

History of the RPCNA
Fresno Reformed Presbyterian Church
Sunday School, September 28, 2014
Week 4 – Detailed Look at the Persecution of the Covenanters

- I. Review

- II. Dying Speeches of Covenanters

- III. Early martyrs
 - a. Marquis of Argyle
 - b. James Guthrie

- IV. Key individuals in the Establishment
 - a. Robert Leighton
 - b. James Sharp
 - c. John Graham of Claverhouse

- V. Covenanter Martyrs
 - a. Richard Cameron
 - b. Donald Cargill
 - c. James Renwick
 - d. John Brown of Priesthill
 - e. The two Margaret's

- VI. Poem of Jamie Douglas

FRPC Sunday School – History of the RPCNA – Quotes for Week 4

1. “The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.” - Tertullian (2nd Century Christian)
2. “After Hamilton’s death, the news of this cruel deed spread rapidly, and someone warned Beaton that if he intended to burn any more, he should do it in cellars, ‘for the reek of Mr. Patrick Hamilton hath infected as many as it blew upon.’” – J.G. Vos
3. “I had the honor to set the crown upon the king’s head, and now he hastens me away to a better crown than his own.” – Marquis of Argyle
4. “What shall I say in this great day of the Lord, wherein in the midst of a cloud, I have found a fair sunshine? I can wish no more for you, but that the Lord may comfort you, and shine upon you as He does upon me, and give that same sense of His love in staying in the world, as I have in going out of it.” – Marquis of Argyle
5. “I was real and cordial in my desires to bring the King home, and in my endeavors for him when he was at home...I shall not speak much to these things for which I am condemned, lest I seem to condemn others...But whatever they think, God hath laid engagements on Scotland, we are tied by covenants to religion and reformation...and it passes the power of all Magistrates under heaven to absolve a man from the oath of God...it’s the duty of every Christian to be loyal...God must have his, as well as Caesar what is his, and those are the best subjects that are the best Christians.” – Marquis of Argyle
6. “The minister said to him [James Guthrie], ‘we have a scotch proverb – duck that the wave may go over you. Will ye duck a little, Mr. Guthrie?’ ‘Mr. Pollock,’ returned Guthrie, ‘there is no ducking in the cause of Christ.’” – J.D. Douglas
7. “My conscience I cannot submit, but this old crazy body and mortal flesh I do submit, to do with it whatsoever you will, whether by death, or banishment, or imprisonment, or anything else; only I beseech you to ponder well what profit there is in my blood; it is not the extinguishing of me or many others, that will extinguish the Covenant and work of reformation since the year 1638. My blood, bondage, or banishment will contribute more for the propagation of those things, than my life or liberty could do, though I should live many years.” – James Guthrie
8. “I durst not redeem my life with the loss of my integrity.” – James Guthrie
9. “The people of the country came generally to hear us, though not in great crowds. We are indeed amazed to see a poor commonalty, so capable of arguing upon points of government, and on the bounds to be set to the power of princes, in matters of religion: upon all these topics they had texts of Scripture at hand; and were ready with their answers, to anything that was said to them. This measure of knowledge was spread even among the meanest of them, their cottagers, and their servants.” – Gilbert Burnett
10. “Sharp was an ambitious wretch who obtained power by duplicity...All the time he was loosing the pins of Presbyterian government and planning the restoration of Episcopacy...and doubtless dreaming of himself in the Primate’s robes.” – J.D. Douglas
11. “The Church in all ages has been persecuted by a Pharaoh upon the throne, a Haman in the State, and a Judas in the church.” – Hugh MacKail
12. “The prisoners, who had been promised quarter, were crowded into the dungeon...and were barbarously treated. At the instigation of Archbishop Sharp, they were immediately tried and found guilty. When they claimed that they had surrendered on a promise of quarter...Sharp retorted that they had been pardoned as

soldiers, but not acquitted as subjects. Ten of the rebels were hanged on one gallows at Edinburgh, and their heads were cut off and fixed on the prison doors at Lanark because they had renewed the Covenant there. Thirty-five were taken to various parts of the south-west and hanged before their own doors.” – J.D. Douglas

13. “One of the worst of men...and a very small proportion of learning.” – Charles II re: James Sharp
14. “There existed a chronic state of indignation against the outrages of the dragoons. Victims were suspended from beams or branches by their thumbs; or a cord was pulled round the head and tightened by twisting a stick in it until the flesh was cut right through to the bone; or fuses were fastened between the fingers and kept burning till the flesh was consumed; or people were stripped naked miles from home and left to make their way back as best they could. One of Claverhouse’s favorite ploys was to gather together the boys and girls of some country hamlet, assemble his dragoons in a line before the trembling children, then tell them to say their prayers before he killed them all. He would order his soldiers to fire a volley over the heads of the youngsters. Then he would tell them that he would spare their lives if they would reveal where their fathers and brothers and friends were in hiding.” – J.D. Douglas
15. “That day at about four in the afternoon, the dragoons came upon that Bible-reading band in the very desert place of Ayrsmoss. The covenanters gathered around their young leader with the horsemen on either side of those on foot. He [Richard Cameron] led them in prayer, appealing three times to the Lord to ‘spare the green, and take the ripe.’ Looking on his younger brother, he said to him, ‘Come Michael, let us fight it out to the last; for this is the day that I have longed for, to die fighting against our Lord’s avowed enemies; and this is the day that we shall get the crown.’” Then with eyes turned to heaven, in calm resignation they sang their last song to the God of salvation.” – Jock Purves
16. “Before the hangman set head and hands on the bloodstained Netherbow Port, the fingers pointing grimly upwards on either side of the head, a hero saint lying in prison was shown them. He was Alan Cameron, Covenanter [father of Richard Cameron]. The cruel question was asked him, ‘do you know them.’ He kissed them saying, ‘I know them, I know them. They are my son’s my own dear sons’. It is the Lord. Good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me nor mine, but has made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days.’ A prisoner, head of a broken home, the father of martyred sons and daughters! It is the answer of the more than conqueror, the sufferer in Christ, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.” – Jock Purves
17. “From whom did the early American slaves wrested from Africa hear the Gospel? Puritans and Quakers? But such were not fellow slaves. The former lived more in their own settlements, and the latter to their everlasting credit would not hold slaves. To the West Indies, Barbados, and South Carolina many Covenanters were sent as slaves. The accounts of their tragic hell-ships make painful reading. Hundreds of these godly men and women, shipped to be sold as slaves, perished in most terrible conditions through disease, and in fearful storms were drowned miserably battered under hatches. From those who reached the Plantations black slaves hear the Gospel, and thus white-skinned slave and black rejoiced in one common Lord. These banished men and women carried the message of redeeming love to their fellow-slaves of another race.” – Jock Purvis
18. “Familiar with the hills and hollows of his childhood, he [Donald Cargill] had to run very fast up and down them one day, years later, when chased by swift and armed pursuers who came to take him in his preaching. Cargill was always preaching. He ran for a known rocky chasm where the River Keith narrows. Mounting a huge rock he took a flying leap across the river. None of his hunters dared follow. They gave up the chase. It is called ‘Cargills Leap’ to this day.” – Jock Purvis
19. “Smiling, he [Donald Cargill] looked up to the many people watching from their windows and asked them to listen to him for a few minutes. He was much interrupted by the drums and at times had to stop. He said that he was sure of his ‘interest in Christ and peace with God...and I am no more terrified at death, nor

afraid of hell, because of sin, than if I had never sinned; for all my sins are freely pardoned and washed thoroughly away, through the precious blood and intercession of Jesus Christ.’ When he came to the scaffold and foot of the ladder...he said, ‘The Lord knows I go up this ladder with less fear, confusion or perturbation of mind, than ever I entered a pulpit to preach.’” – Jock Purvis

20. “That I deny, for it is because I fear to offend God, and violate his law, that I am here standing ready to be condemned.” – James Renwick
21. “No! I own all authority that has its prescriptions and limitations from the Word of God; but I cannot own this usurper as lawful king, seeing both by the Word of God such a one is incapable to bear rule, and also by the ancient laws of the kingdom which admit none to the Crown of Scotland until he swear to defend the Protestant religion, which a man of his profession cannot do.” – James Renwick
22. “They all pitied the young man [James Renwick] whose views of Scripture made him hold to principles for which he was losing his life. Bishop Paterson came asking, ‘Do you think that none can be saved but those of your principles? Will you kill yourself with your own hand, seeing that you can have your life upon easy terms?’ Renwick made answer, ‘I never said or thought that none could be saved but such as were of my principles, but I am of the opinion that those truths for which I suffer are sufficient grounds to suffer upon.’” – Jock Purvis
23. “He has strengthened me to brave man and face death, and I am now longing for the joyful hour of my dissolution, and there is nothing in the world that I am sorry to leave but you; but I go to better company, and so I must take leave of you all. Farewell, beloved sufferers, and followers of the Lamb; farewell, Christian intimates; farewell, Christian and comfortable mother and sisters; farewell, sweet societies; farewell, desirable general meetings; farewell, night wanderings, cold and weariness for Christ; farewell, sweet Bible and preaching of the Gospel; farewell, sun, moon and stars; farewell, conflicts with a body of sin and death. Welcome, scaffold for precious Christ; welcome, heavenly Jerusalem; welcome, innumerable company of angels; welcome, general assembly and church of the first-born; welcome, crown of glory, white robes and song of Moses and the Lamb; and, above all, Welcome, O Thou blessed Trinity and one God! O eternal one! I commit my soul into Thy eternal rest.” – James Renwick
24. “In the midst of a dark and thick mist, Claverhouse with three troops of horse looking for Peden came upon them [John Brown & his nephew]. They ran, but were caught and brought back to Priesthill for cruel cross-examination. Priesthill was ransacked and so-called treasonable papers were found. Brown was questioned. His stammering disappeared, and he answered every question so solidly and distinctly, that Claverhouse asked his base guides if ever they had heard him preach. ‘No, no,’ they said, ‘he was never a preacher.’ ‘Well,’ said he, ‘if he has never preached, much has he prayed in his time. Go to your prayers,’ he shouted, ‘for you shall immediately die.’ The peasant went to his knees and began to pray, but three times Claverhouse interrupted him, and then completely stopped him as John Brown interceded, asking God to spare a remnant. ‘I gave you leave to pray,’ he bawled, ‘and you have begun to preach.’ The Covenanter turned upon his knees, ‘Sir,’ he said, ‘you know neither the nature of preaching nor praying that calls this preaching,’ and, looking to God, finished his last prayer. ‘Take good-bye of your wife and children,’ Claverhouse said. Isabel Brown was standing by with her child in her arms. John came to her saying, ‘Now Isabel, the day is come that I told you would come when I spoke to you first of marrying me.’ She said, ‘Indeed John, I can willingly part with you.’ ‘That is all I desire,’ he replied. He kissed her and his children, saying that he wished Blood-bought and Gospel-promised blessings to be multiplied upon them, and Claverhouse roughly broke in, ordering six dragoons to shoot him. As he stood before them their hearts were moved; they lowered their muskets and refused to fire. But the killer of many unbelted his pistol, and hastily walking up to John Brown, placed it to his head, and blew his brains out, scattering them upon the ground. Looking at his ghastly work with a sardonic smile, he turned to Isabel saying, ‘What do you think of your fine husband now?’ Through her sad tears she bravely answered, ‘I ever thought much good of him, and more than ever now.’ Claverhouse then mounted his horse and haughtily rode off at the head of his

troops. He later confessed that if he gave himself liberty to think of it, he could never forget John Brown's prayer." – Jock Purvis

25. "So came the hungry waters up and up, every wave splashing death, until the older Margaret was chocking in their cold, cold grasp. As she struggled, before she became a poor limp thing lying in the swirling flood, they said to young Margaret, 'What do you think of her now?' 'Think! I see Christ wrestling there,' said she. 'Think ye that we are sufferers? No; it is Christ in us, for He sends none a warfare at their own charges.' The waters were now around her, and she began to sing a plaintive melody she had often sung among the hills when the fellowship of the hunted worshipped God. It was Psalm 25 from the 7th verse... Her Bible with her, Margaret Wilson opened it up for the last time, to see the precious jewels there. She read aloud from the 8th chapter of Romans, in full assurance of faith of the glory soon to be. 'We are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' The cold waves dashed over her head. Loosely tied, the soldiers pulled her out of the water, and when she could speak, they asked her to do what the Covenanter could not do – pray for the King, 'as he is supreme over all persons and causes, ecclesiastic as well as civil,' a blasphemous usurping of the prerogative of Christ as head of the Church, and arrogant claim which no Covenanter would admit. 'Pray for the King,' they cried. She murmured that she wished the salvation of all men, and the damnation of none. They dashed her under the water and pulled her out again. 'Oh, Margaret, say it,' pleaded some. 'Lord, give him repentance, forgiveness, and salvation, if it be Thy holy will,' she whispered. Grierson of Lagg, in wild, impatient passion cried, "[Women], we do not want such prayers. Tender her the oaths.' She groaned, 'No! No! no sinful oaths for me. I am one of Christ's children. Let me go.' And they brutally flung her back into the waters, where she died a martyr of eighteen summers."

Jamie Douglas

'Twas in the days when Claverhouse was scouring moor and glen,
To shake with fire and bloody sword the faith of Scottish men,
They had made a covenant with the Lord, firm in their faith to bide,
Nor break with Him their plighted word whatever might betide.

The sun was nearly setting, when o'er the heather wild,
And up a narrow mountain-path alone there walked a child.
He was a bonnie, blithesome lad, lithe and strong of limb,
A father's pride and a mother's love were fast bound up in him.

His bright blue eyes glanced fearless round, his step was firm and light.
What was it underneath his plaid his little hands clasped tight?
'Twas the bannocks which that morning his mother had made with care
From out her scanty store of meal, and now, with many a prayer,
Had sent by Jamie, her own boy, a trusty lad and brave,
To good old Pastor Tammas Roy, now hiding in yon cave;
For whom the bloody Claverhouse had hunted long in vain,
And swore he would not leave that glen, till old Tam Roy was slain.

So Jamie Douglas went his way with heart that knew no fear.
He turned the great curve in the rock nor dreamed that death was near,
But lurking there were Clavers' men, who laughed aloud with glee.
He turned to flee, but all in vain, they drag him back a pace
To where their cruel leader stands, and set them face to face.
The cakes concealed beneath the plaid soon tell the story plain.
" 'Tis old Tam Roy these cakes are for!" exclaimed the angry man.
Boy, guide me to his hiding-place, and I will let you go."
But Jamie shook his yellow curls, and stoutly answered, "No."

"I'll drop you down the mountain cliffs, and there among the stones,
The old gaunt wolf and carrion crow shall battle for your bones; "
And in his brawny strong right hand he lifted up the child,
And held him o'er a clefted rock, a chasm deep and wild
So deep it was, the trees below like willow wands did seem.
The poor boy looked in frightened maze, it seemed some horrid dream.
He looked up to the sky above, and then at the men close by:
Had they no little ones at home, and could they let him die?

But no one spoke, and no one moved, or lifted hand to save
From such a fearful, awful death, the little lad so brave.
"It's waefu' deep," he shuddering cried, "but, oh !.I canna tell:
So drop me down there if ye will, it's not so deep as hell."
A childish scream - a faint, dull sound - oh, Jamie Douglas true!
Long, long within that lonely cave shall Tam Roy wait for you;
And long for your welcome coming waits the mother on the moor,
And watches and cries, " Come, Jamie, lad," through the half-open door.

No more adown the rocky, path you come with fearless tread,
Or on the moor and mountains take the good man's daily bread ;
But up in heaven the shining ones a wondrous story tell,
Of a child snatched up from a rocky gulf that's not so deep as hell.
And there before the great white throne, forever blessed and glad,
His mother dear and Auld Tam Roy shall meet their bonnie lad.