian ministry he had considered and rejected the claims of episcopalianism, while to that time he had not looked into congregationalism's arguments, assuming the usual prejudices that "it is mere Confusion, and was the Mother of all the Sectaries". Thus his first subscription of the Formula of 1711 does not pose a problem.¹⁵ So far was he from dissent that he did not hesitate at its declaration of acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and conviction of the scriptural basis and authenticity of the church's doctrine, worship, and polity, and the promise never to "endeavour, directly nor indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same; and I promise, that

11. SRO, CH2/106/4, p. 20. James Thomson, *The History of Dundee*, new ed. by James MacLaren (Dundee, 1874), 374-6 supplies incorrect dates, i.e. 1721 for trials and 1722 for entry into the parish of Tealing. The first of these may be attributed to a letter of 1799 in *Letters in Correspondence by Robert Sandeman, John Glas, and their Contemporaries* (Dundee, 1851), 4.
12. Robert Wodrow, *Analecta*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842-3), iii, 323. According to an admiring memoir of Glass's life, his father referred to him as Ishmael (*Genesis* 16:12, "his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, and he shall live at odds with all his kin."), and called him an independent; his father-in-law also looked askance at him, but no dates are given for either alleged incident. *An Account of the Life and Character of Mr John Glas* (Edinburgh, 1813), ix-x.
13. [James Gray], *The naked truth* (n.p., 1729), 6.
14. He was there to see his son subscribe.
15. John Glass, *A continuation of Mr. Glass's narrative, containing a true state of the process against him, as it is in the extracts to be laid before the assembly in May 1729* (Edinburgh, 1729), vii. See also Glass, *A narrative of the rise and progress of the controversy about the national covenants, and of the ways that have been taken about it on both sides* (Edinburgh, 1728), 2.

I shall follow no divisive course from the present establishment in this Church".¹⁶ This document would assume a leading role in the unfolding drama.

The next year he was ordained to the charge of Tealing [Tealine, Tealling, Telen] in the presbytery of Dundee. His settlement followed a dispute over the attempt to move William Stewart to that parish from Blair Gowrie: Stewart's parish wanted to keep him, and there was also a question about the Duke of Douglas's right of patronage.¹⁷ It is not apparent that any of this had direct impact on Glass as the duke did not figure in his placement, though Glass, as so many of his contemporaries, would express real concern over forced settlements. The presbytery records indicate that the patron eventually left the call in the hands of the parish, and after the preaching of sermons, Glass emerged early in 1719 as the unanimous choice of the parish. The presbytery then directed him to preach at the next presbytery day, which he did on 25 March to full satisfaction. On 15 April he underwent extemporaneous trials, offered analyses of Hebrew and Greek texts, and won over the entire body:

he was approven in the haill and he having satisfied the presbitery concerning the soundness of his faith and principalls relateing to the government worship & discipline of this church & engaged to subscribe the confession of faith & formula conform to the Acts of Assembly the presbitery judge him well qualified to be minister at Tealine and appoint him to be ordained minister on the sixth of May next.¹⁸

Thereafter, at the church on 6 May, according to the rules of the national church, which included a church officer standing at the door and calling for those persons to come forward "who had anything to object against the life and doctrine of the said Mr John Glass", and following a sermon by the Revd. James Marr of Muirhouse, who would be consistently sympathetic to the cause,¹⁹ the presbytery proceeded to ordain him in the usual manner. With the offering of the right hand of fellowship, Glass had been received into the ministry of the Church of Scotland. The minutes betray not the slightest suspicion concerning his orthodoxy, and thus one is driven to the conclusion that, upon arrival, Glass was an unexceptionable presbyterian who showed every sign of being a useful and reliable servant of the church, and indeed we see him taking his regular turn in the functions of the presbytery.

16. *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1842* (Edinburgh, 1843), 456.

17. SRO, CH2/12/4. Synod of Angus and Mearns Records, pp. 228-33; CH1/3/17, Register of the Acts and Proceedings of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, pp. 171, 178-9.

18. SRO, CH2/103/9, p. 110. The process is defined in *Compendium of the Laws*, i, 211-2.

19. Glass, *Narrative*, 64; CH2/12/4. p. 321; CH2/12/6. pp. 129, 146.

Glass soon exhibited a deep concern for what he regarded as the impoverished spiritual state of his parishioners, and it was this condition, rather than bashing episcopalians or uplifting the covenants, which inspired his preaching. Over time some people, both within and without the parish of Tealing, began to respond favourably to his pastoral efforts, but others, including some Cameronians,²⁰ were adamant in their opposition to him. In part, this was a generalised opposition to the prevailing condition of the established church, notably its submission to the Oath of Abjuration of 1711. The oath was an anti-Jacobite measure which supported the revolutionary settlement and entailed a monarch who belonged to the Church of England;²¹ clearly there was no room here for the reinstatement of the covenants. Cameronians believed that what they were seeing were signs of declension – an old enough theme in the Reformed church – and Glass was perturbed by their “magnifying the former covenanting Days, and prophesying of great Days to come, by the reviving of these Covenants; but, as for this Day, expecting no Benefit by the Gospel, nor lying open to its influence”.²² An anonymous critic of Glass in a 1727 tract included a letter, c. 1700, by John Dickson of Rutherglen, wherein he declared: “Ah! for a Touch of that Spirit that was poured down in Floods when the Covenants were solemnly entered into; ... The church was then like the Eden of God”.²³ A stunningly bad poem of forty-three stanzas found its way into print in 1724, expressing the same regret:

We're Married now to England, but Divorced from our God,
As long's the Broken Covenant lays on us like a Load,
A flourishing Church Scotland shall never enjoy,
Until the Sons of Levi their Knavery shall destroy.²⁴

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20. The Cameronians were presbyterians who, following the example of Richard Cameron (died in 1680 fighting at Ayrsmoss), insisted on the continuing obligation of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, and thus could not embrace the British monarchy even in terms of its newly affirmed Protestantism. However, they did not resort to Cameron's violent defence of the covenants. The term covers a spectrum of conviction and association; i.e., John MacMillan was not the only centre of gravity. See Robert Wodrow, *Correspondence*, ed. T. M'Crie, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842-3), i, 84.
21. *Statutes at Large*, 28 vols. (London, 1763-1800), iv, 514. For an example of the divided mind of the church, SRO, CH2/2/619/27, Auchterarder Presbytery Records, p. 6; John M'Kerrow, *History of the Secession Church* (Glasgow, 1841), 5-6; William McMillan, *John Hepburn and the Hebronites* (London: James Clarke & Co., [1934]), 142-51.
22. Glass, *Narrative*, 3.
23. *A letter to a minister in the country* (n.p., 1727), 77. Dickson was minister of Rutherglen from 1655 until 1622 when he was deprived for his nonconformity. He was restored in 1690 and remained until his death in 1700.
24. *A mournfull song, upon the breach of National, and Solemn League, and Covenant: with some of the causes, and direfull effects thereof* (n.p., 1724), stanza 23.

The issue for Glass was essentially a practical and a pastoral one, confronted in the first instance not in the study but in a pastor's interaction with his people. However, the opposition drove him to investigate more fully what it was saying, and to attempt to settle the matter on the basis of scripture. His reading led to a reconsideration of the nature of the kingdom of Christ, hence of the meaning of the covenants. While his congregationalism may have been of more enduring significance, in the first instance of defection it was actually of secondary importance.

J.T. Hornsby, Glass's twentieth-century student, noted that "the Kirk Session records reveal that there was great need for the exercise of church discipline"²⁵ in the parish of Tealing. Indeed there are numerous examples of censure for bad language, violence, drunkenness, "antenuptial fornication", irreligious expression. One angry nonpenitent even referred to "that villan Glass".²⁶ After his deposition, some members of the parish wrote of their deep appreciation for his labours of nine years. He had "found the Parish almost void of any Thing of the Form of Religion, and overspread with Ignorance, but since they have Ground to bless the Lord, that they have found a very desirable Change, by the Lord's Blessing on his Labours".²⁷ His own words in the early pages of the *Narrative* conform to this judgment. However, the estimation of conditions made by Glass and his friends did not go unchallenged by their establishment opponents. Two ministerial foes published their outrage at his aspersions. They complained that he, in assailing the religious conditions of the parish, was abusing the work of his predecessors. Gray noted John Campbell's fine reputation among the "old Professors", as indeed they must have been, as his ministry covered the years 1650-63 - more than sixty years earlier. Glass's immediate predecessor was Hugh Maxwell (1703-1717), of whom Gray asserted an enviable reputation, "a very regular Life, known Abilities, and great Application in his Function".²⁸ The session records would seem to bear out a diligent pastor, but Gray's reproaches miss the point. Maxwell himself had complained from the heart that:

Iniquity abounds among us, the love of many waxeth cold, great deadness, security seizes this generation.... The case of our corner calls for sympathy

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25. Hornsby, "Case of John Glas", 116, n.3.
26. Session records are extant for some years up to 1717; 1718 is badly represented, 1719 not at all; for 1720-21 fairly extensive records are available, nothing for 1722, and then 1723-26, but with nothing further for Glass's period. SRO, CH 2/352/3-4, Tealing Session Records. The riposte is likely from 1723, but the records are a bit ragged. There are no page numbers in --/4.
27. Glass, *Continuation*, 26.
28. Gray, *Naked truth*, 7. See also "A Letter from a member of the Synod of Angus and Mearns to his friend at Edinburgh", (by John Willison?) in *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, no. 498, 6-10 June 1728, pp. 1875-6. [John Willison], *A defence of national churches* (Edinburgh, 1729), i. On questions of authorship, John Glass, *A further continuation of Mr. Glas's narrative* (n.p., [1730?], 1-4, 64-5.

and help from yours [Wodrow's], where the gospel is gaining more ground, and many souls are converted to, and confirmed in Christ. As to my particular concerns, I have cause to lament my ministry has not all that desired success I wish for.²⁹

It would seem probable that this was not a bed of ease for a pastor, though one must also consider that ministers tend to think of their own parishes and congregations as the most depressing.

Is there any means of reconciling these diametrically opposed views of the matter? Clearly, neither side was seeking common ground with the other. Tempers were frayed, reputations were at stake. For men such as Gray, the situation which confronted Glass was not at all abnormal; it was simply the context of a national church which claimed spiritual oversight for the whole of society. They would have deplored, but none the less expected, sexual misconduct, drunken brawling, and the rest. It may be that Glass's youth, inexperience, and idealism meant that he was unprepared for the sometimes sordid grind that parochial discipline could entail. He wanted to build a community of saints and to erect a fence around the committed few with restricted access to the Lord's table, where only the visible saints, defined ultimately in the style of congregational independency, might approach, and to this end he gathered a group in his parish in the summer of 1725. At the same time he viewed the ministry of some of his colleagues unsympathetically; that of John Willison of Dundee especially he condemned for its self-satisfaction and design of imposing an authoritative religious scheme upon the common herd.³⁰

In his telling of the story, Glass raised the issue of Cameronian activity in Angus. He wrote about the case of Francis Archibald, a St. Andrews graduate (MA, 1704) and minister of Guthrie since 1716,³¹ who from 1725 was in trouble

29. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, i, 81, dated 7 November 1709.

30. John Glass, *A letter to Mr. John Willison, on a passage in his synodical sermon, concerning illiterate ministers* (Edinburgh, 1734), esp. 23-31. "Illiterate" here means unlettered in ancient languages, not without the ability to read and write English. He also thought that his adversaries, in seeking to prevent people from reading and interpreting the Bible for themselves, were approximating popery. Glass, *Narrative*, 208. Popery was a common allegation against the establishment, and not only from the Glassites. See, e.g., Glass, *Remarks*, 88. See also James Small, *A short and sober answer to a malicious and calumnious libel* (n.p., [1715]), 8. Small had been outed from his charge by presbyterians on account of his episcopalian sympathies.

31. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, rev. ed.; ed. Hew Scott; 10 vols. (Edinburgh, 1915-1981), v, 437. Francis Archibald is listed as a probationer in Auchterarder presbytery in 1713. SRO, CH8/195, Lists of probationers and divinity students for 1713, p. 1. Actually, he was licenced by Perth presbytery on 26 January 1709, having been a presbytery bursar during his theological study 1704-8; he was only assisting in Auchterarder presbytery. CH2/619/27. pp. 7, 8, 17, etc.; CH2/299/6, Perth Presbytery Records, p. 196; CH2/299/7. p. 204; CH2/299/8, pp. 213, 237; CH2/299/9, p. 39. There is no obvious reason for the lengthy delay in his finding a charge; certainly no problems concerning his trials appear in the records of Perth presbytery.

with his presbytery (Arbroath) and synod (Angus and Mearns) and thereafter joined Glass. When all members of the presbytery were asked to subscribe the Confession of Faith and the Formula in that year his was the only dissentient voice. Archibald noted that in earlier years he had subscribed on a number of occasions, but since November 1723 had found himself unable to do so. Archibald did his best to affirm the benefits of the revolutionary settlement in Scotland, but he felt that 1690 had awakened the church not of the halcyon years of 1638-49, but of the rather less spectacular 1592.³² He told the presbytery: "In former Reformations, our worthy Ancestors used to begin with Renovation of our Nationall Covenants and acknowledgement of the Breaches thereof: But upon the Revolution and ever since nothing like that has been done, nor any vigorous attempts to gett it done, to the great grief and offence of many".³³

Archibald, like the Cameronians, thought the kirk was in the unenviable position of having breached its covenants. His was the older way, complaining about the broad toleration of the time, the renewed (since 1712) power of patronage in pastoral settlements, and the apparent loss of the kirk's liberty in requesting regal permission for a national fast, which he did not observe because of the erastianism implicit in the appeal.³⁴ He also submitted a paper on behalf of Alexander Walker who taught at the Arbroath Grammar School. It is not possible here to describe the lengthy history of this individual before the church courts or his relationship with Archibald, but we may note that his subsequent letter to the presbytery contained even more volatile comments than those of the gentle Archibald, who, however, offered something by way of a defence of a covenanted reformation. Walker declined to appear before the presbytery:

for my Principles lead me so according to the word of God and a covenanted reformation,... which I shall adhere to and thro' grace will not eat one syllab of it, for who can countenance this Ministry, while their unfaithfulness is so palpable in neglecting to warn people under such gross apostacy from the way of God after all he has wrought in these lands in the days of our fathers?³⁵

Walker favoured Archibald above the other ministers, and certainly Archibald's peers thought him in the grip of the Cameronians. The presbytery's questions to

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32. Cf. Robert Naismith, *Historical Sketch of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1877), 74. The 1592 act was renewed without its abolition of lay patronage. See the Act Ratifying the Confession of Faith and settling Presbyterian Church Government in *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, 12 vols. (Edinburgh, 1844-75), ix, 133.
33. SRO, CH2/15/4, Arbroath Presbytery Records, p. 98; CH2/12/6, pp. 140-4.
34. SRO, CH2/15/4, p. 144. See also James Hog and James Bathgate, *Reasons... for their not observing the day of thanksgiving appointed by the king* (n.p., [1724]), esp. 16, "advertisement from the Publisher".
35. SRO, CH2/15/4. p. 145.

him on 27 July 1726 asked whether he had been with the Cameronian ministers MacMillan and MacNeil in Fife a fortnight earlier.³⁶ We have a record of marriages and baptisms performed by John MacMillan, the great Cameronian apostle of the first half of the eighteenth century, and from this we know he travelled north of Glasgow into the region around Stirling, along the Forth to Kincardine and north-east to St. Andrews; there is one reference to Newport, presumably that on the south side of the Tay, opposite Dundee.³⁷ So even though we cannot place him in Fife on the particular date, his presence is by no means a fanciful suggestion. A contemporary asserted that Archibald had travelled to Edinburgh, "50 Miles by Sea and Land", to be married by MacMillan,³⁸ though the latter's register does not include Archibald's name. We also know from the Guthrie session minutes that Archibald was much exercised about a breach of the Lord's day (*not* Sunday) by the reading of public documents, inoffensive in themselves, following the service on the last Sabbath in November 1726:

Because a considerable body of people in these lands bearing witness to the covenanted reformation of these lands have been blessed with did at the renewing of our covenants national and solemn league at Douglass July 24th 1712 with accommodation to the then present time, do testifie against prophaning the Lord's day by reading of proclamations wholly irrelative to religion...³⁹

In 1726 Wodrow noted Archibald's connection, never formalised, with MacMillan and that he "read the Covenants on his fast-day before the Sacrament".⁴⁰ It would appear that 1726 was the high water mark of Archibald's Cameronianism; at some point over the ensuing eighteen months he joined

36. SRO, CH2/15/4, p. 149.

37. Henry Paton, ed., *Register of the Rev. John MacMillan* (Edinburgh: Lorimer and Chalmers, 1908), 31.

38. Patrick Walker, *Some remarkable passages of the life and death of Mr. Alexander Peden*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh, 1728), reprinted in *Biographia Presbyteriana*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1827), i, 131. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, v, 437 gives the date of the marriage as 27 November 1718. If all this is reliable, it adds up to a lengthy relationship between Archibald and the Cameronians, and raises questions as to his entry into the ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1716.

39. SRO, CH2/535/1, Guthrie Session Records, p. 307. The renewal of the covenants at Douglas (more precisely Auchensaugh) in Lanarkshire was a constitutive event in the history of the Cameronians, from 1743 known as the Reformed Presbytery. See H. M. B. Reid, *A Cameronian Apostle being some account of John Macmillan of Balmaghie* (Paisley, 1896), 175ff; and *The National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant... at Douglas 24 July 1712. With accommodation to the present times* (n.p., 1712).

40. Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 358.

Glass.⁴¹ Thereafter he supplied a notable exposition of the tensions he felt as a minister in the established church.⁴²

The re-establishment of presbyterianism in Scotland was at a price. The church decided that the half-a-loaf of a protestant succession which complied in a presbyterian establishment at least north of the Tweed was the best arrangement on offer, and it dedicated itself, in painfully obsequious language,⁴³ to harmonising itself with that reality. The outcome was rather more erastian than many would have liked,⁴⁴ and the effect was complex. On the one hand the Cameronians, while no longer pushed into armed defiance against the crown, could not make their peace with the new establishment due to the uncovenanted state of the monarchy and the company they would have to keep in that church; even the union might be criticised as "sinful".⁴⁵ This, however, does not mean that all those in the established church were entirely happy with the new arrangement. Ebenezer Erskine⁴⁶ and his colleagues of the Secession would eventually find tensions within the establishment too great and would leave, refusing, however, except for Thomas Nairn, to migrate as far as to join the Cameronians whose outlook on the civil magistracy and the use of coercion in religion were both too extreme for the Secession.⁴⁷ Still others, perhaps for a variety of motivations, stayed on. Some who found a home may have forgotten the covenants, but by no means all belong to this category. Indeed, the minutes of the judicatories record efforts to raise subscriptions for Wodrow's *History of the Sufferings of the Church*

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41. Not later than 21 July 1728 when he joined Glass as an elder. *Account*, xliv. It was Glass's later, i.e. 28 July 1727, letter to Archibald that the latter, as one who had been affected by it, published as *A letter from a lover of Zion, and her believing children, to his intangled friend, discovering the mystery of national church covenanting under the New Testament* (Edinburgh, 1728).
42. SRO, CH2/12/6, pp. 140-4.
43. SRO, CH1/3/17, p. 276: "Next to our Glorious Reformation, we esteem the Late happy Revolution, under the Conduct of King William, of ever glorious Memory, Our most Remarkable Deliverance from Popery and Slavery, And your Majesty's happy Accession to the Throne, Our chief Security, Under God, of having those dearest Blessings of Religion and Liberty preserved to this & succeeding Generations..." The declaration goes on to make loyalty to the regime a term of ministerial standing.
44. [John MacMain], *The summons dismiss'd* (n.p., 1722?), 19, 26.
45. *A letter to a minister in the country*, 47.
46. Glass, *Narrative*, 71; [Henry Maxwell], *Memorial concerning the affair of Mr. John Glass* (Edinburgh, 1730), 62-4; Glass, *Remarks*, 8-14. There were points of contact between Glass and Ebenezer Erskine, but nothing further of a friendly nature after an initial reconnoitring. See the latter's *A sermon preach'd at the opening of the synod of Perth and Stirling 10 October 1732* (Edinburgh, 1732); [John Glass], *A supplement to Mr. Ebenezer Erskine's synodical sermon* (Edinburgh, 1732); John Glass et al, *A petition to the Associate Presbytery* (Edinburgh, 1737).
47. M'Kerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, 184ff.

of Scotland, first published in 1721-2,⁴⁸ a lengthy work about the covenanters of 1660-88 under the cross, written by one who had determined to live within the establishment.

It was this continuing interest in the covenants which undid Archibald and Glass. Generally their colleagues in Angus clung to the covenants and defended them in print, but did not draw the conclusions which might have pacified Archibald and other incipient Cameronians.⁴⁹ Archibald's rigour was an unwelcome disturbance of an imperfect but tolerable equilibrium in the establishment. Glass might well have become such a man as Archibald and joined *him*, but for his assimilation of other notions about the correct interpretation of the Bible. While Archibald's threat was to question the validity of the established church's claim to the glorious past of the covenanting worthies, Glass threatened to accomplish at least a partial invalidation of that past.

The synod of Angus and Mearns proved a staunch defender of its status quo against any disturbance by Cameronians and protested against Archibald's accusation of a decline from the standards of the Second Reformation.⁵⁰ Among defenders of the covenants was Willison.⁵¹ In *The afflicted man's companion*⁵² he wrote like an old-time covenanter, denouncing theological error, popery, and those who were undermining "the excellent fences of our Reformation, viz. our

48. SRO, CH2/15/4. p. 4; CH2/40/7, pp. 198, 205-6, 219, 262; CH2/103/9. p. 144. See also "Memoir of the Author" by the Revd. Robert Burns in Robert Wodrow, *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*, 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1828-30), i, p. xi. Wodrow's work was not well regarded by Cameronians. See [Patrick Walker], *Some remarkable passages of the life and death of these three famous worthies* (Edinburgh, 1727), 142; on this work's authorship, 162; also Wodrow, *Correspondence*, iii, 218-21, 227, 232.
49. [James Gray], *An essay, to prove the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant of the Church of Scotland* (n.p., 1727), 58, was strenuous about the covenant, but was explicit in not calling for a current public subscription.
50. SRO, CH2/12/6, p. 145.
51. For other examples, see Glass, *Narrative*, 115; and possibly from an interested party in Fife, [James Hog of Carnock], *A letter, wherein the scriptural grounds and warrants for the reformation of churches by way of covenant* (Edinburgh, 1727). On the authorship of this tract, see *Narrative*, p. 116ff.
52. This composition appears in John Willison, *The Whole Works*, new ed., 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1816), i, p. iv, where the author's Letter to the reader is dated 27 March 1737, and *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, v, 321 takes that as his first edition. Glass, however, refers to it in his *Narrative*, 146, published in 1728. The earliest edition noted in *The Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue - CD-ROM* (London: British Library Board, 1992) was printed at Belfast in 1744, perhaps a surprising location for the first edition. The resolution to the confusion lies in a wrong date for the author's Letter, where 1737 is a misprint for 1727, as may be seen in the 1755 edition, published in Edinburgh. It appears that the earliest edition, probably 1727, may not have survived.

covenants, confessions, the magistrates power. &c.”⁵³ Elsewhere he identified his allegiance to the notion of a “Covenanted Reformation” and the old mythology about Scotland’s reformed pre-eminence. The obvious question, then, for someone who sounded rather like a Cameronian in many respects, including the duties of the magistrate *circa sacra*, was why he did not fold up his tent, move to another field, and join the Cameronians. He anticipated this and responded: “Though this [schism] be the common talk of some, there is no warrant for this course in the word of God”.⁵⁴ A later publication provided an historical overview of the work of reformation in Scotland, reflecting ideas similar to those in Gray’s *Essay*. Willison reviewed the history of the church in Scotland beginning with antiquity, before pausing at the King’s Covenant/Negative Confession of 1581: “Here we must take occasion to adore the distinguishing goodness of God to this poor nation of Scotland, in bowing and inclining the hearts of the whole nation, as the heart of one man, to enter into a solemn national covenant with God... to make a national surrender of themselves and their posterity to the Lord...”⁵⁵ The issue was defection, by royal agency, from “a covenanted reformation”, but in 1638 the National Covenant was taken up by nearly the entire nation, “without any compulsion”. He proceeded to comment upon the affairs of the revolutionary period and also the restoration, when the “land [was] soaked with blood”.⁵⁶ Of course, the arrival of William and Mary saw the renewal of a presbyterian church, but Willison feared that the general assembly of 1690 represented a lost opportunity: “We wish they had done more to retrieve the honour of these broken and burnt Covenants, by openly asserting the lawfulness and obligation of them, and applying to the civil powers for their concurrence to renew them, or rather of one made up of both, with accomodation to their times and circumstances”.⁵⁷ There is a tell-tale phrase in the paragraph – no self-respecting Cameronian would have consulted the civil power about covenant renewal. Willison looked for a national fast to address the manifold evils, which included past and present “sins and defections”, naming the shabby treatment meted out to the covenants.⁵⁸ However, a national fast in an erastian church would not answer, and Glass later ridiculed the notion in the mordant anticlericalism which emerged from the

53. Willison, *Whole Works*, i, p. ii.

54. John Willison, *The church’s danger and the minister’s duty* [sermon to the synod of Angus and Mearns], in *Whole Works*, i, 197.

55. [John Willison], *A fair and impartial testimony, essayed in name of a number of ministers, elders and Christian people of the Church of Scotland unto the laudable principles, wrestlings and attainments of that Church; and against the backslidings, corruptions, divisions and prevailing evils, both of former and present times* (Glasgow, 1765 [orig. 1744]), 5.

56. *Ibid.*, 18.

57. *Ibid.*, 25.

58. *Ibid.*, 130-1.

process of his deposition.⁵⁹ In 1720 the call for a fast stated: "And considering that notwithstanding the clear Gospel Light that shines amongst Us, by the plentiful Dispensation of pure Gospel Ordinances, *the many strong Engagements both publick and private which we are under to reform & amend our ways....*" The covenants are only alluded to, and there is no suggestion of renewal.⁶⁰ When Gray and Willison criticised Archibald, Glass taunted them: "As to their Worth, I shall not contend about it, most of them have taken Pains to make themselves worth a good deal of Money, and they have not lost a Groat for the Covenants".⁶¹

The uncloseting of Glass's opinions about the invalidity of the covenants and the growth of those views into a *fama clamosa* were due, wrote Glass, to an affair in Montrose which threatened to generate a schism. If Glass meant that this matter was the necessary condition of bringing him notoriety he was surely naive to a fault. It may have been that in the first instance his desire was only to discuss such matters in private with his own people, but it is beyond serious expectation that they would not have spread the ideas abroad, and in due course he himself thought those notions important enough not to try to hide them; indeed their promulgation became a test of his fitness as a preacher of the gospel.⁶²

The issue had to do with James Traill, minister of the second charge at Montrose. We do not know when the unhappy business began. The local records maintain a complete silence during Traill's life, and we observe him as a regular participant in the normal flow of presbytery business.⁶³ However, beneath the tranquil surface supplied by the minutes a controversy was brewing, and it is clear that the presbytery, synod and commission of general assembly were trying to sort it out in 1722.⁶⁴ Apparently some ministers, especially Willison and James Goodsir of Monikie, took offence at something Traill had done, and then pushed the matter in presbytery and in synod "with a Keeness, and unto a length that I hope they themselves now repent of".⁶⁵ Whereas Glass declined to explain the affair, Gray claimed that Traill was an esteemed pastor who fell into bad, i.e. Jacobite and episcopalian, company, where alcohol and conversation were too

59. John Glass, A letter on national fasts appointed by the clergy, 18 August 1735, in *Works*, ii, 314-21.

60. SRO, CH1/3/17, p. 54, etc. Emphasis added.

61. Glass, *Further continuation*, 69; Gray, *Naked truth*, 11; Maxwell, *Memorial*, 61.

62. Glass, *Continuation*, xi.

63. In 1719 he was chosen to attend the general assembly, but asked to be excused, and was; SRO, CH2/40/7. p. 155. In 1720 he was elected clerk of presbytery; p. 303. His numerous absences from meetings were attributed to domestic circumstances, and excused; pp. 117, 124, 162, 224, 249.

64. SRO, CH1/3/17, pp. 252, 254, indicates on 8 August 1722 that the Commission had received materials relevant to Traill's matter, and noted that the relevant presbytery and synod were in dispute about how to sort out the matter. However, all this disappeared before the official records were written up.

65. Glass, *Narrative*, 7.

easy. His worst act was that he was "at length prevail'd on by some... to subscribe for a Contribution toward the Building an Episcopal Meeting-house in Montrose, (which he indeed afterwards got withdrawn)".⁶⁶

The earliest surviving official notice of a problem came when the Montrose session recorded his recent death at the meeting on 1 April 1723, "and they being much concerned for the vindication of his Memory therefore appoints" three delegates to attend the presbytery, and if necessary the synod, in order to effect this goal. On 6 May it was reported that the synod had in fact passed an overture to the effect, and later that year the synod incorporated an act proposed by a committee of the general assembly:

Whereas sometime before the decease of our Reverend and dear Brother Mr James Trail, he had been in a very injurious and unchristian manner defamed and accused as being guilty of several things which appeared to such as knew him well, very disagreeable to all his manner of Life and the Opinion everybody till then entertained of it, and that by private surmises, other undue Methods, and an unsubscribed Letter...⁶⁷

Traill himself had investigated the matter and determined – surely without difficulty – that the letter was by a Mistress Ross (Margaret Goodsir), and while the original "which is supposed to be in the Commission Book" is not there,⁶⁸ two of her letters have survived in which she both pleads her own case as not intending to be his libeller and explains a little of the affair. In the first, dated 3 August 1722, she remarked that Traill had few friends in that part of the world, and these took offence at his contribution toward the construction of "a superstitious schismatical meeting house".⁶⁹ His friends decided that on this basis, along with "several other things in his conversation", they should meet with him in private and express their concerns. His response was anger, and so she took it upon herself to write him an anonymous letter about the issues. He was the one who chose to circulate it, and

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66. Gray, *Naked truth*, 9-10. Glass actually attributed similar personal failings to Gray. See *Further continuation*, 66. The story has been repeated, undocumented, in *Account*, lxxxvi; Charles John Guthrie, *Genealogy of the Descendants of Rev. Thomas Guthrie* (Edinburgh, 1902), 40, 51, 127; *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, v, 414; Hornsby, "Case of John Glas", 117. The contribution was from an already inadequate stipend. SRO, CH2/40/7. p. 32.
67. SRO, CH2/12/5. pp. 181-2. The Revd. Alexander Molleson, writing of Montrose parish in the *Statistical Account*, noted the sometimes extreme religious feeling in the area up to the middle of the eighteenth century, "and if the clergy were not disposed, to go as great a length as their hearers, they were persecuted much by anonymous letters, threatenings of persecution, and evil speaking". Sir John Sinclair, ed., *The Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799*, 22 vols. (Wakefield: EP Publishing Ltd., 1976), xiii [Angus], 560.
68. SRO, CH2/12/5. pp. 285-6, 315-6.
69. SRO, CH1/2/46, General Assembly Papers, fo. 112r.

then threatened her husband, saying that when the affair had finished its course in the church courts he would launch a civil action. In a second letter she protested that the situation had already been aired publicly months before she wrote her letter to Traill. She also went on to express her dissatisfaction at the way the matter had been handled by the presbytery:

they were bound in conscience and *by the covenanted work of reformation* upon the first appearance of prelacy and superstition getting up its head in such a manner to have shouen their zeal for crushing it by calling of Mr Traill to an Account and thereby free this *covenanted church* from that national scandal, and I observing that his brethren took no notice of it and his other disorderly steps did out of my concern for the glory of God and the good of his soul communicate something of my mind to him in a letter not designing it should be make publick...⁷⁰

While Traill's action may have some appeal in the modern age of ecumenicity, it is all but incomprehensible in its own time and place. The synod of Angus and Mearns⁷¹ was no stranger to the phenomena of Jacobite politics and episcopal churchmanship. Indeed it was from Montrose in 1716 that the Old Pretender had sailed away to a foreign refuge, and presbyterians, for all their establishment status, found themselves in an embattled condition. Willison had already published relevant controversial works⁷² and when he had moved to Dundee from Brechin, it is related that "he found it impossible to command the services of a Brechin carter to convey his furniture to his new charge, so violent was the prejudice against him".⁷³ The relevant records are permeated with comments about episcopal preachers, chapels and adherents;⁷⁴ the Montrose session records complain about the local episcopal meeting house.⁷⁵ On 7 March 1716 Traill wrote that he had been forced from his pulpit and had troops quartered on him, and on 18 April he had been sent from a synod meeting to consult with the local authorities about the threatening and insulting behaviour directed at the brethren.⁷⁶ The next year the presbytery sent him to Dun in order to read to the congregation an act of presbytery against the baptism of children of rebels.⁷⁷

70. SRO, CH1/2/46, fo. 117r. The added emphasis brings attention to Ross's language which is highly reminiscent of Cameronian sentiment.

71. Tealing was no exception. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, i, 81-3, 242-51.

72. [John Willison], *A letter from a parochial bishop to a prelatial gentleman in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1714); *An apology for the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1719).

73. David D. Black, *The History of Brechin to 1864*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1867), 119.

74. SRO, CH2/40/7, Brechin Presbytery Records, pp. 10, 33-4, 271, 326, 330; CH2/40/8, pp. 3, 91; CH2/103/9, Dundee Presbytery Records, pp. 107, 122, 152, 349-50.

75. SRO, CH2/943/12, Montrose Session Records, 4 April 1718; CH2/40/7, pp. 157, 167, 175.

76. Wodrow, *Correspondence*, ii, 126-9; and again in 1717, ii, 347; SRO, CH2/12/4, p. 21.

77. SRO, CH2/40/7, p. 23. Complaints continued for years. See the Brechin presbytery's letter to assembly in 1723, CH1/3/17, p. 326.

Gray alleged that Glass was an active pursuer of Traill, an accusation rejected vehemently by Glass who said that some tried to get him to line up against the Montrose pastor, "yet it is notour that I appear'd far otherwise": the more Glass got to know Traill, the more he appreciated him and disliked his detractors,⁷⁸ perhaps a hint of Glass's broad ecumenicity at this stage. The synod records bear out his assertion concerning his own role. Only three men dissented from the rehabilitation: Goodsir, James Ker and Archibald, the latter because he thought the synod should simply stay out of the matter, Traill being deceased. These promised to supply further comment, but nothing of the sort is to be found.⁷⁹

Church records supply a vast historical treasure house for historians, and without them our vision of the times would be much weakened and narrowed. However, they are by no means complete, and both the affairs of Traill and Glass would indicate that modesty and discretion were rules of thumb. At least with regard to matters affecting pastors, every effort was made to remain silent on difficulties and disputes until such time as the business could no longer be contained. Willison stated that he eschewed publicising conflicts among ministers but preferred "to cover their mistakes",⁸⁰ and one may wonder whether, if Glass had repented in 1728 or 1729, records of his process would be extant. Thus the local records have nothing to say of Traill's unhappy progress until after his death, despite his own pursuit of the matter. Not only did the commission not preserve the original letter but the synod minutes for 18 April 1726 indicate the deletion from the record of everything relevant to the case but the bare statement of vindication.⁸¹ His brothers and widow protested against this action; in fact, their own letters were expunged from the official proceedings. When Archibald was being ground up in the church courts for his refusal to subscribe the Formula, recognising the problematical nature of church records, he demanded in April 1727 that the process be either included in its entirety or totally excluded. In the event, the minutes granted his request that his own submission be written out in full.⁸² In Glass's own affair the original mention of concern about his teachings, in the privy censure, was not minuted.⁸³

Thus the minutes of the various layers of church courts present both a sanitised and unsatisfying picture. Sessions, presbyteries, synods were not representative bodies in the full sense of that word; they represented the interests of the clerical elite, and much that went on in the parishes never found its way into the record. By

78. Glass, *Further continuation*, 66.

79. SRO, CH2/12/5. p. 183.

80. Willison, *Whole Works*, i, 190. But Glass commented on the great divisions amongst ministers, expressed from pulpits. John Glass, *Remarks upon the memorial* (Edinburgh, 1730), 80.

81. SRO, CH2/12/6, p. 34.

82. *Ibid.*, 46-7.

83. SRO, CH2/103/10, p. 132. Not mentioned 26 October 1726; p. 38.

their silence with respect to Traill, the records fail to disclose the full extent of Cameronian support in the midst of episcopal strength, and those who tried to denigrate Glass's claims cannot readily be trusted.⁸⁴ Ross and her supporters may well have considered defection to the Cameronians despite her protestation that the Church of Scotland was still "the best, and purest in the world". The established church was threatened; it was inconsistent in its response to the challenges of the time, and while Glass would not likely downplay the extent and seriousness of that threat, he can be credited with an uncommon honesty in dealing with the situation.

Under the pressures and influences already noted, by 1725 Glass had come to a spiritualised conception of the church, distinct from the state and composed of true believers. We shall explore the details of this view later. Conflict with the establishment was not long in coming. Glass recounted a fast-day sermon preached by James Goodsir. "His sermon was full of the Covenants, without any Caution",⁸⁵ and Glass was moved to preach a reply, from the same pulpit. By the end of that year he had written to Archibald about his notions, and when the letter was circulated in 1726,⁸⁶ the process had begun which would in due course see Glass deposed from the ministry of the church and born the spiritual leader of a new religious society.

In his letter of December 1725 to Archibald, Glass underlined his difficulties with the covenants, and especially the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 whereby the Scots and the English parliamentary party bound themselves to mutual support and to a presbyterian religious settlement in England.⁸⁷ He identified his essential scruple with a clear and decisive distinction between the churches of the Old and New Testaments.

Willison, reported Glass, inflamed public opinion against him, giving other ministers "odd Impressions of me",⁸⁸ and comparing the current affair with the process against Professor Simson of Glasgow.⁸⁹ The Dundee minister tried to block Glass from giving a communion sermon,⁹⁰ but Glass was not one to be

84. Gray, *Naked truth*, 8.

85. Glass, *Narrative*, 12.

86. His letter in the *Narrative* in 1728. It had already been quoted and rebutted in two tracts the year before. See *A review of a paper lately printed against the being and binding of our sacred national covenants* (Edinburgh, 1727). Catalogues attribute this work to John MacMain, but its preface indicates that the body, apart from some additional material, was composed by a "R[everend] Author"; Macmain was a schoolmaster, with theological training. See MacMain, *Summons dismiss'd*, xv. The other tract is *A letter to a minister in the country*. See also Hog, *Letter*.

87. See my "Uniformity in Religion": The Solemn League and Covenant (1643) and the Presbyterian Vision", in *Later Calvinism: International Perspectives*, ed. W. Fred Graham (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Studies Society, 1994), 249-266.

88. Glass, *Narrative*, 46.

89. *Ibid.*, 53. Simson was alleged to be sympathetic to Arminianism and Socinianism.

90. Communions were big events, because infrequent, drawing people from neighbouring parishes, and encouraging, indeed necessitating, the attendance of other ministers.

blocked and went ahead. He attempted to defend his views, and spoke favourably of the covenanting martyrs of the reigns of Charles II and James VII. They had testified to the kingdom of Christ to the effect that the church had no earthly head, and that it might have no officers not authenticated by Christ. They were, however, wrong when it came to the matter of making Christ's kingdom a worldly entity.⁹¹ In the *Narrative* Glass said he would honour the martyrs in so far as they followed Christ, asking, "Is there no Mids between Madness and unerring Wisdom? Or are worthy Ancestors to be followed any further, than as they follow Christ?"⁹² This sort of reasoning earned him a rebuke "as another start up Machiavel".⁹³ Glass was reported as saying that "our Martyrs died as Fools, and they were Self-murderers". Later Willison preached that the National Covenant was "the Glory of our Land", and implied that the Spirit's outpouring at that time was in clear distinction from the present. Shortly afterward, on 7 September 1726 at an exercise, a part of the presbytery meeting where a sermon was heard and "impugned" by the others, Willison affirmed that the covenant meant that Scotland "was married to the Lord".⁹⁴ Glass responded, and earned the reproaches of even those who were not typically eager for the covenants. Before storming out Willison reminded Glass that his views were inimical to the church's established doctrine, intimating thereby that he wanted Glass under "the Lash of Authority".⁹⁵ In the wake of this nasty scene Goodsir refused the Lord's supper to those who would not own the covenants. Nevertheless the presbytery did not minute the episode, but Glass refused the request to keep silence on the controverted issues.

The matter then came under review at a meeting of the synod of Angus and Mearns. Toward the end of the meeting a motion was presented to the committee of overtures "that there should be an Act made, asserting the Obligation of the Covenants".⁹⁶ This went nowhere, but synod did refer Archibald to review by a committee – at this early stage he was still hot for the covenants "and against the present legal Establishment, as inconsistent with them".⁹⁷

Around the same time the near-superstitious reverence accorded the martyrs was emphasised following the reinterment of the bones of some of the martyrs of 1681 in Edinburgh in October 1726. Willison spoke of them.

for a Testimony against the Opposition now made to the Covenants and against the present Apostasy. Such a Story as this was firmly believ'd by

91. *Ibid.*, 56.

92. *Ibid.*, 99.

93. *A letter to a minister in the country*, 55.

94. Glass, *Narrative*, 63. See also *A letter to a minister in the country*, 72.

95. Glass, *Narrative*, 68.

96. *Ibid.*, 79. There is no record of this in the minutes, but as we have seen, that in no way impugns the credibility of Glass's statement.

97. The synod minutes note only his delay in signing the Confession of Faith and the Formula. SRO, CH2/12/6. p. 22.

some well meaning People in Dundee, That the spot of Ground where the Heads of these Martyrs lay bore the finest Flowers, and when Mr. G----s began to speak against the Covenants, the Flowers wither'd. The Heads of the Martyrs, when taken up, were perfectly fresh, so that their Faces could be known.⁹⁸

Over the winter popish sympathies were alleged against anti-covenanters, but Glass responded that some local people, including an old person who had suffered in the bad times, were wearying of the affair; he queried whether these good folk sensed "the old Prelatical persecuting Spirit" at work in the cabal which had formed against him.⁹⁹ Thereafter more letters were written, replies and counter-replies were produced, and the affair ground on. The next synod, 18 April 1727, faced the issue again and, in the midst of its deliberations, consulted Archibald, who, as we have seen, posed the opposite problem to Glass – he took the covenants with a disconcerting seriousness. "He was heard," wrote Glass,

and he said to this Purpose, That they, who had separated for the Sake of the Covenants, lookt upon the Ministers of this Church of two Sorts; the one materially denying the Covenants, and formally professing them; the other formally denying them and they lookt upon this last Sort as most ingenuous. And as for them that had not yet separated, he could speak best for himself; and for him, he declar'd that what I had advanc'd against the Covenants had made him more easy.¹⁰⁰

Confusion prevailed and a motion for the covenants was tabled, but a group

98. Glass, *Narrative*, 80. It is commonplace in this controversial literature to find names replaced in part by dashes. The reinterment would seem to be that described in [Patrick Walker], *The last speeches and testimony to a covenanted reformation* (Edinburgh, 1726), 4-5. See also Walker, *Some remarkable passages*, 138-41. In a similar vein it was alleged c. 1710 that Robert Bruce's body was uncorrupted eighty years after his death. Robert Wodrow, *Life of Robert Bruce*, in Bruce, *Sermons* (Edinburgh, 1843), 150. It would make an interesting study to examine the survival of medieval superstitious modes of religious thought and practice in Scottish piety in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One is reminded here of the incorruptibility of Cuthbert's body, according to Bede's life of Cuthbert. See *Lives of the Saints*, trans. J.F. Webb (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 123. The preface to *Last speeches* is signed Philalethes Philadelphus Antiaspondus: Alexander Walker, the erstwhile Arbroath teacher of Archibald's acquaintance, signed his defiant letter to Arbroath presbytery, Philalethes Antiaspondus. SRO, CH2/15/4. p. 145. One suspects a relationship between the two, and the suspicion is strengthened by the fact that upon leaving Arbroath, Alex. Walker went to Edinburgh, p. 183. See also CH2/12/6. p. 62.
99. Glass, *Narrative*, 82; see also 209.
100. *Ibid.*, 110-1. Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 449, indicates that Archibald had not yet gone over in October 1727.

which included Willison and Goodsir submitted a protest, which Glass took as a libel against himself, declaring that those in opposition to the covenants "advanced Principles against the civil Magistrates Power *circa sacra*, and inconsistent with the present Establishment".¹⁰¹ Glass thought this bizarre, in that acceptance of the present establishment was itself inconsistent with sincere covenanting.

The synod of 17–19 October 1727 brought matters to a head, recommending a process against Glass *usque ad sententiam*, to be submitted to the commission of general assembly. This was carried by a large majority.¹⁰²

The presbytery, with some additional external members, began to deal with him 26 March 1728, requiring resubscription (his third signing) of the Formula and Confession of Faith. The first he flatly refused, and said that his faith was in the Confession of Faith, implying that that symbol contained somewhat more (i.e. power of the magistrate *circa sacra*). He affirmed the presbyterian polity of the Formula but could not adjudge it to be *jure divino*; he lacked that level of certainty and "he trembles at the thought of adding any Thing to the Words written in the Book of God".¹⁰³

The next synod, 16–18 April 1728, suspended him and Archibald. At the general assembly, 11 May, the case was referred to the commission which continued the suspension but declared that it might be lifted by synod upon receipt of satisfaction.¹⁰⁴ Despite his suspension Glass had continued his pastoral functions – by now he cared nothing for the authority of a synod, which he viewed as the first sign of declension from the primitive foundation of the Christian church¹⁰⁵ – though he claimed not to have addressed controversial matters, but the presbytery reported that the minister sent out to supply the charge was kept from entering the premises and he thought that there was no use going back "to give any further disturbance to so resolute people as they are",¹⁰⁶ an allegation repeated and rebutted in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*. Thereafter discussions continued at various levels, but while considerable patience and concern for the dissidents was demonstrated, there was no way to bridge the gulf, and deposition was pronounced at the October synod. At the commission meeting in March 1730, one proposal set forth was that Glass would voluntarily demit his charge, and then the deposition would be quashed, but while it appears he might have accepted the offer, it was

101. Glass, *Narrative*, 114.

102. *Ibid.*, 199–201.

103. Glass, *Narrative*, 212–3.

104. The matter found its way into the local newspaper. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, no. 486, 13–14 May 1728, p. 1821; see also no. 490, 21–23 May 1728, pp. 1841–2. Glass, *Continuation*, 26 ff.

105. Glass, *Narrative*, 101; *Remarks upon the memorial* (Edinburgh, 1730), 77; John Glass, *The speech of Mr. John Glas before the commission of the general assembly, 11 March 1730* (Edinburgh, 1730), 3, 12, 15.

106. SRO, CH2/103/10, p. 189; see also p. 185. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, no. 498, 6–10 June 1728, 1875; no. 503, 18–20 June 1728, 1893.

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defeated.¹⁰⁷ His obduracy had become a liability, and the opposition to him solidified. Glass certainly demonstrated that he knew how to make constitutional procedures work, though he was ultimately unsuccessful in winning the court battles. One may wonder what he hoped to achieve. It is difficult to conceive that he really wanted any longer to keep his place in the corrupt and perverted establishment, and it may be that his procedural challenge was a mistake. A forthright, principled appeal to the public through the press might have anticipated the success of the Relief presbytery by thirty years,¹⁰⁸ but Glass was a different man from Thomas Gillespie; he may not have been an easy person to get along with, and he moved further and further out of the mainstream.

So Glass's deposition from the ministry was confirmed¹⁰⁹ and his place at Tealing was turned over to another. The commission recorded this minute on 8 March 1732: "The Reverend Mr John Willison one of the ministers of Dundee represented that the parties concerned in the process referred by the late assembly to this commission anent planting the paroch of Tealline had agreed among themselves, and that since, the paroch is peaceably settled".¹¹⁰ Thus the curtain was drawn, discretely, as if nothing had happened. However, it was surely a striking irony that when Glass's successor at Tealing, John Stewart, preached to the synod on 17 October 1738, he emphasised the necessity of believing freely, and "that in Matters of Religion we must judge for ourselves". He even cited Glass's favourite text, *a kingdom that is not of this world*, John 18:36-7.¹¹¹

While Glass would articulate a number of significant opinions as his thought developed, one complex issue may be seen as fundamental – the role of the Bible and its proper interpretation, with particular reference to the notion of the covenant. While he addressed all these issues during the controversy in his *Narrative* and the *Continuation*, our primary focus in this analysis will be upon his

107. SRO, CH1/3/19, pp. 365-70; Glass, *Remarks*, 64ff.

108. Gavin Struthers, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of the Relief Church* (Glasgow, 1843), 179.

109. In 1739 his deposition was reversed, not at his own request. Thus the kirk considered him a Christian minister, but not of the Church of Scotland until such time as he made peace with it. *Annals of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1739-1752* (Edinburgh, 1838), 10. Archibald suffered termination of his appointment, but his deposition was lifted, to the dissatisfaction of the synod. SRO, CH1/3/19, pp. 464-6; *A letter to the honourable ——— ruling elder, containing an argument for the reponing of the Reverend Mr. Francis Archibald to his charge* (n.p., [1730?]); *Reasons and grounds of protestation and complaint* (Edinburgh, 1731); Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 261-2; Correspondence, iii, 489.

110. SRO, CH1/3/19, p. 558; see also CH2/12/6. PP. 185-6.

111. John Stewart, *A Sermon preached before the provincial synod of Angus and Mearns, at Dundee 17 October 1738* (Edinburgh, 1738), 10, 27. Stewart was no Glassite, and in his sermon one hears the rationalistic strains of the Moderates. He was minister at Tealing from 1731 until his death in 1764. *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, v, 372.

The testimony of the king of martyrs.¹¹² The book deals generally with Christ's kingdom seeking to define its nature, extent and purpose, according to Glass's understanding of the Bible. The pivotal chapter is the second where Glass introduces and develops his typology. Typology, of course, was nothing new, and was a standard feature of Protestant and Reformed exegesis, supplying a means of connecting the two testaments of the Bible. Here is the crux of the matter. For Calvin and his tradition, typology was a means of preserving continuity; with Glass, however, typology becomes the means of digging a chasm.

There is no doubt that Glass knew of and drew from the fathers of independency,¹¹³ including John Owen, the sometime favourite of Cromwell. Glass's developing congregational polity could well have been informed by Owen's, and his own migration to independency from presbytery sounds very much like the English independent's.¹¹⁴ However, Glass certainly burst asunder the boundaries defined by Owen, not least of all the hermeneutics of typology.

The editor of Wodrow's *Correspondence*, Thomas M'Crie, stated that *Testimony* "was, in fact, a treatise by Dr. Owen, given a new form, without due

112. John Glass, *The testimony of the king of martyrs concerning his kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1729). More than one secondary source has misdated this work. See Wilson, *History and Antiquities*, iii, 270 [1728]; D. MacFadyen, "Glasites", in James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 13 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908-26), vi, 231 [1727]; *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, v, 371 [1727, 1728, 1729, etc.]; Lynn A. McMillon, *Restoration Roots* (Dallas: Gospel Teachers Publications, 1983), 20, 23 [1727]; Geoffrey Cantor, "Dissent and Radicalism?: The Example of the Sandemanians", *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 10 (1991), 4 [1727]; D.B. Murray, "Glas, John", in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, 364 [1725]. I have seen no catalogue reference to an edition earlier than 1729. See Wodrow, *Correspondence*, iii, 458, n. 1; Glass, *Works*, i, p. v; *Account*, lxvi. Willison published a rejoinder to other works by Glass in 1729 [*A defence of national churches*]; he would surely have included a testimony had it been available.

113. Hornsby, "Case of John Glas", 118-9; Murray, "Influence of John Glas", 46.

114. Owen wrote that when he was about twenty-six or so, he had not acquired an appreciation of the debate, "especially as stated on the congregational side".

...being unacquainted with the congregational way, I professed myself to own the other party, not knowing but that my principles were suited to their judgment and profession, having looked very little farther into those affairs than I was led by an opposition to Episcopacy and ceremonies. Upon a review of what I had there asserted, I found that my principles were far more suited to what is the judgment and practice of the congregational men than those of the presbyterian.

His preference had in part been predicated upon his concern about "democratical confusion". He subsequently turned to John Cotton's *The keyes of the kingdom of heaven* (1644). Sinclair B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 5. See also Peter Toon, ed., *The Correspondence of John Owen (1616-1683) with an account of his life and work* (Cambridge: James Clark and Co. Ltd., 1970), 19.

acknowledgement."¹¹⁵ Actually, it appears that M'Crie borrowed his comment, without due acknowledgement, from a history of English dissent, and along the way strengthened a weak allegation into a calumny. Bogue and Bennett had written that "the *sentiments* of Dr. Owen... were adopted by Glass, and given in a new form, without due acknowledgement, in his *Testimony of the King of Martyrs*."¹¹⁶ Even this is erroneous. With Owen, typology played an important but restricted role, as in his sermon to parliament on 24 October 1651, *The advantage of the kingdome of Christ*, a work produced to glorify God in the wake of the defeat of "our Oppressors in Scotland" at Worcester. Here, typology¹¹⁷ supplies a reminder to the victorious English government to ensure that this success should not breed a false sense of what is important; it must be remembered that the spiritual kingdom of Christ is paramount, and civil government must be subordinated to those high ends. In his work on the person of Christ we observe how typology links Old Testament worship to Christ; in his commentary on Hebrews he wrote that "the tabernacle that Moses made was a sign and figure of the body of Christ".¹¹⁸

Significantly, Owen's use of typology, like most Calvinists', did not lead him into a categorical opposition to magisterial involvement in religion nor to an established church, so long as it was comprehensive, with a broad fringe of toleration around the edges.¹¹⁹ The magistrate had a real obligation to support the Christian religion: "If it once comes to that, that you shall say, you have nothing to doe with Religion as Rulers of the Nation, God will quickly manifest that he hath nothing to doe with you as Rulers of the Nation".¹²⁰ This entailed maintenance of the preaching of the gospel, protection of sincere Protestant worshippers, supply of houses of worship, support of ministers, along with suppression of "all outward appearances and demonstrations of such superstitious, idolatrous, and unacceptable service".¹²¹

115. Robert Wodrow, *Correspondence*, ed. T. M'Crie, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1842-3), III, 458, n. 1.

116. David Bogue and James Bennett, *The History of Dissenters*, 2nd ed.; 2 vols (London, 1833), ii, 45. Emphasis added to point out that the original statement did not extend to a clear implication of plagiarism.

117. John Owen, *The advantage of the kingdome of Christ* (Leith, 1652), 4. See also Toon, ed., *Correspondence of John Owen*, 38.

118. John Owen, *Christologia: or, a declaration of the glorious mystery of the person of Christ-God and man*, orig. 1679, in *Works*, ed. Wm. H. Goold, 24 vols. (London, 1850-5), i, 253ff; *An exposition of the epistle to the Hebrews*, orig. 1680, in *Works*, xxiii, 46.

119. James Moffat, *The Life of John Owen, Puritan Scholar* (London: Congregational Union, [1911]), 48. See also Owen, *Two questions concerning the power of the supreme magistrate about religion and the worship of God, with one about tithes*, orig. 1659, in *Works*, xiii, 507-16.

120. John Owen, *A Sermon preached to the parliament, 13 October 1652. Concerning the kingdome of Christ, and the power of the civile magistrate about the things of the worship of God* (Oxford, 1652), 36.

121. Toon, ed., *Correspondence of John Owen*, 29.

These notions about the role of the state in religion, while moderate, would have had little appeal for Glass, and therefore one is disinclined to suggest a profound indebtedness to Owen for the biblical hermeneutic which Glass employed to dissolve the spell of the covenants. Indeed Wodrow himself had discounted the connection with independency: "I am ready to think, no Independent in England would stand up for Mr Glass his principles".¹²² He had travelled far beyond the positions occupied by Cotton and Owen and the dissenting divines in the Westminster Assembly.

In the indexes to the twenty-four volumes of Owen's collected works there is nothing about *John* 18:36-37, Glass's basic text for his *Testimony*. We do, however, meet with that text in the words of an English preacher not long before Glass's entry into the ministry. Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor and a rising star, preached a noted and widely circulated sermon before the king on 31 March 1717. It seems likely that it is this to which James Adams, minister of Kinnaird in Gowrie, referred obliquely in *The independent ghost conjur'd*,¹²³ and to which John Willison referred more explicitly in his *Defence of national churches*, even stating that Glass's opinions were drawn from Hoadly, rather than Jeremiah Burroughs and other independents.¹²⁴ Entitled *The nature of the kingdom, or church, of Christ*, the sermon dwelt upon Jesus's answer to Pilate, "My Kingdom is not of this world". Certainly the text fits Glass's *Testimony*, and some of the ideas, as far as they go, are compatible, as indeed Glass allowed.¹²⁵ He argued that "kingdom of Christ" was synonymous and coterminous with "church of Christ", over which Christ was the only king to the exclusion of all human authorities, the upshot being that there are "no Judges over the Consciences or Religion of his People".¹²⁶ The similarities with Glass's teachings are obvious, but the element of typology is entirely lacking, and Glass would not have been at home with Hoadly's pronounced latitudinarianism; hence Hoadly could have exercised at most only a limited influence over his development at Tealing.

Glass did not often cite sources or name influences in his writings, and thus he did little to help the historian to identify the source of his thinking. One interesting suggestion lies buried in the obscurity of an anonymous pamphlet entitled *A letter to a minister in the country*, where a Glassite production (apparently a letter from a convert) was alleged to contain "the plain Language of the Sectaries";¹²⁷ the

122. Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 188. See also *A letter to a minister in the country*, 44.

123. [James Adams], *The independent ghost conjur'd: being a review of three letters clandestinely sent to a minister in the presbytery of Dundee, in answer to his Queries concerning the lawfulness of national covenanting* (Edinburgh, 1728), 67-8, 70.

124. Willison, *A defence of national churches*, 189, 211. See also J. T. Hornsby, "John Glas: His later life and work", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 8 (1941), 106.

125. Glass, *Further continuation*, 12. Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses*, 4 vols. (London, 1808-14), iii, 268 stated that Hoadly's sermon was esteemed among the London Sandemanians.

126. Benjamin Hoadly, *The nature of the kingdom, or church, of Christ* (London, 1717), 11.

127. *Letter to a minister in the country*, 69.

context is the interpretation of the parable of the tares, a touchstone of sentiment about religious liberty. In fact, it is not difficult to find both Glass's hermeneutical method and its particular application in the writings of English authors rather more radical than Owen in the early and middle decades of the seventeenth century. Most prominent among these was Roger Williams, and while it cannot be proven, one suspects that somewhere along the way Glass read *The bloody tenent of persecution* (1644). If this theory is correct, we need not be surprised that Glass did not mention Williams's name. He would have been ostracised all the more quickly and completely by those who honoured the Second Reformation whose heroes had execrated Williams's ideas, though sometimes honouring his person.¹²⁸

Williams, contemporary with Owen, had used typology to shatter the pretensions of national covenanting and identification of later nations with the supposed precedent of Israel.¹²⁹ He appears to have appropriated his version of typology from the writings of the early General Baptists who returned to England from Amsterdam c. 1612. This is not to suggest that they were the inventors of a hermeneutical tradition – Cyril of Alexandria was not a stranger to it in the patristic era – but it is their particular application of the method to the question of religious liberty which demands our attention.¹³⁰

Among Williams's important statements are a thorough-going typological disjunction between the earthly types of the Old Testament and the heavenly and spiritual antitypes of the New; the impossibility of another earthly Israel with national covenants; an absolute rejection of any molestation based upon belief or worship; a restriction of magisterial responsibility to "the bodies and goods of the subject"; and an interpretation of the parable of the tares which excluded all grounds for persecution. All the main points of Glass's theological writings to 1730 are to be found in Williams.

Glass argues that the Old Testament portends the New; the former deals with temporal and earthly matters, the latter with eternal and heavenly. He notes how the Jews of Jesus's time expected an earthly kingdom, "and under the influence of this fatal Mistake, they rejected Jesus and delivered him up to Pilate".¹³¹ The key of course is to view the Old Testament as the type of the New, which is the

128. Robert Baillie, George Gillespie, and Samuel Rutherford all wrote against Williams's typology and its application to the question of religious liberty.

129. David G. Mullan, "Roger Williams and the Elect Nation: The Theological Critique of a Religio-Cultural Myth" (ThM thesis, Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, 1981).

130. Glass could have had direct knowledge of Cyril in view of his familiarity with Christian antiquity. He wrote several controversial tracts in which he made use of his patristic learning. See, e.g. *A view of the heresy of Aerius* (Edinburgh, 1745) and *Tradition by the succession of bishops* (Edinburgh, 1752). On Cyril, see Alexander Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: interpreter of the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1952); and Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the early Christian mind: a study of Cyril of Alexandria's exegesis and theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

131. Glass, *Testimony*, 14.

antitype and the determinative element in the hermeneutical relationship; Glass referred to the New Testament as the "infallible Guide" for his hermeneutic.¹³² Of singular importance is Glass's assertion that certain categories of the Old Testament no longer have validity: "the New Testament speaks nothing of a National Church", nor did it support national covenanting. Israel was indeed a work of God, but it was so in a typical sense, never to be repeated, a shadow passed away now that the light of the gospel has come.

In April 1728 the synod of Angus and Mearns proposed to Glass a number of queries. His answers included a thorough and final repudiation of the notion of national covenanting which had no foundation in the Bible. As for whatever *true* reformation of religion had been achieved in Scotland, and presumably England ("lands"), it "was carried on by the Word and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, by New Testament".¹³³ This view has two corollaries. First, Israel was one earthly nation, but the kingdom of Christ is composed of "Men of all Nations and Places of the Earth".¹³⁴ Second, Glass effectively excluded the magistrate from all things pertaining to religion; the purview of civil jurisdiction includes only the second table of the decalogue.

We shall return in a moment to Glass's reconstruction of the kingdom and his critique of covenanting, but at this point we must note a muted but still significant comment on covenant theology as it likewise served to hold both testaments together all the more tightly. Also known as federal theology, this system had dominated Reformed thought since the end of the sixteenth century when it was developed in the Palatinate. Its essence lay in two covenants: an Edenic covenant of works by which God bound himself to grant salvation to all who fulfilled its conditions, and which remains universally and perpetually binding; and the covenant of grace made in Christ to save those whom God has elected from eternity to be recipients of his mercy. The covenant of grace did not appear only with Christ, but was revealed in the garden of Eden. As Robert Rollock (d.1599) said, the distinction was one of clarity – "because Christ was not as yet manifested in the flesh, therefore the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace is more sparingly and darkly set forth in it [Old Testament]".¹³⁵ If Rollock introduced the scheme into Scotland, men such as Samuel Rutherford and David Dickson promoted it in the next two generations. Glass, however, took exception to the terminology of federal theology:

Our Divines are very shy to use the Scripture Expression in this Case, and shun to call them two Covenants, but think they express the Thing better when they call them two Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace. And they take this Way to establish this great Truth, that none were saved since the

132. *Ibid.*, 45.

133. Glass, *Narrative*, 220.

134. Glass, *Testimony*, 117. See also *Narrative*, 18-23.

135. Robert Rollock, *Select Works*, ed. Wm M. Gunn; 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1849-1844), i, 46. Cf. MacMain, *Review of a paper*, 56. Rollock is cited in *A letter to a minister in the country*, 63.

Fall, but through Christ by Faith in him. Their Design is good, but why should they shun to use the Scripture Language...?¹³⁶

The author of scripture himself had chosen to speak of two different covenants, distinct as heaven and earth, wrote Glass. He did agree that under the old covenant salvation was still by faith, anticipation of Christ's fulfilment of the promises on which the Old Testament was grounded, but covenant theology failed to take seriously the fact that the apostles made "such a World's Wonder of the excellency of the new State of Things".¹³⁷ Glass also argued that no one was ever saved through the national covenant made with Israel. It was only a schoolmaster. Thus Israel's typical pattern of a kingdom of the Lord erected and defended by human, earthly means was no more, once the coming of Christ had shaken the earth and the heavens.

Under the new covenant there could be no earthly force or coercion. Glass draws the same conclusion from the use of typology as Williams had in denouncing persecution for religion. Filled with bitter irony Glass writes:

But especially the Kings must nurse [*Isaiah* 49:23] the Church by defending her from the Arguments of such Teachers, as the dignify'd Clergy judge Hereticks or Schismaticks, and by their Authority pronounce them such, while they either cannot stop their Mouths by convincing Arguments, or will not be at Pains to do it, and the King is to defend the Church from such false Teachers, by cutting them off, or some Way effectually restraining them from speaking.¹³⁸

Here was the "Royal Law of Liberty".¹³⁹ Glass regarded liberty of conscience as a natural right,¹⁴⁰ to be defended by earthly kingdoms, and which Protestant powers, including Scotland, had done well to uphold. However, the specific tenets of Christianity were none of natural civil, or earthly, thus their defence must be according to different criteria.¹⁴¹

136. Glass, *Testimony*, 85.

137. *Ibid.*, 146.

138. *Ibid.*, 59.

139. Glass, *Narrative*, iv.

140. John Glass, *An explication of that proposition, contained in Mr. Glass's answers to the synod's queries* (Edinburgh, 1728), 61.

141. There is an intriguing document in this aspect of Glass's controversy. An anonymous writer replied to some queries that James Adams had written out for Glass. How they got into his hands is not clear, and his name is never mentioned, but Glass denied his own authorship, hardly necessary in view of the distinctive, though compatible, approach. The replies, with Adams's responses, are in Adams, *The independent ghost conjur'd*. On the question of authorship, see Glass, *Narrative*, 82-3. The anonymous writer played John Locke to Glass's Roger Williams, deleting the verbose theological arguments and focussing upon the philosophical theory of rights. See Winthrop S. Hudson, "John Locke - preparing the way for the Revolution", *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 42 (1964), 19-38. Glass refers to Locke in *Further continuation*, 12.

Glass had not far to go to identify an example of error in this respect. He thought the Scottish Revolution was admissible in so far as it was "a civil Affair in Opposition to Tyranny, and to the common Enemy of the Liberties of Mankind in the Kingdom of the World, the Pope of Rome". By a sermon he had brought down upon his own head the wrath due to Quakers as his words were apparently capable of meaning support only for "passive Obedience and Non-resistance", which opinions were tantamount to opposition to the "Protestant Cause",¹⁴² but this was not his position. Nor was the problem with the theological tenets advanced in that heroic period, many of which were honourable and owned by God.¹⁴³ The crux of the matter was that by its defence of "a particular Religion by the Sword", the covenanting movement led ineluctably to the violation of a free conscience – the pursuit of one natural right had led to excess and the invasion of another. Elsewhere Glass attacked the very implementation of the covenants. He queried, not unlike John Corbet ninety years earlier, whether the covenants had been taken freely, "after Examination of Truth and Falshood according to the Word, as to all the Things engaged to in these Covenants? Or was the whole Nation ever perswaded of the Truth of those Things by the Evidence of the Word?"¹⁴⁴ He regarded the national quality of the covenants as rooted in the exercise of force rather than genuine understanding and "hearty Consent", thus challenging the constitutional pretensions of covenanting political thought.

Glass contrasted the kingdom of Christ which implied patience and cross-bearing with the worldly kingdom and its rather different methods: "It is no Wonder that this Doctrine gave Surprise in this Time of the World, when there is so little Distinction to be seen between His Subjects and the rest of the World". He recognised the impact of his ideas: "Christs Subjects of different Denominations will have Rest, and Popery cannot take Place while this is maintained; *but then our abjured Toleration will take Place*".¹⁴⁵

Glass's opponents sought to appropriate the light of nature as a means of authenticating the covenants. He thought this odd as these theological opponents, of a conservative orientation, must thereby talk "in the very Language of those, whom they have been inveighing against, as fast as any, under the Name of Naturalists and Rationalists".¹⁴⁶ He was no friend to notions of natural religion, and his apparent commitment to a rational theology must be seen within a fuller context. The establishment (spiritually not legally speaking) of the kingdom of Christ is predicted upon truth to which the human being is expected to assent, "a Perswasion of a Thing upon Testimony", rather reminiscent of John Cameron. This truth has to do with the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the testimony to which is found in the Bible which is of central importance to

142. Glass, *Narrative*, 187.

143. Glass, *Testimony*, 169.

144. Glass, *Narrative*, 93.

145. *Ibid.*, 188; emphasis added.

146. *Ibid.*, 207.

Glass. Such truth, however, is not a natural thing: "This Truth comes into our Minds and Hearts from above by Divine Teaching" and it is "engrafted in our Minds", *James* 1:21. Not growing naturally in them, but brought from else where and engrafted, "that we may bring forth a new Kind of Fruit, according to the Nature of the Graft, and not according to the Nature of the Stock..."¹⁴⁷ As such, truth, as Glass is interested in it, is something which involves the human being but transcends each one's potential for discernment, and while the language may not be exactly the same, Glass sounds like a Calvinist who holds to the Bible and the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. We might describe it as self-authenticating, and certainly Glass did not see its acceptance as grounded in either enthusiasm or human wisdom.¹⁴⁸ He thought there were external evidences which supported Christianity, but these were of no significance for faith, since persuasion based upon the supposed adequacy of "philosophical Argument" produces not faith but science. Genuine faith is determined by the substance and the means of the argument.¹⁴⁹ Nor is this an arid intellectualism divorced from deontological considerations, for this gospel truth "must be a living Principle of Action in us".¹⁵⁰

With authentic Christianity narrowed in its propositional content Glass could defend his ecumenicity, celebrating the diversity of "Christ's Subjects" amongst all the nations and parties and classes of the world. They might differ in the grace and light allotted them, and are subject to error: "Uniformity, in all these Things, which some of them may judge very necessary, is not to be expected here; but herein they are all one, but they are *every one of this Truth*, yea, even tho' they may have different Speculations about it, and Controversies of Words while the *Truth* itself reigns in all their Hearts".¹⁵¹ While Glass did not countenance the teaching of perfectionism, he did insist that the Christian must, however fallibly, embrace the whole of scripture. He did not see many positive signs; indeed, he sounded rather like a covenanting Jeremiah when he deplored the lack of obedience to Christ and a preference for worldly conformity, "so little Self-denial, and patient bearing the Cross after him, so little Good-will and Forgiveness to Enemies, and so very little Brotherly-love and Charity and Mercy to the Poor...."¹⁵² He himself chose the way of suffering and sacrifice, and in at least this respect he could have laid claim to

147. Glass, *Testimony*, 215; see also 193.

148. *Ibid.*, 257-8.

149. *Ibid.*, 192. This may be contrasted with a statement by Glass or whoever wrote *A supplement to Erskine's sermon*, 18. The writer commented, in a sceptical vein that evokes Montaigne's essay, "Apology for Raymond Seebond": "the most of the people born and bred in a country, so made and called christian, are christians, the same way that people born and bred in a heathenish or Mahometan country, are heathens or Mahometans". See Donald M. Frame, trans., *The Complete Essays of Montaigne* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 325: "We are Christians by the same title that we are Perigordians or Germans".

150. Glass, *Testimony*, 227.

151. *Ibid.*, 234.

152. Glass, *Testimony*, 265-6.

being the true heir of early covenanters such as Samuel Rutherford who preached in the 1630s: "For the saints have a different tack of the cross of Christ, while we are here, and aye ill weather... ever the cross".¹⁵³ In addition to losing his charge, Glass suffered various calumnies from holding disorderly meetings to sanctioning an incestuous marriage by one of his people.¹⁵⁴

Had Glass's movement been spectacularly successful, his answers to the questions he raised could not have been without real significance for the matter of Scottish national identity, if only because his religious reconstruction had no room for the issue. Like Roger Williams, he denied that any nation has ever occupied the covenantal position of the Jews. Israel as a temporal entity will always remain *sui generis*. Thus while Glass would gain his reputation as an independent, not without warrant, the initial impulse lay in the destruction of the idea of a national church which in the Scottish experience of reformation hinged upon the practice of national covenanting. In the hermeneutics of a radical application of typology, so similar to that of Williams, Glass found a means of offering the Church of Scotland freedom from a past it could no longer deal with effectively.

DAVID G. MULLAN

THOMAS GILLESPIE AND PHILIP DODDRIDGE

Thomas Gillespie (1708–1774) entered the ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1741 with his mind and heart set on exercising a ministry of pastoral care and preaching within the confines of the parish of Carnock, in the county of Fife. No one who attended his induction service in Carnock could have imagined the impact which his life would have on the ecclesiastical politics of the eighteenth century, as well as the influence he would exercise on the piety of countless Christians to whom he ministered over the next thirty-three years. His involvement in the Cambuslang and Kilsyth awakenings brought him to the attention of evangelicals, in Britain and North America.

153. Samuel Rutherford, *Fourteen Communion Sermons*, 2nd ed.; ed. A.A. Bonar (Glasgow, 1877), 226.

154. On disorderly meetings in Dundee, Brechin and Perth, see Gray, *Naked Truth*, 58ff, where he noted that those in attendance were the "very scum of those that go to church", "light People and School boys... a kind of religious Mob". See also Maxwell, *Memorial*, 61; Glass, *Remarks*, 26; Robert Sandeman, *A letter to Mr. William Wilson* (Edinburgh, 1736), [ix]; *Advertisement by the Town-Clerk of Perth*, bound at the end of Glass, *Further continuation*, repudiating the aspersions. Wilson was with the Erskines in founding the Associate Synod, and his fervour may have been heightened by the competition. The town clerk was George Miller, who represented Glass in the judicatories considering the case. Glass's newly installed elders were ridiculed for their lack of classical education; Glass, *Letter to Mr. John Willison*. On the accusation of sanctioning an incestuous marriage, SRO, CH2/12/6. p. 160; John Glass, *A dissertation on incest*, orig. 1730, in *Works*, ii, 470-98.