

George Gillespie

A Sketch of His Life and Times

By Rev John Colquhoun, Glendale.

Free Presbyterian Magazine Vol 65 & Vol 66

The Church of God in Scotland had many bright ornaments among her ministers, who, though young in years when they were transplanted to the Church triumphant, were burning and shining lights in their day and generation. Among such men were George Gillespie, Andrew Gray, Hugh Binning, James Durham, James Renwick, and in later times, Robert Murray McCheyne. Each had his own peculiar gift, but in that way each one was fitted to fill a particular niche by himself in the Church. In writing a sketch of the life and times of George Gillespie we see that he lived at a time when Zion had many troubles, and that he seemed to have been raised up on purpose, by Him who gave diverse gifts to His Church, in order to be a polished shaft in His hand for discomfiting the enemies of the Church, not only at that time but also through subsequent generations.

His early days. - Very little seems to be known of his early days beyond the fact that he was born in Kirkcaldy, early in 1613. He was the son of the Rev John Gillespie, minister of the parish there. Of his father we do not know much beyond a short note. which Rev. John Livingstone supplies, of him in his *Memorable Characteristics*, in which he describes him as "a thundering preacher." His mother appears to have been a daughter of Patrick Simson, minister of Stirling, for in Row's *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, p. 432, Mr John Gillespie is referred to as Simpson's son-in-law.

This seems to be further proved by the fact that Patrick Simson, minister of Renfrew, and a grands-on of Simson of Stirling, who was on very intimate terms with Robert Woodrow, the historian, always referred to George Gillespie as "my cousin." It is on his authority that Woodrow gives the date of Gillespie's birth as 27th January, 1613. Woodrow, in his *Analecta*, says of the subject of this sketch that "when he was a child, he seemed to be somewhat dull and soft like, so that his mother would have stricken and abused him, and she would have made much of Patrick, his younger brother. His father, Mr John Gillespie, minister of Kirkcaldy, was angry to see his wife carry on so to his son George; and he would have said, my heart, let alone; though Patrick may have some respect given him in the Church, yet my son George will be the great man in

the Church of Scotland.” This prediction proved true as we shall have occasion to notice afterwards.

That John Gillespie was not only a “thundering preacher” but also one who had the courage of his convictions with regard to the government and worship of the Church of Scotland is proved by the fact that his name is among those of several others who were summoned before the High Commission which met in Edinburgh on 28th January, 1620 for refusing to conform to the Acts of the Perth Assembly of 1618. They were dismissed with the warning that if they did not conform before the 1st March they would be deposed, and the Bishop of St. Andrews, who presided, caused the Clerk to make an Act bearing their consent to be deposed on that day if they conformed not. They unanimously protested that willingly they would never renounce their ministry.

His name also appears among the subscribers to a Protestation offered to the Parliament at Perth on 1st July, 1606, against “the erection, confirmation and ratification” of bishoprics and bishops by the said Parliament. This Protest, which is as clear a piece of reasoning as is to be found in all the annals of the Church of Scotland, was the work of Patrick Simson, minister of Stirling, and the maternal grandfather of George Gillespie. This Patrick Simson was one who had a large measure of the boldness of the Scottish Reformers as the following anecdote clearly shows: -

For some time after King James VI and his Queen came home from Denmark after their marriage, the Roman Catholics in this country became very bold and many outstanding Protestants were abused and some cruelly murdered. Shortly after the murder of James, Earl of Moray, by a professional papist, Mr. Simpson was preaching before the King who did not in any way exert himself to bring the murderer to justice. The text was, “The Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?” Gen. iv: 9. The preacher, turning to the King before the congregation, said, “Sir, I assure you in God's name, the Lord will ask at you where is the Earl of Moray, your brother?” The King replied before all the congregation, Mr Patrick, my chalmers doore was never steeked upon you; ye might have told me anything ye thought in secret.” He replied, “Sir, the scandal is public.” After sermon he was sent for to the castle where he went up with the Bible under his arm, affirming that would plead for him. Row's History of the Kirk of Scotland, p. 144. Thus, we see that the subject of this sketch was not only the seed of the righteous but of men who attained to an uncommon boldness in defending the Cause of Christ and rebuking evil.

We have no means of ascertaining how George Gillespie's earlier studies were prosecuted. It may have been under his father's roof, as in the case of many of the families of the ministers of Scotland at this time, or in the parish school, for some parishes had schools where education was of a very high order, as can be proved from the fact that many of the youth of Scotland found their way to the Universities. One thing we are sure of, and that is, that young Gillespie made good use of his opportunities, for he entered St. Andrews University in 1629 when he was in his sixteenth year. That he prosecuted his studies there with zeal and industry is evident from the fact that when he left the University he was noted for his extensive learning.

The Condition of the Church at this time. - That Gillespie was born when the Church of Scotland was under a very dark cloud is proved when we compare the date of his birth with the dates of certain matters in her chequered history. A little over two years before Gillespie's birth King James I of England and VI of Scotland ordered three Presbyterian pastors, whom he himself had created bishops to proceed to London in order to receive Episcopal consecration at the hands of Bishops of the Church of England so that they would be able to transmit the so-called Apostolic Succession to their brother-bishops at home. They were consecrated on 21st October, 1610.

Thus, we see that the carved work of the Reformers was, for the time being, cast down and broken. Two years later Parliament legalised the Acts of the General Assembly of 1610, popularly known as the "Angelic Assembly" from the large number of gold angel-pieces which were given to its members, as bribes, by the supporters of the King. Thus, the yoke of the English hierarchy was imposed upon the Church of Scotland, which opened the floodgates for all that the Church of Scotland disapproved of at the time of the Reformation. Instead of the God-fearing ministers who were the glory of the Church of Scotland, were the Bishops, who were everything but what they ought to be. Burnet, though himself a Bishop and an ardent Episcopalian, says in his *History of Our Own Times*, "That the persons preferred to that dignity did their part very ill. They generally grew haughty; they neglected their functions, and were often at court, and lost all esteem with the people; some few that were stricter and more learned, did lean so grossly to Popery, that the heat and violence of the reformation became the main subject of their sermons and discourses."

Under more favourable circumstances a pious young man of George Gillespie's abilities and acquirements would very soon find a sphere of usefulness in the

Church of Scotland, but it was otherwise at the period of which we write. King James I, having got Andrew Melville out of the way, first by confining him in the Tower of London and then by banishment to France, and having forbidden his nephew, James Melville, to return to Scotland, he, in 1610, at the Glasgow Assembly, succeeded in intruding Episcopacy, and although there were still Presbyteries and Synods, and also a General Assembly if the King condescended to call one, the Bishops were lords over these Courts so that, in effect, the Church was governed by Prelates.

In 1618 an Assembly met at Perth by order of the King, and, through its members being overawed and bribed by him, the infamous Five Articles of Perth were passed. These were, kneeling at the Communion, the observance of Holy days, Episcopal confirmation, private baptisms, and the private dispensation of the Lord's Supper. This attempt at abolishing the Presbyterianism of the Church of Scotland was only partially successful, for the Most High, in various places, blessed the land by the refreshing showers of a spiritual revival, so that, though the people were sore oppressed, their spirits were kept from being broken by their hard lot.

Among the ministry of the Church of Scotland at this time were many who truly feared the Lord and declared His whole counsel to perishing sinners. Where such faithful preaching was to be found the Holy Spirit began to work mightily so that many were brought from the darkness of sin to God's marvelous light, and others who had been in Christ before these declensions began, were now finding their drooping spirits revived. King James and his servile minions and court parasites might do all in their power to crush evangelical religion and a Scriptural form of Church government out of Scotland, but they all forgot, or ignored, the lesson that Andrew Melville taught the King some years before this: "Sir, when you were in your swaddling-clothes, Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land in spite of all His enemies; His officers and ministers converted and assembled, and convened for the ruling and welfare of His Church, which was ever for your welfare, defense, and preservation, when these same enemies were seeking your destruction and cutting off." The Lord Jesus, however, did neither forget nor ignore His Church and people, for in many places they could say, "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: Thou God, hast prepared of Thy goodness for the poor." Ps. lxxviii. 9:10.

Archbishop Laud – In 1625 King James went the way of all the earth and his son, more bigoted, and cruel, if possible, than the father, reigned in his stead as Charles I. He was bent on doing in the Church of Scotland what his father had only partially accomplished. In this he had a henchman in Archbishop Laud, who was willing to go to any length in order to please his royal master. He seems to have been Charles's favourite and confidential friend from the beginning of his reign. In 1633 he became Archbishop of Canterbury, and to him may be attributed a very large share of the trials which befell the Cause of Christ in Scotland and England. According to Andrew Stevenson, in his *History of the Church and State in Scotland*, it could be said of him as was said of old of Pope Boniface: "He came in like a fox, he reigned like a lion, and he died like a dog."

As for his religion it was reckoned that if it had been divided into four parts, two were Arminianism, the third Popery, and scarce a fourth part Protestantism. He would never brook any deviation from what he conceived to be proper to religious worship; his whole conduct in that respect showed him to be "cunning, narrow-minded, bigoted and malevolent," and to his charge may be laid the introduction of the most fearful punishments meted out to Christ's witnesses in this country at that time, such as putting in the pillory, slitting of noses, branding on the cheek, cutting off ears, scourging, and other forms of punishment, which, for their horrible nature, vie with those practised among savages. From his elevation to the See of Canterbury till his execution on Tower Hill on 10th January, 1641, he continued his tyrannical abuse of power along with these atrocities, showing him to have been a monster of iniquity who covered himself with the cloak of a high religious profession.

Efforts are made in our day to show Laud in a better light than contemporary history shows him to be. He is paraded as a "great ecclesiastic possessed of considerable learning and ability, and his zeal, for the Church, however unwise at that time, was undoubtedly sincere." Some part of this character may be true, to a certain extent, but the other side of his character eclipses anything that he may have shown of an amiable nature. Lord Macaulay says of him, "Of all the prelates of the Anglican Church, Laud had departed farthest from the principles of the Reformation, and had drawn nearest to Rome. His theology was more remote than even that of the Dutch Arminians from the theology of the Calvinists. His passion for ceremonies, his reverence for holidays, vigils, and sacred places, his ill-concealed dislike of the marriage of ecclesiastics, the ardent and not altogether disinterested zeal with which he asserted the claims

of the clergy to the reverence of the laity, would have made him an object of aversion to the Puritans, even if he had used only legal and gentle means for the attainment of his ends. But his understanding was narrow, and his commerce with the world had been small.

He was by nature rash, irritable, quick to feel for his own dignity, slow to sympathise with the sufferings of others, and prone to the error, common in superstitious men, of mistaking his own peevish and malignant moods for emotions of pious zeal. Under his direction every corner of the realm was subjected to a constant and minute inspection. Every little congregation of separatists was tracked out and broken up. Even the devotions of private families could not escape the vigilance of his spies. Such fear did his rigour inspire that the deadly hatred of the Church, which festered in innumerable bosoms, was generally disguised under an outward show of conformity. On the very eve of troubles, fatal to himself and to his order, the Bishops of several extensive dioceses were able to report to him that not a single dissenter was to be found within their jurisdiction." *History of England, 1921 reprint. Vol. i. p. 74.*

With the view of eliminating the last vestiges of Presbyterianism in the Church of Scotland, it was resolved that a Book of Canons and a Liturgy should be prepared by the Scottish Bishops. The Book of Canons appeared in 1635 and the Liturgy in 1637. Previous to the appearance of the Liturgy it was sent to England for revision, and Laud himself superintended that revision, adding to it much that gave the whole a decided Popish trend. These revisions were submitted to the King for his approval and an order from him appeared, requiring the Liturgy to be used in all the Scottish churches, and an Act of the Privy Council was passed enforcing the order.

Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies. - when George Gillespie had finished his College course and was ready for the work of the Ministry, what appeared to be an insurmountable obstacle stood in the way. He would not receive ordination at the hands of a prelate and no Presbytery could be found who would ordain him. This led him into a more retired way of living as domestic chaplain, first to Lord Kenmuir until 1634, and afterwards in the same capacity, with the additional duties of a tutor, in the family of the Earl of Cassilis. While acting in this capacity he was not idle.

He had leisure to study the questions of the day, and he studied them to some purpose for in 1637, when he was only 24 years of age, there appeared from

his pen a production, entitled, *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies Obtruded upon the Church of Scotland*. He divides his treatise into four parts; i. Against the necessity of the ceremonies; ii. Against the expediency of the ceremonies; iii. Against the lawfulness of the ceremonies; iv. Against the indifferency of the ceremonies. In the Prologue he states what are the duties of every one who would contend for the truth against all corruptions. (1) "To walk by the same rule, to mind the same thing." (2) "To make diligent search for the truth, and (3) When we have attained to the acknowledging of the truth, then to give a testimony unto the same, according to our vocation, contending for the truth of God against the errors of men, for the purity of Christ against the corruptions of anti-Christ; For to understand the truth, and yet not contend for it, argueth cowardliness, not courage; fainting, not fervour; lukewarm-ness, not love; weakness, not valour; Wherefore since we cannot impetrate from the troublers of our Israel that true peace which derogateth not from the truth, we may not, we dare not, leave off to debate with them....These considerations have induced me to bestow some and to take some pains in the study of the controversies which are agitated in this church about the ceremonies, and (after due examination and discussion of the writings of such as have played the proctors for them) to compile this ensuing dispute against them, both for exonerating myself, and provoking of others to contend yet more for the truth, and for Zion's sake not to hold their peace, nor be at rest, until the amiable light of long wished for peace break forth out of all these confusions, which, O Prince of Peace, hasten, who wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us, Isa. xxvi. 12."

In concluding his Preface, which is addressed "To all and everyone in the Reformed Churches of Scotland, England, and Ireland, who love the Lord Jesus and mean to adhere unto the Reformation of Religion," the author says, with reference to what he brought before them: -

"If you disregard those things whereof, in the name of God, I have admonished you, and draw back your helping hands from the reproached and afflicted cause of Christ, for which we plead, then do not put evil far from you, for wrath is determined against you. And as for you my dear brethren and countrymen of Scotland, as it is long since first Christianity was preached and professed in this land, as also it was blessed with a most glorious and much renowned Reformation: and, further, as the gospel hath been longer continued in purity and peace with us than with any church in Europe: moreover, as the Church of Scotland hath treacherously broken her bonds of oath and

subscription wherewith other churches about us were not so tied; and finally, as Almighty God, though he hath most consumed other churches by His dreadful judgments, yet hath showed far greater long-suffering kindness towards us, to reclaim us to repentance, though, notwithstanding all this, we go on in a most doleful security, induration, blindness and backslidings; so now, in the most ordinary course of God's justice, we are certainly to expect, that after so many mercies, so great long-suffering, and such a long day of grace, all despised, He is to send upon us such judgments as should not be believed though they were told. O Scotland, understand and turn again, or else, as God lives, most terrible judgments are abiding thee.

“But if you lay these things to heart - if you be humbled before God for the provocation of your defection and turn back from the same - if with all your hearts and according to all your power, you bestow your best endeavours for making help to the wounded church of Christ, and vindicating the cause of pure religion, yea, though it were with the loss of all that you have in the world, (*augetur erzim religio Die, qtto magis pretritttr* - God's true religion is enlarged the more it is pressed down), then shall you not only escape the evils which shall come upon this generation, but likewise be recompensed a hundred fold with the sweet consolations of God's Spirit here, and with the immortal crown of never-fading glory hence.”

Gillespie's treatise could not have been better timed for it appeared when the Church was groaning under the galling yoke of the oppressor, and the new Service Book was about to be publicly used for the first time. On 23rd July, 1637, the Dean of Edinburgh, attired in his surplice, ascended the reading desk of St. Giles, and began to read the hated Service Book. The story is that an old woman, named Jenny Geddes, flung the stool on which she had been sitting at the Dean's head, saying, “Villain, dost thou say Mass at my lug?”

Immediately everything was in confusion, and it was impossible to continue the service. Primate Spottiswood tried in vain to quiten the tumult, and the Magistrates, with their halberdiers, who were present, had to eject those who created the tumult and the service was finished without any further disturbance from within the church, but it was not so outside. Windows were broken, doors were battered, and everything told the innovators what reception they would meet with once they were out of the church. Owing to precautions by the authorities the afternoon service was performed in

quietness to a select audience, but those who performed it narrowly escaped with their lives when they ventured on to the street.

King Charles issued orders to continue the use of the Liturgy but no Readers could be found, for love or money, who would carry out his instructions. For the time being Prelacy lost its high place and even the royal authority could not give it any material support. Gillespie's book proved a powerful means for educating the people so that they could say with the Apostles of old, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." It therefore contributed very much towards the confirming of men in their resolution to resist prelatical innovations, and thus it naturally paved the way for entering into the National Covenant of 1638.

It may be stated that as far as any authentic records are concerned there is no mention of Jenny Geddes and the part which tradition assigns to her in opposing the reading of the Liturgy. In fact, there does not seem to be any documentary proof that such a person, as is named by tradition, ever existed, yet such a tradition could hardly be based on the action assigned to a person who never existed. The prelates were in too much confusion to give a correct narrative of what took place, and the opposers of the Liturgy would not wish to give away any person, who acted such a noble part in striking the first blow in the battle for religious freedom, therefore, we may be quite sure that she had every opportunity of retiring into that obscurity from which she had momentarily been drawn by her religious fervour.

It may have been a fictitious name given to her at the time by those who knew her real name, in order to lead off the scent such as were only too ready to visit with severe punishment any who showed a love to Christ's Cause and to Scotland's ardent institutions. Her real name, as was sometimes the case in similar affairs, may be cleverly hid in the fictitious one, if only one had enough ingenuity to decipher it. On the raised stone flooring of the Moray Aisle in St. Giles there is a copper plate with the following inscription: -

"Constant oral tradition affirms that near this spot a brave Scotch woman, Janet Geddes, on the 23rd July, 1637, struck the first blow in the great struggle for freedom of conscience, which after a conflict of half a century, ended in the establishment of civil and religious liberty."

This refusal to accept the odious Service Book was very evidently owned of God, and though the King thought to overawe his Scottish subjects into

compliance with that which their very souls abominated, he had to beat a retreat before men who had a Scripture-enlightened conscience which they were determined not to put under the feet of King or Churchman. The matter is well put by Dr Hetherington when he says, "When Charles I ascended the throne, he found England in a state of discontent swelling towards insurrection, in consequence of the long course of tyranny, civil and religious, which it had uneasily endured. Unfortunately for him and for the kingdom, he had imbibed all his father's despotic notions of the absolute and irresponsible nature of the royal prerogative; and to little less than his father's dissimulation and insincerity, he added far greater strength of mind, and strength, or rather obstinacy of purpose.

Yielding himself entirely to the counsels of Laud, and of his beautiful but imperious and relentless queen, he not only refused to mitigate the sufferings of the English Puritans, but resolved to complete what his father had begun, and to bring the Scottish Church into an entire conformity with that of England. A Book of Canons, and a Liturgy, were framed by the Scottish bishops, chiefly by Maxwell, bishop of Ross, revised by Laud, and sent to Scotland to be at once adopted and used, without even the formality of having them laid before any Scottish civil or ecclesiastical court. The free spirit of Scotland was roused by this mingled insult and tyranny. At first a sudden tumult broke out, and rendered the scheme abortive; and then followed a wide, deep, and steady determination to wrench asunder the despotic yoke of Prelacy, and to restore to Scotland, in all its original purity and freedom, her own dearly purchased and beloved Presbyterian Church.

Pledging themselves in a sacred National Covenant, the noblest, the wisest, and the best of Scotland's sons and daughters prepared to encounter every peril, and to sacrifice all that life holds dear, rather than yield up their most precious birth-right and inheritance - their religious liberty. Provoked to see so bold and firm a front of resistance shown to his despotic designs in the poorest and least populous part of his dominions, Charles raised an army and marched against his hitherto unconquered Scottish subjects. He was met on the border by an equal array of that high-hearted and intelligent class of men, the Scottish peasantry, who have no parallel in any land, trained as they are from infancy to know, to love, and to fear God, and fearing Him, to have no other fear. The King could, in bitterness, mock their poverty, but he shrunk from the encounter with men who knew better how to die in what they believed to be the cause of sacred truth and liberty, than how to yield. He framed an evasive

peace, and returned to England, purposing to conciliate the Parliament so far that he might obtain the means of overwhelming Scotland by a new army too mighty for that small kingdom to resist." *History of the Westminster Assembly, 3rd ed., p.103.*

The tumult in Edinburgh and the opposition towards the Service Book manifested in various places, strengthened the hearts and hands of the friends of the Cause of Christ. The bishops, having realised the damaging nature of Gillespie's book, a proclamation was procured from the Privy Council ordering every copy of the book that could be obtained to be gathered in and burned by the common hangman. It was much easier to burn many copies of the work than to answer it, and so it remains unanswered to this day, while no exertion of arbitrary power by the sovereign, aided by the bishops and the Privy Council, could daunt the hearts or stay the hands of those who read the book. Its author became known and very soon the congregation of Wemyss set their hearts on obtaining him as their minister.

Gillespie's Ordination. At the time of Gillespie's ordination, the power of the bishops began to be on the wane, and the ministers became more determined that the Church of Scotland would be Presbyterian and not Prelatical. Johnston of Wariston records in his Diary for 11th April, 1638; "I heard Mr. Andrew Blackball (Minister of Abernethy) show the duties between a pastor and a people, and very sensibly touch all the corruptions of this time or of any in the Presbytery: then I saw him and the whole brethren of the Presbytery give imposition of hands, and thereby admission to the ministry to Mr. Robert Kerr to be conjoint minister "with his father in the church of Pans (Prestonpans); blessed be the name of God for restoring this great liberty to the Church again, whereof they have been robbed by the Prelates these twenty eight years past; and blessed be the name of God who used the un-ablest, unworthiest of all his servants to be an instrument in this restoration.

"Again, on 12th April, he writes; "Afternoon I got a letter from Mr. George Gillespie to clear the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy; of their legal doubts anent the admission of ministers against Tuesday next. "In connection with this matter he has an entry under the 17th April as follows:- " On Tuesday, 17th April, I wrote over two treatise - the one dogmatic to be read to the Presbytery - the other dialectic anent the admission of ministers by Presbyteries; for the which from the bottom of my heart, I thank my God who designs to use me as the sole principal instrument in His hand for the legal of His Church's liberties."

These ordinations gave great offence to the King, and the action of the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy in ordaining George Gillespie at Wemyss would no doubt give great offence to the Archbishop of St. Andrews who was never consulted in the matter, but the ministers were resolute and they ordained him there on 26th April 1638, as Robert Baillie quaintly puts it, “maugre St. Andrews baird.” It is a great tribute to the abilities of Gillespie and a testimony to the confidence reposed in him by his brethren that a few months after his ordination we find him preaching before the famous Glasgow Assembly of 1638. His text on the occasion, according to Baillie, was, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord.” Prov. xxi. 1.

Formation of the Tables. After the disturbance in St. Giles, which does not, in any way, seem to have been organised, we find resistance to Episcopacy taking a more definite and organised form. Two petitions were presented to the Privy Council; one from “the men, women, children, servants and in-dwellers, within the burgh of Edinburgh,” and the other from “Noblemen, barons, ministers, burgesses and commons. “The last of these petitions was a formal and constitutional document, the terms of which amounted to a demand for the trial of the bishops in a constituted court of law. They set apart representatives who, as commissioners, were appointed to watch over their affairs in Edinburgh. This body, however, was found to be too unwieldy, and a smaller number was chosen, which was divided into four sections.

In one section there were to be as many nobles as cared to attend, a second section of four county gentlemen, a third of four ministers, and a fourth of four representatives of burghs. These soon got plenty of work to do. In reply to the Petitioners King Charles issued a Proclamation to the effect that he himself had ordained the Service Book, and that he would forgive the Petitioners who had framed the petitions “out of preposterous zeal and not out of any disloyalty;” that gatherings for that purpose should cease, and that all who had repaired to Stirling, where the Privy Council was at the time sitting, should leave within six hours under pain of treason. This Proclamation was to be kept secret to that no opportunity would be afforded of making a Protestation against it. However, the matter leaked out and, on the instructions of the Tables, Advocate Johnston of Wariston prepared a Protestation which was read immediately after the Proclamation was read at the Cross of Stirling. Similar action was taken in Edinburgh.

Of Protestations of this nature King Hewison gives the following explanation: -

“A Protest was a formidable legal instrument in use in Scotland for protecting the subjects of the Crown from the sudden operation of unacceptable statutes. It meant entering an appearance in the highest law-court to ask: trial of the legality of any new ordinance.....A Protestation is a most ordinary, humble, and legal act of preserving our right, permitted to the meanest of the subjects, in the highest courts, in assemblies, and Parliaments, whosoever they are not fully heard, or being heard, are grieved by any iniquity in the sentence; which is granted by the law of nature and nations, and is the perpetual custom of this kingdom, to protest in favour of all parties having interest, and not heard, by an express act *salvo jure cujuslibet*, even against the Acts of Parliament. It was also a legal form of appeal to the King himself to see justice done according to the law.” *Covenanters, I. 259, 290-291.*

On the point that, in their Protestations, Wariston and those associated with him were acting according to law, and giving the clearest proof of being law-abiding, we have the view of Sheriff Robert Low Orr, K.C., M. A., LL. B., “What was this Protestation about which the supplicants were so punctilious, and which the Privy Council strove so hard to evade? Had it any effect in law or otherwise? It may appear to us a technical and archaic formality, but it was regarded at the time as a highly important State paper. The legal advisers of the supplicants, some of the ablest lawyers in Scotland, were unanimous in their opinion that it should be prepared and presented, and they revised its language with care.... This procedure shows the desire to act in a Law-abiding spirit and in accordance with the principles and precedents of Scottish Government. It was apparently borrowed from the legal practice of the day, when a litigant who thought he had not received justice “took protestation for remeid of law” appealing to the king and parliament for remedy.

In effect the Protestors declared that the proceedings complained of were not in accordance with the law of the land and had therefore no legal effect, that they declined to regard them as closing the controversy, and that they appealed, passed the king misinformed by bad advisers, to the king as dispenser of justice, and to the law of the land itself. That the Protestation was believed to produce a profound effect on the minds of the people is evident not merely from the supplicant’s persistence in making it but from the nervous anxiety on the other side to evade it. It fortified their position to make it appear that their claim was not something novel or arbitrary but only what the law entitled them to; it took off the weight and edge of the royal proclamation when it was instantly and formally challenged before the world as violating

laws which the sovereign had sworn to uphold. *“Alexander Henderson: Churchman, and Statesman, p: 110-112.*

We see that their Protestation was an appeal from the king misinformed to the king as dispenser of justice, but the last thing in the world which Charles would admit was that he was misinformed; not only so but he and Laud were the chief cause of all the trouble, so that their Protestation was, in effect; a declinature of the authority of the king in ecclesiastical matters. This could be nothing else but a declaration of war on the king's policy and, of course, they would have to bear the consequences.

The National Covenant; It now became very clear to the Tables that the whole kingdom would require to stand on the defensive and, as a preparatory step, they instructed Alexander Henderson and Johnston of Wariston to prepare a Covenant which was to be subscribed all over the country, binding themselves by the Great Name of the Lord to continue in the profession and obedience of the true religion, to defend the same, resist all contrary errors and corruptions, protesting that they have no intention or desire to dishonour God or do anything to diminish the King's greatness or authority “in the defence and preservation of the foresaid true religion, liberties and laws of the kingdom.” on the 28th February, 1638, after prayer by Alexander Henderson in Greyfriars Church, the congregation with uplifted hands swore allegiance to the Covenant, and then began to subscribe it. Later on it was carried out to the churchyard where, by the aid of torches, it was signed by an immense crowd. Copies were sent all over the country, so that in a short time a great many people had an opportunity of signing it.

In connection with the signing of this National Covenant the exercises of Johnston of Wariston are interesting as he records them in a soliloquy with his own soul: - “After the afternoon sermon I got good in my thanksgiving in my family; then in my private retiring; then in my reading Psalms 84 and 85; then in my public prayer before supper, during the space of one long hour confessing my sins and the sins of the land at large; praising the Lord for all His favours; and particularly for four, for renewing of His Covenant with this nation, for the powerful and lively manner of renewing it in our congregation, for His providence to my family in calling us upon one day first to His Table wherein He gave Himself to us, and then to the oath where we surrendered ourselves to Him, which was as solemn a day of marriage between the Lord and us *hinc inde*, in the greatest spiritual solemnities, as perhaps will not fall

out in any age again; and for His particular indulgence in employing me, the unworthiest of all his servants, to have been an instrument, advisor, drawer up, and partly the author of it under the Lord, blessed be His Name for ever; and praying to the Lord for wisdom, ability, and grace to perform all the conditions of the Covenant on our part, and have our eyes open to see, in the outward works of God's providence and the inward of His indulgence, the Lord's performance of all His conditions thereof."

On the 27th March the Tables demanded, among other things, a free General Assembly, but it was only when Charles saw that he could not get anything by force that he consented to the calling of an Assembly which he had no intention of making a free Assembly. The story of the Glasgow Assembly of 1638 is well known and it is not necessary to repeat it here. At this Assembly, which was presided over by Alexander Henderson, and from which the Royal Commissioner had withdrawn when he could not get his own way, the bishops were deposed, Episcopacy overthrown, and Presbyterianism re-established in the Church.

Scotland on the Defensive. King Charles raised an army which was to meet him on 1st April, 1639, at York. The reason he gave for this action was that the Scots had raised an army to invade England. The Covenanters denied this and hurried to make defensive preparations. They had as their military leader, Alexander Leslie, who had served Charles IX and Gustavus Adolphus, Kings of Sweden. The Scots army encamped at Duns, where some of the more prominent of the Scottish ministers acted as chaplains. Here negotiations were entered into for a peace, and Charles had the mortifying experience of discovering that those he had to treat with in the Scots Arm, were neither fools nor cowards, but men of integrity who were not afraid to stand firm even in the presence of kings, and so he had to yield and consent to the Treaty of Berwick on 18th June 1639. The King, however, with the unreliableness so characteristic of the Stewarts, had no intention of keeping this Treaty but looked upon it as abreathing space to afford him an opportunity of crushing the Scots into submission to his desires.

The General Assembly, to which the King agreed at the Treaty of Berwick, met on 12th August, when Traquair was Royal Commissioner. Alexander Henderson, as retiring moderator, preached an appropriate sermon in which he clearly set forth Christ as the Head of the Church, and showed that this was in no way inconsistent with monarchical government in the State. Traquair cunningly

tried to retain Henderson's services as Moderator, but the latter perceived that this was but an attempt to introduce constant Moderators, and so would not agree and David Dickson minister of Irvine, was appointed. Traquair, in order to deceive the Covenanters, agreed to everything that was done at this Assembly, and what was done at previous free Assemblies, and also agreed to the nullifying of what was done at illegal Assemblies.

He had, however, gone too far for the liking of the king and only regained the Royal favour by treachery and lies. The result was that the King planned another war of extermination. The first step towards this was that the Commissioners sent by the Scottish Parliament to London to testify their loyalty to the King, and to convey a thanksgiving from the General Assembly, were arrested and committed to the Tower on the charge of treason. The result was that the Scots had to prepare again for war and on 17th April, 1640, General Leslie's commission was renewed.

Again, the Scottish Army mustered at Duns, on 31st July, 1640, where, among the chaplains are to be found such famous names as Alexander Henderson, Robert Blair, John Livingstone, Robert Baillie, Andrew Cant and George Gillespie. The King's forces were defeated at Newburn Ford on 28th August, 1640, and on account of the dissatisfaction of the nation, together with a consequent lack of support to the King, Charles was forced to capitulate and the Treaty of London was signed on 10th August, 1641. The Scottish chaplains accompanied to London the Commissioners from Scotland who were parties to this Treaty, and the Church of St. Antholin, or St. Anthony, was placed at their disposal. Here Henderson, Baillie, Blair and Gillespie preached regularly, drawing immense crowds, who were anxious to see and hear men who played such an important part in the endeavour to bring about civil and religious freedom.

Soon after this a Call to George Gillespie, from the town of Aberdeen, came before the General Assembly, but he could not be prevailed upon to accept it, preferring Wemyss to Aberdeen. The following year, 1642, an application was before the General Assembly from Edinburgh to have him translated to one of the charges there. He was accordingly translated to Greyfriars Church and continued to be its minister until he left this world. In the Assembly of 1641, we find the members occupied with the consideration of a letter from some clergy men from England, who desired a closer alliance with the Presbyterians, and in answering it, the members indicated their desire to have "in both kirks

one Confession, one Directory for Public Worship, one Catechism, and one form of Kirk Government." This may be looked upon as the first public notice which we have of the aim which forms such a prominent part of the deliberations of the Assembly of Divines which afterwards met at Westminster.

The Government of the Church of Scotland. In 1641, while in London, Gillespie published his *Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland* to which he added a Postscript in answer to a Treatise lately published against Presbyterian Church Government. This was a reply to Bishop Hall's *Assertion of Episcopacy by Divine Right*. He divides it into two parts. The first part deals with the office of the Ruling Elder, showing the function of ruling elders and proving that in the Jewish Church they sat in ecclesiastical courts among the priests, and then gives four passages from the New Testament showing that they were recognised in the early Christian Church. He then argues for the office from antiquity from the consent of Protestant writers, and from the confessions of opponents.

In the second part he treats of Church Government; of the eldership of particular congregations, Presbyteries, Provincial and National Synods. He shows that the Church is a kind of republic, that Christ has committed spiritual power and authority to its courts, that the Jews had two ecclesiastical courts, the synagogue and the Sanhedrin, the latter having jurisdiction over the former; further, he argues from Acts xv., where we have a synod, of Apostles and elders, from geometrical proportions, and from necessity. In his Epistle to the Reader, he gives his motive for publishing his Treatise: - "As, in publishing this assertion, I intend to satisfy the scrupulous, and to put in silence the malicious; so also, to confirm the consciences of such as are friends and favourers to the right way of Church government. 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin' (Rom. xiv. 23), saith the Apostle, yea, though it be in a matter otherwise indifferent, how much more is it necessary that we halt not in our judgment concerning the government of the Church, but walk straight in the plerophory and full assurance of the same, from the warrants of the word of God - for as it is not my meaning to commend this form, because it is Scotland's, so I hope assuredly that my countrymen will not despise God's ordinance, because it is Scotland's practice, but rather follow them in so far as they follow Christ and the Scripture. This, therefore, I pray, that thy love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment that thou mayest approve the things that are excellent (Phil. i: 9). 'Consider what I say: and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.' (II Tim. ii: 7) Amen."

Gillespie at the Westminster Assembly. The General Assembly of 1642 pointed a Commission to prosecute the work of bringing about uniformity of religion in all His Majesty's dominions and renewed that Commission on subsequent occasions. A later Assembly also gave the following commission to certain persons to prosecute the Treaty of Uniformity in England with the Houses of Parliament and the Assembly of Divines: -

“The General Assembly, taking to their consideration that the Treaty of Uniformity in religion in all His Majesty's dominions is not yet perfected, therefore renews the power and commission granted by preceding Assemblies for prosecuting that Treaty, unto these persons after named, viz., M. Alexander Henderson, M. Robert Douglas, M. Samuel Rutherford, M. Robert Baillie, M. Geo. Gillespie, *Ministers*; and John, Earl of Lauderdale, John, Lord Balmerino, and Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, *Elders*: Authorising them with full power to prosecute the said Treaty of Uniformity with the honourable Houses of the Parliament of England, and the Reverend Assembly of Divines there, or any Committees appointed by them: and to do all and everything which may advance, perfect, and bring that Treaty to a happy conclusion, conform to the former commissions given there anent.” *Peterkin's Records of the Kirk, page 450.*

On 15th September, 1643, Gillespie and those of the other Scottish Commissioners who at the time went to London were received by the Westminster Assembly and welcomed by the Prolocutor, Dr. Twisse and two other English members. The first business thereafter was the reading over of the Solemn League and Covenant, clause by clause, and explanations given where necessary, till the whole of it was accepted by the Assembly. Afterwards the House of Commons and the Assembly subscribed the Covenant, and the House of Lords subscribed it later on, on 15th October. At the Westminster Assembly, Gillespie, though the youngest member by many years, took more than his fair share of the work: of that learned Convocation, both in its debates and in the work of its Committees.

As is well known the members were drawn from among the foremost for learning and talents in the country, and when one views the various shades of opinions among its members, especially concerning the civil magistrate and church government, one is indeed surprised to find that, after debating these matters point by point, their considered opinion should be so favourable to what we in Scotland hold to be the only Church government sanctioned in

Scripture, that is, Presbyterianism, and that they should so clearly give the Scripture view of the province of the civil ruler in connection with the Church of God. It may truly be said that to a large extent we owe these matters to George Gillespie, as the humble instrument under God.

Though the Independents and the Erastians were not numerous in the Assembly, yet, among them were to be found men of great talent and learning, and these did their utmost to force their own opinions on the rest of the Assembly, only to find that they had more than their match in the Scottish Commissioners. Robert Baillie, in reference to the debates on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, gives an idea of what had to be contended with when he says, "The unhappy Independents would mangle that sacrament. No catechising nor preparation before; no thanksgiving after; no sacramental doctrine or chapters in the day of celebration; no coming up to any table, but a carrying of the elements to all in their seats athort the Church; yet all this, with God's help, we have carried over them to our practice. We must dispute every inch of the ground. Great need have we of the prayers of all God's people."

The story is often told how Gillespie defeated John Selden, Esq., known as the learned Selden." Arriving rather late, so the story goes, when he came to the door, he was told that the place was so crowded that it was impossible to get an entrance. "Can you not admit a pinning?" he said, comparing himself to the small stones which masons use for packing a wall. He worked his way to the seat allocated to the Scottish Commissioners, and took his place beside them. The subject under discussion was Matthew xviii, 15-17. Selden in a learned speech, conspicuous for the amount of Rabbinical lore which he packed into it, maintained that the passage had no reference to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and that it altogether related to civil jurisdiction. Herle and Marshall, both very learned men, endeavoured to reply to it but utterly failed to demolish his arguments.

Some accounts say that at this juncture it was Samuel Rutherford who turned to Gillespie and said, "Rise, George, rise up, man, and defend the right of the Lord Jesus Christ to govern, by His own laws, the Church which He hath purchased, with His blood." Gillespie arose and, first of all, gave a masterly analysis of Selden's speech and then proved clearly that the passage had reference to a spiritual jurisdiction, because, (1) The nature of the offence and cause treated of is spiritual; (2) The end is spiritual; for it is not restitution or satisfaction, but to gain the soul; (3) The persons are spiritual, for Christ speaks

to His Apostles; (4:) The manner of proceeding is spiritual - all is done in the name of Christ; (5) The censure is spiritual, for it is binding the soul; (6) Christ would not have sent His disciples for private spiritual injuries to civil courts; (7) The Church of the Jews had spiritual censures, and the expression, "Let him be as a heathen," imported prohibition from sacred things, for the heathen might not come into the temple; and the ceremonially unclean might not enter, much more the morally unclean.

Such was the effect of his arguments that the Assembly was convinced, and it is reported that Selden himself said, "That young man, by this single speech, has swept away the learning and labour of ten years of my life." His friends, expecting to find a summary of the analysis which he had given of Selden's speech in a note book in which he had been jotting down something now and then were surprised to find nothing but *Da lucem, Domine* (Lord, give light), and similar petitions. This shows that though he had acquired a vast amount of learning, he greatly felt his need of being wholly dependent upon the Lord for help and guidance.

The details of this combat between two intellectual giants are given so clearly that one is loath to believe that it has no foundation as has been asserted in some quarters. As far as any authentic proof is concerned some of these details cannot be associated with the particular discussion with which tradition has associated them, but they may, however, have a connection with one of the many other passages-at-arms between these two champions. Dr. Mitchell proves from the most reliable sources that the details, as given by tradition, in connection with this particular debate are not according to fact. He says, "The manuscript Minutes coincide with Lightfoot's *Journal* in assigning Gillespie's speech not to the session of the 20th but to that of 21st February. In Gillespie's own *Notes* it is introduced at the close of the account of the former session with the words, 'I reply,' not 'I replied,' and may simply embody a brief outline of the reply he was to make on the following day. The reply made to Selden on the spur of the moment was that of Herle, who in 1646 succeeded Dr. Twisse as Prolocutor, and judging even by the fragmentary jottings preserved by Byfield, one cannot doubt that it was a very able reply. Gillespie and Young appear to have taken the evening to arrange their thoughts, and at next session made very telling replies, the former to the general line of arguments, the latter to the citations from rabbinical and patristic authorities. "*The Westminster Assembly, p. 288.*

On the occasion of a Solemn Fast on 27th March, 1644, Gillespie preached before the House of Commons from the words, "And if they be ashamed for all that they have done, show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them." Ezek. xliii, n. At the beginning of his sermon, he refers to another discourse he preached on a like occasion in which he laid open England's disease, that is, corruption in religion and the iniquity of their holy things. He then tells them, that the symptoms of that disease are "your high places not yet taken away, many of your old superstitious ceremonies to this day remaining, which, though not so evil as the high places of idolatry in which idols are worshipped, yet are parallel to the high place of will-worship, of which we read that the people, thinking it to be too hard to be tied to go up to Jerusalem with every sacrifice, did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the Lord their God only, pleading for their doing so, antiquity, custom, and other defences of that kind, which have been alleged for your ceremonies."

The sermon was published by order of the House of Commons, and, in a preface to the Reader, he observes, "Reformation has many unfriends, some upon the right hand, and some upon the left ; while others cry up that detestable indifferency or neutrality abjured by our solemn covenant, insomuch that Gamaliel and Gallio, men who regard alike the Jewish and the Christian religion, are highly commended, as examples for all Christians, and as men walking by the rules, not only of policy, but of reason and religion."

Directory for Public Worship. Early in January, 1645, Gillespie, along with Baillie, returned to Scotland for a brief season and before leaving the Assembly he acknowledged, in his parting speech, that it was one of the greatest mercies which he received in this world to have been associated with the Assembly, returned humble thanks for their forbearance towards him, and gave expression to his great respect for the Dissenting brethren among them. The Prolocutor, in his reply, said, "All of us have had great experience of your learned pains: for myself, I have taken great comfort in your learned discourses." Their purpose in going to Scotland as to submit the *Directory for Public Worship* to the General Assembly which sat on 22nd January, 1645.

At that Assembly, the Director, after certain alterations had been recommended which were afterwards agreed to by both Houses of the English

Parliament, was adopted and an Act made on 3rd February, 1645, “for the establishing and putting in execution of the Directory.” According to Baillie this Act was written by Gillespie. Three days later the Scottish Parliament passed an Act “approving and establishing the Directory for Public worship.”

On 9th April, 1645, we find Gillespie and Baillie appearing again in the Westminster Assembly, and Gillespie, in his report of the acceptance by the Church of Scotland of the Directory for Public Worship, assures the Divines that the hearts of those in Scotland are much with those at Westminster, that they are “so much comforted by those first-fruits, that it makes them long for the full harvest.” He also tells that they themselves would have been there a month previously but were carried away to Holland by rough weather.

In a little over a month after this we find the Assembly discussing the Report from the Committee on the Catechism in which Mr Gillespie takes his share, and in the course of the discussions, imparted the information that when lately in Scotland he showed his brethren an example of the plan upon which they intended to go and that it was liked very much. In this he refers to the original form in which the Westminster Assembly's plan for catechising was cast. When they had gone as far as the exposition of the Fourth Commandment we find from the printed Minutes of the Assembly for 14th January, 1646, that it was ordered “ that the Committee for the Catechism do prepare a draft of two Catechisms, one more large and another more brief, in which they are to have an eye to the Confession of Faith, and to the matter of the Catechism already begun.” - In this we see the origin of the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as they are known to us today.

Sermon Before the House of Lords. On 27th August, 1645, being the day appointed for solemn and public humiliation, Gillespie preached before the House of Lords in the Abbey Church at Westminster. His sermon was based on the words, “But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner 's fire, and like fuller's soap.”

Mal. iii, 2. The general doctrine which he drew from these words was: “The way of Christ, and fellowship with Him, is very difficult and displeasing to our sinful nature, and it not so easy a matter as most men imagine.” He brings many things from Scripture to prove this, and then propounds the question, “How does all this agree with Matthew xi, 30, 'For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light'; and I. John, v. 3, ' His commandments are not grievous?'" He shows from the same source that there is perfect agreement, and then insists

on the need of all classes of people to be cleansed. In his application he addresses his audience, saying, "My second and chief application shall be unto you, my noble lords. If you be willing to admit such a reformation as is according to the mind of Christ, as is like the 'refiner's fire,' and 'fuller's soap,' then, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (who will say, ere long, to every one of you, Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward, Luke xvi, 2), I recommend these three things unto you I mean, that you should make use of the 'refiner's fire' in reference to three sorts of dross: 1, The dross of malignancy ; 2, The dross of heresy and corruption in religion; 3, The dross of profaneness." Never was exhortation more faithfully given and never was it more needed. When the sermon was printed, he added a "Preface to the Reader," in which he says: -

"I have in this sermon applied my thoughts towards these three things; 1, The soul-ensnaring error of the greatest part of men who choose to themselves such a way to the kingdom of heaven as is broad, and smooth, and easy, and but little or nothing at all displeasing to flesh and blood, like him that tumbled down upon the grass and said, *Utinum hoc esset laborare*. 2, The grumbling and unwilling ness which appeareth in very many, when they should submit to that reformation of the church which is according to the mind of Jesus Christ, like them which said to the seers, 'See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things.' Isa. xxx, 10, and again, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. Ps. ii, 3. 3. The sad and desolate condition of the kingdom of Scotland, then calling for our prayers and tears, and saying, ' Call me not Naomi (pleasant), call me Mara (bitter): for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.' Ruth i. 20. - We are pressed out of measure, above strength, and 'had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead; who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us'" II. Cor. i, 8-10.

Gillespie's Dispute with Coleman. Sometime after preaching before the House of Lords Gillespie was engaged in another controversy. On 13th July, 1645, the Rev. Thomas Coleman preached before the House of Commons a sermon which was remarkable for it's highly Erastian views. When Gillespie's sermon before the House of Lords was printed, he added an appendix to it entitled, *A Brotherly Examination of some of the Passages of Mr Coleman's late Printed Sermon*. Coleman replied in a pamphlet entitled; *A Brotherly Examination Re-examined*. Gillespie replied to this in a pamphlet entitled, *Nihil Respondes*. A

bitter reply to this came from the pen of Coleman, bearing the title, *Male Dicis Maledicis*. Gillespie issued, in reply to this, a pamphlet entitled; *Male Audis*, in which he surveyed the whole Erastian controversy, not only silencing Coleman, but no-one else has endeavoured to reply to it to this day. On the title-page he tells us that in it the repugnancy of Coleman's "Erastian doctrine to the Word of God, to the Solemn League and Covenant, and to the ordinances of Parliament; also, his contradictions, tergiversations, hetero- doxies, calumnies, and perverting of testimonies are made more apparent than formerly." When such charges are proved, and they are indeed proved in this pamphlet, it is no wonder though Mr Coleman never replied to them.

Aaron's Rod Blossoming. - Though he gave punctual attendance at the various Sessions of the Assembly of Divines, and contributed in a most useful way to the discussion of the various subjects brought before them yet we find that this was, by no means, the limit of his labours there. At the Session held on. 30th July, 1646, we read from the published Minutes that "Mr Gillespie gave his books, dedicated unto the Assembly, to the Prolocutor and the rest of the members then present, for which he had thanks returned by the Prolocutor in the name of the Assembly." In a foot-note the Editors of the printed Minutes state, "This was his great work: *Aaron's Rod Blossoming; or the Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated*. It was dedicated 'to the reverend and Learned Assembly of Divines convened at Westminster,' and was published in London in 1646." In this book he deals, first, with the government of the Jewish Church, showing that it was distinct from the State; that the Jews had an ecclesiastical Sanhedrin as well as a civil one; the nature of ecclesiastical excommunication among the Jews, as shown in Scripture, and, by fourteen arguments, show that offenders against the Moral Law, were excluded from the Passover. Secondly, he goes on to write of the government of the Christian Church, giving the history of Erastianism, and proves what is the proper place of the civil magistrate with respect to the Church of Christ; that Christ has a general kingdom as He is the eternal Son of God, and a particular kingdom as He is Mediator, reigning over the Church only. In the third part of his book, he deals more particularly with excommunication from the church and suspension from the Lord's Table, proving from Scripture and antiquity that scandalous persons ought not to partake of the Lord's Supper. That such a work could be produced at the time when he was engaged so fully in other work, requiring great mental concentration, amply proves both the learning and the industry of the man.

Gillespie finally returns to Scotland. - Gillespie took his last leave of the Assembly on 16th July, 1647, and this, incidentally, shows that the pleasing tradition connected with the answer to the question, What is God? in the Shorter Catechism, cannot be rightly associated with his name. On this point Prof. A.F. Mitchell, D.D., of St. Andrews says, in tracing the sources from which the Larger Catechism was taken, "The answer to the question, What is God? had in the former draft been taken from Palmer's work with the exception that 'perfection,' is in the plural, as it had been in another catechism published anonymously in the previous year. Here the former description is exchanged for one abridged apparently from Ussher's *Body of Divinity*.

The next answer, respecting the properties and attributes of God, was at first distinct from the previous one. Dr. Briggs supposes it may have been got by crushing into one the answers to more than a score of questions in Palmer's treatise and Dr. Matthews by a somewhat similar condensation of various answers in Ball's larger catechism. But it is simply an abridgment of a paragraph in Chapter II of the Confession of Faith; and the ultimate answer of the Larger Catechism to the question, What is God? was got by joining these two answers into one. The answer to the same question in the Shorter Catechism is composed of the Scriptural definition, 'God is a Spirit,' with the incommunicable attributes arranged in the same order, as they were by Rogers, but in adjectival form, and the communicable in substantive form almost exactly as they had been given by Egerton." (*The Westminster Assembly*, p. 422-423).

In a footnote to the same work, p. 428, Dr. Mitchell says, "Even three months after he (Gillespie) left London all that he was able to report to the Scottish Assembly, respecting the Catechisms, was that the Divines have had no time yet to do anything in the latter, but here is the copy of the greater, which is almost complete.'" This is further confirmed by the following recommendation from the Commission of Assembly which sat on 29th September, 1647. "The Commission, apprehending that the Assembly of Divines in England will not fall upon the Shorter Catechism at this time, do therefore recommend to the ministers of Edinburgh and Messer's David Calderwood and Robert Ker, Messer's David Dickson, Robert Ramsay and Robert Baillie, and Messer's Robert Blair and Samuel Rutherford, as soon as the Large Catechism shall be perfected and sent down, to draw out of it a short plain Catechism for the capacity of the weaker, in case the Assembly of Divines shall do nothing in it, and desired Mr George Gillespie to write to their brother, Mr Samuel

Rutherford, to learn if the Assembly of Divines will take any pains in the Short Catechism.” (*Commission of Assembly Records, 1646-47*).

The General Assembly which met in August, 1647, caused to be printed the One Hundred and Eleven Propositions which Gillespie wrote against Erastianism, Independency, and Liberty of Conscience, falsely so-called. The reason for printing them is, in the Act ordaining their publication, given as “ Being tender of so great an engagement by solemn covenant, sincerely, really, and constantly to endeavour in our places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in this kirk of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the Word of God and the example of the best reformed kirks, and to endeavour the nearest conjunction and uniformity in all these, together with the extirpation of heresy, schism, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine....”

These Propositions give a clear view of the heresies refuted and anyone who studies them carefully can make himself master of the arguments used to support them and how they can be combated. The first part of these Propositions was written while Gillespie was in London, and in the midst of other labours, yet they are written with all the thoroughness which is so characteristic of the man, so that, after reading them, one is constrained to pause and adore the great goodness of the Lord in giving such a gift to His Church.

At the Commission of Assembly held in Edinburgh on 14th October, 1647, we find Gillespie's name along with those of others on a Committee appointed “to consider what course is to be taken for making a history of these late times, of the persons fit for that purpose, of the manner of collecting materials, the method of the work and everything conducive thereunto, and to report.” Later on; on 26th November, we find the same matter taken up and a Committee, with the personnel somewhat different but with Gillespie's name on it, appointed “to collect any papers they have by them; as also appoints the same ministers and elders to be a committee to order the business and to do, everything necessary therein; and that the Clerk have the care and charge of printing thereof. And it is also thought fitting and necessary that, beside these collections, there be a perfect story made out of these papers and any other

intelligences, and that the persons before named think upon a man fit for that purpose and of all helps conducive thereunto: and to report.”

At the Assembly of 1649 Mr John Livingstone, Minister of Ancrum, was appointed to write this history but, by then, the subject of this sketch had entered into that Presence where there is a fullness of eternal joy. In the Records of the Commission of the General Assembly for 25th February, 1648, we read, “The Commission appoints Mr George Gillespie to preach before the Parliament the day of their first meeting.” We have no record of this sermon, nor does it appear among his collected works, and the probability is that it was never printed.

The Civil War ended disastrously for King Charles and he threw himself on the mercy of the Scots Army. He, however, proved himself as obstinate as ever and gave every evidence that he was the sworn foe of Presbytery and all that was dear to the best men in Scotland. On 3rd February, 1647, he was delivered to the Parliamentary Army on condition that they would not injure his person. Charles, however, escaped to Carisbrook Castle, Isle of Wight, where he proved that he was as determined as ever to exercise despotic sway, and to gain his ends by any means that would present themselves to him.

The Engagement. - Early in 1648 the whole kingdom was agitated over what is known in history as the Engagement. The Royalist party in Scotland entered into a secret treaty with King Charles I to raise an army in Scotland for the purpose of assisting him to regain possession of the English Throne, he being at the time in Carisbrook Castle. The King promised to confirm Presbyterian Church government for three years till an Assembly of Divines, aided by twenty commissioners of his nomination, should frame a form of church government agreeable to the Word of God. On 1st March, 1648, a Declaration was emitted by the Commission of Assembly pointing out the sinfulness of the Engagement, for it went contrary to the solemn vows taken in swearing to the Solemn League and Covenant, bringing God's displeasure on Church and State, Scotland, which for a number of years was most united, was now divided into three bands. There were the Covenanters in the Parliament and in the Church, who remained faithful to their solemn vows; there were those who were responsible for the Engagement, and who were joined by a large number of the ministers; and those who were out and out Royalists who had no real regard for Church or State as long as they got their own way.

The Assembly of 1648. – When the General Assembly met on 12th July, 1648, it was, indeed, under very difficult circumstances. The Cause of Christ had been very much weakened, division was to be found on every hand, the attainments of the Second Reformation had been well-nigh lost, and the Church had been deserted by many who had sworn to be faithful unto death. Instead of that uniformity of religion between the three kingdoms, which the Church of Scotland was so anxious to obtain, and the progress made in that direction to contemplate, there were the distant rumblings of the thunders of war. Under such conditions it was necessary for the Assembly to look for one who could be trusted to fill the Moderator's Chair with dignity, wisdom, and courage. The choice fell on George Gillespie, and no better choice could have been made.

That the members of this Assembly knew their business and had the courage of their convictions is demonstrated by the work which they carried through. As the Rev. W. M. Hetherington, LL.D., states, “They not only approved of the Declaration and other similar writings of the Commission but passed an Act condemnatory of that Act and Declaration of the Parliament which enjoined all subjects to subscribe a bond, equivalent to an oath, in support of the Engagement. They further published a declaration and exhortation to all members of the Church of Scotland, pointing out the unlawfulness of the Engagement, and warning against the dangers in which it would certainly involve the Church and nation.

An able answer was also written to the Committee of Estates, proving by Scriptural arguments that the Engagement was inconsistent with the safety and security of religion. And, as the Hamiltonian faction was well aware of the power which the Church had recently put forth, when it raised the kingdom like one man for the defence of religious liberty, they employed every artifice to bring as many ministers as possible to their side, by that means either to procure support or to neutralise opposition. To meet this dangerous divisive policy, the Assembly passed an act, censuring those ministers who either favoured the Engagement openly, or abstained from pointing out its sinfulness, and warning their people against entering into its bond.

A respectful but firm supplication was also written to His Majesty, showing the insufficiency of the concessions promised by him in the Engagement, and its positive sinfulness, as tending to involve the kingdom in perjury; and imploring him to comply with the Covenant, and thereby to enable them, with a safe conscience, to give him that support which their sincere loyalty and affection

which prompted them to bestow, so far as their duty to God would permit.”
(*History of the Church of Scotland, 6th ed, p. 114-115*).

At this Assembly the Larger and Shorter Catechisms were ratified. The Act of Assembly approving the Larger Catechism was passed on 2nd July, 1648, and contains the following declaration: -“That the said Catechism is agreeable to the Word of God, and in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Kirk; a necessary part of the intended uniformity of religion, and a rich treasure for increasing knowledge among the people of God; and therefore the Assembly, as they bless the Lord that so excellent a Catechism is prepared, so they approve the same, as a part of uniformity; agreeing, for their part, that it be a common Catechism for the three kingdoms, and a directory for catechising such as have made some proficiency in the knowledge of the grounds of religion. “The Shorter Catechism was approved on 28th July, 1648, and is stated “to be a Directory for catechising such as are of weaker capacity.”

Commission's Paper on the Engagement. The 1648 Assembly did not come to an end till 12th August, and before it ended it directed a paper to be framed “in answer to a document issued by the State, respecting the Engagement that had been formed for the support of the king.” On 15th August, 1648, this paper was submitted to the Commission of Assembly and “after some alterations and corrections, the Commission unanimously approved the same.” The Editors of the published Records of the Commission say in a footnote: “Internal evidence points decidedly to George Gillespie, the Moderator, as the main author of this paper, and it is one of the most terse and pithy he ever wrote.” After giving the five arguments of the previous General Assembly to prove the sinfulness and un-lawfulness of the Engagement, and showing their Scriptural-ness by precept and example from the Word of God, it goes on to say, “That we are obliged by solemn Covenant to endeavour the extirpation of heresy and schism is manifest and uncontroverted among us.

The point complained of is that under pretence of doing against Sectaries there is an associating and joining with Malignants, a strengthening of the enemies who formerly fought against the Covenant, a casting down of what has been built, so that the remedy is worse than the disease, and the latter end worse than the beginning. What their Lordships assert of duties to the King have been abundantly answered before. We plead against no duty to the King, but for preferring the glory of God and security of religion to all human interests. We

wish their Lordships may here apply to themselves what they have blamed in others, and so we shall conclude, with their Lordships' own words in their late Declaration to the Parliament and kingdom of England: - 'We are sorry to see other interests still so carefully provided for, and so little security to religion, which indeed was the main and principal cause of our engagements in the late wars.'"

The last Commission of the General Assembly which George Gillespie attended, was on 16th August, 1648. After the meeting held on the following day he left Edinburgh for Kirkcaldy hoping that a change to his native air might prove beneficial to his health, but the Lord, in His Sovereignty, ordered it otherwise. The disease from which he was suffering was, evidently, consumption, and he rapidly became weaker. Though weak in his body we find him on 8th September, from his death-bed, penning the following letter to the Commission of Assembly, which shows the activity of his mind and his great concern for the glory of God and the good of His Cause in the land: -

My very reverend and dear Brethren - Although the Lord's hand detaineth me from attending your meetings, yet, as long as I can write or speak, I dare not be silent, nor conceal my thoughts of any sinful and dangerous course in the public proceedings. Having, therefore, heard of some motions and beginnings of compliance with those who have been so deeply engaged in a war destructive to religion and the liberties of the kingdom, I cannot but discharge my conscience in giving a testimony against all such compliance. I know, and am persuaded, that all the faithful witnesses that give testimony to the thesis, that the late Engagement was contrary and destructive to the Covenant, will also give testimony to the appendix, that compliance with any who have been active in that engagement is most sinful and unlawful. I am not able to express all the evils of that compliance, that are so many. Sure I am it were a hardening of the malignant party, a wounding of the hearts of the godly, an infinite wronging of those who, from their affection to the Covenant and cause of God, have taken their life in their hand - a great scandal to our brethren in England, who, as they have been strengthened and encouraged by the hearing of the zeal and integrity of the well-affected in this kingdom, and how they opposed the late Engagement; so they would, be as much scandalised to hear of a compliance with Malignants now. Yea, all that hear of it might justly stand amazed at us, and look upon us a people infatuated, that can take in our bosom the fiery serpents that have stung us so sore.

But, above all, that which would heighten this sin, even to the heavens, is this: That it were not only a horrible backsliding, but a backsliding into that very sin which was specially pointed at and punished by the prevalency of the malignant party, God justly making them thorns and scourges who were taken in as friends, without any real evidence or fruits of repentance. Alas, shall we split twice upon the same rock, yea, run upon it, when God hath set a beacon upon it? Shall we be so demented as to fall back upon the same sin which was engraven, with great letters, in our late judgment? Yea, I may say, shall we thus outface and out-dare the Almighty, by protecting His and our enemies when He is persecuting them, by making peace and friendship with them when the anger of the Lord is burning against them, by setting them on their feet when God hath cast them down? O shall neither judgments nor deliverances make us wise. I must here apply to our present condition the words of Ezra: "And after all this is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hath given us such deliverance as this; should we again break thy commandments and join us in affinity with the people of these abominations? Wouldest thou not be angry with us, till thou hast consumed us, so that there should be no more remnant nor escaping? "O happy Scotland, if thou canst now improve aright and not abuse this golden opportunity. But if thou wilt help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord, wrath upon wrath, and woe upon woe, shall be upon thee from the Lord.

This testimony of a dying man, who expects to stand shortly before the tribunal of Christ, I leave with you, my reverend brethren, being confident of you, through the Lord, that ye will be no otherwise minded but that, as men of God, moved with the zeal of God, you will freely discharge your consciences against everything which you see lifting up itself against the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. This shall be your peace and comfort in your latter end. Now the God of all grace establish you, and direct you, and preserve you all blameless to the end, and bring others out of the snare that hanker after that compliance. So prayeth your most affectionate brother, to serve you in which I can to my last. - George Gillespie. This letter is published among his collected works in the *Presbyterian Armoury*.

The End. On 17th December, 1648, at the age of thirty-five years, the subject of this sketch passed from this world of sorrow to the place prepared for him by his adorable Saviour. Two days before his death he partly wrote and partly dictated his "*Testimony against Association with Malignant Enemies of the*

Truth and Godliness.” This Testimony was afterwards published along with the foregoing letter, on the same subject, addressed to the Commissioners of the General Assembly, and extracts from some of his sermons. In connection with his death, we may quote the words of Dr. Hetherington: “So passed away from this world one of those bright and powerful spirits which are sent in troublous times to carry forward God's work among mankind. Incessant toil is the destiny of such highly-gifted men while here below; and not infrequently is their memory assailed by those mean and little minds who shrunk with instinctive fear and hatred before the energetic movements which they could neither comprehend nor encounter. But their recompense is in Heaven, when their work is done; and future generations delight to rescue their reputation from the feeble obloquy with which malevolence and folly had endeavoured to hide or defame it. Thus, had it been with George Gillespie to a considerable extent already; and we entertain not the slightest shadow of doubt that his transcendent merit is but beginning to be known and appreciated as it deserves, and that ere very long his well-earned fame will shine too clearly and too strong to be approached by detractors.”

The industrious Woodrow, the Historian, gives a minute account of his last illness and death, which he had from Gillespie's cousin, Patrick Simson, minister of Renfrew, part of which we quote: -

“The next morrow being Friday, he not being able to write, did dictate out the rest of a paper, which he had been before writing himself, and did subscribe it before two witnesses, who also did subscribe; wherein he gave a faithful and clear testimony to the work and Cause of God, and against the enemies thereof, to stop the mouths of calumniators and to confirm his children.

“In all his discourses this was mixed as one thing that he longed for the time of his relief, and rejoiced because it was so near. His breath being very short, he said, ' Where the hallelujahs are sung to the Lamb, there is no shortness of breath.' And being in very great pain all the Friday night, his mother said in the morning, ' In all appearance you will not have another night. To which he said, ' Think you that your word will hold good?' She said, ' I fear it will hold over good.' He said, ' Not over good.' That day he blessed his children and some others (among them Mr. Patrick Simson, the writer of this) and said, ' God bless you, and as you carry the name of your grandfather so God grant you his graces.' That afternoon, being Saturday, came Mr Samuel Rutherford, who, among other things, said, ' The day, I hope, is dawning, and, breaking in your

soul that shall never have an end.' He said, 'It is not broken yet; but though I walk in darkness and see no light, yet I will trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon my God.' Mr Samuel said, 'would not Christ be a welcome Guest to you?' 'He answered, Welcome, the welcomest guest that ever I saw.' He said further, 'Doth not your soul love Christ above all things?' He answered, 'I love Him heartily; who ever knew anything of Him but would love Him.'

"Mr. Wilson going to pray asked what petitions he would have him to put up for him? He said, 'For more of Himself, and strength to carry me through the dark valley.'

"Saturday night he became weaker, and inclined to drowsiness and sleeping, and was discerned in his drowsiness a little, to rave; yet being to the last half-hour in his full and perfect senses, and having taken a little jelly and drink, about half an hour before his death he spake as sensibly betwixt as ever, and blessed some persons that morning with very spiritual and heavenly expressions. About seven or eight of the clock his drowsiness increased, and he was overheard in it speaking (after he had spoken more imperfectly some words before) those words, 'Glory, glory, a seeing: of God; I hope it shall be for His glory.' After he had taken a little refreshment of jelly, and a little drink through a reed, he said that the giving him those things made him drowsy; and a little afterwards, 'there is a great drowsiness on me, I know not how it comes.'

"His wife seeing the time draw near, spake to him and said, 'The time of your relief is now near, and hard at hand.' He answered, 'I long for that time. O happy they that are there.' This was the last word that he was heard sensibly to speak. Mr Frederick Carmichael being there, they went to prayer, expecting death so suddenly. In the midst of prayer he left his rattling (the death-rattle in the throat of the dying man), and the pangs and fetches of death began thence; his senses went away where-upon they rose from prayer, and beheld till, in a very gentle manner, the pins of his tabernacle were loosed."

He was buried in Kirkcaldy and a Latin inscription put on his tomb-stone, for the following English translation of which we are indebted to Dr.

Hetherington:- "Master George Gillespie, minister at Edinburgh, in his youthful years overthrew a host of 'English Popish Ceremonies'; as he approached full manhood, having been sent as commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, his attention was directed to the task of extirpating Prelacy from England, and promoting purity and uniformity in the worship of God. He chastised

Erastianism in his 'Aaron's Rod Blossoming.' having returned to his native country he weakened the violators of the covenant, who were bent on provoking a war with England. Having been chosen Moderator of the General Assembly which met at Edinburgh in the year 1648, he devoted his last exertions to the service of his country so as to draw public approbation; and having, as an eyewitness, seen that ruin of the Malignants which he had foretold, departing in peace on the same day on which the League of the three kingdoms was solemnly renewed, in the 36th year of his age, he entered into the joy of the Lord. He was a man profound in genius, mild in disposition, acute in argument, flowing in eloquence, unconquered in mind. He drew to himself the love of the good, the envy of the bad, and the admiration of all. He was an ornament of his country - a son worthy of such a father."

Through the influence of Archbishop Sharp, the Committee of Estates in 1661 caused his tomb-stone to be brought to the Cross of Kirkcaldy, on a market day, and broken by the hangman. The inscription, however, was preserved, and in 1746 his grand-son, Rev. George Gillespie, minister of Strathmiglo, caused a tablet to be erected to his memory on which the same inscription was carved, with the addition:- "This tomb being pulled down by the malignant influence of Archbishop Sharp, after the introduction of Prelacy, Mr George Gillespie, minister of the Gospel at Strathmiglo, caused it to be re-erected, in honour of his said worthy grandfather, and as standing monument of dutiful regard to his blessed memory; Anno Domini, 1746."

His character is well summed up by Dr. Hetherington when he says, "George Gillespie was one of that peculiar class of men who start like meteors into sudden splendour, shine with dazzling brilliancy, then suddenly set behind the tomb, leaving their compeers equally to admire and to deplore. When but in his twenty-fifth year, he published a book against what he termed the 'English Popish Ceremonies,' which Charles and Laud were attempting to force upon the Church of Scotland. This work, though the production of a youth, displayed an amount and accuracy of learning which would have done honour to any man of the most mature years and scholarship. In the Assembly of Divines, though much the youngest member there, he proved himself one of the most able and ready debaters, encountering, not only on equal terms, but often with triumphant success, each with his own weapons, the most learned, subtle, and profound of his antagonists. He must have been no common man who was ready on any emergency to meet, and frequently to foil, by their own acknowledgment, such men as Selden, Lightfoot, and Coleman, in the Erastian

controversy; and Goodwin and Nye in their argument for Independency. But the excessive activity of his ardent and energetic mind wore out his frame; and he returned from his labours in the Westminster Assembly to see once more the church and land of his fathers, and to die." *History of the Westminster Assembly, 3rd ed. p. 146.*

The Committee of Estates, by an Act dated 20th December, 1648, which was unanimously ratified by an Act of Parliament, dated 8th June, 1650, voted the sum of £1,000 sterling to his widow and children, "as an acknowledgment for his faithfulness in all the public employments entrusted to him by this church, both at home and abroad, his faithful labours, and indefatigable diligence in all the exercises of his ministerial calling, for his Master's service, and his learned writings, published to the world, in which rare and profitable employments, both for Church and State, he truly spent himself and closed his days." Owing to the trouble and confusion caused by Cromwell's invasion his wife or family did not get a penny of it.

Though his widow and family were deprived of what their country voted for them yet we are sure that the Lord whom George Gillespie served so faithfully and zealously did not forsake them, but that he often manifested himself as the God who "relieveth the fatherless and widow." is a proof of His goodness to them it may be noted that one of his sons, Robert, became a minister of the Church of Scotland, and although he did not attain to his father's stature, yet was an outstanding witness on the side of Christ in his day, and suffered much in the days of persecution. The Editor of Woodrow's Correspondence, in an explanatory note prefixed to a letter of Woodrow to his son, the Rev. George Gillespie, Strathmiglo, quotes from a letter to Woodrow the following statement with reference to Rev. Robert Gillespie, that he "was persecuted from the day he was licensed until the day of his death, and that merely for preaching the Gospel, for he was neither at Pentland nor Bothwell Bridge." *Correspondence II, p. 4n.*

Woodrow, himself, says of him: "April 2nd, I find Mr Robert Gillespie before the Council, where he confesses, he had kept one house-conventicle in the town of Falkland; but refusing to delate whom he knew among his hearers, and to be an evidence against them, the Council order him to be carried prisoner to the isle of the Bass, their lately contrived prison. Upon the 7th of May, they allow him the liberty of the isle of the Bass above the wall, but strictly require he be not permitted to preach, or exercise any part of his ministry there. Here he

continues till the beginning of the next year, when he fell sick; and January 8th, the Council permit him, on his petition, to be let out some time for his health.” *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, Vol. II, p. 223.*

Gillespie's Other Writings. Along with what has been noticed already of his writings, Gillespie seems to have written other works which do not appear to have seen the light of day. Rev. Robert Woodrow of Eastwood, already quoted, says, “The known bookseller, Parkhurst, who died some twelve or sixteen years ago, had, in manuscript, the three volumes of Gillespie on the Covenant, and by his letter to me, offered to print it, if I would procure three hundred subscriptions at half-a-crown the book in sheets. I wrote to him I would do it; and soon after he died. It would be of use if the manuscript could be recovered and printed.” *Correspondence, III, p. 286.* It does not appear that this manuscript was ever recovered, for, as Woodrow wrote in 1727, it seems to have been a different production from that referred to in *The Treasury of the Scottish Covenant*, by Rev. J. C. Johnston, and entitled *The Ark of the Testament Opened; In a Treatise of the Covenant of Grace*, printed in London, 1661. In the published Records of the Commission of Assembly, we find in reference to his Testimony that “the Commission appoints it to be registered, and to be printed together with his sermons he preached against the associations with the enemies of truth and godliness. “In a footnote the editors say, “The sermons do not appear to have been published, but shortly after his death an extract from them was published under the title: 'An Useful Case of Conscience Discussed and Resolved, concerning associations and confederacies with idolaters, infidels, heretics, or any other known enemies of Truth and Godliness. By Master George Gillespie, late Minister of Edinburgh, Whereunto is subjoined a letter written by him to the Commissioners of the General Assembly in the time of his sickness, together with his testimony unto this truth, within two clays before his death.' 4th, Edinburgh, 1649.” According to Woodrow there were twelve or fourteen volumes of notes written by Gillespie containing an abstract of the deliberations of the Westminster Assembly, but at the time Mr David Meek edited the Notes on that Assembly, only two volumes could be found. Dr. Hetherington, in his *Memoirs of Gillespie*, prefixed to his collected works, gives it as his opinion that the remaining volumes may have contained, not notes of the Westminster Assembly, but portions of his more elaborate works. What has been published of his Notes is well worth careful study. In Woodrow's *Analecta* it is stated that Gillespie also prepared a

volume of sermons for the press but that the Sectaries bribed the printer to sell them, and that they were probably destroyed.

After his death, his brother Patrick, published his *Treatise of Miscellany Questions*. He tells us that he had the author's consent for publishing these papers, which indicates that George Gillespie intended them for publication. They treat of various matters, such as, The Ministry, Election of Pastors, Ordination, Infant Baptism, Assurance of an Interest in Christ, and various other subjects, clearly stated and supported by Scripture and the testimony of antiquity.

The Condition of the Country at the time of Gillespie's Death.- At the time of Gillespie's death both Scotland and England were in a serious condition. King Charles I, who had entered into a league with the Engagers, had no other end in view in doing so but to further his own designs of setting up an absolute monarchy. The Covenanters in Scotland were divided; some were for the Engagement and some against it. The Scottish politicians, who were for the Engagement, were under the necessity of appointing the Duke of Hamilton to the command of the Scottish Army, because, neither the Earl of Leven nor David Leslie would abandon the Covenant. Hamilton's first move after he was appointed General was to lead his army into England where he suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of Cromwell. After this defeat the Marquis of Argyle, the Earls of Cassilis, Eglinton, and Loudon took up the reins of government, proved to Cromwell that they were in no way in favour of the Engagement and so hostilities were averted. A new Parliament was called which passed very stringent laws against the Engagers, prohibiting them according to their degrees of delinquency, to hold positions of power. At this time, however, a great deal of uneasiness was caused through receiving intelligence that the English Parliament intended to proceed with the trial of the King. This was too much for these stern Covenanters. They and their ancestors might, in conference with the King use great plainness of speech which often amazed his subjects south of the Border, but they never dreamt of arraigning him at their bar on charges, which, if proved, deserved the death penalty. Charles was summoned to answer to the charges of being "a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and a public and implacable enemy of the Commonwealth of England," which charges were supported by evidences which could not be contradicted. In spite of his refusal to plead at the bar of a court which he held to be unconstitutional he was sentenced to death. On 30th January, 1649, he stepped on to the scaffold from one of the windows of white hall and a few

moments later he entered into the presence of his judge to give an account of his stewardship. Much has been said of late to make him appear a saint and a martyr. The history of the time and his own acting's show him to have been neither. It cannot be claimed for him that either his courage or his manliness, were of a very high order. Treacherous in the extreme, in his dealings with those which policy forced him to enter into treaties with, for at the very time at which he entered into these treaties he was devising schemes for breaking them, as far as the English Parliament could see, there was nothing which could secure the liberty of his subjects but his death.

The Covenanters were looking at the matter from another point of view. As Dr. Hetherington puts it: "They, even by the terms of their Covenant, were the vowed supporters of a monarchy based upon and pervaded throughout by Scripture principles. No sooner, therefore, did they receive the melancholy intelligence of their sovereign's death, than they hastened to proclaim his son King, by the designation of Charles II, not omitting, however, in their proclamation, the significant intimation that their support of his pretensions to the throne would involve the necessity of his subscribing the Covenant." *History of the Church of Scotland, 6 ed. p. 116.* This drew Cromwell in to Scotland again, and for many a day afterwards the Church in Scotland was as "a lily among thorns," but this part of her history extends beyond the limits of this sketch.

In this fragmentary sketch of the life and times of George Gillespie we see that he was raised up at a time when there was great need of him. The Lord endowed him with a clear penetrating mind, enabling him with ease to discern between right and wrong. In a brief lifetime he was able to accumulate a vast amount of learning, which his type of mind enabled him to call forth at a moment's notice to marshal against the fallacious arguments of Episcopalians and Independents. The Presbyterian government of the Church of Scotland had been attacked and a determined effort made in high places to have it completely subverted. The Lord called forth George Gillespie, as a polished shaft in His hand, to show the Scriptural-ness of Presbyterianism, and the origin of that form of government which the Stewarts endeavoured to foist upon the people of Scotland, proving that it was not only unscriptural, but had its origin in the Roman Catholic Church. Gillespie was not raised up merely to battle with matters in his own time, but by his writings, gives a clear guidance to the present day to such as are inclined to make use of them. We know that to refer to the writings of George Gillespie is not palatable to the union-mongers of our

day in the Church of Scotland. They are using gifts and learning which ought to be used otherwise and to a better purpose, in order to bind upon the descendants of men and women, who sealed their testimony against “black prelacy” with their hearts' blood, the ceremonies which Gillespie denominated “English Popish Ceremonies,” and against which he wrote so much. It would be well for such to consider carefully his words of warning in his Preface: -

“If you disregard these things whereof, in the name of God, I have admonished you, and draw back your helping hands from the reproached and afflicted cause of Christ, for which we plead, then do not put evil far from you, for wrath is determined against you. And as for you, my dear brethren and county-men of Scotland, as it is long since first Christianity was preached and professed in this land, as also it was blessed with a most glorious and much-renowned Reformation; and, further, as the gospel hath been longer continued in purity and peace with us than with any church in Europe; moreover, as the Church of Scotland hath treacherously broken her bonds of oath and subscription where-with other Churches about us were not so tied; and, finally, as Almighty God, though he hath almost consumed other churches by His dreadful judgments, yet hath showed far greater long-suffering kindness towards us, to reclaim us to repentance, though notwithstanding all this, we go on in a most doleful security, induration, blindness, and backsliding; so now, in the most ordinary course of God's justice, we are certainly to expect, that after so many mercies, so great long-suffering, and such a long day of grace, all despised, He is to send upon us such judgments as should not be believed though they were told. O Scotland, understand and turn again, or else, as God lives, most terrible judgments are abiding thee.”

The ecclesiastical system against which Gillespie waged an uncompromising warfare in his *Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies*, and which many in the Church of Scotland today are seeking to unite with, is a system which holds the myth of Apostolic Succession. Its exponents, because they cannot find any Scripture warrant for the appointment of diocesan bishops, maintain that such an appointment is included in the appointment of Apostles, and that the power of ordination was transmitted by these Apostles to subsequent bishops to the present day, and this implies that the commission given to the Apostles included in it an ordination as bishops, presbyters, and deacons separately.

On this point the late Rev. James Bannerman, D.D., says: "Episcopalians have no directory for this in the terms of the appointment of the Apostles by our Lord at first, but stand indebted wholly to their own arbitrary and gratuitous assumption for the ability to divide the apostolic commission into separate parts and parcels, and to assert that one portion of it, giving the right to ordination and government in the Church, belongs to one office, and another portion of it, giving a right to administer Word and Sacrament, to a second office - both of them being permanent and ordinary in the Church; and that other portions of the commission still, giving special endowments, belonged to yet another office, which was extraordinary and to be abolished. The very terms of the commission indeed show that the office to which the apostles were appointed was one and undivided, alike when they entered upon it, and when with their own lives it came to an end." *The Church of Christ, Vol. II, p. 271.*

The holding of this myth by the Episcopal Church requires of it to treat those not ordained by a Bishop as laymen, thus making their ordination null and void until they submit to Episcopal ordination.

In closing his *Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies* Gillespie makes the following statement which, in view of a proposal to renew conferences which would include the Episcopal Church in Scotland, ought to be seriously considered by those who would, in our day, enslave the Church of Scotland by compliance with what the Episcopal Church has of the dregs of Popery: -

"Whatever indifferency the ceremonies could be thought to have in their own nature, yet if it be considered how the Church of Scotland hath once been purged from them, and hath spewed them out with detestation, and hath enjoyed the comfortable light and sweet beams of the glorious and bright shining gospel of Christ, without shadows and figures, then shall it appear that there is no indifferency in turning back to weal and beggarly elements. *Gal. v., 9.*

And thus saith Calvin of the ceremonies of the *interim* that, granting they were things in themselves indifferent, yet the restitution of them in those Churches which were once purged from them, is no indifferent thing. Wherefore, O Scotland, 'strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.' Rev. iii: 2. Remember also from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else thy candlestick will be quickly removed out of his place, except thou repent."

All that can be proved from Scripture and the government of the early Christian Church is in favour of Presbyterianism, and there is not a shred of evidence in favour of Episcopacy. 'the position is well put by Rev. William Cunningham, D.D., when he says: " It has always been one of the leading general arguments which Romanists have adduced against the Reformers and their successors in the Protestant Churches that, though mere Presbyters, they assumed functions which belonged only to bishops - and especially that, as mere presbyters, they were incapable of preserving a succession of pastors in the church, since bishops alone had the power of ordaining to the ministerial office. And this, of course, is the same objection which is commonly adduced against us by Prelatists.

The substance of the answer which has always been given by Presbyterians to this objection, whether adduced by Romanists or by Prelatists, is this, that, according to the standard of God's word, there is no higher permanent office in the Church of Christ than the presbyterate, and that presbyters are fully competent to the execution of all necessary ecclesiastical functions. These two positions confirm and strengthen each other.

If Christ has not appointed any higher permanent office in the church than the presbyterate, then presbyters must be competent to the execution of all necessary ecclesiastical functions; and, on the other hand, if they are competent to the execution of all necessary ecclesiastical functions, this is at least a very strong presumption that no higher office, with peculiar and exclusive functions, has been established. "*Historical Theology, Vol. II, p. 532.* Who today, without a betrayal of the true position of the Church of Scotland, in its best days, would advocate union with a Church whose system of government was not only repugnant to the principles of the most illustrious of our Reformers and Covenanters and has no Scriptural warrant to commend it?