

SECOND SANQUHAR DECLARATION

In 1680 James Cameron (c. 1648–1680), a leading Covenanter, in the market square of Sanquhar (Scotland) read a repudiation of Charles II, beginning two years of open warfare between his supporters and the government. As part of the response to this armed rising, the Crown demanded all public officials, including ministers, publicly swear allegiance to the King. Many Covenanters refused, rejecting an Erastian church settlement, and began meeting in fields. Concerned with the potential for these coventicles to bred dissent, the army continually broke up these meetings, arresting hundreds. James Renwick (1662–1688) became a prominent leader of the Covenanters, and issued a second Sanquhar Declaration on the accession of James II.

Sanquhar, 28 May 1685

It has pleased the Holy and Wise God to exercise the Church of Scotland now of a long time with wrestling and warfaring under the yoke of cruel oppressors, who have made it their whole work to extirpate to true worship and worshippers of God out of the land, they making it highly criminal to own Christ as sole supreme over His own house, to mention any adherence to Scotland's reformation and covenants, and to take the written Word of God to be the only rule of faith and manners, discerning any to forfeit right to estate, life, and liberty who are of Presbyterian principles, who will not make a full surrender of conscience unto them, to be carried about as they please, complying with all contradictions and contradictory impositions which their diabolic spirits may invent, who are clearly seen to be void of all religion, reason, and humanity.

So that they proceed against all recusants with the height of barbarity and Hellish cruelty, refusing to hear them profess subjection to rulers only in the Lord and according to His word, yea cutting them off in the fields without giving them any time to deliberate upon death. Yea, often times without so much as a to commit their spirits unto the Lord, but murderously slaying them without taking notice what they are or what (according to their own law) is to be led against them.

Moreover these arbitrarrians have so raged that they have now brought the land to that (O, poor, miserable, and lamentable slavery) that the freest subject and best gentlemen in the Kingdom is by their acts, laws and proceedings held obliged to give oath *super inquirendis* before any single soldier or dragoon meeting them upon the way.

Lo, all this and much more we have met with as just upon the Lord's part, though most unjust upon man's for so manifold sins and iniquities. And in a special manner for our not purging our judicatories and armies, when the power was in our hands, of men disaffected to the cause and interest of Christ; for our bringing in known malignants to places of power and trust among us; and for inordinate affection unto and lusting after the deceased tyrant, Charles II, and advancing him to the regal throne, even while known by many palpable discoveries (as to be seen in the causes of God's wrath with the Church of Scotland) to retain his heart enmity to the covenanted work of reformation, which sins we desire to confess and mourn for before God, angels, and men. As also our sin in not timeous rejecting the foresaid Charles when he broke Covenant and all parts of his coronation oath. Howbeit snaring the lying under such a sin any longer when we were brought to a very small remnant, we did by open declarations disclaim his pretended authority upon many important grounds and reasons, as is to be seen elsewhere, particularly in our declaration published at Lanark 12 January 1682. All which declarations we do hereby ratify and approve.

So now the Lord in His goodness and wisdom having removed the foresaid Charles from his tyranny by death, and a few wicked and unprincipled men of this Kingdom having by open proclamation proclaimed James, Duke of York, though a professed Papist and excommunicate person, and not yet received into the Church again, to be King of Scotland, England, France, and Ireland.

We, the contending and suffering remnant of true Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland, calling to mind the many bonds and obligations that lie upon us from the Lord, and being desirous to be found faithful in this day

of temptation to avoid accession to the guilt in which many have involved themselves, to exonerate our consciences as in His sight, to testify our resentment of the deed and make it appear unto the world that we are free thereof, whether by concurrence or connivance, do here deliberately, jointly, and unanimously protest against the foresaid proclamation of James, Duke of York, to be King, as said is.

In regard that the choosing a murderer to be governor, who has shed the blood of the saints of God. In regard that it is the height of confederacy with an idolater, which is forbidden by the law of God. In regard that it is contrary to the declaration of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, of the date 27 July 1649. In regard that it is contrary to many wholesome and laudable Acts of Parliament...

And in regard that it is inconsistent with the safety of the faith, conscience, and Christian liberty of a Christian people to choose a subject of Anti-Christ to be their (especially supreme) magistrate, and so it is that we understand that part of the 4§23 of our Confession of Faith, and in a general and abstract sense, where it is said (in opposition to sectarians who assert that such are not lawful kings who either know not Christ or believe not in Him) that infidelity or difference in religion does not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people of their obedience to him. We acknowledge it to be true indeed that infidels and these of a different religion are not (chiefly because such) presently to be declared no magistrates, for *Magistratus non est Magisraius qua Christianus, sed qua homo*. So it is that the magistratical power considered generally, given for the good of human societies, may be in the person of an infidel or one of a different religion, but considered specially, given for the good of the Church, it is only in the person of a professor of the true religion. Hence in traveling or trafficking in foreign lands, be the persons in whom is the power infidels or of a different religion, we cannot refuse subjection to their laws so far as they are consistent with the written Word of God and our true Christian liberty. Howbeit, our Covenants and Acts of Parliament have put a bar upon the admission of any person, if either infidels or of a different religion, while such, to govern in Scotland. And the practice of our Church confirms it in refusing the Crown to the late deceased tyrant Charles II until he subscribed such demands as were sent unto him. And especially upon admission of a known enemy to the true religion to govern. For it could not but be both highly sinful and irrational for us to entrust an enemy to the work and people of God with the interest of both.

Also conceiving that this pretended Parliament is not a lawful Parliament in regard that the election of commissioners is limited and prejudged in the due liberty thereof, by their Acts and laws. In regard that the Members are convicted of avowed perjury, which according to Scottish law makes a man incapable of being so much as a witness. In regard they are men of blood, the chief being convict of avowed murder, whereby they are under the lash of the law. And in regard of their carrying on apostacy and making way for the Man of Sin. We do on the like manner upon these and many other important grounds and reasons protest against the validity and constitution of this present Parliament as not being free and lawful, against their assuming to themselves any authority or exercising any power or jurisdiction for making of acts or laws, for judging causes, determining of controversies, or proceeding in any Parliamentary way. And in particular, we protest against their proceeding to any approbation or ratification of the foresaid proclamation of James, Duke of York, to be King, as said is. And that they may not go on further to set the Crown upon his head, they being incapable to give it.

And further seeing bloody Papists, the subjects of Anti-Christ, become so hopeful, bold, and confident under the perfidy of the said James, Duke of York, and Popery itself so eminent and (oh, lamentable) like to be intruded again (if God's mercy and power meeting together in a wonderful way prevent it not) upon these Covenanted lands, an open door being made there unto by its accursed and abjured harbinger prelacy, which these three Kingdoms are equally sworn against. We do, in the like manner, protest against all kinds of Popery in general and particular heads, the jurisdiction of the Pope, all the heretical and erroneous doctrine of the Church of Rome, their tyrannous laws made against Christian liberty, their erroneous and bloody decrees, their vain ceremonies and superstitions, their allegories, rites, signs, and traditions, their laws, statues, acts,

constitutions, canons civil or municipal, with all other ordinances and practice penalties whatsoever, made in prejudice of the true religion and professors thereof, or of the true Church discipline and jurisdiction, or freedom thereof, and every other thing contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness, abjured most explicitly by our National Covenant, abrogated, annulled, and rescinded by our Acts of Parliament... We say we do protest against all kind of popery whatsoever, against it entering again into this land and against everything that does or may directly or indirectly make way for the same. Disclaiming likewise all sectarianism, malignancy, and any confederacy therewith....

Finally, we being mis-represented to many by wicked malice of our avowed enemies, and the sinful prejudice of others, who mis-representing our late declaration affixed to several parish church doors (which we do hereby ratify and approve) perverting the true and obvious sense thereof, and through blind malice and prejudice mistaking our signs therein (else their consciences give their tongues the lie) hold us forth as persons of murdering and assassinating principles. All which principles and practices we do hereby declare before God, angels, and men that we abhor, renounce, and detest. As also all manner of robbing of any, whether open enemies or others, which are most falsely aspersed with, either in their gold, their silver, or their gear, any household stuff. Their money perish with themselves; the Lord knows that our eyes are not after these things.

And in like manner we do hereby disclaim all unwarrantable practices committed by any few persons reputed to be of us, whereby the Lord has been offended, His cause wronged, and all made to endure the scourge of tongues. For which things we have desired to make conscience of mourning before the Lord, both in public and private. As the unwarrantable manner of the killing that curate of Carsphairn (though he was a man of death, both by the law of God and Man, and the fact not materially murder), it being gone about contrary to our declaration without deliberation, common or competent consent (the conclusion and deed being known only to three or four persons), in a rash and not in a Christian manner. And also other offences being committed at the time, which miscarriages have proven a means to stop and retard lawful, laudable, and warrantable proceedings, both as to the matter and manner. But let not guilty persons think themselves indemnified.

Howbeit, we require and hope that all whosoever in this land, our neighbor, or foreign lands which have not a willful prejudice at the cause and way of God will not give ear unto reports which stated enemies or prejudiced pretended friends give of us, that they will not impute the miscarriages of one or more persons to us or all of us; who desire that nothing may be looked on hereafter as our deed, which wants common consent or approbation, and that they will not receive a wrong impression of us and our proceedings. For we call the living God, the searcher of hearts, to witness that this only is our sincere desire and unfeigned resolution, to continue in the profession and obedience of the true religion of Jesus Christ, according to His Word, our Covenants, National and Solemn League, to defend the same, and to resist all contrary errors, corruptions, and innovations, according to our vocation, and the utmost of the power that God does or may put in our hands.

Now, we hope none who have not made a full surrender of conscience and are not bent to welcome Popery into the land will be offended at what we have here done. For, in the Lord's sight, we durst do no less, whatever occasion of persecution our God's enemies may take from the same. For we could not see at the time any other way to discharge our duty before the Lord to exonerate our consciences, and to free ourselves of the connivance of Popery, which we pray the Lord may stop, and not lay the guilt of its increase to the charge of us and our posterity....

Let King Jesus reign and all His enemies be scattered.

Alexander Shields, *An Informatory Vindication of a Poor, Wasted, Misrepresented Remnant of the Suffering Anti-Popish, Anti-Prelatic, Anti-Erastian, Anti-Sectarian, True Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, United Together in a General Correspondence. By Way of Reply to Various Accusations in Letters, Informations, and Conferences Given Forth Against Them* (Edinburgh: Drummond, 1744):191–204. [modernized]