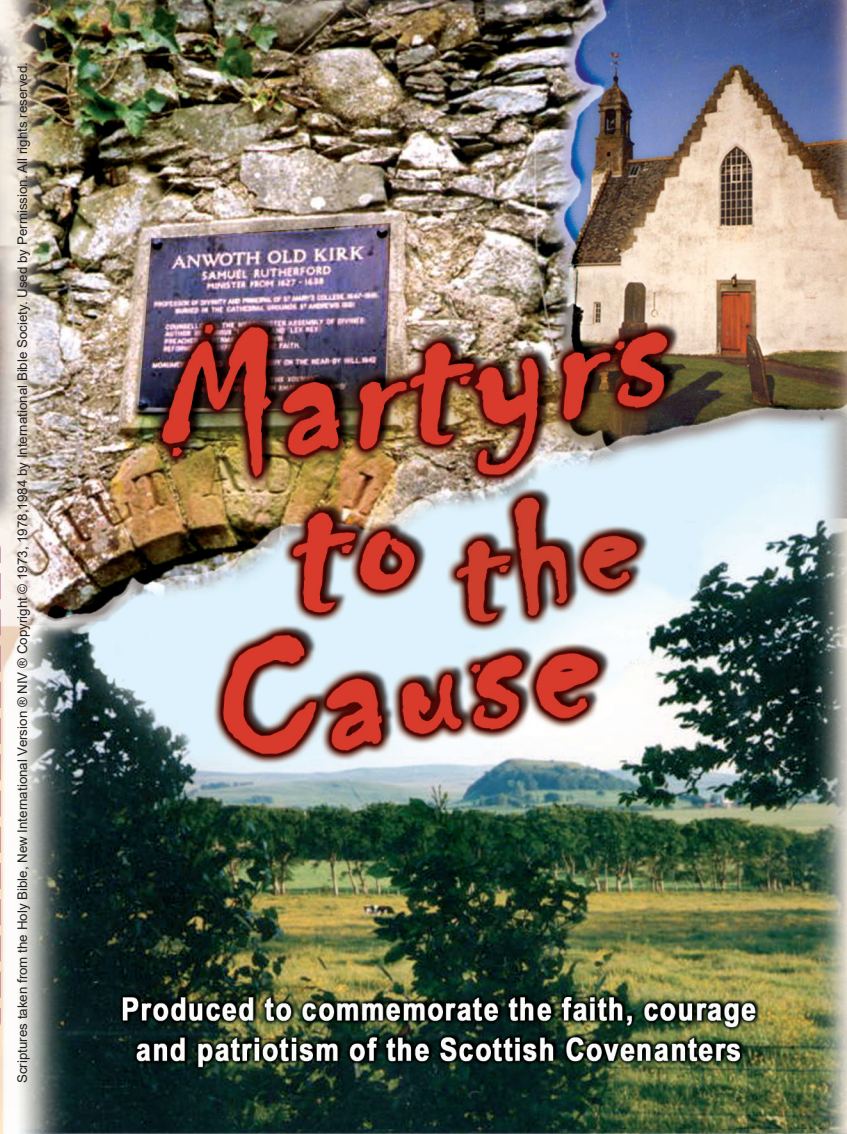




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To:

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Produced to commemorate the faith, courage and patriotism of the Scottish Covenanters

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Martyrs to the Cause

There's no doubt that the 17th Century Covenanting period is amongst the most violent in all of Scotland's turbulent history.

Thousands of Scots, rich and poor, signed the National Covenant of 1638. In this way they were declaring their allegiance to Jesus Christ, the head of the Christian Church and openly opposing the interference of the King and his bishops.

There followed 30 years or so of terrible bloodshed and persecution. Ministers sympathetic to the cause were thrown out of churches and preached in the open air, an offence punishable by death.



Littered with memorials, castles and battlefields, the Clyde Valley in particular is rich in Covenanting history.

And yet the beliefs of our forefathers still have a remarkable relevance for us today...

ESCAPE

In 1679 the Covenanters suffered their heaviest defeat at the Battle of Bothwell Bridge, with 400 killed and 1500 captured. Amongst those who managed to escape however was James Gourlay of Overtown, and now a street named after him in the village reminds us of his courage.

Today our enemies no longer pursue us with muskets, yet they can be just as real... such 'enemies' as depression, anxiety, ill-health and the pain of broken relationships.

In the midst of such challenges it's so good to know that the God of James Gourlay still offers His special help to us today... through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who says...

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

Of course we'll never know true freedom or the peace of God in our lives until we first find peace WITH God. And again Christ Jesus points us in the right direction...

...I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6



HOPE

Only a few short weeks before their defeat at Bothwell Bridge the Covenanters had celebrated their greatest victory at Drumclog. But of course the victories we need today are of a different variety altogether... over the darker side of our human nature...



...sexual immorality, impurity... hatred... jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition... envy... drunkenness...

Galatians 5:19-21

...as well as over the consequences of all this... which are surely unthinkable...

...man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment...

Hebrews 9:27

And there will be no place to hide...

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Hebrews 4:13

And yet, in His love and mercy God has provided a 'way of escape'...

SACRIFICE

Throughout much of the Lanarkshire and Ayrshire countryside plaques and memorials remind us of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their beliefs. And yet the greatest sacrifice of all was made by the Lord Jesus Christ on another barren hillside called Calvary...

...God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

But of course this doesn't bring us peace with God automatically. We can only find this by seeking His forgiveness, turning away from all we know to be wrong and asking the risen Christ Jesus into our lives to become our Saviour and Lord...

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...

John 1:12

And although in our own strength we could never 'keep it up' He also gives us a brand new start in life... with the motivation and power to live a new lifestyle... pleasing to Him...

...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17

COMMITMENT

There's absolutely no doubting the Covenanters' commitment to their cause. And although we may never need to face the brutalities of what became known

as the 'Killing Time', the Lord Jesus Christ calls us to be ready to face the cost if we're to become one of His true followers...

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

Luke 9:23-24

CHALLENGE

In 1688 the 'Glorious Revolution' marked the end of the Covenanting period. And the mustering of a regiment to maintain the ideals of the Covenanters went on to become one of Scotland's most famous... the Cameronians.

But although these days are now long gone, the heart of the Covenanting cause lives on... and the greatest challenge of all still faces each one of us...

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

And yet how readily so many of us reject the Lord Jesus Christ and disregard His clear warning...

...whoever does not believe stands condemned already...

John 3:18

The prospect of facing Eternity simply hoping for the best is surely unthinkable...

...how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?

Hebrews 2:3

So NOW is always the right time to seek Him.

