

DUNDEE  
AND THE  
REFORMATION

*by*

J. H. BAXTER, D.Litt., D.D.

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# DUNDEE

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# REFORMATION

DURING the thirty years that preceded and prepared for the consummation of the Reformation in 1560, no town in Scotland was more resolute and consistent than Dundee in its adherence to that cause, and none exercised a deeper influence upon the course of events and the character of the movement. In their "Good and Godly Ballads," the Wedderburns of Dundee not only voiced with sharp and biting satire the widespread criticisms and denunciations of the medieval Church; their work was to an even greater extent constructive, setting forth in simple and earnest language the fundamental teachings of the Gospel, and providing both heart and reason with encouragement to confidence and steadfastness — and all that in a rough and popular form that clove to the memory and was readily passed from tongue to tongue, so that for three generations at least those "Psalms of Dundee" were the nation's catechism, hymn-book and spiritual guide. It was in Dundee that George Wishart, by his preaching and devoted pastoral care, gathered a large and enthusiastic following, opened a further stage in the development of the movement, impressed upon it a Genevan character in place of the Lutheran that had prevailed till then, created the nucleus of a church and furnished it with an order of worship and communion. Perhaps the greatest legacy he left behind him was, that he inspired and shaped the mind and spirit of John Knox, whose pride it was to have been Wishart's companion and disciple. These men were outstanding leaders, who earned for Dundee the name of "the Geneva of Scotland", and their place in our national history is secure. But there were numerous others in Dundee who welcomed the new teaching, and in face of persecution clung to it faithfully. Many of the town's officials, both provosts and councillors, openly, and at an early date, took sides with the reforming party, withstood the pressure of government and Church and set an example

of constancy and courage that counted for much, both among their fellow-citizens and throughout the land. Among the clergy and the monastic orders there were some who dared to challenge the many abuses prevalent in the Church, and to demand a return to a purer, evangelical religion. The common people, too, repeatedly exhibited their partisanship in outbursts of violence, deplorable in their destructiveness, yet clearly provoked by something deeper than wantonness and the lust to sack and plunder. The remarkable thing is that Dundee, a quiet and orderly city, possessing an unusually large number of churches, chapels and religious houses, appears to have given a wholehearted welcome to the reformers and their teaching and to have been unanimous in adopting the new faith and system. If resistance there was, no trace of it has reached us over the centuries. With apparently no commotion or dissent the older institution was rejected and the new inaugurated. In fact, before papal jurisdiction was legally abolished and the reformed Church officially established, Dundee had taken the decisive step and set up its own Kirk Session, calling its own minister fully a year before the meeting of the first General Assembly. McCrie, the famous biographer of John Knox, tells in one sentence what was then so splendidly achieved: "Dundee was the first town in which a reformed Church was completely organised, provided with a regular minister, and favoured with the dispensation of the sacraments".

This is the story that these pages set out to recall. In most of its particulars it has been long familiar, but in this year, when the four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation is being commemorated, it is only right to remember once again the great part played in that achievement by the men of Dundee. Their generation had good reason for rejecting a church which had so far outlived its usefulness as to be a scandal and a shame, and in doing so, they showed such independence of mind and such fearlessness, that they forever claim our admiration. How was it that such a spirit, such devotion to truth and pure religion, should have been so marked a characteristic of this town? What was Dundee like under the old system, and what changes were the result? It was in that struggle that the way of life, which is still ours, was shaped and founded, and we can best appreciate our inheritance by understanding how it was won.

# THE OLD ORDER

## 1

LIKE so many of the other coastal settlements in Scotland, Dundee had its beginnings upon the narrow shelf of land, "the twenty-five feet beach," which is so common and conspicuous a feature of our shores. Along the north bank of the Tay, that shelf opens out into the broad and fertile Carse of Gowrie; along the edge of the North Sea, it widens into the expanse of sand-dunes at Barry and continues to Arbroath, after which the cliffs of old red sandstone, chiselled and tunnelled by the action of the waves, line the coast to Stonehaven and beyond. As port and harbour, this site was an inevitable choice. Here, the raised beach is narrowed into a short bottle-neck by the slopes of the Law and the Castle Rock, making it a natural meeting-place and market within a stone's throw of the river. The early settlement was small and narrow, hardly more than a quarter of a mile in length from Tod's Burn to Wallace's Burn, and with only two principal streets, the Seagate and the Cowgate. Only gradually, as it increased in prosperity and numbers, did it climb up the rising ground to the north. Behind those slopes lay a rich and diversified hinterland, plentifully supplying the produce which the gravelly shelf was unable to yield. By the low passes over the Sidlaws came the corn, timber, wool, hides, horses and other essentials of life, to the centre of consumption and exchange. Sheltered and protected by the Law and the broad hills behind them from the winds and rains from the northwest, Dundee had a sunny and pleasant situation which made it a resort and residence of princes and kings.

Though that hinterland came to serve Dundee, when conditions were ripe, as granary and storehouse, it was sufficiently isolated and possessed of sufficient natural advantages and opportunities, to retain its independence and to develop its own character and organisation. It is essentially a region of transition: from the valleys that cut back into the mountains the rivers run either to the upper Tay or to the North Sea, while the main lines of communication between central Scotland and the North-East, between Perth and Aberdeen, cross it transversely. Thus Dundee, on the much longer shore-road, lay completely off the beaten track, remote from the movement of armies and the excitements and disturbances of politics. On the whole, its history has been peaceful. The name is not found recorded until about 1165, but it was only in the following century, in what has been called "the Golden Age of Scotland",

that it became prosperous and important. Then, in a time of unparalleled good government and tranquillity, when the land began to be portioned out among feudal lords, castles to be built, law to be proclaimed, towns to grow up and ere long to join hands in an association that was the germ of the Convention of Royal Burghs, and commerce to develop, Dundee sprang into prominence. Its Merchant Gild was in existence before the Wars of Independence and for long only guild members were allowed to sit on the Town Council. The Craft Gilds came later, and showed themselves just as devoted to civic causes, jealous of their privileges, eager for greater political rights and for equality with the merchant class. It might almost be surmised that in this rapid growth of urban institutions and an urban spirit, the influence of Flemish immigrants had been strongly at work in Dundee, as it had in other east coast towns like Berwick and St. Andrews. Here is the same stout burgess outlook, the orderly erection of gilds, the love of liberty, the peaceful, laborious disposition and the same fearlessness in resisting all oppression. It is more than coincidence that it was chiefly in the seafaring communities that resistance to the old Church and support for the new was earliest and most boldly manifested. Leith was one of the first to declare for the Reformation; Perth was a staunch adherent; St. Andrews, Crail and Anstruther gave wholehearted assistance and allegiance. Knox's *History* tells of one man, whom we shall meet later as a martyr, whose conversion began when he refused to pay the fish-tithe demanded by the local prior and bade his servants cast the tenth fish back into the sea again. On being denounced for non-payment of his teinds, he began to frequent the company of the Laird of Dun, heard the New Testament and swore never to deny his Lord. It is interesting how, from a personal and economic motive, "a hatred against the pride and avariciousness of the priests", David Straiten passed to a sincere and heartfelt conviction of the truth of evangelical religion and laid down his life willingly for it. During the struggle against Edward I., the same spirit of resolution is seen, although in a different cause. If William Wallace did not actually absorb it during his schooldays in Dundee, he at least left it as a tradition. In the Church of the Grey Friars Monastery, an assembly of bishops, abbots, priors and clergy of Scotland met in February, 1310, and solemnly put on record that the people of this land, having been without a faithful captain and leader, had agreed to receive Robert Bruce as true heir to the Crown in right of his grandfather, and they, the whole clergy, approved of that decision and made all homage and allegiance to him as king. Not for another ten years was the Declaration of Arbroath proclaimed, when the cause was won. The Declaration of Dundee was made four years before Bannockburn had brought security to the country and the Crown and while Bruce was still under the ban of excommunication. It was an act of both political and ecclesiastical courage and defiance, thoroughly in character.



No wonder that the city was loved alike by Robert Bruce and by John Knox.

At the time of the Reformation it was still a small place. Maxwell, the historian of Old Dundee, has estimated that then its population stood somewhere near nine thousand, but this estimate appears to be too generous. About that time Edinburgh itself had" no more than that number, Glasgow about half, or four thousand and some hundreds, Aberdeen about three thousand, and the total population of Scotland can hardly have exceeded half-a-million. Statistical tables can be adduced which show that, while at the end of Bruce's reign, Dundee stood lower in importance than Aberdeen and continued to be so until nearly 1500, it had outstripped the northern city by 1535 and held that superior position for long. In 1557, when the burghs were assessed in a total of £10,000 to meet the expenses of Mary's marriage in France, the proportion required from Edinburgh was £2,500, from Dundee £1,245, from Aberdeen £945, from Perth £742, from St. Andrews £300 and from Glasgow £202. On these figures it would seem fairly accurate to reckon the population of Dundee as one third more than that of Aberdeen, so four thousand would be a reasonable estimate. About the turn of the century, when the first Protestant minister of St. Mary's resigned, his successor, Robert Howie, wrote to a friend in Switzerland announcing his election to the vacant charge, and calling Dundee "of all the towns in Scotland easily the first after Edinburgh". The figures given above show that his boast was the actual truth.

Of its various religious houses and chapels, the majority were founded at a late date, within the half-century or so before the Reformation led to their extinction. The oldest and the most important was the monastery of the Franciscans, or Grey Friars, which owed its foundation to Devorgilla, Lady of Galloway, in the year 1284. It was situated outside the burgh, to the north, on ground now known as the Howff. At some date prior to 1335, a school was erected beside the conventual buildings and this probably served as the training-centre for the friars of the whole Scottish community. Here, too, was the recognised residence of the Provincial Vicar. It was in this church that the assembly of patriotic clergy met in 1310, as has already been mentioned, and by their courageous declaration brought new heart to the national resistance. From the fact that such a large and representative gathering could assemble within the friary buildings, it would appear that they had escaped all harm during Edward's march to Stracathro in 1296, and in the occupation of the town. Edward had a strong partiality for the Franciscan Order and treated the Scottish houses generously, even in time of war. But this immunity did not endure for long. In 1335, a company of pirates, from the north of England, attacked Dundee and wrought considerable damage to the friary; they burned its dormitory and school and carried off its great bell to Newcastle, where it was sold to the Black Friars of Carlisle. Repair proceeded slowly, for the times

were troubled and money was scarce. When Richard II. invaded Scotland in 1387 and gave Edinburgh, Perth and Dundee to the flames, the friary buildings are said to have suffered almost complete destruction. The inmates were reduced to such extremity that they were forced to sell their library, ornaments and sacred vessels in order to secure the means of existence. But some years before that disaster, the friary church had once again the scene of gathering of unique interest and importance. The great Schism in the Church had broken out in 1378, by the election of Clement VII. in opposition to the reigning pope Urban, and for nearly forty years the Christian world was divided by the rivalry of two, and for a time three, claimants to the papal crown. Almost automatically and without hesitation, Scotland signified its adherence to the French pope, first Clement, then his successor, Benedict XIII. Early in 1379, a messenger was sent from Avignon with copies of records and documents by which all doubt concerning the legitimacy of Clement's election might be stilled. The messenger was a Scottish friar, Thomas Rossy, a man of unusual learning and distinction, later to be Bishop of Galloway from 1380 till 1406, the only Franciscan to be elevated to a Scottish see. In the Franciscan church in Dundee, before a large congregation, which included the King and many nobles, Rossy delivered a discourse about the origins of the schism and the motives which moved the cardinals to reject the reigning pope and appoint another in his place, supporting his statements by the evidence of numerous papers and so confirming the decision which the King and council had already reached. In the manuscript copies of Rossy's tractate, which still survive, he tells us that he preached the same sermon many times, both in central Scotland and in the Border districts, where his arguments and proofs might the more easily come to the ears of those schismatics, the English. No doubt many sermons first delivered in Dundee have been similarly preached elsewhere, but Rossy's had the justification of being a political tract, a masterly piece of debate and a factual and legalistic defence of a policy which had as great repercussions on the political and social life of the country as on the religious.

Much obscurity hangs over the early history of the two churches, St. Clement's and St. Mary's, and their relation to each other and to the town. From its position in the very centre of the original settlement, its frontage on the High Street and its common burial-ground that extended down to the harbour, St. Clement's was almost certainly the earliest church erected in Dundee. Until the Reformation, there was no other place of interment, and, repeatedly, while excavation for later building on the site has been in progress, grave-stones and human bones have been revealed and occasional fragments of the ancient structure. Among these, the most interesting is the head of a capital, on which two armorial shields were carved, one bearing the royal arms of Scotland and the other the arms of Joan Beaufort, wife of James I. It has been argued that

these are evidence of the erection of the church between 1424, the date of James's marriage, and 1437, when he was assassinated.

But there is no more reason for associating these insignia with the building of the church than with its decoration at some later date, and in any case this evidence is slight and inconclusive. The dedication of the church, too, suggests an earlier period than that to St. Mary; the St. Clement, whom it commemorated, was the Roman bishop who is said to have been exiled to the Crimea about the year 100, and to have suffered martyrdom by being cast into the sea with an anchor fastened to his neck; he thus came, like St. Nicholas, to be regarded as the patron and protector of all who went down to the sea in ships. It was, therefore, natural that he should become the tutelary saint of a burgh so dependent upon the river and the sea as Dundee was. If the testimony of Boece can be taken as reliable, the cult of St. Clement would appear to have been deeply rooted and of long standing; Boece says, even after the erection of St. Mary's Church the people did not forsake their old patron, but that the majority of them "resorted most to the very old church of St. Clement". Confirmation of this fact is provided by the designs on the ancient seal of the burgh, which, on one side, shows the Virgin and Child, and, on the other, St. Clement and his anchor. The dedication of churches to the Virgin is comparatively rare in the early Middle Ages; in Ireland, contrary to what might be expected, none are found before the year 1200, though, in Scotland, there are some few before then. It was only in the two centuries or so before the Reformation that they became numerous. In particular, her cult received a great impetus in consequence of the calamities of the fourteenth century, which is quite unequalled in European history for its disasters and misfortunes. Unprecedented storms, floods and famines, repeated attacks of the Black Death, continuous and bitter wars, social upheavals that marked the breakdown of the structure of mediaevalism — these all went to create a universal feeling of helplessness and despair, out of which a new piety was born. The foundation of collegiate churches was the most noticeable manifestation of this revival of religion, and it was associated with a fervent veneration of the Virgin and the dedication of numerous Lady-chapels and new churches to her honour. It was probably on this wave of devotion that the parish church of Dundee received the name by which it is most familiarly known. Destroyed during the Wars of Independence and again in 1385, it must have risen again, perhaps in greater size and magnificence, around or soon after 1400. It may well be that when Sir David Lindsay, afterwards Earl of Crawford, sailed from Dundee in 1390 to meet an English knight in tournament in London, the name of his ship, the "St. Mary," was chosen both from local patriotism and as a sign of his confidence in the new tutelary patron of the church with which he and his family were so closely linked. Competent authorities assert that there is no mention of the

name of St. Mary's in chartularies or official records before 1406; it is simply called "the parish church". The date suggested accords well with the evidence of the architecture, which is generally agreed to belong to the early decades of the fifteenth century. Beyond these conjectures, it is impossible to go. When all has been said and done, any investigation of the question can only end in the repetition of the words of Cosmo Innes, nearly a century ago, after he had studied it long and carefully: "I have not yet unravelled the puzzle of the patron saint of the burgh and his church. Dundee is generally said to have been under the guardianship of St. Clement, and I have no doubt correctly; yet the parish church was dedicated to the Virgin, and its tithes were a valuable possession of the abbey of Lindores".

Much of this confusion is due to the romantic imagination of Hector Boece, first principal of the University of Aberdeen and a patriotic native of Dundee. In his *History of Scotland*, published in 1526, he tells the often repeated story of the foundation of the church by David, Earl of Huntingdon, as a thank-offering for his providential escape from shipwreck on his return from the Third Crusade. The tale has been subjected to thorough scrutiny and proved to be a mere fiction, but the fact remains that, in founding Lindores in 1191, the Earl did present to it his church in Dundee; there is no question of its foundation, and indeed it is implied that the church was already in existence. By this donation, all the revenues, tithes, offerings and dues belonging to the church became the property of the abbey, which, in return, was to appoint and pay the vicar. This arrangement was ratified by the Bishop of Brechin in 1224, the amount of the vicar's stipend being fixed at ten pounds a year; the abbey was further given the right to plant schools wherever they pleased in the town. Some revision of these conditions was sought in 1252, when the vicar professed himself dissatisfied and appealed to Rome, only to lose his case and be condemned to bear the costs of his action. The maintenance of the fabric, which had suffered severe injury during two English invasions, proved a heavy burden to Lindores, which had suffered equally on those occasions, and this neglect of their legal obligations caused "great discord, contention and altercation" between the townspeople and the monastery, a feeling which lasted for many years. At last, in 1443, the Town Council agreed, in return for certain rents from properties in Dundee surrendered to them by the monastery, to accept responsibility for the repair and upkeep of the choir in walls, windows, pillars, window-glass, roof and covering, as also for the vestments, books, chalices, palls and cloths of the great altar, and other ornaments belonging to the choir. By 1461 this work was completed, the choir thoroughly restored and the roof covered with lead. Perhaps it was a new sense of civic pride that prompted the many gifts that were now offered by some of the outstanding citizens: in 1483, Isabella Spalding offered four pounds ten ounces

troy weight of good silver for making a Cross for the use of the church, and some years later, her son, George Spalding, presented a great bell, a eucharist of silver overgilt, a silver chalice and a new mass-book for use at the altar. But all this restoration and adornment was lost, when the town was bombarded and occupied by the English in 1547. From then till the Reformation it stood wrecked and empty.

The appropriation of parish churches to monastic establishments was coeval with the erection of parishes and the foundation of monasteries, but if the original motive was true devotion and piety, the system certainly worked to the sore detriment of the Church and the cause of religion. By this arrangement, the spiritual headship of the local church and community was transferred to the monastic corporation, as rector or parson, while the day-to-day duties of the church were entrusted to a vicar. The rector drew the greater tithes, and the vicar the lesser, or a fixed sum was allocated to him for his services. It was an obvious temptation for the monastery to employ cheap labour; when an appropriated church lay within easy distance of the parent house, it was usually served by one of the monks and the cost of a vicar was saved. In course of time, almost three-quarters of the parochial charges in the country, 678 out of a total of 940, were attached in this way to bishops, abbeys or other monastic bodies. Lindores itself was much less handsomely endowed than many other abbeys; it possessed only some ten churches, while Arbroath had thirty-three, Paisley thirty-nine, Holyrood twenty-seven, and Kelso thirty-seven. Naturally enough, the abbeys claimed every last penny they could exact from their possessions, spent as little as possible on their upkeep, paid as little as possible to the incumbent, and resisted all attempts to secure for the vicars an adequate salary and a suitable dwelling. In 1247, for example, the Bishop of Aberdeen obtained, for all the vicars within his diocese, papal approval of a salary-scale of fifteen merks annually, but the abbeys of Lindores and Arbroath, which owned large territories in Aberdeenshire, used all their influence with the provincial council to have this decree rescinded. The authorities were well aware of the evils that so easily followed in the wake of this system; over and over again regulations were framed against the ill-payment of the local priest; against the poor quality and the illiteracy of those appointed to such charges; against deliberate delay in the filling of a vacancy, so that the emoluments might accrue to the benefit of the patron. But the monasteries found it too profitable to make any change. In 1471. the Scottish Parliament enacted that there should be no annexation of any benefices to bishops, abbeys or priories, and that all such annexations made since 1460 should be null and void. The Act remained a dead letter. It was renewed in 1488, but once again it proved quite ineffective. As a vicarage of Lindores, Dundee came to realise the penalties that the arrangement imposed; the parsimony of the patron abbey threw upon

the town and community the burden of maintaining the fabric and the furnishings of their church; the parish was deprived of the revenues of its own lands, which should have gone for the religious services and the charitable schemes of the burgh; the whole machinery of diocesan and episcopal administration was thrown into confusion and made unworkable; the vicars were poorly paid and often uneducated, and many of them gave only poor attention to their duties. The succession of vicars in Dundee is difficult to trace, because so many of them held, at the same time, other and better benefices and were vicars only in name. In 1394, for example, a Scot who was lecturing in Avignon, a distinguished and learned man, petitioned the Pope for the vicarage of Dundee, giving as an inducement the fact that it lay only four miles from his own birthplace. His petition was granted, though, at the same time, he enjoyed a canonry of Dunkeld, the archdeaconry of Lothian, the vicarage of Musselburgh, the rectory of Ecclesmachan, and a canonry in the diocese of Glasgow. With such pluralists and absentees, the religious and pastoral duties of the office cannot have been discharged with any thoroughness or continuity. As the ecclesiastics' greed increased, so did their disregard of the people's needs and rights. Pensions were granted out of the vicarage income, still further reducing the amount available for local purposes. Between 1483 and 1487, a certain John Spalding enjoyed a pension of £15 from the fruits of the vicarage of Dundee, which sum was required to be paid by John Barre, the vicar. Complaints against the avarice and corruption of the monks are the staple topic, not only of the satirists and the reformers, but with equal frankness and insistence, of the better churchmen and of the official councils. As a result, in Scotland, the religious orders without exception were attacked and abolished with violence and resentment almost unparalleled elsewhere. The land-hungry nobility coveted their wide properties, and the common people resented their pride, wealth and idleness. It is significant that, when the mobs from Dundee sacked and destroyed the abbeys of Balmerino, Lindores, Perth and Scone, they left the parish churches untouched, save for their purging of the monuments of idolatry. Who can say that the fate of the monasteries was undeserved?



# CHANGES

## II

A MOVEMENT so vast and all-embracing as the Reformation was not the product of one day or one generation. The demand for the reform of the Church, in head and members, in doctrine and in administration, had been familiar since at least 1300; Luther's revolt in 1517 was only the culmination of something that had been gathering strength for long. If there still exists any doubt about the extent and gravity of the errors that the Reformation sought to remedy, it can only be due to blindness or prejudice. In Scotland, after the first indication of new forces at work is revealed in an Act of Parliament of 1399, prescribing punishment for all "cursed men and heretics", Lollardy, spreading from England, had persisted in the west country and had gained many faithful adherents in spite of inquisition and persecution. Some thirty people, men and women, who were charged before the king in 1494 with holding and disseminating heretical opinions, were dismissed uncensured and left free to spread their views. It is surprising to find that when their heresies were detailed point by point, they appeared to be not unfamiliar and aroused neither alarm nor indignation in the king and his councillors; surprising, too, that a well-developed body of Scriptural doctrine was set forth by the accused, covering the repudiation of papal authority, the condemnation of the Church's idolatrous practices, and a political theory that is almost anabaptist in its rejection of all royal control. Some of the survivors of that trial lived long enough to link up with the beginnings of the Reformation in the 1520's. One of them, Murdoch Nisbet, had sought refuge on the continent and brought back a manuscript version of Wyclif's translation of the New Testament. Before Parliament in 1525 forbade the importation of all Lutheran literature, the ferment was already at work. Maxwell's *Old Dundee* reproduces, from the burgh records, a list of men and women who were sentenced to banishment in 1521, and others who received a similar sentence in the following year; the author asserts that there can be little doubt that their offence was heresy, but there is no mention of this in the decree and it must be regarded as unproved. Yet the probability that it is so is increased by a similar incident in Aberdeen in the same year, 1521, when the master of the Grammar School was accused of openly accepting and advocating Lutheran doctrines, which he repudiated only after a persecution lasting for two years.

In St. Andrews, two years before Patrick Hamilton's martyrdom, an Observantine friar, James Melvin or Melville, came into conflict with his superiors and eventually sought refuge in Germany, returning to Scotland only in 1535, "infected with Lutheranism which he attempts to spread among the ignorant people". At this point, he disappears from the record. A more certain case of conversion and conviction, this time directly concerning Dundee, occurred in 1531, when a member of the Observantine house in Aberdeen, Friar Alexander Dick, who had been impressed by the opinions of the reformers, fled to Dundee and sought protection. He was not disappointed, for the provost, James Scrymgeour, Constable of Dundee, and the bailies received him sympathetically. News of his apostasy soon reached the ears of the authorities. Royal warrants were issued for his apprehension and "the constable, bailies and others of the said burgh" were charged "with treating and holding him with them in secular habit". Friar Lang was sent with a small company to bring back the apostate to St. Andrews after his arrest, but when the town officials made some pretence of compliance, the people intervened, refusing to allow Friar Dick to be handed over to the Bishop of Brechin or to Friar Lang and his companions. The St. Andrews contingent was hustled and warned that, if they proceeded further, the crowd "suld pull thair cowlis our thair heides". In the end, the Provost and Bailie James Rollock secretly conveyed the wanted man to St. Andrews, where they offered to produce him before the archbishop on receiving a statement of the charges laid against him. None being forthcoming, they hurried back to Dundee with him, only to be faced with another warrant. On 11th May, the Provost and Bailie appeared before the Lords of Council and were severely reprimanded and ordered to make humble submission to Holy Church. On 23rd June, 1532, one part of this general act of penance was carried out within the Franciscan friary, when James Wedderburn and John Wait took a solemn oath purging themselves of all points of heresy laid to their charge. At this moment, when the evident Protestant sympathies of the burgh had received a vigorous check and its officials were compelled to make public recantation, the factor of the friary seized the opportunity to present his claim for the arrears of payment due from the town and promptly secured it. There had clearly been some reluctance to meet those for several years previous to this public humiliation.

The martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton in February, 1528, had brought the question heresy into the open; it left a profound and lasting impression both upon the teachers and students in the University and upon the clergy who had heard his message. One of the canons of the Augustinian priory in St. Andrews, who had been deputed to debate with Hamilton the points at issue between the new doctrine and the old, was himself convinced by his Scriptural arguments and accepted his faith. After many troubles this cleric, Alexander Alane, better

known by his Latin name, Alesius, was enabled to escape from his prison and to make his way to Dundee, where he found a ship on the point of sailing and thus made his escape. When the authorities made enquiry about his means of escape, two citizens of Dundee were interrogated, James Scrymgeour, the provost and, it would seem, James Wedderburn, the merchant. The reply of the provost to the prior's questioning was bold and uncompromising: "If I had known that Alexander was preparing to go away, I would with the greatest of pleasure have furnished him both with a ship and with provisions for his voyage, that he might be put in safety beyond the reach of your cruelty. Had he been my brother, I would have long ago have rescued him from the perils and miseries in which you have involved him." This escape took place in 1530, and Alesius had a long life before him in the Church and the seminaries of Germany: with him began the exodus of many Scottish churchmen who were to give fruitful service to the evangelical cause in England and on the continent. Similar assistance was given some years later to Robert Logie, kinsman of Gavin, the head of St. Leonard's College, who likewise found in Dundee good friends to facilitate his flight. It is interesting to see in these acts of sympathy and helpfulness the name of Wedderburn, which was to earn an unforgettable place in Reformation records. The James Wedderburn who, along with Provost Scrymgeour helped Alesius to escape, was the father of three distinguished sons, James, John and Robert, all three graduates of St. Andrews, the two younger, John and Robert, having been at St. Leonard's College during the eventful months when Patrick Hamilton was freely lecturing and preaching the new doctrines. The oldest brother, James, became a merchant, spent some time in France and, on his return, came under the influence of Friar Hewat, formerly of the Dominican monastery of Perth, from which Prior John McAlpine had, like Alesius, fled from persecution and had found a permanent home on the continent. By this time, James Wedderburn's literary talent had matured. He composed several comedies and tragedies in the vernacular, in which he satirised the corruptions of the clergy and the abuses of the Church. One of these pieces was a sacred tragedy on the beheading of John the Baptist, which was played at the West Port of Dundee. Other pieces followed, no less outspoken. At length he was denounced and a warrant issued for his seizure. He escaped to France, made his home in Dieppe and died there in 1553. The second brother, John, the principal author of the *Good and Godly Ballads*, returned to Dundee from College shortly after Patrick Hamilton's death, was placed under the tuition of Friar Hewat and took orders as a priest about 1532. Like James, he was accused of heresy in 1538 and sought safety in flight, leaving his possessions in Dundee to be confiscated and eventually redeemed by his younger brother, Henry, on payment of a fine. John made his way to Wittenberg, "the city of the prophets," where an entry in the University

register is almost certainly his. Two years were spent in that exhilarating atmosphere, in close intimacy with Melancthon, Luther, and his own countryman, Alesius. When John came back to Dundee in 1542, he joined John Scott, the early printer, in producing the famous volume of translations and original poems and hymns from his own and his brother's pen. Unmolested for some years, he was again driven to flight in 1548 and his death occurred in England in 1556. The third of the brothers, also a graduate of St. Leonard's, entered the church at an early age and ultimately succeeded his uncle, John Barre, as vicar of Dundee, but before entering on that office, he fell under suspicion and like his older brothers, he made his way to the continent. For a short time he was in Paris, then he is said to have spent some time in Wittenberg in the company of his brother John. It was only after the death of Cardinal Beaton in 1546 that he ventured back to his native land. Before his death in 1553, he drew up a document in which, after telling that his house had been destroyed in the war "between us and our old enemies the English", he undertakes its repair and leases it to John Lovell, reserving to himself and his successors in office one room "to be the Vicar of Dundee's chamber in all time coming". Whatever happened to this bequest, the first Protestant minister found himself without a manse and it was long before there was any provision for one.

Though the book was not actually printed until about 1544 or 1545, many of the pieces in it were already widely circulated and known. On the night of his arrest, George Wishart had asked his friends to sing a psalm before retiring for the night. The psalm he chose was the 51st and it was sung in the Wedderburn version. It is not surprising that the words were well known to Wishart, but that they were familiar to many on the other side of the Forth is proof that those poems and hymns had circulated more widely and taken deeper hold than might have been expected. The collection shows how deeply John Wedderburn had been influenced by German sacred poetry and by the example of Luther. Drawing largely upon the German "Spiritual songs, psalms and hymns", especially those that had appeared in the hymn-books of Magdeburg and Strassburg, the compiler starts with the secular poem, the popular love-song or hunting-song, and fills the old form with new spiritual meaning. In this book, the Lutheran period of the Scottish Reformation reaches its noon-day. Not only were the fundamental doctrines of the evangelical scheme of salvation set forth and repeated in almost every hymn, with a persistence which only the author's hearty and complete acceptance of them can explain, but, for the first time, these doctrines were linked to music for the community and the individual, so that the sense of fellowship and unity was given to a movement which hitherto had been intellectual and individual rather than social and congregational. The particularly Lutheran character is not obtrusive, but it is un-mistakeable. The Commandments, for example, are given in the Lutheran and Roman form; the doctrine of baptism is still more mediaeval than Calvinist; the

special honour assigned to the Virgin Mary exceeds anything that is to be found in the Reformed Churches. And, no doubt, many of the ballads show a roughness of expression and a vigour of abuse not in keeping with modern tastes. But the age was rough and language seldom moderate, for the manners and morals exhibited by churchmen high and low were beyond correction by gentle words. Some of the lines have won a permanent place in the popular memory:

The Paip, that Pagane full of pryde,  
 He has us blindit lang,  
 For quhair the blind the blind does gyde  
 Na wounder baith ga wrang.  
 Like Prince and King, he led the Ring  
 Of all iniquitie:

Say trix, tryme go trix, under the grenewod tree.

Here, there is certainly mockery, bold and unsparing, but, somehow, the gay refrain seasons the mockery with humour and turns the papal dance "of all iniquitie" into a ludicrous and outmoded sideshow, to be scorned and left alone. And again,

Christ keip all faithful Christianis  
 From perverst pryde and Papistrie;  
 God grant theme trew Intelligens  
 Of his law, word and veritie.  
 God grant thay may thair life amend  
 Syne blis posses,  
 Throw Faith in Christ all that depend,  
 And nocht on Mes.

A pious prayer, with the last line coming unexpectedly like a sharp thrust home. Such verses were well suited to their purpose and their success was immediate and lasting.

A few months after the burning of Patrick Hamilton, the young king, James V., escaped from the custody of the Douglasses and took the reins of government into his own hands. The moment was propitious, for France and England were at peace and each was eager to secure the support of Scotland. Henry VIII. repudiated the authority of the pope and brought every effort to bear upon James, but all the weight of the Scottish Church was thrown upon the side of France and Rome. Until then the suppression of heresy had been spasmodic and irregular, and preaching against the corruptions of the Church and clergy had been frank and open. Friar William Airth, for example, "spake somewhat more liberally against the licentious lives of the bishops nor they could well bear". Charged with heresy by the Bishop of Brechin, Airth proceeded to St. Andrews and consulted John Major, then Provost of St. Salvator's College, "whose word was then held as an oracle in matters of

religion," and was assured that such doctrine might well be defended. John Knox, to whom we owe these particulars, then goes on to summarize the arguments used by the bold friar, some of whose shafts were aimed at no less a person than Prior Patrick Hepburn. Similar attacks on the corrupt doctrines of Rome were made by Alexander Seaton, Prior of the Black Friars at St. Andrews and Confessor to the King, in a course of sermons that lasted throughout Lent. When his teaching was denounced as heretical, Seaton was in Dundee, where, no doubt, he had many like-minded friends; he returned at once to St. Andrews and gave notice that he would preach, which he did more pointedly and insistently than ever. By now, copies of Tyndale's translation of the New Testament were in wide circulation and the number of converts was daily increasing, but in proportion as the Church acquired more ascendancy over royal policy and saw how Henry was using religious propaganda as a political weapon, severity, persecution and suppression took the place of moderation. In 1535, the Act prohibiting the import of Lutheran books and the discussion of Lutheran doctrines was re-affirmed. A year earlier, the death sentence had been passed against David Straiten, a close friend of Erskine of Dun and a householder in the burgh of Dundee. It was Straiten who had refused to pay the tithe of fish, bidding the agents of the Prior of St. Andrews to come and take it after he had caused his servants to throw every tenth fish back into the sea. Straiten's tenements, on the north side of Murraygate, were forfeited to the Crown and later sold. With the king's marriage to a French princess in 1537, the Church party was now in complete control, while the nobility was completely out of favour. The persecution of heresy was speeded up and grew more urgent and severe, and even George Buchanan escaped punishment only by the king's special favour. It was during this fresh wave of inquisition that the older Wedderburn brothers were driven to flight, and at the same time, several other citizens of Dundee were denounced and compelled to flee. Among these was the bailie who had so courageously sided with Provost Scrymgeour during the defence of Friar Dick in 1531. This James Rollock, one of an old and leading Dundee family, was arraigned for heresy, and his property, among which is special mention of a wind-mill, was escheated and sold. Fortunately, Rollock, though deprived of his possessions and his home, retained his business acumen and built up for himself a considerable competence and a worthy position in Holland, where he is heard of many years later as guardian of the common privileges. He returned to Dundee in 1551, and was one of that band of faithful and determined supporters by whom the Reformation was carried through. Though not under any charge of heresy, a young member of the family of Scrymgeours left Dundee about this same period to become a scholar of international fame and perhaps the best known of all Dundonians abroad. Henry Scrymgeour was about thirty when he set out to continue his studies in



Paris and Bourges. As secretary to the Bishop of Rennes, he visited Italy, where he gave his adherence to the reformed religion. Invited to Geneva, he was offered the chair of philosophy, but interrupted his teaching for some years while collecting books and manuscripts for the wealthy merchant in Augsburg, Fugger. He returned to Geneva and was nominated to the chair of civil law. Two points are of interest: he was one of the witnesses to Calvin's will in 1564, and he was also uncle to James Melville, who was also nephew of Andrew Melville; uncle, too, to Sir Peter Young, whose son, Patrick, also a famous scholar, is supposed to have presented to Dundee many of the books and manuscripts that had belonged to Henry Scrymgeour. These were placed in the vestry of St. Mary's, but in the great fire of 1841 all were destroyed.

The defeat at Solway Moss, the death of James V., the regency of the Earl of Arran and the imprisonment of Cardinal Beaton, left the Protestant and Anglophil party with an open field. In July of 1543, George Wishart returned to Scotland, and with his arrival, the whole character of the reforming movement changed. Until then, the country had been still a feeble pawn in the French and English schemes for aggression and aggrandisement; under his inspiration and that of his followers, it emerged from its divisions and uncertainty with a vigorous spirit of resolve and unity, a clear and practicable programme, and a strong self-consciousness that set it high among the nations. A protagonist of the new learning, Wishart found Scotland mediaeval and scholastic, her schools and universities untouched by any gleam of the renaissance; by precept and example he encouraged the newer studies and forshadowed the close association of scholarship and religion which made Scotland for centuries the admiration of Europe. Before his coming, the demand for religious reform had been persistent and continuous, but however heroic, it had been individual, unorganised and with no clear or common programme. After him it was a united and deliberate movement, with a farsighted leader and widespread support from gentry and people alike. Through Wishart's contact with the Reformed Church of Switzerland and his translation of some of its standards, he introduced its thought and doctrine at a time when the leaders of that Church were the most potent forces in Europe. In John Knox, his friend and follower, he left one well able to complete his unfinished work and to be his biographer as well as the heir of his spirit.

George Wishart was born about 1513 and, at the time of his martyrdom, was only thirty-three. First a pupil, then later an assistant or successor to the Greek master in the school at Montrose, he was summoned before the ecclesiastical authorities for using the Greek New Testament in his classes. He fled to England and received a welcome at Benet College, or Corpus Christi, in Cambridge. There he made the acquaintance of Bishop Latimer, from whom he obtained a preaching licence, and was sent to Bristol, where he preached in the

Church of St. Nicholas. It was a difficult moment, for the "Six Articles" enforcing heavy penalties against heretics and heretical preaching had just become law. Wishart was called to appear before a Church court, over which Cranmer presided, and, on his advice, he retracted and left the country, spending some time in Germany and Switzerland and becoming familiar with the teaching of their Reformed schools.

In 1542, he returned to Cambridge, taking up residence again in Corpus Christi, where he both taught and studied. From one of his students we possess a short and moving testimony to his character: he was Godfearing and charitable, glad to teach, eager to learn, always studying to do good unto all and hurt to none. In July, 1543, he made his way back to Scotland. From his home at Pitarrow, he made occasional visits to Montrose, where he preached in a private house near the church, expounding the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. Later he passed to Dundee, where, protected by a friendly magistracy, he publicly read and expounded the Epistle to the Romans, which Calvin's Exposition, published shortly before, had shown to be the foundation-charter for the doctrine of justification by faith.

He was not long suffered to preach in peace. In the Queen's name he was charged with desist, to leave the town and to trouble it no more. He left forthwith and passed to the west country, where, as in the Mearns, the soil was well prepared. There he found warm welcome and support among the lairds and gentlemen of Kyle. From the Kirk of Ayr he was driven by the Archbishop of Glasgow, but in Galston and Barr crowds flocked to hear him, and when the churches were closed against him, he gathered his congregations, like the Covenanters, on the moors.

When he had been in Ayrshire only about four weeks, news reached him of an outbreak of plague in Dundee. At once he made his way back and gave all his time and strength to ministering to the stricken. Here, the first attempt was made upon his life by a creature of Cardinal Beaton's, but his quickness of eye enabled him to seize the assassin and, after solemn exhortation, secured his safe retreat from the angry crowd. After the plague had abated, he retired to Montrose, and, once again, the Cardinal sought, by means of a forged letter, to lure him into an ambush, where a band of armed horsemen awaited his coming.

The last chapter of his life was now to open. From his friends in Ayrshire he was informed of an Assembly of the Church, which was to meet in Edinburgh in January, 1546, at which they promised to secure him a hearing. He agreed to attend, in spite of the remonstrances of his companions. Taking the road by Invergowrie and Perth, in order to avoid the parts of Fife where the Cardinal had his spies and informers, he made his way to Kinross and King-horn, thence by ferry to Leith. His Ayrshire supporters had not yet arrived and he was urged to conceal himself. But instead he preached openly at

Inveresk, Tranent and Haddington, finding hospitality in the houses of several lairds who were in sympathy with the reformers. It was at one of these houses that Wishart and John Knox first met. The two men were at once drawn to each other. Knox assumed the duties of guardian, carrying, in front of Wishart, the two-handed sword that was to be his protection against attack. During these days of companionship, which he recorded so fully in his History, Knox learned from his leader's own lips the details of his earlier life and came to understand the motives and ideals that urged Wishart on his fearless way.

On the night of 16th December the House of Ormiston was surrounded. On a promise that he would not be handed over to the Cardinal, Wishart surrendered. That promise was broken. He was lodged in Edinburgh Castle and from there, he was taken, towards the end of January, to the Castle at St. Andrews and lodged under strict confinement. After four weeks' imprisonment, he was brought to trial on 28th February, the same day on which Patrick Hamilton had suffered eighteen years earlier. Knox has given a lengthy account of the accusations and Wishart's replies to them, and has provided many touching particulars of the martyr's last hours. The substance of his defence was an appeal to Holy Scripture against the doctrines by which the mediaeval Church had obscured the true way of salvation, against purgatory, auricular confession, the mass, celibacy, and other innovations. But Beaton was determined to inflict the ultimate penalty, and he himself pronounced sentence of death by burning, to be carried out on the following day. On the morning of that day, Wishart was asked to breakfast with the Captain of the Castle and turned that last meal into a sacrament. For half-an-hour he discoursed on the Last Supper, then blessed the bread and wine and invited all those present to partake with him. Soon, thereafter, he was led to the open ground before the Castle and there, with Cardinal Beaton and Archbishop Dunbar watching the scene from the Castle windows, he laid down his life for the faith.

It is unfortunate that the records of the University of St. Andrews are so scanty and occasional during those years and on until the Reformation was accomplished. But there is ample evidence of the deep impression made by this martyrdom, both in Scotland and on the continent. By his example, Wishart gave a new courage to his followers and the determination to prevail; in his translation of the Helvetic Confession, he left them the fundamentals of a Christian faith that was to prove stronger than persecution and become the accepted standard of the Reformed Church in Scotland. For the first time, the movement took clear shape and congregations were formed, with at least the elements of a liturgy. It has sometimes been doubted whether Wishart did in fact leave an Order of Holy Communion, but it should be evident from the proceedings of his last morning on earth that some kind of ritual was followed

in the blessing and partaking of the holy bread and wine. In any case, with George Wishart, the movement in Scotland enters upon its second stage, in organisation and in theology, and its success was now only a matter of time. If Dundee was the chief scene of his activity, his legacy was for the whole Church. Without the strong sympathy, support and protection afforded him by the magistrates and people of Dundee, his work would have been impossible. Beaton himself was frequently passing through the town on his way to the Abbey of Arbroath and the house of Melgund in Aberlemno, which he had built for Marion Ogilvy, his mistress. His position as political leader was now secure, and he was determined to stamp out all heresy and opposition to the Church. That his hand could be heavy had been shown two years before Wishart's martyrdom, when Friar John Roger of the Black Friars' monastery at Perth, who, in Knox's words, "had fruitfully preached to the comfort of many in Angus and Mearns", was seized by Beaton's agents, thrust into the sea-tower of St. Andrews Castle, done to death there and his body thrown over the wall into the sea. Such deterrents failed of their effect and rather increased the zeal of those who saw their leaders thus cut down. Wishart left relatives and friends, especially in Dundee, who now devoted themselves more earnestly than ever to ensure the triumph of the cause for which he had died.

Wishart's death was followed by that of Beaton, and Beaton's by that of Henry VIII, but English policy towards Scotland remained unchanged. After the defeat of Pinkie, in September, 1547, the whole border country lay exposed to plunder and destruction, the larger towns were occupied and a fleet was sent to control the Firths of Forth and Tay. Broughty Castle was seized and Dundee threatened. The English commander appears to have looked to a more subtle weapon than arms or force: he reported that "the most part of the town favours the Word of God and loveth not the priests and bishops very well. They are much desirous here in the country of Angus and Fife to have a good preacher and Bibles and Testaments and other good English books of Tyndale's and Frith's translation, which I have promised them". But even if this hunger existed, it did not lead to any weakening of the resistance or any slackening of the attack. Balmerino Abbey was sacked and burned; the nunnery of Elcho was raided and its inmates carried off; Lindores Abbey was spared because it offered little booty, having suffered plundering and the ejection of its monks shortly before. In Dundee, the houses of the Franciscans and Dominicans were looted; St. Mary's, the steeple of which had been fortified by the English with guns and guards, was despoiled of its ornaments, its bells carried off with all the brass and copper that could be found, and the tower itself was given to the flames. The only part of the building that was not completely demolished was the choir, which stood for twelve years in a half-ruined condition, until the Town Council took in hand to repair it and fit it up for Protestant worship.

During this hostile occupation, one man comes into prominence who was to play a notable role in the events, both local and national, that brought about the success of the reforming cause in 1560 and for twenty years after that to continue his service as the town's representative and leader. James Halyburton was born in 1518, entered St. Salvator's College in 1537 and graduated in the following year. In the attack on the English in Broughty Castle he commanded the Scottish horse with such skill and courage that he earned general commendation. In 1553, he became Provost of Dundee, which post he held with only short interruption until his death in 1589. His sympathies were entirely with the Reformers and were shown openly and in defiance of both Church and Court. In 1555, he and his Council gave strong support to the master of the town school, Thomas McGibbon, who had earned the displeasure of the Abbot of Lindores by his free discussion of reforming principles with his pupils. The dispute was bitter and long, but the Council stuck stubbornly to its refusal to admit the Abbot's nominee, and its insistence that the townspeople should send their children to Mr McGibbon's Grammar School on penalty of a heavy fine. As religious feeling grew more and more enthusiastic, some laymen began to preach openly "according to the measure of grace given to them", and among these, Paul Methven, originally a baker, but so filled with zeal and earnestness that he rallied the people and by his eloquent persuasiveness welded them into a congregation "with the face of a Reformed Church in which the Word was preached openly and the sacraments truly ministered". Here, two years before the Reformation was officially established, the Church in Dundee is in full life and activity; a full ministry of Word and Sacraments is being exercised, and some kind of organisation is in being. It is possible to argue that Paul Methven was uncommissioned and irregular, lacking in ordination and a recognised call and appointment. That may be admitted, but it is sufficient to say that the times were critical and unparalleled and from the success of his labours in Dundee, Methven had undeniably had the gift and the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

His work prospered and soon attracted the attention of the clerical party and the Court. Provost Halyburton was required by the Queen Regent to arrest and deliver him for judgment, but "he gave secret advertisement to the man to avoid the town for a time". A formal summons was thereupon addressed to Methven, citing him to appear before the Privy Council at Stirling, on 10th May, to "answer for usurping the authority and ministry of the Church and for taking upon himself the service thereof, not being lawfully admitter thereto, at the feast of Pasche last and continually thereafter administering the sacraments of the altar to several of the lieges within Dundee and Montrose". When this citation was received, his friends from Dundee and the gentlemen of Angus and Montrose decided to accompany him. At this moment, John Knox enters the

picture. Newly returned from the continent, he hurried from Edinburgh to Dundee, "craved earnestly that he might be suffered to assist his brethren and to give confession of his faith with them, which was granted". In Perth, Knox preached against the idolatry of the mass and image-worship. An altercation ensued, which ended in the purging of the church of all its ornaments and images and in the plundering of the monasteries.

The leaders of the movement resolved to meet in St. Andrews. Knox made his way by the river and the sea to the coast towns of Fife, preaching at Crail and Anstruther with great acclaim. From Dundee, Provost Halyburton brought a contingent of nearly a thousand men and joined the Lords of the Congregation at Cupar Muir. It was to the Provost that the disposition of the troops was entrusted, and his choice was so skilfully made that the Regent's troops were checked and held. No agreement being reached between the opposing leaders, Halyburton again led his forces to deliver Perth from the French. With his brother, Alexander, he made every effort to restrain the men of Dundee from destroying the palace and the abbey of Scone, but in vain.

The crisis was near. Again Halyburton was in the forefront of events. He led his men to the defence of Edinburgh, but was compelled to retreat from Leith. In that skirmish his brother, Alexander, was slain. Bishop Keith, in his *History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland*, asserts that it was the Provost that was slain on this occasion, and one Dundee historian has claimed that his tomb was discovered in St. Giles's Church, but this is wrong. The Provost was among those chosen to discuss the terms on which help might be received from Queen Elizabeth and he signed the last band at Leith for setting forward the revival of religion. He was also one of the Lords of the Congregation who, on 27th January, 1561, signed the First Book of Discipline. He lived on until 1589, taking a full and active share in all the events of those crowded and critical years. During some renovations in St. Mary's in 1827, his richly ornamented monument was found, but it was totally destroyed during the great fire of 1841.

When the first General Assembly met on 20th December 1560, a new name appears among the representatives of Dundee, that of William Christison, minister, with George Lovell and William Carmichael, elders. These two are easily identified as bailies and members of old and well-known Dundee families; George Lovell, in particular, had already become noted as a devoted supporter of the reformed cause. The first mention of Christison is on 20th July, when the Commissioners of Burghs met to appoint ministers to the more important towns; Paul Methven was transferred to Jedburgh and, in his place, William Christison was nominated to Dundee. The *Fasti* of the Church of Scotland tell nothing of his previous career, and in fact he appears abruptly and unexpectedly in the middle of that critical year. Fortunately, the St.



Andrews professor, John Jonston (1565-1611), an excellent Latin poet, with the good habit of addressing complimentary or congratulatory verses to his friends and heroes, composed two short poems addressed to Christison, and these supply some interesting information otherwise unknown. Jonston describes him as a native of Fife, perhaps of Dysart. For some reason — poverty, or, it may be, persecution — Christison left Scotland and betook himself to Denmark, where, it is very likely, he met the Scottish exile, Maccabaeus, by then professor of theology in Copenhagen. There he may have graduated; he certainly came under the influence of the theological school. He then made his way to Norway and became friendly with the first Protestant bishop of Bergen, Gable Pederssen (1536-1557), by whose help he secured a post as master in a school. After some time there, he was, in Jonston's words, called to Dundee by "the city fathers and the folk" — an interesting point, which shows that he was known in Dundee, by name or in person.

It would not be surprising if, while in Denmark or Norway, he had become friendly with some of the Dundee merchants who were either settled in the seaports there or came on occasional business. William Kinloch, whose trading connections with the Baltic towns was regular and extensive, was living in Elsinore in 1554, and his interests were with the reforming cause. Rather later, one of the Wedderburns settled in the same town, and a daughter of that family married into another Dundee family, Kinnaird, and took up residence there. It was through the good services of another Dundee merchant that timber from Rostock was obtained for the rebuilding of St. Mary's, after its long neglect and misuse. Another of the Wedderburns was stationed in Finland and received burial in the cathedral at Abo.

With so many opportunities for meeting Dundee merchants on those coasts, Christison was probably well informed of the progress of events and closely in touch with the leading men at home. Early in 1559, he returned from Denmark, sailing, no doubt, to Dundee. His nomination must have come through Provost Halyburton, with the approval of the council and the church.

For almost forty years, he filled his post with great acceptance to the people and great distinction in the church. Of the sixty Assemblies held after 1560, he attended no fewer than thirty-eight, and in 1569, he was chosen to be Moderator. Many other public duties in that generation of conflict and rapid change were laid upon him. He was one of the commissioners appointed to visit and report upon the University of St. Andrews; he had supervisory authority over his own province; he was selected to interview a young laird who had been educated in France and returned professing himself a Roman Catholic. But in spite of these public duties, he devoted himself faithfully to the tasks that awaited him in Dundee. The choir of St. Mary's had received little attention since the English occupation, and the appointment of a Kirk-master in

1561 was intended as the beginning of a thorough renovation. The work proceeded slowly, and, indeed, a considerable proportion of the buildings, especially the old chapels and religious houses, called for demolition or complete reconstruction. Yet a certain carefulness was shown in utilising some of the now unwanted possessions of the old church. The vestments of the priests, with characteristic economy, were sold by auction with the proviso that they should be altered to serve as gowns for the Kirk Session. Equal care was shown by Christison himself for the library of valuable books that had accumulated in the vestry of St. Mary's; he repaired the damage that they had suffered during the burning of the church in 1548.

The thirty-seven years of Christison's ministry were difficult; the civil troubles of Queen Mary's reign were followed by the efforts of James VI. to alter the constitution of the Reformed Church from presbyterian to episcopalian. Christison's position and the attitude of his parishioners is probably reflected in the solemn declaration made by the General Assembly when it met in Dundee in July, 1580: "The office of a Bishop, as it is now used in this realm, has no sure warrant, authority nor good ground in the Scriptures, but is brought in by the folly and corruptions of men's invention, to the great overthrow of the Kirk of God". A few years later, one of the protagonists of the presbyterian cause owed his escape from apprehension to the assistance of some friends in Dundee, who carried him, disguised as a sailor, in an open boat to Berwick. To this James Melville we owe a short tribute to the minister of Dundee, whom he describes in his Diary as "that faithful pastor", a close friend of his own uncle, Roger Melville. Through old age, Christison was compelled to resign in 1597, and again it is the poet John Jonston who gives us the right date of his death, 16th October, 1599, not, as the *Fasti* says, 1603. To tell the story of his life in full would be to describe the whole process by which the Church in Dundee was reorganised, expanded into a three-fold ministry and made effective for the task it has since then pursued with undiminished earnestness and zeal.





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