

History of the RPCNA
Fresno Reformed Presbyterian Church
Sunday School, September 21, 2014
Week 3 → Overview of the Persecution of the Covenanters

- I. Review
 - a. 1st Reformation in Scotland followed by Struggles between Presbyterianism & Prelacy
 - b. 2nd Reformation in Scotland (National Covenant & Solemn League & Covenant)

- II. Understanding the Controversy
 - a. Stewart Dynasty & the Divine Right of Kings
 - b. Covenanter Position of Christ's Kingship
 - c. This Controversy has had tremendous effect on the Church & the World

- III. Overview from Cromwell through James II
 - a. Occupation by Cromwell
 - b. Restoration of Charles II
 - c. Charles II & James II and the Church of Scotland
 - i. Presbyterianism eliminated & Episcopalianism established
 - ii. Indulgences
 - iii. Persecution

- IV. Other Considerations of the Persecution of the Covenanters
 - a. Covenanter opposition to the King
 - i. Public Protests & Testimonies
 - ii. Armed Defense & Conflict
 - b. Extent of the persecution

- V. The Revolution Settlement & William of Orange

FRPC Sunday School – History of the RPCNA – Quotes for Week 3

1. “The alliance was an unhappy one from the beginning, for the respective national causes differed radically. The ground of the Scottish quarrel, after all superficialities had been cleared away, was religion; that of the English was essentially the more mundane constitutional point of legal taxation...It would have been better...if in 1643 two covenants had been drawn up, one dealing with civil, the other with religious affairs.”
– J.D. Douglas
2. Quotes from The True Law of Free Monarchies by King James I in 1598
 - a. “The State of monarchy is the supreme thing on Earth...As to dispute what God may do is blasphemy, so is it treason in subjects to dispute what a king may do.”
 - b. “A good king will frame his actions according to the law, yet he is not bound thereto but of his own goodwill.”
 - c. “First it is a sure Axiom of Theology, that evil should not be done, that good may come of it. The wickedness therefore of a king, can never make them that are ordained to be judged by him, to become his judges...I grant indeed a wicked king is sent by God for a curse to his people, and a plague for their sins.”
3. “No Bishop, no king.” – King James I
4. “If you aim at a Presbytery, it agrees as well with monarchy as God and the Devil.” – King James I
5. “This ill-fated theory was to lead Mary Queen of Scots and Charles I to execution, cost James VII his throne, and spell the doom of the Stuart dynasty.” – J.D. Douglas (re: Divine Right of Kings)
6. “that it may guide you beyond the rocks of flattery and not only give you advice, but also keep you in the road you are so happily entered, and in case of any deviation, replace you in the line of duty.” – George Buchanan the dedication of his book to King James I
7. “Sire, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland; there is King James the head of this commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. We will yield to you your place, and give you all obedience; but again I say you are not the head of the Church; you cannot give us that eternal life, which we seek for even in this world, and you cannot deprive us of it. Permit us then freely to meet in the name of Christ, and to attend to the interests of that Church of which you are a member. Sire, when ye was in your swaddling-clothes, Christ reigned freely in this land, his ministers and servants did then freely in his name what they ought to do; and now, when ye are come to the kingdom, will ye take it upon you to make encroachments?” – Andrew Melville speaking to King James I
8. “Whenever ye are enjoined to do anything by any man...forget not this dignity and power that God has over you, and that you are the people of Jesus Christ; and therefore no man ought to enjoin anything to be done by you, but that for which he has a warrant from God. There is a great controversy now about disobedience to superiors, and the contempt of those who are in authority; but there is not a word of that, whether God be obeyed or not, or if He be disobeyed by any...Try anything that the magistrates impose upon you, before ye obey it, if it is warranted by God or not; because God is the only superior over you.” – Alexander Henderson
9. “Christ lives and reigns alone in His Church, and will have all done therein according to His Word and will, and that He has given no supreme headship over His Church to any Pope, King, or Parliament whatsoever...We hear much of the breach of privilege and of the Covenant in relation to the civil right. Let us remember...the Covenant begins with the advancement and ends with the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ...All laws contrary to the will of Christ are acknowledged to be void in His Kingdom...There is no

authority to be balanced against His, nor posts to be set up against His...Is it so small a thing to have the sword, but they must have the keys also?" – Archibald Johnston in a speech before Westminster Assembly

10. "The reformed churches believe... the power and authority of emperors, kings, princes and dukes over their dominions, and of other magistrates or states over their commonwealths and cities, to be the ordinances of God himself appointed as well to the manifestation of His own glory...and we must not only suffer and be content that those do rule...but also love them, fear them, and with all reverence and honor embrace them as the ambassadors and ministers of the most high and good God, being in His stead, and preferred for the good of their subjects, to pour out prayers for them, to pay tribute to them, and in all business of the commonwealth which is not against the Word of God to obey their laws and edicts." – George Gillespie
11. "We find it so frequently in the mouths of the covenanters, the firm opposition of the Reformed Church of Scotland to two principles: the authority of the civil power in spiritual matters, and the prelatie superiority of one minister over others. This opposition, consistently maintained to this day, involves the necessary corollary that a thorough-going Presbyterian Church (or any holding similar tenets) can never be completely relied upon by civil rulers who wish to use it as a mere engine of state for their own political ends." – J.D. Douglas
12. "At first blush, the inclusion of a whole volume on the Scottish Covenanters in a series covering two thousand years of Christian history may be put down to an excess of provincialism on someone's part. But the inclusion of this volume is due to something more than an exaggerated estimate of the importance of seventeenth-century Scotland in the on-going story of the Church in the world...the story of the Scottish Covenanters, limited as it is in space and time, brings out in sharp outline a crucial issue which the Christian Church has had to face from its earliest days, and which is as acute today as ever it was...The issue is that of the relation between Church and State...There are still times when it must be emphasized that the civil ruler as such, even when he is a Christian, has no authority in church councils beyond that of the humblest church member. On the other hand, the obedience which a Christian man, or the Christian community, owes to the civil ruler, even when the ruler is a Christian, is never absolute. There are times when it may be not merely a Christian right, but a Christian duty, to disobey the civil ruler: when his claims clash with the law of God, the Christian will say with the apostles: 'We must obey God rather than men.' Where men so conscious of their Christian right and duty as the Covenanters were confronted by men so blindly insistent on imposing their own will as the Stuarts, the resultant conflict revealed the issues involved in exceptional clarity." – F.F. Bruce (forward to J.D. Douglas Book)
13. "I, Charles...do assert and declare, by my solemn Oath, in the Presence of Almighty God, the Searcher of Hearts, my Allowance and Approbation of the National Covenant, and of the Solemn League and Covenant...and faithfully oblige myself to prosecute the Ends thereof in my Station and Calling...and fully establishing Presbyterian Government...and that I shall observe these in my own Practice and Family, and shall never make Opposition to any of these, or endeavor any change thereof." – Charles II Coronation Oath
14. "An odd stipulation was included in his recognition by the Scots...this involved the acceptance of both Covenants, and the swearing of an oath to establish Presbyterianism in all his dominions...The first Charles had preferred to die rather than sign the Covenant, on which condition the Scottish army would have come to his aid in England. No trace of any such fervent religious feeling characterized his son. He was prepared to swallow the Covenant at a gulp, to give himself the chance of possessing a crown which he had never worn." – J.D. Douglas
15. "...being again sent there...for that same business, we did sinfully both entangle and engage the nation and ourselves, and that poor young prince to whom we were sent; making him sign and swear a covenant, which we knew, from clear and demonstrable reasons, that he hated in his heart. Yet, finding that upon these terms only, he could be admitted to rule over us (all other means having then failed him) he sinfully complied with

what we most sinfully pressed upon him; where, I must confess, to my apprehension, our sin was more than his.” – Alexander Jaffray (Scottish commissioner sent to negotiate with Charles II)

16. “In 1653, the two parties held general assemblies at the same time in the same building, St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh with a partition between them.” – J.G. Vos
17. “While the Resolution and Protestor Assemblies were meeting...an officer in Cromwell’s army appeared on the scene with a body of soldiers, entered the Church, and inquired by whose authority the Resolutioner Assembly was sitting. Was it by authority of Charles II or Cromwell? The moderator replied, ‘We sit here by the authority of Jesus Christ and by the law of this land, whereby we are authorized to keep General Assemblies from year to year.’...[he] ordered the Resolutioner General Assembly to leave the Church, and after he had led them a mile outside of Edinburgh, he released the commissioners, ordering them to depart to their homes on pain of being held for breach of the peace.” – J.G. Vos
18. “...by this solemn oath, I acknowledge my said sovereign [Charles II], only supreme governor of this kingdom, over all persons, and in all causes...and never decline his majesty’s power or jurisdiction, as I shall answer to God.” – 1661 Oath of Allegiance
19. “That his Majesty hath the supreme authority and supremacy over all persons and in all causes ecclesiastical within this his kingdom; and that, by virtue thereof, the ordering and disposal of the external government and policy of the Church doth properly belong to his Majesty and his successors, as an inherent right of the crown; and that his Majesty and his successors may settle, enact, and emit such constitutions, acts, and orders, concerning the administration of the external government of the Church, and the persons employed in the same, and concerning all ecclesiastical meetings, and matters to be proposed and determined therein, as they in their royal wisdom shall think fit.” 1669 Assertory Act
20. “These were the worst preachers I ever heard. They were ignorant to a reproach and many of them were openly vicious. They were the dregs and refuse of the northern part of Scotland.” – Scottish Bishop referring to replacement ministers after the ejection of ministers in 1662
21. “When the offer was proposed to a Mr. Blair, minister of Galston, he received the paper from the official who offered it, saying, ‘My Lord Chancellor, I cannot be so uncivil as to refuse a paper offered to me by your Lordship.’ He then let the paper fall to the floor, and added, ‘but I can receive no instructions from you for regulating the exercise of my ministry; for if I should receive instructions from you, I should be your ambassador, not Christ’s.’ Blair was imprisoned for his words, and died soon after.” – J.G. Vos
22. “permitted to meet and serve God after their own way and manner, be it in private houses, chapels, or places purposely hired or built for that use, so that they take care that nothing be preached or taught among them which may in any ways tend to alienate the hearts of our people from us or our government.” – Portion from 3rd Indulgence under James II
23. “At this time, the Court of High Commission could inflict any punishment short of death; many were fined and imprisoned, others banished, and some sold as slaves. It appears that of all the persons tried by the Court of High Commission, not a single one was acquitted, or escaped without suffering some penalty.” – J.G. Vos
24. “In the summer of 1670 the Parliament passed a second act against conventicles. All previous measures had failed to stop the ‘seditious’ meetings, and this act, with others passed at the same time, provided legislation intended to suppress utterly all religious meetings not held in parish Churches, and to exterminate those who attended and supported such meetings. Every person was required to give evidence on oath concerning conventicles and those who attended them. The penalty for refusal to testify was fine, imprisonment, or banishment. The oath could be administered at any time, and by any public official...this legislation, while

intended to suppress conventicles, failed to do so; the effect was rather to force such meetings to be held in greater secrecy and in remoter places than had been done before. One of the most diabolical features of this legislation was that it attempted to force persons to give evidence against their most intimate friends and nearest relatives. It is also worthy of note that by this legislation, death and confiscation of good was the penalty provided for conducting or preaching at a conventicle. Rewards were offered for the capture of conventicle preachers.” – J.G. Vos

25. “The appearance in arms at Pentland, Drumclog, Bothwell-Bridge, and Airmoss in unpremeditated attempts at necessary, though desperate self-defense, and in vindication of the outraged liberties of the church and nation, we regard as justifiable on the admitted principles of national law, from the example of God’s saints recorded in history, and the noble struggles of such nations as have achieved constitutional freedom. To some, in deed, they may appear to have been rash and inexpedient, inasmuch as they led to increased sufferings and oppression. They served, nevertheless, as a just though unsuccessful protest against the reckless conduct of infatuated rulers, and as an impressive testimony in behalf of principles which the British nation endorsed in the ultimate rejection of the house of Stuart.” – RPC Ireland Testimony
26. “A secularist, he [King Charles II] shook off Presbyterianism as a viper, utilized Episcopacy as the readiest political tool, and finally put on Popery as a comfortable shroud to die in.” – J.D. Douglas
27. “I would either convert England or die a martyr, and I had rather die the next day and convert it, than reign 20 years piously and happily, and not affect it.” – King James II to a Catholic Priest
28. “Nothing vindicates the position of the Covenanters through the persecuting years so much as the fact that their consistent arguments for renouncing the Stuart kings, which had led to the sacrifice of several thousand Presbyterian lives, became now the reasons offered to the world for the righteousness of the invasion of Britain by a foreign liberator.” – J.D. Douglas
29. “The right of revolution, the right of a nation to decide when its rulers had forfeited the right to rule, on which the Covenanters had repeatedly insisted, was now being claimed and exercised, not merely by a few thousand persecuted persons, but by the Estates of Scotland, representing the whole nation, in convention assembled.” – J.G. Vos