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The Great Alteration: The Motivation behind the Rebellion Following the Imposition of the 1637 Scottish Book of Common Prayer

Ashley Vee Foster

Introduction

AT THE BEGINNING OF 1638, a group of men congregated at the Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh, Scotland to mark their names on a contract which would become legendary in following centuries as a turning point in Scottish history.¹ Ministers, nobles, and laypeople came together to endorse a national document which promised to “stand...in the defence and preservation of the foresaid true Religion, Liberties, and Lawes of the Kindgome.”² These signatories pledged to preserve the religious and political rights of their native land by declaring “if any such dangerous & divisive motion be made to us by Word or Writ, We and every one of us, shall either suppress it, or...it may be timeously obviated.”³ Offensive political and religious motions will be furiously revoked for “neither do we fear the foul aspersions of rebellion, combination, or what else our adversaries from their craft and malice would put upon us” in protecting the “true Religion, Liberties, and Lawes” of Scotland.⁴ Thus, the National Covenant of 1638 promised to defend Scottish liberties in politics and religion to the point of armed rebellion

if needed. A year later in February 1639, that need for open armed rebellion took hold of Scotland as the first of two Bishop Wars pitted the Covenanters against the reigning Stuart, Charles I.⁵ Roughly three years later, Charles raised the standard of his second kingdom to announce the start of the English Civil War against the Parliamentarians, men who had been greatly influenced by the success of their northern brethren in opposing their king.

The fervent nature of this National Covenant, which spearheaded royal revolt in Scotland, stemmed in part from an incident which happened a year before its inception at Greyfriars Church. On 23 July 1637, the Scottish royal Crown enforced the reading of a new Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments in Edinburgh kirks. This reading spawned an extensive national opposition as the imposition of the new prayer book conflicted with two chief principles mentioned in the National Covenant, religion and liberties. This new liturgical innovation was the conclusive straw in a long and complex history between inhabitants of Charles’s northern kingdom and the Crown. Charles’s enforcement of the book ultimately led to a national revolt in defence of not only the institution of the Scottish Kirk but the entire political kingdom of Scotland as well. While Scottish animosity certainly derived from the religious nature of the 1637 Book of Common Prayer and its conflict with Scottish Calvinism, it also originated, perhaps even more significantly, from Charles’s complete disregard for the institutions and liberties of Scotland. He entirely bypassed the Scottish Kirk and parliament to introduce his book into the kingdom. To illustrate the king’s lack of concern for these Scottish principles, a detailed analysis of the incompatible religious

1 Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1992), 264.

2 “National Covenant,” 1638, in *Scottish Historical Documents*, Ed. Gordon Donaldson (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press Ltd, 1970), 200.

3 *Ibid*, 201.

4 *Ibid* 200-201.

5 Lynch, 265.

ideologies inhabiting the British Isles in the seventeenth century precedes a description of the Scottish Kirk as a rallying institution for Scottish Lowland nobility and laymen. Specific acts in the decades prior to 1637 will depict the rationality behind the fierce and far-reaching reactions of that year. All of this, in turn, will attempt to explain the Scottish (Lowlanders' in particular) stress and actions over their king's indifference towards their Scottish liberties.

The Riot of 1637

On a Sunday in late July 1637, the regular congregation of the High Kirk at St. Giles in Edinburgh was visited by a prominent entourage of national importance. This group was composed of not only the two archbishops of Scotland along with eight of his bishops, but also members of the king's own privy council and the majority of the Scottish judicial body, the Lords of the Sessions. They came to the church previously ministered by John Knox himself to attend the first service conducted according to the new Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments. However, unimpressed with the prestige of their fellow guests, the congregants of St. Giles openly and almost immediately expressed their hostility towards the new royally approved proceedings. When the dean began reading aloud, a substantial number of Scots simply walked out while remaining others began shouting abuses at him.⁶ John Leslie, the sixth Earl of Rothes, recalled the reading "made sum out of zeall, sum out of grieffe, and sum from astonishment at such a change, vent their words and cryes" while further "provok[ing] a number of the Commons...to cry out, and, it is alledged, to throw stones at the Bischops."⁷ Legend even mentions a stool being hurled in

the direction of the dean's own pulpit. After such a public outcry, the dean retreated from his podium, but people continued to demonstrate not only outside the High Kirk of St Giles but also outside three other Edinburgh churches which had practiced the new liturgy that Sunday. Fleeing the capital dissenters, the bishop of Edinburgh's coach was stoned as he travelled to Holyroodhouse Palace, one of Charles's royal residences in the capital city.⁸ Rothes attributed the demonstrations to "these people, formalie patient under all uther new devyces that wer brought in by degrees, [who] were unable to bear at ane instant so great a change as appeired, in the mater, to those of best understanding, and, in the manner and forme, to the weakest...to change the whole externall frame of Gods publict worschip formerlie practised."⁹ The open hostility towards the new liturgy led the Scottish royal council to abandon the book on 29 July, less than a week after its implementation. Yet, still the dissidence did not cease. Scots flooded the privy council with over sixty-eight petitions and supplications against the prayer book. These petitions extended from Fife to Dumfriesshire and were a result of collaboration between over a hundred ministers and a third of the nobility who worked alongside burgesses and gentry men.¹⁰ By October, the privy council no longer felt safe in Edinburgh and moved to Linlithgow, literally abandoning the capital to nonconformists and dissidents.¹¹ Citizens of Edinburgh were demanding the hanging of those involved.¹² By November, the established four Tables of Scotland representing the four main political groups of the kingdom, the no-

⁸ Lynch, 263.

⁹ Rothes, 2.

¹⁰ Allan I. Macinnes, *Charles I and the Making of the Covenanting Movement, 1625-1641* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1991), 160.

¹¹ Lynch, 263.

¹² Allen B Bircher, "Archbishop John Spottiswoode: Chancellor of Scotland, 1635-1638," *Church History*, vol 39 no. 3 (Sept 1970), 324, www.jstor.org/stable/3163467 (accessed February 2010).

⁶ Ibid., 263.

⁷ John Leslie, 6th Earl of Rothes, *A Relation of proceedings concerning the affairs of the Kirk of Scotland from August 1637 to July 1638*, (Edinburgh, 1830), 3.

bility, ministers, burgesses, and lairds, began to organise themselves so that in three months time they could spawn the National Covenant.¹³

The Desired Union of Two Clashing Churches

Charles I had wanted a new Scottish liturgy in 1637 to bring the Scottish Kirk in closer alignment with his Anglican church to the south. As king of both Scotland and England, Charles sought the amalgamation of the national churches of his two kingdoms. His father, James VI of Scotland, had inherited the English throne following the death of Elizabeth I and so combined the two royal thrones in 1603. Yet to James's frustration, the Union of the Crowns did not immediately lead to a union of the kingdoms as he desired. His successor, Charles, hoped creating one comprehensive British Church would help consolidate his power as the sole ruler of the British Isles.¹⁴ However, the union of the Scottish Kirk and the Anglican Church would never occur as he desperately wished and planned for. They were just too different. The two kingdoms were both Protestant in declaration by the 1630s, but both the histories and the forms of Protestantism differed significantly. England, which had become Protestant as the result of a royal decision was Anglican and Episcopalian, while the realm of Scotland, where the Reformation had been a grass-roots effort, which had not included the monarch, was Calvinist and Presbyterian. This meant England's church followed more in line with the Roman Catholic Church in form of ritual and governmental hierarchy than the Scottish Kirk with its system of austere doctrine and governmental assemblies. Furthermore, England's Protestant Reformation owes its foundation and success to the firm tenacity and resolve of the English Crown in the form of Henry VIII and his daughter Elizabeth I to see it wi-

dely practiced by Englishmen. Thus, the English Crown played a direct role in the personal religion of its subjects. Scotland's Protestant Reformation, on the other hand, was born during a time in which it directly countered a Catholic monarch, Mary, Queen of Scots. The Scottish Crown played hardly any role in the inception of Scottish Protestantism. Its Protestantism grew from a gradual burgh-to-burgh spreading, not royal decree.¹⁵ Conversion of the majority made Scotland Protestant, not the conversion of one king or queen. It would be this difference which would generate two different churches, who on the surface both declared to be of the same Christian branch. However, in both doctrine and structure, these churches conflicted markedly.

Scottish Religious Opposition to the 'Popish' Service Book

Religious opposition arose from a variety of complaints specific to Scottish Presbyterian beliefs. The very existence of the prayer book originated from Charles instructing Scottish bishops in the early 1630s to draft a new liturgy using the English Common Prayer Book as a basis for the new Scottish one. Further, any draft or amendment had to be approved by himself in advisement with the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud, William Juxon, bishop of London, and Matthew Wren, bishop of Norwich, all ironically men of the Anglican Church.¹⁶ Thus, Scottish bishops overseen by English residents produced a book in which Scottish Presbyterians saw the Crown attempting to adulterate their national church with Anglican practices. For instance during compiling, Scottish advisors warned against reproducing the full English Prayer Book Kalender in the Scottish equivalent. The Kirk had long condemned

13 Lynch, 263.

14 Ibid., 269.

15 David Mathew, *Scotland under Charles I* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1955), x.

16 Macinnes, 145-146.

saint and holy days as popish customs. Charles, however, refused to exempt such days, and thus, the book possessed the observance of twenty-nine saint days, or two more than the English version. Scots also disagreed with the book's instruction to stand at the reading of the Gospels, the Gloria Patri, and the Creeds. They believed standing implied a particular passage of Scripture was more important than another. The communion table was also called to be specifically placed at the uppermost part of the church, which would put it in an eastward position. The minister then would be placed at the table's north end. According to the opponents of the book, this would not only give an elevated appearance to the table and the minister but also mimic a sacrifice.¹⁷ The book's passages of the Apocrypha also contradicted with traditional doctrine of the Scottish Kirk who denied any usage of it.¹⁸ Private baptisms, responses, ornament rubrics, and fixed vestments upheld in the service book were additionally rejected. The use of wafer bread was even attacked because it represented Charles trying to impose high Anglican tendencies on the Kirk.¹⁹ Much of Scotland would not accept the 1637 prayer book because they saw it as an English attempt to corrupt the pristine Scottish Kirk with popish doctrine.

The Incompatible Ideologies of Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism

While there were specific doctrinal and liturgical religious differences, one must not overlook the differing governmental ideologies of the two national churches which caused tension among Scottish subjects. James and Charles were especially favourable to Episcopacy and its structure of hierarchy, specifically the hierarchical system

supported under the Church of England. Anglican doctrine allowed bishops to have a prestigious and important function in ecclesiastical affairs. In turn, the monarchs also viewed them as essential figures in parliament to represent royal interests.²⁰ The Scottish Kirk possessed a different opinion of the existence and/or role of bishops. As early as 1578, the Scottish Kirk's Second Book of Discipline stated that in the church the name bishop was "not a name of superioritie and lordschip, bot of office and watching."²¹ In the 1570s, while there might be an actual bishopric office in the Kirk, the existence of such an office did not necessarily mean that one minister was superior or inferior to another. Such a thing in their mind was not scripturally based for "it agries not with the Word of God that bishops sould be pastors of pastors."²² Yet even though the Book of Discipline supported the actual presence of bishops in the Kirk's ranks, it did not shy away from mentioning the abuses of this particular church office. The authors clearly declare "the corruption of the kirk" has allowed "this name (as uthers) [to] have bene abusit, and yit is lykelye to be."²³

The dispute centred on who was allowed the final say on ecclesiastical affairs. This would have political and religious implications in the future. The Stuarts believed Scottish ecclesiastical authority should reside with the king and bishops as it did in England. This would give Charles, with his absolutist attitude, the royal prerogative in all final ecclesiastical decisions.²⁴ However, the actual government of the Scottish Kirk has been described by Scottish historian Allan Macinnes as "conciliar and anti-erastian," meaning the church was not subjected to the authority of the state and the Anglican system of hierarchical courts

17 Gordon Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637* (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh University Press, 1954), 74-78.

18 Mathew, 249.

19 Donaldson, 73, 77-78.

20 Macinnes, 17.

21 "Second Book of Discipline," 1578, in *Scottish Historical Documents*, 148.

22 Mathew, 43; "Second Book of Discipline," 148.

23 "Second Book of Discipline," 148.

24 Lynch, 269.

and councils.²⁵ Presbyterian Scots, also referred to as Melvilleans after the zealous Scottish pastor Andrew Melville, sought a national church based upon a presbyterian system of courts, beginning at the local kirk sessions and advancing to the district presbyteries and regional synods concluding at the national assembly with representatives from kirks around Protestant Scotland. In these egalitarian courts composed of elected elders would ecclesiastical matters be decided.²⁶ The Act authorising Presbyterian Government itself was ratified in 1592, over thirty years before Charles came to power and eight years before he was born. Presbyterianism was not a new dissenting factor in the 1630s sprung up to try to curb Charles's royal power. Long before his coronation, Scotland's parliament "declairis that it salbe lauchfull to the kirk...to hald and keip generall assemblies" along with "sinodall and provinciall assemblies to be haldin by the said kirk...[and] presbyteries and particulare sessions."²⁷ In these assemblies,

God hes gevin to the spirituall office beraris in the kirk concerning headis of religioun, materis of heresie, excommunication, collatioun or deprivation of ministeris or ony sic essentiall censouris speciall groundit and havand warrand of the Word of God... with full power to thame to giff collationis thairupoun and to put ordour to all materis and caussis ecclesiasticall winthin thair boundis.²⁸

According to the act, ecclesiastical authority rested in the hands of ruling bodies of religiously equal men who decided together as a group on religious matters which fell under the church's jurisdiction. Such a system could be accomplished because of the 'nonexistent' hierarchal system of pastoral offices in the Scottish Kirk. One's word did not weigh more than another's just because of his title. The-

re existed an idea of parity among believers and pastors who all were subjects to the same absolute sovereignty of God.²⁹

Yet, still James and Charles embraced the idea of the Crown controlling religious power in Scotland. David Mathew attributes this desire for royal absolute religious control as an attempt by the Stuarts to curb political Calvinism. Therefore, Kirk presbyterian representation in parliament was highly frowned upon and the Stuarts tried to crowd the seats in the legislative body with bishops who would owe their allegiance to the king and thus would prevent the political ascendancy of Kirk presbyterian leaders. Mathew emphasises James's decisions as being completely motivated by justifications of policy and administrative conveniences. James saw the elevation of bishops in his reign as a symbol of his political victory and thus a realisation of his political hegemony. It was not a religious conversion that made him Episcopalian. It was the political advantages to royal sovereignty that Episcopalianism offered.³⁰

Calvinism offered little if no political benefit to an absolutist royal monarch. In fact,, seventeenth-century Scottish Calvinism seemed to directly work against such royal hegemony. The Second Book of Discipline clearly proclaims the reformed church's perspective on ecclesiastical and civil disciplines. In the 1578 document, the Kirk has been granted special power from God in which "this power and policie ecclesiasticall is different and distinct in the awin nature from that power and policie quhilk is callit civill power."³¹ According to the Presbyterians, this authority stemmed "immediatlie from God and the Mediator Jesus Christ, and is spirituall, not having a temporall heid on earth, bot onlie Christ, the onlie spirituall King and

25 Macinnes, 16.

26 Ibid, 17.

27 "Act authorising Presbyterian Government," 1592, in *Scottish Historical Documents*, 160.

28 Ibid, 161.

29 Mathew, 43.

30 Ibid., 80-83.

31 "Second Book of Discipline," 144.

Governour of his kirk.”³² In turn, civil officers are censured by “the kirk spiritually and in ecclesiasticall government. And the exercise of both these jurisdictiones cannot stand in one person ordinarlie.”³³ Thus, there is a belief in a boundary between the civil and religious states. Religion was under the jurisdiction of the Kirk and political power was under the duty of the state. Kirk ministers were not to practice any other profession but the ministry. If there was any overlap in the two separate spheres, it would be the religious state exercising moral influence over the political nation and not the political nation influencing the religious one. The Kirk had the ability and the obligation to exercise moral supervision over the civic state. Calvinism even taught that if civic leaders were tyrannical, then men had the duty to rebel against their ungodly monarch, even to the point of armament.³⁴

But in reality, such division in theory was not practiced, and political and religious offices were thoroughly intertwined. The power of bishops in governmental affairs was staggering even when one just notes the methods used to compile a parliamentary committee. For example, the Lords of Articles was established to compose the agenda for upcoming parliamentary sessions. Under James and Charles, the members were chosen by a process which guaranteed royal dominance in the committee. Eight nobles were chosen by Kirk bishops. Most of the selected nobility were royal courtiers and none possessed nonconformist ties. In turn, these eight nobles picked eight bishops. Then, these sixteen men together chose eight shire and eight burgh commissioners. These hand-selected gentry predominantly possessed a history of royal patronage. As a result, the Stuarts could with some assurance determine the agenda of a parliamentary session. This was a way Episcopalianism benefited the royal political agenda

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Macinnes, 16-17.

and thus was a reason why Melvilleans wanted the two spheres separate.³⁵

The Scottish Kirk Becoming the Scottish Glue³⁶

While Charles was using bishops for governmental gain, he was also simultaneously alienating himself further from his subjects. This miscalculation by the absentee monarch Charles had a shattering effect on Scottish identity. In a 1638 pamphlet issued after the revolt of the service book and the formation of the Covenant, the protesters stressed that Charles had spent too much time away from his original kingdom. Out of the many grievances the writers had against the service book and the process to attain it, they still mention the length of “His Majesties absence from his native kingdome.”³⁷ They find time to specifically designate this particular injustice, ironically in the very first paragraph. They never forgot or forgave Charles’s

35 Ibid, 87.

36 When I am referring to the Scottish Kirk becoming the Scottish glue/adhesive, binding Scots together to sharing a common identity, I am referring mostly to Scottish Lowlanders. The majority of Scots inhabiting the Highlands and Northern Isles remain Catholic (except for the south-western Earl of Argyll). Thus, this next section (and in fact this paper) deals mainly with the rise of the Scottish Kirk in the eyes of Lowlanders, who were chiefly Protestant and, hence, were concerned with a royally imposed liturgy book corrupting their version of Protestantism. One could certainly argue that if considered from a Highlander perspective, the notion of the Scottish Kirk becoming synonymous with the Scottish identity would fall apart. I am taking this viewpoint of the Scottish Kirk as one of identity because, in this paper, I am interested in the political/religious identity and beliefs of the Protestant nation that revolted against the Book of Common Prayer and published pamphlets (and soon the National Covenant) emphasising their view of Scottish religion and liberties. As far as I know, the majority of Gaelic lords did not take part in the riots of 1637.

37 “The Protestation of the Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Borrowes, Ministers, and Commons.” 28 June 1638, in Microfilm 21903. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilm, 1970), 1.

physical absence from Scotland. This absenteeism or abandonment felt by the Scots began with James VI when he packed his bags in Edinburgh and permanently relocated to London in 1603. He returned to his homeland only once in his remaining twenty-two years of reign. His successor, Charles, was born in Scotland in 1600 but soon left as a three year old with the royal family. He did not return until his coronation in 1633.

Hence from 1603 and onwards, Scotland's king did not reside in the royal capital but in a city four hundred miles away. Its king also had to be shared

with a more populous and wealthier nation to the south, which ironically was Scotland's traditional enemy. As the years progressed, the Crown lost its validity in being the protector and thus symbol of Scottish independence simply because the monarch was much more concerned with the affairs of England than with those of his native land.³⁸ During his reign, Charles increasingly exhibited favouritism to Englishmen over Scotsmen. After the Duke of Buckingham's rise in the king's favour, court and governmental positions were restricted from Scots. The nobility soon lacked any chances to advance themselves in the eyes of the royal court.³⁹ As a result, the nobility felt alienated from their king as his own administration became progressively less responsive to the expectations of the noble-led political nation. In turn, these men grew more apprehensive in dealing with instructions from Court and less devout in their desire to preserve Charles's monarchical position in Scotland on their own. His monarchical influence in Edinburgh was fading.⁴⁰

In the wake of this power void in Scotland, the

Scottish Kirk rose in the hearts and minds of its people to supersede the royal Crown. The Kirk became the emerging symbol of Scottish identity and not the Stuart king since he was no longer the quintessential Scot. The welfare and prosperity of the Scottish kingdom ceased to rest in the hands of the monarch. Instead, it rested in the hands of the Kirk, in the hands of the ministers who created it and the

nobles who led it. The Kirk would have such an effect on the mindset of contemporary Scots and their identity that the eighteenth-century Scottish historian Da-

**All felt that the process in which the
Book of Common Prayer was introduced
infringed upon their liberties.**

vid Hume could correlate an attack on presbyterian polity as an attack on Scotland itself.⁴¹ Scottish Presbyterianism became heavily intertwined with Scottish patriotism. The Kirk was seen as a liberating force which freed Scotland from the chains of Rome and of heresy. It was also what separated the country from its southern neighbour and the Scots firmly believed it was what made their kingdom distinctive and nonpareil.⁴²

However, it is vital not to forget that the uniting factor of the Kirk was its doctrine and its preaching of the Word to Scots. It was the Kirk's doctrine and emphasis on preaching that allowed it to survive the turbulent sixteenth century. It was the governmental structure, discipline, and organisation that paved the way for the church's success in the beginning of the seventeenth. What the institution offered was stability and pride in religion and local life which fuelled a hope for stability and pride on a national scale.⁴³ It was created for Scots, by Scots, and served Scots. In this way, Scots believed their Kirk would preserve their beliefs not only in the private but in the public sphere as well.

38 Lynch, 243.

39 Mathew, 30.

40 Macinnes, 37-41.

41 Lynch, 243.

42 Mathew, 17, 47.

43 Ibid.

Calvinism allowed both spheres to be in their hands if the situation required. The Calvinist Kirk allowed them direct access to their religion and an access to politics through the preservation of their faith. The Reformed Church allowed Scots to be Scots and not Anglicans, Roman Catholics, or any other faith associated with an allegiance to a foreigner. Thus, protecting the Kirk became synonymous with protecting Scotland.

The Scottish kingdom and its Kirk became inseparable and soon in many accounts identical because of what the Kirk offered to the state of Scotland. Jenny Wormald attributes the success of the Kirk to its self-confidence and its absolute refusal to compromise. Scots admired these qualities in a time when they were facing a national identity crisis following the Union of 1603. In the mid to late sixteenth century, the fledging Kirk possessed hardly any finances or ministers. Yet, it openly criticised the king and demanded merchants stop trading with Catholic countries. These demands could be very detrimental in securing its long term stability, yet the church was adamant in creating a society it felt reflected the words of God even if it affected its chances for survival.⁴⁴ Thus when a Stuart king imposed an unwelcome doctrine, edict, or ruling, Scots knew the Kirk would be the best institution to invoke because it was the institution that historically had shown itself to be the most unwilling to compromise.

The Kirk also offered the chance for the Lowland aristocracy to fulfil their “military ethos.”⁴⁵ They were no longer nobles of a relatively weak and poor northern European kingdom. Under the Kirk, the nobility became inspiring Christians fighting for the establishment of the universal Church. Their duty played upon the still existing feudal atmosphere and called upon them to be defenders of the true faith. The Reformed Church finally allowed lairds, a

term for Scottish gentry, to have an opinion in the national scene through the positions of elders. The structure of the Kirk court systems ranging from local sessions to the national general assembly allowed for close relationships to spring up between shires and central government and consequently provide a link for the gentry to have a national voice. Furthermore, since Melvilleans believed ministers should only be involved in their religious calling, the gentry no longer had to compete with the clergy for professions in law or business. Lay education was stressed because the ministers, who had to be highly educated themselves, needed a scholarly congregation who could constantly read Scripture and decipher the symbolism of the Old Testament. Lairds would use this new push for mass education to their advantage in pursuit of legal training.⁴⁶

The Feud between Power-seeking Nobles and Absolutistic Kings

Thus while Charles was trying to wrestle power away from his nobles and into the hands of the bishops, his peers became more resolved to protect the power their forefathers possessed. Historically, the Scottish nobility exerted a significant influence over their ruler. Scotland had evolved as a kingdom by a coalescing of military chiefs and lords. Thus to increase their power and wealth, they either conquered each other or formed alliances which resulted in the creation of a structured system of differing hierarchal positions. Jealousy and conflict between differing clans and families vying for power were rampant, allowing for a flexible system in which families could rise and fall from power and still return to prominence decades later. This system could be sustained because their kingship was relatively weak, forcing the ruler to govern as an instrument fulfilling the will of his peers.⁴⁷ There was

44 Jenny Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community: Scotland 1470-1625* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 134.

45 *Ibid.*, 138.

46 *Ibid.*, 138-139; Mathew, 44.

47 Mathew, 17, 25.

a precedent for the nobility to exercise control over the monarch, not the monarch over the nobility as James and Charles wished it to be. Scotland also had a precedent for the kidnapping of kings by power-hungry nobles.

One could argue the noble-led revolt occurred because James began and Charles expanded upon the idea of an absolutist king in an environment where noble-led revolts traditionally dominated and influenced national politics. When England suddenly experienced a rise in aristocratic governmental involvement, Scotland witnessed a drastic reverse of participation that went against centuries of tradition. These men had been virtually abandoned by their monarch for another country's peerage and crown. They suddenly had little to no opportunity under Charles to advance in court culture and government simply because they were Scottish. None of Charles's closest advisors were Scots. Furthermore, the economic turmoil of the mid 1630s with its bad harvests and plummeting trade caused nobles to feel increasing strain on their pocketbooks. In turn, they fought for a place on the payroll in terms of pensions and governmental offices. When they received none, they readily blamed bishops for their nonsuccess. Bishops were a facile target for massive noble resentment because they were known as the group Charles and James heavily relied on to control their nobility inside and outside parliamentary sessions. For instance, the number of bishops sitting in the privy council rose from six in 1625 to nine in 1637. Hence, with no governmental positions available to the nobility, they suddenly acquired too much time on their hands with nothing to do. They had nothing to do except examine the royal government who had shut them out.⁴⁸

Seven weeks into his reign as an absentee monarch, Charles I initiated a royal program which showcased the extent of his belief in his own royal prerogative. This program would only further infuriate his nobles against

him since it struck at the very element which separated them from the common Scot, land. Spanning from 1625 to 1633, his Act of Revocation in the beginning called for former crown lands and revenues dating from the 1540s onward to be returned to the royal family. Soon however, there appeared to be no time limit to how far back in years the Crown could go to demand its former lands. Opponents criticised the fact that technically the act allowed for the right of revocation to be exercised as far back as 501 with the first king of Dalriada, Fergus macErc. After five years, the Court of Sessions finally decided the act could only revoke at the most revenue and land originating from 1455 and onwards, still though a span of one hundred and seventy-five years. After such a drastic land act, the majority of Scottish nobles suddenly felt their familial lands were now threatened by Charles and the newly imposed legislation. Many new peers created by Charles's own father had received lands carved out from former abbeys alongside the traditional nobility. These lands were part of a massive secularisation of church lands, teinds, abbey lands, and heritable jurisdictions which occurred during the Scottish Reformation and now were being recalled. They also worried the legislation allowed Charles's successors to repeal any land grant ever given by the reigning Stuart himself, for that was simply what Charles was doing now in relation to his father's grants. Therefore, the security of heirs and their inheritances would never be assured since Charles and his descendants alone would be the judges on which grants could be revoked based on its pernicious effects to the Crown. Charles used the revocation scheme to provide a constitutional basis to give him the right to annexe as much of the acquisitions of the Pre-Reformation Church as he could. Many noblemen such as the 2nd Earl of Dunfermline, the son of the king's own chancellor, would join the Covenant in part because of the drastic changes the act could create. Essentially, the entire order of landowners could have been undermined by Charles's new scheme. If taken to the extreme, the revocation sche-

48 Lynch, 248, 268-270.

me could have created an economic disaster in Scotland which would have mimicked a national economy suffering from a sudden collapse in property values. Scotland's economy would have been almost nonexistent.⁴⁹ Almost as nonexistent would be the nobility's faith in their king who wanted to claim their land.

The Revocation Act would never be fully implemented by Charles, yet the political damage done by his resolve to see it through based solely upon his royal prerogative was great. The Commission for Surrenders and Teind, founded to oversee the project, remained a hated shadow over Scottish politics until July 1637. The scheme managed to even alienate bishops from Charles, though they were initially seen to greatly benefit from it. However, they were the ones urging him not to exhibit such an insatiable appetite for land and money for it would only isolate the Church from Scotland. Covenanters would even mention the Revocation Scheme in the 1640s. Charles's greatest failure in the scheme was his lack of understanding the tenacity of his noble subjects in protecting their land and subsequently their class privilege.⁵⁰

A Coronation Eight Years Too Late

Charles would face the zealotry of his subjects when he eventually returned to Scotland in 1633. His return was the first in thirty years and the first as ruler. His coronation in Edinburgh took place on 8 June 1633, eight years after he ascended the Scottish throne with the passing of his father in March 1625. He had been crowned in England on 2 February 1626. Originally descended from a Scottish royal dynasty, Charles waited eight years, or more technically ninety-nine months to return to his homeland and be officially crowned. He waited only eleven months for the official coronation in England. Yet those eight ye-

ars between his succession and his coronation in Scotland were an especially trying time for his subjects and played into the fear of being a used and abandoned nation by their now seemingly foreign king. After 1627, the economy took a hit as grain prices rose and overseas trade drastically declined. Simultaneously, Scots were experiencing an unprecedented rise in taxes. They had suffered tax increases under James VI but those increases paled in comparison to those his son would impose. Michael Lynch points out the fact that the city of Edinburgh paid more in taxes during Charles's first two years as king than the capital had paid in the last twenty-two years of James's reign.⁵¹

Balmerino's Supplication

The nobility's grievances confronted the king in 1634 with the public leaking of Haig's Supplication. This document is probably more commonly known, however, by the name Balmerino Supplication, after Second Lord John Elphinstone Balmerino, who, as a nobleman in 1634, had much to lose with the new monarchical direction. As a second generation son of James's new nobility and thus a beneficiary from the previous Stuart creating lordships out of former church lands, Balmerino and his family were heavily indebted to the Crown for their title and land, which in turn were liable to abrupt seizure by Charles's Revocation scheme.⁵² He would become an outspoken leader for the dissident faction and what made him so was his involvement with William Haig's supplication. Because of his participation with this piece of writing, Balmerino would find himself on trial for treason which in the words of Macinnes would lead to "the single most important event transforming the disaffected element from a political faction into a national movement."⁵³ Lynch quotes histori-

49 Ibid., 266-267; Macinnes 53.

50 Lynch, 266; Macinnes, 71-72.

51 Lynch, 267.

52 Ibid., 248.

53 Macinnes, 138.

an M. Lee in describing the Balmerino trial as the Scottish version of the infamous English ship money case.⁵⁴

Haig's Supplication appeared a year after Charles's Coronation Parliament. Critics of the king had been unsuccessful in blocking much of Charles's legislation during his first Scottish parliament a year before in 1633. The king's belief in the span of his royal prerogative, created grievances, which were only mounting. To address these, the authors penned a supplication to their monarch. They blatantly admit opposing James's and Charles's parliamentary acts ratifying a controversial religious legislation entitled the Five Articles of Perth, for they believe "that experience hath shewed how much these articles of Perth have troubled the peace of this church and occasioned innumerable evils and distractions in it."⁵⁵ They claim these acts are "importing a servitude upon this church unpractised before," since they see these articles as a sole attempt by a king to corrupt their Kirk with Anglican doctrine.⁵⁶ These Scots continue to inform Charles they are caught in an unprecedented predicament. Either they must vote "undutifully in the sacred point of prerogative or unconscionably in church novations, which blessed King James would never have confounded."⁵⁷ The writers further conclude these grievances have been "altogether slighted in this your first parliament" and they finish their supplication critiquing the formation of the Lords of Articles, the body used by the

54 Lynch, 268. The ship money case is generally referred to as one of the grievances leading to the English Civil War. In 1635, Charles wanted to levy ship money (taxes used for coastal defences) on all English counties, not just coastal counties, which had been the precedent beforehand. Furthermore, this writ was authorised without the consent of the English Parliament in the name of defence and foreign policy. One Sir John Hampden refused to pay and a resulting court case ruled in favour of the king (7-5). Now, a precedent has been set in favour of power stemming from the monarch and not Parliament.

55 'Balmerino' Supplication, 1634, in *Scottish Historical Documents*, 192-193.

56 *Ibid.*, 193.

57 *Ibid.*

Stuarts to control parliamentary agenda.⁵⁸ They criticise Charles for denying his "nobility their freedom by authority to meet with the Lords of the Articles, [which] may seem against the constitution of a free parliament...which before the parliament held in anno 1609 did always elect and chuse the Lords of the Articles from among them of their own rank and quality."⁵⁹ They even claim a precedent of "there having been no parliamentary bishops from the reformation of religion till then, nor were they such as now do cull and single out such noblemen either popishly affected in religion or of little experience in our laws, as having had their breeding abroad, and so none of the ablest to be upon our Articles but fittest only for the clergy's mystical ends."⁶⁰ While the editor Gordon Donaldson points out the falsehoods lying in these last two claims (that the election for the Lords of Articles had differed throughout history and parliament had always sat bishops) the nobility felt in 1634 that they could make these statements, they believed they were in a supportive enough atmosphere in Scotland where they thought such liberal measures could be stated even if there was no precedent. Perhaps they wanted these false claims asserted in hopes these procedures would eventually happen, allowing these writers a voice in the Scottish parliament and thus Scottish politics. In the end, Haig's Supplication concludes with the thought,

therefore we are confident that your majesty finding such a harmony in our affections to your service in preserving our religion and liberties, will be unwilling...to introduce upon the doctrine or discipline of this your Mother-Church anything not compatible with your majesty's honour, your good people's consciences, or that hath been rejected by acts and public practice of this Reformed Church.⁶¹

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Ibid.*

60 *Ibid.*

61 *Ibid.*, 194.

Because the authors end their document with two named specific ideas, they choose to define their grievances and, in turn the grievances of their nation, with the two concepts of liberty and religion, the exact ones evoked in the National Covenant. They believe Charles's decisions of endorsing the Five Articles, approving legislation supporting his own royal prerogative, and drastically increasing taxation and reliance on bishops were damning to Scottish religion and liberty. In doing so, Charles has attacked both Scottish religion and political liberties. Hence, these two concepts become Scottish essentials to rally behind to preserve their Church and in turn their kingdom from Charles. Furthermore, it is important to note that the Scottish religion and liberties at stake here are not determined by the king or his privy council alone. They are also directed by "the people's consciences" and the acts of the Kirk. The writers declare the king's prerogative is not the only thing which governs Scotland. The public practice of the Kirk has a significant influence in the direction of 'their' religion and liberties. Therefore, they argue the people of the Kirk have a decisive say in the practices and policies their government should introduce and perform. The conscience of the nation has the right to influence and, if need be, negate what is happening on a national scale and what is affecting a national institution such as the church. Scotland is not a kingdom to be run by one man alone.

Because of his involvement with William Haig's Supplication, the Scottish crown tried Lord Balmerino for treason. This treasonous involvement consisted of Balmerino receiving two copies of the written document and showing them to the Earl of Rothes and a Mr. John Dunmore, a notary from Dundee. He overwrote three phrases to help moderate the tone and sent one copy back to Haig. Unfortunately for Balmerino, three pirated copies surfaced, two from his household and one from Dunmore. It was the copy from Dunmore's house which found its way to the royal court and provoked a trial which ironically focused solely on Balmerino and never on William Haig,

the actual author. The outcome of the trial from December 1634 to March 1635 was a guilty verdict on just one of his initial four charges by an eight to seven vote. His punishment would have been execution if he had not been eventually pardoned by Charles.⁶²

Even though Balmerino walked away in the end, the damage to Charles's reputation along with his bishops who supervised the affair was unsalvageable. Scottish Archbishop of St. Andrews John Spottiswood, the chancellor of Scotland who ascended to the position during the trial, along with other prominent church bishops were heavily involved in collecting information and interrogating witnesses.⁶³ Spottiswood's push for Balmerino to be charged with treason alienated many people of the Scottish administration and more importantly nobles and gentrymen who had not beforehand sided with the dissident Scottish faction. The use of bishops as investigators only sparked fury at the Episcopal administration that was increasingly seen as the main implementation of Charles's will. Mr. William Drummond from Hawthornden, a conservative supporter of the church's hierarchical society, made a comment declaring the bishops who were so determined to punish Balmerino to the fullest were just as erring as libellers themselves. Arguably, Balmerino's trial caused more alienation from the Crown than what was actually written in the document itself. The indictment provided yet another rallying point as the disaffected claimed Charles was now trying to halt an individual's freedom to oppose the policies of the Crown and using the Episcopal system to secure its stoppage. The public clearly sided with Balmerino, whom they felt had been targeted by Charles. Edinburgh magistrates had to provide an armed escort not only for the prisoner but for the judicial commission as well when they passed through the streets of the capital. Prayer meetings for Balmerino, both public and private, alongside petitions

⁶² Macinnes, 138-139; Bircher, 321.

⁶³ Bircher, 321.

and political agitation, illustrated the distance growing between Charles and his subjects. The outcome of the trial depicted to the dissident faction the lack of control Charles had in Scotland. He lacked the ability to prevent such a public outcry and to prevent such a close ruling even if its outcome was in his favour. The disaffected learned he lacked the ability to use coercion and coaxing to his advantage even with his loyal bishops.⁶⁴

Simultaneously even as the Balmerino trial was progressing, Charles was pressing for the composition of the Scottish liturgy book which would bring the Kirk in closer alignment to the Anglican Church. There had already been three Scottish publications of the English Book of Common Prayer between his coronation and October 1634. The new book, as mentioned before, had been compiled by bishops with Anglican priests as overseers and then ordered by royal decree to be read in the churches of Edinburgh. That fateful Sunday of 23 July 1637 was not the first day, however, to witness a ruler trying to impose his agenda on the Kirk. It was the first day, however, where he met fierce opposition and revolt. To discover the reason behind the Scottish revolt of 1637, it is important to understand how the 1637 Book of Common Prayer differed from three major religious innovations of the early seventeenth century, the restoration of the Episcopacy, the Five Articles of Perth, and the assertion of Charles's royal prerogative in church affairs. For instance, as previously quoted, the Earl of Rothes had mentioned that the Scottish people were "formalie patient under all uther new devyces that wer brought in by degrees."⁶⁵ All these innovations were hated by Presbyterian Scots, yet it was the last one in 1637 which caused them to revolt simply because the king never allowed the service book to be ratified by any Scottish degree.

64 Macinnes, 138-141.

65 Rothes, 2.

The Restoration of the Episcopacy

With the passage of the 1592 Act authorising Presbyterian Government, the Scottish Kirk's Presbyterian government was flourishing, giving power to a series of local church courts made up of ordinary men. Twelve years beforehand, the General Assembly actually had affirmed Episcopacy unscriptural.⁶⁶ However, this system did not please James in the least who had fought furiously against giving up so much power so easily. So while Presbyterianism was established in 1592, the general assemblies' decisions were still licensed by parliament. The king retained the right to determine the time and place of general assemblies. Lay commissioners who were drawn from the political estates and not regional synods or presbyteries were additionally allowed to sit in these national assemblies. Consequently, James at the turn of the seventeenth century could effectively manipulate these meetings. In this environment where titular bishops continued also to sit in parliament, James could influence his way to restoring more Episcopalian beliefs in Scotland. By royal decree in July 1607, every synod had to now elect a bishop as the moderator of their local meetings. The full spiritual restoration and reconsecration of the Episcopate took place just three years later in 1610 alongside the creation of the English inspired High Court of Commission which dealt out civil penalties to match ecclesiastical reprimands.⁶⁷

To realise the success James had in restoring an Erastian form on the Kirk, one just needs to look at the acts accepted by the General Assembly of Glasgow in 1610. In one piece of legislation passed, it called for "no sentence of excommunicatioun or absolutioun therfra, be pronouncit against or in favours of any person without the knowledge and approbation of the Bsichop of the Dyocie."⁶⁸

66 Lynch, 202.

67 Macinnes, 17, 81.

68 "Acts of General Assembly at Glasgow," 1610, in *Scottish Histo-*

Ironically, the 1592 Act authorising Presbyterian Government also talked about who had the power to excommunicate. However, it never specifically named that only a bishop held that special power. It referred to those men with such a high ecclesiastical power to perform such a severe religious censure as those “spirituall office beraris in the kirk.”⁶⁹ The writer could have written ‘bishops of the kirk,’ but he did not. In a pure Presbyterian form, bishops would not possess a more sacred and prestigious opinion and authority than other ministers simply based on title alone. The idea that “bishops salbe Moderatours in every Diocesian Synod” was also passed by this Assembly in 1610.⁷⁰ It seems odd that a Scottish Assembly which had just passed the 1592 act supporting Presbyterianism is now passing not twenty years later such conservative Episcopal legislation. These acts declare “all presentatiouns be direct heirafter to the Bischoep” for inquires and judgement into the ministry while allowing only “the visitatioun of ilk dyoice is to be done be the Bischoep himself.”⁷¹ There is a significant amount of power given just to the bishopric office in a nation where many subjects wanted a pure Presbyterian form. The Scottish desire for a pristine Presbyterian functioning church did not suddenly disappear with the restoration of the Episcopate. Melvilleans simply became more alienated from the Stuart government over the direction of their national church and religion. The Episcopalian direction no longer seemed to support their Presbyterian dream. However, the Melvilleans allowed cooperation with the Crown in 1610, yet soon events would lead them to the direct opposite in 1637. One of the first events which catalysed the opposition came in 1618 with the Five Articles of Perth.

James’s Five Articles of Perth

The Five Articles of Perth were part of James’s dream to bring together a “reunited Christendom” where he would be remembered as the Constantine who envisioned it all.⁷² With the passage of his royal agenda at Perth, James hoped to bring the Kirk and the Anglican church closer together in alignment. The first introduction of the Five Articles, however, was vehemently rejected by the General Assembly in St. Andrews during November 1617. Nonetheless, by royal decree, the privy council decided to push on and implement parts of the Articles that following January. Their second attempt in August 1618 during the General Assembly at Perth resulted finally in success. James attained the ratification of the Five Articles by only allowing the General Assembly to vote on all the articles together and not separately. This method would also be used to pass the articles in the Parliament of 1621. Yet to even pass with his method, James had to promise his subjects he would no longer attempt to introduce any new measures on the religious front. The articles, though, still only passed by only a twenty-seven vote, eighty-six to fifty-nine.⁷³

The doctrine approved at Perth hit upon very specific ideals that countered the Calvinistic religion flourishing in many places of Lowland Scotland. The first point of the legislation required “everie minister...[to] have the commemoration of the inestimable benefites received from God by and through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ his birth, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and sending doun of the Holie Ghost, upon the days appointed for that use.”⁷⁴ Hence, observance of holy days, including Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, and Whitsun-

rical Documents, 176.

69 “Act authorising Presbyterian Government,” 1592, 161.

70 “Acts of General Assembly at Glasgow,” 1610, 176.

71 *Ibid.*

72 Lynch, 242.

73 *Ibid.*, Macinnes, 39-40.

74 “Five Articles of Perth, 1618,” in *Scottish Historical Documents*, 184.

day, should be specially recognised in Kirk congregations with “pertinent texts of Scripture.”⁷⁵ The next two articles sanctioned private baptisms and communion. “The catechizing of young children of eight yeers of age and presenting them to the bishop to lay hands upon them” entitled bishops, and bishops alone, to perform confirmation.⁷⁶ Finally, the last point made “the blessed sacrament of the Holie Communion of the bodie and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be celebrate to the people humblie and reverentlie kneeling upon their knees.”⁷⁷ Although Calvinistic doctrine disagreed with all first four articles stated, it would be the concluding one which would cause the greatest turmoil in contemporary Scotland. Ironically, it was also this fifth final act that James was so determined to see obeyed.⁷⁸

The monarch’s determination to see the articles implemented proved to be a daunting task even with his successful history of restoring the Episcopate to a prestigious position in Scotland. To assure his liturgical innovations were followed, the Crown pursued and coerced ministers for years. Privy councillors were employed to document the number of those who took communion and in which position they received it in. The magistrates of the capital burgh alone had to personally vouch for the compliance of kneeling for all 12,000 churchmen living within city boundaries. Nonetheless, many Scots still did not bend at communion. Many just ignored the newly inspired Anglican doctrine and continued to take communion as they had always done. A considerable part of congregations from Edinburgh and Fife simply abandoned the practice of communion by 1625.⁷⁹ Soon, the main form of Presbyterian dissidence in Scotland became the outright refusal to bend one’s knees at communion. It would be this

resistance which would create a common thread for a majority of dissidents and would allow them to rally together against a shared cause. In the Parliament of 1621, opposition arose from all ranks, from the nobility to the shire and burgh. High ranking nobles openly criticised and opposed the king’s endorsed Five Articles in governmental parliamentary sessions. The hostility felt towards the articles becomes even clearer when one realises the passing of them was the first issue, excluding taxation, on which Scottish MPs openly opposed James in parliament.⁸⁰

Four years after the Articles of Perth were ratified by a discontented parliament, Charles I inherited a Scotland where conflicting doctrine between the established Scottish church and the growing Presbyterian faction already had a heated coexistence. Consequently by his coronation date in 1625, Charles would have known of the dissidence created by the Five Articles of Perth and the tarnishing effect it had on his father’s reign. Thus in 1637, a Scot must have been perplexed to read in the new Book of Common Prayer some of the same articles which were also stated in the Five Articles of Perth. These ranged from sanctioning private baptisms to observance of holy days to the demand of performing a specific religious act in a particular required posture. On the other hand however, Charles’s own Coronation Parliament of 1633 ratified the Articles a second time, to the dismay of the Melvilleans who were hoping this parliament would revoke them.⁸¹ Even so, there was never a widespread public rebellion in 1618 or 1633 to take it off the rolls.

The Assertion of Charles’s Royal Prerogative in Church Affairs

During that same Coronation Parliament of 1633, the members passed a piece of legislation which illustra-

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid., 185.

78 Lynch, 242.

79 Ibid., 242-243; Mathew, 83-84.

80 Lynch, 242.

81 Macinnes, 88.

ted Charles's view of his power as unlimited. In the first sentence of the act of the king's prerogative and apparel of churchmen," the king declares all four estates of the Scottish parliament recognise "his Majesties soveraigne authoritie, princelie power, royall prerogative and priviledge of his crowne over all estaites, persones and caues quhatsumevir within this kingdome."⁸² Charles's own royal hegemony was approved and ratified by parliament. Furthermore the act justified that since "quhat order soever his Majesties father of blissed memorie sould prescrive for the apparell of kirkmen" was followed, "the same power sall remaine with the persone of oure soverane lord" now in 1633.⁸³ In essence, MPs were giving Charles the power to choose the fashion of Kirk ministers. Haig's Supplication rebuked Charles for lengthening what was considered a petty concession to James to illustrate Charles's prerogative as king. The 1609 act which allowed James to determine the fashion of religious wear was a reward for the king after almost forty-two years of reign. It was not given to him to depict his dominance in state and religious affairs.⁸⁴ On the other hand, by using this legislation, Charles was asserting that the Crown possessed the power to regulate such a mundane thing as church apparel. He was contending the decision was inherently bestowed to the Crown. Thus, refusing to wear the royally approved "gownes with standing capes...and cassocks" became synonymous with defying Charles's royal prerogative.⁸⁵ Constitutionally, this particular act sanctioned Charles's absolutist thinking. It allowed him to believe as king he could do anything, as king he was immune to any restrictions.⁸⁶ Religiously, the 1633 ruling again clashed with popular nonconformist views. Having a parliamentary sanctioned document

claim there are "inferiour clergie" does not coexist easily with a group of people who wish for parity among believers.⁸⁷ The act also highlights a custom reeking in their opinion of popery. A specific wardrobe for a specific occasion based on the type of occasion was hardly scripturally based. Interestingly, the clerical garments described in this act mimic the ones worn by their equivalents to the south in England.⁸⁸ Thus, the act concerning apparel was seen as another Anglican imposed custom on the Kirk sanctioned by prerogative alone. Yet still, the kingdom of Scotland and its Kirk continued without a call to arms.

The Pamphlets

This atmosphere, while heavily discontented with the direction of the national Kirk, was still relatively peaceful until the introduction of the 1637 Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments. The contemporary publications of 1637-1638 offer an insight into why in that year of Scottish history such a turbulent atmosphere was created and why the Scottish privy council feared for the safety of their government. While the religious grievances were mentioned, all the publications also mentioned the new element of liberties. All felt that the process in which the Book of Common Prayer was introduced infringed upon their liberties as Lowland Scotsmen by ignoring legitimate Scottish institutions established to protect the Scottish voice.

The Earl of Rothes' *A Relation of proceedings concerning the affairs of the Kirk of Scotland from August 1637 to July 1638* illustrates in detail the events mentioned above after the introduction of the liturgy book. For example, the earl tells of 23 August where ministers appeared before the Lord of Council appealing,

because this said book wanted the warrand of the

82 "The King's Prerogative and Apparel of Churchmen," 1633, in *Scottish Historical Documents*, 189.

83 Ibid.

84 Macinnes, 136.

85 "The King's Prerogative and Apparel of Churchmen," 1633, 189.

86 Macinnes, 136.

87 "The King's Prerogative and Apparel of Churchmen," 189.

88 Macinnes, 136-137.

Generall Assemblie, the representative Kirk of this kingdome, which hath onlie power, and was ever in use to give directione in maters of Gods worschip; and wanted the warrand of Parliament, which hath bein ever thocht necessar in such caices; becaus the liberties of the Kirk of Scotland, and forme of worschip receaved at the Reformatione, ar established in General Assemblies and ratified in Parliament.⁸⁹

Throughout his writing, this idea is repeated frequently that the book infringed upon the liberties of the general assembly and parliament, which should have sanctioned it before the book's imposition. However, neither institution approved, consented, nor ratified it. He claims the general assembly is the only body which has the power and the position to make such changes to religious affairs because the general assembly is simply the only national representative of the Scottish Kirk. The assembly is composed of the very men who establish and maintain the local Kirks. Furthermore, Rothes declares that historically parliament has a precedent in being involved as well because parliament gives the decisions of the general assembly legal reinforcement. It is as if the general assembly and parliament work together to achieve and preserve Scottish liberties on the political and religious front. This would make sense since the Kirk of Scotland was becoming synonymous with the kingdom itself as the years of the seventeenth century progressed. If one took the general assembly and parliament away, as Charles did when he decided not to involve the two before the reading on 23 July, it is as if Charles took away the liberties enjoyed by Scotland. He took away the Scots' ability to represent themselves, their opinions, and their beliefs since these institutions allow them to have a voice in the religion and in the political activities of their kingdom. If the assembly and parliament are ignored, Scots have no voice, no sort of ability to decide anything

for themselves. Furthermore, Rothes continues to write that [the] small number of the Counsell to add their autorite to the book, who had no more power to authorize, then the bischops to frame it;...[is] a work onlie for a nationall assemblie, and that could proceid onlie from the Parliament, to whom the Counsell is subaltern, and by whom, for this, is censurable.⁹⁰

While again reiterating the method which should have been followed, Rothes makes the statement that the privy council is inferior and subordinate to parliament. This idea depicts the Scottish perception of their liberties in the late 1630s. They now believed they could make such a claim and it would not be disputed. They firmly regarded the general assembly and parliament as the final voice in national government, not the king's own council. Rothes takes it even one step further and proclaims by literally penning the word "subaltern" that Charles's privy council is inferior to the institution of parliament.⁹¹ In turn, one could translate his statement as meaning that in part Charles's governmental instruction is subordinate and answerable to parliament since the privy council's goal, at this time, was to aid in the king's governmental wishes. Because they were under the dominion of parliament and the assembly, the privy council had no power to authorise such a book.

The earl also mentions the Supplication of Noblemen on 18 October 1637 when he discusses that the "introduceing of the Book of Canons and Common Prayer, and such other novations as wer hurtfull [to his kirk and commonewealth...[and would] overthrow the liberties of the subjects."⁹² The wrong religion could and, in Rothes' mind, did impede upon the political privileges of Scotsmen. Remember, Calvinism offered many political advantages to Scotsmen such as the obligatory duty to superse-

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Rothes, 5.

de royal authority if needed. By referring to the Earl of Loudons' speech before the Council at Dalkeith on 21 December 1637, the "illegal introduction" of the book and its content directly hindered upon the kingdom's religion and laws which meant it directly hindered upon "the conditione of lyff, libertie, and fortune heir, and their happiness heirefter."⁹³ The means of introducing solely by the king's will and desire not only affected the direction of religion in Scotland and the direction of the liberties but also now the direction of one's own future and happiness. This "illegal introduction" became personal to the nobles.⁹⁴ They felt as if their very life's purpose was at stake and the life of their heirs. By having no voice in such a drastic national change and thus no voice in the direction of their country, they hardly had any control in a system which as nobles could bestow or deny them everything. They felt powerless and feared their heirs would be as powerless as well. He even reiterates the fact Scots "had mucche patience to bear many former grievous burdeings, bot not to be altogether smothered; for these their last novations extinguished the very lyfe of religione and policie."⁹⁵ They had allowed grievances before but the means to introduce the last set of grievances in 1637 went too far in smothering their liberties.

Another example would be the pamphlet from 28 June 1638 entitled 'The Protestation of the Noblemen, Barrons, Gentlemen, Borrowes, Ministers, and Commons, Subscribers of the Confession of Faith and Covenant' which was read at the Mercate Cross of Edinburgh on the fourth of July. In the document, the authors proclaim Charles's "diverse innovations, which both in themselves,

and in the way wherein they have beene urged doe manifestly tend to the prejudice of the Kings honour, and of our religion, lawes, and liberties."⁹⁶ They stress that the manner in which these innovations were introduced had a direct correlation with why the Scots protested against them. The method used to attain these changes were not

Calvinism offered many political advantages to Scotsmen

just a hindrance to the stability of their religion but also to their political stability as well. The procedure of the service book's introduction went against the consent of their political con-

siousness, or more importantly their perceived political independence from the crown. Throughout the writing, the authors accentuate the idea Charles infringed upon these Scottish political liberties for "establish[ing] lawes and service bookes, without consent of the Assemblie and Parliament...is contrare to the maine ground of all our Supplications, against the manner of that introduction."⁹⁷ The protestors specifically state that the lack of involvement on the side of the assembly and parliament is one of their main grievances against the liturgy book. Again, this writing illustrates the depth of resentment the Scottish felt against the crown for not seeking their approval. This fact offended them deeply and their pamphlet was not shy in letting Charles know it.

The writers of the protestation did not stop there. They now targeted the High Commission, mimicking the reasons why they opposed the service book. The High Court of Commission needed to be rectified since the establishment of such an institution "without consent of the three estates conveened in Parliament, [is] contrary to the fundamentall and expresse lawes."⁹⁸ Now that they were

93 Ibid., 38-39.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid., 16-17.

96 "The Protestation of the Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Borrowes, Ministers, and Commons," 1.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid., 8.

making their complaints known to the crown, the authors were attacking the institutions which denied them of their rights as Scotsmen to have a say in national activities through the general assembly and parliament. They saw the High Commission's existence as an infringement of their liberty just as much as they saw the imposition of the service book as an infringement. Both shut the protesters, who saw themselves as ordinary Scotsman, out of national power and influence. It is important to remember that the writers of this pamphlet were composed of noblemen and ministers who were used to having a direct influence in the transactions of their kingdom. Yet now progressively during James's and Charles's reign, the atmosphere seemed as if they had none. "The supreme judicatories of this church and kingdom" are stated to be "the only proper judges to nationall causes and proceedings" and not Charles, his privy council, or the Court of High Commission.⁹⁹ These men even suggest "a free Assemblie and Parliament, As the only remedies of our evils, and means to prevent" more "popish superstition" from infiltrating their kingdom and church.¹⁰⁰ This would allow the Scottish nobility and ministers to have a say in national government since it was parliament and the general assembly which were composed of a mixture of subjects from around the kingdom. These two institutions were the ones in the seventeenth century that came as closely as possible to wide national representation. While they certainly fell short of what is expected as wide national representation in the twenty-first century, these institutions were all that Scots had in the 1600s. The call for such a free parliament and assembly was mentioned at least seven times in a roughly twelve page pamphlet. While the book was full of Melvillean religious contradictions, the unlawful "manners of introduction, without consent of the three estates of Parliament" caused the writers to believe the 1637 situation

"cannot bee any wayes rectifie," but must be "absolutely discharged."¹⁰¹ Since the liturgical book was introduced through royal decree, it was harmful "to the Lawes and liberties of this church and kingdom, and destructive of other lawfull judicatories."¹⁰² The introduction completely invalidated the laws and liberties of Scotsmen and, thus to preserve these privileges, the book would have to be recalled. The political independence of Scotland was too important for Charles to ignore. These nobles, burgesses, ministers, and lairds, men from various ranks of society, were adamant for the Stuart to realise this book infringed upon that by his decisions to not have any Scottish institution consent to it.

Lastly, George Gillespie's pamphlet 'Reasons for which the Service Booke, urged upon Scotland out to be refused' also gives from a candid political standpoint the causes of the 1637 revolt. In the very first sentence, he writes the book "conteineth divers points and directions, which would breed a change in some Articles that doctrine and discipline of the Church of the said Kingdome, which is both warranted in Scripture and approved by Parliament."¹⁰³ Again, there is this correlation between Scottish religion and Scottish politics and how a national political institution such as parliament has the only position to support religious consensus. While Gillespie's particular document depicts a more detailed reasoning for the religious animosity towards the introduced liturgy book than the former pamphlet (such as the before mentioned twenty-nine holy days, bishop confirmation, and the standing at the Gloria patri and Creeds), he ends not on a religious note but on a political one. He chooses his last words to be remembered as ones centring on the illegal infringement on Scottish privileges and not religious objections. Gillespie argues

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁰² Ibid., 8.

¹⁰³ Gillespie, George. "Reasons For which the Service Booke, urged upon Scotland out to be refused," 1638, in Microfilm 21903 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilm, 1970), 1.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 5.

that “if a new one ought to be imposed, then it ought to come in by a lawfull manner: by a generall Assemblie.”¹⁰⁴ This idea has been reiterated again and again. The general assembly would have been the first institution to have sanctioned such a service book. It was a religious liturgy and as the highest court and collection of religious leaders in the Presbyterian ranking of the Kirk, the general assembly had the right and duty to oversee religious innovations. They were the highest religious representation in Scotland and a liturgy book by nature fell under their jurisdiction. Presbyterian Calvinism gave them that power. He goes on to declare the book should not have been “urged by Antichristian Prelates upon Gods people, without consent of any Generall Assembly or Parliament, against the will of all men.”¹⁰⁵ Going against the consent of parliament and the general assembly is now linked with going against the consent of “the will of all men.”¹⁰⁶ This statement supports ideas floating in previous documents in terms of how the assembly and parliament represented the national subjects on a certain scale. As formerly mentioned, these institutions were outlets to protect and further the interests of Scots, religiously and politically. So if something went without the consent of these two institutions, it went without the consent of the Scottish subjects. The fact that the liturgy book was not sanctioned by parliament nor the general assembly was not overlooked by Scotsmen for the countless religious variances contradicting Scottish Calvinism. Both pamphlets along with Rothes’ writing stress this fact relentlessly. The complaint is not solely religious, political issues are also extremely crucial.

Scottish Stress on Scottish Liberties

Scottish dissidents were determined that the king

104 Ibid., 4.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

and his government would not forget that the 1637 service book was passed by neither the general assembly nor parliament. They reworded this sentiment, harked back to it in countless publications. There was no allowance for public discussion surrounding the possibility of its introduction in Scotland. The ministers and laypeople of the Scottish Kirk had no say in the matter whatsoever. The composition and implementation were handled through bishops, who already had a precarious position in the church, and Englishmen. Charles’s determination to impose his book in his native kingdom fed into the Scottish fear of his arbitrary ways. Unpopular liturgical innovations had been imposed on the Scots before, but had at least been approved by Scottish institutions. The Episcopal agenda from Glasgow 1610 confirming power of bishops was approved by the General Assembly. Aspects of Episcopalianism were legally embedded into the Scottish Kirk, accomplished by government consensus. James’s Five Articles of Perth were widely disliked for its perceived Anglican impositions on the Calvinistic Scottish Kirk, but no one revolted. They were approved by the General Assembly in 1618 and Parliaments of 1621 and 1633. No one rioted because Charles decided to initiate an act declaring he could choose ministerial apparel simply because he was king. Even though it demonstrated his belief in his own prerogative, it was approved by the Parliament of 1633. Not religiously based but still despised, Charles’s Revocation Act was approved by parliament. Thirteen enactments of the Renovation Act were not only sanctioned but prolonged in the Coronation Parliament of 1633.¹⁰⁷ Because the book was never ratified, perhaps Scots felt as if their privileges as Scotsmen were being completely eroded by a king who simply cared less for his northern kingdom. The publications voice the concern that Charles viewed their parliament and national assembly as worthless and meaningless since he did not need their consent to do his wishes in Scotland. So they

107 Macinnes, 88.

abandoned his liturgy because in their mind, Charles abandoned their liberties.

Conclusion

The 1637 Scottish Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments intruded upon every single Scotsman who attended any Scottish Presbyterian church. Its implementation would have affected every Presbyterian Scot in Scotland. Particularly in Lowland Scotland where the capital city resided, almost no one would have been left unaffected in their religious values by the execution of Charles's book. However, the majority those people who traditionally possessed a voice in the governing of the country no longer had a say in its establishment. The liturgy book was not handled through members of parliament, the nobility, or the majority of ministers. With one royal proclamation establishing its usage, these men were rendered powerless in their own country. The only way they could regain their autonomy would be by challenging Charles, his privy council, and his bishops. Charles introduced his prayer book during a time when the king was being superseded by the Kirk in prestige, influence, and power among ordinary Lowland Scottish subjects. The Kirk was now looked upon as the true Scottish glue in a country which had no other substance to band it together. The king who had for centuries embodied the identity and hope of Scotland abandoned the Scots in 1603. The Scottish Kirk filled that void in the hearts of its congregations. Perhaps the nobility knew that to win their liberties back, their national voice, they needed the help of an institution which could mobilise the masses to revolt. Perhaps the Scottish political nation knew it needed the Scottish religious nation to aid in preserving the perceived liberties of the political kingdom. They needed the religious grievances to make sure their political ones were heard as well. Thus when Charles attacked the Scottish Kirk, Charles in essence attacked the

kingdom of Scotland. He attacked the Kirk's liberties and therefore attacked the Scotsman's liberties as well.

Perhaps that is why the reigning Stuart in 1707, Queen Anne, decided to leave the Scottish Kirk to the Scots when writing the Articles of Union which gave birth to the United Kingdom. She knew the Scots would never abandon their religious consciousness as Scots since it seemed to be essentially tied to their political consciousness as Scots. The revolt of 1637 and the following two Bishop Wars of Scotland depict explicitly the lengths to which Scotsmen would go to defend the established institutions of the Scottish general assemblies and parliament. These organizations allowed the Scots to protect and further their own interests and opinions in religion and politics. In the early seventeenth century, parliament and the general assemblies were the embodiment of Scottish representation in national affairs. Balerno's Supplication supports that the nonexistence of these two institutions would have nullified the Scottish voice in the daily governing of the northern kingdom. The introduction of the 1637 service book tried to void Scottish representation in national affairs by ignoring the representativeness of the general assemblies and parliament. By initiating "a great alteration on the public worship of God, without warrant in law and consent of the church...to impose so many and huge novations upon free subjects, in custom to be ruled by the laws," Charles spawned a war fueled by Scottish determination to preserve and increase political liberties sanctified in the Scottish institutions of parliament and Kirk assemblies.¹⁰⁸

108 Rothes, 41.