ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Name of Candidate: Robert Gaston Hall

Degree: Ph.D., Divinity

Date: 1 November 1954

Title of Thesis: "Archibald Bruce of Whitburn (1746-1816), With Special Reference to His View of Church and State."

Archibald Bruce's entire ministry was spent in Whitburn. In 1768 a call was extended to him by the Anti-Burgher congregation there, and he continued to serve as its pastor until his death in 1816.

Although Bruce amassed a tremendous amount of information on a great variety of subjects, he failed to concentrate his efforts on the production of a definitive work. From his prolific pen there came numerous books and pamphlets on a great diversity of themes - Roman Catholicism, the French Revolution, patronage, the Sacramental Test, and the relationship of Church and State. Despite the wide range of his interests, he was dominated by a few ideas which he held to tenaciously. His two great concerns were the defense of the Reformed doctrine of Church and State and the protection of human liberty. His writings were often forged in the heat of controversy, and consequently, they are polemical in nature.

In 1786 Bruce was appointed professor of Divinity by the General Associate Synod, and he continued in that capacity until the disruption of his denomination in 1806. In theology he was not a creative thinker, and he made no original contributions in this field. Bruce reflected a warm evangelical Calvinism that was thoroughly permeated with the Marrow teaching. He insisted upon a universal offer of salvation, the doctrine of assurance, and the freedom of the Christian from the covenant of works. As a result of the Marrow influence he developed the doctrine of salvation, faith, and conversion more exhaustively than the others.

Bruce was a fearless champion of popular rights. He defended freedom of the press and the French Revolution. His ideas were expressed most forcefully in a book entitled Reflections on Freedom of Writing which was occasioned by King George III's Proclamation Against Seditious Writings. In it he advocated complete intellectual freedom, and he defended the right of dissent. After he had experienced difficulty in finding a publisher for one of his controversial pamphlets, he established his own printing press in the name in Whitburn. The writings of men like Bruce, as well as the activities of reformers such as Thomas Muir, prepared the way for the triumph of more liberal ideas.

Bruce frequently appeared before the public in the role of a religious controversialist. One of his major works, Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery, was directed against the repeal of the penal statutes which restricted the activities of Roman Catholics. He argued that Rome's doctrines and practices endangered all civil and religious liberties. He advocated a policy toward Roman Catholicism which would not find general approval among modern Protestants. In a series of pamphlets Bruce also attacked the Moderate Party of the Church of Scotland, for he was convinced that it had betrayed the great Reformation principles.

Although the Secessers of 1733 did not reject the principle of a national establishment of religion, there was a growing conviction within the Secession that the civil magistrate's role in religious affairs should be re-defined. Among both the Burghers and Anti-Burghers a controversy arose which produced further schisms. The New Lights argued that the power ascribed to the civil magistrate in the Confession of Faith was Erastian, while the Old Lights professed an unwavering loyalty to the
Covenants and maintained that it was the duty of rulers to employ their authority in the support of religion. In the General Associate (Anti-Burgher) Synod Bruce was the leader of the Old Lights. Two years after the adoption of the new Narrative and Testimony he and three other ministers withdrew and organized the Constitutional Associate Presbytery. The position of the Old Lights was in essential agreement with that of the Judicial Testimony of 1736 and of the Confession of Faith.

In no single work did Bruce give a complete and systematic statement of his view of Church and State. He envisioned a church that was both national and free. He asserted in unequivocal terms the headship of Christ over the church. He is its only Judge, Lawgiver, and King. This spiritual independence has certain important implications for the church. It has the right to determine its own doctrine and worship, to convene its courts, to elect its own office-bearers, and to proclaim the whole counsel of God. Although temporal and spiritual powers are totally distinct, the civil magistrate can legitimately assist in the promotion of Christ's Kingdom. It is his duty to enact laws in favor of the true religion and its adherents to participate in external reformations, and to defend the church against all outward violence and danger.

In the formulation of his concept of Church and State Bruce was influenced by the Reformation creeds, the Confession of Faith, and the official documents of the Secession Church. He emphasized two important truths which have been characteristic of the Church of Scotland's witness through the centuries—the spiritual independence of the church and at the same time the duty of the civil magistrate to promote the Kingdom of God in all appropriate ways.

Although Bruce made a number of positive contributions to the ecclesiastical and political life of his day, he has exerted a limited influence upon subsequent religious thought. With him quality became the victim of quantity, for he spread his interests and activities over too wide an area. His influence has also been limited by the nature of his works. He wrote primarily on topics of purely temporary interest. Nevertheless, the church is indebted to ministers who, like Bruce, have sought to serve God and to defend the truth as they understood it.
Dedicated to
My Mother and Father
Who instilled in me a deep love for my
Church and my Country
ARCHIBALD BRUCE OF WHITBURN (1746-1816)
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIS VIEW OF CHURCH AND STATE

--------- oo0 ---------

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the University of Edinburgh in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Robert Gaston Hall

November, 1954
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. ARCHIBALD BRUCE: A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. ARCHIBALD BRUCE: EDUCATOR AND THEOLOGIAN</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Educator</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Theologian</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. ARCHIBALD BRUCE: PROPAGANDIST FOR FREEDOM</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. In Defence of Freedom of the Press</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. In Defence of the French Revolution</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Propagandist as Printer</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ARCHIBALD BRUCE: RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIALIST</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. In Controversy with Rome</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. In Controversy with the Church of Scotland</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE SECESSION CHURCH: ITS VIEW OF CHURCH AND STATE</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Associate Presbytery and Synod</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Judicial Testimony</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Porteous Act</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Nairn Case</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Rebellion of 1745</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Burgher Controversy</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The General Associate Synod</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Address to the King on the State of Religion in the Nation</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Address of Loyalty to King George III</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Denunciation of the African Slave Trade</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Commemoration of the Revolution of 1688</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Loyalty Oaths to the British Constitution</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE NEW LIGHT CONTROVERSY: ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Origin and Development of the New Light Controversy</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Narrative and Testimony of 1804</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Defence of the New Lights</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The Defence of the Old Lights</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. M'Crie's Statement</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bruce's Review</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. ARCHIBALD BRUCE: HIS VIEW OF CHURCH AND STATE</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Sphere of the Church</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Origin and Nature of the Church</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Headship of Christ over the Church</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Authority of the Church</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Government and Constitution of the Church</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Church and State</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Sphere of the State</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Origin of the Civil Magistrate's Office</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Qualifications of the Civil Magistrate</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Duties of the Civil Magistrate</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Right of People to Choose Their Form of Government</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The State and War</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 261

BIBLIOGRAPHY 275

APPENDIXES 289
PREFACE

One of the ever recurring problems in American ecclesiastical life is the relationship of Church and State. This explosive issue often comes to the forefront in a number of varying forms - the church's political pronouncements, religious instruction in public schools, and the question of federal aid to the church's educational institutions. My own particular branch of American Presbyterianism, the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern), has traditionally emphasized the spiritual mission of the church and has been deeply suspicious of any ecclesiastical activity in the political sphere.

It was my desire to prepare a thesis on a phase of the Church and State conflict in Scotland, for I thought that it would illuminate our situation in the United States. The Very Reverend Principal Emeritus Hugh Watt, D.D., suggested a study of Archibald Bruce and the New Light Controversy in the General Associate Synod. Although Bruce and his colleagues were members of a small branch of the Secession, they defended the principle of a national establishment of religion. The issues involved in this conflict were to emerge more distinctly during the Voluntary Controversy.

Archibald Bruce wrote extensively on a great variety of subjects - Church and State, ecclesiastical history, the French
Revolution, and Roman Catholicism. Within the scope of this thesis it is impossible to deal adequately with all phases of his work. Consequently, it has been necessary to impose certain limitations on this study. I have chosen to make Bruce's concept of Church and State the major emphasis. His other contributions have, perforce, been subordinated to this main theme. For example, it was impossible to give an exhaustive treatment of his attitude toward the French Revolution. The re-action of the Scottish nation and church to that great event has been ably discussed by Dr. Henry W. Meikle in his book, Scotland and the French Revolution.

As a background for Bruce's concept of Church and State certain introductory material has been included. In successive Chapters (V and VI) I have endeavored to summarize briefly the political thought of the Secession Church and to trace the development of the New Light Controversy in the General Associate Synod.

For assistance in the preparation of this thesis I am indebted to many friends and associates. I am particularly grateful to the Very Reverend Principal Emeritus Hugh Watt, D.D., who suggested the topic and has given many helpful criticisms, including the reading of the manuscript. I am also indebted to the Reverend Professor J.H.S. Burleigh, D.D., and to the Reverend Dr. J.A. Lamb, Ph.D., and Miss E.R. Leslie, M.A., of the New College Library. I also gratefully acknowledge the
assistance of the Reverend J.B. Primrose, M.A., former New College Librarian; the Reverend W.B. M'Martin, M.A., Minister of the Brucefield Church, Whitburn; the Reverend Dr. John Campbell, D.D., of the General Assembly Library; and the Reverend R.L. Findlater, M.A., Clerk of the United Original Secession Synod.

American rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation have been used in this thesis except in direct quotations.

The majority of Archibald Bruce’s works have been collected in nine volumes which are deposited in the New College Library. In the footnotes they have been designated by the abbreviation, C.W. In the preparation of this thesis I have frequently used Adam Gib’s valuable collection of the important Secession documents, The Present Truth: A Display of the Secession-Testimony (Two Volumes).

New College, Edinburgh
November, 1954.
CHAPTER I

ARCHIBALD BRUCE: A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE

"The law of God and the common judgment of mankind demand some peculiar degree of sobriety, religion and decorum in those who approach the divine altar..."

- Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I, C.W. 7, p. 152.
CHAPTER I

ARCHIBALD BRUCE: A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE

Archibald Bruce was born in the year 1746\(^1\) on a farm near Denny\(^2\) in Stirlingshire. His birthplace was in an area rich in Scottish history. Ten miles away was Stirling with its castle on a precipitous rock overlooking the Forth Valley. Within this fortress the monarchs of Scotland had held their courts and parliaments. Here both James V and Mary had been crowned.

In Stirling Castle the infant James had been baptized on 15th December, 1566 with great pomp in the presence of many of the nobility and gentry and of ambassadors from England, France and Savoy. When James VI ascended to the throne of Scotland in 1578, he held his first parliament in Stirling Castle.\(^3\)

At the wooden bridge that spanned the Forth near Cambuskenneth Abbey, William Wallace had achieved his notable victory.

---

1 The exact date is unknown as the Registry of Births in Denny Parish for the year 1746 does not record his name. All accounts of Bruce's life give 1746 as the year of his birth, but there is no reference to the month or day in any of them. See for example, M'Kerrow, John, History of the Secession Church, p. 896.

2 Contemporaries of Bruce disagree as to the exact place of his birth. It is variously stated as Broomhall or Broomhill, near Denny. The Ordnance Survey Map for the area (published by Col. Sir H. James: 1865) does not record either a village or a farm in the parish of Denny by this name. There are two possible explanations for this discrepancy - (1) Broomhall (or Broomhill) might have been a small cottage on the Broomridge farm near Denny. (2) Broomhall House, some distance away on the Firth of Forth, was the residence of the Earl of Kincardine and Elgin whose family name was Bruce. There is the possibility that A. Bruce's father was formerly a farmer on the estate of a distant kinsman, thus the association with Broomhall. However, there is general agreement that A. Bruce was born on a farm near Denny and that his parents attended the Anti-Burgher Church in Loanhead.

over the English on 12th September, 1297.\footnote{Brown, P. Hume, History of Scotland, Vol. I, pp. 18, 19.} Within a few miles of Archibald Bruce’s birthplace was Bannockburn, where Robert Bruce had inflicted a defeat on the invader from the south on 24th June, 1314.\footnote{Ibid., p. 130.}

In the year that Archibald Bruce was born, Prince Charles Edward Stuart and his Highland Army had marched through Stirlingshire on their way north. At Falkirk, only a few miles from Denny, the Highlanders defeated the English forces under General Hawley. The action, which was fought in torrents of rain, had commenced at four o’clock in the afternoon on 17th January and was concluded in approximately twenty minutes.\footnote{Brown, History of Scotland, Vol. III, p. 251.} Charles was the master of the situation, and General Hawley, with a loss of over four hundred men, was forced to withdraw to Linlithgow and then to Edinburgh.\footnote{Ibid., p. 251.} Despite this victory little advantage accrued to the Highland Army as it was soon forced to raise the siege of Stirling Castle and retreat northwards to the disastrous defeat at Culloden on 16th April, 1746.

Speaking of the years following the Revolution of 1745, P. Hume Brown states:

The half-century in the history of Scotland that followed the Forty-five has been described as “the period of her most energetic, peculiar, and most various life;” and foreign observers, at least, would endorse the statement. During that period Scotland made her largest contribution to the world alike in the sphere of speculative and practical ideas; in literature, in philosophy, in economical science, she may then fairly claim to have been a pioneer in opening
up new possibilities for the future of the nations. This new flowering of the national spirit implied a complete breach with the past; and we have seen the successive steps by which the breach had been effected. Commerce and the modern spirit had vanquished the Stewarts and the political principles which they represented; and they had concurrently over-ridden the theocratic ideals which had been the bequest of the Reformation of 1560. It was in the purely secular sphere that Scotland now achieved what is set to her account by the world at large; religion, as it manifests itself in soul or mind, bore the stamp of mediocrity throughout the whole period.1

It was in this age of "secular interests" that Archibald Bruce was born, and in this period he spent his ministry in the rural village of Whitburn. Although he served a small division of Presbyterianism which has long ceased to exist as a separate entity, his voice was heard on the important political and religious issues of the late eighteenth century.

In 1755 the population of the entire Parish of Denny was only 1,392, and at this time the area was predominantly agricultural although there were a few factories along the Carron River for the manufacture of oatmeal, dye stuffs, and wool.2 A writer of the late eighteenth century stated that over a fourth part of the parish was the possession of two proprietors, and the remainder of the land was owned by one hundred small heritors who usually cultivated their own farms.3 The principal crops were oats, potatoes, and flax. Denny was the principal village of the parish, and there were three smaller ones - Hags, Fankerton, and Loanhead. A contemporary describes Denny as

1 Ibid., p. 265.
3 Ibid., p. 420.
"only a hamlet adjoining the church, containing unsophisticated prayerful families."

The ecclesiastical situation that existed in Denny was similar to that of most communities in Scotland. The usual divisions were to be found as there were, in addition to the Parish Church, a large number of Seceders and a small Cameronian group. However, there were no Roman Catholics or Episcopalians. In the parish there was a parochial school as well as several unendowed institutions to provide education for the young people.

Archibald Bruce's birthplace was near the village of Dennyloanhead, and there he grew to maturity amidst the characteristic austerity of rural life. His early years are shrouded in obscurity; consequently, little is known of his background. His parents, who belonged to the agricultural class, were of humble circumstances, but the Bruce family was highly respectable and noted for its piety. Through several successive generations it had furnished its complement of laborers to the ministry. Bruce was a prominent name in this part of Scotland, for it was the family name of the Earl of Kincardine and Elgin who maintained his residence at Broomhall House on the Firth of Forth in Fife. However, there is no

2 Sinclair, op. cit., p. 421.
definite evidence to substantiate any family connection.

As a youth Archibald Bruce manifested a marked personal piety as well as a keen thirst for knowledge. Because his thoughts were directed toward the ministry even as a boy, his parents endeavored to provide him with an education that would prepare him for his chosen vocation. Their confined dwelling, filled with the activity inseparable from active agricultural employment, afforded no place of sufficient quiet and retirement for the youthful Bruce to pursue his studies. Consequently, a small room was built for him in a corner of the farm yard and designated "the chaumer."¹

Archibald Bruce received his initial education in one of the country schools of Denny Parish.² His religious instruction during this formative period was also given careful attention by his parents. He was nurtured amidst the simple-hearted godliness that was characteristic of most Scottish homes. The truths of the Bible and the Westminster Confession of Faith were held before him constantly, and the purity of the Reformation Church presented as the ideal toward which he should strive. The following description of scenes prevalent in households of the Secession will give some idea of the environment in which Bruce spent his early years:

Pious parents on the evening of the Lord's Day gathered their families around them, and after careful examination

¹ The United Secession Magazine, March, 1844, p. 114.
not only on the Shorter Catechism and the discourses heard in the church during the day, they brought the instructive proceedings to an appropriate close by engaging in family worship. On week-day evenings it was not unusual for Secession families to sit around the hearth, and after some telling biography from the Scots' Worthies had been read, such as that of Guthrie of Stirling, Alex. Peden, or Brown of Priesthill, to talk about the troubous times during which these Christian heroes had lived, and the importance of imitating their conduct by handing down unimpaired the principles of civil and religious liberty.1

If these scenes present a true picture of Bruce's family background, it is not difficult to explain or understand the subsequent course of his life and ministry.

The simplicity of his manner, his deep and fervent piety, his hostility to oppression of every kind, and his fondness for study were all the natural outgrowth of his early associations and the influence of his home.

Bruce's parents were members of the Anti-Burgher Church in Dennyloanhead.2 This congregation had its origin in one of those disruptive struggles that were characteristic of the National Church in this period. In both 1735 and 1738 the laird of Herbertshire, professing to act for the Crown, had named presentees who were unacceptable to the majority of the adherents in the Denny Parish Church. The General Assembly, after attempting to mediate the differences, ordered the settlement of the presentee in both instances. In December, 1738 a majority of the heritors, elders, and heads of the families of the Parish Church

1 Quoted by Scott, David, Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church, p. 52.
requested to be taken under the inspection of the Associate Presbytery. They were united with other Seceders of the district under the designation of "The Correspondence of Falkirk," and they met for worship in various places throughout the area. In 1746 a congregation was organized in Dennyloanhead, and at the breach within the ranks of the Associate Synod in 1747 the majority of them adhered to the Anti-Burgher faction.1

As a youth Archibald Bruce came under the tutelage of the Reverend James Walker, the minister of the Anti-Burgher Church in Dennyloanhead.2 It was customary for Secession ministers to conduct a week-day class for the young people of their congregations at which they expounded a portion of the Westminster Confession of Faith or the doctrinal section of the Judicial Testimony. After this lecture the young people would often read through in rotation such narratives as the battles of Drumclog and Bothwell Bridge. Then the minister would give explanations designed to instil in the students a spirit of religious patriotism and an abhorrence of Catholicism and prelacy.3

In his writings Bruce makes only one allusion to an experience of his childhood. During the period of his controversy with the General Associate Synod over the revision of the Secession standards, he recalled the occasion on which he as a lad of

---

1 Mackelvie, William, Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church, pp. 271, 272.
2 Christian Repository and Religious Register, September, 1816, p. 574.
3 Scott, op. cit., p. 32.
eleven or twelve appeared before the session with another youth to give accession to the Judicial Testimony. The solemnity of the ceremony made a vivid impression upon his mind, for the moderator addressed them in this manner: "Now, Lads, you have done as much just now as may bring you to the gallows yet: the same cause cost many honest folks formerly their lives."¹

When he was only fourteen or fifteen years of age, Archibald Bruce commenced his studies at the University of Glasgow.² This would mean that he matriculated in either 1760 or 1761. However, there is no record of his academic career as he is not listed among the students or graduates of the University.³ At this time Glasgow had a fourteen member faculty presided over by Principal William Leechman.⁴ Among the professors were Adam Smith, LL.D., professor of Moral Philosophy, and his successor Thomas Reid, D.D., and John Anderson, professor of Natural Philosophy. The Arts curriculum embraced Latin, Greek, Logic, Moral Philosophy, Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy, and the completion of this course of study required five sessions.⁵

Archibald Bruce commenced his theological education in the

3 See Addison, W. Innis, The Roll of Graduates of the University of Glasgow, 1727 to 1897, and The Matriculation Album of the University of Glasgow, 1728 to 1853.
4 Coutts, James, A History of the University of Glasgow, p. 268.
5 Kerr, John, Scottish Education, p. 235.
Anti-Burgher Divinity Hall in Alloa under Professor William Moncrieff in 1764. At this time it was customary for the Hall to convene in March and remain in session for nine weeks. The time prescribed for the completion of the course was five years. During the long recess students were required to pursue their theological studies under the superintendence of their presbyteries and local pastors. In the interval between sessions at the Divinity Hall it was not uncommon for students to attend one of the Scottish Universities, thus pursuing their two courses simultaneously.

Before a young man was admitted to the Divinity Hall, he was subjected to a rigorous examination by a committee of the Synod on Logic, Metaphysics, and Moral Philosophy. Each prospective student was then called in alone and examined privately on his personal religion and views of theological

1 Brown, George, Alphabetical List of the Students of Divinity of the United Secession Church from the Rise of the Secession till the year 1840. I have accepted this date (1764) rather than 1761 as given by Mackelvie and Scott for the following reasons: (1) the general reliability of Dr. Brown's information, (2) the dates of Brown's and Mackelvie's compilations are approximately the same, (3) this date fits more logically into the chronology of Bruce's life and (4) Bruce and his other biographers refer only to Mr. William Moncrieff as his teacher. Dr. Brown's Manuscript is deposited in the General Assembly Library, Tolbooth-St. John's Church, Edinburgh. It contains a list of the divinity students of the Secession Church with the dates of their entry in the Divinity Hall, their licence, ordination, death with brief notes appended. The editors of Mackelvie's Annals and Statistics of the U.P. Church expressed their indebtedness to this volume (p. viii). Robert Small in his History of the Congregations of the U.P. Church says that this volume was of inestimable service. (Vol. I, p. viii).

2 Landreth, P., The United Presbyterian Divinity Hall, p. 107. (See also p. 39 and p. 93).

3 M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 780.

4 Ibid., p. 780.
The textbook employed by Mr. Moncrieff was the Medulla of Marck, and Turretine's system was the one recommended to the students. A former student at Alloa, Mr. Alexander Pringle of Perth, has stated that the professor usually delivered four lectures each week and that once or twice weekly the members of the class were required to discuss various theological subjects. On Saturday a discourse was given on a chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and this was followed by a discussion in which the students participated.

A short time prior to his ordination, a formidable difficulty arose for Bruce began to entertain doubts about the terms of communion in the Secession Church. Specifically, he had reservations about the validity of an established religion as expounded in the National Covenant. This was a pivotal experience in his life and must be examined carefully, for it wielded a great influence upon his subsequent thinking on the subject of Church and State.

While Bruce was studying theology in Alloa, he began a correspondence with Thomas Gillespie, the founder of the Relief Presbytery. During this period of doubt and uncertainty he did not sever his relationship with the General Associate Synod; however, he was not permitted to deliver the usual

---

1 Ibid., p. 780.
2 Ibid., p. 780.
3 Landreth, op. cit., p. 121.
4 Ibid., p. 121.
5 Bruce's Review, pp. 139, 140.
6 Ibid., pp. 139, 140.
student discourses in the Divinity Hall as he had not subscribed to the Covenants. There were two salient emphases in the teaching of Thomas Gillespie: the headship of Christ over the church and the rights of conscience. He taught that the church was entirely distinct from the kingdoms of this world and that the civil magistrate had no right to interfere with it. He believed that an established religion, constituted by human authority, was contrary to the laws of Christ. Thomas Gillespie opposed the principles embodied in the National Covenant and the Solemn League as they were designed to force the true religion upon men by civil penalties, thus abrogating the fundamental right of conscience. It was the duty of the civil magistrate to recommend religion to his subjects by example but without abridging private judgment and choice. It is interesting to observe that these views were closely akin to those adopted by Bruce’s Synod in 1806 when the Narrative and Testimony was revised and modified.

When Archibald Bruce was at the point of being accepted into the fellowship of the Relief Presbytery, his difficulties were resolved, and he states that he was able “to discern the specious snare in which he had nearly been caught.” Once he had examined carefully the New Light teaching and had come close to appropriating it, he repudiated any affinity with this doctrine. Throughout the remainder of his ministry he staunchly

---

1 Struthers, Gavin, The History of the Rise, Progress and Principles of the Relief Church, pp. 270-279.
2 Bruce’s Review, p. 140.
opposed the entry and development of these principles in the General Associate Synod.

Writing to Thomas M'Crie, who was having a similar difficulty some years later, Archibald Bruce gave this account of the experience that he had while a student:

I once felt something of the struggle you now undergo; like that of one who has adventurously pushed out into the middle of the stream, but instead of reaching the other side, finds himself constrained to return: though this was happily over with me before I had come forward into public life. Having made exceptions to some parts of our principles, and made some advances, though cautiously, towards a laxer and more fashionable system, never till the time when I was about to discard them, did they appear in such a convincing and satisfactory light. After entering into a course of correspondence with a leader of a certain modern party, and submitting for a time the direction of my studies to their advice, and in the juncture when I received a letter intimating their design of taking steps towards license, I found myself obliged to return no other answer, whatever constructions might be put upon it, than a frank recantation: a step that, in reflection from that day to this, never gave me an anxious thought, but much the reverse. This was one of the critical incidents of my life, as to which I have reason ever gratefully to acknowledge the care and goodness of Him who is the leader of the blind. I doubt not but in aiming singly at following and honouring the Lord, you will see cause, in the event, to make a similar acknowledgement. And in vain will the same snare be spread in the sight of any bird that is hardly escaped from it.1

Being now fully confirmed in the principles of his denomination, Archibald Bruce was licensed by the Presbytery of Stirling, meeting in Dennyloanhead, in 1768.2 The subject of his discourse was National Covenanting, using as the text Isaiah, 44:5: "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand

1 Quoted by M'Crie, Thomas, Life of Thomas M'Crie, D.D., pp. 77, 78.
2 Bruce's Review, p. 223.
unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

Soon thereafter he was recommended to the members of the congregation in Whitburn by the Reverend Adam Gib who had been present at his examination.¹ When he was only twenty-two years of age, Bruce was ordained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh on 24th August, 1768 and installed in the church at Whitburn.² The call was signed by thirty-three male members or heads of families and by thirty adherents.⁴

There was a predominance of Seceders in Whitburn because the parish had been the scene of a patronage controversy. In 1730 Whitburn had been disjoined from Livingstone and made into a separate parish, and it was understood that the people were to choose their own minister. However, the House of Lords decreed that the patron of Livingstone had the right to nominate the presentee for the new church in Whitburn; and consequently, a large number of the adherents went into the Secession.⁴

On 31st October, 1763 the General Associate Synod made Whitburn the seat of a new congregation as it was centrally located and could serve the members of this communion in the surrounding area.⁵ In 1766 a building was erected on land that had been donated by a Mr. Wardrop of Culp.⁶ The site of

¹ Ibid., p. 224.
⁵ Small, op. cit., p. 232.
⁶ Scott, op. cit., p. 438.
this church was on the Longridge road. This building, which had two levels and an outside stair, served as the church for the congregation and as the Divinity Hall for the Synod. In it the students lived and attended lectures, and it was usually referred to as "The Barracks." During his ministry in Whitburn Bruce's stipend never exceeded fifty pounds, and it is stated that the congregation was two and a half years delinquent in payment at his death. The manse which Bruce occupied was located just across from the church and was a simple two storey building with a thatched roof. Here he lived alone during the forty-eight years of his ministry in Whitburn for he was never married.

When Bruce came to Whitburn in 1768, the parish was still predominantly agricultural, although coal had been discovered in the area and was being mined on a small scale. Most of the land was enclosed and cultivated with oats and potatoes as the principal crops. By 1793 the village had five hundred inhabitants, and the population of the parish was 1,322.

There was a small cotton factory in Whitburn employing between thirty and forty people at about one shilling a day. A contemporary writer states that there were three shops and six ale houses which "are tolerably well frequented."

---

1 *Brucefield Church Bulletin*, No. 5, December and January, 1953, p. 2. This building was demolished only twenty years ago when alterations were made in the road.
3 The manse, greatly modified, is still in use. At the union of 1929 the United Free Church in Whitburn chose the name of Brucefield, thus perpetuating the memory of its first minister.
4 Sinclair, *op. cit.*, p. 299.
In this small and secluded rural community Archibald Bruce was destined to spend his entire ministry. In its comparative quiet he was able to cultivate and develop his vast intellectual capacities.

In his personal appearance Archibald Bruce was very striking. It has been said that when he came to Edinburgh his aristocratic bearing, as seen in the street, so struck the crowd that few could resist turning around to watch his arresting figure.¹ A former student, Thomas M'Crie, Jr., has given this description of him:

In his personal appearance, Mr. Bruce was remarkably dignified and venerable. With a spare erect figure of the middle size, and a noble cast of countenance, resembling the Roman, dressed with scrupulous neatness, and wearing the full-bottomed wig, long cane and large shoe-buckles of the olden time, he presented to the last the polite bearing of the gentleman with the sedateness of the scholar and the minister. And yet, with all his graveness of aspect and demeanour, he had an uncommon fund of wit, which he could indulge in playful humour or poignant satire, and which rendered his company peculiarly engaging.²

In the preface to his Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I, Professor Bruce said: "If a man serve God in his generation, and discharge the important duties of life at all, he must resolve to do it, according to the proportion of his powers, combined with the opportunities, and circumstances of greater or less advantage, he enjoys, for the exercise of them."³ This injunction might be taken as embodying

¹ Scott, Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church, pp. 519, 520.
² M'Crie, op. cit., p. 56.
³ Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I, (C.W. 7, p. vi.).
the principles that governed Bruce in his pastoral ministry in Whitburn.

Although Archibald Bruce was active as a professor, author, and controversialist, he did not neglect the normal ministrations of the pastor and preacher. As few of his sermons are extant, it is impossible to render a detailed analysis of his homiletical method and pulpit manner. Bruce's delivery was unimpressive as he had an unfortunate vocal impediment which caused him to speak in a halting and hesitant manner. He was not a popular preacher in the tradition of Ralph Erskine or John Brown of Haddington as he was too pedantic and verbose. His sermons were devoid of any ornamentation, and he did not attempt to be eloquent or rise above the understanding of his congregation. The chief characteristic that impresses the reader is his austere simplicity. There were few striking expressions, telling phrases, or vivid illustrations. In his evaluation of Alexander Morus as a preacher Bruce stated that a sermon should be characterized by doctrinal soundness, spiritual simplicity, plain but expressive language, careful arrangement, and serious and earnest address. In his own pulpit discourses he endeavored to display these qualities.

Bruce's sermons were characteristic of those preached by the Seceders. His outline was usually rather complicated, and it was not uncommon for him to speak for over two hours.

1 Landreth, P., The United Presbyterian Divinity Hall, p. 124.
3 Scott, op. cit., p. 521.
His homiletical method is well illustrated in a sermon entitled "The Gospel Salvation Described", based on Acts 16:31. Following his usual pattern there was a long introduction in which he gave the historical setting of the text. This was followed by the major division of the sermon which he called "The Head." It was divided into three main sections, and each of these was broken down into numerous sub-divisions. The concluding section of the sermon was designated "The Improvement" and consisted of a series of practical injunctions and applications.1

Despite the limitations and deficiencies of Bruce's method and delivery his sermons were well received, for a frequent listener, Dr. Thomas M'Crie, commented:

He was more qualified for writing than public speaking; but although his utterance was slow (and he had no claim to the attraction of delivery), yet his discourses from the pulpit always commanded the attention of the judicious and serious by the profound views and striking illustrations of divine truth which they contained, and by the vein of solid and evangelical piety which ran through them.2

As the minister of a congregation that was dispersed over seven or eight parishes, Bruce had an arduous schedule of pastoral duties.3 In addition to the Sunday services there was the Wednesday evening class in the meeting-house. Furthermore, he had to travel over great distances to visit in the

1 See Bruce, Practical Discourses, pp. 127-152.
3 Bruce's Review, p. 142, n. 1.
homes of his congregation that he might console the sick and bereaved, catechise the young people, and prepare the families for the observance of the Lord's Supper.

There is a dearth of material about the personal life of Bruce because he neither kept a diary nor shared his intimate thoughts with his associates. By nature he was meditative and reserved, and he withdrew from society almost to the extent of becoming a recluse. His leisure time was devoted to his scholarly pursuits as he was a conscientious student throughout his life. He possessed an inquisitive mind that avidly sought knowledge from all sources. A careful perusal of his published works reveals his prodigious learning and erudition. His books abound in quotations from Greek mythology, the classics, philosophy, and ecclesiastical history as well as contemporary literature. Bruce's historical scholarship is best illustrated in a book entitled *Annus Secularis*. The occasion of its publication was the commemoration on 5th November, 1788 of the Revolution of 1688. In this copiously documented volume he made a detailed survey of the origin and development of religious festivals. It is his major thesis that the worship of the early church was marked by a simplicity that was corrupted largely through pagan influences. To substantiate this position he quotes both the early Christian writers - Justin Martyr, Athanasius, Eusebius, and Chrysostom - and the Reformation leaders - Calvin, Farel,
Bucer, Bullinger, and others. His treatise, *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery*, revealed an equally thorough knowledge of all aspects of papal history. The breadth of his learning is seen likewise in the diversity of subjects on which he wrote for the "Christian Magazine." In 1797 he published in it a series of articles on Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, and other early Christian figures. He also contributed articles on "Marrow Theology" and on preparation for the ministry as well as numerous sermons.

Although Bruce amassed a tremendous amount of information on a great variety of subjects, he failed to concentrate his efforts on the production of a definitive work. Rather he chose to write primarily on controversial issues that were agitating the church and nation in his day. From his prolific pen there came numerous books and pamphlets on a great diversity of subjects - Roman Catholicism, the French Revolution, patronage, the Sacramental Test, as well as political and theological treatises. He attained the rare distinction of keeping a printer busy publishing his works. The fault of Bruce's writings was their great diffusiveness.

Comparing Dr. Thomas M'Crie to Professor Bruce, Dr. James A. Wylie states:

*Dr. M'Crie studied Theology under Professor Bruce. The master lived in the pupil, but with powers more concentrated and with an aim more steadily directed to one great object. Professor Bruce spread abroad his powers, and scattered his efforts amongst a multitude of subjects, drawn thereto by the richness and prolificness of his mind, and by the abundance*
of leisure which he enjoyed in his seclusion, Dr. M'Crie gathered in his powers. ¹

Another aspect of Bruce's versatility is to be seen in his favorite diversion which was the composition of poetry. His poems were written on a great variety of subjects over a period of years and were published in contemporary periodicals such as the "Scots Magazine," "Ruddiman's Weekly Magazine," and the "Christian Magazine." The earliest of his poetical works bears the date of 1762. In 1812 he collected his various poems and published them under the title, Poems: Serious and Amusing by a Rural Divine.

Although Bruce's poetical works do not possess a great literary merit, nevertheless, many of them do reveal his deep personal piety and religious faith. One of his best poems is entitled "The Christian's Inviolable Security," a paraphrase of Romans 8:31-39. A portion of it is quoted to give an impression of his poetical gifts.

O matchless love of God in Christ!  
That flows in such abundant streams:  
Who can its gracious influence stop?  
Or interrupt its warming beams?

Shall all the train of ills below?  
Shall all the rage of earth or hell?  
Shall tribulation, famine, pain?  
Or sword, or prison's darksome cell?

Shall height or depth? shall changing life?  
Or death in terrors all array'd?  
Shall tyrants, - or satanic powers,  
With their dread banners full display'd?

¹ Quoted by Scott, op. cit., p. 531.
What in creation's present frame,
What in the circling round of time?
Or what in ages yet to come,
Shall part from Christ, and heav'n's bright clime?

'O'er all of these', may Christians' boast,
'Our conquest is already won:
'With more than conquest we are crown'd,
'Through love of Him who fills the throne.'

In addition to devoting considerable time to his studies and pastoral duties, Archibald Bruce was an active churchman, for he participated in all of the affairs of the General Associate Synod. He had a prominent role in several of the controversies between the Synod and some of its ministers who were serving churches in North America. He was a member of the committee which recommended, in August, 1780, that Mr. James Mason be deposed for his co-operation with clergymen of the Burgher persuasion in New York. Bruce was an outspoken critic of the Presbytery of Pennsylvania which declared its virtual independence from the Synod in 1788. In August, 1782 he was designated as one of the ministers to go to London and participate in the ordination of Mr. George Jerment as the colleague of the Reverend David Wilson of the Scots Congregation, Bow Lane. The Synod gave further indication of its esteem for Mr. Bruce in 1788 when he was elected its moderator.

It was just two years after his settlement in Whitburn that Archibald Bruce appeared before the public as an author.

1 Bruce, Poems: Serious and Amusing by a Rural Divine, (C.W. 19, pp. 84, 85.)
2 M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 315.
3 Ibid., pp. 349, 350.
5 Logan, Robert, The United Free Church, p. 230.
In 1770 he published *The Formidable Triumvirate*, a witty and satirical poem in which he lamented the decline of true Presbyterian doctrine and morals. In the preface he stated:

But how enlightened and improved are our times! What a change to the better! Instead of that sour-faced, weeping figure of presbytery set up by John Knox, we have got a smiling and truly amiable form, as moderate and indulgent as one could wish, such as no modern beau or belle need be shocked at. A man may now live and think and look exactly in the fashion, and yet be in every respect a good presbyterian.¹

In *The Formidable Triumvirate* Bruce depicted three friends who gathered one night to rejoice over their liberation from strict Presbyterianism. Formerly they had been forced to comply with its stringent demands, but now they speak gleefully of their newly discovered freedom. One of them declares:

No synods, presbyteries or sessions
Will vex us with their rude citations.
We'll here confirm our alliance,
And set our clergy at defiance;
We'll laugh at God, and all his ire,
And scorn his sacrilegious fire.²

In 1778 Archibald Bruce became involved in his first public controversy. In that year Parliament enacted a law that repealed certain of the penal statutes affecting Roman Catholics in England.³ An attitude of near panic was created when it was rumored that a bill of a similar import, applicable to Scotland, was to be introduced.⁴ With the publication of *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery* Bruce emerged as one of the most able spokesmen of the Anti-Catholic forces. This

¹[Bruce], *The Formidable Triumvirate*, p. 11.
²Ibid., p. 7.
⁴Ibid., p. 278.
work was a copiously documented treatise in which he traced the whole span of papal history, giving incisive criticisms of its maxims, methods, and intrigues.

The publication of Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery brought the scholarship of Archibald Bruce before the General Associate Synod. Consequently, when Professor William Moncrieff died on 4th August, 1786, Bruce, along with Mr. John Heugh, was nominated to fill the vacancy. However, Adam Gib objected to the appointment of Mr. Bruce to this office, and he entered a protest in which he declared:

...that as he has advanced principles subversive of a most material and fundamental part of the Secession Testimony, concerning the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, principles meaning to subject the consciences of Christians to the lordship of civil powers, and transferring to these powers the special privileges and business of the church, a putting him into that office may expose young men to a being tainted with these principles...2

On the following day Mr. Gib retracted his objections, and the minutes state that Mr. Bruce was chosen by a great majority.3

Despite this vote of the Synod, Bruce was still reluctant to accept the professorship. He felt that there might be some divergence between his position and that of the Synod on the role of the civil magistrate in religious matters. He was, therefore, insistent upon expounding his views

---

2 Bruce's Review, p. 211.
explicitly on this controversial subject. Furthermore, he objected that the heavy burden of his pastoral duties would prohibit the study that was necessary for the preparation of a course of lectures. The Synod then appointed a committee to meet with Mr. Bruce. His scruples being resolved as a result of their conversation, he was duly inducted into the chair of Divinity. He continued in this capacity until the division of the Synod in 1806 over the New Light Controversy.

The Synod voted to pay Mr. Bruce the sum of fifty pounds per year to compensate for his labor. He was reluctant to accept a stipend because none of his predecessors had received compensation. Professor Bruce stated on a later occasion that none of this money was used for his personal benefit but rather to provide better accommodation for the students and to purchase books for the theological library of the Divinity Hall in Whitburn.

The debate over the appointment of Professor Bruce was important, for it was the prelude to a controversy that was to create a serious breach within the ranks of the General Associate Synod. Increasingly the members of this body came to favor a modification of the Secession Testimony that would restrict the role of the civil magistrate in religious matters.

2 Ibid., pp. 240, 241.
4 Ibid., p. 123.
5 Bruce's Review, p. 259.
Realising that New Light tendencies were gaining the ascen-
dancy in the Synod, Professor Bruce accommodated his teachings
to this trend for a time. He avoided a full statement of his
views and omitted instruction on certain contested chapters
of the Westminster Confession of Faith.\(^1\) He commented on his
actions in this way:

So far did he show deference to the scruples of his
bretheren; so far was he from imposing his own views
on these points, or from urging any to a premature
explication of their sentiments upon them, while they
were under Synodical consideration. Perhaps he can-
not so easily be justified in using such caution, and in
carrying his deference so far. None of his predecessors
in that charge, it may be presumed, ever acted a simi-
lar part.\(^2\)

When Bruce saw that a continuation in office would lead
to a drastic compromise of his views, he withdrew from the
Synod.

From the publication of his first volume in 1770 until
his death, Archibald Bruce devoted considerable time to
literary endeavors. The quietness and leisure of his country
home offered him an opportunity for studying and writing which
was utilized to the fullest extent. Speaking of Bruce as an
author, P. Landreth states:

\[\ldots\text{in whatever he spoke and wrote, his style, unlike}\]
\[\text{that of his clerical bretheren both in the Secession}\]
\[\text{and in the Church of Scotland, was, in an exquisite}\]
\[\text{combination of elements and qualities, distinctively}\]
\[\text{literary. Mr. Bruce, indeed, was the first of the}\]
\[\text{Anti-Burghers who attained to a literary style; and}\]
\[\text{his style was rich and racy, fresh and full of felici-
\[\text{tous phraseology. His versatility of intellect, that}\]
\[\text{had been enlivened by a free fancy which was only under}\]
\[\text{the reins of a just judgment and a fine taste, was re-
\[\text{presented by language copious and varied, fluent and}\]

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 206.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 206.
forcible, finely tinted and shaded.¹

Bruce was a most prolific author as he published books and pamphlets on many of the issues that were agitating the church and nation in his day. In 1797 six volumes came from his pen. In addition to being an author he was a translator and editor. His studies were not restricted to the literature of his own tongue, for he was particularly interested in French ecclesiastical history. He mastered the French language in order to translate certain theological works into English. In 1797 he published a translation of Pictet’s True and False Religion Examined and the Protestant Reformation Vindicated. To this work he prefaced a brief biography of Professor Benedict Pictet and a discussion of his various theological writings. A few years later Mr. Bruce published A Critical Account of the Life, Character and Discourses of Mr. Alexander Morus. To this biography he appended a selection of Morus’ sermons which he translated from the French.

In 1798 Archibald Bruce made a notable contribution to the ecclesiastical literature of Scotland when he published the Memoirs of the Public Life of Mr. James Hog. Hitherto this document had not achieved wide circulation as it existed only in manuscript form and was confined to the libraries of a few ministers. A portion of it had been published by

¹ Landreth, The United Presbyterian Divinity Hall, pp. 123, 124.
John Brown of Haddington in a collection entitled The Christian, The Student, and The Pastor Exemplified. However, this abridgement omitted the sections that were related to the public affairs of the Church of Scotland in this period. A full manuscript of the Memoirs, that had formerly belonged to Mr. Thomas Mair of Orwell, had been deposited in the theological library at Whitburn, and it was used as the basis of the edition issued by Professor Bruce.¹

In the early part of the nineteenth century the General Associate Synod was to be divided into two opposing factions by a controversy that originated in 1791. The immediate cause of this conflict was a decision to revise and simplify the Secession Testimony.

Professor Bruce vigorously opposed this revision; and consequently, throughout the period between 1793 and 1804, he tabled frequent protestations against the actions of the Synod. He became the leader of a group known as the Old Lights.

A crisis was precipitated on 2 May, 1804 when the Synod formally enacted the Narrative and Testimony and set a date for all ministers to enter into the Covenants.² Messrs. Bruce, James Aitken, Thomas M'Crie, and James Hog dissented. When the Synod refused to redress the grievances enumerated in their protest, these four ministers presented a paper which was a

¹ Bruce, Memoirs of the Public Life of Mr. James Hog, (C.W. 13, p. v).
² M'Kerrow, op. cit., p. 440.
virtual declinature of its authority.¹

When the General Associate Synod met in Glasgow on 28th August, 1806, the four dissenting ministers convened in Whitburn and organized themselves into the Constitutional Associate Presbytery.²

Speaking of the four original members of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery - Bruce, Aitken, Hog, and M'Crie - David Brown has said:

But on all hands it will be admitted that the first and last of these deposed brethren were the most distinguished ornaments of the Secession Church, and that the other two were second to none in general and just esteem.³

Bruce was formally deposed by the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh on 7th October, 1806 on the charge that he had followed "a schismatical and disorderly course in having withdrawn from all ministerial and judicial fellowship with them."⁴ Mr. Alexander Oliver, minister at Craig-Mailen, was designated to intimate the sentence to the congregation on the third Sabbath of the month. On hearing of his appointment, he rose to his feet and exclaimed: "Me depose the Professor, Moderator! me preach his pulpit vacant! Why, the people would stane me like a dog!"⁵ The terms of the deposition were never directly intimated to the congregation but were left "to the accidents of posting,"⁶ as Mr. Bruce stated.

¹ Ibid., pp. 449-451.
³ Brown, David, Life of the Late John Duncan, p. 24.
⁶ Bruce's Review, p. 178.
While the Presbytery was debating his fate, Professor Bruce was reading the eleventh chapter of Jeremiah at family worship. In this passage the prophet rebuked the people of Judah for their disobedience of the covenant, and his life was threatened by the men of Anathoth. Mr. Bruce saw a parallel between his experience and that of Jeremiah for he wrote:

> From the latter part of it [Jeremiah 11] he [Bruce] considered himself as admonished to be prepared for such an event as that which actually happened. He closed the book under some impression that devices, in some respect similar, might probably, though unknown to him, be devised against him; and with the reflection, that there was no reason to be surprised if this should be the case, when even a prophet, speaking by immediate commission from heaven, met with still worse treatment. This happened about the very time, by accounts, when the Presbytery were fabricating the sentence under review, and the committee had retired to draw up the form and words of it. He is as far as any from regarding unaccountable or unreasonable impressions, that may suddenly arise in the mind from passages of scripture, much more from expecting an extraordinary revelation of events to be made that way. Yet there is sometimes such a striking coincidence between what is found in scripture, and the particular circumstances or events, personal or public, that may be taking place, as cannot reasonably be overlooked."

In his defence of what he conceived to be the truth, Bruce was convinced that he was following the example of the Erskines and the Reformers. He maintained that this was not to be accounted arrogance, for every minister and Christian could feel some affinity with the most eminent saints and prophets when he combated errors that endangered the purity of the church:

> ... who are the Bostons and the Erskines? who were Luther and Calvin? Nay, who was Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, Jeremiah, or Elias? but men of like passion with others, who only by the grace of God were what they were; who were made faithful so far and so long as that grace enabled them, and no farther, that they may exhibit to all who came after them,
at once examples of fidelity and of infirmity, and so a lesson of humility and fear.¹

Throughout this period of strife in Synod and Presbytery, harmonious conditions existed within the congregation in Whitburn. During this time of turmoil the minister continued his normal pastoral duties, and it appears that he was drawn even closer to his flock. Bruce commented on this difficult period in these words:

The minister hath felt as much complacence and comfort in his ministrations, as well as in the fellowship of his people, as perhaps at any former period of his ministry: so that none need, by the example of such sufferings, be deterred from taking a share in the afflictions of the Gospel, for along with these, the Lord oft makes his consolations to abound.²

On the first Sunday after receiving intimation of his deposition, Mr. Bruce preached on the text, Daniel 6:10: -

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his window being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before God, as he did aforetime."³

Following the sermon he delivered an address to the congregation in which he denounced his deposition as null and void because the charges were unscriptural; the procedure was illegal; and his ministerial freedom was violated.⁴

The closing decade of Archibald Bruce's life was relatively uneventful. After the crisis of 1804, except for one brief

¹ Ibid., p. 162.
² Ibid., p. 180.
³ Ibid., p. 404 (Appendix) n. 1.
⁴ Ibid., p. 412 (Appendix).
interval, he retired from public controversy and devoted himself to his scholarly and literary pursuits. In 1808 he published an elaborate defence of the ministers who had protested against the imposition of the New Testimony under the title A Review of the Proceedings of The General Associate Synod and Some Presbyteries. He continued as Professor of Divinity for the Constitutional Associate Presbytery although the number of his students was greatly diminished by the breach in the Synod in 1806. Likewise, he was active as an author as he wrote several books during this period. Among them was a revision of An Historical Account of the Most Remarkable Earthquakes and Volcanic Eruptions which was published posthumously in 1820. This rather curious book commences with the earthquakes mentioned in the Bible and brings the chronicle to within two years of the author's death. In 1813 Bruce appeared briefly before the public in a pamphlet urging Parliament to permit all Protestant churches to engage in missionary work in India.¹

During the last year of his life there was a marked decline in Mr. Bruce's health for he was seized by frequent fainting spells.² Although he was not feeling well, he preached on Sunday, 18th February, 1816. That afternoon as he was sitting in his study conversing with a friend, he died quietly.³

After receiving notification of Mr. Bruce's death,

¹ See [Bruce], The Interest and Claims of the Church and Nation of Scotland in the Settlement of Religion in India, (C.W. 5).
² Scots Magazine, April, 1816, p. 319.
³ The United Secession Magazine, March, 1844, p. 121.

The table of moveable feasts in a contemporary Prayer Book indicates that Sunday fell on the 18 February in 1816 rather than on the 19th as this Memoir states.
Thomas M'Crie wrote a letter to Mr. James Aitken in which he expressed his high esteem for their former friend. There had been a very close and intimate relationship between Mr. M'Crie and his teacher in the Divinity Hall at Whitburn. Professor Bruce had been his counselor during his period of uncertainty about the role of the civil magistrate in religious matters. He had likewise encouraged him in his historical studies.

I cannot describe to you the situation in which I am. My heart felt for some time as a stone, and even yet when I am recovered somewhat from the shock, there remaineth no strength in me. The early reverence which I felt for him as a teacher, mellowed by the familiarity and intimacy to which I have since been admitted with him, the interest which he condescended to take in my affairs, and which he allowed me to take in his, the pleasure which I felt and the benefit which I derived from his conversation and his correspondence, have all contributed to make the stroke in some respects more heavy to me than perhaps it is to any of his brethren, and gave him a place in my affections of which I was not fully aware, until I was told that I could no longer call him by the name of friend and father. But how selfish am I to intrude and dwell upon my poor interest and personal feelings, when the church and world have suffered such a loss!

In any appraisal of Archibald Bruce's personal character, allowances must be made for his Secession background and the general tenor of the times in which he lived. Like any man he was a child of his own age. He lived in a period of intense ecclesiastical and political controversy, and these conflicts were all reflected in his writings. Furthermore, his own personal character was in a measure moulded by these influences.

I Quoted by M'Crie, Life of Thomas M'Crie, D.D., pp. 206, 207.
Bruce's personal and public behavior was dictated by a courage and moral integrity which were recognised even by his opponents. Once he was convinced of the truth of a cause, he was willing to adhere to it regardless of the adverse consequences that might befall him. His resoluteness was reflected in the address delivered to the congregation in Whitburn after his deposition by the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh:

...I can freely say, I am not conscious of blame, much less such as to deserve such a censure; - so far from it, I have satisfaction in reflecting that in these instances, I have been attempting to discharge a necessary though painful part of public duty, sincerely aiming at keeping the trust that is committed to ministers, and in which I can look up to the Supreme Lord with confidence of his gracious approbation.1

Behind Archibald Bruce's austere and aloof exterior there was a warm personal quality. He was rather shy and retiring as a result of his secluded and scholarly habits, yet he possessed a genuine capacity for friendship. Among his close associates were those who differed from him on many important issues. He maintained cordial relationships with the Reverend John Brown, the minister of the Burgher Congregation of Longridge, and Dr. John Erskine, the leader of the Evangelical Party in the Church of Scotland. He exchanged visits with the controversial Lord George Gordon who led the anti-Catholic riots in London in 1780.2

1 Bruce's Review, p. 411 (Appendix).
2 Christian Repository and Religious Register, September, 1816, p. 576.
After the death of Professor Bruce obituaries were published in many of the religious journals of Scotland. His contemporaries appear to have been impressed particularly with three of his personal qualities - his modesty, industriousness, and personal piety. In one of these memorials a former student wrote: "Of his personal piety, no person who knew him entertained a doubt. He lived under the practical influence of the Gospel he preached and defended." Writing in the Scots Magazine, Dr. Thomas M'Crie said of his former teacher:

He possessed talents of a superior order, which he had cultivated with unwearyed industry. To an imagination which was lively and fertile, he united a sound and correct judgment. His reading, which was various and extensive, was conducted with such method, and so digested, that he could at any time command the use of it; and during a life devoted to study he had amassed a stock of knowledge, on all the branches of learning connected with his profession, extremely rare... His piety, his erudition, his uncommon modesty and gentlemanly manners, gained him the esteem of all his acquaintance; and these qualities, added to the warm interest which he took in their literary and spiritual improvement, made him revered and beloved by his students.

A more recent estimation of Professor Bruce appears in Principal John Macleod's book, Scottish Theology. He speaks of Bruce as "one of the most scholarly and versatile of the divines of his day" and as "a model for diligence."

Archibald Bruce was buried in the graveyard of the Parish

---

2 Scots Magazine, April, 1816, pp. 318, 319.
3 Macleod, John, Scottish Theology, p. 114.
Church in Whitburn, and on the memorial stone which his congregation erected this epitaph can still be read:

Erected to the memory of the Reverend Archibald Bruce, Minister of the Associate Congregation, and teacher of the Theological Class at Whitburn, who died 18th February, 1816, in the 70th year of his age, and 48th of his ministry. Uniting great talents and profound learning with unaffected piety, modesty, and humility - a true patriot, a powerful defender of the reformed religion, and a steady friend of the principles of The Church of Scotland, as stated in the Secession Testimony, equally distinguished as a pastor, a teacher, and author; and a Christian, he lived beloved and revered, and died lamented by his Congregation, his pupils, and all who knew him.
"If any science may be called practical, it is divinity."

CHAPTER II

ARCHIBALD BRUCE: EDUCATOR AND THEOLOGIAN

A. Educator

"The Scottish Church has always been proud of its ministry, and careful that whatever other defects the institution might have, it would not fall short in education."¹ With this observation David Woodside commenced his survey of theological education in the United Presbyterian Church. A study of its Secession antecedents reveals the truth of his assertion.

From its very inception the Secession Church endeavored to provide its constituents with an educated clergy. Despite the numerous calls made upon the Seceders in the early days for pastoral ministrations, they refused to follow the easy course and lower their ministerial qualifications. They determined to maintain a standard as high as that of the Church from which they had seceded. To accomplish this two practical steps were taken. First, candidates for the ministry were required to attend one of the Scottish Universities for the regular Arts course. Secondly, the Seceders established their own Divinity Hall.²

One of the first official acts of the Associate Presbytery was to appoint a professor of Divinity, and at its meeting in November, 1736, Mr. William Wilson of Perth was elected to this office.³ The Divinity Hall had an itinerant existence,

¹ Woodside, David, The Soul of a Scottish Church, p. 125.
² Ibid., pp. 126, 127.
³ Landreth, The United Presbyterian Divinity Hall, pp. 37, 38.
convening for a few months each year where the professor held his charge. It was located successively at Perth, Abernethy, Alloa, and Whitburn. The usual arrangement was for students to reside in private homes and to attend lectures in the local Secession Church.

During Professor Wilson's tenure of office it was customary for the Divinity Hall to convene in March and to remain in session for only three months. Later the period of study was reduced to nine weeks. To compensate for this relatively short period of formal instruction, students were required to pursue their studies during the long recess under the superintendence of their presbyteries and local pastors.

A rather uniform method of instruction was employed by all of the professors in the Secession Divinity Hall. The textbook was the Medulla of Marck. This volume was a compendium of theology abbreviated from a larger work of Professor Marck of Leyden, Holland. Its position was the strict Calvinism of the Dutch school. Professor Marck was a disciple of Voetius.

The usual classroom procedure in the Hall consisted of lectures by the professor, frequent examinations on Marck's system, and student discourses.

---

1 Ibid., p. 23.
2 Ibid., p. 60.
3 M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 778.
4 Landreth, op. cit., p. 107.
5 Brown, D., Life of the Late John Duncan, LLD., p. 42.
7 Ibid., p. 74.
8 Landreth, op. cit., pp. 52, 53.
There was a succession of able professors in the Secession Divinity Hall - William Wilson of Perth, Alexander Moncrieff of Abernethy, and William Moncrieff of Alloa. When a breach occurred in the Associate Synod in 1747, Mr. Alexander Moncrieff joined the Anti-Burgher faction. Subsequently, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine of Stirling was appointed professor by the Burghers, and henceforth the two rival Synods operated separate Divinity Halls.¹

At its meeting on 7th September, 1786 the General Associate Synod (Anti-Burgher) elected the Reverend Archibald Bruce of Whitburn to succeed Mr. William Moncrieff as professor of Divinity.² As previously indicated, Mr. Bruce displayed great reluctance in accepting this position. Speaking to the students at the opening session of the Hall in 1787, he declared: "As for me, nothing but deference to authority, could have induced me to appear in this place among you on such a business."³ In his Review Bruce discussed at considerable length his various objections to assuming this post. He complained about the lack of proper living accommodations for the students in Whitburn, the difficulty of combining pastoral and teaching functions; and he declared that by nature and disposition he was not qualified to be a teacher.⁴

During Professor Bruce's tenure of office it was customary

¹ Ibid., p. 91.
² Bruce's Review, p. 239, n. 1.
³ Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I, (C.W. 7, p. 5).
for the Divinity Hall to convene in September\footnote{Brown, D., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 28.} and to remain in session for only eight weeks.\footnote{M'Kerrow, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 783.} An examination of Mackelvie's list of Bruce's students reveals certain interesting facts.\footnote{Mackelvie, \textit{Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church}, pp. 658-661.} During the nineteen years of his professor-ship (1787-1805)\footnote{After his withdrawal from the General Associate Synod in 1806, Professor Bruce continued to conduct the Divinity Hall for the Constitutional Associate Presbytery until his death in 1818.} he instructed over one hundred and fifty students. Seventeen of these men went to North America as missionaries, the majority of them to Kentucky (U.S.A.) or to Nova Scotia. On the average nine new students entered the Hall annually.

Soon after assuming his duties as professor, Bruce made a number of pertinent criticisms of the Synod's educational scheme and sought to introduce certain improvements. He complained particularly about the shortness of the term and the irregular attendance at his lectures.\footnote{Bruce's \textit{Review}, p. 243.} Furthermore, under the existing system it was impossible for the professor to become properly acquainted with his students. There was little opportunity of knowing their particular views, correcting error, or of instilling in their minds the principles of theology.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 243.}

Professor Bruce has given this description of the conduct of the Hall:

\begin{quote}
Through the greater part of the session there was a
\end{quote}
continual fluctuation, some coming, some going, as in a caravansera. If particular directions relating to studies or conduct were intended, these were never heard by perhaps the greater part, with a very few exceptions, those who were at the beginning, were not at the close of the session....

In an effort to rectify these grievances Professor Bruce brought a petition before the Synod embodying a number of proposals. He recommended the establishment of an academy for teaching all of the necessary branches of philosophy as well as the Biblical languages and theology. Furthermore, the faculty should be enlarged to include several professors qualified to teach in these various fields.

Although the Synod failed to approve Bruce's scheme, a number of new regulations were adopted that were designed to improve its educational standard. Before their entrance into the University prospective candidates were to be examined on their knowledge of Latin; and students of philosophy were required to appear before their presbyteries annually for an examination. When a young man applied for admission to the Divinity Hall, he was to be examined on his knowledge of Latin and Greek as well as philosophy. All students of divinity were required to deliver at least one discourse per year before their presbyteries.

1 Ibid., p. 243.
2 Ibid., p. 246.
3 Ibid., p. 246.
5 Ibid., p. 782.
6 Ibid., p. 782.
A perusal of the Minutes of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery reveals the thoroughness of these examinations and the close supervision exercised over candidates for the ministry. At a meeting of this body on 27th July, 1813, Mr. John Aitken intimated that a member of his congregation, Mr. John Duncan, desired to be examined with a view to entering the Divinity Hall. The following excerpt gives an indication of the comprehensiveness of his examination:

They accordingly proceeded to examine him upon his knowledge of Latin and Greek, Philosophy and Mathematics. He was also dealt with particularly as to his knowledge of religion, and views in prosecuting his studies. Mr. Duncan, being removed, the Presbytery, after some deliberation unanimously agreed to admit him to the Hall. Mr. Duncan, being called in, this was intimated to him. 2

This same source gives an indication of the nature of the annual examination which students of divinity were required to undergo. For example, a Mr. John Aitken had to give a lecture on Hebrews I: 7,8, read a passage from the Old Testament in Hebrew and one from the New Testament in Greek, and give a discourse on a subject in church history. 3 Frequently subjects from Turretine's system (e.g. Baptism, Christ's Mediatorial Office, etc.) were assigned for discussion. 4

In general Professor Bruce followed very much the same pattern of instruction as that of his predecessors in the chair of Divinity. He continued to use the Medulla of Marck as the

---

1 The same procedure was followed in the General Associate Synod.
2 Minutes of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery, 1808-1827, p. 68.
3 Ibid., p. 37.
4 Ibid., pp. 37, 38.
text-book in theology. A former student, the Reverend Peter Taylor of Ceres, has given a summary of the various exercises prescribed during the theological course:

First year: A Biblical exegesis and a lecture on a chapter of the Confession of Faith.
Second year: A homily.
Fourth year: A theological lecture.
Fifth year: A popular sermon.

In addition to these exercises, the students were required to deal with various textual problems and to discuss certain controversial points in theology.

A former student has given this account of the daily routine in the Divinity Hall:

There was at Whitburn (says an old student) generally only one meeting a day, and the hour of meeting was twelve o'clock. The business of each week was as follows. On Monday, a miscellaneous lecture by the Professor; on Tuesday, discourses by the students; on Wednesday, a lecture by the Professor on the system, - the system which he used was Marokii Medulla. On Thursday, examination on the system; on Friday, discourses by the students; on Saturday, a confessional lecture, together with a conference on some practical subject stated by the Professor.

In Professor Bruce's instruction there was a combination of the theoretical and the practical. The bulk of his published lectures deal with subjects related to various aspects of the minister's personal life - "The Importance of Moral Character and Conduct," "Necessity of Personal Religion," and "Improvement and Proper Distribution of Time." Today in divinity schools there is an increasing emphasis upon the practical side of the

---

1 Bruce's Review, pp. 204, 205.
2 M'Kerrow, op. cit., p. 782.
3 Ibid., p. 782.
4 Quoted by Scott, Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church, p. 605.
minister's preparation, and in a real sense Professor Bruce was a pioneer in this field.

Many of Professor Bruce's former students have paid tributes to him as a teacher and a friend. However, the Reverend Peter Taylor of Ceres has criticized his instruction as being particularly defective in the work required of students. He added: "The great object should be to make them good operatives both in composition and pulpit ministration. To effect this, they should, during their course of study, have more to compose and to deliver."¹

The success of any teacher will be measured to a large extent by the students who go out from his classroom. Judged by this criterion Professor Bruce was eminently successful. From the small Divinity Hall in Whitburn there went out a band of ministers who were greatly to enrich the religious life of Great Britain and North America. Space will permit a consideration of only a few of his more prominent students.

Foremost among Bruce's students was Thomas M'Crie, D.D., the eminent church historian. The frequent correspondence between these two men attests to the intimacy of their friendship. Speaking of their relationship, Thomas M'Crie, Jr., has stated: "For no man on earth did Dr. M'Crie entertain a more profound veneration, to no man's opinion did he pay a greater respect..."²

Bruce's influence upon M'Crie is revealed in two important

¹ M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 783.
areas. He assisted him in the formulation of his views on Church and State, and he directed his studies toward a consideration of Scottish ecclesiastical history. Bruce served as M'Crie's counselor and adviser during the New Light controversy which disrupted the General Associate Synod. This period of intense conflict served to forge their friendship, and their correspondence at this time reveals the reliance of young M'Crie upon his former teacher. For example, M'Crie wrote Bruce about the change in his views on the religious duties of the civil magistrate and of the unhappy division it had created in his church.¹

Perhaps of even greater importance was the influence that Bruce exerted upon M'Crie in his historical studies. His encouragement was to a large extent responsible for launching M'Crie's career in the field in which he was to achieve great prominence and success. M'Crie's son has commented: "Mr. Bruce had no small influence in determining him to biography as the best mode of eliciting and recommending the history of the period."²

Soon after the publication of his Life of John Knox in 1811, M'Crie wrote a letter to Bruce in which he expressed his indebtedness to him.

You need not doubt that your approbation of Knox's Life is gratifying to me.... If I have been able to do any justice to the Scottish Reformation and Reformers, it may, in a very great degree, be ascribed to your example and influence; as you first directed my attention to the subject, and from your

¹ Ibid., pp. 107, 108.
² Ibid., p. 161.
conversation and writings I received many of the hints of which I have availed myself.¹

It was as an ecclesiastical historian and as an exponent of the Reformed doctrine of Church and State that Thomas M'Crie made an impact upon the thought of his day. As a historian he was in a real sense the re-discoverer of John Knox. His biography of the great Reformer served to vindicate him and to rescue him from the obscurity and the disrepute into which he had fallen. Under the influence of writers such as David Hume and William Robertson prejudice and misconception had arisen which tended to obscure the true principles of the Reformation. However, M'Crie changed this whole perspective. As Principal Hugh Watt has pointed out:

His elaborate biographies of John Knox and Andrew Melville flooded their dim background with light. While packed with erudite annotations, they were eminently readable; and they drew many to admire and to emulate the earliest contendings of the Scottish Kirk.²

In the years following the publication of his Life of John Knox a series of scholarly historical studies came from the prolific pen of Thomas M'Crie - Life of Andrew Melville (1819), History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Italy (1827), and History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Spain (1829). In addition to his books, M'Crie was the author of numerous pamphlets and articles published in various religious journals and periodicals.

¹ Quoted by Ibid., pp. 169, 170.
² Watt, Hugh, Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption, pp. 121, 122.
Not less conspicuous was M'Crie's service as an exponent of the principle of a national establishment of religion. In this phase of his work he was closely associated with Professor Bruce of Whitburn. As the leaders of the more conservative faction within the General Associate Synod, they militantly opposed the emergence of the New Light doctrine. After the organization of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery Thomas M'Crie was entrusted with the vindication of their position, and in 1807 he published his "Statement of the Difference between the Profession of the Reformed Church of Scotland and the Profession contained in the New Testimony and Other Acts." This volume has been described as "perhaps the ablest work extant that deals with the Confessional teaching on the subject of National Religion." It is interesting to note that Mr. M'Crie received the assistance of Professor Bruce in the composition of Section VIII, "On Liberty of Conscience." Although M'Crie's "Statement" was scarcely noticed when it first appeared from the press, it was revived and used extensively during the Voluntary Controversy.

Another of Professor Bruce's students who attained considerable fame was Thomas Dick, "The Christian Philosopher." Writing in the "Records of the Scottish Church History Society" (Volume XI - Part I, 1951), Dr. Hector Macpherson lamented the

1 Macleod, John, Scottish Theology, p. 236.
2 M'Crie, op. cit., p. 123.
fact that this eminent Scot has been almost completely forgotten by his fellow countrymen. Thomas Dick was a scientist who was also a theologian – a rather unusual combination for his time. He was a prolific writer on a great diversity of subjects including astronomy, the relationship between science and religion, and on moral, social, and educational questions.

Thomas Dick was born in the Hilltown of Dundee on 24th November, 1774, the son of a small linen manufacturer. After receiving his Arts education at Edinburgh University, he entered the Secession Divinity Hall at Whitburn in 1798. Dick was ordained in 1803 and was called to the Anti-Burgher congregation in Stirling. However, his ministerial career was very brief as he was deposed and excommunicated by his Presbytery on 17th December, 1805. Subsequently the sentence of excommunication was revoked by the General Associate Synod, and Dick was restored to full church membership; however, his ministerial career was at an end.

Thomas Dick taught successively at schools in Methven and Perth. In 1827 he retired in order to devote his full time

3 Macpherson, op. cit., p. 42.
4 Ibid., pp. 43, 44.
5 Ibid., p. 44.
6 Ibid., p. 44.
7 Chambers, op. cit., pp. 445, 446.
to writing and scientific research. Dick's final years were spent at Broughty Ferry, near Dundee, where he died on 29th July, 1857.\textsuperscript{1} Union Theological College in New York conferred upon him the degree of LL.D., and in 1853 he was elected a Fellow of The Royal Astronomical Society.

Thomas Dick was a prodigious writer on scientific and religious subjects, and his works had a wide circulation in both Great Britain and North America. Among his better known publications are: \textit{The Christian Philosopher} (1823), \textit{The Philosophy of Religion} (1826), \textit{The Philosophy of a Future State} (1828), \textit{The Mental Illumination and Moral Improvement of Man-kind} (1836), \textit{Christian Beneficence Contrasted with Covetousness} (1838), and \textit{Celestial Scenery or the Wonders of the Planetary System Displayed} (1838).

Dick was a versatile thinker and writer, and he made important contributions in a number of different fields. His foremost interest was astronomy, and he wrote extensively on this subject. He sought to reconcile science and religion, and in 1823 he published \textit{The Christian Philosopher} to prove "that there can be no real discrepancy between a just interpretation of Scripture and the facts of physical science."\textsuperscript{2} He advocated popular education for the masses, and he assisted in the establishment of the schools that became known as

\begin{itemize}
\item[Ibid., p. 446.]
\item[Dick, Thomas, \textit{The Christian Philosopher}, Part II, p. 225.]
\end{itemize}
"Mechanics' Institutes". Dick was a pacifist as he absolutely and without qualification repudiated war as a method of settling disputes among nations. Dick's work as a Christian social reformer also deserves mention. He denounced the slave trade and the penal codes of civilized nations. Furthermore, he was deeply concerned about the conditions of the working classes, and he advocated better housing and more adequate safeguards against disease and infant mortality.

Although an examination of Dick's major works does not reveal any quotations from Bruce or evidences of a direct influence, nevertheless, there are definite affinities in thought. Both men almost equally abhorred war. Bruce maintained that every war must be pronounced unjust which is not absolutely necessary and that necessity can never be pled unless all means for avoiding it have been tried and have failed. However, Dick would go beyond this and adopt a position of absolute pacifism. Moreover, both men possessed a sensitive social conscience and denounced slavery and other national sins. Finally, Bruce and Dick agreed that there need be no conflict between science and religion.

The eminent Hebraist of New College, John "Rabbi" Duncan, commenced his theological studies under the tutelage of Professor Bruce. He entered the Divinity Hall at Whitburn in

---

1. Macpherson, op. cit., p. 47.
4. [Bruce], A Serious View of the Remarkable Providences of the Times, (C.W. 5, pp. 25, 26).
September, 1813.¹

After the death of Professor Bruce in 1816 John Duncan left the Secession and joined the Established Church, completing his theological education at Aberdeen University.² Prior to his appointment to the Chair of Hebrew at New College Mr. Duncan served several parishes in Scotland as well as the Jewish Mission Station at Pesth.

An anecdote related by Dr. Thomas M'Crie, Jr., indicates that the memory of his student days at Whitburn did linger with Dr. Duncan.

I remember that when I was Moderator of the (General) Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (in the year 1856), he took his seat one day on the steps leading up to my chair, and, struck apparently with the change of circumstances, he said to me, with his serio-pleasant look, 'O man, do you mind about Whitburn and Professor Bruce? He was a wonderful old man that' - doubtless transporting himself to the days when the venerable Professor sat before us in his full-bottomed wig and silver buckles, lecturing to his sadly reduced numbers (after the rupture in the Associate Synod and the deposition of the four brethren), in the muffled tones of the Dead March in Saul, but uttering a depth of wisdom worthy of being listened to by a whole concave of bishops.³

Thomas M'Crie, Jr., commenced his theological training under Professor Bruce but completed his studies under Robert Chalmers of Haddington.⁴ Dr. M'Crie was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1856 and later professor in the Theological College of the English Presbyterian Church.⁵ He was the author of a number of books and

¹ Brown, Life of the Late John Duncan, LL.D., p. 28.
² Ibid., p. 31.
³ Quoted by Ibid., pp. 39, 40.
⁵ Ibid., p. 545.
pamphlets including Life of Thomas M'Crie, D.D. (1840), Sketches of Scottish Church History (Two Volumes, 1841), and The Story of the Scottish Church (1875).

One of Professor Bruce's students, Robert Robertson, achieved prominence in the field of journalism as he became one of the editors of the London "Times."\(^1\)

An appropriate conclusion to this section on Bruce as an educator is this excerpt from the memorial address that Dr. Thomas M'Crie delivered at the Divinity Hall in Whitburn shortly after the death of the Professor:

> For solidity and perspicacity of judgment, joined to a lively imagination, - for profound acquaintance with the system of theology, and with all the branches of knowledge which are subsidiary to it, and which are ornamental as well as useful to the Christian divine, - for the power of patient investigation, of carefully discriminating between truth and error, and of guarding against extremes on the right hand as well as the left - and for the talent of recommending truth to the youthful mind by a rich and flowing style - not to mention the qualities by which his private character was adorned - Mr. Bruce has been equalled by few, if any, of those who have occupied the chair of divinity, either in late or in former times.\(^2\)

R. Theologian

In order to place Bruce's theology in its proper perspective, it is necessary to make a few general observations about the theological position of the Secession Church. The attitude of the early Seceders toward the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms was thoroughly conservative and orthodox. Their dispute was not with these historical documents but rather with the prevailing party within the Church of Scotland.

\(^1\) Findlay, James T., The Secession in the North, p. 45.
\(^2\) Quoted by M'Crie, Life of Thomas M'Crie, D.D., pp. 56, 57.
Specifically, they objected to the Moderates' tyrannical abuse of power in the enforcement of patronage and their tolerant attitude toward theological deviation.

Secondly, the Seceders were staunch advocates of the Marrow Theology. Doctrinally this was their principal point of cleavage with the National Church, for the General Assembly had condemned the Marrow teaching in both 1720 and 1722. The Marrow Controversy stemmed from a book entitled *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* which Thomas Boston of Ettrick had discovered while visiting a parishioner in 1700. It was subsequently republished by James Hog of Carnock in 1718. *The Marrow of Modern Divinity (Part I)*, a compilation of the writings of Reformed and Puritan divines, had been first published in London by Edward Fisher in 1645.¹

The salient tenets of Marrow Theology may be summarized as follows: (1) A universal offer of salvation is to be made since the atonement is valid for all who believe. (2) Faith is the means whereby the sinner appropriates Christ unto himself. It is the instrument which unites man with the object of salvation. (3) Assurance of salvation is an essential ingredient of a saving faith. In justifying faith there is a real persuasion in the heart of the sinner that Christ is his and that he shall have life and salvation by Him. (4) Personal holiness or good works do not have a causal or conditional influence upon salvation. (5) Believers are wholly and altogether free from the

¹ McCrie, C. G., Editor, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, p. xv.
covenant of works, and their salvation is dependent upon the perfect obedience of Christ to the law in their stead.\(^1\)

The Calvinism of the Marrow Men has been described as broad, catholic, and liberal.\(^2\) Their desire to offer salvation to all men enabled them to avoid the narrowness and the exclusiveness which were characteristic of many Calvinists who held a rigid doctrine of election. While they were particular redemptionists and completely repudiated the doctrine of universalism, they "were able to see that Calvinistic doctrine was not inconsistent with world-conquering aspirations and efforts."\(^3\) The Marrow Men had entered into the true missionary spirit of the Bible.

In theology Bruce was not a creative thinker, and he consequently made no original contribution in this field. Rather he reflected a warm evangelical Calvinism that was thoroughly permeated with Marrow teaching. Evidence of his strict orthodoxy is manifested in Bruce's severe denunciation of the various "isms" that were disturbing the doctrinal purity of his day - Deism, Arianism, Socinianism, and Arminianism.

In none of his books does Professor Bruce undertake to give a thorough and systematic exposition of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. In his published lectures there is a pronounced practical emphasis. The absence of doctrine in them

---

\(^1\) See the Associate Presbytery's "Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace" in Adam Gib's The Present Truth: A Display of the Seesession-Testimony, Vol. I, p. 171 ff. (Hereinafter referred to as Gib's Display). C. C. M'Crie has termed the "Doctrine of Grace" the clearest and most cogent vindication of Marrow Theology. M'Crie, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, p. xxx

\(^2\) M'Crie, op. cit., p. xxviii.

\(^3\) Walker, James, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, p. 60.
can probably be attributed to the fact that in the classroom he used the Medulla of Marck as the basis of his theological discourses. An examination of Bruce’s works reveals that several of the major heads of divinity are either omitted or treated in a rather cursory manner (e.g., the Trinity, Sacraments, Man). His main emphasis was on Soteriology, and this doctrine was treated rather exhaustively in a volume of Practical Discourses which he delivered to his congregation.

It is necessary to examine certain of the basic presuppositions that undergirded Bruce’s theological position.

1. "Theology is a system built upon authority, and not on any principles or process of reasoning, drawn from our own mind:— It is the doctrine of faith, and so cannot have reason or the rational evidence of things for its foundation."  

Utmost deference and unlimited subjection are due to every word and decision that are known to come directly from God. He has full authority and undisputed right to dictate to our faith, to govern our intellects, and to command our obedience in every respect. In all matters determined by His express authority we are to acquiesce without cavil. If this truth be controverted or brought into doubt, religion will be thrown into absolute and irretrievable confusion.

2. Every article of divine truth, every law, and ordinance delivered by the Redeemer ought to enter into the confession and

---

1 Bruce’s doctrine of the Church is treated in Chapter VII, "Archibald Bruce: His View of Church and State."
2 Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I, (C.W. 7, p. 87).
3 Ibid., pp. 86, 87.
4 Ibid., p. 87.
5 Ibid., p. 87.
All doctrines of the Christian faith must be equally accepted and defended. Many have taken the freedom to distinguish and divide in this matter without warrant from either reason or Scripture. Bruce attacked the Latitudinarians who argued that the Christian system should be reduced to a few articles which were termed fundamental. In the first place, the exponents of this view have no certain criterion whereby they can delineate between the small and the great things of Christ. Secondly, they can never unanimously agree on the articles that are to be considered essential. Hence, elements of the one system that has been authenticated by Christ throughout are unnaturally separated and even set at variance with one another. Bruce concluded his argument:

Though all the doctrines and injunctions of the Redeemer may not be in themselves, or in regard of the matter of them, of equal importance and necessity; yet having his sanction and authority, they are in this respect all on a level, and equally entitled to men's observation and regard.

3. Bruce affirmed the importance of theology to Christianity, and he denounced those who would minimize doctrine and stress ethics. Belief and action are closely related and naturally dependent upon one another. Until a man believes rightly about God he cannot worship Him properly or live in a manner acceptable.

---

1 Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, pp. 154, 155).
2 Ibid., p. 155.
3 Ibid., p. 155.
4 Ibid., p. 155.
5 Ibid., p. 155.
6 Ibid., p. 156.
7 Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, pp. 49, 50).
to Him.  

It is certain, that God has, in all ages, given a system of truths to be believed and professed, as well as enjoined duties to be practised; and they can never be separated without injuring, or rather destroying both.  

In none of his works does Bruce give a concise summary of his theology. Rather he stated that it is quite impossible to reduce the whole of the Christian faith to a few fundamental articles.3 However, in a lecture "On the Excellence of Theology," he did give this summary of the great ideas with which theology is concerned.

... In this study all that is valuable and interesting to mankind is comprized. Man cannot truly understand himself, nor discover his highest interest, but through the revelation of God, by Jesus Christ. - This only gives us the real history of what man was, what he is, and what he shall be - from whence he has fallen, and to what he may be raised. It leads to the origin of evil, and the fountain of human woes, together with the mercy of God; the method of reconciliation; the mysterious atonement; the free justification of the ungodly, the sure ground of hope for a future world, and the way of being rendered partakers of holiness hereafter.4

A Summary of Bruce’s Theology.

Like most theologians of the eighteenth century Bruce emphasized the importance of natural theology. God has laid the foundation of both natural and revealed religion and established them securely that they may not be eradicated either through the negligence or the depravity of mankind.5

---

1 Ibid., p. 50.
2 Ibid., p. 50.
3 Bruce, Practical Discourses, pp. 110, 111. (This volume, consisting of eight lectures delivered to his congregation, was not given a title by Bruce).
4 Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I, (C.W. 7, p. 57).
5 Ibid., p. 66.
He has engraved lively impressions of many divine truths upon every heart. In each man God has instilled a sense of duty, of reverence for an oath, and a regard for justice quite apart from Biblical revelation.

Natural theology reveals the existence of God and demonstrates His creative activity. When nature is properly studied, it incites dissatisfaction with secondary causes. The farther men traverse among the external works of God, the clearer are their impressions of Him who "is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." As one observes the work of God, he discovers a world, not consisting of a number of detached objects connected only by the fleeting tie of co-existence, but a universe bound together by causation with innumerable degrees of subordination and subserviency, and all co-operating in the production of one great and glorious purpose.

Not only does natural theology reveal the fact of God, but it also discloses something of His character. The incomprehensibility of His nature and works, His infinite power, and His bounty and goodness are all manifested in His creation.

In as much as natural theology does not give an adequate revelation of God, He has chosen more direct methods to disclose Himself. He has often made Himself conspicuously visible and sensibly audible. "At sundry times, and in divers manners, he

1 Ibid., p. 66.
2 [Bruce], The Principal Difference... on the Head of Magistracy, (C.W. 5, p. 6).
3 Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part II, (C.W. 7, p. 194).
4 Ibid., p. 194.
5 Ibid., p. 195.
6 Ibid., p. 193.
7 Ibid., Part I, p. 66.
spake in times past unto the fathers..." - now in a dream, then in a vision, next by an angel, a voice from heaven, or an internal revelation. As a further disclosure He promulgated His laws from Sinai and selected a people to transmit them to posterity. To reveal His purposes prophets were commissioned, and priests and sacrifices were instituted. But last of all God sent His Son to bear witness to the truth.

Bruce accepted the fact of God's existence without any reference to the theistic proofs.

There is a great chasm between God and man, and it is quite impossible for us to know Him. The great First Cause, however, generally acknowledged, is least of all understood. Although He is surrounded forever with ineffable light, yet to us He dwells in thick, impenetrable darkness, comprehended only by Himself. There can be no complete knowledge of God until we meet Him in the hereafter.

From God's creation, the Scriptures, and Christ it is possible to learn something of the divine attributes. He is revealed in them as eternal, self-existent, immutable, immortal, omniscient, and omnipresent.

---

1 Ibid., p. 66.
2 Ibid., p. 67.
3 Ibid., p. 67.
4 Ibid., p. 68.
5 Ibid., p. 35.
6 Ibid., p. 35.
7 Ibid., Part II, p. 154.
8 Ibid., Part I, p. 32 and Practical Discourses, p. 183. (Note: Bruce did not give a complete exposition of "theology proper." This can be explained by the fact that the doctrine of God was thoroughly treated in Chapter IV of the Medulla of Marck. Bruce, no doubt, was in agreement with this exposition, and he only elaborated upon it in his lectures to the students. There is a similar omission in Dr. Thomas Chalmers' discourses. W. P. Huie, The Theology of Thomas Chalmers, p. 249).
The sovereignty of God is manifested both in His providence and in His grace. In His providence He visits and punishes one people and place, making them examples while He spares another. God's divine intervention is best illustrated in His preservation of the righteous remnant throughout the turbulent course of history. The continued existence of the church is a standing monument to His power and greatness. Although severely tried and proved, harassed and broken by persecution and afflictions, it subsists still. God rescued His chosen people from the bondage of Egypt, delivered them from the captivity of Babylon, and preserved them through the persecutions of pagan emperors until the fires were quenched and full liberty and peace were restored.

More particularly God's sovereignty is manifested in the mysterious operation of His grace. In His good pleasure He illuminates one mind and softens one heart while leaving another to its natural darkness. Out of the same common and corrupt mass God makes one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. The conversion of every sinner is an act of supernatural grace, and every soul that is saved is made a monument to His mercy.

God has chosen to reveal Himself in the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On this doctrine Bruce expressed

---

1 Bruce, Sermon: The Inefficacy of Dangers or Deliverances to Reclaim, (C.W. 3, p. 25).
3 Ibid., p. 13.
4 Ibid., pp. 14, 15.
6 Ibid., p. 27.
7 Ibid., p. 27.
8 Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part II, (C.W. 7, p. 122).
his satisfaction with the language of revelation, and he failed to discuss the nature of the Trinity.¹

Man is the very apex of God's creative activity. "In the formation of man this honour was bestowed on him: it was emphatically said of him, 'Come let us make man after our image, and in our likeness.'"² This similitude consisted of his moral rectitude and goodness, as well as intellectual endowments that enabled him to transcend himself and to reflect upon the nature of God, of the universe, and of himself.³ In this respect he was elevated above the animals and the senseless masses of inanimate creation.⁴ In man's primitive state the way of life was clearly perceptible to him by the law written in his heart and the positive promise made to him.⁵

The first Adam was not only the original parent of all the human race, but he was also constituted the federal head of his posterity, in and through whom life and happiness might have been received had he fulfilled the conditions upon which it was promised.⁶ Having once failed in his representative character, his capacity to convey benefit to them was forever at an end.⁷ It has only entailed sin and death for all.⁸

¹ Ibid., p. 123. (Note: In his lectures on the Trinity in the Divinity Hall Bruce probably elaborated upon Chapter V of the Medulla of Marck).  
³ Ibid., pp. 13, 14.  
⁴ Ibid., p. 14.  
⁵ Bruce, Practical Discourses, p. 52.  
⁶ Ibid., p. 169.  
⁷ Ibid., p. 169.  
⁸ Ibid., p. 169.
The principle of depravity is lodged in every heart. So far from being born immaculate or with a predominant inclination to virtue, man is evil from his birth.\(^1\) Whatever may be a person's descent or connection, whatever may be his education, or calling, he cannot claim exemption from the common law of corruption which resides in all and strives for mastery over them.\(^2\)

Despite man's fallen state certain vestiges of his former glory and grandeur remain. Although his moral rectitude and spiritual freedom are greatly impaired, they are not quite obliterated.\(^3\) They remain as so many beautiful monuments amidst the ruins of an ancient and magnificent edifice.\(^4\) These same materials, however debased, are capable of being revived out of the rubbish and of acquiring a new luster through God's grace.\(^5\)

God graciously decided not to proceed against all mankind according to the merit of their transgressions. Consequently, a covenant of redemption was drawn up between God and Christ in which the divine Son undertook to be man's surety.

The Christian religion owes its very existence to Jesus Christ - not only by virtue of the fact that it was published by Him, but also because He is the subject of all revelation.\(^6\)

---

1 Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I, (C.W. 7, p. 140).
2 Ibid., pp. 140, 141.
3 Ibid., p. 14.
5 Ibid., p. 14.
6 Bruce, Practical Discourses, p. 153.
In this respect Christ differed from all of the other prophets whom God commissioned. None of these made themselves the theme of their own doctrine. But Christ proclaimed Himself to be the light of the world, and He made Himself the object of man's trust and worship.

In the person of Christ two distinct natures were united - the human and the divine. However, the exact manner in which this was accomplished is one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith, and Bruce, while affirming the truth, did not seek to give a rational explanation. The uniqueness of Christ, to some extent at least, can be attributed to the remarkable circumstances of His birth. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit altogether free from sin and consecrated from His birth to the ministry of reconciliation.

Christ is infinitely preferred, not only to every name on earth, but to the highest order of angels in heaven, being "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." His name is identical with that of the supreme God, and He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Every divine attribute belongs to Him - eternity, self-existence,

---

1 Ibid., p. 153.
2 Ibid., p. 153.
3 Ibid., p. 168.
4 Ibid., p. 168.
5 Ibid., p. 185.
6 Ibid., p. 185.
7 Ibid., p. 183.
8 Ibid., p. 183.
immutability, and immortality. His knowledge is perfect, His wisdom infinite, and His judgment unerring; His holiness is immaculate, His truth inviolable and His authority supreme. He is the fountain of all being and life, and He upholds all the world by His power. Therefore, by virtue of His divine nature Christ is capable of producing a new creation and of saving to the utmost.

In order to be a redeemer of men, it was necessary that Christ have a common nature with them. Consequently, "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." By His own voluntary action Christ assumed the same flesh and blood as His people that He might take their place, be in a state of submission to the law, and offer the necessary ransom. His holy human nature, spotless and separate from sinners and deriving dignity from the divine with which it was personally united, was the great and suitable sacrifice that He offered for expiation.

The redemptive work of Christ was a major emphasis in Bruce's theology. He discussed the necessity, the nature, and the extent of the atonement.

1 Ibid., p. 183.
2 Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, p. 32).
3 Bruce, Practical Discourses, p. 183.
4 Ibid., p. 183.
5 Ibid., p. 184.
6 Ibid., p. 184.
7 Ibid., p. 184.
8 Ibid., p. 185.
Why did Christ die? The honor of the Supreme Lawgiver was offended and His law violated; consequently, His moral government could not be exercised in the same manner as when man was in a state of innocence.\(^1\) The whole demand of the law, as to obedience and suffering, must be satisfied to the full. The debt of the prisoner and criminal must be paid in person or by a surety before release could be granted.\(^2\)

If salvation is possible only through the intervention of a surety, a consent and choice on the part of the injured party, who had an absolute right to dispose of the lives of the guilty, is a requisite.\(^3\) To permit a transfer of obligation and of guilt is not in the course of ordinary or natural justice; it was entirely optional and gratuitous, the exercise of a divine prerogative.\(^4\) For a third party to intervene without being appointed would be an intrusion.\(^5\) "And who could undertake to approach to an incensed Deity, to mediate between heaven and earth, but he who was God's elect and appointed One?"\(^6\)

It required a person singularly qualified to act in the role of a redeemer and to accomplish our salvation.\(^7\) He had to be able to act equally toward both parties who were to be reconciled. In the first place, since the majesty and rights.

---

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 166.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 166.
\(^3\) Ibid., pp. 166, 167.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 167.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 167.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 167.
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 167.
of God were immediately concerned, it was needful that the mediator be of equal dignity with Him.\textsuperscript{1} Furthermore, if the Redeemer were to take the place of the guilty and suffer death under the law for their sakes, it was necessary that He possess a human nature.\textsuperscript{2}

Christ was the person called and authorized for the work of reconciliation. He was chosen to be the head of a new race and constituted the mediator of a better covenant.\textsuperscript{3}

The Redeemer is one, but His various offices and acts of administration are various. They are usually designated the prophetical, the priestly, and the regal, and under one or the other of these every aspect of His mediatory work may be included.\textsuperscript{4}

This threefold office is adapted to the necessities of those He came to save, and it corresponds exactly to that state of ignorance and error, of guilt and divine wrath, and of the bondage and depravity from which they are to be delivered.\textsuperscript{5} As a prophet He is made unto them wisdom; as a priest, righteousness, and as a king, sanctification and final redemption.\textsuperscript{6} In the execution of His prophetical and kingly offices, He deals with men, in the name of God, for their happiness; in His priestly office, He acted in their name and deals with God for the reparation of His honor.\textsuperscript{7} His priesthood in the order

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Ibid., p. 167.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 168.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 184.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p. 186.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 187.
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 187.
\item \textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 187.
\end{itemize}
of nature is first and principal, laying a foundation for
the exercise of the other two. However, in the actual order
of execution, He begins first to act and deal with sinners
as a prophet in order to proclaim the love of God and to bring
men into subjection to Him as their king. Nevertheless,
man's first relationship with Christ is as the priest who
reconciled him to God.

As Christ has actually performed all that He undertook
to do in a state of humiliation, He is now exalted to a posi-
tion where He lives to bestow salvation. The price of re-
demption is paid; the meritorious sacrifice has been offered;
and reconciliation has been made for iniquity.

In his discussion of the extent of the atonement Bruce
reflected the Marrow teaching. The Gospel is to be addressed
to all men, and none whatever are to be excluded from the
benefit and relief that it offers. Bruce attacked those who
teach that Christ is not to be offered to the unconverted.
These are the persons first to be addressed, for their deplorable
condition requires immediate relief. To leave such people
without hope or means of salvation would be contrary to the
primary purpose of the Gospel.

1 Ibid., p. 187.
2 Ibid., p. 187.
3 Ibid., p. 187.
4 Ibid., pp. 187, 188.
5 Ibid., p. 188.
6 Ibid., p. 117.
7 Ibid., p. 124.
8 Ibid., pp. 124, 125.
Soteriology was the Christian doctrine expounded most thoroughly by Professor Bruce in his lectures. In his exposition of salvation Bruce discussed both its nature and scope. Salvation as a Christian concept is to be distinguished carefully from the more comprehensive sense in which it is frequently employed in the Scriptures. In the Biblical narrative it often denotes deliverance from external dangers and calamities of a temporal kind (e.g., the rescue of Jonah or the protection of Israel). In opposition to this view, the salvation of the Gospel is of a purely spiritual nature and does not immediately relate to protection from external afflictions. It refers rather to the state of man’s soul and the bestowal of spiritual blessings by Christ.

This salvation is not only spiritual but it is also personal and peculiar to the elect who in the end shall inherit eternal life. Although it is common to all of them, yet it is never bestowed upon any nation, body, or community as a unit. Everyone must enjoy it individually and must be born again and enter into the Kingdom of God. This salvation may be considered as purposed, as promised, and finally as exhibited and applied. It was ordained from everlasting, having its

---

1 Ibid., p. 129.
2 Ibid., pp. 129, 130.
3 Ibid., p. 130.
4 Ibid., p. 130.
5 Ibid., p. 131.
6 Ibid., p. 131.
7 Ibid., p. 132.
origin in the mere good pleasure of God who did foreknow from the beginning all those who would be the recipients of His grace.\textsuperscript{1}  It was promised in Christ before the world began and manifested in successive stages until the advent of the Messiah.\textsuperscript{2}  It was obtained and purchased by the ransom Christ paid.\textsuperscript{3}  It is a salvation, in consequence, fully revealed, exhibited, and offered, not only to the Jews but to all nations and people to whom the Gospel is proclaimed.\textsuperscript{4}

Salvation may be spoken of in three successive stages - its commencement, progress, and completion.\textsuperscript{5}  It has its inception in the day of vital union with Christ or in effectual calling, for then salvation actually comes to the soul and is embraced by faith.\textsuperscript{6}  At this point the Christian enters into the possession of the purchased inheritance and is legally entitled to the whole.\textsuperscript{7}  The new man is made to grow and after advancing through successive stages comes to "the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ."\textsuperscript{8}  It is a salvation still working out and will not be completed until we appear before Christ.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., p. 132.  
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 132.  
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 132.  
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p. 132.  
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 133.  
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 133.  
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 133.  
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p. 133.  
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p. 133.
After his exposition of the nature of salvation Bruce discussed the benefits which accrue to the believer. Salvation includes at once the deliverance from all evil and the restoration to the enjoyment of all that is good.\(^1\) It offers release from sin which is the greatest, and in one sense, the only evil.\(^2\) Sin is that which God has strictly prohibited and severely threatened in His holy law.\(^3\) It dishonors His infinite majesty, provokes His wrath, and proves destructive to the sinner.\(^4\) Christ saves His people from sin and from all resulting from it, and this He does meritoriously, powerfully, and completely.\(^5\) The death of Christ removes the guilt of sin, frees man from its dominion, and cleanses him from its defilement.\(^6\)

In the second place, salvation includes deliverance from all the miseries and penal effects to which sin has made man liable.\(^7\) By His death and glorious resurrection Christ has broken the dominion of Satan, released man from the bondage of the law, and conquered death.\(^8\)

Finally, this salvation offers certain positive benefits. When the sentence of condemnation is reversed, a full justification and restoration to a state of favor with God accompany it.\(^9\) When a person is liberated from the bondage of Satan,

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 134.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 134.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 134.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 134.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 135.
\(^6\) Ibid., pp. 135, 136.
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 137.
\(^8\) Ibid., pp. 137-142.
\(^9\) Ibid., p. 145.
he is translated into the Kingdom of God and admitted to all of the liberties and privileges of His adopted sons.\textsuperscript{1} He is brought into a union with Christ, ruled by His Spirit, and made secure in all heavenly blessings.\textsuperscript{2}

Faith is the means whereby man obtains an interest in salvation.\textsuperscript{3} In its more comprehensive sense faith denotes a persuasion of mind as to reality of existing objects or of the truth of certain propositions.\textsuperscript{4} In this sense whatever man knows, whether by instinct, sense, reason, experience, or testimony, belongs to the realm of his belief.\textsuperscript{5} However, faith, strictly interpreted, respects what is known by testimony alone, and by this it is distinguished from all other methods of knowledge.\textsuperscript{6}

Saving faith consists in believing the testimony of God concerning His Son and the life that is in Him for all men.\textsuperscript{7} Belief in Jesus Christ implies much more than merely accepting His veracity as a teacher or a prophet commissioned by God to publish the doctrine of salvation, for others had this honor conferred upon them in an inferior degree.\textsuperscript{8} It involves trust in Him and dependence upon Him for salvation.\textsuperscript{9} Such faith is an act of divine worship due only to God and absolutely

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Ibid., p. 146.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 146.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 104.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid., pp. 104, 105.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 105.
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 105.
\item \textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 108.
\item \textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p. 114.
\item \textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p. 114.
\end{itemize}
forbidden to be given to any creature.\(^1\)

In Bruce's thought the relationship between faith and salvation was important. The chief and proper business of faith is to apprehend Christ and thereby to receive full and free salvation through Him.\(^2\) Faith is not a condition or qualification. It has no virtue in itself.\(^3\) It is only a means or instrument by which an interest in salvation is obtained.\(^4\) The meritorious efficacy is altogether in the object which faith apprehends.\(^5\) For example, nourishment is in the bread that is eaten, and the healing quality is in the medicine and not in the hand or mouth that uses them.\(^6\)

If those who speak of faith as a condition of salvation mean nothing more than an instrument by which a means and an end are brought together, this usage will not be questioned.\(^7\)

Assurance is an essential and discriminating mark of the real Christian.\(^8\) With this in mind the apostle exhorts, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." (2 Corinthians, XIII, 5). This supposes that faith which is genuine may be distinguished from that which is of a different kind.\(^9\) Bruce discussed two types of assurance - the assurance of sense and that

---

1 Ibid., p. 114.
2 Ibid., p. 115.
3 Ibid., p. 115.
4 Ibid., p. 115.
5 Ibid., p. 115.
6 Ibid., p. 116.
7 Ibid., p. 116.
8 Ibid., p. 121.
9 Ibid., p. 121.
assurance which is implicit in the very nature of saving faith.\(^1\) First, assurance may be attained by a close examination of certain evidences that are manifested in the believer's conduct - complete reliance upon Christ, peace of spirit, absolute surrender to God, and mortification to sin and the love of the world.\(^2\) This kind of assurance is very rare even among true believers.\(^3\) The Gospel, rightly understood, shows yet another and more excellent way. Assurance is included in the very nature of faith, and it is founded upon nothing sensibly felt or seen but upon what is contained in the divine testimony.\(^4\) This way of assurance is direct and immediately attainable by everyone who believes without a tedious search and examination into evidences that are often obscure and uncertain.\(^5\) It is inseparable from saving faith and therefore belongs, in some degree, to every believer.\(^6\)

Bruce discussed the subject of conversion at considerable length. Although the Spirit of God usually begins His saving work by convicting men of their sins and by arousing their fears, His method and manner in producing these effects are not always uniform.\(^7\) For example, it is impossible to find two saints whose conversion experience corresponds in every respect.\(^8\) In

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 122.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 121.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 122.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 122.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 123.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 123.
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 29.
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 29.
nothing is the difference more discernible than in the spiritual anguish which precedes or accompanies the great change. In some there are strong and violent concussions of the soul, while in others it is so faint as to be hardly remembered. Yet in all there must be a sense of sin in order to produce humiliation and to make them conscious of their need for Christ.

Some have been gently drawn and insensibly allured to God by the cords of love, and the danger is past before an overwhelming apprehension of it falls upon them. Others are saved with fear, being plucked out of the fire, and they suffer the terrors of the Lord almost to the point of distraction. Illustrations of these two types may be found in the Bible. In the case of John the Baptist and Timothy it was quiet and almost imperceptible, whereas with Paul it was a violent and terrifying experience.

The instrument of conversion is always the Holy Spirit. The awakenings which precede and accompany salvation are all attributed to His work. Even under the old dispensation, it was the Spirit of God who stirred men to repentance.

1 Ibid., p. 29. 
2 Ibid., pp. 29, 30. 
3 Ibid., p. 30. 
5 Ibid., pp. 30, 31. 
6 Ibid., p. 33. 
7 Ibid., p. 33. 
8 Ibid., p. 24.
The Holy Spirit employs various methods to awaken sinners.\(^1\) The ministry of the law is the principal means used to induce repentance.\(^2\) By it the whole world is found guilty before God.\(^3\) The commandment that was ordained for life is now productive of only death.\(^4\) Man, realizing his inability to keep this law, is constrained to turn to Christ for salvation.\(^5\) Particular events of providence are also made to co-operate with the Spirit in producing conversion - sickness, disease, misfortune, grief, etc.\(^6\)

True conversion will be accompanied by gratitude, habitual godly sorrow, and evangelical repentance.\(^7\) Repentance is best described by the phrase "returning unto the Lord."\(^8\) It implies, not only a consciousness of sin and a profession of sorrow, but also a new disposition of mind that is characterized by obedience to God's laws and ordinances and by a personal transformation.\(^9\) However, holiness, the fruit of true faith and repentance, does not belong to the price or federal condition of it, nor has it any share in obtaining salvation.\(^10\)

Finally, Bruce discussed the relationship of good works to the Christian life. True salvation issues in disinterested love to God and men.\(^11\) Conscious of the dishonor that he has

---

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 34.  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 35.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 36.  
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 36.  
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 36.  
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 37.  
\(^7\) Ibid., pp. 65, 66.  
\(^8\) Bruce, Sermon: The Inefficacy of Dangers or Deliverances to Reclaim, (C.W. 3, p. 20).  
\(^9\) Ibid., p. 20.  
\(^10\) Bruce, Practical Discourses, p. 99.  
\(^11\) Ibid., p. 67.
done to God for so long, the true convert will love, adore, and serve Him to the utmost of his power.\(^1\) Furthermore, the Christian will have a new relationship with his fellow men.\(^2\) He will repent of the injuries that he has done to them and will demonstrate a readiness to minister to them in their needs and their sufferings.\(^3\) Particularly will he desire the conversion of all men and seek to promote their spiritual welfare and final salvation.\(^4\)

The revelation given by God in His Word is the source from whence all knowledge of divine things is derived.\(^5\) What is contained in the Scriptures we should consider as God's authoritative voice and solemn language addressed to us.\(^6\) The Bible's authority, harmony, and beauties of composition and diction induce us to cry out, "It is the voice of God, and not of a man."\(^7\)

As the Bible is the authentic publication of the divine will and exhibits God's authority, it is to be reverently treated and used.\(^8\) What tends to detract from its credit, to unsettle its authority, and to raise skeptical doubts about it must be avoided.\(^9\) Although Bruce recognized the contributions of Biblical criticism, he felt that it was often liable to abuse.\(^10\)

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 67.  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 68.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 68.  
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 69.  
\(^5\) Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part II, (C.W. 7, p. 112).  
\(^6\) Bruce, Practical Discourses, p. 1.  
\(^7\) Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I, (C.W. 7, p. 65).  
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 88.  
\(^9\) Ibid., p. 88.  
\(^10\) Ibid., Part II, p. 145.
In his discussion of the proper method of Biblical interpretation, Bruce commented upon 2 Peter, I, 20,21, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." These words teach that man is not at liberty to give whatever interpretation he likes to the Bible, but must rely upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the whole tenor of scriptural teaching when he is seeking to understand an obscure passage.¹

Bruce assumed a very conservative and uncritical attitude toward the Bible. He failed to discuss the problems of its authority and inspiration.

Eschatology did not occupy a place of primary importance in Bruce's theology.

There is a remarkable period yet to come when Christ will achieve an ultimate victory over all of His formidable enemies.² The Christian religion is yet comparatively confined to narrow limits, and the reformation is imperfect.³ Nevertheless, a period approaches when the avowed opponents of Christ's Kingdom shall be overthrown, when all Israel shall be restored and dwell safely under the Messiah, and when a fuller harvest of the Gentile world will be gathered.⁴ When the long and severe contest

¹ Ibid., pp. 260, 261.
² Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, p. 80).
³ Ibid., p. 81.
⁴ Ibid., p. 81.
with the Anti-Christ is concluded, Satan shall be bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Revelation XX, 2,3). Whether the number of years here is to be interpreted literally or not is unknown, but the description evidently denotes a long period when error and wickedness shall be remarkably restrained. During this period peace, true religion, and holiness shall prevail throughout the world. Deceased martyrs and saints shall be held in great honor so that it may be said that they will live and reign with Christ. However, this is not to be accomplished in the millennial state either in the manner or to the degree that some have taught. These events are not to be effected by a visible and personal reign of Christ before the general resurrection.

Even after the glorious millennium irreligion and wickedness will appear again, and the hostilities against the saints will be resumed. At the end of the world Christ will appear, and there will be a final and total abolition of all that is evil. At this time all things will be made new, and Christ will present in heaven a glorious and perfect church.

In this brief section on eschatology Bruce based his sequence of events on Revelation XX. However, he warned against a completely literalistic interpretation as advocated by the Millenarians. Dr. John Macleod has written that the usual

1 Ibid., p. 81.
2 Ibid., p. 81.
3 Ibid., p. 81.
4 Ibid., pp. 81, 82.
5 Ibid., p. 82.
6 Ibid., p. 82.
7 Ibid., p. 82.
8 Ibid., p. 82.
9 Ibid., p. 83.
Scottish interpretation of the first resurrection of Revelation XX was that of James Durham who saw in it a resurgence of the truths and principles for which the martyrs had laid down their lives.1 This would appear to be a fair and adequate interpretation of Bruce's position.

Bruce spoke briefly of the final condition of men. The righteous will spend eternity in heaven where they will enjoy continual fellowship with God and have refuge from all danger and enemies.2 On the other hand, those who persist in unbelief are precluded from the gift of life and are under God's eternal wrath and judgment.3

Neither in his published lectures nor sermons did Professor Bruce attempt to formulate a complete theological system. His approach was practical, for his main purpose was to relate theology to life. As a result of this emphasis he developed the doctrines of salvation, faith, and conversion more exhaustively than the others.

On the basis of this study it is possible to make certain general observations about Bruce's theology. First, it was Christocentric. Christ was proclaimed as the sum and substance of all revelation and the only proper theme of preaching. This Christological emphasis is also seen in Bruce's exposition of the Person and Work of Christ and the related doctrines (e.g., Salvation, Faith, and Conversion). He also spoke frequently of

---

1 Macleod, Scottish Theology, p. 278.
2 Bruce, Practical Discourses, pp. 225, 226.
3 Ibid., pp. 123, 124.
the vital and mystical union which must exist between the believer and Christ.¹

Bruce's theology also reflected the influence of the Marrow teaching on a number of specific points. His whole system was moulded, to a large measure, by the Associate Presbytery's "Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace" (adopted 21 October, 1742). He was thoroughly steeped in the theology of this document, and his outlook was greatly influenced by it. It permeated his thinking to the extent that there was a marked similarity in both thought and expression. The influence that the "Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace" exerted upon Bruce's theology is particularly evident at four points.

(1) **The Definition of Faith.** Saving faith consists in believing the testimony of God concerning His Son and the life that is in Him for all men.² Faith is the means whereby the believer appropriates Christ unto himself; however, the meritorious efficacy is altogether in the object which faith apprehends.³

(2) **Assurance of Salvation.** Assurance is an essential mark of a genuine Christian. In saving faith there is a real persuasion in the heart of the sinner that he has salvation through Christ.⁴

(3) **Universal Offer of Salvation.** A free and unlimited offer of Christ to all men is not inconsistent with the doctrine of

---
¹ Ibid., p. 116, p. 133, p. 146.
⁴ Gib's Display, Vol. I, p. 139; Bruce, Practical Discourses, p. 122.
(4) Good Works. Personal holiness or good works do not have a causal or conditional influence upon salvation.\(^2\)

The Marrow Men did not regard their doctrine as being in conflict with the Westminster Confession of Faith. However, a study of the two positions does reveal a difference in emphasis. For example, the Marrow Men were more insistent about the assurance which accompanies saving faith. They argued: "None can believe on Christ, trust in him or rest on him for salvation; without some degree of persuasion, that they shall have life and salvation by him..."\(^3\) On the other hand, the Confession asserted: "This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be a partaker of it..."\(^4\)

Furthermore, the theology of the Marrow Men was very evangelical. They reacted against the Confession's doctrine of reprobation.\(^5\) Although they were particular redemptionists, they maintained that the Gospel was to be freely offered to all men. As the Reverend Andrew Robertson has written:

... they preached the gospel of the grace of God, - that gospel which opens up to the sinner all its rich and varied treasures, and placing them before him as heaven's choicest gifts, invites him to take them freely and at once.\(^6\)

Dr. John Cunningham has made this very able observation on

\(^{1}\) Gib's Display, Vol. I, p. 181; Bruce, Practical Discourses, p. 117.
\(^{4}\) Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XVIII, Section 3.
\(^{5}\) Walker, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, p. 57.
\(^{6}\) Robertson, Andrew, History of the Atonement Controversy, p. 74.
the relationship of the Marrow Theology to the doctrinal standards of the Church of Scotland:

If that celebrated treatise [The Marrow of Modern Divinity] diverges from the standard of high orthodoxy, it is only by a hairbreadth, though the divergence is undoubtedly in a dangerous direction. It certainly delights in scholastic distinctions and startling paradoxes, and in detached passages speaks as if a believer's moral conduct were of no account; but these passages are to some extent modified by others, and its apologists affirm that the difference lies more in the statement of truth than in the truth itself.¹

CHAPTER III

ARCHIBALD BRUCE: PROPAGANDIST FOR FREEDOM

"Genius cannot vigorously flourish under confinement."

- Bruce, Reflections on Freedom of Writing,
  C.W. 3, p. 11.
CHAPTER III

ARCHIBALD BRUCE: PROPAGANDIST FOR FREEDOM

The period following the outbreak of the French Revolution was a time of political ferment in Great Britain. In this atmosphere of hysteria and tension Parliament enacted a number of restrictive measures to curb revolutionary tendencies. In this crisis when civil rights appeared to be imperiled, Archibald Bruce vehemently denounced all laws designed to enforce political and religious conformity. In his passionate devotion to the cause of freedom he manifested an enlightened attitude and a liberal spirit that were far advanced for his age. Bruce was suspicious of all laws designed to curtail individual liberties, and he wrote a series of books and pamphlets in which he defended freedom of the press and the French Revolution.

In order to appreciate Bruce's labors as a propagandist for freedom, it is necessary to examine the general tenor of the times in which he advocated his unpopular ideas.

On 5 May, 1789 the States-General of France met, and in the course of a few months it overthrew the existing constitution and proclaimed the momentous Declaration of the Rights of Man. This dramatic event served to stimulate the political consciousness of the masses in Great Britain. In Scotland it accentuated the agitation for burgh reform and for a more
democratic system of parliamentary representation. At this time town councils employed a system of self-election, and the representatives for Parliament were chosen by a few thousand out of a total population of a million and a half.

Among the governing classes there was the fear that the portentous drama enacted in France would be repeated in Great Britain. In Scotland Henry Dundas, who had been appointed Home Secretary in 1791, emerged as the champion of the "status quo." He resolutely opposed all reforms and sought to thwart them by all means at his disposal.

In the years immediately following the outbreak of the French Revolution pamphlets were published and societies were organized which alarmed government officials. In February, 1791 Thomas Paine published the first part of his Rights of Man. In reply to Edmund Burke's ultra-conservative doctrine as expounded in his Reflections on the Revolution in France, Paine stated the full democratic thesis: that government is derived from the people, can be altered at their will, and must be exercised for their benefit through a system of popular representation. In the second part of the Rights of Man, published in 1792, Paine carried his doctrine to its logical conclusion and advocated the abolition of all hereditary elements in the constitution. Fearing that its position was now endangered, the

3 Brown, op. cit., p. 300.
4 Ibid., p. 302.
5 Paine, Thomas, Rights of Man, Part I, p. 110.
6 Paine, Rights of Man, Part II, p. 25.
government intervened, and on 21st May, 1792 King George III issued his Proclamation Against Seditious Writings.¹

During this period two societies came into existence which advocated parliamentary reform. Thomas Hardy, a shoemaker, founded the Corresponding Society, and Charles Grey and his young government colleagues organized The Friends of the People.²

Throughout 1793 and 1794 the law courts of the land were filled with government prosecutions of editors, nonconformist ministers, and radicals who had advocated parliamentary reform.³ In Scotland two leaders of the Friends of the People, Thomas Muir, a young advocate, and Thomas Fyshe Palmer, a Unitarian preacher in Dundee, were found guilty of sedition and sentenced to transportation.⁴

This system of repression continued as measures were passed by Parliament suppressing the reform societies and suspending Habeas Corpus.⁵ In 1795 the Treason and Sedition Acts were passed. According to the former, writing or speaking against the King's authority was declared to be treason; and by the latter all political meetings were prohibited unless advertised before hand, and power was given to any two justices to disperse a convocation if they deemed it dangerous.⁶

On 21 January, 1793 King Louis XVI was executed, and soon thereafter hostilities broke out between France and Britain.

² Trevelyan, George Macauley, British History in the Nineteenth Century, p. 66.
³ Ibid., p. 70.
⁴ Brown, op. cit., pp. 304, 305.
⁵ Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 71.
⁶ Brown, op. cit., p. 306.
From the British viewpoint the purpose of this war was not only to arrest French aggression but also to defeat the Revolution and to restore the Bourbon dynasty.\(^1\)

It was against this historical background that Bruce defended freedom of dissent. In an age when justice was often perverted and when human rights were frequently abridged by repressive laws, he courageously espoused the cause of liberty. In his evaluation of this aspect of Bruce's work Thomas M'Crie, Jr., has written:

As a polemical writer, none has succeeded better in drawing the line of distinction between liberty and licentiousness, or balanced with a nicer hand the rights of God and man. A genuine Whig of the old school, yet with nothing of the virulence or vulgarity of the democrat, he was a thorough hater of all despotism and intolerance, civil or religious. He was a bold assertor of the right of private judgment and the liberty of the press, at a time when both were so abused as to expose the writer who advocated them to no small hazard.\(^2\)

Bruce's defence of freedom against political tyranny is a phase of his work that is particularly relevant for the present time. To-day there is a spirit of hysteria abroad because our political philosophy is under attack from a totalitarian system. Men and governments, in their zeal to defend existing institutions against the assault of Communism, have often adopted methods that are inconsistent with the true democratic spirit.

A. In Defence of Freedom of the Press

In 1794 Archibald Bruce published Reflections on Freedom of Writing and the Impropriety of Attempting to Suppress it by Penal

\(^1\) Trevelyan, op. cit., pp. 80, 81.
Laws. Like many of his works it was written anonymously. In this instance he used the "nom de plume", "A North British Protestant." To the title page this motto was affixed: "What Britons dare to think, he dares to tell." Reflections on Freedom of Writing was occasioned by King George III's Proclamation Against Seditious Writings which was issued on 21 May, 1792. This edict condemned all publications "tending to excite tumult and disorder by endeavouring to raise groundless jealousies and discontent in the minds of our faithful and loving subjects, respecting the laws and happy constitution of government, civil and religious...."^1 It enjoined magistrates and other public officials to be vigilant in their efforts "to discover the authors and printers of such wicked and seditious writings as aforesaid, and all others who shall disperse the same."^2

Inasmuch as Reflections on Freedom of Writing was Bruce's principal contribution to the defence of political and religious liberty, a synopsis of its contents will be given.

In the preface Bruce stated that his objective was to vindicate freedom of the human mind and liberty of the press. He lamented the fact that the spirit of moderation was on the decline and that men were in danger of relinquishing privileges acquired only after great sacrifices. In the present crisis

^2 Ibid., p. 1477.
^4 Ibid., p. i.
formidable enemies are assailing the rights of conscience; consequently, it behooves all friends of liberty to be vigilant.¹

The issues involved in the present controversy are of equal importance to the church and the state, for civil and religious liberty are but two branches of the same tree.² They have always been closely allied, and the same prettexts and methods have been employed to undermine and destroy both.³ Although on occasions one may appear to be more directly attacked, the other can never assume its security and accept its counterpart's defeat with complacency.⁴ In the past penal laws were directed primarily against religious reformers.⁵ However, of late the trend has been reversed as political and philosophical ideas have been proscribed.⁶

Although Bruce expressed his approval of the objectives of the various political societies, he asserted that his primary concern with the King's Proclamation was as it affected religious liberty and ecclesiastical reform.⁷ In it there is no distinction between writings which attack the established Constitution in the church and in the state, but all of them appear to be indiscriminately denounced as seditious.⁸ The practical consequence of this edict is to condemn all religious dissenters and to promote intolerance and persecution for

¹ Ibid., p. ii.
² Ibid., p. iii.
³ Ibid., p. iii.
⁴ Ibid., p. iii.
⁵ Ibid., p. iii.
⁶ Ibid., p. iv.
⁷ Ibid., p. v.
⁸ Ibid., p. v.
conscience's sake.  

Bruce advanced a number of cogent arguments against the present royal edict. First, it tends to make the King and his ministers the final arbiters of men's political and religious opinions, for its purpose is to enforce uniformity of thought by the threat of criminal laws. Royal proclamations have frequently been employed by despotic rulers to suppress freedom of inquiry and to obstruct necessary reforms. Such measures, therefore, are hostile to the spirit and interests of a free Protestant state.

Secondly, proclamations of this nature suppress all criticism of the church and the state. This is one method of silencing antagonists although it is not the most convincing and satisfactory. It supersedes reason and decides a controversy without any reference to its merits. To overwhelm men by the weight of authority and to refute writings with indictments and threats of imprisonment betrays the weakness of a cause and the defects of one's arguments. In a free society it is essential that citizens have the right to review and to criticize the principles of their government as well as of their religion.

In the third place, the King's Proclamation stifles freedom

---

1 Ibid., p. iv.
2 Ibid., p. 4.
3 Ibid., pp. 5, 6.
4 Ibid., p. 6.
5 Ibid., p. 10.
6 Ibid., p. 10.
7 Ibid., p. 10.
8 Ibid., p. 11.
of inquiry. Bruce argued:

Genius cannot vigorously flourish under confinement. It delights only in the open air: and a plant so rare deserves to be carefully cherished, even when it shoots out into wild luxuriances.¹

Finally, Bruce objected to the nebulous and indeterminate language in which the Proclamation was couched.² It might be logically interpreted as declaring that all British laws are equally sacred and that all attempts to amend the Constitution are seditious.³ The result, then, would be to thwart all reformation, civil as well as religious. Although all laws enacted by the legislature are an integral part of the constitution, this does not imply that they cannot be altered in the interests of public good.⁴ Bruce defended the right of citizens to amend a constitution that had become oppressive.⁵

Liberty of the press is an invaluable good although it may be subject to certain abuses.⁶ A nation that intends to enjoy its benefits must be willing to tolerate its excesses. It is better that a thousand erroneous ideas be propagated than that one necessary truth be suppressed.⁷ A study of history reveals the various benefits to be derived from a free press. It has contributed to the defeat of tyranny, the expulsion of ignorance and bigotry, and the advancement of the Protestant Reformation.⁸

¹ Ibid., pp. 11, 12.
² Ibid., p. 67.
³ Ibid., p. 67.
⁴ Ibid., p. 69.
⁵ Ibid., p. 73.
⁶ Ibid., p. 12.
⁷ Ibid., p. 12.
⁸ Ibid., p. 13.
The word sedition has much the same usage in the state as heresy or schism in the church. Despotic rulers have often applied it in a perverted sense. It has, therefore, notably served the designs of those who have sought to suppress all opposition and to prevent innovations disagreeable to their wills. Reformers, religious dissenters, and critics of the state in every age have been branded as seditious. For their adherence to the worship of the true God, the Jews of old were accused of being a rebellious people. Sedition was the common charge brought against the early Christians throughout the Roman empire. Later the Waldensians, the Lollards, and the Hussites were harassed and persecuted to death on similar charges. British history also abounds in illustrations of persecution for sedition.

Bruce lamented that, in the present crisis, there appeared to be a recurrence of the old methods of persecution and inquisition. Edicts had been published prohibiting a discussion of French politics, and troops had been dispatched to the frontiers to arrest foreigners and to prevent the importation of news and publications relating to the Revolution. A government that cannot bear a comparison with another without

1 Ibid., pp. 13, 14.
3 Ibid., p. 14.
5 Ibid., p. 15.
6 Ibid., p. 15.
7 Ibid.; see p. 20 ff.
8 Ibid., p. 39.
9 Ibid., p. 39.
fear of an eclipse or of total subversion is indeed vulnerable.¹

Bruce discussed at considerable length the proper method to refute a false idea. It is futile to attempt a correction of prevailing errors with legal prosecutions and court verdicts.² A full communication of ideas should be encouraged that they may be accepted or rejected on their own merits.³ Generally speaking, in such contests weapons of the same kind should be employed. Writings should be opposed with writings, arguments with arguments, and reason with reason; while the decision should remain with the public.⁴ A popular government will always have volunteers to perform such a service. A Johnson will emerge to refute a Price; some Burke or Boothby will appear to counterbalance the abilities of a Paine.⁵

It is essential to the welfare of society that men of a free spirit, accustomed to speculative thoughts and reflections, and detached from all political affiliations, have free access to address the public and to impart without fear the fruits of their research and observations.⁶ A nation needs the exciting impulse, the critical acumen, and the admonitions of persons of this description that it may profit from their labors, disputes, and even from their errors and extravagant hypotheses.⁷

Only petty politicians and illiberal bigots will make war with this class of men.⁸ To limit their range or to diminish their

¹ Ibid., p. 39.
² Ibid., p. 40.
³ Ibid., p. 40.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 40, 41.
⁵ Ibid., p. 41.
⁶ Ibid., p. 41.
⁷ Ibid., p. 41.
⁸ Ibid., p. 42.
number is to impoverish a nation.1

Bruce admitted that there are certain circumstances in which the government may quite legitimately restrain the press. Publications which threaten the subversion of a commonwealth or tend to incite a public disorder are to be suppressed.2 However, a necessity of this kind will occur only infrequently. Authors who expound radical ideas but do not actually advocate sedition or treason are not to be punished by civil authorities.3

In this connection Bruce discussed Thomas Paine’s Rights of Man since it was one of the publications against which the King’s Proclamation was directed. Although he rejected many of Paine’s doctrines (e.g., that posterity cannot be bound by the deeds of its ancestors, that all obligation must arise from voluntary consent, and his antipathy for royalty) he did not find his writings to be seditious.4 On the other hand, Bruce found many helpful truths in the Rights of Man (e.g., Paine’s exposure of public abuses and his proposed methods of obviating them).5

At this point in his argument Bruce reiterated his abhorrence of all libel laws. It is too easy for unscrupulous men to give an insidious turn to the most innocent expression and to torture language in order to make it speak sedition, treason, or whatever they desire.6 Detached expressions and paragraphs

1 Ibid., p. 42.
2 Ibid., p. 48.
3 Ibid., pp. 48, 49.
4 Ibid., pp. 50, 51.
5 Ibid., pp. 51, 52.
6 Ibid., p. 56.
are often selected in order to pervert an author's obvious meaning.¹

Bruce expressed very enlightened views about the rights of citizens. Everyman is entitled to full liberty and justice irrespective of his external circumstances.² Governments were not ordained for the aggrandizement of one, or the accommodation of a few, but for the many.³ A man's right to testify against public grievances is not to be determined by the positions that he occupies, the acres that he owns, or the money that he earns.⁴ If these be the requirements for voting or expressing one's judgment on national affairs, the masses of the people would be disqualified.⁵ If the power and the interests of the crown and the nobles be subordinate to that of the people, there is no danger of the latter ever seeking to overthrow the constitution.⁶ The general inclination of the country is in favor of the old mode of government.⁷

Bruce wrote extensively about the King’s Proclamation as it affected religious liberty. According to its stipulations punishments could be inflicted on those who were guilty of seditious writings against either the civil or ecclesiastical aspects of the Constitution.

Here again Bruce attacked the Proclamation for its ambiguity and vagueness.⁸ In terms of the British Constitution it is

¹ Ibid., p. 56.
² Ibid., p. 78.
³ Ibid., p. 78.
⁴ Ibid., p. 78.
⁵ Ibid., p. 78.
⁶ Ibid., p. 79.
⁷ Ibid., p. 79.
⁸ Ibid., p. 95.
impossible to define religious sedition, for two distinct and incompatible establishments are sanctioned. Therefore, both national churches cannot be protected by the same Proclamation. For example, a book asserting the divine right of presbytery will be good constitutional doctrine in Scotland, but it will be libelous in England. In the present circumstances the only way to avoid offence and danger is by total silence and indifference on religious subjects.

According to the terms of the King's Proclamation the charge of sedition could be brought against the Church of Scotland and all of the various religious dissenters in the land. They disapprove of every law in the civil state which sanctions the Constitution of the Church of England, which obliges compliance with it, or which ensures its perpetual maintenance. If an unlimited approbation of such a Constitution be required as an essential condition of loyalty, it may be safely predicted that there will never be peace in the land or that sedition will be wanting as long as men have a New Testament to read and judgment to understand it.

The present ruling party in Great Britain maintains that the civil and ecclesiastical aspects of the Constitution are inseparable, so that it is impossible to differ about the one without incurring the charge of defection in the other.

1 Ibid., p. 95.
2 Ibid., p. 96.
3 Ibid., p. 97.
4 Ibid., p. 105.
5 Ibid., p. 100.
6 Ibid., p. 111.
7 Ibid., p. 119.
It is equally criminal to attack the religious abuses of a church as to impugn the proper authority of the government. It is no less punishable to condemn the perversion of a divine ordinance by a sacramental test than to refuse obedience in a lawful command. Such arguments are fallacious, for it is possible to be loyal to a civil government and at the same time to criticize an established religion. Loyalty in these two spheres has been unnecessarily confused.

The right of dissent is a cardinal principle of Protestantism. Man has the absolute freedom to examine whatever relates to religion and to formulate his own convictions irrespective of mere human authority. This is a rule which admits no limitation or exceptions from the laws or constitutions of men. Freedom of inquiry was the foundation stone of the Protestant Reformation. A small minority, after a diligent and careful examination of the truth, dissented and inaugurated a new movement. There would have been no Reformation had Luther deferred action until his ideas were universally accepted.

Bruce severely denounced the Church of Scotland and its clergymen for their conduct in the present national emergency. By their acceptance of the state's coercive measures, they had, in effect, renounced the religious reformation of their ancestors.

---

1 Ibid., p. 111.
2 Ibid., p. 112.
3 Ibid., p. 112.
4 Ibid., p. 113.
5 Ibid., p. 113.
6 Ibid., p. 113.
7 Ibid., p. 113.
8 Ibid., pp. 115, 116.
9 Ibid., p. 116.
and nullified the Covenants. The activity of magistrates and ministers could be better employed than in the suppression of men's rights. It would be more conducive to the happiness and tranquility of society if they desisted from these efforts and concentrated on the elimination of drunkenness, dishonesty, and other public evils.

In the conclusion of his argument Bruce addressed himself to the question: "What ought the friends of freedom do in the present circumstances?" First, it is their duty to enter a protest against the government's coercive measures in order to extricate themselves from the charge of acquiescence or silence. They must reserve, it seems, their opinions, arguments, and remonstrances for a more opportune time, leaving all of the guilt upon those who are intent upon a course of persecution and suppression.

Secondly, if the ministers and lawyers of the Crown are resolved to persist in their plans, authors and publishers should request that a licencer of the press be constituted by royal authority. Although such an office has usually been considered odious and tyrannical, it is necessary to have competent judges to guide and assist writers if they are liable to prosecution for seditious sentiments.

Bruce saw in the government's oppressive policies a re-emergence of despotism and a tragic betrayal of Britain's noblest ideals.

1 Ibid., p. 123.
2 Ibid., p. 145.
3 Ibid., p. 146.
4 Ibid., p. 156.
5 Ibid., p. 156.
6 Ibid., p. 159.
7 Ibid., p. 159.
8 Ibid., pp. 159, 160.
B. In Defence of the French Revolution

Soon after Britain declared war on France in 1793, Archibald Bruce emerged as a staunch defender of the French Revolution and its objectives. While deploring its excesses, he recognized it as a movement designed to overthrow a tyrannical system and to give free expression to more democratic and liberal ideas. Bruce has stated that he felt compelled to come forth from his obscurity and quiet habits of life to register his disapproval of the measures which precipitated the war with France. In this instance, as in his defence of freedom of the press, Bruce manifested a liberal spirit that was opposed to current opinion.

Before discussing Bruce's attitude toward the French Revolution, it is necessary to place him within the larger context of his time. This momentous event evoked contrasting reactions among the various religious groups of Scotland. Some few of the National Church expressed an early admiration for the Revolution, but their enthusiasm soon gave way to alarm. The clergy of both the Moderate and Evangelical Parties united in denouncing all democratic aspirations. Dr. Gavin Struthers has summarized the general reaction of the aristocracy and the National Church to the French Revolution in this way:

1 Bruce, A Peaceable Declaration... Relative to the War between France and Great-Britain, pp. 10, 11. (Hereinafter referred to as A Peaceable Declaration).
2 Meikle, Scotland and the French Revolution, p. 194.
3 Ibid., p. 195. Note: It should be observed, however, that the liberal principles of the French Revolution did subsequently exert an influence upon the development of thought within the Evangelical Party of the Church of Scotland. Kirkland, W.M., The Impact of the French Revolution on Scottish Religious Life and Thought (unpublished thesis), p. 211.
Nobles, clergy, and almost every man of property and influence, united in one great confederation to counteract all attempts at change, and to control and silence their dependents. The power of the civil law was called into exercise; and men were seized, tried, and transported as guilty of sedition...¹

Grateful for the recent concessions that had been granted to them by Parliament, both the Episcopalians and the Roman Catholics viewed with favor the war with France.²

The ideals of the French Revolution were warmly supported by many of the dissenters in both England and Scotland, particularly the Relief Church.² This latter group embraced many of the principles embodied in the Declaration of the Rights of Man—universal religious toleration and the free communication of ideas.⁴ Inasmuch as the members of the Relief Church repudiated the idea of a State Church, they welcomed the disestablishment of the Papacy in France.⁵ The cause of the Revolution was openly espoused by many of its clergymen. The Reverend Mr. Smith of Kilbride published a discourse in which he pointed to the Revolution as a harbinger of good.⁶ Another minister of the Relief Church, the Reverend Patrick Hutchison,

¹ Struthers, The History of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of the Relief Church, p. 380.
² Meikle, op. cit., pp. 196, 197.
³ Struthers, op. cit., p. 381. Note: (1) "When the French Revolution broke out, it was received in England (as has been said) with mingled astonishment and sympathy." Willey, Basil, The Eighteenth Century Background, p. 241. Willey gives an able discussion of the impact that the French Revolution made on the thought of Joseph Priestley, William Godwin, Edmund Burke, and others. (2) In Scotland Robert Haldane, a leader of the lay missionary movement, declared that he had been "awakened from the sleep of spiritual death" by the French Revolution. Meikle, op. cit., p. 206.
⁴ Ibid., p. 381.
⁵ Ibid., pp. 381, 382.
⁶ Ibid., p. 382.
denounced the war with France, and he was attacked by the "Glasgow Courier." A small number of his congregation, who disagreed with his views, withdrew from his church.¹

In Bruce's section of the Secession, the General Associate Synod (Anti-Burgher), there does not appear to have been such widespread enthusiasm for the French Revolution. However, there was some sympathy for it as evidenced by the publication of a book by Mr. John Young of Hawick. In his Essays on the Following Interesting Subjects: viz. I. Government, etc. he undertook to defend the British Constitution, to justify the war with France, and to exonerate the Seceders from the charge of disloyalty. He viewed with alarm the fact that some dissenters had been associated with the various reform societies.² Mr. Young was charged with advancing ideas inconsistent with his Synod's doctrine of Church and State, but no formal action was taken against him.³ In 1798 the Burgher Synod adopted a loyal address which appears to have exonerated the Seceders as a whole from the charge of disaffection.⁴

Among the Anti-Burghers Bruce was the most outspoken apologist for the French Revolution. In his defence of it he went beyond the official pronouncements of his Synod.

The overthrow of the religious establishment in France was one of the factors which caused all branches of the Secession

¹ Ibid., p. 382.
² Young, John, Essays on the Following Interesting Subjects, pp. 3,4.
³ M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 376, n. 1.
to re-examine their doctrine of Church and State. Both the Burgher and Anti-Burgher Synods were divided into the Old and New Lights. The former professed a staunch loyalty to the Covenants, while the latter group asserted that the power ascribed to the magistrate in the Westminster Confession of Faith was Erastian.

Dr. Struthers has given this able statement of the influence of the French Revolution on the churches of Scotland:

It had a surprising influence upon the progress of religious liberty in Scotland, and, with some few drawbacks, was greatly favourable to the progress of truth and piety. It caused men to think for themselves who had previously been dreaming away their time, or founding their faith upon certain "decrees and canons" of their fathers, which were no longer applicable to a new state of society.

Bruce published two anonymous works on the subject of the French Revolution - *A Serious View of the Remarkable Providences of the Times: and A Warning as to Public Sins, Dangers, and Duty of British Protestants* (1795), and *A Peaceable Declaration of the Sentiments of a Number of Presbyterians in Scotland Relative to the War between France and Great-Britain* (1797).

In his introduction to *A Serious View of the Remarkable Providences of the Times* Bruce stated that this book was written in 1793 soon after the cabinet adopted measures which involved Britain in the war with France. It was originally delivered to his congregation on a day of humiliation which had been

1 Struthers, op. cit., p. 384.
2 Meikle, op. cit., p. 200.
3 Struthers, op. cit., p. 378.
4 Bruce, *A Serious View of the Remarkable Providences of the Times*, (C.W. 5, p. 6). (Hereinafter referred to as A Serious View).
appointed by the Edinburgh Presbytery of the General Associate Synod. The purpose of this paper was two-fold—a personal exoneration and a warning to his congregation. Bruce declared that this book contained his fixed views on the French Revolution. His opinions had not been altered as a result of its more recent excesses of violence and cruelty.

Bruce denounced in scathing terms the political leaders (Pitt and Burke) who were responsible for the war. He accused them of wantonly discarding peace and of entering upon an aggressive war without attempting to resolve differences by negotiation. He declared: "Perhaps never were hostilities voluntarily and so rashly entered upon, by any administration ...." Bruce quoted with approval a member of Parliament who had said of the war with France: "I have always considered it as unjust in its principle, inefficient as to its means, and ruinous in its consequences."

In his writings Bruce enumerated the specific reasons for his refusal to give an active support to the war with France.

First, the French Revolution represented a decisive defeat for the ecclesiastical tyranny of Rome. Although it was not inspired by the spirit of religious reform; nevertheless, it had dealt a severe blow to the papal empire and had

1 Ibid., p. 6.
2 Ibid., p. 9.
3 Ibid., pp. 8, 9.
4 [Bruce], A Peaceable Declaration, p. vii.
5 Ibid., pp. 12, 13.
6 Ibid., p. 18.
7 [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 8).
8 Ibid., p. 12.
threatened the annihilation of its dominion in all nations. The Revolution had broken the fetters of a tyrannical civil and ecclesiastical system which had long enslaved the citizens of France. As a result of it many flagrant abuses were eradicated. Monastic orders were abolished; the authority of the Catholic hierarchy was circumscribed; and the operation of canon laws was terminated. Furthermore, the new Constitution of France guaranteed liberty of conscience and universal toleration. Bruce discerned in these events a signal intervention of Providence.

Bruce readily admitted that the French Revolution was not, properly speaking, a religious reformation. Nevertheless, it did prepare the way for the eradication of ecclesiastical as well as political abuses. It opened the door for the preaching of the Gospel and the promotion of religious reform.

The present conflict with France may be properly called a war of religion, for one of its objectives is the restoration of Catholicism. Consequently, by their participation in this conflict British citizens are guilty of propagating a religion that is inconsistent with their Constitution. For this reason

1 Bruce, A Peaceable Declaration, p. 17.
2 Bruce, A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 37).
3 Ibid., pp. 13, 14.
5 Ibid., p. 36.
6 Ibid., p. 15.
7 Ibid., p. 15.
8 Ibid., p. 15.
9 Bruce, A Peaceable Declaration, p. 14.
10 Bruce, A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 19).
it is inconceivable that Presbyterians should take an active part in it.¹

If Britain is really concerned about the infidelity of France, there is a more effective way to combat it than by force of arms.

A 100,000 Bibles, accompanied with 10,000 plain, zealous preachers of the gospel, would be a more hopeful way of combating infidelity and putting ignorance and error to flight, than all the provision of pikes and muskets, and an army of 200,000 rascally soldiers.²

Secondly, Bruce supported the Revolution because it extended to the citizens of France the prospects of greater freedom.³ Previously they had been in a state of servitude to a tyrannical monarchy, but now they were to enjoy justice and liberty.⁴ Bruce interpreted the war with France as an effort to restore the former order with all of its abuses.

We supposed that no friend of mankind, could behold with indifference the formidable combination of last year, or view, without dread, attempts... to replace millions in chains, for the sake of one; to repress the rising spirit of liberty and reformation, and to plunge a nation, just beginning to taste these sweets, into danger and anarchy...⁵

Finally, Bruce denounced the war with France because of its unpopularity.⁶ He observed that in his conversations with ordinary people he met few who were disposed to vindicate the war.⁷ It found its support largely among the ruling class which had arbitrarily forced its decision on an unwilling nation.⁸

¹ [Bruce], A Peaceable Declaration, p. 16.
² [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 22).
³ [Bruce], A Peaceable Declaration, p. 9.
⁴ Ibid., p. 9.
⁵ Ibid., p. 11.
⁶ Ibid., p. 21.
⁷ Ibid., p. 22.
⁸ Ibid., p. 22.
Were an impartial poll to be taken, the majority would vote for negotiation rather than for a continuation of hostilities.¹

Bruce discussed what he considered to be the proper Christian attitude toward an unjust war. In public matters there is the tendency for individuals to accept the judgments of those in authority without any attempt to ascertain for themselves what is right or wrong.² Hence, in national affairs morality and religion are often violated without remorse.³ Although government officials, who transact what is morally evil have the greater sin, yet those who give their assent are not guiltless.⁴ As for himself, Bruce took this occasion to wash his hands publicly of the war and to disassociate himself from its disastrous consequences.⁵ However, he was careful to explain that his behavior was not to be interpreted as an expression of disloyalty to the King or to the interests of the nation.⁶ His sense of duty would restrain him from any action that might be injurious to his country.⁷ Although he was opposed to the imposition of new taxes or the continuation of old ones for the support of the war, he had no warrant for refusal to comply with legal exactions.⁸ Having entered his protest against this scandalous misapplication of public funds,

¹ Ibid., p. 22.
² Ibid., p. 19.
³ Ibid., p. 19.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 19, 20.
⁵ Ibid., p. 20.
⁶ Ibid., p. 23.
⁷ Ibid., p. 22.
⁸ Ibid., p. 23.
his conscience was exonerated. Bruce described this course of action as "the doctrine of passive obedience." A nation is still to be respected even though it abuses its authority and resorts to improper and unlawful acts.

In the conclusion of *A Peaceable Declaration* Bruce enumerated certain specific proposals which, if followed, would ensure peace among all nations. His suggestions reveal a very progressive and enlightened spirit as well as a penetrating insight into the causes of international tension. He advocated: (1) the abandonment of the oppressive war system, (2) the repudiation of the principle of a balance of power, (3) a universal respect for the laws of justice, mercy, and peace, (4) the subordination of the government to the interests of all people rather than to the aggrandizement of the few, (5) the use of councils to mediate differences rather than recourse to war, (6) the cultivation of the arts, (7) the protection of liberty with arguments and books rather than with oppressive laws, (8) the toleration of some errors and indiscretions rather than the introduction of persecution for political and religious opinions, and (9) the encouragement of all reform.

Bruce concluded his argument with this declaration:

> In a word, let the Christian religion as founded on the Bible, and resulting from free enquiry and choice, not as derived from the traditions and constitutions of men, or depraved by worldly politics, be everywhere respected and encouraged; - and we know nothing as yet, except our follies and sins, to hinder us from reposing in the arms of peace...

---

2 [Bruce], *A Serious View*, (C.W. 5, p. 59).
4 [Bruce], *A Peaceable Declaration*, p. 24.
C. The Propagandist as Printer

In a note appended to his account of Professor Bruce's life and work, Thomas M'Crie, Jr., stated: "It may be mentioned as a curious illustration of the zeal with which Mr. Bruce prosecuted his literary labours that he brought a printer to Whitburn, and employed him exclusively, for many years, in printing his own publications.\(^1\) Unfortunately there is a dearth of material about this interesting aspect of his work. Many of the memoirs of Bruce mention his labors as a printer, but without exception they fail to supply any important details. It is necessary to compile information about it from scattered references and from the comments made by the reviewers of his books. An exhaustive treatment of this subject is beyond the scope of this thesis. The purpose of this section, therefore, is not to give a technical discussion of the mechanics of Bruce's printing, but rather to view it as a practical illustration of his passionate devotion to the cause of liberty. In his work as a printer he dared to give expression to the ideas which he had enunciated in *Reflections on Freedom of Writing*. His defence of civil liberties, therefore, was more than a mere academic exercise.

Any account of Bruce's work as a printer is largely conjectural because of the scarcity of material. For a variety of reasons it is impossible to obtain conclusive results. For example, the type used in most eighteenth century presses

was very similar. Furthermore, Bruce's failure to designate all of the works emanating from his private press complicates this study.

A large number of Bruce's works were printed by regular typographers in Edinburgh. Those mentioned most frequently are: George Caw, J. Pillans and Sons, and J. Guthrie. At least one of his pamphlets, Strictures on the Form of Swearing by Kissing the Gospels (1782), was printed in London by R. Denham. On the title page of many of Bruce's books only a list of stationers appears, indicating that they were responsible for the printing and sale of them. The usual booksellers were: Edinburgh - J. Guthrie, J. Ogle, C. Elliot, M. Gray, and W. Blackwood; Glasgow - J. Duncan, J. Dymock, M. Ogle, J. Steel, and Brash & Reid; Aberdeen - W. Knight; Perth - G. Brown, T. Hill, and Morison and Son; and London - Gray. This extensive list of printers and booksellers indicates that Bruce's works had a wide circulation.

In his book, A Typographical Gazetteer Attempted, Archdeacon Henry Cotton noted Bruce's work as a printer. In his entry under Whitburn he stated:

The Rev. Archibald Bruce, minister of this parish [Whitburn] who died in 1816, had a private press within the manse; from which he sent forth several publications,

---

1 Mr. J. Loudon of the National Library of Scotland, who has made a detailed examination of Bruce's publications, has indicated that he used in his press the characteristic old face type. Furthermore, the verified books from Bruce's press are not marked by any outstanding peculiarities which assist in a comparison of them to others.
chiefly upon Church matters.\(^1\)

This comment indicates that Bruce's work as a printer gained some recognition beyond the bounds of Scotland.

There is general agreement as to Bruce's reason for establishing a printing press in Whitburn. As a result of the King's Proclamation Against Seditious Writings, freedom of the press was not legally recognized. For some of his outspoken treatises on political and religious rights he could find no publisher.\(^2\) The Reverend R. R. Hobart has commented:

> But with his passion for liberty, he refused to be silenced by these restrictions, and it was characteristic of the man, of his ingenuity, as well as of his fearlessness, that he took the printing of books into his own hands.\(^3\)

Bruce purchased a press in Edinburgh and had it conveyed to Whitburn where he employed an old printer to operate it.\(^4\)

From a statement that Bruce made in the introduction to *A Peaceable Declaration of the Sentiments of a Number of Presbyterians in Scotland Relative to the War between France and Great-Britain*, it is evident that he experienced considerable difficulty in the publication of this pamphlet.

At the beginning of the war with France it was written and transmitted to press, but no publisher could be found.\(^5\)

---

Note: Neither the standard histories of printing in Scotland nor the records of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Bibliographical Societies take notice of Bruce's work as a printer.


3 *The Original Secession Magazine*, December, 1903, p. 488.


5 *Bruce*, *A Peaceable Declaration*, p. iv.
Bruce quoted a letter from a correspondent to whom the paper had been submitted:

> It is accordingly under review, and the opinion formed by one gentleman of the law is, that in its present form it would not answer to be published, as it would expose the author and all connected with it to a prosecution. Another is to look over it to-day, the result of which shall be communicated. If the author and its abettors have no objection to be avowedly responsible, and to run the risk of an excursion to Botany Bay, in that case there may be a going on, as is proposed....

In this connection Bruce bitterly denounced the government's restrictive measures which had served to intimidate printers and publishers.

> This then may be a satisfactory answer to any who may ask, Why the paper and the advice was not sooner published? Let the enemies of the freedom of the press, the abettors of the system of violence and destruction, be held responsible for that, as for all the nameless evils and mischievous consequences of their measures.

The controversial pamphlet in question was eventually published in 1797, and evidence points to it as the first work from Bruce's private press. It is likely that had his press already been in operation he would not have experienced this difficulty. Furthermore, no book or pamphlet definitely verified as being published in Whitburn bears a date prior to 1797. Additional evidence for 1797 as the year that Bruce established his press is to be found in his *Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I* (Whitburn: 1797). In the first chapter Bruce paid this tribute to his printer: "The pen of the writer has been, in the kind providence of God in the latter days, admirably aided by the types of the mechanist."\(^{3}\)

---

P. Landreth has given this interesting insight into Bruce's activities as a printer:

We have learned further, on good authority, that Professor Bruce himself often acted as compositor of his own 'copy'; and that, stepping in the room where his printer was busy, he spent hours in putting into type pages of his manuscript....

Not all of the works emanating from the press in Whitburn were of a controversial nature. For example, Bruce printed a series of his lectures to the students in the Divinity Hall as well as a volume of his sermons.

1 Landreth, The United Presbyterian Divinity Hall, p. 130.
2 As previously indicated it is impossible to ascertain with absolute certainty all of the publications printed by Bruce in Whitburn. A list is herewith appended with its division into two classifications: (1) Verified Publications from the Whitburn Press and (2) Probable Publications from the Whitburn Press. Support for placing publications into one of these two categories was derived from the following sources:- (1) Internal evidence (e.g., Whitburn listed as the place of publication. (2) Verifications made by two former New College Librarians, Dr. James Kennedy and the Reverend James B. Primrose. (3) Reviews of Bruce's works in current periodicals. (4) A study of watermarks and inking. (5) A comparison of the type. I am indebted to Mr. J. Loudon of the Staff of the National Library of Scotland who undertook to compare the type in Bruce's various books and pamphlets.

I. Publications from Bruce's Whitburn Press

1 Pamphlets. (1) The Advantages of Reading the Scriptures. A Discourse, at the Lecture in East Cheap, London, by Jabez Earle, 1797. A New Edition (Verified by Kennedy and Primrose). (2) A Friendly Letter to Private Soldiers, on the Customary Vice of Swearing, &c, Addressed to a Regiment after the Battle of Culloden by Dr. Doddridge, 1797. (Verified by Kennedy and Primrose). (3) Practical Reflections on Earthquakes, Which may also be applicable to Other Public Judgments by John Shower of London, 1797. A New Edition. (Verified by Primrose). This sermon was originally published in 1693. It was re-edited by Bruce, and he also wrote a preface for the new edition. Bruce was particularly interested in the subject of earthquakes, and he wrote a book on this subject himself.

2. Books. (1) Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part I by A. Bruce, 1797. (Whitburn is listed as the place of publication and also a review in The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, No. XCVII, Vol. XVII, No. 11, August, 1818, p. 119).
In his role as a propagandist for freedom, Bruce proved to be a resolute opponent of all forms of political and religious tyranny. His publications in defence of civil liberties and the right of dissent required considerable courage and moral stamina, for many of his ideas might have been interpreted as seditious according to existing laws.

(2) Select Sermons of Mr. Alexander Morus, translated by A. Bruce, 1812. (An annotated volume containing Select Sermons and Bruce's Practical Discourses has this note appended to the title page: "Printed for private circulation, amongst his friends, at Professor Bruce's own press at Whitburn, where he kept a printer & a press, for his own use." (3) Practical Discourses by A. Bruce, 1816. (As stated above a note on the title page indicates that it came from Bruce's private press). In this volume there is an interesting change in the type at page 217 as there is a transition from old face to new face type. It is possible that this book was completed on another press because of mechanical difficulties or after Bruce's death in 1816. (4) An Historical Account of the Most Remarkable Earthquakes and Volcanic Eruptions by A. Bruce, 1820. (A note indicates that it was partially printed on a private press. It was not issued to the public until after Bruce's death). In this volume on page 157 there is a change in type. The type in the remainder of this book is similar to that used for the latter part of Practical Discourses.

II. Probable Publications from Bruce's Whitburn Press

Mr. J. Loudon of the National Library of Scotland has stated that on the basis of their similarities in type and spacing to the publications in the first category, it can be reasonably assumed that the following books and pamphlets came from Bruce's press.

1. Pamphlets. (1) A Peaceable Declaration of the Sentiments of a Number of Presbyterians in Scotland Relative to the War between France and Great-Britain by [A. Bruce], 1797. Bruce mentions his difficulty in finding a printer for this pamphlet, p. v. (2) Queries Addressed to the Gentry, Clergy, and People of Scotland on the Solemn Commemoration of the Revolution in M.BCC. LXXXVIII by "Calvinianus Presbyter" (A. Bruce), 1797. (3) Slavery or Public Spirit; or the Ass, or the Serpent. A Comparison between the Tribes of Issachar and Dan, in their Regard for Civil Liberty by the Reverend Thomas Bradbury. Preached at London, November 5, 1712. A New Edition, 1797. This pamphlet is bound with a volume of Bruce's works, and the type and spacing are similar to other works that came from his press. (4) Two Sermons: I. The Inefficacy of Dangers or
Bruce denounced vilification on the basis of unproved charges and the spread of distrust and suspicion which attacked non-conformity as subversive and equated dissent with disloyalty. He insisted that a complete intellectual freedom was essential to the welfare of society, and he defended the right of men such as Thomas Paine and Richard Hughes to propagate their opinions without governmental restrictions. Bruce opposed all penal laws which tended to make the state the final arbiter of men's political and religious tenets. Ideas should be accepted or rejected on their own merits by free men.

Deliverances to Reclaim. II. Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated by A. Bruce, 1812.

2 Books. (1) Memoirs of the Public Life of Mr. James Hog, Editor: A. Bruce, 1798. A note indicates that it was published from a MS. in the Theological Library at Whitburn. (2) A Critical Account of the Life, Character, and Discourses of Mr. Alexander Morus by A. Bruce, 1813. A review of this book which appeared in The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, No. XLIV, Vol. VIII, No. III, March 1814, supports the fact that it was probably printed on a private press. The reviewer stated: "... we must declare, that, in the whole course of our critical labours, it has not been our lot to meet with a work of any respectability, at all comparable to this, for the vileness of the mechanical part of it... Nor does the correctness of our 'nameless' typographer make amends for the badness of his tools and materials." p. 182. (3) Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part II, by A. Bruce, 1817. Dr. Thomas McCrie, who supervised the final publication of this volume, has stated in his "Advertisement" that the printing of it had proceeded as far as page 177 before the author's death. (p.iii). The type used in pages 3-176 is very similar to that of Part I of Introductory and Occasional Lectures which was printed by Bruce in Whitburn. This volume in its entirety (321 pages) was issued to the public in 1817 by Macredie, Skelly, & Muckersy of Edinburgh, and Brash & Reid, and J. Steel of Glasgow.

All of the books and pamphlets referred to in this section are in the New College Library, Edinburgh.
In the formulation of his ideas about political and religious freedom Bruce was strongly influenced by the principles of the French Revolution. While he abhorred its infidelity and its excesses, he regarded it as a genuine struggle for liberty. Bruce expressed his warm admiration for certain aspects of the new Constitution of France. He praised it for its guarantee of universal toleration and its protection of liberty of conscience. Bruce advocated similar ideas in his book, *Reflections on Freedom of Writing*.

Bruce also expressed his agreement with many of the ideas of Thomas Paine. He declared:

He [Bruce] could easily perceive, upon the whole, that, in his system of general politics, as well as in what he advances with regard to the French and British constiutions, he [Thomas Paine] stands on broader and firmer ground, than his applauded antagonists...

The writings of men like Bruce, as well as the activities of reformers such as Thomas Muir, prepared the way for the triumph of more liberal ideas. Dr. Henry W. Meikle has correctly observed: "...the Reform Bill of 1832 was due, in part at least, to the agitation engendered forty years before." This important legislation abolished the system of self-election in town councils, increased Scottish parliamentary representation by eight members, and bestowed the right of franchise on thousands who had never possessed it.

---

1 [Bruce], *A Serious View*, (C.W. 5, p. 13).
2 [Bruce], *Reflections on Freedom of Writing*, (C.W. 3, p. 52).
4 Ibid., p. 237.
"He whose zeal for Protestantism is merely temporary or local, the passing humour of a day... is not worthy of the name of a Protestant."

- Bruce, *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery*, C.W. 2, p. vi.
CHAPTER IV

ARCHIBALD BRUCE: RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIALIST

It has been said that Adam Gib's ministerial career had controversies as its milestones. Archibald Bruce's ministry could be similarly described. Despite his arduous labors as professor of Divinity and as pastor and preacher in Whitburn, he was an active participant in many of the political and religious conflicts which agitated the Scottish nation and church. His prolific pen was frequently employed in polemical writings, for he was a staunch apologist for the Reformation ideals of the Church of Scotland. Whenever he felt that these principles were endangered, he immediately rose to their defence. He was particularly alarmed by the government's more lenient policy toward Roman Catholicism and by the ascendancy of the Moderate Party within the Church of Scotland. In his various controversial writings Bruce demonstrated considerable gifts as a satirist. His style was often trenchant and forceful and marked by great felicity of speech. His wit was caustic, and at times it was marred by lapses into bad taste.

A. In Controversy with Rome

When William III ascended to the throne, the previous anti-Catholic legislation was codified in order to make its enforcement

---

more effective. According to the terms of his Act adherents of the Church of Rome were prohibited from instructing their own youth, from purchasing or inheriting property, and from becoming domestic servants.\(^1\) Gradually a more tolerant spirit found expression among statesmen, and there was a general desire to mitigate these stringent penalties. Consequently, in 1778 a law was enacted by Parliament which rescinded certain of the disabilities imposed upon English Catholics.\(^2\) This act conferred no political power upon the individual Catholic. He was not permitted to be a member of a corporation, nor could he sit in Parliament; but henceforth he might acquire property and, under certain restrictions, worship without molestation.\(^3\) In the course of the same year it was rumored that a bill of a similar nature, applicable to Scotland, was to be introduced by Henry Dundas.\(^4\) At the meeting of the General Assembly in May, 1778 it was moved that the Commission be instructed to oppose by every means at its disposal the extension of toleration beyond the Tweed.\(^5\) Largely through the eloquence and influence of Principal William Robertson this motion was defeated.\(^6\)

It soon became evident that the action of the General Assembly did not reflect the attitude of the rank and file of the

---

3 Ibid., p. 385.
4 Brown, op. cit., p. 278.
5 Cunningham, op. cit., p. 385.
6 Ibid., p. 385.
nation. When a bill was introduced towards the end of 1778 to extend toleration to Scottish Catholics, the country, almost to a man, rose in alarm. The Established, Secession, and Relief Churches all raised their voices in opposition. Synods, presbyteries, and kirk sessions passed resolutions and dispatched petitions against the impending bill. Town councils, guilds, corporations, ministers, and clubs objected to the passage of this legislation. Under the designation of Friends of the Protestant Religion a society was organized for the avowed purpose of defeating the proposed bill. In 1779 violent and destructive anti-Catholic riots occurred in both Glasgow and Edinburgh. Meeting in May, 1779, the General Assembly declared that the repeal of the penal statutes would be inexpedient and prejudicial to the best interests of religion and society. Under this mounting pressure Dundas announced to Parliament his resolve to abandon the bill.

The Gordon Riots of London proved that this almost fanatical fear of Catholicism was not confined to Scotland. On 2 June, 1780 some sixty thousand people, under the leadership of Lord George Gordon, marched to Westminster with a petition demanding the restoration of the penal statutes. On subsequent days

1 Ibid., p. 386.
2 Ibid., p. 386.
3 Ibid., p. 386.
4 Brown, op. cit., p. 279.
5 Ibid., p. 279.
6 Ibid., p. 279.
7 Ibid., p. 279.
Catholic chapels, houses, and shops were attacked, and general disorder prevailed throughout many parts of the city. Finally, the King ordered the military to intervene, and within a short time the riots were quelled.  

With the publication of *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery* in 1780 Archibald Bruce emerged as one of the most able spokesmen for the anti-Catholic forces.

Bruce considered his opposition to Rome to be an integral part of his defence of freedom. At first his strong anti-Catholic bias may appear to be in basic conflict with the ideas expounded in his *Reflections on Freedom of Writing*. In this connection Thomas M'Crie, Jr., has stated:

> As strange as it may appear to modern politicians, it was by the very fervour of his zeal for civil and religious liberty, that he was led to take such a decided part in opposition to the Roman Catholic claims....

Bruce regarded Rome's doctrine and practice as subversive of all civil and religious liberties. In his opposition to Catholicism he was motived not primarily by a religious bias, but by his fear of its political consequences. He declared:

> .... the Popish religion ever hath been, is, and ever must be, in proportion to the degree in which it prevails, destructive of civil liberty; inconsistent with the external peace, prosperity and wealth of nations; the just authority, dignity and rights of Princes....

Over a period of years Bruce wrote several anti-Catholic books and pamphlets. In addition to *Free Thoughts on the*

---

1 Ibid., p. 207.
3 [Bruce], *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery*, First Edition, (C.W. 2, p. 29) (Hereinafter referred to as *Free Thoughts*).
Toleration of Popery, he published News from the Pope to the Devil\(^1\) and A Penitential Epistle, and Humble Supplication to his Holiness the Pope, in the Name of the People of Great Britain; for a Perfect Reconciliation and Perpetual Alliance with Rome (1797). The latter two works are poems. According to modern standards Bruce's language was often crude and his judgments intemperate. However, certain allowances must be made for the severity of his sentiments. Since the Reformation there had been an intense fear of Catholicism in Scotland. P. Hume Brown has observed: "It was the spectre of Rome that had been the main cause of the Covenants and of the final rejection of the House of Stewart."\(^2\)

Bruce's major anti-Catholic publication, Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery, was occasioned by the repeal of the penal statutes in 1778. It was immediately acclaimed when it came from the press in 1780, and it is regarded by many to be his "magnum opus."\(^3\) A second edition of Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery was published in 1810. This book exerted a far reaching influence. It procured Bruce the friendship of Lord George Gordon, the leader of the London riots in 1780. These two leaders of the anti-Catholic forces later exchanged visits.\(^4\) In 1829 when the Emancipation Act was under debate

---

1 This humorous poem depicts the consternation caused in papal circles by the acquittal of Lord George Gordon, leader of the London riots.
2 Brown, op. cit., p. 278.
3 The Original Secession Magazine, December, 1903, p. 485.

I have not been able to find any references to Bruce in the publications or correspondence of Lord George Gordon.
in Parliament, *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery* was quoted by the opponents of that measure.¹ This book also exerted a strong influence upon Dr. James A. Wylie who was a prolific writer on many aspects of Roman Catholicism. One of his best known publications, *The Papacy; Its History, Dogmas, Genius, and Prospects*, contains many references to *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery*. Dr. Wylie gave this evaluation of Bruce's book: "It displays immense research, sound learning, and great eloquence."²

Like many of Bruce's other works, *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery* was written anonymously. On this occasion his "nom de plume" was "Calvinus Minor, Scoto-Britannus." *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery* is a very detailed and erudite dissertation, consisting of four hundred and sixty-three pages. It has thirty-one appendixes which amplify certain points alluded to in the main body of the narrative. In this volume Bruce manifested a comprehensive knowledge of Roman Catholicism's doctrines and practices. It is copiously documented throughout with many scholarly annotations which illustrate different aspects of papal history. The footnotes reveal Bruce's wide acquaintanceship with a great variety of Catholic sources.³

In this more tolerant age it will be generally recognized that Bruce was mistaken in many of his views. For

¹ *The Original Secession Magazine*, July, 1871, p. 260.
³ See, for example, [Bruce], *Free Thoughts*, (C.W. 2, p. 166, n. 1).
example, he advocated restrictive policies which are at variance with modern concepts of civil and ecclesiastical liberty. Very few Protestants to-day would favor the imposition of disabilities on any religious society because of its creed. Nevertheless, certain of Bruce's criticisms are still valid, for the Roman Catholic Church to-day is pursuing an aggressive policy which has alarmed many thoughtful Christians. Even in the twentieth century persecution for conscience's sake is not entirely uncommon in predominantly Catholic countries (e.g., Spain, Colombia). Many modern writers are aware of this problem as evidenced by the publications of such books as Paul Blanshard's American Freedom and Catholic Power and Professor C. J. Cadoux's two studies, Catholicism and Christianity and Roman Catholicism and Freedom.

Because of the cogency of certain of Bruce's observations, a cursory summary of the main arguments advanced and developed in Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery will be given.

It is Bruce's major thesis that the doctrines and practices of Catholicism are incompatible with the general good of society.\(^1\) In order to refute the charge that he was proceeding upon a vulnerable hypothesis, he frequently cited references from official Catholic sources.\(^2\) Bruce was careful to assert that his attack was not upon individual Catholics. His remarks were directed not against men but

1 Ibid., p. ix.
2 Ibid., pp. xii, xiii.
measures, not against persons but principles. In the conclusion of his preface Bruce declared:

With a freedom which is the birthright of every British Protestant, he dares to express his feelings and convictions, without regard to unreasonable prejudices, however prevalent, and without flattering parties of any description.

In the development of his argument against the repeal of the penal statutes Bruce expounded his view of Church and State relationships.

Religion is not only of the highest advantage and importance to the individual, but also to society. It has justly been viewed as the basis of civil government, and the main and surest pillar on which society stands.

Because of this natural alliance between church and state it is essential that the legal protection of Protestantism be a primary object of civil policy. Consequently, laws to this effect were made an integral part of the British Constitution.

Our civil and religious privileges are thus twisted intimately and inseparably together; and the one cannot be touched or injured, but the other must also be affected.

Bruce argued that the repeal of the penal statutes vitiated the principles of the British Constitution and abrogated the legal securities guaranteed to Protestants.

The major portion of Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery is devoted to a careful analysis of the basic principles.

---

1 Ibid., p. xiv.
2 Ibid., p. xv.
3 Ibid., p. 4.
4 Ibid., p. 5.
5 Ibid., p. 5.
6 Ibid., p. 5.
7 Ibid., pp. 15, 16.
which undergird Catholicism. Bruce discussed the ideas inherent in its system which, he believed, made it inconsistent with the spirit of Protestantism. He argued that the two religions were unalterably opposed to one another and were, therefore, incapable of a peaceful co-existence in the same society.

First, the Papal system was denounced because it invested the Roman Pontiff with temporal authority. He claimed the right to subject princes and rulers to his dictates in secular as well as spiritual matters.

The Papacy has assumed many of the characteristics of a secular state. The Popes have ruled over cities and provinces, levied taxes, imposed oaths of allegiance, raised armies, and dispatched ambassadors to the various courts of Europe. Furthermore, they have often been implicated in political intrigues. Popes have pronounced anathemas against princes who dared to defy their edicts and resist their wills. They have relieved subjects of the duty of obedience, incited them to revolt, and authorized them to depose or murder their excommunicated rulers. In this manner Rome has been successful in extending the borders of its sovereignty to every quarter of the globe.

1 Ibid., p. 30.
2 Ibid., p. 30.
3 Ibid., pp. 32, 34.
4 Ibid., pp. 34-41.
5 Ibid., pp. 41, 42.
6 Ibid., pp. 48, 49.
7 Ibid., pp. 51, 52.
8 Ibid., pp. 58, 59.
It is impossible for civil liberties and the Papacy to co-exist in the same nation. There has been a perpetual rivalry between Rome and the secular powers. This conflict has been responsible for many of the convulsions which have disturbed Europe and kept it in a state of turmoil and constant warfare.

Some degree of temporal power is essential to the Papacy. The secular dominion of the Pope has been so long avowed that it cannot be renounced without endangering the whole system. Wherever the Church of Rome exists, there is a state within a state. Every Catholic, by his membership in it and by his recognition of a foreign head, not only forfeits his title to the protection and privileges of the commonwealth, but justly renders himself the object of punishment. To be a Catholic is, interpretatively, to declare hostility against one's own country. Inasmuch as the claims of the Pope and the rights of the prince are incompatible, it is impossible to be faithful to both. If a man acknowledges the Roman Pontiff, he cannot promise a true and unqualified allegiance to his temporal sovereign. In this connection it is interesting to observe that

1 Ibid., p. 62.
2 Ibid., p. 62.
3 Ibid., p. 63.
4 Ibid., p. 63.
5 Ibid., pp. 63, 64.
6 Ibid., pp. 66, 67.
7 Ibid., p. 65.
8 Ibid., p. 67.
9 Ibid., p. 67.
10 Ibid., p. 67.
a similar argument is still used against the election of Roman Catholics to high offices in predominantly Protestant countries. It is argued that their first loyalty is to the See of Rome rather than to their own government. For example, in 1928 the Democratic Party of the United States nominated a Roman Catholic, Alfred Smith, for the Presidency. He was immediately challenged by the "Atlantic Monthly" to reconcile his responsibility to the American Constitution with his obedience to Pope Pius IX's "Syllabus of Errors" which proclaimed clerical supremacy in politics. Once the religious issue was injected into the campaign, it ensured the defeat of Mr. Smith. Professor C. J. Cadoux advances a similar argument in his book, Roman Catholicism and Freedom: "... it is important to observe that the Roman Catholic community differs from all other religious bodies in the country in that it owns allegiance to a foreign political power."

Secondly, Bruce criticized Rome because it exalted the Pope above all laws and constituted him an arbitrary legislator in matters of morality. By his decree solemn treaties have been annulled; vows and oaths have been made void; marriages have been dissolved without warrant; and subjects have been liberated from the duty of obedience.

The granting of indulgences has often encouraged crime and immorality by promising remission of guilt upon the performance

1 Nichols, James Hastings, Democracy and the Churches, p. 102.
2 Cadoux, C. J., Roman Catholicism and Freedom, pp. 174, 175.
3 [Bruce], Free Thoughts, (C.W. 2, pp. 79, 80).
4 Ibid., pp. 81-83.
of certain prescribed exercises.\textsuperscript{1} Catholicism further endangers morality by establishing it as a maxim that a blind attachment to Rome is the Christian's first duty to which all others must be subservient.\textsuperscript{2}

In the third place, Bruce argued that Rome's intolerant spirit had often resulted in an abridgement of man's religious liberty.\textsuperscript{3} It makes no allowances for theological deviation or non-conformity. Heresy, in the opinion of Catholics, is the most insufferable of all crimes.\textsuperscript{4} The Roman Pontiff has not only pronounced anathemas against heretics and excommunicated them, but he has also employed the secular arm to suppress them.\textsuperscript{5} They have been deprived of the benefits of the law and rendered incapable of holding any public office.\textsuperscript{6} Whole cities, provinces, and kingdoms have been doomed to perish.\textsuperscript{7} All who would presume to read the Scriptures and reject the traditions of men have been subjected to this infamous treatment.\textsuperscript{8}

On the basis of what has been said on this subject, it is obvious that Roman Catholics can never be conscientious subjects of a Protestant government.\textsuperscript{9} By virtue of the principles and spirit of their religion they are irreconcilable

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., pp. 83-89.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., pp. 94, 95.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 116.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p. 116.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 117.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., pp. 117-119.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., pp. 158, 159.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., pp. 189, 190.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p. 194.
enemies, not only of Protestantism as a creed but also of its adherents' authority, property, and liberties.¹

Finally, Bruce maintained that the doctrine of papal infallibility was untenable.² All issues are determined by an absolute authority which at no time and in no case may be questioned or opposed.³ The articles of Rome's faith are prescribed and fixed for every man so as to supersede rational inquiry and private judgment.⁴ In this system there is no provision for doubts, differences, or changes.⁵ The faithful Catholic has only to receive his Church's dictates and blindly to resign himself to its direction.⁶ Authority cannot be questioned whether it be conveyed through the Scriptures, tradition, papal pronouncements, or other ecclesiastical canons.⁷

The doctrine of infallibility is an insuperable barrier to a reformation, for it precludes every idea of change.⁸ Once a principle has received the Pope's imprimatur, like the law of the Medes and Persians, it cannot be altered.⁹

Bruce endeavored to refute the arguments of the statesmen who maintained that the spirit of tolerance required the repeal of the penal statutes against the Roman Catholics.¹⁰

¹ Ibid., p. 194.
² Ibid., p. 195.
³ Ibid., p. 195.
⁴ Ibid., p. 195.
⁵ Ibid., p. 195.
⁶ Ibid., p. 195.
⁷ Ibid., pp. 195-198.
⁸ Ibid., p. 205.
⁹ Ibid., p. 205.
¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 248, 249.
The advocates of this measure represent it as a necessary corollary of the plan of true British liberty. They consider it to be a noble effort to extinguish every vestige of the anti-Christian spirit of religious persecution. Bruce emphatically asserted that all of these arguments were fallacious.

For what can be more incongruous than an attempt to promote a plan of true Protestant liberty, and to secure the rights of conscience, by supporting their most avowed and implacable foes...

Moreover, the precepts of Jesus, enjoining charity, forbearance, patience, and forgiveness, are not to be interpreted as condemning the penal statutes under consideration. The doctrine and example of the Savior do not immediately affect the duty of magistrates or the administration of justice. Jesus consistently refused to appear in the role of a temporal judge or legislator, lest He usurp the office of others. He did not intend for the spiritual laws of His Kingdom to supplant the civil polity of nations. Christianity, rightly understood, does not divest rulers of their legal authority. Christ's doctrines of forbearance and forgiveness have no relation to public offences against either civil or ecclesiastical laws, so as to exempt violators from punishment or censure.

1 Ibid., p. 249.
2 Ibid., p. 250.
3 Ibid., p. 250.
4 Ibid., pp. 268, 269.
5 Ibid., p. 269.
6 Ibid., p. 269.
7 Ibid., p. 269.
8 Ibid., p. 269.
9 Ibid., p. 270.
In this connection Bruce discussed the limitations that must be imposed upon toleration and liberty of conscience. Civil powers are obligated to preserve the rights of society and to punish whatever is inconsistent with the public good.\(^1\) In so far as religious opinions and practices affect the safety and interests of the state, they fall within the proper jurisdiction of the magistrate.\(^2\) Toleration can never be absolutely unlimited.\(^3\) Those whose principles tend to subvert the lawful government or to destroy the civil and religious rights of others may be quite legitimately subjected to legal incapacities and penalties.\(^4\) Inasmuch as the Catholic religion answers to this description, the rights of its adherents are to be limited.\(^5\) The odious name of persecution for conscience's sake is not to be applied to these restrictions.\(^6\)

Were Catholicism merely a religious error, penal laws against it would be altogether improper.\(^7\) Here again, Bruce expressed his abhorrence of all persecution for conscience's sake. He was opposed to the enactment of laws to combat erroneous opinions, to the imposition of religion by force of arms, and to the extirpation of heresy by fire and the sword.\(^8\) Bruce expressed the desire that every vestige of persecution be purged from the British Constitution.\(^9\) He

---

\(^{1}\) Ibid., p. 251.  
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 251.  
\(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 251.  
\(^{4}\) Ibid., p. 251.  
\(^{5}\) Ibid., p. 252.  
\(^{6}\) Ibid., pp. 251, 252.  
\(^{7}\) Ibid., p. 254.  
\(^{8}\) Ibid., p. 254.  
\(^{9}\) Ibid., p. 255.
lamented the fact that many devout and conscientious Protestants still enjoyed only a partial and precarious liberty.¹

Bruce was careful to assert that his plea for religious toleration was not to be applied to Roman Catholics.² They had resigned their consciences and wills to a foreign sovereign who was, in fact, their only king, lawgiver, and judge. Consequently, they were not only heretics but also disturbers of the peace.³

By the help of the temporal power was the liberty of professing the Reformed religion obtained and publicly settled in Europe, and through the aid of political laws and sanctions it has been preserved.⁴ Because the church has only spiritual weapons at its disposal, it is the duty of the civil magistrate to protect it from all violence and oppression.⁵ The acceptance of this secular aid does not imply any intrinsic weakness in the Kingdom and Laws of the Redeemer.⁶

In his discussion of the limits of toleration Bruce was careful to delineate between the ecclesiastical and the political aspects of Roman Catholicism. He rejected the use of all coercive methods to suppress a purely religious system. However, at the same time he opposed the extension of toleration to Roman Catholics, for he believed that their Church possessed many of the characteristics of a secular state. Bruce clearly

¹ Ibid., p. 255.
² Ibid., p. 257.
³ Ibid., p. 257.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 262, 264.
⁵ Ibid., p. 264.
⁶ Ibid., p. 264.
perceived the dangers inherent in a system which advocated clerical supremacy in political matters. Although modern Christians would repudiate the use of penal laws against the Roman Catholic Church, they must be alert to its political aspirations and to its tendency to curtail religious freedom in nations where it has gained the ascendency.

B. In Controversy with the Church of Scotland

In his controversies with the Church of Scotland Bruce's publications usually took the form of satires. In a series of pamphlets he exposed the various aspects of its life and thought to ridicule. His wit was often trenchant and his criticisms severe and uncompromising.

The main object of his attack was the Moderate Party which was the ascendant school within the Church of Scotland during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The Evangelicals, who opposed the present patronage law and upheld the right of congregations to have a voice in the election of their ministers, were not so severely criticized by Bruce. Principal William Robertson of Edinburgh University was the Moderates' outstanding churchman, and Hugh Blair was their foremost preacher. The former dominated the Church of Scotland from his election as Moderator in 1763 until his retirement from the active leadership of his Party in 1780. The ideal of the Moderates has been summarized in this way:

The creed was not formally stated, and it left a wide latitude of opinion; but its specific characteristic was that, in contradistinction to the traditional
theology, it laid emphasis on good works rather than on faith, and on the ethical teaching to be found in the Bible rather than on its mysteries.¹

Socially, the Moderates re-acted against the strict puritanical code of their Covenanting forebears. They encouraged the enjoyment of the pleasures of life and the cultivation of the social graces.² The Moderates emphasized the importance of ecclesiastical discipline and the subordination of the various courts of the Church to the General Assembly.³ They insisted upon a rigid enforcement of the law of patronage, and they ultimately succeeded in establishing the claims of the patron over the wishes of the congregation.⁴ One of the most notable examples of this procedure was the case of Thomas Gillespie of Carnock. He was deposed by the General Assembly for his refusal to participate in a meeting of Dunfermline Presbytery which had been summoned to induct the patron's presentee into the Parish of Inverkeithing.⁵

Theologically, the Moderates stressed toleration as opposed to rigid orthodoxy.⁶ Their sermons, as exemplified by Hugh Blair, were little more than moral dissertations which treated such subjects as idleness, envy, and patience.⁷

It is, of course, unfair to imply that the Moderates did not have among them ministers who were genuinely pious and fully consecrated to the work of the church.

2 Ibid., p. 290.
3 Ibid., p. 292.
4 Ibid., p. 312.
7 Ibid., p. 113.
In 1774 Bruce published *The Kirkiad; or Golden Age of the Church of Scotland, Canto I*. This forty-four page poem was designed to be a satire on Moderatism. Although it does not possess great literary merit, it does reveal his caustic wit and his ability to make piercing criticisms in a humorous vein.

In the preface to *The Kirkiad* Bruce stated his reason for adopting this method to reproach the Moderates:

Surely it is not impossible to convey wholesome instructions in a vein of pleasantry, and impart useful hints, or grave rebukes, with a smile....And many there are who will be much sooner laughed out of their follies, than sermonised, or reasoned out of them.1

Bruce gave this humorous description of the general prevalence of Moderatism throughout the land:

O how does Moderation shine
With fair and ever placid mien!
In ev'ry place, both near and far,
In pulpit, bench, and at the bar;
From barbers shops, and coblers stalls,
To camps, and courts, and college-halls!
She smiles, with soft and winning air,
Ev'n from the theologic chair:
There softens ev'ry harsher feature,
And dictates nought but pure good-nature.2

The major portion of *The Kirkiad* is given over to a caricature of the young Moderate clergyman, depicting the milestones in his ministerial career from his call to his settlement by a patron. In the course of the poem Bruce exposed every aspect of ecclesiastical life to ridicule (e.g., education for the ministry, the cultivation of the social graces, Sabbath observance, sermons, theology, and settlement in a parish).

1 [Bruce], *The Kirkiad*, (C.W. 1, p. iii).
2 Ibid., pp. 28, 29.
Bruce gave this portrait of the finished product of the Moderates' educational system:

Observe that youth, upon whose cheek
Sits rosy health, so fat and sleek;
His dress so trim, so gay his air;
So jolly, spruce, and debonair;

He makes no sour or whining faces,
Wastes not the time in pray'rs and graces:

Nothing e'er gives him so much fear,
As lest he should a saint appear;
Altho', such is his happy lot,
This name he never yet has got.

He learns from ge'men of the sword
To grace his speech with Jove or L - d;
Thinks that a cold and awkward truth
That wants the sanction of an oath.
He loves to hear the whisper spread,
That he inclines to sceptic side;
Doubts of the odds 'twixt good and evil,
Believes no h....n, h,1l, or d...l.
This reputation will secure,
And make his future fortune sure.1

In 1791 Bruce published The Catechism Modernized: and Adapted to the Meridian of Patronage and Late Improvements in the Church of Scotland: with Suitable Creeds and Prayers. Once again the object of his attack was the Moderate Party which was enforcing a strict adherence to the law of patronage. This publication takes the form of a parody on the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and there is throughout it a conscious effort to imitate that document's language and form. The Catechism Modernized is a scathing denunciation of the nature and effects of patronage. In it there are frequent lapses into bad taste. As Dr. Robert Small has said: "It is cleverly done, but it

1 Ibid., pp. 16, 17.
sometimes comes very near profanity."¹

In The Catechism Modernized Bruce gave vivid caricatures of the patron, the clergyman, and of the effects of patronage on the Church. Specimens of its questions and answers will be given in order to illustrate Bruce's biting satire and his style.

Q. What is the chief end of a modern clergyman?
A. To obtain a presentation, and enjoy the benefice and favour of the patron all the days of his life.²

Q. What is a presentee to believe concerning a Patron?
A. That he is a being of infinite use in the church, of the greatest antiquity, of indefeasible and unchangeable rights, infallible in his wisdom, and unerring in his choice, unlimited and uncontrollable in his power, immaculate and above censure in his life and conduct, untainted in his honesty and justice, unspeakably generous and liberal of his graces and favours, sound in the faith, and inviolably strict to his word of honour.³

Q. How doth he [the Patron] create a minister?
A. He creates the something so called, whether masculine, feminine, or neuter, after his own image, as nearly resembling him in learning, taste, opinions and morals as possible, with absolute dominion over the Christian laity.⁴

Q. What is the duty a Patron requires of these presented by him?
A. Obedience in all things to the intimations of his will.⁵

In this same style Bruce paraphrased the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. He appended to The Catechism Modernized parodies of the various creeds of the church as well as a number of prayers that he composed for the Moderates' liturgy.

In a short pamphlet entitled A Full and Particular Account of the Trial and Condemnation of Mess John Presbytery Bruce assailed the ecclesiastical polity of the Moderates. This brief

² [Bruce], The Catechism Modernized, (C.W. §, p. 9).
³ Ibid., p. 9.
⁴ Ibid., p. 11.
⁵ Ibid., p. 19.
tract was published in 1798 under the pen name, "Cousin - German".

In this rather humorous pamphlet Bruce lamented the eclipse of the presbytery's influence and power which had occurred under the Moderates' regime. This clever and imaginative account of the trial of Mess John Presbytery took the form of a court scene. John Presbytery was arraigned before the bar of the General Assembly; charges were brought against him; witnesses were summoned; and finally the sentence of execution was announced.

A few excerpts from The Trial and Condemnation of Mess John Presbytery will indicate Bruce's method and style.

The Charges against Mess John Presbytery:

That Mess JOHN, from his local situation, from the company he keeps, the food he eats, and the raiment wherein he is clothed, is rendered totally incapable of judging in a liberal manner upon any ecclesiastical subject, corresponding in any degree to this age of reason; and therefore ought to be annihilated. 1

The Sentence and Execution of Mess John Presbytery:

OLD PRES'TRY was taken prisoner, and instantly sentenced to be hanged, the guillotine not being yet erected. But, his enemies not being able to find an executioner, he was ordered to go home and hang himself before of May one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight. 2

As this study has indicated, Bruce was an outspoken critic of both Rome and the Church of Scotland. He criticized Roman Catholicism most forcefully at those points where he believed it infringed upon human liberty. In fairness to Bruce it must be emphasized that he was not motivated by a spirit of maliciousness but by a genuine desire to preserve the civil and religious

1 [Bruce], A Full and Particular Account of the Trial and Condemnation of Mess John Presbytery, (C.W. 5, p. 5).
2 Ibid., p. 16.
liberties of the nation's Protestant majority. In his zeal for his cause he did advocate methods that were closely akin to persecution for conscience's sake.

Bruce's controversy with the Church of Scotland was conducted in a lighter vein. In a series of satires he criticized the Moderate Party, for he was convinced that this school had betrayed the great Reformation principles.

Bruce's controversial writings must be interpreted against the background of his time. Scottish Presbyterians had suffered greatly at the hands of Rome, and this experience had instilled in them an almost fanatical fear of Catholicism. Consequently it was difficult for Bruce to be completely objective and dispassionate on this subject.

As a member of a small section of the Secession, it was natural that Bruce be critical of the Church of Scotland. With the passing of the years and the ascendancy of the Moderate Party, the Seceders had become more firmly convinced that their course of action had been vindicated.
"Therefore they judge it their duty to bear testimony for the sovereignty and headship of the Lord Jesus over his own house...which is his spiritual, free, and independent kingdom..."

CHAPTER V

THE SECESSION CHURCH: ITS VIEW OF CHURCH AND STATE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the view of the Seceders of 1733 on Church and State and then to trace subsequent developments in the undivided Associate Synod and in the Anti-Burgher denomination. Such a study is important if the position of Archibald Bruce and the Constitutional Associate Presbytery is to be understood properly.

Although it does not lie within the scope of this chapter to give a detailed account of the Secession of 1733, it is necessary to review certain events that were antecedent to it.

The aggressive Romanism of James II incited dissatisfaction in both England and Scotland and thus prepared the way for the Revolution of 1688 and the accession of William and Mary to the throne of the two Kingdoms. In 1690 the Scottish Parliament, with the approval of King William, ratified the Westminster Confession of Faith and established Presbyterianism on the basis of the Act of 1592.¹

Soon after the establishment of 1690 certain trends appeared in the National Church that engendered dissatisfaction and led inevitably to the first Secession. In 1736 the Associate Presbytery issued its Judicial Testimony which was a

declaration of the errors against which its members protested. After a grateful acknowledgement of the benefits that accrued to the church as a result of the Revolution this document proceeded to enumerate certain evils that the Seceders considered to be inherent in the Settlement of 1690. It was declared to be a retrograde motion since no reference was made to the accomplishments of the Covenanting period from 1638 to 1650. Furthermore, it was denounced for its failure to vindicate the Covenants, to declare the divine right of presbytery, and to assert the spiritual independence of the church.

After its condemnation of these omissions the Judicial Testimony enumerated the various evils that had appeared in the National Church since the Union of 1707. It condemned acquiescence in the oaths imposed by the civil government, the toleration of doctrinal laxity, and submission to patronage.

The Seceders were particularly suspicious of the orthodoxy of the National Church as a result of its tolerant attitude toward several cases of heresy. In both 1714 and 1726 John Simson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, was summoned before the General Assembly. On the former occasion he was accused of teaching Arminianism and later of propagating Arianism. In 1717 he was admonished for certain indiscretions.

2 Ibid., pp. 87-89.
3 Ibid., pp. 94-97.
but in 1729 Professor Simson was suspended from his office.\(^1\) Furthermore, in 1736 Professor Archibald Campbell of St. Andrews University, who had been accused of denying the value of natural religion, was only rebuked by the General Assembly for his ambiguous language.\(^2\)

To the same period as Professor Simson belongs another conflict which served to intensify the cleavage between the Evangelicals and the Moderates and to increase the tension that was to disrupt the National Church. It was the famous Marrow Controversy. In both 1720 and 1722 the General Assembly condemned the Marrow Theology as antinomian and contrary to the Bible, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Larger Catechism.\(^3\)

Another factor that contributed to the Secession was the restoration of patronage in 1712. This method of settling vacant parishes had been abolished in 1649, reinstated in 1660, and rescinded in 1690.\(^4\) For nearly twenty years the Act restoring patronage lay in abeyance because the current opinion in the country and church was strongly opposed to it.

When the General Assembly sought to enforce a uniform method of filling vacant parishes, its methods were criticized by Ebenezer Erskine and others. In November of 1733 the protesting brethren - Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, William Cunningham, and others - threatened to leave the National Church.

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 190.
\(^2\) M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, pp. 98, 99.
\(^4\) Cunningham, op. cit., pp. 233, 234.
Alexander Moncrieff, and James Fisher—were declared to be no longer ministers of the National Church. On 5th December, 1733 they met at Gairney Bridge near Kinross and constituted themselves into the Associate Presbytery.

The General Assembly made certain conciliatory gestures during the next few years, but they were of no avail. The culmination of the whole matter came in 1740 when the Seceding ministers were deposed and their churches declared to be vacant.

In order to ascertain the attitude of the Associate Synod toward Church and State an examination will be made of certain of its documents and of specific cases which illustrate its principles. The aim of this section is a survey of the major trends in the Seceders' political thought rather than an exhaustive treatment of the subject.

A. The Associate Presbytery and Synod

The Associate Presbytery, meeting in Perth on 3rd December, 1736, gave its sanction to An Act, Declaration, and Testimony for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland. This document is usually referred to as the Judicial Testimony. Its general purpose was to declare what God had done for the Church of Scotland in former periods, to condemn the defects that had appeared in it, and to vindicate the truth in opposition to prevailing errors. The

2 M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 71.
men who formulated this document did not regard themselves as innovators, for they did not intend it to supersede the accepted standards of the Church of Scotland but rather to serve as a supplement. They were careful to express their loyalty to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Directory for Public Worship.¹

John Brown of Haddington expressed this judgment on the conduct of the Seceders:

... they declared a SECESSION not from the constitution of the church of Scotland, but from the prevailing party in her judicatures.²

1. The Judicial Testimony

One of the major emphases of the Judicial Testimony is the headship of Christ over the church. It is declared to be "his spiritual, free, and independent kingdom."³

The Seceders accepted the Covenanting period of 1638 to 1650 as their model for the church. This was considered to be the time of its greatest purity and independence. The Judicial Testimony warmly commends the various accomplishments of the church during this period - the union of the three Kingdoms in the Solemn League and Covenant, the adoption of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the other standards, and the co-operation of the church and Parliament in the work of reformation.⁴

² Brown, John, An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Secession, p. 23.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 58-62.
In the historical section of the Judicial Testimony there is a summary of the encroachments made upon the church's spiritual independence in the period between 1650 and the Secession. The Associate Presbytery condemned the Acts of Charles II which abolished the legal securities formerly granted to the church and the laws which made the Covenants illegal.\(^1\) The Testimony asserted that during this period Christ was divested of His authority over the church in so far as human laws could accomplish it.\(^2\) The Testimony also denounced the Erastian aspects of the Settlement of 1690,\(^3\) the restoration of patronage in 1712,\(^4\) and the restrictions placed upon the minister's freedom to criticize the proceedings of the General Assembly.\(^5\)

It was in the doctrinal section of the Judicial Testimony that the Seceders gave their most important pronouncements on Church and State relationships. After a careful assertion of Christ's sovereignty and lordship over the church the implications of this principle were enumerated.\(^6\)

1. The office-bearers and the courts of the church are subordinate to Christ alone in their spiritual and ecclesiastical administrations.

2. The office-bearers of the church have power, warrant, and authority from the Lord Jesus Christ to hold general assemblies as well as subordinate judicatories for the

---

\(^1\) Ibid., pp. 67-73.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 69.
\(^3\) Ibid., pp. 86, 87.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 96.
\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 142, 143.
\(^6\) Ibid., pp. 157-161.
exercise of government and discipline. Ecclesiastical courts have the right to convene whenever necessary and to dissolve themselves and to appoint the time of the next meeting. (General Assembly, 1638, Session 26, and General Assembly, 1647, Session 23). In this connection is stated that the civil magistrate has the right to call synods and assemblies of ministers for consulting and advising them on matters pertaining to religion.¹

3. Christ has appointed a particular form of government for the church apart from the civil government and not subordinate to the magistrate.

4. Unto the office-bearers of the church alone are committed the keys of doctrine, government, discipline, and ordination (Confession of Faith, Chapter XXXI, Section 3). It is their duty to expound the Word, determine controversies, inflict censures, and ordain men for spiritual ministrations.

5. Ministers and office-bearers in the church are to be appointed by the call and consent of the majority of those who are admitted to full communion.

6. The National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant are a perpetual obligation to all people.

In their Judicial Testimony the Seceders emphasized the headship of Christ over the church, the purity of the Covenanting Church, and the perpetual obligation of all Christians to enter into the Covenants. In the sphere of Church and State

¹ (1) The General Assembly in 1638 (Session 26) prepared an address to the King in which reasons were given for its refusal to terminate its proceedings when dissolved by the Commissioner. This action was declared to be to the best interests of religion and the welfare of the nation. (See Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, pp. 33-35) (2) When the General Assembly approved the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647 (Session 23), an explanatory statement was given with reference to Chapter XXXI, Section 2. In churches not settled or constituted in point of government synods of ministers and other persons may be summoned by the magistrate's authority and nomination without any other call. In churches properly constituted synods should not be called merely by magisterial authority but jointly by the church and the civil ruler. Ministers by virtue of their office may meet together in assemblies even if permission is denied them by a magistrate who is hostile to the church. (See Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, pp. 158, 159, and John Macpherson, The Westminster Confession of Faith, pp. 162, 163).
relationships their major emphasis was upon the spiritual independence of the church, for they believed that it had been too long subservient to the civil authority. They made a precise delineation between civil and ecclesiastical governments and insisted that office-bearers of the church are subordinate to Christ alone in their spiritual administrations. They affirmed that the civil ruler was not to interfere with the external government of the church or with the deliberations of its courts. However, the Seceders did not repudiate the principle of a national establishment of religion. They expressed their approval of the co-operation that existed between the Church and Parliament during the Covenanting period.

A. R. MacEwen has stated that the attitude of the first Seceders toward Church and State was best summarized in William Wilson's *Defence of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland*. He declared that a national establishment of religion had divine sanction and that the civil magistrate could render valuable assistance to the church. Mr. Wilson wrote:

> The countenance of civil authority is not necessary to the being of the Church tho' it is indeed very profitable and useful unto her outward peaceable being... But, when is it that the countenance of civil authority is a blessing unto the Church of Christ? It is when the civil power is employed for the support and defence of the office-bearers of the Church in the faithful discharge of their duty, and for the protection of the courts of his Kingdom in all their several just rights and privileges... if the countenance of civil authority is pled for depriving her of the

---

1 MacEwen, *The Erskines*, p. 100.
3 Ibid., p. 167.
least of these rights and privileges that are given her by her exalted Head, the legal Establishment becomes in this case a snare and a judgment unto the Church...¹

2. The Porteous Act

The Seceders had an opportunity to apply their principles of Church and State in 1736 when ministers were required by an Act of Parliament to read from their pulpits, on the first Sunday of each month for a year, a proclamation urging their parishioners to help discover the murderers of one Captain John Porteous.

In 1736 there occurred the notorious Porteous Riot, one of the most dramatic episodes in Scotland’s history. There was a mysterious quality about it as its perpetrators were never apprehended and brought to justice. Two smugglers, Robertson and Wilson, whose contraband goods had been confiscated by government officials, waylaid an exciseman and relieved him of as much money as would indemnify them for their loss. They were arrested and sentenced to be executed. Robertson escaped, but his companion was hanged in the Grassmarket. After the execution the crowd became restive, and Captain John Porteous ordered his guards to fire upon them, and several people were killed. This infuriated the citizenry of Edinburgh, and Porteous was arrested, tried and sentenced to death. Fearing that he would be pardoned, a mob broke into the jail one night, seized him, and proceeded to lynch him.²

There was an immediate demand for the punishment of the guilty on the part of

¹ Ibid., p. 167.
² Brown, op. cit., pp. 175-178.
the government as such an overt defiance of authority could not be tolerated. After considerable debate Parliament enacted a bill in 1737 which imposed a fine of two thousand pounds on the City of Edinburgh as an indemnification for the widow of Porteous and deposed and disqualified the Provost.1

The most controversial Act passed by Parliament in connection with the Porteous episode was one alluded to previously. It required ministers to read from their pulpits on the first Sunday of each month for a year a proclamation urging their congregations to do their utmost to apprehend the murderers of Captain Porteous and bring them to justice. Any clergyman who refused to comply was, for the first offence to be declared incapable of sitting or voting in any church court; and for the second, to be denied any ecclesiastical benefice in Scotland.2

The official pronouncements of the Associate Presbytery condemned the Porteous Act as an encroachment on the church's spiritual freedom; yet they were careful to show that this denunciation did not imply disloyalty to the civil government. At meetings in both 1737 and 1738 the Presbytery deplored the "invasion made upon the Crown of Zion's King by the late Act of Parliament concerning Porteous and ministers reading of it from their pulpits."3

Likewise there is a reference to the Porteous episode in

1 Ibid., p. 180.
the formal Declinature that the Seceders read to the General Assembly in May, 1739. In it they maintained that the reading of this Act vitiated the sovereignty of Christ over the church and subjected ministers to the civil powers in the exercise of their spiritual functions.¹

The Declinature declared that ministers by reading this Act from the pulpit were delivering the commandments of men rather than the oracles of God, thus profaning the Sabbath day. Furthermore, it asserted that to obey this directive was to surrender the key of discipline to Parliament, for it had the power to inflict certain penalties upon the ministers who refused to comply.²

In this instance the Seceders acted in accordance with their principles as enunciated in the Judicial Testimony. There was a definite cleavage between their doctrine of the spiritual independence of the church and compliance with the terms of the Porteous Act. There were two crucial points of conflict in this case. The Judicial Testimony held that church office-bearers were subordinate to Christ alone in their spiritual and ecclesiastical administrations. To read this Act from the pulpit was to submit to civil authority in a matter that did not belong properly to its jurisdiction. Secondly, the Judicial Testimony declared that the key of discipline belonged to the church, but the Porteous Act gave Parliament authority to inflict

² Ibid., p. 167. Note: There is a reduplication of the page numbers in Gib's Display at this point.
penalties upon ministers for deviation from its terms.

3. The Nairn Case.

The next important stage in the development of the Associate Presbytery's political thought was the case of Mr. Thomas Nairn. Out of this controversy the principles of the Seceders on Church and State began to emerge more distinctly.

Soon after its organization the Associate Presbytery resolved to enter into a renewal of the Covenants. Consequently, a committee was appointed to prepare a bond or covenant and an Acknowledgement of Sins. A draft of these documents was presented to the Presbytery on 21st October, 1742, and it was approved by all of the members present with the exception of Mr. Thomas Nairn.\(^1\) He objected to the paragraph in the Acknowledgement of Sins in which the Presbytery condemned those who impugned subjection to the present civil government in lawful commands and who taught the warrantableness of propagating religion by force.\(^2\) Mr. Nairn felt that the purport of this section was to stigmatize the reputation of the old Dissenters (the Cameronians).

The controversy between Mr. Nairn and the Presbytery continued over a considerable period of time, and in August, 1743 he withdrew and joined with Mr. John M'Millan in the organization of the Reformed Presbytery.\(^3\)

On 3rd February, 1743, at the instigation of Mr. Alexander M'Kerrow, op. cit., p. 184.


\(^2\) Frazer, Donald, Life and Diary of the Reverend Ebenezer Erskine, pp. 433, 434.
Moncrieff, the disputed paragraph in the Acknowledgement of Sins was deleted and made the subject of a separate Act. This statement declared that it was not judicious to blend civil and ecclesiastical matters since the recognition of a government did not properly belong to the jurisdiction of a church court.\(^1\) It condemned those who had gone to the dangerous extreme of "impugning the present civil authority over these nations and subjection thereunto in lawful commands" and of "espousing principles in favour of propagating religion by offensive arms."\(^2\)

In order to ascertain the full significance of this event for the political thought of the Associate Presbytery, it is necessary to examine two documents - "A Short Account of Mr. Nairn's Secession" and "Answers by the Associate Presbytery to Reasons of Dissent... by the Reverend Mr. Thomas Nairn."

In his formal dissent Mr. Nairn sought to defend the old Dissenters and to prove that the renewal of the Covenants as proposed by the Associate Presbytery was a perversion of their original intent.

For this study the most important part of Mr. Nairn's argument was his objection to the omission of the civil aspect of the Covenants. He opposed particularly the deletion of the passages relating to the duty of rulers to suppress error (e.g., prelacy, superstition, heresy, etc.) and to promote Presbyterian

2 Ibid., p. 735.
doctrine, worship, and discipline. He argued that the Presbytery had taken this action because it would be inconsistent to enter into a covenantal relationship with the present government whose Constitution afforded protection to the Church of England and its hierarchy. He condemned the present procedure as a compromise and a betrayal of the Covenants.

Mr. Nairn took his position to its logical conclusion, and it led him to adopt anti-government sentiments. He asserted that it was an integral part of the civil constitution of Scotland that its magistrates were to be of the true religion and should endeavor to preserve it inviolably in its constituent parts. The loyalty of the subject to his rulers was contingent upon their fulfilment of these conditions. He concluded that the government in its failure to give full approbation to the true religion had forfeited its right to rule and that Christians could no longer be obliged to give allegiance to it.

The Associate Presbytery prepared a pamphlet in which the charges brought against it by Mr. Nairn were refuted. First, its act condemning those who espoused anti-government policies was not to be interpreted as an indictment of a special group but rather a denunciation of certain extremes, principles, and practices.

Secondly, there was a reply to Mr. Nairn's charge that the Presbytery was imposing a new Covenant because of its omission.

---

2 Ibid., pp. 32, 33.
3 Ibid., p. 47.
4 Answers by the Associate Presbytery to Mr. Nairn, p. 3.
of the civil part. It maintained that the present circumstances were quite different from those of a hundred years ago, and therefore called for certain alterations in procedure.¹

It was observed that in the past the Covenants had been entered into at the instigation of both civil and ecclesiastical authorities. However, this was not the case at the present time. It was now a purely religious function and to omit matters of a civil nature was quite logical and proper.²

The most important part of the "Answers by the Associate Presbytery to Mr. Nairn" is the section entitled "Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery's Principles anent the present Civil Government." In this document there is clear statement of the Seceders' view of Church and State. The important principles enunciated in the "Declaration and Defence" will be summarized in order to reveal the progress which had taken place in the Presbytery's political thought.

1. It is the duty of subjects to acknowledge the present civil government and to be obedient to it in all lawful commands. This teaching is in accordance with the tenor of Scripture, the principles of the continental Reformed Churches, and the confessions and Covenants of the Church of Scotland.³

2. Obedience to the civil magistrate is not dependent upon his personal character or religious qualifications.⁴ The Westminster Confession of Faith is quoted with approval on this point. "Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free people from their due obedience to him..."⁵

¹ Ibid., p. 29.
² Ibid., p. 41.
⁴ Ibid., p. 314.
⁵ Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XXIII, Section 4.
3. The magistrate’s office has its origin in natural principles rather than the revealed will of God.  

4. The duties of the magistrate were defined in this manner: "The public good of outward and common order in all reasonable society, unto the glory of God, is the great and only end which these invested with magistracy can propose... it is only over men's good and evil works that they can have any inspection; so, it is only over these which they must needs take cognizance of, for the said public good."  

Mr. Adam Gib has written that the doctrine set forth in this definition was fundamental to the concept of the magistrate's office as it was understood by the members of the Associate Presbytery. He was to secure the peace and the welfare of the community in a civil capacity without subordinating any religious institutions or ordinances. The magistrate was to take cognizance of men's religious conduct only in cases where the public good of society was concerned.

The Associate Presbytery's "Declaration and Defence" reveals a definite progression in its political thought. In this document the Seceders undertook to define the attitude of a non-established church toward the state. In this situation certain adjustments were necessary. The Covenants were made a purely religious function, and the duties of the magistrate were limited to the outward good of society. Nevertheless, the Presbytery continued to accept an establishment in principle as it approved the civil reformation of Scotland.

---

2 Ibid., p. 311.
3 Ibid., p. 311, n. 1.
4 Ibid., p. 312, n. 2.
5 Ibid., p. 313, n. 2.
6 Ibid., p. 280.
4. The Rebellion of 1745.

The Rebellion of 1745 afforded the Seceders an opportunity to demonstrate that it was possible for a people to renounce the National Church and at the same time to remain loyal subjects. They were cognizant of the advantages that had accrued to them under the moderate government of the Hanovers, and they opposed the idea of a return to the Catholic Stewarts.

The patriotism of the Seceders during the "Forty Five" is best illustrated by an examination of their official pronouncements and of the conduct of certain ministers.

The Associate Synod, meeting in Stirling on 26th September, 1745, soon after the defeat of the King's troops at Prestonpans, decreed that 17th October should be observed by the congregations under its inspection as a "Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation."¹

As the Rebellion was still in progress when the Synod met in Edinburgh on 10th April, 1746, it was decided that consideration should be given to the conduct of its members in a military capacity.² After deliberation on this subject an overture was prepared and transmitted to the presbyteries for their approval. It recommended that the Seceders be permitted to form their own military units as they could not be conscientiously associated with those who refused to testify against corruptions in the church and nation.³ The Synod's discussion of

² Ibid., p. 937.
³ Ibid., p. 938.
this subject was soon terminated by the defeat of the rebels at Culloden on 16th April, 1746.

The conduct of the Seceders in this instance is important to an understanding of their concept of Church and State. Participation in the suppression of the Rebellion was regarded as a duty that they owed to the government in return for the protection that it had afforded them. Nevertheless, the Synod insisted upon the formation of separate units for its members. To join the regular army would involve them in a compromise, for it would be necessary for them to give an oath of allegiance to the Constitution.

Individual ministers of the Secession were distinguished by their zealous defence of the government during the Rebellion of 1745. During the period when the rebels had possession of Edinburgh, the Reverend Adam Gib and his congregation worshipped in an open field in Colinton. In his services he prayed for King George and the suppression of the "Anti-Christian rebellion, headed by a Popish Pretender" even though enemy troops were nearby. Mr. Adam Gib encouraged volunteers later when the Highlanders were marching northward, and the safety of Edinburgh appeared to be imperiled again.

During this period of internal conflict Mr. Ebenezer Erskine stood conspicuously in the forefront. His influence

---

was largely responsible for the organization of a regiment
of six hundred volunteers in Stirling. According to con-
temporary reports he even accepted command of a company.

The correspondence that Mr. Erskine carried on with the
Marquis of Lothian attests to his loyalty. In one of his
letters he declared the willingness of the Seceders to take
up arms on behalf of the government that had given them free-
dom and protection.

In recognition of his services during the Rebellion of
1745, a letter of appreciation was written to Mr. Erskine by
command of the Duke of Cumberland.

The Seceders' patriotic conduct during this period of
turmoil afforded an unassailable refutation of the charge that
they were preachers of sedition and advocates of anti-government
practices. Their behavior during the "Forty Five" was con-
sistent with their principle of loyalty to civil government
as defined in the "Declaration and Defence."

5. The Burgher Controversy.

The Associate Presbytery organized itself into a Synod in
March, 1745, but the spirit of unity and tranquility did not
exist long within this body as it was soon to be disrupted by
the Burgher controversy. burgesses in Edinburgh, Glasgow,
and Perth were required to take an oath in which they declared:

1 Fraser, op. cit., pp. 437, 438.
2 Ibid., p. 438.
3 Ibid., p. 441.
4 Ibid., p. 444.
Here I protest before God, and your Lordships, that I profess, and allow with my heart, the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorized by the laws thereof: I shall abide thereat, and defend the same to my life's end; renouncing the Roman religion called papistry.1

The Burgher controversy had its inception at a meeting of the Synod in March, 1745 when an overture was transmitted to it from the Presbytery of Dunfermline requesting a decision as to warrantableness of the religious clause of the Burgess Oath.2

During subsequent meetings of the Synod debates on this subject engendered a heated controversy which was marked by the emergence of two opposing factions that espoused quite different views. The more conservative element held that these words implied an approbation of the National Church and all of its corruptions. On the other hand, the moderates led by the Erskines thought that no such meaning need be reasonably attached to them.

The Burgher controversy moved toward a climax in April, 1746 when overtures were received from several presbyteries advocating that the whole matter be brought to an issue.3 By a vote of thirteen to nine the Synod condemned the religious clause of the Burgess Oath.4

When the Associate Synod, at its meeting in April, 1747, refused to make its condemnation of the religious clause a term

2 Minutes of the Proceedings of the Associate Presbytery, Vol.II, p886
3 Ibid., p. 931.
4 Ibid., p. 933.
of ministerial and Christian fellowship, Mr. Thomas Mair presented a paper in which he declared that the Synod had violated its testimony and had thereby forfeited its authority and power.\(^1\) He and twenty-two others left the meeting, and on the following day, 10th April, they met in the home of Mr. Adam Gib and declared themselves to be the true Synod.\(^2\) All efforts at reconciliation failed, and at meetings in August, 1749 and February, 1750 the Anti-Burghers excommunicated their brethren.\(^3\)

In reply to the objections raised against the religious clause, Mr. Ralph Erskine pointed out that the Burgess Oath of Edinburgh was originally formulated by John Knox.\(^4\) In as much as the laws which settled the first period of the Reformation were not rescinded but incorporated into the statutes at the Revolution and Union, there should be no reluctance about accepting the oath.\(^5\)

To support his position Mr. Erskine pointed out that the true religion authorized by the Revolution Parliament and adopted by the Church of Scotland was the same as professed by the Associate Synod:

Nor did we even to this Day, declare a Secession from the Church of Scotland in her ancient or present Confession of Faith, and Standards of Religion established by good Laws whether civil or ecclesiastical...\(^6\)

\(^{1}\) Ibid., pp. 966, 967.
\(^{2}\) Gib's Display, Vol. II, pp. 72, 73.
\(^{3}\) Ibid., pp. 97, 98.
\(^{5}\) Ibid., p. 12.
\(^{6}\) Ibid., p. 23.
Mr. Adam Gib gave a very concise statement of the position of the Anti-Burgher element of the Synod.¹ He argued that the religious clause of the oath was obviously of a contemporary nature and that the only feasible interpretation of the phrase "true religion" was to apply it to the National Church. He concluded that to swear this oath was to express satisfaction with the Church of Scotland and to abjure the Secession Testimony.

Furthermore, Mr. Gib believed that the Burgess oath as it now existed tended to blend civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, thus giving the magistrate authority that did not belong to his office.²

In any assessment of the Burgher controversy it is difficult to ascertain which faction of the Synod was most faithful to the position of the Secession on Church and State. This issue was particularly complex as both religious and political factors were involved. The crucial point was whether or not the controverted clause implied approval of the National Church with its current defections.

Both groups had some basis to substantiate their claim of loyalty to the Secession Testimony. The Erskines argued that they seceded not from the Constitution of the Church of Scotland but from the prevailing party in it. Consequently, it was possible to take the Burgess oath if the phrase "true religion"

² Ibid., pp. 22, 23.
be understood as applying to the historic standards of the Church of Scotland.

On the other hand, the Anti-Burghers maintained, with a certain logic, that the clause must be understood in a more restricted sense. The only feasible interpretation of the phrase "true religion" was to apply it to the National Church as it presently existed.

In the main it was the position of the Erskines that prevailed within the Secession Church. When the Burghers and Anti-Burghers united in 1820, they agreed to regard such subjects as the Burgess oath as a "matter of forbearance."¹

In the period prior to the breach of 1747 the Associate Synod had not developed a thoroughly consistent doctrine of Church and State. In its official documents contradictory views were often expressed. The state was condemned for its failure to support the Covenanted Church, and at the same time it was taught that the civil magistrate had nothing to do directly with the church.² The most important pronouncements on Church and State were made in the "Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery's Principles anent the present Civil Government." The ideas embodied in it were to be interpreted in a later period as opposed to every form of civil intrusion or coercion in ecclesiastical affairs.

¹ MacEwen, The Erskines, p. 131.
² Ibid., pp. 115, 116.
B. The General Associate Synod.

Having taken a general view of the political thought of the undivided Secession Church, the point of emphasis will now be the Anti-Burgher denomination. This group is usually referred to as the General Associate Synod to distinguish it from the Burghers who retained the appellation of Associate Synod. This section is of particular importance as it was in this communion that Archibald Bruce ministered for many years. The purpose will be to examine its political theory and practice and to observe the gradual emergence of the New Light principles which Bruce was to combat prior to his withdrawal to organize the Constitutional Associate Presbytery. The Anti-Burghers gave a fuller and more precise statement to certain ideas that were at least implicit in the pronouncements of the Associate Synod on Church and State.

The General Associate Synod was formally organized in the home of Mr. Adam Gib of Edinburgh on 10th April, 1747. Present at this meeting were twelve ministers and eleven elders. After prayer and deliberation they adopted an overture which declared that the lawful authority and power of the Associate Synod had devolved upon them.

From the organization of the Synod in 1747 until his death on 18th June, 1788, the Reverend Adam Gib of Edinburgh was the

---

1 Gib's Display, Vol. II, pp. 72, 73.
2 Ibid., pp. 73, 74.
outstanding churchman of the Anti-Burghers. By nature he was highly argumentative, and he played an important role in all of the controversies of his denomination. He was the dominant influence in formulating the theological and political thought of the General Associate Synod. Speaking of Gib's role in the Nairn controversy, Dr. David M. Forrester has written:

This led to much discussion as to the Civil Magistrate's warrant and sphere; and Adam Gib laid down guiding principles that perhaps were hard to reconcile with what the Seceders at first held as to the State's relation to the Church, but that bore fruit later on in the Anti-Burgher Kirk before the Re-union of 1820, and provided an armoury for the Voluntary Controversy that soon followed.1

On 16th August, 1758 the General Associate Synod adopted a report entitled "A Solemn Warning" in which it lamented the deplorable state of affairs in the land.2 Of particular importance to this study is the article entitled "The Royal Supremacy in Causes Ecclesiastical."

This section commenced with a denunciation of the fact that the King is acknowledged to be head or governor, on earth, of the Churches of England and Ireland. By virtue of this prerogative he can exercise spiritual and ecclesiastical functions that do not properly belong to his office. As the head of the Church he is invested with the power of government and discipline. Clergymen, therefore, have no jurisdiction but by and under the King.3

In this connection the "Solemn Warning" censured the

---
1 Forrester, Adam Gib: The Anti-Burgher, p. 16.
Church of Scotland for its subjection to the civil power on certain occasions. It had complied with Parliament in the case of the Porteous Act and in the appointment of fasts.¹

This document made a clear distinction between the Kingdom of Christ and the civil government:

The Church is the Kingdom of Christ, a Kingdom which is not of this world: And earthly powers have no authority from him in that Kingdom; while no creatures are intrusted with any magisterial or legislative power therein. He hath appointed spiritual office-bearers in his Church, with a ministerial power only, for declaring and applying his laws: And it is only in his name that all their ministrations should proceed; as, in these matters, they are the servants of Christ, - and not the servants of men.²

The Synod was careful to assert that earthly powers had no reason to fear the Kingdom of Christ because it was independent from theirs. It was concerned only with the consciences of men and spiritual matters and had nothing to do with public administrations in the civil state.³ The Synod declared that it, like all Reformed churches, taught obedience to the magistrate in secular matters.⁴

Certain specific cases illustrating the General Associate Synod's political thought will now be considered.

1. **The Address to the King on the State of Religion in the Nation.**

   At its meeting on 11th April, 1759 Mr. Alexander Moncrieff proposed that the Synod take into consideration the question:

"If it is called for duty, to lay before the king our grievances concerning the present state of religion in these lands, together with a dutiful and suitable petition for redress of the same?" Mr. Moncrieff then gave a number of reasons to support his proposal. Such a procedure was declared to be in accordance with the principles of Scripture, the Covenants, and the Judicial Testimony. After deliberation the Synod voted to defer action.

At the October meeting Mr. Adam Gib objected to the measure proposed by Mr. Moncrieff, and he presented a paper which was subsequently published. He declared that the present motion was unwarrantable, impracticable, unreasonable, improper, irregular, unscriptural, and impatient. Consideration will be given only to those reasons which are pertinent to this study.

Mr. Gib argued that even if the measure were adopted by the Synod, it would be impracticable to carry it into effect. It would be necessary to secure an important person to present the petition to the King who would in turn recommend it to the Parliament. To address that body was inconsistent with the Synod's principles as it involved a recognition of the Lords Spiritual.

The method proposed in Mr. Moncrieff's petition was denounced

2 Gib, An Address to the Synod to which are prefixed Mr. Moncrieff's Petition and Reasons, p. 8.
3 Ibid., pp. 14, 15.
4 Ibid., pp. 17, 18.
as being irregular. A true reformation should commence with the people and then permeate all aspects of the nation and the church, but the present motion appears to reverse the order. It is Erastian in nature, giving the civil magistrate the power to choose a people's religion and then impose it upon them. Such a procedure is reprehensible even though the end might be good in itself.¹

Mr. Gib insisted that there were no scriptural examples to support the method of reformation proposed in the present overture. Scripture enjoined subjects to be obedient to the civil authorities in lawful commands and to pray for them, but there was no reference to a higher sphere of duty to them.²

To substantiate his position Gib cited references in the Old and New Testaments. The prophets went to the rulers only when they were summoned by them or had a direct commission from the Lord to do so. Their purpose in addressing a king was to deliver a message from God and not to make petitions about His work.³

In the early days of Christianity the Apostles did not appeal to the civil powers for assistance in propagating the Gospel.

They never called in the assistance of the secular arm, against the prevailing abominations; whatever advantages

¹ Ibid., pp. 240, 241.
² Ibid., p. 242.
³ Ibid., p. 233.
they had for doing so, from the universality of their commission, and the miraculous powers with which it was accompanied. Our Lord did not see meet to make choice of that secular way, for promoting the interests of his kingdom.¹

Mr. Gib pointed out that in the directions the Lord gave His disciples there was no reference to their going before kings and rulers on His behalf. Rather they were to wait until they were providentially brought before these higher powers.²

Mr. Gib argued that the Synod had no more reason to petition the civil authorities than had the Apostles. Furthermore, there was no need to communicate even with the Christian magistrates about the true religion. In this connection Gib pointed out that the Covenants were not to be interpreted as the foundation for any new duties.³

The sentiments of Mr. Gib prevailed as the Synod concurred in his objections to the motion proposed by Mr. Moncrieff, and it agreed, without a vote, to lay the matter aside under the present circumstances.⁴

Mr. Moncrieff was not satisfied with this rejection of his proposal and at subsequent meetings in 1760 and 1761, he sought unsuccessfully to have the matter re-introduced.⁵

Commenting on this episode, M'Kerrow stated:

These sentiments are much in unison with those that are held by voluntary church writers in our own day; and

¹ Ibid., p. 242.
² Ibid., p. 243.
³ Ibid., pp. 242, 243.
⁵ M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 271.
they show us, that even at this early period correct views of the spiritual nature of Christ's Kingdom, and of the mischievous effects of political interference with it, had found their way into the Secession Church.¹

2. The Address of Loyalty to King George III.

When the General Associate Synod met on 16th April, 1761, overtures were transmitted from the Presbyteries of Glasgow and Ireland which recommended that a dutiful and loyal address be presented to King George III who had recently acceded to the throne.² Mr. Alexander Moncrieff insisted that these proposals should be considered in conjunction with the motion that he had already made regarding a petition to the King on the state of religion in the land. However, the Synod would not agree to a blending of the two motions, and he dissented.³

These overtures incited considerable discussion. The debate was over the method of presenting the congratulatory address to the King. Some members of the Synod reasoned that as the law did not recognize them in their capacity as an ecclesiastical court, an address presented by them could not be received constitutionally. Consequently, they agreed to record in their minutes an expression of their attachment to the reigning family and their loyalty to the person and government of His Majesty.⁴

The Synod's declaration of loyalty as recorded in its minutes asserted that its protest against the current defects

¹ Ibid., p. 271.
³ Ibid., p. 212.
⁴ Ibid., p. 213.
in both the church and the nation did not impede its attachment to the monarch nor prevent its members from a zealous opposition to the spirit of rebellion. The civil government of Great Britain was declared to be the best modelled in all of the world, and a special tribute was paid to the late King George II. This declaration concluded with a pledge by the members of the Synod to be loyal and dutiful subjects of the new sovereign.

In his comments on the Synod's declaration of loyalty Mr. Gib maintained that the King had no more devoted subjects in all of Britain than the members of the General Associate Synod. Their secession from the Established Church and their opposition to certain evils in the present government did not instil in them a subversive spirit. He cited their conduct during the Rebellion of 1745 as evidence of their patriotism.

Mr. Gib concluded by saying:

None of their fellow-subjects have given better evidence of a genuine disposition, — to "Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."

3. The Denunciation of the African Slave Trade.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century there was great agitation for the abolition of the notorious slave trade. In the forefront of this crusade was William Wilberforce who was the guiding spirit of the Clapham Sect. This organization was

1 Ibid., pp. 212, 213.
3 Ibid., p. 248.
4 Ibid., p. 250.
Influential in political circles, for it was comprised largely of members of Parliament. The goal of this group was achieved in 1806 when the slave trade was abolished.\(^1\)

In this venture to vindicate human rights the Secession Church played an important role. On 6th May, 1788 a motion was made that the General Associate Synod express its sentiments on this subject. Some of its members advocated a petition to Parliament. However, others were averse to this procedure as they objected to the Synod appearing in the capacity of a petitioner to the civil government. After considerable debate the Synod voted to prepare a declaration opposing the slave trade and have it published in various newspapers.\(^2\) The Synod's conduct in this instance closely paralleled its rejection of Mr. Moncrieff's proposal to the King on the state of religion in the land. It illustrated this body's determination to make a clear distinction between civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions and to prohibit the encroachment of one on the other.

In his discussion of the influence of the Seceders on the social and political life of their day, David Woodside has written:

> While the Secession and Relief Churches held very stringent views about the relation of Church and State, and the limits that ought to be assigned to the State in dealing with men's consciences, yet they never hesitated to use all their weight

---

\(^1\) Trevelyan, *British History in the Nineteenth Century (1782-1901)*, pp. 52, 55.

to ensure that the laws of the country should make virtue more easy and the way of vice increasingly hard.¹


At a meeting of the General Associate Synod on 6th May, 1788 a proposal was made to observe the centenary of the Revolution of 1688 by appointing a day of solemn thanksgiving. The resolution adopted by the Synod expressed gratitude for the civil and religious liberties that its people enjoyed as a consequence of the Revolution. However, it was recommended that their thankfulness be accompanied by a lamentation for the defects of the Settlement. The Synod appointed Wednesday, 5th November, 1788, to be observed in all of its congregations as a day of solemn thanksgiving and prayer.²

Professor Archibald Bruce and six others dissented and desired to have their opposition to the motion recorded.³ When the "Act for Solemn Thanksgiving" was published, it proved to be rather unpopular, and petitions were sent to the next meeting from the congregations of Mid-Calder and Whitburn imploring the Synod to revise and explain its position. The defects of the Revolution Settlement were considered to be of such a serious nature as to call for humiliation rather than thanksgiving. Furthermore, the appointment of 5th November for this purpose appeared to be a revival of the practice of observing religious holidays and festivals.⁴

¹ Woodside, The Soul of A Scottish Church, p. 208.
³ M'Kerrow, op. cit., p. 344.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 344, 345.
In 1788 Professor Bruce published a volume entitled *Annus Secularis* which was a denunciation of an Act of the General Assembly designating 5th November, 1788 as a day to commemorate the Revolution. Although this treatise was not directed against the specific action of his Synod, it does reflect his reasons for a dissent from its resolution on the same subject. He had two principal objections to this Act. First, although such an observance was laudable in itself, it might lead to a re-institution of holy days and festivals which had been eliminated by the Reformation.1 Secondly, such an observance did not preserve the proper distinction between the deliverances of the Revolution and the defects of the Settlement.2 He particularly objected to its encroachments upon the spiritual independence of the church because he felt that it gave the King a kind of ecclesiastical supremacy over it.3 Mr. Bruce contended that the Settlement was Erastian in nature as the civil ruler was given authority to dissolve church assemblies.4

In order to resolve the scruples of some of its members the Synod prepared an explanatory statement relative to its "Act for Solemn Thanksgiving." It reiterated the fact that its gratitude should be accompanied by lamentation and that its ministers were free to give as much emphasis as they desired to the defects of the Settlement. Furthermore, the appointment

---

1 [Bruce], *Annus Secularis*, (C.W. 1, pp. 19, 20.)
2 Ibid., p. 227.
3 Ibid., pp. 228, 229.
4 Ibid., p. 229.
of a day to commemorate the Revolution was not to be interpreted as an approval of religious holidays or festivals.¹

This statement appears to have allayed the objections of Archibald Bruce and the others who had dissented against the original resolution. While the Synod had recognized its indebtedness to the state, it was careful to denounce all Erastian tendencies inherent in its Constitution.

5. The Loyalty Oaths to the British Constitution

The period following the outbreak of the French Revolution was one of political ferment and unrest throughout Europe. The rulers of Great Britain took alarm at the course of events. Existing institutions were considered to be endangered, and many individuals were required to give oaths of allegiance to the British Constitution. In the lists of these subscribers were many Seceders. However, some of them entertained scruples about this act as they regarded it to be inconsistent with their Secession Testimony. Their primary objection was that this declaration of loyalty implied an approbation of the English hierarchy and an acquiescence in the ecclesiastical authority exercised by the King.²

At a meeting of the General Associate Synod on 5th May, 1795, the Presbytery of Perth presented an overture on the subject of oaths to the civil government. It read in part:

¹ M'Kerrow, op. cit., pp. 345, 346.
² Ibid., p. 373.
The Presbytery find that some of the people in connection with them have subscribed an appropriation of the British Constitution, accompanied with an engagement to do everything in their power for the maintenance and defence thereof and that others are in danger of falling into similar snares.1

The overture from the Presbytery of Perth requested that the Synod give direction to those under its inspection who were confronted with this problem, declare its dissatisfaction with certain features of the Constitution, and affirm its loyalty to the present civil government.2

After considerable debate on this subject the Synod warned all people under its inspection "that they ought to be on their guard against all measures tending to ensnare them into such oaths or practices as are contrary to their Christian profession."3 Members of the Synod were reminded that these oaths and declarations were not to be interpreted according to any secret or reserved sense that individuals might give them in their own minds, but they were to be understood as expressing satisfaction with the government as it existed.4 The Synod maintained that an oath of allegiance implied not only acceptance of the Constitution as established in the King, Lords, and Commons, but also of the English hierarchy as its bishops and archbishops were members of the House of Lords.5 It is important to notice that the Seceders made a clear distinction between an unqualified

1 Minutes of the General Associate Synod, 1787-1803, Scroll V, p. 217.
2 Ibid., pp. 217, 218.
3 Ibid., p. 219.
4 Ibid., p. 219.
5 Ibid., p. 219.
acceptance of the British Constitution and loyalty to the
civil government. Here again they reiterated the principles
enunciated in the Associate Presbytery's "Declaration and
Defence."

On this occasion the Synod declared that over a period
of almost one hundred years its members had been good subjects
and had behaved themselves in a quiet and peaceable manner:

The Synod at the same time declare that they never
expressed any scruple with the form of civil government,
as settled in a King, Temporal Lords, and Commons; and
they recommend to their people and expect of them, -
that they will behave themselves, as they have hitherto,
as the meek and quiet in the land.¹

At this time insinuations were made that tended to impugn
the patriotism of the Seceders. They were represented as
disloyal to the civil government and desirous of overthrowing
its existing institutions. At the meeting of the Synod in
May 1795 a proposal was made by the Provincial Synod of Edin-
burgh that measures be adopted to remove this false impression.
Messrs. Archibald Bruce and George Whytock were appointed to
prepare a statement of the General Associate Synod’s principles
with reference to the civil government.²

Mr. Bruce prepared a paper entitled "A Brief Statement
and Declaration of the Genuine Principles of the Seceders,
Respecting Civil Government, etc." However, this document
did not receive the official sanction of the General Associate
Synod.³

¹ Ibid., p. 219.
² M’Kerrow, op. cit., p. 374.
³ Bruce, A Brief Statement and Declaration..., (C.W. 3, pp. 86, 87).
One of the members of the Synod, Mr. John Young of Hawick, emerged at this time as an avowed apologist for the British government. In 1794 he published a volume entitled *Essays on the Following Interesting Subjects: Government, Revolutions, etc.* In the introduction he stated that his purpose was to show that the Seceders had been loyal subjects.¹ He condemned the popular idea that the common man should participate in the determination of government policies, for the science of politics was too complex for him.² Mr. Young gave an almost unqualified approval of the present Constitution and deplored the efforts of the societies that were seeking to introduce certain Parliamentary reforms.³ In his final essay the author undertook to vindicate Britain's war against France.⁴

A formal complaint was preferred against Mr. Young, and the Synod appointed a committee to examine his book and to ascertain whether or not it contained principles inconsistent with the Secession Testimony. However, it appears that the case was terminated without further consideration.⁵

At this point it is necessary to summarize the developments that had taken place in the General Associate Synod's concept of Church and State since its organization in 1747. Ideas emerged during this period that were to disrupt the Synod in 1806.

² Ibid., pp. 13, 14.
³ Ibid., p. 95.
⁴ Ibid., See p. 130 ff.
⁵ M'Kerrow, op. cit., p. 376, n. 1.
The general attitude of the Synod was expressed most succinctly by Adam Gib in his exposition of the duties of the magistrate. He declared:

Thus, the Magistrate must not assume any Lordship immediately over men's consciences; in offering to make himself a judge of men's religious principles: Nor must he encroach upon the special privileges and business of the Church; by assuming a cognizance of men's religious conduct or behaviour, farther than the public good of society is concerned...

In the General Associate Synod there was the growing conviction that the magistrate's authority ought to be restricted entirely to the civil sphere. Consequently, members of the Synod consistently opposed the use of the secular arm to promote the Kingdom of Christ. Thus, they rejected Mr. Moncrieff's proposed address to the King.

Certain other important ideas emerged during this period. The magistrate's role with reference to revealed religion was restricted primarily to his personal example and influence. The existence of a national church was not to be prejudicial to the rights of dissenters. Compulsion was not to be used to force religion upon a man against his conscience.

One writer has observed that during this period the Seceders still clung to the idea of a "via media." While they abhorred all coercive measures in religion, they still admitted that the civil magistrate might, within certain limits, exercise a legitimate control in ecclesiastical affairs.

2 Thomson, Andrew, Historical Sketch of the Origin of the Secession Church, p. 150.
"... civil authority may be lawfully and beneficially employed in the advancement of religion and the kingdom of Christ."

Near the close of the eighteenth century there was a movement in both sections of the Secession Church to qualify adherence to their standards on the authority of the state in ecclesiastical matters and on the duty of public covenanting. There was a general desire to remove all ambiguity and appearance of inconsistency by giving an explicit declaration on these points. The discussion revolved around a consideration of certain chapters of the Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter XX, Section 4, and Chapter XXIII, Section 5). Many people entertained scruples about giving an unlimited assent to such passages as it was felt that they ascribed an authority to the civil magistrate that did not properly belong to his office. Consequently, ministers and members alike were desirous of effecting such alterations in the formularies of their communion as would suit the present circumstances.

After a period of prolonged and intricate controversy, which had its full complement of debates and dissents, a breach occurred in both Secession Synods. In each instance a small minority, claiming to represent the true position of the original Seceders, withdrew. This rupture occurred among the Burghers in 1799 and in the General Associate Synod
In 1806. In both cases the conservatives, who opposed all modifications in the Westminster Confession of Faith, were designated the Old Lights. Their more liberal opponents were commonly referred to as the New Lights.

In this chapter a study will be made of the New Light Controversy in the Anti-Burgher denomination, for Archibald Bruce had an important role in it. He steadfastly opposed those who sought to modify the standards of his Synod, and he ultimately withdrew from its fellowship.

A. The Origin and Development of the New Light Controversy

The New Light Controversy had its inception among the Anti-Burghers in May, 1791. Growing out of the concern over the question of magisterial authority in religion, overtures were presented to the General Associate Synod by the Presbyteries of Glasgow and Forfar. The former related to those passages in the Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter XX, Section 4, and Chapter XXIII, Section 3) which sanctioned the intervention of the civil magistrate in religious matters. The latter overture requested the Synod to extend and simplify its Testimony, in order that it might be more applicable to the present circumstances in the church and the nation. No definite action was taken at this time, but the clerk was instructed to send the overtures to the Provincial Synods for their consideration.

2 Ibid., p. 126.
At the meeting of the General Associate Synod in May, 1792, a committee, including Professor Bruce, was appointed to prepare the draft of an act in accordance with the Glasgow overture. This paper was presented in May, 1793, but a full discussion of it was delayed until a special session which was appointed to convene in October of that year. After a long deliberation over the expediency of enacting the Glasgow overture, the Synod found that many of its members were not acquainted with the implications of it. Consequently, it was agreed to have it printed and copies sent to each minister and session for study.

The Synod at this same meeting entered into a discussion of the Forfar overture. A motion was made that a committee be appointed to prepare the draft of an act for extending the Testimony in opposition to errors that had prevailed since the first secession but delay the part relating to simplification. This procedure was adopted, and the overture from Glasgow Presbytery was now superseded as its sentiments were to be embodied in the new Testimony.

It was not until April, 1796 that the committee reported the completion of the task assigned it. A draft of the new Narrative and Testimony was tabled with the request that the Synod express its judgment upon it. A special meeting was

1 Ibid., p. 142.
2 Ibid., p. 159.
3 Ibid., p. 160.
appointed to be held in October, 1796 for the purpose of considering this document. When the Synod voted to express satisfaction with the committee's work, Messrs. Bruce and Ramsey desired to have it recorded that they did not concur in this approval.¹

A perusal of the Synod's minutes reveals that this body gave careful consideration to the new Narrative and Testimony before its final enactment. Between 1796 and 1804 a portion of each meeting was devoted to a careful and thorough examination of this document page by page. Various corrections and amendments were made in order to remove contradictions and to win the approval of the Synod's constituents.

At this point it is necessary to digress from the account of the Synod's revision of its Testimony, and consider the case of Mr. Thomas M'Crie because it has important implications for this study. The second question in the formula for licence and ordination required an acceptance of "the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith."² Although the Synod intended assent to be qualified by the principles embodied in the "Answers by the Associate Presbytery to Mr. Nairn,"³ this stipulation did not allay the scruples of all probationers.

This matter was brought to an issue in the case of two licentiates, Thomas M'Crie and William M'Ewan. These two men

did not feel free to give an unlimited answer to the second question of the formula, for they entertained doubts about the role of the civil magistrate in religious matters. They were reluctant to submit to ordination until given an opportunity to intimate their sentiments on this controverted point.1

When Thomas M'Crie appeared before the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh for ordination, he requested permission to state the reservation with which he took his vows.2 The Presbytery, being a subordinate court, did not consider itself competent to make any alterations in the public confession of the body to which it belonged.3 Consequently, the matter was referred to the General Associate Synod which met in May, 1796. At this meeting a Declaratory Act was passed in order to resolve the difficulties of Messrs. M'Crie and M'Ewan.

This Declaratory Act stated:

.... That as the Confession of Faith was at first received by the Church of Scotland with some exception, as to the power of the civil magistrate relative to spiritual matters, so the Synod, for the satisfaction of all who desire to know their mind on this subject, extend that exception to every thing in the Confession which, taken by itself, seems to allow the punishment of good and peaceable subjects on account of their religious opinions and observances: That they approve no other means of bringing men into the church, or retaining them in it, than such as are spiritual, and were used by the apostles and other ministers of the word in the first ages of the Christian church....4

1 M'Kerrow, History of the Secession Church, p. 380.
4 Ibid., pp. 42, 43.
The Declaratory Act also added this qualifying phrase to the second question of the formula for ordination (acceptance of W.C. of F.): "and according to the Declaration of the General Associate Synod, 1796."¹

As a result of this alteration in the Synod's standards, Mr. M'Crie's scruples were resolved, and he was ordained in the Potterrow Church, Edinburgh, on 26th May, 1796.²

Professor Bruce has stated that this explanatory act was "covertly introduced" and passed hurriedly without discussion.³ It was only after several representations that he was successful in having his opposition to this measure recorded in the minutes of the Synod.⁴

It is necessary to return now to an account of the Synod's deliberations on the renovation of its standards. Although a draft of the new Narrative and Testimony was published in October, 1796, it was not formally enacted until May, 1804. During this interval the revision of the other official documents occupied the Synod's time. The Acknowledgement of Sins and the Engagement to Duties were not considered to be adapted sufficiently to the tenor of the times. The former of these documents summarized all of the defects and errors that had prevailed

¹ Ibid., p. 43.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 116, 117.
in the church since the Reformation, and the latter contained a declaration of what the covenanters proposed to do.

At its meeting on 11th September, 1799 the Synod enacted the new Acknowledgement of Sins and Engagement to Duties and reiterated that assent to the Westminster Confession of Faith was to be qualified by the Declaratory Act of 1796. Professor Bruce dissented and later presented a written protest. He argued that in certain respects the new Acknowledgement and Engagement were inconsistent with and derogatory to those formerly enacted. Mr. Bruce concluded by stating:

And I farther declare, that communion with my brethren henceforth, unless I obtain other light, can only be maintained according to the tenor of this protestation, and upon the ancient terms and bonds of our religious association, and not on the footing of these late innovating acts.  

It is interesting to observe at this point the reversal in Mr. M'Crie's opinion with reference to the Declaratory Act of 1796. Almost immediately after the passage of this explanatory statement he began to question the wisdom of it. He felt that it implied a condemnation of the Confession of Faith and abrogated the profession of the Seceders in favor of the civil reformation. Mr. M'Crie's son asserts that his father was never an uncritical exponent of New Light principles. At the time of his ordination his views on this subject were quite undecided. However, as the result of a course of study

2 Ibid., pp. 164, 165.
4 Ibid., p. 62.
he progressed from a state of indecision to one of conviction. He came to the conclusion that it was erroneous to assume that the civil administration should show no particular favor to revealed truth and divine institutions.\(^1\)

In April, 1800 Mr. M'Crie presented a petition to the General Associate Synod imploring it to review the Declarationary Act of 1796. He maintained that the import of this statement was to condemn the Confession of Faith and the method by which the Reformation had been promoted in Scotland.\(^2\)

Professor Bruce, desirous of arresting the Synod's revision of its standards, brought forth a resolution on 5th September, 1800, advocating a termination of the deliberations on this subject since the Synod already had a judicially authorized Act, Declaration, and Testimony.\(^3\) Only Messrs. M'Crie, Aitken, and Dun adhered to this petition.

The Synod's revision of its official documents was now progressing rapidly toward a climax, for the new Testimony was adopted in 1801, and the Introduction and Narrative in 1803. On each occasion the voice of a small but vigorous minority was raised against these proceedings. At the latter meeting a formal protest was submitted by Messrs. Whytock, Aitken, and M'Crie. Mr. Bruce, who was absent because of his duties as professor of Divinity, dispatched a letter in which he concurred.

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 64.

\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 434, 435, Appendix No. 1.

with the other dissenters.¹

When the Synod convened in April, 1804, Messrs. James Hog and Robert Chalmers adhered to the protest already tabled against the enactment of the Introduction and Narrative. At this meeting the Synod devoted considerable time to certain amendments and corrections that were designed to obviate the objections of the remonstrants.² However, their efforts were unsuccessful, and a breach now appeared inevitable.

The tedious and laborious process of revision and amendment was completed on 2nd May, 1804 when the Introduction, Narrative, and Testimony were formally enacted.³ When this motion was adopted, Messrs. Whytock, Aitken, Chalmers, Hog, and M'Crie intimated adherence to their former protest and reserved the right to express further opposition. On this same occasion the Synod decreed that all ministers, students, elders, and others who had not convenanted should "join in the bond" at a special session to be held in May, 1805.⁴

When the Synod met in May, 1805, a final effort was made to placate the dissenting ministers as they were allowed to retain their views, but with certain clearly defined provisions. They were permitted to receive into their churches members who adhered to the former standards of their denomination. However, they were prohibited from impugning the principles of

¹ Ibid., p. 229.
² M'Kerrow, op. cit., p. 440.
⁴ M'Kerrow, op. cit., p. 446.
the Synod in either the pulpit or the press, and they were required to admit into Christian communion those who assented to the new Narrative and Testimony.¹ The protesters, however, considered these stipulations to be an infringement of their ministerial liberty, and they refused to exercise their ministry under these restrictions.²

Mr. Bruce, at this time, presented a remonstrance in which he declared that if the Synod did not annul its former deeds, he would be compelled to withdraw from its fellowship.³

On 7th May, 1806 Bruce, Aitken, Hog, and M'Crie presented a paper which was a virtual declinature of the Synod's authority. Mr. George Whytock of Dalkeith, who had formerly been associated with them, had died on 24th October, 1805. The protesters lamented the fact that their withdrawal would cause a division; nevertheless, their action was justified as the Synod sought to impose unwarrantable terms of communion.⁴ The Synod delayed a consideration of this paper until its meeting in August.

The four dissenting ministers did not wait for a decision on their declaration, but when the Synod met on 26th August, 1806 in Glasgow, they convened in Whitburn. After spending two days in conference and prayer, Archibald Bruce, James Aitken, James Hog, and Thomas M'Crie organized themselves into the Constitutional Associate Presbytery on 28th August, 1806.

¹ Ibid., pp. 447, 448.
² Ibid., p. 448.
⁴ M'Kerrow, op. cit., p. 450.
It was stated in their Deed of Constitution that such an obligation was laid upon them by their ordination vows because the General Associate Synod had renounced certain important doctrines of the Confession of Faith and the Secession Testimony and introduced the opposite sectarian errors. Specifically, they objected to the Synod's omission of any reference to the warrantableness and duty of civil rulers to employ their authority in an active support of the Kingdom of Christ. Furthermore, all covenants of a religious nature (e.g., National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant) entered into by nations in their public capacity or in conjunction with churches "are either directly or by native consequence condemned."

The Deed of Constitution then proceeded to enumerate five specific reasons to justify the organization of a separate presbytery.

1. The General Associate Synod had adopted a different scheme of principles and imposed new and unwarrantable terms of communion. Consequently, it could no longer be regarded as a rightly constituted court of Christ.

2. The present course of action was imperative if the principles of the Reformed Church of Scotland were to be preserved in a time of defection.

3. There was no other ecclesiastical body in Scotland with which the members of the Presbytery could affiliate without a sacrifice of their principles.

---

1 Minutes of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery, p. 1.
2 Ibid., p. 1.
3 Ibid., p. 2.
4 Ibid., pp. 3-6.
4. The ordination vows of the ministers involved laid this obligation upon them as they had promised to uphold the Presbyterian form of church government, to defend the doctrine of the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, and maintain the Judicial Testimony.

5. The organisation of a Presbytery was essential if their distinctive witness was to be perpetuated and if their adherents were to be supplied with the normal ministrations of the church.

Mr. Bruce was unanimously chosen the first Moderator, and he constituted the Presbytery "in name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the alone King and Head of his church."\(^1\)

The Constitutional Associate Presbytery issued a Declaration on 11th November, 1806 which was designed to supplement its former Deed of Constitution. In this document the Presbytery gave reasons for adopting its particular appellation:

... to avoid confusion, and distinguish them from others, they think it not improper to join the term Constitutional with that of Associate; as this also may serve to express their adherence to the true Constitution of the Reformed Church of Scotland, as stated in her standards and reformation-acts, and to the original Constitution of the Associate Presbytery and Synod.\(^2\)

For their overt defiance of its authority the Synod took immediate action against the ministers who had organized themselves into a separate ecclesiastical court. Mr. James Aitken was deposed on 28th August, 1806,\(^3\) and Mr. M'Crie on 22nd September of the same year.\(^4\) These two ministers were deprived.

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 6.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 12.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 265.
of their church buildings although Mr. M'Crie did receive some compensation after extensive litigation. Mr. James Hog died before the proceedings against him were concluded. Professor Bruce was first relieved of his duties as teacher in the Divinity Hall, and later he was cited to appear before Edinburgh Presbytery. He disobeyed this summons, and he was subsequently deposed on 7th October, 1806. The Synod took similar action against Mr. Robert Chalmers who acceded to the Constitutional Presbytery in 1806.

B. The Narrative and Testimony of 1804.

The distinctive tenets of the Old and New Lights will now be discussed in order to delineate the points of divergence and to set the controversy in its proper perspective. This will entail an examination of certain documents in which the principles of the two opposing factions are enunciated. First, consideration will be given to the Narrative and Testimony as it was the immediate cause of the cleavage between the two groups. This study will be concerned only with the sections of this document that deal specifically with Church and State relations.

Certain important principles are enunciated in the Introduction to the new Narrative and Testimony that are essential to an understanding of its purpose. The motives that induced

---

2 M'Kerrow, op. cit., p. 457.
5 M'Crie, op. cit., pp. 141, 142.
the Synod to remodel its standards are clearly stated.  

The first of these was a desire to simplify. Hitherto, the distinguishing principles of the Secession had been dispersed throughout a variety of publications and were not immediately accessible to all members of the communion. It was deemed expedient to collect the substance of them into one comprehensive summary which the average person could read and understand. Another consideration which influenced the Synod in this matter was the ambiguous phraseology of the original Testimony on certain points. Finally, there was the need to extend the Testimony in order to incorporate into it the more recent errors that had prevailed in the National Church and other denominations.

The Synod was careful to affirm that the basis of its ecclesiastical system was the Word of God. An acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms as subordinate standards was not to be interpreted as adopting a rule of faith distinct from the Holy Scriptures. Adherence to these doctrinal statements was qualified in this manner:

That as no human composure, however excellent and well expressed, can be supposed to contain a full and comprehensive view of divine truth; so by this adherence, we are not precluded from embracing, upon due deliberation, any further light which may afterward arise from the word of God, about any article of divine truth.

1 Narrative and Testimony, pp. 8, 9.
2 Ibid., p. 9.
3 Ibid., pp. 11, 12.
In the Introduction it was stated that both the former Reformation in Scotland and the subordinate standards of the church were accepted with certain reservations. There was no hesitancy to criticize the achievements of the past as being defective in many respects. Although the Synod affirmed its general approbation of both the First and Second Reformations, this did not imply an approval of all the measures adopted in the prosecution of them. The Reformation as attained between 1638 and 1650, though laudatory in many respects, was not to be considered as a perfect model for the Church State: "We acknowledge that to have been a period of eminent ecclesiastical purity; but we call no man nor church, Master." The primary objection to this former establishment was the fact that it blended civil and ecclesiastical laws.

The doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith on the subject of the power of the civil magistrate in religious matters (Chapter XX, Section 4 and Chapter XXIII, Section 3) was accepted with certain reservations. It was received only in so far as it concurred with the principles of the Secession as exhibited in the Nairn case and now more explicitly stated in the Narrative and Testimony.

1 Ibid., p. 10.
2 Ibid., p. 9.
3 Ibid., p. 9.
4 Ibid., p. 10.
5 Ibid., p. 12. In this connection it was noted that the Church of Scotland had adopted the Confession of Faith with certain reservations. The General Assembly (Session 23, 1647) had restricted the right of the magistrate to summon synods.
The body of the Narrative and Testimony consists of two major divisions. In the historical section, (the Narrative), a detailed account is given of the period from the Reformation to the present time. This chronicle of events is sub-divided into passages dealing with the Reformation, the Secession, the errors of the National Church, and the rise of certain denominations (Reformed Presbytery, Glasites, Burghers, etc.).

The second main section (the Testimony) is a summary of the doctrinal position of the Synod with a discussion of its various articles of faith. The Acknowledgement of Sins and the Engagement to Duties are appended.

Of particular importance to this study is Chapter XVIII of the Narrative and Testimony entitled "Of Public Religious Covenanting." According to the Synod's definition covenanting is a religious practice or observance. It is a duty incumbent upon Christians in their capacity as church members and not as citizens of the state.¹ It is asserted:

That public religious covenanting is the deed of a number of church-members, in which they jointly and publicly profess, to renounce all hope of life from the covenant of works; to take hold of the covenant of grace, and to devote themselves to the Lord; and in the strength of promised grace, engage faithfully to cleave to Him, to hold fast His truths, to perform the various duties which they owe to God and man, in their respective stations and relations, and to strengthen one another's hands in the work of the Lord.²

It is taught that public covenanting is a moral duty and

¹ Ibid., pp. 154, 155.
² Ibid., pp. 151, 152.
is therefore incumbent upon Christians under both the Old and New Testament dispensations.\(^1\)

A section of this chapter is devoted to the distinction between civil and religious covenants.\(^2\) In the former an appeal is made to God as the moral Governor and Judge of the world. In the latter Christians come under certain obligations to Him as their personal God. In a civil covenant the Christian, as a citizen of the state, enters into obligations of a temporal nature; whereas, in a religious one he dedicates himself to God.

The Synod asserted that it was the duty of its constituents to enter into the Covenants of their reforming ancestors (the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant). However, the Secession Church had never deemed it expedient to blend civil and religious matters in the bond for renewing these engagements.\(^3\) Furthermore, the Synod was not to be understood as approving every step taken by their forefathers, either in the manner of entering into, or of prosecuting the purposes of the Covenants.\(^4\)

The Kingdom of Christ was declared to be wholly of a spiritual nature, and its true interest could be promoted only by means consistent with its character.\(^5\) The Synod considered itself bound by the Covenants to prosecute the reformation only

---

1 Ibid., p. 152.
2 Ibid., p. 154.
3 Ibid., p. 158.
4 Ibid., p. 158.
5 Ibid., p. 158.
by such methods as were compatible with the nature of Christ's church. This precluded the use of external force or violence to impose a religious profession upon anyone.\footnote{Ibid., p. 158.}

The Synod gave a statement of its judgment on the duty of public religious covenanting in this paragraph:

We therefore condemn the error of those who reckon this duty unwarrantable, unless it have the concurrence of the civil powers. - It has been seen, that religious covenanting is entirely an ecclesiastical duty. Therefore, those invested with civil power have no other concern with it, than as church-members.\footnote{Ibid., p. 162.}

The Synod expressed its specific views on political matters in Chapter XXIV entitled "Of Church and State, and of the Difference Between Them." This section is of crucial importance, for certain watershed propositions are enunciated and expounded in it.

The church which is the Kingdom of Christ and the civil state are essentially distinct.\footnote{Narrative and Testimony, p. 193.} This is the major thesis of the chapter, and all that follows is an elaboration of this basic premise. Certain specific differences between the two institutions are clearly defined. One is by nature spiritual and the other is secular.\footnote{Ibid., p. 193.} This distinction likewise implies separate functions. The church's power is entirely in the spiritual realm and is exercised by its office bearers. The glory of God and the salvation of elect sinners is the purpose of its existence.\footnote{Ibid., p. 194.}
On the other hand, the state is concerned with the secular interests of society and its temporal good.¹

The church and state are declared to be virtually independent of one another as it is affirmed that neither has power over the other.² The church has no authority over earthly kingdoms in their collective or civil capacity but only over such subjects and rulers as are members of its communion.³ Similarly, the state exercises the same jurisdiction over church members as other subjects, but the magistrate has no power to interfere with the internal functions of an ecclesiastical court.⁴

This chapter affirms the right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.⁵ Nevertheless, the civil magistrate does not exceed the authority of his office when he seeks to suppress the propagation of erroneous principles or a false religion.⁶

This rigid distinction between the church and the state does not imply that these two institutions have no mutual duties to perform to one another. It is incumbent upon all Christians to pray for the peace and the prosperity of the nation in which they reside, to honor their rulers, and to render them a conscientious and exemplary obedience in all of their lawful commands.⁷ Civil magistrates should embrace the

¹ Ibid., p. 194.
² Ibid., p. 194.
³ Ibid., p. 194.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 194, 195.
⁵ Ibid., p. 195.
⁶ Ibid., p. 195.
⁷ Ibid., p. 196.
true religion and affiliate themselves with the church. It is their duty in a public capacity to withdraw support from a false religion, to abolish laws prejudicial to the true faith, and to regulate their administrations subservient to evangelical truth.1

The most important section of this chapter relates to the distinction between the official and private functions of the magistrate with reference to religion. It is his duty in an official capacity to protect the rights of the church as a society and to secure for its members the full enjoyment of liberty of conscience.2 In addition to this, many other obligations are incumbent upon him in his private character. It is his duty as a subject of God:

... to use his endeavours that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; that all corruptions in the worship of God and discipline of the Church be prevented or reformed; and that all ordinances of God be duly administered and observed.3

In his execution of these duties the magistrate is to rely upon his personal advice and example rather than the imposition of the civil sword.4 As a result of the exalted position that he occupies in society, he has a unique opportunity to promote the cause of Christianity. It should be observed that the duties of the civil magistrate as prescribed in the Confession of Faith (Chapter XXIII, Section 3) are no

---

1 Ibid., pp. 196, 197.
2 Ibid., p. 197.
3 Ibid., p. 198.
4 Ibid., p. 198.
longer regarded as an official function but as a private obligation.

C. The Defence of the New Lights

There were many articulate exponents of the new Narrative and Testimony who came forward to defend it against the dissenters. Among these was the Reverend Alexander Allan of Cupar-Angus who wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Power of the Civil Magistrate in Matters of Religion."

Mr. Allan pointed out that the paramount issue involved in the present controversy was whether or not the magistrate was to employ his power to promote the Kingdom of Christ by civil legislation and direct intervention in matters of a religious nature. ¹ He adduced no less than eight reasons to support a negative reply to this question. However, only three of his objections will be considered. To admit the power of the civil magistrate in ecclesiastical matters is inconsistent with the doctrine of the sole headship of Christ over His church:

Certainly, if his sole headship means any thing, it means, that none but he has the smallest right to prescribe laws for his church to observe, to determine what rewards shall be conferred on his obedient subjects, or to appoint what penalties shall be inflicted upon the contemners of his authority.²

Further, to assign the magistrate this power violates the unalienable right of private judgment or liberty of conscience. That man has a right to judge for himself in matters of faith

² Ibid., p. 58.
and worship is essential to the idea of his being an accountable creature. Finally, Mr. Allan argued that for the first three hundred years of the church's history there was no such thing as a Christian magistrate to employ his power on the behalf of religion. If Christ had considered this to be a legitimate means to promote Christianity, He would have instituted this office.

Another spokesman for the General Associate Synod was Mr. Robert Culbertson of Leith. His views are embodied in an address that he delivered to the Associate Congregation in Haddington when he appeared there to intimate the sentence of deposition against Mr. Robert Chalmers. Mr. Culbertson contended that if the civil magistrate were permitted to exercise religious authority, it would issue in either an Erastian or Papal system. He accused the protesters of adopting the latter position as he believed that they ascribed too much authority to the ecclesiastical. After the church had made its decisions, the state was then to give them the sanction of national laws and to enforce them by civil pains. The result of such a practice was to degrade the office of the magistrate and to threaten the dissenter with persecution.

The salient tenets of the New Lights as they emerged from the Narrative and Testimony and the ensuing controversy might

1 Ibid., p. 59.
2 Ibid., p. 64.
3 Culbertson, Robert, Consolation to the Church, p. 45, n. 1.
now be summarized:

1. There is an essential distinction between the Kingdom of Christ and the civil government as one is by nature spiritual and the other temporal in character. These two institutions have quite separate functions as the church is responsible for the religious interests of man and the state for the outward good of society.

2. The Kingdom of Christ is wholly of a spiritual nature, and its true interests can be promoted only by such means as are consistent with its character.

3. The unalienable right of private judgment implies that every man is free to judge for himself in matters of faith and worship and to conduct himself by what he considers to be the will of God. The state is not to enforce a religious profession upon a man against his will or persecute him for erroneous beliefs.

D. The Defence of the Old Lights

The Old Lights were zealous in the defence of their position as they sought, in a series of publications, to vindicate their withdrawal from the General Associate Synod. The tenor of the argument advanced in these documents is that the new Narrative and Testimony betrayed the doctrine of the original Seceders on Church and State. By far the most lucid and logical exposition of their principles is to be found in M'Crie's Statement. In this work Mr. Thomas M'Crie gave a forthright declaration of the views of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery. Commenting on this book, Professor George Smeaton has written:

It is a masterly defence of the principle of Establishments as a scripture truth; and the most complete vindication ever given to the world of the position occupied by the Reformed Church of Scotland on the whole subject of national religion, and of the magistrate's legitimate power in promoting it.1

1. M'Crie's Statement

In order to ascertain the exact position of the Old Lights, it is necessary to examine the main line of Mr. M'Crie's argument as it is developed in his Statement. He objected particularly to the definition of covenanting and to the interpretation of the magistrate's religious functions as they were expounded in the new Narrative and Testimony.¹

Mr. M'Crie devoted two chapters (Sections V and IX) in his Statement to the subject of public religious covenanting. In Section V he pointed out the various divergencies between the position of the original Seceders and the one expounded in the Narrative and Testimony. He censured the Synod particularly for emphasizing almost exclusively the ecclesiastical aspect of the Reformation, for he considered this to be a radical departure from the intention of the Associate Presbytery as stated in its Judicial Testimony.² Formerly the Seceders had regarded the Reformation as a great national concern in which both the church and state co-operated.³

It is Mr. M'Crie's conclusion that the Synod in the renovation of the Covenants had relinquished an important part of the witness hitherto borne by the Seceders to the Reformation in Scotland.⁴

Mr. M'Crie continued this same argument in Section IX "Of the Difference with Respect to Religious Covenants." In this

¹ M'Crie, Thomas, M'Crie's Works, Vol. X, Miscellaneous Writings (1) Statement of the Difference Between the Profession of the Reformed Church of Scotland... and the Profession Contained in the New Testimony and Other Acts... (1807 Edition), pp. 44, 45, (Hereinafter referred to as M'Crie's Statement)
² M'Crie's Statement, pp. 65, 66.
³ Ibid., p. 64.
⁴ Ibid., p. 74.
chapter he gave a critical analysis of the Synod's definition of covenanting. It is too general and indeterminate as it does not distinguish explicitly between a formal covenant and the normal engagements (worship, communion, etc.) performed in all Christian churches.\(^1\) This definition would appear to restrict religious covenanting to churches and men under the evangelical covenant rather than resting it upon the broad basis of the moral law, and therefore applicable to men in all of their stations and relations.\(^2\)

In adopting this interpretation of covenanting, the Synod is giving the practice a purely religious meaning and is implying that the Christian has no concern for religion except in his capacity as a church member.\(^3\) The purpose of covenanting is the salvation of a man's soul rather than the advancement of a national reformation. The propriety of such an exercise is not questioned, but it must be regarded as only a partial fulfilment of the Christian's duty.\(^4\) The present doctrine of the Synod is more akin to the teaching of the Independents than the Presbyterian Church.\(^5\)

Mr. M'Crie maintained that the Synod's rigid distinction between civil and religious covenants and its insistence upon the obligation of the Christian, as a church member, to engage only in the latter condemned some of the most notable oaths

---

\(^1\) Ibid., pp. 162, 163.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 164.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 166.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 166.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 170.
which have been entered into in Protestant countries. For example, the Solemn League and Covenant was designed not only to advance the cause of religion, but also the liberty, safety, and peace of the three kingdoms.

After making his criticisms of the Synod's definition of covenanting, Mr. M'Crie gave a positive statement of the views of the Old Lights on this subject. The method proposed by them was declared to be both scriptural and Presbyterian:

We maintain that the nation and the church entered jointly into these covenants, and that both are bound by them; that they were approved, ratified, and promoted by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and sworn by them and the body of the people under them; and therefore are binding in both characters.

It is in Section VI that Mr. M'Crie considered specifically the relationship between church and state. He admitted that these two institutions, with their respective authorities, are distinct and mutually independent. However, this does not preclude the possibility that they can render valuable assistance to one another. In as much as religion is an object of interest to all mankind, magistrates as well as ministers have a concern with it. Each may employ his authority in its behalf without encroaching upon the business or usurping the power of the other.

While denouncing all Erastian tenets, the protesting ministers believe that the civil authority may be beneficially

---

1 Ibid., p. 172.
2 Ibid., p. 174.
3 National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant.
4 M'Crie's Statement, pp. 182, 183.
5 Ibid., p. 77.
6 Ibid., p. 77.
and lawfully employed to advance the Kingdom of Christ. The care of religion in the general view of it belongs to the magistrate's office. It is his duty to watch over its external interests, to suppress irreligion, impiety, profanity, and blasphemy, to introduce the gospel into his dominions, and to provide his people with instruction and the ordinances by salutary laws and encouragements. All of this can be accomplished without propagating Christianity by the sword or imposing a profession by penal laws. Furthermore, when the established religion of a land becomes corrupt and degenerate, it is the duty of the civil authority to work for its reformation. This is not to be accomplished by the abolition of all laws respecting religion or by leaving ecclesiastical affairs to voluntary associations. Rather, the magistrate is to assume an active role by correcting the abuses and by summoning and supporting synods to settle the internal affairs of the church.

Mr. M'Crie and his followers accepted the principle of an established religion and gave it their approval. In normal circumstances it is the duty of the magistrate to give legal sanction to a particular church by ratifying its confession of faith and its form of worship and discipline. Civil rulers may do these things in a manner agreeable to Presbyterian principles and without encroaching upon the business of the church. The existence of an established religion does imply the persecution

1 Ibid., p. 79.
2 Ibid., p. 80.
3 Ibid., p. 80.
of those who dissent from it for conscientious reasons.¹

Mr. M'Crie observed that the real point of cleavage in this controversy was the definition of the magistrate's religious duties as they were formulated in the Narrative and Testimony of 1804. It declared that he was responsible only for the secular interests of society.² More specifically, Mr. M'Crie attacked the distinction made between the magistrate's official and private functions in ecclesiastical affairs. His official duties are contained in one sentence and are limited to protecting the church as a society and to securing for its members the full enjoyment of liberty of conscience.³ This implies that he is to extend equal protection to every society that purports to be a church even if it be heretical and corrupt in nature. In his official capacity the magistrate is to do no more for Christians than for Jews, Deists, Mohammedans, or pagans.⁴

M'Crie accused the Synod of imposing an unwarranted restriction upon the meaning of the Confession of Faith (Chapter XXIII, Section 3). The duties of the civil magistrate as defined here are no longer considered to be an official function but ones belonging to his capacity as an individual Christian.⁵ The Synod excludes the exercise of magisterial authority with reference to divine worship and ordinances and

¹ Ibid., p. 81.
² Narrative and Testimony, p. 193.
³ M'Crie's Statement, p. 83. (See also Narrative and Testimony, p. 197).
⁴ Ibid., p. 83.
⁵ Ibid., p. 84. (See also Narrative and Testimony, p. 198.)
restricts him to the use of advice and example in the suppres-
sion of error and in the promotion of reformation. The
Synod is charged with deliberate misrepresentation, for it
appears that an effort was made to give the impression of
adhering to the Confession of Faith while actually repudiat-
ing its doctrine. The design of the Confession (Chapter XXIII,
Section 3) was to define the duty of the civil magistrate in
religious matters, after enumerating in the first part the
things to which his authority did not extend. By eliminating
the words "yet he hath authority" which preceded the definition
of the magistrate's duties and by substituting "by his own
advice and example" at the paragraph's conclusion, the Synod
had questioned the lawfulness of the civil establishments of
religion.

2. Bruce's Review

Another able spokesman for the Old Lights was Professor
Archibald Bruce in his book, A Review of the Proceedings of the
General Associate Synod and of Some Presbyteries. This treatise
did not present so clear and precise an exposition of the issues
involved as M'Crie's Statement. Written in the heat of the
author's controversy with Mr. Robert Culbertson of Leith, it is
polemical in nature. Mr. Bruce's primary purpose was to
chronicle the long and intricate proceedings against the pro-
testers and to reveal the various irregularities and discrepancies

1 Ibid., p. 85.
2 Ibid., pp. 85, 86.
3 Ibid., p. 86 (See also Narrative and Testimony, p. 198).
in the Synod's acts of deposition.

Speaking of Bruce's Review in his introduction to M'Crie's Statement, Professor George Smeaton wrote:

Though this work is too minute in matters of detail, and too full of the personalities of the controversy, it is replete with important statements, and will be read with pleasure and advantage by every one who takes national religion in earnest.¹

As Professor Bruce did not give a succinct statement of his sentiments in the Review, it is impossible to give a systematic study of its contents. Rather, an effort will be made to abstract certain important ideas that are dispersed throughout this four hundred and twenty-one page volume.

Mr. Bruce declared that the guilt for the breach in the Synod lay at the door of those who had introduced certain innovations into its standards. His opponents were accused of having departed from some of the important doctrines of the Confession of Faith and the Secession Testimony.² This was probably the first time in the annals of Protestantism that ministers had actually been deposed for adhering to the standards of their denomination.³

In as much as the Synod had altered its constitution, the protesters' declinature was warrantable and proper. Bruce argued:

A society, whether civil or ecclesiastical, that changes its laws, its terms of admission, its object, its means - becomes to all intents and purposes, a new society, though it may retain the same name.⁴

¹ Smeaton (Ed.), M'Crie's Statement (1871 Edition), pp.X, XI.
² Bruce's Review, pp. 8, 9.
³ Ibid., p. 10.
⁴ Ibid., p. 105.
A large portion of the Review is devoted to Bruce's controversy with Mr. Robert Culbertson. Bruce undertook to refute the charge that the Old Lights' political theory would issue in either an Erastian or Papal system. He argued for a mediating position between these two extremes. It is not necessary for the civil magistrate to be either "the head or the hangman of the church."\(^1\) Bruce accused Mr. Culbertson of a gross misinterpretation of the Secession Testimony and censured him in scathing terms, declaring that a person adhering to his sentiments ought never to have been permitted to minister to a Presbyterian congregation.\(^2\)

In this connection Bruce defended the principle of a national establishment. The settlement of a religion by law, or a royal edict or parliamentary act in its behalf, does not imply that the church is thereby deprived of its lawful authority. A civil government may warrantably settle affairs of this nature in consequence of the people's adoption of a particular profession; or it may ratify a confession of faith and a form of ecclesiastical government in order to distinguish one church and its ministers from another when the disposal of certain external privileges, property, and emoluments are concerned.\(^3\) It is absurd to maintain that a parliament acting in such matters makes it guilty of encroachment upon the freedom of

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 272.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 272.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 280.
Christ's Kingdom. The old Testimony not only takes a national religion for granted, but explicitly affirms it by adopting the Scots Confession and Books of Discipline.¹

Bruce's argument against the new Narrative and Testimony is summarized in this statement:

Thus the General Associate Synod have passed their Acts Rescissory against the whole of that civil reformation, and to a greater extent than the persecuting parliaments did, with this difference, that the latter rescinded it as a track of rebellion against the king, and an usurpation of his prerogative, while the former have done it under the pretence that the whole was an usurpation of Christ's supremacy, and an invasion of the rights of his spiritual kingdom.²

At this point it is necessary to summarize the principles of the Old Lights as they emerged from the writings of M'Crie and Bruce.

1. They recognized that there was an essential distinction between the church and the state. They rejected all Erastian tenets and the sinful encroachment of the civil authority in ecclesiastical affairs. However, in full consistency with this principle, they believed that the magistrate could be beneficially and lawfully employed to advance the Kingdom of Christ. It was his duty to suppress irreligion and blasphemy, to introduce the true religion into his realm, and to provide his people with the instruction and ordinances of the church.

2. The Reformation was considered to be a great national concern in which the church and state co-operated, and both the civil and ecclesiastical aspects of it were approved. The National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant were entered into by the church and state, and both of these institutions were equally bound by them.

¹ Ibid., p. 280.
² Ibid., p. 284.
3. The principle of an established religion was approved and defended. In normal circumstances it is the duty of the magistrate to give legal sanction to a church by ratifying its confession of faith and form of discipline and worship. Civil rulers may do these things without encroaching upon the business of the church or persecuting those who dissent from the establishment.

The New Light controversy was of more than transitory significance, for it involved the principle of national Christianity. Furthermore, the issues involved in this conflict were antecedent to the emergence of Voluntaryism in 1829.

Historians have disagreed as to which faction within the General Associate Synod adhered to the original doctrine of the Secession on Church and State. Grub maintained that the only offence of the minority led by Bruce and M'Crie was its steadfast loyalty to the principles for which the whole body had contended at one time. Scott concurred in this evaluation and argued that the protesters were deposed because of their refusal to alter their views along with the Synod. Professor George Smeaton declared that the members of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery rendered an important service to the entire Presbyterian Church by their clear and scriptural testimony to national Christianity.

M'Kerrow, although sympathetic with the views of the Synod, admitted that the sentence of deposition was probably too severe. He commended the Synod for its caution and deliberation in revising

---

its standards and its indulgence of the protesting ministers.  

M'Kerrow maintained that the principles contained in *Narrative and Testimony* of 1804 were not new to the Secession Church. This document merely gave a clearer and more explicit declaration to ideas that had already been embodied in official pronouncements. To substantiate his position, M'Kerrow cited a number of references from "Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery's Principles anent the present Civil Government." He quoted passages from this pamphlet which would appear to condemn any connection between the church and the state and to teach that the sole function of the magistrate was the care of the outward good of society. He also cited Mr. Adam Gib's paper against the petition to the King on the state of religion in the land in which he argued that Jesus was opposed to the use of the secular arm to promote His Kingdom. M'Kerrow admitted that the *Narrative and Testimony* did go beyond the teaching of the original Seceders on the subject of covenanting. Their refusal to blend the civil and the ecclesiastical in the Covenants was not based upon the imprpropriety of the procedure, but rather upon the peculiar circumstances in which they found themselves as a religious communion without official recognition. However, the General Associate

6 *Answers by the Associate Presbytery to Mr. Nairn*, p. 29 and p. 41.
Synod inserted no such qualifying phrase. This body appeared to think that in all circumstances covenanting was to be regarded as a religious duty.

Undoubtedly the General Associate Synod did carry to their logical conclusion certain principles that were at least implicit in the documents of the Secession Church. In order to accommodate its Testimony to its position as a non-established church, the Associate Presbytery altered its bond for the renewal of the covenants and re-defined the function of the magistrate. In 1804 the General Associate Synod accepted these modifications, not as a "modus vivendi" but as the norm. In its Narrative and Testimony this body explicitly declared that the Covenants were a purely religious obligation and that the magistrate was not to interfere in ecclesiastical matters. Professor G. D. Henderson has summarized this development in the Seceders' political theory in this manner: "Gradually, as was natural, they came to make a principle of their freedom from State connection, and to denounce all forms of Establishment." ¹

Principal John Macleod has defined the Scottish doctrine of Church and State in this manner:

The Scottish doctrine of Church and State is one that sets itself over against, on the one hand, that Erastian system which would make the government of the church but a department of civil management, and, on the other, the scheme of Indifferentism that aims at putting no difference by the nation as such between one form of religious profession and another.²

² Macleod, Scottish Theology, p. 45.
It was this historic doctrine of Church and State that the Constitutional Associate Presbytery sought to defend. Its position was consistent with that of the Church of Scotland as expounded in its standards. Furthermore, its doctrine of Church and State was in essential agreement with that of the original Seceders as stated in the Judicial Testimony and explained by Mr. William Wilson in his Defence of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland. While the members of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery vigorously defended the principle of a national establishment of religion, they equally opposed all Erastian tendencies.

During the twenty-one years of its existence the Constitutional Associate Presbytery increased to only eleven ministerial members. On 17th May, 1827 it united with the Synod of Protesters to form the Original Secession Synod.

---

1 Scott, Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church, p. 97.
2 Ibid., p. 120.
"Religion and government have a mutual relation, and a reciprocal dependence upon each other."

- Bruce, *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery*, C.W. 2 p. 4.
ARCHIBALD BRUCE: HIS VIEW OF CHURCH AND STATE

Archibald Bruce's most significant contribution to ecclesiastical thought was in the sphere of Church and State relationships. In his various publications he vigorously defended the Reformed doctrine of Church and State as it was formulated in the Scots Confession, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the other great creeds of the Reformation.

In the two preceding Chapters (V and VI) a survey has been made of the political thought of the Associate Synod and of the Anti-Burgher denomination. With this background it is possible to understand Bruce's concept of Church and State and to evaluate his position with reference to the principles of the original Seceders.

Reference has already been made to the fact that at one period in his life Bruce entertained reservations about the validity of an established religion. However, he emerged from this time of indecision confirmed in his loyalty to the principles of the Reformation and the Covenants. Henceforth, his views on Church and State were inflexible, and he resolutely opposed those who sought to revise the Testimony of the General Associate Synod.

It is necessary to compile Professor Bruce's teaching on

1 See Chapter I, pp. 10-12.
Church and State from a variety of books and pamphlets published over a considerable period of time. His first pronouncement on this subject was a sermon which he delivered before the General Associate Synod in 1778 when he was the retiring Moderator. The title of this address was "Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated," and the text was Matthew, XV, 13. In this discourse he enumerated the various evils existent in the church and then described the means to be employed for their elimination. Under the latter head he discussed the role of the civil magistrate with particular reference to the laws affecting the Roman Catholics.1 After the sermon Mr. William Moncrieff remarked: "It is well you could set the Confession of Faith between you and all challenge on that head."2 Mr. Bruce has commented that no member of the Synod, either publicly or privately, expressed any dissatisfaction with his interpretation of the religious duties of the magistrate.3

In subsequent years Bruce prepared a number of treatises on Church and State in which he gave a more thorough explication of the thesis that he had advanced in his Synodical sermon. Many of his writings were forged in the heat of controversy and are consequently highly polemical in nature. For example, there was his severe denunciation of the Reformed Presbytery for its anti-government sentiments and later his able refutation

1 Bruce's Review, pp. 206, 207.
2 Ibid., p. 207.
3 Ibid., p. 207.
of those who accused the Seceders of disloyalty.¹

Bruce's definitive work on Church and State was *A Historico-Politico-Ecclesiastical Dissertation on the Supremacy of Civil Powers in Matters of Religion*, published in 1802. This book represents his mature thinking on this subject, and it contains an amplification of ideas expressed previously. In this well documented volume he gives a historical survey of the relationship between civil and ecclesiastical authorities in Jewish, pagan, and Christian communities.

This chapter will consist of two major divisions - the Sphere of the Church and the Sphere of the State. Bruce was primarily concerned with the inter-relation of the civil and religious authorities, and all that he wrote about these two institutions must be assessed from this perspective. He did not attempt to formulate a complete Ecclesiology.

In his discussion of the church he fails to expound his view of the Sacraments.

A. The Sphere of the Church

1. The Origin and Nature of the Church

In his discussion of the origin of the church Bruce was careful to stress its continuity from the Old Testament period.² Although true religion has always been in substance the same, and although the church in every age has had the same essential characteristics, yet it has greatly varied with respect to its

---

¹ See *The Principal Difference Between the Religious Principles of Those Commonly Called the Anti-Government Party and of Other Presbyterians*, (C.W. 5) and *A Brief Statement and Declaration of the Genuine Principles of the Seceders Respecting Civil Government*, (C.W. 3) (Hereinafter referred to as The Principal Difference and Genuine Principles).

² Bruce, *A Historico-Politico-Ecclesiastical Dissertation on*
external constitution and form of administration. 1 Three distinct eras may be delineated in its history - pre-Mosaic, under the law, and after the advent of the Messiah. 2 The Christian church, or the Kingdom of Heaven, in its last and most perfect form dates its commencement from the reign of Christ. 3 The pattern of its constitution is not to be found in the law of nature, in the form and government of worldly kingdoms, nor in the divine institutions of the Jews. 4 As it was founded on the person and mediation of Christ, so it received its peculiar form, its laws, ordinances, and privileges from His own authority before He ascended or by that of His inspired apostles after that event. All that pertains to its constitution and administration was divinely appointed in the beginning and was intended to be a perfect and perpetual establishment. 5

Various descriptions are given of the church which are all indicative of some aspect of its nature.

This church, to denote its nature, its independence, and its distinction from human empires, is denominated the kingdom of heaven; the house, the city, or kingdom of God, - of his Son, or - of his Christ. 6

In the Bible a great variety of metaphors from the world of nature is employed to describe the church. It is spoken of as a

vineyard, a garden, or a farm. These figures of speech imply that the church is God's special property, that He has taken it under His peculiar care and bestowed much pains in its cultivation, and that He has purchased it with the blood of His Son.

Inherent in Bruce's concept of the nature of the church was a strong emphasis upon the communion of the saints and the unity of Christ's body.

It is altogether vain for people to think that they can successfully promote a public cause in an individual capacity severed from all fellowship with a community. It is much the same as if a soldier should desert his rank, reject all subjection to martial order and discipline, and imagine himself able to encounter and defeat the enemy. The faith delivered to the saints was not entrusted to individuals but lodged with those who were organized into one body, His church. No one can discharge his Christian responsibility except by associating with other faithful men.

Bruce deplored the many shameful divisions in the church, and he was an ardent exponent of Christian unity despite the fact that he belonged to a small splinter group of the Secession. The unity of the church has its basis in the relationship that all Christians have to their common Head and Savior.

1 Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions In the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, p. 39).
2 Ibid., p. 40.
3 Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, p. 130).
4 Ibid., p. 131.
5 Bruce, Practical Discourses, pp. 198, 199.
In him they are all elected, represented, redeemed by
the same offering, called, and gathered into one; by
him they are all animated, governed, and supplied; -
in him they are all justified, blessed, and glorified. 1
This unity which Christians have with one another in Christ is
not limited by the barriers of time or space or by differences
in circumstances or attainments. 2

Such as have associated together to promote the cause of
God are strictly bound to maintain unity and harmony among
themselves and to guard against all unseemly contentions and
pernicious divisions. 3 The public interests of the church
cannot be expected to flourish and advance when there is a
spirit of discord among its members. 4

And nothing is more contrary to the gospel than implac¬
able animosities, personal quarrels and resentments, a
schismatical spirit, and causeless divisions; such as
too often abound even under the specious pretext of
conscience and singular faithfulness. 5

Bruce was careful to assert that some secessions
are necessary in order to preserve the purity of the church.
Faithful Christians cannot maintain fellowship with those who
depart from the terms of communion authorized by Christ, who
refuse to submit to His discipline, or who display a spirit
of pride, bigotry, or tyranny. 6 Following this line of
argument he sought to vindicate the existence of his own
denomination. The Associate Synod was a small remnant which

1 Ibid., p. 199.
2 Ibid., p. 199.
3 Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, pp. 175, 176).
4 Ibid., p. 176.
5 Ibid., p. 178.
6 Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated,
(C.W. 3, p. 56).
was organized to preserve the ancient religion of Scotland and to oppose civil and ecclesiastical despotism. Only when the cause of Christ is jeopardized is a separation from a national church justifiable. Were any to disrupt the peace and unity of the church for any other motive, they would deserve to be called "the trouble of Israel." 2

2. The Headship of Christ Over the Church

Archibald Bruce abhorred any suggestion of Erastianism; and, consequently, the spiritual freedom of the church was a distinctive emphasis in all of his writings.

Since the church did not derive its origin either from the will of men, the power of rulers, or from a voluntary association of individuals, so it is not to be brought under the subjection of a temporal lord or potentate. Its supreme Judge, Lawgiver, and King is Christ. 3

It is a capital offence against the laws and constitution of the church to exalt any mortal to a position of supremacy in it. 4 Bruce considered this to be the case in England, and he bitterly denounced the Erastianism of its Constitution.

What is called the Church is but a limb of the political constitution. The ecclesiastical laws and canons are but the ordinances of kings, and parliaments. The clergy with their courts, are but the royal deputies, appointed in his name, acting by virtue of his commission, and responsible to him. The members of such a Church have one common pastor and bishop of souls, and that is the reigning prince. 5

---

1 Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, pp. 149, 150).
2 Ibid., p. 152.
4 Ibid., p. 25.
5 Ibid., p. 25.
After this vehement denunciation of the ecclesiastical policies of Henry VIII, Bruce gave a summary of the restrictions placed upon the church by his successors (e.g., invasion of freedom of the pulpit, enforced use of the Prayer Book in Scotland, and religious persecutions).  

In opposition to this view, the Presbyterians of North Britain profess as an article of their faith that there is no other Head or King of the church but Jesus Christ.

They scruple not to call the supremacy of any mortal over the church, a sacrilegious usurpation, and to say, that the church which derives her constitution, offices, and power from such a head, is in so far no church of Christ.

Bruce argued that both Scripture and the great majority of Protestant churches concur in this emphasis upon the headship of Christ. He quoted with favor Ambrose who said: "The emperor is in the church, not above it." Furthermore, Scottish Presbyterians agree with Calvin's judgment: "They were unadvised people and blasphemers who raised King Henry VIII, so far as to call him the Head of the Church."

Bruce lamented the fact that the Church of Scotland, despite its historic emphasis upon the supremacy of Christ over it, had become tainted with Erastianism. Increasingly it had become subservient to the state, for it accepted the Sacramental Test and patronage. Many of its ministers, instead of warning the nation of public errors and dangers, were disposed to receive

---

1 See Ibid., pp. 36-46.
2 [Bruce], Reflections on Freedom of Writing, (C.W. 3, p. 100).
3 Ibid., p. 100.
their mandates from the civil administration.¹

3. The Authority of the Church

Since Christ is the sole King and Lawgiver of the church, He has chosen to delegate spiritual authority into the hands of its office-bearers. It is necessary to examine now the nature of the church's power, the peculiar privileges that accrue to it as a result of its spiritual independence, and finally its exercise of discipline.

The church's authority is purely of a spiritual nature. It is destitute of all worldly power for injuring the persons of men or the secular interests of nations.² It is primarily through the medium of influence that its impact is to be made upon society.³

The church exercises its peculiar authority quite independent of the civil magistrate. It is most essential to liberty and wise legislation that the two powers be kept perfectly distinct, for they have different areas of responsibility.⁴ It is the express doctrine of the Confession of Faith that Christ has appointed a government for his church separate from the civil magistrate.⁵ A ruler is not to administer the Word or Sacraments or "the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven."⁶

Bruce then discussed at considerable length the implications of this spiritual independence for the church.

¹ [Bruce], A Serious View of the Remarkable Providences of the Times, (C.W. 5, p. 43).
² Bruce, A Historical Dissertation, (C.W. 5, p. 144*).
³ Ibid., p. 144.
⁴ [Bruce], Annus Secularis, (C.W. 1, p. 10).
⁵ Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. XXX, Sect. 1.
⁶ Ibid., Ch. XXIII, Sect. 3.
(Note: There is a duplication of pagination in A Historical Account. An asterisk denotes the duplicate page).
1. **Right to Determine its Doctrine and Worship.** It is an encroachment upon the spiritual freedom of the church if the state prescribes the terms of admission into it.¹ In this connection Bruce attacked the procedure of the Revolution Parliament in ratifying a system of faith, worship, and government for the Church of Scotland. He accused it of exercising a kind of ecclesiastical supremacy, for it approved the Westminster Confession of Faith without consulting church bodies or referring to the former acts of the Assemblies and Parliaments relating to this document.² He objected particularly to the Parliament's failure to recognize the Act of the Assembly of 1647 which qualified the right of the civil magistrate to convene ecclesiastical courts.³

It is a duty incumbent upon all Presbyterians to contend for the right of the church, through its ministers and courts, to determine matters relating to religion.⁴ Ecclesiastical synods and councils are "to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his church..."⁵

The church also has an intrinsic right to determine its own worship. When a state arbitrarily appoints fasts and thanksgivings, it is assuming a power which properly belongs to ecclesiastical courts according to Presbyterian principles.⁶ To permit

---

² [Bruce], *Annus Secularis*, (C.W. 1, pp. 228, 229).
³ Bruce, *A Historical Dissertation*, (C.W. 5, p. 100*).
⁴ [Bruce], *A Serious View*, (C.W. 5, p. 26).
⁵ Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. XXXI, Sect. 3.
a privy council to intervene on this point is to grant it
licence to meddle in the church's acts of religious worship.
Whenever the church complies with edicts from the state on the
subject of special days, it relinquishes one of its spiritual
privileges.  

In times of national emergency it is permissible for the
civil government to recommend to the church its concurrence in
the observance of a special day of thanksgiving or fasting.  
The state might intervene directly on such occasions if there
is no regularly constituted church authority in the land.  
However, this procedure must never be regarded as an exclusive
right of the magistrate's office.  To concede this would be
to give the civil administration an opportunity of imposing its
views on the whole church.

2. Liberty of Assembly.  It is essential to the freedom and
independence of every society that it have the liberty to assemble
whenever it is deemed necessary.  This right, according to the
design and laws of the church, includes not only the power of
coming together for public instruction and worship but also the
privilege of convening in courts to deliberate upon ecclesiastical
affairs.  Freedom in both of these respects has been claimed
and exercised by the church in the best periods of its history.

1 Bruce, A Serious View, (C.W. 5, pp. 26, 27).
3 [Bruce], Annus Secularis, (C.W. 1, p. 10).
4 Ibid., p. 10.
6 Ibid., p. 136.
Such assemblies may be lawfully held without waiting for the consent of civil rulers or even if approval be denied by them.\(^1\)

A negative power may not be exercised by the crown over the proceedings of a church court, nor is civil ratification necessary to give them a binding force as ecclesiastical deeds.\(^2\)

In this connection Bruce denounced the Revolution Settlement as Erastian, for it permitted the King to convene and dissolve the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.\(^3\)

Liberty of assembly is a right that should be extended even to the religious dissenters of Scotland (e.g., the Seeders).\(^4\)

3. **Election of its Office-Bearers.** The society, be it civil or religious, that has no voice in appointing those who exercise authority over it can no longer be considered independent.\(^5\)

The imposition of civil oaths and tests as a qualification for ecclesiastical offices is a violation of Presbyterian principles.\(^6\)

In this connection Bruce condemned patronage as an invasion of ecclesiastical independence and as the subordination of spiritual interests to secular dominion. It subverts little by little the right of popular election, the great support of an independent and useful ministry.\(^7\)

Patronage is a vestige of Romanism, and the practice of it is without warrant either in the

---

2 *Bruce*, *A Serious View*, (C.W. 5, p. 80).
Word of God or in primitive Christianity.\(^1\) It is prejudicial to the interests of religion, for it has the tendency to introduce and promote abuses.\(^2\) Patronage interferes with the right of a Presbyterian court to judge the character and call of its ministers and to direct all matters relating to their administration; it brings the church increasingly under the domination of the state; and it encourages ecclesiastical tyranny and the dissemination of corrupt doctrine.\(^3\) Bruce was particularly critical of the Church of Scotland because of its failure to prevent the operation of the law of patronage. He felt that its ministers had become the principal instruments of this grievous oppression and had thereby surrendered the rights for which the church had contended in the past.\(^4\) Bruce feared that their conduct would discredit the idea of an establishment in the eyes of the people.\(^5\)

4. Ministerial Freedom. When clergymen are pressed into the service of the state and are employed by it to publish criminal and civil laws, to read edicts from the pulpit that do not pertain to the business of the church, or to assist in the enrolment of soldiers, their freedom may be said to be invaded and their office degraded.\(^6\) Ministers of the gospel, by virtue of their positions, are no more obligated to perform public duties than any other class of citizens. Their services are appropriated solely to

---

\(^1\) Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions In the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, pp. 114, 115).

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 114.

\(^3\) Bruce, A Historical Dissertation, (C.W. 5, pp. 107, 108).

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 107.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 108.

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 109.
Christ and His church.¹

Though ministers, as men and subjects, are under the control of the laws of every commonwealth, equally with others, and owe all external homage to princes, yet are they not subordinate to them in their office, either as courts or individuals; they need not therefore to depend on royal edicts for their instructions, or to render their acts and administrations valid.²

Even in matters where it is lawful for the church and state to co-operate such as the collection of public charities, the suppression of vice, or the prosecution of scandals, care should be taken in the manner of procedure in order to maintain the distinct and independent jurisdictions of the two societies. In such cases the church should retain and exercise its right of ascertaining whether or not these acts or occasional orders communicated to it by the state are both in matter and manner consistent with ecclesiastical laws and liberties and with the best interests of religion.³

Ministerial freedom involves the right of clergymen to declare the whole counsel of God, to apply His word to all sorts of persons and actions, and to testify against public and private corruption.⁴ They are to endeavor to repress all ungodly and offensive practices and to enforce conformity to the laws of Christ's Kingdom.⁵ When ministers assemble as an ecclesiastical court, they are not only to deliberate upon the state of their

¹ Ibid., p. 109.
² [Bruce], Annus Secularis, (C.W. 1, p. 11).
⁴ Ibid., p. 139.
⁵ Ibid., p. 139.
congregations, but they are also to testify against public sins and dangers and to contend for a reformation.¹ If the church is to fulfil its duty to the state, ecclesiastical courts must be exempt from the restrictions imposed upon other voluntary societies.²

Ministers should be free to choose any subject that they desire to discourse upon and to apply its meaning without fear of intimidation.³ Freedom of the pulpit is infringed upon if clergymen are permitted to discuss only those topics and doctrines which are sanctioned by the civil administration. This is to reduce ministers to the status of mere heralds of the state.⁴

It is mockery for ministers with their congregations to convene for public prayer and confession without taking under serious consideration "any grievance in church or state" or without daring to utter a single syllable against wickedness existing either in high or low places.

For spiritual watchmen to pretend to give public warning of evil and danger wherever they discern it, and yet to shut their mouths as to these that may be the most obvious, the most prevalent, the greatest, and most threatening, because great men or rulers may have some concern in them, would be the basest treachery.⁵

Bruce was very critical of the Sedition and Treason Acts, for he felt that they encroached upon certain liberties of the

1 Ibid., p. 139.
2 Ibid., p. 139.
3 Ibid., p. 141.
4 Ibid., p. 141.
5 Ibid., pp. 141, 142.
church (e.g., right of assembly and pulpit freedom). The former prohibited a meeting of more than fifty persons to deliberate upon any grievance in church or state unless advertised before hand. Furthermore, it gave any two justices the right to disperse any gathering that they considered dangerous. According to the terms of the Treason Act anyone who wrote or preached against the present civil government was liable to punishment. Bruce was fearful that these restrictive measures might be applied to the Seceders who had not been accorded legal recognition by the civil government.

Another essential branch of ecclesiastical liberty is the exemption of clergymen from punishment by the civil government for anything done or said in the immediate execution of their spiritual duties. The church and not the state has jurisdiction over ministers who are guilty of any misconduct in office, whether in doctrine, in the administration of the Sacraments, or in discipline. However, this is not to be interpreted as granting a clergyman immunity from the civil law if he commits an ordinary crime against society.

The Church’s Exercise of its Authority. It is through the medium of discipline that the church exercises the spiritual powers committed unto it by Jesus Christ.

Discipline is one of the ordinances of Christ and is essential to the preservation of His church in a corrupt world. He has

1 Ibid., p. 140.
2 Ibid., p. 141.
3 Ibid., p. 143.
4 Ibid., p. 143.
5 Ibid., pp. 143, 144.
6 Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, p. 88).
given power to His servants to bind and loose on earth, to admit into or cast out from the visible communion of saints, to remove offences, and to provide remedies for public disorders and dangers.¹ The church is not only to condemn false and corrupt practices but to inflict censures upon those who are chargeable with them.² This method of discipline is scriptural, for it was practised by the Apostle Paul. In his letters to the Galatians and Corinthians he admonished his readers to excommunicate those who troubled them with novel schemes.³ Discipline, therefore, ought still to attend and support ministerial teaching and admonition.⁴

It is the duty of ministers to contend for the truth and to promote the purity of religion by the vigorous and impartial administration of discipline. They are to prohibit whatever subverts the peace of the church or taints the purity of its doctrine.⁵

Where a scriptural discipline has been settled and maintained, the church has been blessed with purity and uniformity. Where it is lacking, errors are prevalent, for every man does that which is right in his own eyes.⁶ Nevertheless, the abuse of discipline has often proved no less pernicious than its total neglect.⁷

When it has been employed to patronize error, protect the guilty

¹ Ibid., p. 88.
² Ibid., p. 88.
³ Ibid., p. 89.
⁴ Ibid., p. 89.
⁵ Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, p. 50).
⁶ Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 2, p. 89).
⁷ Ibid., p. 89.
from censure, or restrain freedom, the true purpose of discipline has been perverted.  

4. The Government and Constitution of the Church

The dominion or headship of Christ over the church extends also to its constitution and administration. A form of government is as essential to the Kingdom of Christ, visibly constituted in the world, as its faith and worship.

Properly speaking, it is the government or external polity of the church that gives it the form of a city, a kingdom, or an organic body. It must therefore form one of the peculiar marks of the true church and one of its principal distinctions from the world.

God has not left the modeling of His church in the hands of erring princes and churchmen.

Everything requisite to the due government and order of Christ's church, may be found, either expressly declared in Scripture, or may be collected from the directions and precedents contained in it.

This applies to the church's faith, worship, and manner of service. Likewise, the several offices to be performed in it are specified along with the qualifications and powers of those who are to discharge them.

1 Ibid., pp. 89, 90.
3 Ibid., p. 22.
4 Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, p. 55).
5 Ibid., p. 41.
6 Ibid., p. 55.
The Presbyterian form of government has the merit of being drawn immediately from the Scriptures; therefore, it is the divinely appointed system.¹

5. The Church and State

It is the invariable principle of Presbyterianism that temporal and spiritual powers are totally distinct and ought never to be lodged in the same hands.² This axiom, if properly understood and practised, will prove to be a barrier against tyrannical oppression either from one or the other.³

When Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," he clearly taught that His church, though in the world, was completely different from all other institutions in it.⁴ This does not preclude the fact that the church and other societies have certain things in common. The authority in both may have the same objects, and they may also render reciprocal acts and duties to each other. However, none of these things are inconsistent with their formal distinction, but rather suppose it.⁵ The proper relationship between the church and the state was described in this manner:

¹ [Bruce], The Interest and Claims of the Church and Nation of Scotland in the Settlement of Religion in India, (C.W. 5, p. 39). Note: Professor Bruce does not undertake a discussion of the Presbyterian form of church government in any of his publications.
² Bruce, A Historical Dissertation, (C.W. 5, pp. 59, 60).
³ Ibid., p. 60.
⁴ Ibid., p. 22.
⁵ Ibid., p. 23.
When following their proper line, and keeping within their proper sphere, they can never jar or impede one another by interference: like two straight and parallel lines, they can never meet, or be confounded together.

It is difficult to preserve always the due distinction between the civil and ecclesiastical states and the rights and privileges belonging to each. Powers which exist together in the same time and place and are employed about the same objects, even though in a different manner, will be in great danger of interference. Rivalship and mutual jealousies may be expected to arise between them. Since the magistrate became Christian, these mutual struggles and usurpations have been almost unintermitting, and either one side or the other has exercised an undue superiority. Sometimes the ecclesiastical power has gained the ascendancy as under the Papacy, and on other occasions the state has assumed a supremacy and legislative authority in spiritual matters. Despite the dangers of these two extremes, a church and a commonwealth may have certain connections and may perform mutual duties to each other without losing their distinctive characteristics or without being absurdly blended together in one heterogeneous constitution.

Although the church and the state are essentially different, yet neither institution can be well maintained or effectually promoted without the assistance of the other. Bruce stated

1 Ibid., p. 23.
2 Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, p. 40).
3 Ibid., p. 40.
4 Ibid., p. 40.
5 Ibid., p. 41.
his own view of this relationship in this manner:

Religion and government have a mutual relation, and a reciprocal dependence upon each other. They are naturally designed and fitted for the strictest union, and the closest alliance; and by their union, like allies, they mutually strengthen one another. Hence religion must ever deserve to be attended to as a primary object of legislation; the public defence and support of it, becomes a principal political duty, and must make a fundamental law in every well-regulated state.  

In his book *A Historico-Politico-Ecclesiastical Dissertation on the Supremacy of Civil Powers in Matters of Religion* Bruce gives a detailed historical survey of the relationship between church and state. It is his thesis that from the very beginning of human society there has been a close connection between these two institutions. He seeks to prove his argument with illustrations from both the Jewish and pagan communities.

Under the ancient patriarchal system there was no clearly defined priestly caste. 2 It would appear that oblations and offerings were made by the heads of families, the founders of cities, or others who occupied place of authority. 3 After Sinai the church of God assumed a more regular and settled form as there was the transition from a patriarchal state to a national establishment. 4 A regular priesthood was selected and ordained, and civil and ceremonial laws were dictated by God. 5 Bruce argued against those who would abolish all distinctions between

1 [Bruce], *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery*, (C.W. 2, pp. 4, 5).
3 Ibid., pp. 4, 5.
4 Ibid., p. 5.
5 Ibid., p. 6.
the several parts of this complex system and thereby make
court and state among the Jews absolutely one and the same.¹
Although there was a close connection between the political
and ecclesiastical constitutions in Judea, and although the
laws belonging to each had the same divine Author, yet a dis¬
tinction, founded in the nature of things, still remained.²
In the Jewish system there is no warrant for the supremacy of
civil magistrate in religious matters.³ Kings were not "ex
officīo" either prophets or priests in the church of God.⁴
Priests owed nothing of their peculiar character or power to the
prince, for they were the Lord's immediate servants.⁵ The
sanctuary was made as inviolable to them as the palace and the
throne to the king.⁶ Rulers who attempted to impugn the
sanctity and authority of the priesthood were punished by God.
For example, King Uzziah was afflicted with leprosy because he
attempted to usurp the prerogatives of the priestly order.⁷

Upon the whole it may be concluded that the offices and
acts of the Jewish kings and magistrates still furnish an
imitable precedent for all who rule in a commonwealth. How¬
ever, any authority assumed by Hebrew princes, or any acts
performed by them with reference to religion that arose from the
peculiarities of their law, can never be intended for examples

¹ Ibid., p. 8.
² Ibid., p. 9.
³ Ibid., p. 10.
⁴ Ibid., p. 10.
⁵ Ibid., p. 11.
⁶ Ibid., p. 11.
⁷ Ibid., p. 11.
to ordinary rulers in other nations. With good reason the Scottish nation repudiated the doctrine of the English canons which stated "that the King's Majesty had the same authority in causes ecclesiastical that the godly kings had among the Jews, or the Christian emperors in the primitive church."2

In ancient pagan cultures there was usually an affinity between civil and religious polity. No system of politics was ever recommended by one of the ancient philosophers without due regard for sacred rites and the duty of the magistrate to have them properly observed.3 Plutarch taught that it would be easier to build a city without foundation than to frame or support a government without belief in a deity.4 In ancient Egypt, Greece and Syria provisions were made for supporting sacrifices, priests, and temples.5 In heathen nations there was the propensity to combine sacred and secular offices and to subordinate the former to the latter.6 The union of civil and religious supremacy is exemplified in a most striking manner in the history and constitution of the Mohammedan empire. The successors of the prophet were considered to be the occupants of a sacred rather than a secular office.7

The practice of pagan communities, therefore, does not

---

1 Ibid., p. 13.
2 Ibid., p. 13.
3 Ibid., p. 15.
4 Ibid., p. 15.
5 Ibid., p. 16.
6 Ibid., p. 17.
7 Ibid., p. 18.
afford a precedent for the settlement of Church and State affairs in a Christian nation.¹

Bruce concluded his survey of Church and State relations in early Jewish and pagan societies with this statement:

From this summary view of the sentiments, and practices, that have been generally prevalent among the nations, refined and barbarous, it may be collected, that religion has been accounted an object of importance to civil government, and the interests of society...²

The Presbyterian Concept of an Established Religion. A medium must be found between an Erastian supremacy and a sectarian anarchy, a tyrannical slavery, and lawless licentiousness, an unlimited toleration and persecution for conscience’s sake.³

To secure and favor all religions alike is to protect and support none. It would be a great disservice to Christianity to give the same status to a Jewish synagogue as to a Protestant Church or to recognize the Bible and the Koran as equally sacred.⁴ Bruce therefore attacked the principle of Independency, for he felt that it opened the door to anarchy and endless schisms as well as permitting the spread of error, idolatry, and superstition.⁵

A government that makes no settlement of religion is entirely defective and inadequate. To grant all religions equal sanction under the law is a virtual denial of the truth of Christianity.⁶ There can be no diversity and multiplicity in

¹ Ibid., p. 19.
² Ibid., p. 19.
³ Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, p. 41).
⁴ Ibid., p. 41.
⁵ Ibid., p. 42.
⁶ Ibid., p. 44.
things divinely revealed and settled.\textsuperscript{1}

The settlement of a national religion does not require infallible knowledge on the part of the civil magistrate.\textsuperscript{2} The doctrines of Christianity are unalterably established by divine authority, so it is the ruler's duty: "Not to invent or create; not to change or innovate, but to approve, recommend, support, defend, and by all habile methods to promote them."\textsuperscript{3}

Presbyterians do not consider it inconsistent either with good policy or Christian liberty to have some particular system publicly defined, approved, and protected which may be designated the national religion.\textsuperscript{4} They do not oppose all laws and provisions which require conformity to the Established Church by those who occupy important public offices.\textsuperscript{5} In certain circumstances it may be not only lawful, but also wise to settle religious tests which exclude dissenters from the external advantages of the national religion. The enforcement of such restrictions is not always absolutely necessary, and to insist upon their use in all places and circumstances may be prejudicial to the best interests of religion.\textsuperscript{6} In the settlement of a national religion the utmost care and caution must be taken to insure that nothing is done to abridge the dissenters' liberty of conscience.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., pp. 44, 45.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 45.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p. 46.
\textsuperscript{4} Bruce, A Historical Dissertation, (C.W. 5, p. 57).
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 57.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 57.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., pp. 57, 58.
All compulsion in matters of mere religion is absolutely unlawful.\(^1\) Coercive measures may be properly applied only when the good of society requires it.\(^2\) Civil sanctions are not the business of the church but belong only to the civil rulers.\(^3\) Clergymen, rather than urging the civil powers to add to the rigor of such laws, should plead for mildness, forbearance, and moderation in the use of them.\(^4\) Nevertheless, Presbyterians do not consider it persecution to suppress a religious society which seeks to propagate its faith by force or other unlawful methods.\(^5\)

Such are the general sentiments of modern Presbyterians in Scotland. If their ancestors exceeded the limits expressed here, they do not consider themselves obliged to imitate them.\(^6\) If Presbyterianism were to be adopted by the British legislature and publicly established throughout the empire, its adherents would not seek to re-introduce the penal laws of a former unsettled period.\(^7\) They would advocate the use of such statutes only if similar circumstances arose in the church and nation.\(^8\)

The Christian’s Attitude toward the State.

1. Obedience to the civil magistrate in lawful commands. True religion and loyalty are inseparable. The precepts of fearing

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 58.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 58.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 58.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 58.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 58.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 58.
\(^7\) Ibid., pp. 58, 59.
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 59.
God and honoring the king are essential parts of the moral law. Christians, though called to the highest freedom in Christ, are not thereby released from the common obligations of other men. It is their moral duty to obey the laws of the state, to pay tribute to it, and to defend and pray for it.

Obedience to a legally constituted civil government is not contingent upon the personal character or the religious qualifications of the magistrate. Neither do evils in the constitution affect the principle of submission. They only extend the limitations of obedience and enforce more strongly the duty of attempting a reformation.

Although the Protestant Reformation was primarily concerned with the restoration of Christianity to its original purity, it also tended to enhance the rights of princes which had long been violated by Rome’s authority. With unanimity the Reformers opposed papal encroachments on civil power, the exemption of certain classes of men from the law, and obedience to a foreign head who claimed the right to tax his subjects and to depose princes at his pleasure. On the other hand, the Reformers equally denounced the Anabaptists and other extremists who expressed anti-government sentiments. Although the Reformers clearly

1 [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 71).
2 Bruce, Genuine Principles, (C.W. 3, p. 8).
3 [Bruce], The Principal Difference, (C.W. 5, p. 20).
4 [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 72).
5 [Bruce], The Principal Difference, (C.W. 5, pp. 20, 21).
6 Bruce, Genuine Principles, (C.W. 3, p. 8).
7 Ibid., p. 8.
8 Ibid., p. 8.
defined the limits of obedience and authority, they taught subjection even to rulers who were inimical to their religion. Their public apologies and confessions, as well as their private writings, contain assertions sufficiently explicit and strong on these points.

Bruce argued that the Secession Church was in agreement with the Reformers on the subject of obedience to the civil magistrate. Its principles were clearly enunciated in "The Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery's Principles anent the Present Civil Government." In this document the Seceders declared that all citizens of a nation, despite differences in religion, were under an obligation from God to obey the rulers appointed over them. This doctrine was to be applied to the present British government in spite of the defective aspects of its Constitution. Mr. Thomas Nairn, because of his failure to comply with these principles, was expelled from the fellowship of the Associate Presbytery.

It is, therefore, unjust to accuse the Seceders of a fondness for innovation either in politics or religion. They had not adopted theories that tended to disturb the order of society. In the main their views concurred with those of the Reformers who endeavored to settle the authority of rulers on a firm basis.

1 Ibid., p. 9.
2 Ibid., p. 9.
3 Ibid., p. 9.
5 Ibid., p. 13.
6 Ibid., p. 10.
7 Ibid., p. 14.
In an effort to substantiate this contention Bruce appealed to the various creeds of the Reformation. He quoted with approval the Scots Confession (1560), the Second Helvetic Confession (1556), and the Gallican Confession (1559) - all of which recognized the divine origin of the civil powers and the duty of obedience to them.¹

Bruce admitted that the Seceders did qualify their obedience to the civil government in certain respects. For example, they refused to take oaths of allegiance because they held that certain aspects of the British Constitution were opposed to the principles of true Presbyterians.² They particularly objected to the ecclesiastical supremacy annexed to the crown, the admission of the Lords Spiritual into the legislature, and the legal establishment of prelacy.³ According to the Seceders' interpretation, to engage in an oath of allegiance would be to express approval of the present Constitution and thereby to abrogate the Covenants in which they had pledged to promote a reformation in the land.⁴

2. Critic of the State and Advocate of Social Reform. Bruce placed a strong emphasis upon the Christian's social responsibility. There are many who scarcely have any idea of a community or the duties that they owe to it. Provided that they can sit unmolested "under their vine and under their fig tree," they adopt

¹ Ibid., pp. 14, 15.
² [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 68).
³ Ibid., pp. 68, 69.
⁴ Ibid., p. 68.
an attitude of complete indifference toward the evils of society.\(^1\) Such people teach that a social concern is inconsistent with personal godliness. They would have it believed that the demonstration of a public spirit is foreign to the religious life, because it diverts the Christian from a concern with his own salvation.\(^2\) This attitude was condemned in strong terms.

That sort of Christianity, and those devotional exercises and experiences, which exclude attention to the state of Christ's kingdom without a man, and confine it entirely to a kingdom of God within him, must flow from another spirit than that of Christ.\(^3\)

Although a religious society as such may have no interest in promoting civil reform, yet to support it when needful is the duty of all organizations.\(^4\) Religion, instead of restraining people from such endeavors, should encourage them to be more zealous in the eradication of public evils.\(^5\) The church is not departing from the line of ecclesiastical duty when it denounces the errors in a political constitution or condemns the conduct of those in public offices.\(^6\) The church and its ministers are to apply the law of God to all persons, public as well as private, civil as well as religious, and to criticize in them what is contrary to that law.\(^7\) Whenever the church makes a pronouncement on a political, commercial, or military

---

\(^1\) Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, p. 70).
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 97.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 98.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 31.
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 51.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 31.
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 31.
matter, it speaks from a religious viewpoint and to a spiritual end. The concern of ecclesiastical and civil authorities about the same objects does not necessarily imply a competition of jurisdiction.

It is the duty of the church and its members to denounce political corruption - the sale of places of trust, the bribery of public officials, and the disregard of oaths. The church should denounce those evils that are a sin against humanity - the African slave trade, the indifference of the wealthy to the needs of the poor, and the unwise expenditure of public funds. Finally, it should testify against those things that tend to corrupt public morals - the theatre, gambling, dancing and drunkenness.

When rulers neglect their duties, or when a nation is guilty of religious apostasy, it is incumbent upon every class of subjects to promote a reformation in church and state by every means competent to them. This is not to be accomplished by seeking to overthrow a legally constituted government. Rather by instruction, example, prayer, religious contending, and dutiful applications to those in authority are the faithful to achieve their end. They are not to go to the dangerous

---

1 Ibid., pp. 31, 32.
2 Ibid., p. 32.
3 Ibid., p. 51.
4 [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 40).
5 Ibid., p. 40.
6 Ibid., p. 76.
7 Ibid., p. 76.
extreme of propagating religion by offensive arms or of imposing a reformation on a reluctant land.¹

The Right to Oppose the State. The doctrine of resistance and of the deposition of civil rulers is to be taught with great care.² Whenever anything of this kind has been introduced, it has always been accompanied with limitations and cautions lest it encourage a spirit of rebellion.³ The Seceders had no intention of applying this principle to the legal government which had been established in Great Britain for over one hundred years.⁴

When a government degenerates into a habitual tyranny, or when princes refuse to fulfil their obligations, then they may be set aside and their authority disowned.⁵ Lest their teaching be misunderstood, the Seceders were careful to define what they meant by habitual tyranny. To clarify their position Bruce quoted an excerpt from "The Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery's Principles anent the present Civil Government."

Again, in order to render one an habitual tyrant, it is, at least, necessary that he leave ruling by just laws; and that he be engaged in war against the lives, or invading and overthrowing the avowed liberties and privileges of the nation, civil and religious; or all of these: As was the case in persecuting times before the Revolution.⁶

The conduct of the Covenanters at Pentland and Bothwell was

¹ Ibid., p. 76.
³ Ibid., p. 20.
⁴ Ibid., p. 19.
⁵ Ibid., p. 20.
justifiable because of the tyrannical oppressions of Charles II (e.g., despotic exercise of his power and religious persecu-
tions).¹

Not only were they tyrannically imposed upon, to give express acknowledgment of the then authority; but they were actually cast out from under the wings of all Government, denied all benefit of law, and devoted unto destruction: So that they by no means proceeded ultero-
neously in their rejecting of the Civil Government.²

The Seceders recognize and testify against the errors in the present Constitution. Nevertheless, they do not consider them to be of such a nature as to invalidate dutiful subjection to the civil magistrate in lawful commands.³ Their situation, therefore, is not the same as that of their Covenanting fore-
bears.⁴

B. The Sphere of the State

1. The Origin of the Civil Magistrate's Office

When it is asserted that a civil government is ordained by God for all nations, it does not mean either that the institution is founded in the revealed will of God or that anyone of its particular norms can claim to possess a superior and exclusive right of obedience.⁵ The magistrate's office has its basis in natural principles and the moral law which are prior to and more extensive than the Christian faith.⁶ It is absurd to assume that

---

¹ Ibid., p. 341.
² Ibid., p. 341.
³ Ibid., p. 291.
⁴ Ibid., p. 341.
it was appointed by the Mediator for His kingdom or that it has for its direct and proper object the supernatural things peculiar to the church.¹ It is not to be denied, however, that revelation explains and enforces the duties belonging to the magistrate's office.²

2. The Qualifications of the Civil Magistrate

It is the responsibility of all people to take care that the magistrates admitted to rule over them be both moral and religious.³ Hence, the duty of obedience is not dependent upon their personal character or their religious qualifications while they are in lawful possession of power and continue to exercise it with the consent of the governed.⁴ Hence, the heathen kings of old were as much entitled to obedience as the rulers of Judea.⁵ Paul, in Romans XIII: 1-7 enjoined subjection to the civil magistrate without making any reference to his moral or religious qualifications. The apostle is to be interpreted as teaching obedience in all things that properly fall within the compass of civil authority.⁶

The religious qualifications essential to the magistracy are those to be found in natural religion and therefore common to all men — a sense of Deity, reverence for an oath, and a regard for justice.⁷ There may be a knowledge of civil duties

¹ Ibid., p. 316.
² [Bruce], The Principal Difference, (C.W. 5, pp. 6, 7).
⁴ Ibid., p. 23.
⁵ Ibid., p. 23.
⁶ Ibid., pp. 23, 24.
⁷ [Bruce], The Principal Difference, (C.W. 5, p. 6).
and a fitness for the office even among those who have no Biblical revelation.¹

Bruce was unalterably opposed to the principle of making peculiar religious qualifications essential to the lawful power of the magistrate. His views on this subject were expressed most forcefully in a pamphlet which he wrote to refute the teaching of the Reformed Presbytery. This religious society claimed to be continuing the witness of the Covenanters, and it refused to recognize the Revolution Settlement because it was not established on the covenanted plan of the preceding period. As opposed to the Seceders, the Cameronians taught that the magistrate's office was authorized and instituted in the Bible and that God specified in His Word certain qualifications essential for those who ruled over Christians.² The Reformed Presbytery taught that only governors who possessed these attributes were to be voluntarily recognized and obeyed.³ Their attitude toward the British government is embodied in this quotation from their "Act, Declaration, and Testimony for the Whole of our Covenanted Reformation" (1761):

They reject whatever...does justly and in its own nature, imply a voluntary and real acknowledgment of the lawfulness and title and authority of an anti-scriptural, anti-covenanted, and Erastian government...⁴

Bruce declared that the main point of cleavage between his Synod and the Reformed Presbytery was whether or not the possession of scriptural and religious qualifications was essential

¹ Ibid., p. 6.
² Hutchison, Matthew, The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, p. 207.
³ Ibid., p. 208.
to the being of the magistracy. The Seceders admit that the possession of them is necessary to the "bene esse" or better discharging of the office, but they deny that religious qualifications have any thing to do with the very essence ("esse") or nature of civil authority. Just as a man may be a husband, a physician, or a philosopher without being a Christian, so may a person be a magistrate without embracing Christianity.

A person invested with a civil office may be of one religion and his people of another, and yet the relation between them be lawful and valid. There is no inconsistency in saying that a man may be a magistrate to Protestants, Presbyterians, and Covenanters while he is not himself a Christian if he answers the immediate end of his office which is the preservation of peace, order, and justice in the commonwealth. To deny this principle is to assert that a perfect uniformity in religion is absolutely necessary to constitute a lawful relationship between civil governors and their subjects.

With incisive logic Bruce undertook to expose the fallacies inherent in the various tenets of the Reformed Presbytery. It is absurd to maintain that the civil ruler must be of the same

1 [Bruce], The Principal Difference, (C.W. 5, p. 4).
2 Ibid., p. 4.
3 Ibid., pp. 4, 5.
4 Ibid., p. 5.
5 Ibid., p. 5.
6 Ibid., p. 5.
religion as his subjects, for this would mean that no government could be legally established until all people had agreed on a particular religious profession.¹ The practical consequence of this position would be the creation of as many civil communities as there are religious societies.² Each denomination, though a minority in the nation, would consider it necessary to choose one of its own number as the magistrate to whom its members would render obedience and honor.³ According to this plan in Judea in the time of the Apostles there should have been a Christian governor as well as a Roman and Jewish.⁴ Or in Britain at the present time there should be an Anglican, Presbyterian, Romanist, Cameronian, Independent, and Quaker King.⁵ Instead of uniting together into one civil body for the preservation of their lives and property, such a people would be so many distinct nations intermingled and hostile to one another.⁶ Such a principle must be considered inimical to good government.⁷

To assert that a particular religious profession is essential to the being of the magistrate leads to another absurdity. It would mean that a nation could not change its confession of faith or system of worship and discipline without choosing a new civil ruler.⁸ If the magistrate held to the old profession,

he would forfeit his right to govern even if he had otherwise been an excellent prince. The real fallacy of the Cameronians' doctrine is that it teaches "that dominion is founded in grace" and that the magistracy is an ordinance given to the church and lodged in the hands of the saints.

The Cameronians, instead of considering the magistracy something simple and unalterable, claim that it may be one thing in one place or time and something quite different in other circumstances. Therefore, the qualifications of a magistrate in a heathen land differ from those in a Christian or reformed nation. In opposition to this view, Bruce maintained that what is essential to the being of a thing must be so in all times, in all places, and in all circumstances.

If the want of scriptural and religious qualifications destroy the being of Magistracy in the once covenanting land of Britain, the want of them must have the same effect in France, Russia, or Japan, unless Magistracy be some strange monstrous composition, made up of as many beings or essences, as there are modifications in religion, or supposable variations, with regard to it, in different times and places.

Bruce contrasted the attitude of his Synod to that of the Reformed Presbytery on the subject of the Revolution Settlement. The Seceders had never maintained that it was perfect in all respects. Although the Settlement redressed many of the grievances of the preceding reigns, it omitted the covenant engagements and the Reformation Acts. However, it was none the

1 Ibid., p. 8.
2 Ibid., p. 9.
3 Ibid., p. 9.
4 Ibid., p. 9.
5 Ibid., p. 9.
6 Ibid., p. 10.
7 Ibid., p. 15.
less lawful on that account, for it was legally entered into by the nation.\(^1\) As a result of this agreement subjects are bound to give allegiance to their rulers in all lawful commands.\(^2\) Seceders have consistently taught, however, that they are obligated to obey the civil authorities only "according to the word of God and our covenants."\(^3\) They do not believe that obedience to lawful commands is tantamount to recognizing the ecclesiastical supremacy invested in the King of Great Britain.\(^4\) The deficiencies of the present constitution do not absolve subjects of the duty of obedience as maintained by the Reformed Presbytery.\(^5\)

Although the Seceders disagree with the Cameronians, they do not minimize the importance of the magistrate's religious qualifications.\(^6\) Accordingly, they approve the laws of the former reformation which required civil rulers, upon their admission to office, to maintain and defend the reformed religion settled in the land.\(^7\) But at the same time, they have distinguished between the qualifications essential to the office and those

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 16.  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 16.  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 16.  
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 22.  
\(^5\) Ibid., p. 14.  
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 11.  
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 11. The Seceders also approve of Ch. XXIII, Sect. 4 of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which states, "In-fidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free people from their due obedience to him."
requisite to the better exercise of it.\textsuperscript{1} If subjects withhold their tribute until they find a magistrate in every way perfect, they will never discover one worthy to receive their obedience.\textsuperscript{2}

3. The Duties of the Civil Magistrate

1. Secular Duties. The immediate aim of the magistrate's office is the preservation of the peace, order, and justice of the commonwealth.\textsuperscript{3}

The Kingdom of Christ and the civil government were instituted for quite different purposes.\textsuperscript{4} The latter was ordained for the care of the body and outward goods alone.\textsuperscript{5} The security of the temporal life, liberty in its various branches, and the property and peace of men are the only things with which the state is to be immediately concerned.\textsuperscript{6} From its very nature civil government cannot aim at anything different or higher as its proper end.\textsuperscript{7} To suppose that the state is to be equally concerned with spiritual and temporal matters is to lose all distinction between civil and religious societies and to make them formally the same.\textsuperscript{8}

All offences are punishable by the magistrate which are inconsistent with the outward peace of civil society.\textsuperscript{9} He is to

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., p. 11.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 11.
\textsuperscript{3} Bruce, The Principal Difference, (C.W. 5, p. 5). Bruce quotes with approval a passage from the Associate Presbytery’s Declaration and Defence which declares: "The public good of outward and common order in all reasonable society, unto the glory of God, is the great and only end which these invested with Magistracy can propose..." Gib's Display, Vol. I, p. 311.
\textsuperscript{4} Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part II, (C.W. 7, p.314).
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 314.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 314.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 314.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p. 314.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p. 314.
restrain evils and sins, not in proportion to the degree of their guilt before God, but according to their criminality in the sight of men.\(^1\)

2. Religious Duties. As there is a natural connection between bodies and souls, between the visible and spiritual worlds, so there is a necessary relation between civil and ecclesiastical governments.\(^2\) Neither of them can fully achieve their goals when separated from one another.\(^3\) As the magistrate's office is founded in natural rather than revealed principles, his first concern is with religion as it is contained in the moral law.\(^4\) The care and preservation of religion in its general and common principles is an immediate object of civil legislation.\(^5\) However, with the advent of Christianity a wider scope was given to the magistrate's office.\(^6\) It gave him an occasion to discharge his duties toward a new object.\(^7\) Nevertheless, the exercise of civil authority in behalf of Christianity and its supernatural doctrines is to be considered a secondary duty and the application of its original law to a particular object which occurred in some periods and places.\(^8\)

It is not necessary for the crown of Caesar and Christ to be ever at variance and incapable of forming a friendly alliance.\(^9\)

---

1 Ibid., p. 314.
2 Ibid., pp. 314, 315.
3 Ibid., p. 315.
4 Ibid., p. 316.
5 Ibid., p. 315.
6 Ibid., p. 317.
7 Ibid., p. 317.
8 Ibid., p. 318.
9 Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, p. 44).
There is no power ordained of God, but is to be applied for the glory of God; and none, but what is both compatible with, and capable of being subservient unto his gracious and spiritual government among men.¹

Magistrates, by a proper application of their authority, may be more useful to the cause of religion than those in private capacities.² However, certain definite restrictions are imposed upon them by virtue of their secular status. They are not office-bearers in the church of Christ and therefore cannot lawfully assume any power over it in purely ecclesiastical matters. Nor ought they to encroach upon the true liberties of Christians or the rights of conscience.³ Despite these restrictions magistrates can still be the church's friends and faithful allies.⁴ Their religious duties cannot be discharged by adopting an attitude of neutrality or total indifference.⁵ It is not enough that they abstain from offering any direct injury or actual detriment to the church's interest. The Word of God and the teachings of Protestantism allot them something more.⁶

Bruce did not think that it was inconsistent with the church's nature to accept assistance from the state. Although the church is not of the world, yet it is in the world, and it is not so spiritual as to be entirely detached from material things.⁷

¹ Ibid., p. 37.
² Ibid., p. 35.
³ Ibid., pp. 35, 36.
⁴ Ibid., p. 36.
⁵ Ibid., p. 36.
⁶ Ibid., p. 36.
⁷ Ibid., p. 38.
Bruce enumerated certain specific ways in which the state could support the cause of religion.

(1) **Laws expressly in favor of the true religion and its adherents.** Magistrates are to afford positive protection, countenance, and support to God's cause. This is not to be accomplished merely by their personal example but in their public capacity by making laws in favor of the true religion.¹

Neither the sceptre nor the sword are so profane and unhallowed as to be incapable of being employed to insure the external rights and privileges of the church.² To reject this source of help would be to fall into the errors of the Anabaptists and Quakers.³ By the help of the temporal powers the Protestant religion was publicly settled in many of the nations of Europe.⁴

Bruce expressed his approval of the ratification of Presbyterianism by the Scottish Parliament in 1560.⁵ Political laws, therefore, wisely framed and administered, are not foreign to the nature of the church.⁶

(2) **Elimination of obstructions to the progress of religion and reformation.** It is the duty of magistrates to participate in all external reformations. Their concurrence and assistance may be most useful in repressing flagrant disorders, abolishing corrupt laws, and freeing their subjects from a system of religious despotism.⁷ When religious abuses have been supported by

---

¹ Ibid., p. 36.
² [Bruce], Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery, (C.W. 2, p. 263).
³ Ibid., p. 263.
⁴ Ibid., p. 263.
⁵ Bruce, A Historical Dissertation, (C.W. 5, p. 89).
⁶ [Bruce], Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery, (C.W. 2, p. 266).
⁷ Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, p. 92).
political laws and woven into the civil constitution, only those who exercise the power of legislation can eradicate them.¹

(3) Defence of the church against all outward violence and danger.²

(4) Maintenance of the church's rights and privileges as an organic body.³

(5) Preservation of the church against the encroachments of a worldly prince, the violent attacks of false and corrupt religions, and the injurious practices of disorderly ministers. It does not lie within the province of the magistrate's office to determine religious matters ecclesiastically, nor does the cognizance of error and heresy as such pertain to him.⁴ It is contrary to the spirit of religion for the state to enact severe penal laws immediately affecting the conscience, to extirpate error and heresy by the sword, or to destroy men's lives under the pretence of saving their souls.⁵ Nevertheless, if the welfare and peace of public society are threatened by the violent attacks of corrupt or false religions, the magistrate is to intervene.⁶ This is the express doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith.⁷

As an illustration of the above principle Bruce argued that

¹ Ibíd., pp. 92, 93.
² Bruce, Sermon: True Patriotism, (C.W. 1, p. 36).
³ Ibíd., p. 37.
⁴ Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, pp. 91, 92). See also Westminster Confession of Faith, Chap. XXXI, Sect. 3.
⁵ Ibíd., p. 95.
⁶ Ibíd., p. 92.
⁷ Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. XXIII, Sect. 3.
it was the duty of the civil government to retain the present penal statutes against the Roman Catholics. It is inconsistent with good policy and true religion for the rulers of a Protestant nation to encourage and tolerate people of this religious persuasion. Although civil legislation is not the usual method of advancing Christ's Kingdom, the state may quite legitimately employ laws and penalties against the Roman Catholics. But Bruce added this caution:

And in their hands we plead for the use of them, not for offence, but defence; not directly for the propagation or vindication of truth, but for preventing injuries and in-injustice; not for destroying men's lives, liberties or property, but for saving them; not for the conviction, conversion, or spiritual salvation of sinners, but for the restraint of the lawless and disobedient; not for the punishment of any as heretics, but for the terror and punishment of them as evil doers.

4. The Right of People to Choose their Form of Government.

As the necessity of a civil government is common to all men, so must also be the right of constituting it. No wickedness of people can exempt them from this obligation or deprive them of this right.

In their choice of a government citizens should be guided by the law of nature and right reason, as well as by local circumstances and customs. Whatever form of government is chosen may be said to be ordained by God, and those appointed to exercise

1 Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, p. 94).
2 [Bruce], Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery, (C.W. 2, pp. 259, 260).
3 Ibid., p. 262.
4 Bruce, Genuine Principles, (C.W. 3, p. 15).
5 [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 71).
6 Bruce, Genuine Principles (C.W. 3, p. 15).
authority in it are entitled to obedience and honor.1

According to these principles it is absurd to confine the epithets of lawful or regular to one particular form of government.2 The kingly office, though no more sacred than others, is expressly approved by God in the Scriptures.3 The British Constitution as settled in the King, Temporal Lords, and Commons is an admirable form of government.4 However, in other circumstances a republic might be equally good.5

5. The State and War

There is nothing in which men need to take greater care in satisfying their consciences than when they speak, or pray, or become in any way active on the side of war.6 On the principles of moral justice, as well as religion, every war must be pronounced unjust which is not necessary.7 Necessity can never be pled unless all due and peaceable means for averting it have been tried and have failed.8 Only on the surest grounds should a state resort to the terrible expedient of war.9 It is the duty of nations and people to live together in peace even if they disagree on political, moral, and religious principles.10

---

1 [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, pp. 71, 72).
3 [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 72).
4 Bruce, Genuine Principles, (C.W. 3, p. 17)
5 Ibid., p. 17.
6 [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 25).
7 Ibid., p. 25.
8 Ibid., pp. 25, 26.
9 Bruce, Genuine Principles, (C.W. 3, p. 61).
10 [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 26).
Bruce wrote extensively about the conduct of the individual Christian during a war. To denounce a war as unjust and then to concert with others, either in a public or private capacity, in the support of it is the subversion of every principle of morality and religion. Unless moral principles, known and confessed by men, be considered as a sacred rule of their conduct, they must be the most inconsistent, capricious, and dangerous animals on the earth. In matters of right and wrong the Christian cannot accommodate his conduct to the authority and opinion of others. Every man is constituted the immediate judge of his own actions, superior to every power on earth, and he ought to possess sufficient fortitude to act in accordance with his convictions. In cases of a political nature the rules of right and wrong are not altered. The Christian should not be reluctant to oppose the state if it pursues a policy which is contrary to morality and religion.

Bruce deplored particularly the frequent inconsistency between the Christian's convictions and behavior with reference to political issues. It is not rare to hear a war arraigned one day in a church court as unjust, and on the next to have resolutions passed advocating the vigorous prosecution of it.

If this same flexibility of principles should seize every class of citizen, justice and rectitude would be in danger of

1 Ibid., p. 29.
2 Ibid., p. 29.
3 Ibid., p. 29.
4 Ibid., p. 29.
5 Ibid., p. 29.
6 Ibid., pp. 29, 30.
It ought to be remembered, that the man who prays or preaches, or concurs in keeping a religious day, for the avowed purpose of promoting or procuring success to an unjust war, whatever be his station or personal views, comes in for his share of guilt with the cabinet which plans it, the general who conducts it, and the hands that actually inflict the mortal wounds.  

Principal Hugh Watt has stated that Scotland's main contribution to Reformed theology has been within the domain of the Erastian Controversy. Professor Archibald Bruce and his colleagues in the Constitutional Associate Presbytery were participants in a phase of this conflict in the late eighteenth century when it divided the Secession Church into the Old and New Lights. As members of the former faction they stood resolutely for the principle of a civil establishment of religion as it was formulated in the Church of Scotland's standards and the Reformation Acts. However, at the same time these ministers were careful to disassociate themselves from any Erastian doctrine.

In the formulation of his doctrine of Church and State Bruce placed a strong emphasis upon the headship of Christ over the Church and the essential distinction between civil and ecclesiastical authorities. He carefully defined the functions and jurisdictions of the two institutions and warned against encroachments of the one on the other. At the same time he sought to steer a

---

1 Ibid., p. 30.
2 Ibid., p. 30.
middle course between Erastianism and Independency. He asserted that the true Presbyterian position was a medium between these two extremes.\(^1\) It is possible for the state to enact laws relating to the external affairs of the church without encroaching upon its jurisdiction in purely ecclesiastical matters.\(^2\)

Bruce maintained that the true Reformed doctrine of Church and State was expounded in the standards of the Church of Scotland. He expressed his approval of the Scots Confession of 1560, the civil establishment of Presbyterianism in 1592, and the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Scots Confession defined the religious duties of the magistrate in these terms: "...Mairover, to Kings, Princes, Rulers, and Magistrates, wee affirme that chieflie and most principallie the conservation and purgation of the Religioun apperteinis....\(^3\) However, the Reformers were equally zealous to affirm the supremacy of Christ over His church.\(^4\) In his introduction to the Scots Confession Professor G. D. Henderson stated:

The duty of the civil magistrate includes the maintenance of the true religion and the suppression of idolatry and superstition, but it is made clear that Christ is the only Head of the Church, Sovereign and Supreme Governor. Neither Papal nor Royal head is admitted.\(^5\)

Bruce also cited the civil establishment of Presbyterianism in 1592 as a proper example of Church and State relationships.\(^6\)

---

\(^1\) Bruce's Review, p. 272.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 280.
\(^3\) Henderson, G. D., (Editor), Scots Confession, 1560, p. 95.
\(^4\) Bruce, A Historical Dissertation, (C.W. 5, p. 89). See also Scots Confession, Article XVI, "Of the Kirk."
\(^5\) Henderson, Scots Confession, 1560, p. 17.
\(^6\) Bruce, A Historical Dissertation, (C.W. 5, p. 96).
The Act of 1592, which legalized the main points of the Second Book of Discipline, granted freedom of assembly to church courts and abrogated the Act of 1584 in so far as it infringed upon ecclesiastical authority.¹

Furthermore, Bruce accepted the principles of the Covenanting period (1638-1650) as normative in Church and State matters.² He also fully endorsed the Westminster Confession of Faith as it was adopted by the General Assembly in 1647. He considered this document to be authoritative on the subject of Church and State. His writings abound in quotations from Chapters XX, XXIII, and XXXI.

Finally, Bruce endeavored to prove his loyalty to the principles of the original Seceders on Church and State. In all of his writings there are frequent quotations from the "Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery's Principles anent the present Civil Government." His views did concur with those expressed in this document for the most part. Both assert that the magistrate's office has its origin in natural principles rather than the revealed will of God.³ Again there is agreement on the fact that peculiar religious qualifications are not essential to the being of the magistrate.⁴ Both agree that the immediate aim of the civil authority is the preservation of the outward good of society.⁵ However, Bruce declared

¹ Ibid., p. 96.
² Ibid., p. 101.
⁵ [Bruce], The Principal Difference, (C.W. 5, p. 5); Gib's Display, Vol. I, p. 311.
that in a Christian community the magistrate should render positive assistance to the church, and he discussed a number of specific ways in which the state could support the cause of true religion. On this point he went beyond the Associate Presbytery's "Declaration and Defence." This divergence is due largely to a difference in viewpoint. The Seceders in 1743 were seeking to give directions to a non-established church on the subject of obedience to the civil government. On the other hand, Bruce assumed the desirability of a national church and wrote from that viewpoint.
By modern standards Archibald Bruce would be considered narrow and intolerant, for he was dominated by a few ideas which he held to tenaciously. His two great concerns were the defence of the Reformed concept of Church and State and the protection of human liberty. The majority of his writings were forged in the heat of controversy; and consequently, they are polemical in nature. In the statement of his convictions he was usually very dogmatic and uncompromising. He had the propensity to be excessively argumentative, and he often failed to recognize any merit in the position of his opponents. In his various controversies Bruce sometimes had difficulty in distinguishing between the important and the insignificant. He frequently magnified issues beyond their true importance. The nature of many of his arguments is well characterized in this excerpt from a letter which John Brown of Haddington wrote to Bruce in 1786.

Our conduct, on both sides of the Secession, I have often thought to be like that of two travellers both walking on the same road, not far from one another, but in consequence of a thick mist suddenly come on, they cannot see one another, and each supposes the other to be off the road: After some time the darkness is removed, and they are quite surprised to find that they are both on the road, and had been all along so near one another.1

Several factors explain the limited extent of Bruce's

1 The Christian Repository and Religious Register, Vol. IV, October, 1819, p. 610.
influence upon subsequent religious thought. With him, quality became the victim of quantity, for he spread his interests and activities over too wide an area. Even a cursory examination of Bruce’s works reveals the great versatility of his mind. He wrote on a great variety of subjects, ranging from French ecclesiastical history to poetry. Unlike his former student, Dr. Thomas M’Crie, he failed to concentrate his efforts on a truly definitive work which would have permanently enriched the ecclesiastical literature of Scotland. In his review of Bruce's *A Critical Account of the Life, Character, and Discourses of Mr. Alexander Morus*, the Reverend John Brown of Biggar stated:

> Before bidding him [Bruce] farewell, however, we must be permitted to remonstrate with him, (we wish to do it with all deference), for not undertaking some work more worthy of himself, which might serve as a lasting ornament to the literature of his country, and a monument to his own fame. We believe him very capable of such a work......

Bruce’s contribution to religious thought has also been limited by the nature of his works. He wrote primarily on topics of purely temporary interest - the repeal of the statutes against the Roman Catholics, the commemoration of the Revolution of 1688, the ruling Party in the Church of Scotland, and missionary activities in India. For example, it is necessary to compile his doctrine of Church and State almost altogether from books and pamphlets which he wrote to refute the Church of England and the Reformed Presbytery. Because of the contemporary quality of

---

his publications they are not read and consulted to-day as are Dr. Thomas M'Crie's historical studies. The Reverend Andrew Thomson has given this accurate appraisal of Bruce as an author:

Professor Bruce was remarkable at once for the strength and the versatility of his mental powers. In learned research, in theological discussion, in popular essay, in parody and satire, and even in poetry he appeared as an author and in almost all of them excelled. It is to be lamented that his excellent and varied gifts were too much given to themes of temporary interest, and that the very versatility of his talents was unfavourable to his concentrating his energies upon some great work worthy of himself.¹

Bruce was not an original thinker. However, he did possess the ability to amass material from a great variety of sources, to assimilate it, and then to state his arguments cogently and forcefully. His historical scholarship is best illustrated in a book entitled *Annus Secularis*. It is his thesis that the worship of the early church was marked by a simplicity which was corrupted largely through pagan influences. To buttress his argument Bruce quoted extensively from the early Church Fathers, the Reformers, and modern writers.

With these criticisms as a background it is possible to assess more accurately Bruce's status as a churchman. As this study has already indicated, Bruce made a number of positive contributions to the religious and political life of his day.

Bruce's first important service to the church was as an educator. He served successively as professor of Divinity for

the General Associate Synod and for the Constitutional
Associate Presbytery. Although his lectures did not make any
original contributions to religious thought, he made an impact
upon the church through such notable students as Thomas M'Crie,
John Duncan, and Thomas Dick. Professor Bruce exerted a parti-
cularly strong influence upon Dr. Thomas M'Crie. The latter
frequently consulted his former teacher during the preparation
and composition of his historical studies. In his preface to
Bruce’s Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part II, Dr.
M'Crie expressed his great indebtedness to his late professor
and friend.¹

In a period when human liberty was often curtailed by
oppressive laws, Bruce proved to be a fearless and resolute
champion of popular rights. In this respect he demonstrated
a liberal and enlightened spirit which was advanced for his own
time. Bruce gave a concrete expression to his ideas, for he
established his own printing press in Whitburn.

It was in his book Reflections on Freedom of Writing that
Bruce expounded most forcefully his ideas about liberty. He
advocated complete intellectual freedom, and he expressed his
abhorrence of all libel laws. A full communication of ideas
should be encouraged that they may be accepted or rejected on
their own merits. It is essential to the welfare of society
that men of a free spirit, detached from all political parties,
be permitted to address the public and to impart without fear

¹ Bruce, Introductory and Occasional Lectures, Part II,
(C.W. 7, p. iv).
of intimidation the fruits of their research and observations. Bruce also defended freedom of dissent. The writings of men such as Thomas Paine should not be suppressed by the government. Bruce also expressed very enlightened views about the rights of citizens. Every man is entitled to full liberty and justice irrespective of his external circumstances. A person's right to express his opinion on public issues should not be determined by his position in society, the extent of his property, or his wealth.

In the formulation of his political ideas Bruce was influenced, to some extent, by the principles of the French Revolution. This quotation from the "Basis of the New Constitution of France" reveals a remarkable similarity in thought.

No man ought to be molested on account of his opinions, not even on account of his religious opinions, provided his avowal of them does not disturb the public order established by the law. - The unrestrained communication of thoughts and opinions being one of the most precious rights of man, every citizen may speak, write, and publish freely, provided he is responsible for the abuse of this liberty in cases determined by the law.¹

In this connection it should be observed that Bruce, like many of the dissenters in England and Scotland, vigorously defended the French Revolution. He argued that it represented a decisive defeat for the ecclesiastical tyranny of Rome and that it afforded the citizens of France the opportunity of greater liberty. In Chapter III of this thesis an effort has been made

¹ Quoted by Struthers, The History of the Rise, Progress, and Principles of the Relief Church, p. 381.
to discuss Bruce's attitude toward the Revolution and to place him within the context of his time on this important issue. Dr. Henry W. Meikle in his very able book, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, while discussing the attitude of the churches toward the Revolution, did not allude to Bruce's defence of it.

Bruce's defence of popular rights was of more than transitory significance. The activities of such men prepared the atmosphere in which the Reform Bill of 1832 could be enacted. Bruce had advocated many of the principles embodied in this important piece of legislation. This Bill admitted a considerable proportion of the Scottish people to municipal and political life, for it eliminated many of the injustices of the old electoral system. Dr. William Law Mathieson has commented:

> It was reserved for the French, foreshadowed to some extent by the American, Revolution to arouse a passion for liberty which, impervious at heart to the blows of repression and bursting forth anew in seasons of industrial distress, was to continue till the outbreak of another French Revolution called it to the victory it achieved in 1832.¹

Undoubtedly Bruce's major contribution was as an apologist for the principle of a national establishment of religion. At this point it is necessary to summarize briefly his concept of Church and State. In a word, he envisioned a church that was both national and free. He asserted in unequivocal terms the headship of Christ over His church. He is its only Judge, Law-giver, and King. It is an offence against the laws and constitution of the church to exalt any mortal to a place of supremacy.

¹ Mathieson, William Law, *Church and Reform in Scotland*, p. 228.
This spiritual independence has certain implications for the church. It has the right to determine its own doctrine and worship, to convene its courts, to elect its own office-bearers, and to proclaim the whole counsel of God without interference or restrictions. Although temporal and spiritual powers are totally distinct and ought never to be lodged in the same hands, the civil magistrate can quite legitimately assist in the promotion of Christ's Kingdom. Bruce enumerated certain specific ways in which the state can support the church. (1) Laws expressly in favor of the true religion and its adherents. It is not inconsistent either with good policy or Christian liberty to have some particular system publicly defined, approved, and protected which may be designated the national religion. However, the utmost care and caution must be taken to ensure that nothing is done to abridge the dissenter's liberty of conscience. (2) Participation in external reformations. (3) Defence of the church against all outward violence and danger. (4) Maintenance of the church's rights and privileges as an organic body. (5) Preservation of the church against the attacks of false and corrupt religions. All compulsion in matters of mere religion is unlawful. It is contrary to the spirit of Christ for the state to enact severe penal laws which immediately affect the conscience, to extirpate error and heresy by the sword, or to destroy men's lives under the pretence of saving their souls. However, the magistrate may quite legitimately suppress a religion
which threatens the welfare and peace of society.

In order to place Bruce’s concept of Church and State in its proper historical perspective, it is necessary to compare his views with those of the Associate Presbytery, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the "Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in Matters Spiritual."

Dr. Hector MacPherson has rightly observed that the original Seceders were not Voluntaries.¹ He adds: "They had no quarrel with the Establishment principle as such; their grievance was that the Establishment principle was treated as fundamental."²

The Associate Presbytery’s Judicial Testimony explicitly approved the civil establishment of 1592 which legalized the main points of the Second Book of Discipline,³ and it asserted the perpetual obligation of all Christians to subscribe to the Covenants.⁴

Mr. William Wilson of Perth, in his apology for the Secession, declared that a national establishment of religion had divine sanction and that the civil magistrate could render valuable assistance to the church.⁵ However, he rejected the present establishment as a snare to the church.⁶ These observations confirm A. Taylor Innes’ judgment that the Secession of 1733 was conservative in nature, "looking back to a golden age of

² Ibid., p. 158.
⁴ Ibid., p. 161.
⁵ Wilson, A Defence of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland, pp. 35, 36, and p. 167.
⁶ Ibid., p. 167.
Church purity and independence."¹ It was not until a later period that the New Light teaching began to emerge. There was no basic conflict between Bruce and the original Seceders on the subject of Church and State. Both denounced the establishments of their day as defective because of their tendency to subject the church to secular domination. The points of divergence were due largely to differences in viewpoint and circumstances. Ebenezer Erskine and his colleagues were resisting the trend toward Erastianism, while Bruce was combating the emergence of Voluntaryism in his Synod. In these circumstances it was natural for him to be more explicit in his exposition of the magistrate's religious duties than were the Seceders in their Judicial Testimony.

Bruce's concept of Church and State also closely parallels the one expounded in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Both assert the headship of Christ (W.C. of F., Chapter XXV, Section 6), the essential distinction between civil and ecclesiastical authorities (W.C. of F., Chapter XXX, Section 1), the right of the church to determine controversies of faith (W.C. of F., Chapter XXXI, Section 3), and the duty of the magistrate to support the cause of religion (W.C. of F., Chapter XXIII, Section 3). In the exposition of his concept of Church and State Bruce frequently quoted from the Westminster Confession of Faith. It is evident that this document exerted a strong influence upon him in the

formulation of his views, for there is a marked similarity in both thought and expression. This is particularly discernible in his definition of the magistrate's religious functions. Both Bruce and the Confession of Faith agree that it is his duty to promote external reformations, to preserve the peace and unity of the church, and to suppress false and corrupt religions.¹

Finally, Bruce’s concept of Church and State is similar to the one expounded in the "Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in Matters Spiritual," one of the documents which constituted the basis of the Union in 1929. This affinity is best illustrated by quoting pertinent excerpts from both the "Articles" and the writings of Bruce.

1. The Headship of Christ over the Church.

**Articles Declaratory:** "This Church, as part of the Universal Church wherein the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed a government in the hands of Church office-bearers, receives from Him, its Divine King and Head, and from Him alone, the right and power subject to no civil authority to legislate, and to adjudicate finally, in all matters of doctrine, worship, government, and discipline in the Church...."²

**Bruce:** "And the true church hath ever recognized him [Christ], as her only supreme Judge, Lawgiver, and King... This dominion or headship of Jesus Christ, not only respects his body in its internal state, but also in its visible constitution and administration. It includes his authority in prescribing the whole system of faith and worship...."³

¹ Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XXIII, Section 3, and Bruce, Sermon: Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, (C.W. 3, pp. 91-95).

² Cox, James T., Editor, Practice and Procedure in the Church of Scotland, p. 327.

³ Bruce, A Historical Dissertation, (C.W. 5, p. 21).
2. The Church's Right to Determine its Doctrine.

**Articles Declaratory:** "This Church has the inherent right, free from interference by civil authority, but under the safeguards for deliberate action and legislation provided by the Church itself, to frame or adopt its subordinate standards, to declare the sense in which it understands its Confession of Faith...."¹

**Bruce:** "The greater part of Presbyterians in Scotland seem no longer sensible of the importance of maintaining the intrinsic power of the church to appoint her public fasts and thanksgivings, and the freedom of her courts and ministers to judge and determine in all relating to religion."²

3. The Relationship of Church and State.

**Articles Declaratory:** "This Church acknowledges the divine appointment and authority of the civil magistrate within his own sphere, and maintains its historic testimony to the duty of the nation acting in its corporate capacity to render homage to God ... and to promote in all appropriate ways the Kingdom of God. The Church and the State owe mutual duties to each other, and acting within their respective spheres may signally promote each other's welfare."³

**Bruce:** "Religion and government have a mutual relation, and a reciprocal dependence upon each other. They are naturally designed and fitted for the strictest union, and the closest alliance; and by their union, like allies, they mutually strengthen one another."⁴

It is natural that these two statements should vary considerably in phraseology and content as a result of the different circumstances in which they were composed. For example, Bruce would not favor the principle of universal religious toleration which is generally accepted in the twentieth century.

---
¹ Cox, op. cit., p. 327.
² [Bruce], A Serious View, (C.W. 5, p. 26).
³ Cox, op. cit., p. 327.
⁴ [Bruce], Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery, (C.W. 2, p. 4).
He argued for the retention of the penal statutes which restricted the activities of Roman Catholics. Nevertheless, both Bruce and the "Articles" emphasized two important truths which have been characteristic of the Church of Scotland's witness through the centuries - the spiritual freedom of the church and at the same time the duty of the state to promote the Kingdom of God in all appropriate ways.

Although Bruce and his colleagues were members of a small branch of the Secession, they made a significant contribution to the Church of Scotland's struggle for spiritual independence within the bounds of an establishment. They resolutely opposed the trend toward the separation of Church and State which was to be developed more fully during the Voluntary Controversy. The members of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery rendered an important service to Presbyterianism by their clear testimony to the principle of an establishment. They helped to translate the ideal of a church that is national and yet free, into a reality. The witness of such men made possible the eventual adoption of a Church Constitution which has been described in this manner: "The Church of Scotland is the outstanding example of a Church which is Established and yet is Free... No other Church has a constitution which asserts so strongly its complete freedom from the State."1

1 Archbishop Garbett, quoted by Henderson, The Claims of the Church of Scotland, p. 141.
KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS IN BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anon.  -  Published Anonymously

C.W.   -  Bruce's Collected Works

MS. GAL - Manuscript in the General Assembly Library,
          Tolbooth-St. John's Church, Edinburgh.

N.D.   -  No Date

N.P.   -  No Place

P.P.   -  Bruce's Private Press.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Books and Pamphlets by Archibald Bruce:

Annus Secularis; or the British Jubilee; or A Review of the Act of the General Assembly, Appointing the 5th of November, 1788; As an Anniversary-Thanksgiving, in Commemoration of the Revolution in 1688, by "Calvinianus Presbyter," C.W. 1, Edinburgh, etc., 1788.

A Brief Statement and Declaration of the Genuine Principles of the Seceders, Respecting Civil Government; the Duty of Subjects; and National Reformation, C.W. 3, Edinburgh, etc., 1799.

The Catechism Modernized: and Adapted to the Meridian of Patronage and Late Improvements in the Church of Scotland, "Anon.", Eleutheropolis, Edinburgh, etc., 1791.

A Critical Account of the Life, Character, and Discourses of Mr. Alexander Morus, C.W. 6, Edinburgh, etc., 1813.

The Formidable Triumvirate; or The Malignant Club, (In the Hudibrastic Manner), "Anon.", Edinburgh, 1770.


A French Prophecy: or An Admonition to the English, Concerning their Near Approaching Danger, and the Means to Escape It, by A Prediction of a Gentleman of Quality in Longuedoc. With Some Passages extracted from a Scarce Book by the Eminently Pious Mr. J. Welch... Relating to the Approaching Destruction of the Anti-Christian Kingdom, (Bruce, Editor), N.P., N.D.


An Historical Account of the Most Remarkable Earthquakes and Volcanic Eruptions: From the Beginning of the World to the Present Time, C.W. 9, Whitburn: Printed for the Booksellers, 1820. The greater part of this work was printed prior to 1820 on Bruce's Private Press.

The Interest and Claims of the Church and Nation of Scotland in the Settlement of Religion in India; and the Necessity of Appearing for Them at this Time, with Brief Remarks on the Proposed Measures presently under consideration of the Legislature, by "A North-British Protestant," C.W. 5, Edinburgh, 1813.

Introductory and Occasional Lectures: For Forming the Minds of Young Men Intending the Holy Ministry, To Theological and Useful Learning, Religion, and Good Manners, Delivered in the Theological Academy at Whitburn, Part First, C.W. 7, Whitburn: P.P., 1797.


The Kirkiad; Or, Golden Age of the Church of Scotland, Canto I, "Anon.", C.W. 1, Edinburgh, 1774.

Memoirs of the Public Life of Mr. James Hog; and of the Ecclesiastical Proceedings of his Time; Previous to his Settlement at Carnock, (Bruce, Editor), C.W. 3, Edinburgh, etc., 1798.

News from the Pope to the Devil, "Anon.", C.W. 9, N.P., N.D.


A Peaceable Declaration of the Sentiments of a Number of Presbyterians in Scotland, Relative to the War between France and Great-Britain, "Anon.", N.P., 1797.

A Penitential Epistle, and Humble Supplication, to His Holiness the Pope, in the Name of the People of Great-Britain; For a Perfect Reconciliation and Perpetual Alliance with Rome, "Anon.", C.W. 9, Edinburgh, etc., 1797.

Poems: Serious and Amusing by a Rural Divine, "Anon.", C.W. 9, Edinburgh, 1812.

Practical Discourses, Whitburn: P.P., 1816.
Practical Reflections on Earthquakes, Which may also be applicable to Other Public Judgments. To Which is subjoined An Historical Account of the Most Remarkable Earthquakes; Particularly Those in later Times. Sermon preached by John Shower of London in 1693. (Edited with a Preface by Bruce), London, etc., 1797.


Queries Addressed to the Gentry, Clergy, and People, of Scotland, on the Solemn Commemoration of the Revolution in M.DCC.LXXXVIII; and on the Bill afterwards brought into Parliament, for Appointing a Perpetual Anniversary, by "Calvinianus Presbyter," C.W. 1, M.P., 1797.

Reflections on Freedom of Writing; and the Impropriety of Attempting to Suppress It by Penal Laws, Occasioned by a Late Proclamation against Seditious Publications, and Measures consequent upon it; Viewed Chiefly in the aspect they bear to Religious Liberty, and Ecclesiastical Reform, by "A North British Protestant," C.W. 3, Edinburgh, etc., 1794.

A Review of the Proceedings of the General Associate Synod, and of Some Presbyteries, in Reference to the Ministers Who Protested against the Imposition of a New Testimony; Wherein their Protestations and Conduct are Vindicated, C.W. 8, Edinburgh: George Caw, 1808.

Select Sermons of Mr. Alexander Morus, Pastor and Professor of Theology in Geneva and Holland, Whitburn: P.P., 1812 (This work is bound with a volume of Bruce's Practical Discourses in the New College Library). Select Sermons was re-published in 1813 in a single volume with the Life of Morus).

A Serious View of the Remarkable Providences of the Times; and A Warning as to the Public Sins, Dangers, and Duty of British Protestants, "Anon.", C.W. 5, Glasgow, 1795.

Strictures on the Form of Swearing by Kissing the Gospels, "Anon.", London; R. Denham, 1782.

True Patriotism; or, A Public Spirit for God and Religion Recommended, and the Want of It Reprehended. A Discourse: The Substance of Which was Delivered before the Associate Synod, Met at Edinburgh on a Day of Humiliation Observed by Them, C.W.1, Edinburgh, etc., 1785.

Two Sermons. I. The Inefficacy of Dangers or Deliverances to Reclaim on Amos IV, verse 11, Preached on a Day of Humiliation. II. Corruptions in the Church to be Eradicated, Preached at the Opening of the Associate Synod, on Matthew XV, verse 13, C.W.2, Glasgow, etc., 1812.

2. Articles by Archibald Bruce in The Christian Magazine; Or Evangelical Repository: (Bruce's contributions to this magazine were usually signed simply "B").


"Observations concerning the Weather in the Holy Land, illustrating several Passages of Scripture," (Collected and Abridged from Harmer), No. IV, June 5, 1797, pp. 162-165.


Answers by the Associate Presbytery unto Reasons of Dissent given in to the said Presbytery, by Mr. Nairn, at Stirling, December 23, 1742, Edinburgh: T. W. and T. Ruddimans, 1744.

CULBERTSON, Robert, Consolation to the Church: In Two Discourses; together with An Address; Delivered before the Associate Congregation of Haddington, Aug. 2, 1807. Edinburgh: J. Pillans and Sons, 1807.


GIB, Adam, An Address to the Associate Synod, Met at Edinburgh, October 11, 1759, Concerning a Petition and Reasons laid before them by the Rev. Mr. Alexander Moncrieff, that they might consider upon petitioning the King for a redress of grievances about the present state of religion in these lands. To which are prefixed, Mr. Moncrieff's Petition and Reasons, Edinburgh: A. Donaldson and J. Reid, 1763.


NAIRN, Thomas, A Short Account of Mr. Thomas Nairn, Minister of the Gospel in Linktown of Arnot, Formerly Abbotshall, his Seccession from the Associate Presbytery; with the Grounds and Reasons for his so doing, M.P., 1743.


4. Minutes of Presbyteries and Synods: (The documents in this section are listed chronologically in so far as possible).

The Acts and Proceedings of the Associate Presbytery, 6 December, 1735-19 September, 1740, Volume I, MS. GAL

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Associate Presbytery, 7 January 1741-10 April, 1747, Volume II, MS. GAL


Acts and Proceedings of the General Associate Synod, 1787-1803, Scroll V, MS. GAL.

Acts and Proceedings of the General Associate Synod, 1795-1820, Volume IV, MS. GAL.

Narrative and Testimony, Agreed Upon and Enacted by the General Associate Synod; together with an Act Respecting Procedure in Covenanting Work; Copies of the National Covenant and Solemn League; An Act concerning An Acknowledgment of Sins, Profession of Faith, and Engagement to Duties; with The Formula, Edinburgh: A. Neill & Co., 1804.

Minutes of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery: Containing the Deed of Constitution, with the Reasons; and An Act for a Public Fast, Edinburgh: George Caw, 1807.

Minutes of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery, 1808-1827, MS. in custody of the Reverend R. L. Findlater, Clerk of The United Original Secession Synod, Glasgow.

BROWN, George, Alphabetical List of the Students of Divinity of the United Secession Church, from the Rise of the Secession, till the Year 1840: With the Date of their Entrance to the Divinity Hall, their Licence, Ordination, and Death, and other particulars which have come to the Knowledge of George Brown, LL.D., the Compiler, MS. in the General Assembly Library, Tolbooth-St. John's Church, Edinburgh. The exact date of the compilation is unknown, but the flyleaf indicates that it was presented to the author's friend, G. Robson, on 26 August, 1864.

B. SECONDARY SOURCES

1. General References:

ADDISON, W. Innes, The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow, From 1782 to 1858, Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1913.

, A Roll of the Graduates of the University of Glasgow, From 21 December, 1727 to 31 December, 1897, Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1898.


BROWN, David, Life of the Late John Duncan, LL.D., Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872.


BROWN, Thomas, Church and State in Scotland, A Narrative of the Struggle for Independence from 1560 to 1843, Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1891.


The Confession of Faith; The Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter, & Co., M.D.


COUTTS, James, A History of the University of Glasgow from its Foundation in 1451 to 1909, Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1909.


, Editor, Scots Confession, 1560 (Confessio Scotica) and Negative Confession, 1581 (Confessio Negativa) with Introduction, Edinburgh, etc.: Church of Scotland Committee on Publications, 1937.


LANDRETH, P. The United Presbyterian Divinity Hall, in its Changes and Enlargements for One Hundred and Forty Years, Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Co., 1876.


LOGAN, Robert, The United Free Church, An Historical Review of Two Hundred and Twenty-Five Years, 1681-1906, Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1906.

M'CRIE, C. G., The Church of Scotland: Her Divisions and Her Re-Unions, Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1901.

M'CRIE, C. G., Editor, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, in Two Parts 1645, 1649 by E. F., Edited, with Introduction, Notes, and an Appendix, Biographical and Bibliographical, Glasgow: David Bryce and Son, 1902.


The Story of the Scottish Church From the Reformation to the Disruption, London: Blackie & Son, 1875.


MACLEOD, John, Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation, Edinburgh: The Publications Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, 1943.
MACPHERSON, Hector, Scotland's Battles for Spiritual Independence, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1905.


MACPHERSON, John, The Westminster Confession of Faith, with Introduction and Notes, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1881


——, Church and Reform in Scotland, A History from 1797 to 1843, Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1916.


MEIKLE, Henry W., Scotland and the French Revolution, Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1912.


RAINY, Robert, The Right Honourable Lord Moncrieff and A. Taylor Innes, Church and State, Chiefly in Relation to Scotland, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1878.
ROBERTSON, Andrew, History of the Atonement Controversy, in Connexion with the Secession Church, From its Origin to the Present Time, Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Sons, 1846.


SCOTT, David, Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church: Till its Disruption and Union with the Free Church of Scotland in 1852, Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1886.


WALKER, James, The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, Chiefly of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1872.


WOODSIDE, David, The Soul of a Scottish Church, or The Contribution of the United Presbyterian Church to Scottish Life and Religion, Edinburgh: Publications Department, United Free Church of Scotland, 1917.


3. Magazines: Biographical and Reviews of Bruce's Publications:
(The articles are listed chronologically).

[BROWN, John, of Biggar], Review of Bruce's A Critical Account of
the Life, Character, and Discourses of Mr. Alexander Morus,
in The Edinburgh Christian Instructor, No. XLIV, Vol. VIII,
No. III, March 1814.

M'CRIE, Thomas, "Archibald Bruce," in The Scots Magazine,
Volume LXXXVIII, April 1816.

Anonymous Memoir, "Archibald Bruce," in The Christian Magazine:
or Evangelical Repository, Volume X, Number CIII, May 1816.

and Religious Register, Volume I, Number IX, September 1816.

BROWN, John, of Haddington, Extract from a Letter to Prof. Bruce
in 1786, in The Christian Repository and Religious Register,
Vol. IV, October 1819.

W.B., "Memoir of The Reverend Archibald Bruce," in The United
Secession Magazine, Volume I, Number III, March 1844.

Anonymous Memoir, "The Rev. Archibald Bruce, Whitburn," in The
Original Secession Magazine, Volume X, Number III, May 1871,
and Volume X, Number IV, July 1871.

HOBART, R. R., "Archibald Bruce of Whitburn," in The Original
Secession Magazine, Volume I, Number XII, December 1903.
APPENDIX # 1

"On the War Between Britain and America"

What do I hear? - What doleful news
Come wafted o'er the billowy main?
Shall Britain now a tear refuse,
To her own sons and heroes slain?

Beneath the direful rage of war
Earth trembles, and the ocean groans;
I hear the thunders from afar!
I hear the deep and deadly moans!

Are these the wounds of foreign foes
Sworn enemies to Britain's weal?
Do sons of Rome inflict those woes?
Or savage tribes her plains assail?

Ah, no! by other hands she bleeds,
And brethren fall by brethren slain:
Her evil demon discord speeds,
And drags these horrors in her train.

Say, is this vict'ry? while the streams
Of kindred blood so plenteous run;
While conquest all reward disclaims,
And success by itself's undone?

Let Britain's foes the tale repeat
For none but they have cause to joy;
Let Britons view in sad regret
Heav'n arm'd with vengeance to destroy.

How long with fumes of pleasure drunk
Shall they the lifted scourge despise;
And deep in vice and lux'ry sunk,
Contemn the ruler of the skies:—

Whose voice commands the rolling seas,
And people's noisy tumult stills,
Who bends the hearts of men with ease,
Whose work the wrath of man fulfils:

In whose Almighty hand resides
The fate of kingdoms, and of kings;
He bids them rise; again he chides,
And down the pageant image brings.
Be wise at last! vain feuds forego;  
And turn to heav'n the tearful eye:  
O guilty nation! prostrate bow  
To him whose arm the shafts lets fly.

Can war and carnage stalk around,  
And desolation rear her throne;  
Is evil in a city found;  
And hath not God the evil done?

Shall the loud trumpet sound alarm,  
Nor listening crowds be mov'd with fear?  
Shall a weak herd presage no harm,  
When they the lion's roaring hear?

The false illusive glass throw by,  
Through which blind politician's gaze;  
And through a juster medium spy  
Dread Providence's mystic ways.

Know that no blind unmeaning laws  
Direct the mighty frame of things:  
For moral ends - for moral cause,  
Revolving time its events brings.

See where the sins of Britain rise,  
See all her garments dy'd with blood!  
Her unwash'd crimes have deeper dies  
Than those which stain her purple flood.

Hid from the Courtier's dazzl'd eye,  
Hid from the jaundic'd Patriot's sight,  
The guilty rolls unopen'd ly  
In dust of years; ne'er brought to light.

This is the land where th' iron rod  
Of lawless power the good opprest;  
Hence lawless faction stalks abroad  
To tear her bowels, break her rest;

The land, where tyrants' impious spite  
Dash'd the fair temple to the ground  
Of sacred liberty and right;  
Where conscience no asylum found.

The land, whose barb'rous edicts drove  
The helpless fathers o'er the main,  
Whose sons unaw'd by fear or love  
Rise to repay the wrong again.
And this the land, which burnt its leagues,
And broke its plighted faith with heav'n
Hence trampled laws; - hence dark intrigues,
To other leagues a birth have given

The violated bonds still cry,
Their ashes cry yet from the ground:
And martyr'd souls invoke the sky,
Whose blood in Britain's skirts is found. ¹

¹ [Bruce], Poems: Serious and Amusing by a Rural Divine,
(C.W. 9, pp. 18-21.)
"The Christian's Triumph Over Death"

An Ode

I

While hov'ring on the awful brink,  
With vast Eternity in view,  
Why does my heart in sadness sink?  
Or tremble at Death's threatening brow?  
Or why before my fainting eyes  
Do gloomy shades and terrors rise?  
Why should rude tempests vex my breast;  
Or anxious doubts disturb my rest?  
The Christian in his last conflicting hour,  
May at Death's aspect smile, and meet his utmost pow'r.

VI

The dear Redeemer (bless his boundless grace  
Ye who in bondage pass your mourning days!)  
Has laid the basis of unshaken peace,  
And furnish'd matter for eternal praise.  
His blessed feet have trod the dreary vale,  
His flaming love has scatter'd all its shades:  
He drank the cup, and emptied all its gall;  
Before his face dissolving darkness fled.  
Awake, all ye who dwell in dust, and sing!  
"O Grave, where is thy pow'r! O Death, where is thy sting?"

VII

See where the Lord of life did lie!  
Earth's caverns for a time his dome:  
But wide again the portals fly;  
He bursts resistless from the tomb.  
See Death transfixed with mortal wound!  
His dart drops harmless to the ground:  
The conqu'ring grave, destruction feels:  
Drag'd at the Victor's chariot-wheels  
The prince of hell, with all his hosts in chains,  
Are captive trophies led, - while Jesus lives and reigns.
VIII

With shouts he re-ascends his native sky,
All glorious with the crown in battle won;
Th' eternal gates lift up their heads on high,
And glad admit him to his heav'nly throne:
Around all principalities adore
The King immortal - mighty now to save;
Whose voice proclaims, "I di'd, but die no more;
"I wear the keys of death and of the grave."
Th' expiring saint the glad'ning accents hears,
Pants keen for endless life, and joys unmix'd with tears.

IX

The radiant mansions of the sky,
Where glory from its fountain springs,
Unveil to the believing eye,
Beyond the scene of mortal things.
Down to the mournful vale below
The crystal streams of pleasure flow,
The ravish'd soul, before she flies,
The distant happy land espies:
Th' angelic guard appears; - the blissful throng
In whitest robes array'd, invite to join their song.

X

"What now (she cries) shall keep me from my God?
"Why should I wish to linger here in clay?
"Vain world, adieu! I reach the blest abode:
"Adieu! dear friends, nor tempt my longer stay.
"I go where pain and death shall never come;
"To light more splendid than the mid-day sun,
"I go to hail, when tongue in dust lies dumb,
"The Prince of Peace, who victory hath won.
"This mortal for immortal I resign:
"'Tis Christ who died, and lives; - now life and death are mine."

---

1 [Bruce], Poems: Serious and Amusing by a Rural Divine,
(C. W. 9, pp. 21-25).