THE LIFE AND PROPHECIES, OF ALEXANDER PEDEN

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ALEXANDER PEDEN.

THAT most excellent minister of the gospel, and faithful defender of the Presbyterian Religion, MR. ALEXANDER PEDEN, was born in the parish of Sorn, near Ayr. After his course at the College, he was sometime school-master, precentor, and session-clerk to Mr. John Guthrie, minister of the gospel at Tarbolton. When he was about to enter on the ministry, a young woman fell with child, in adultery, to a servant in the house where she stayed; when she found herself to be so, she told the father thereof, who said, I'll run for it, and go to Ireland, father it upon Mr. Peden, he has more to help you to bring it up (he having a small heritage) than I have. The same day that he was to get his licence, she came in before the Presbytery and said, I hear you are to licence Mr. Peden, to be a minister; but do it not, for I am with child to him. He being without at the time, was called in by the moderator; and being questioned about it, he said, I

am utterly surprised, I cannot speak; but let none entertain an ill thought of me, for I am utterly free of it, and God will vindicate me in his own time and way. He went home, and walked at a water-side upwards of 24 hours, and would neither eat nor drink, but said, I have got what I was seeking, and I will be vindicated, and that poor unhappy lass will pay dear for it in her life, and will make a dismal end; and for this surfeit of grief that she hath given me, there shall never one of her sex come into my bosom; and, accordingly he never married. There are various reports of the way that he was vindicated; some say, the time she was in child-birth, Mr. Guthrie charged her to give account who was the father of that child, and discharged the women to be helpful to her, until she did it: some say, that she confessed: others, that she remained obstinate. Some of the people when I made enquiry about it in that country-side, affirmed, that the Presbytery had been at all pains about it, and could get no satisfaction, they appointed Mr. Guthrie to give a full relation of the whole before the congregation, which he did; and the same day the father of the child being present, when he heard Mr. Guthrie begin to speak, he stood up, and desired him to halt, and said, I am the father of that child, and I desired her to fa-

ther it on Mr. Peden, which has been a great trouble of conscience to me; and I could not get rest till I came home to declare it. However it is certain, that after she was married, every thing went cross to them; and they went from place to place, and were reduced to great poverty. At last she came to that same spot of ground where he stayed upwards of 24 hours, and made away with herself!

2. After this he was three years settled minister at New Glenluce in Galloway; and when he was obliged, by the violence and tyranny of that time, to leave that parish, he lectured upon Acts xx. 17. to the end, and preached upon the 31st. verse in the forenoon, 'Therefore watch, and remember that for the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears:' Asserting that he had declared the whole counsel of God, and had kept nothing back and protested that he was free of the blood of all souls. And, in the afternoon he preached on the 32d verse, 'And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.' Which was a weeping day in that kirk; the greatest part could not contain themselves: He many times requested them to be silent; but they sor-

rowed most of all when he told them that they should never see his face in that pulpit again. He continued until night; and when he closed the pulpit-door he knocked hard upon it three times with his Bible, saying three times over, I arrest in my Master's name, that never one enter there, but such as come in by the door, as I did. Accordingly, neither curate nor indulged minister ever entered that pulpit, until after the revolution, that a Presbyterian minister opened it.

3. After this he joined with that honest and zealous handful in the year 1666, that was broken at Pentland-hills, and came the length of Clyde with them, where he had a melancholy view of their end, and parted with them there. James Cubison, of Paluchbeaties, my informer, to whom he told this, he said to him, 'Sir, you did well that parted with them, seeing you was persuaded they would fall and flee before the enemy.—Glory glory to God, that he sent me not to hell immediately! for I should have stayed with them though I should have been cut all in pieces.

4. That night the Lord's people fell, and fled before the enemy at Pentland-hills, he was in a friend's house in Carrick, sixty miles from Edinburgh; his landlord seeing him mightily troubled enquired how it was with him; he said, 'To morrow I will speak with you,' and desired some can-

dle. That night he went to bed. The next morning calling early to his landlord, said, 'I have sad news to tell you, our friends that were together in arms, appearing for Christ's interest, are now broken, killed, taken, and fled every man.'—the truth of which was fully verified in about 48 hours thereafter.

5. After this, in June 1673, he was taken by Major Cockburn, in the house of Hugh Ferguson, of Knockdow, in Carrick, who constrained him to tarry all night. Mr. Peden told him that it would be a dear night to them both. Accordingly they were both carried prisoners to Edinburgh. Hugh Ferguson was fined in a thousand merks, for resetting, harbouring, and conversing with him. The Council ordered fifty pounds sterling to be paid to the Major out of the fines, and ordained him to divide twenty-five pounds sterling among the party that apprehended him. Some time after examination he was sent prisoner to the Bass, where, and at Edinburgh, he remained until December, 1668, that he was banished.

6. While prisoner in the Bass, one Sabbath-morning being about the public worship of God a young lass, about 13 or 14 years of age, came to the chamber-door mocking with loud laughter: He said, 'Poor thing, thou mocks and

laughs at the worship of God, but ere long God shall write such a sudden, surprising judgment on thee, that shall stay thy laughing, and thou shalt not escape it.' Very shortly after, she was walking upon the rock, and there came a blast of wind and sweeped her into the sea, where she perished. While prisoner there, one day walking upon the rock, some soldiers passing by him, one of them said, Devil take him. He said, Fy, fy, poor man, thou knowest not what thou art saying; but thou wilt repent that.—At which word the soldier stood astonished, and went to the guard distracted, crying aloud for Mr. Peden, saying, the devil would immediately take him away. He came to him again, and found him in his right mind under deep convictions of great guilt. The guard being to change, they desired him to go to his arms; he refused, and said, he would lift no arms against Jesus Christ his cause, and persecute his people, he had done that too long. The governor threatened him with death, to-morrow about ten of the clock; he confidently said, three times, though he should tear all his body in pieces, he should never lift arms that way. About three days after, the governor put him out of the garrison, setting him ashore. He having a wife and children, took a house in East Lothian, where he became a singular Christian. Mr. Pe-

den told these astonishing passages to the foresaid John Cubison and others, who informed me.

7. When brought from the Bass to Edinburgh and sentence of banishment passed upon him, in Dec. 1678. and sixty more fellow-prisoners, for the same cause, to go to America, never to be seen in Scotland again, under the pain of death; after this sentence was past, he several times said, that the ship was not yet built that should take him and these prisoners to Virginia; or any other of the English plantations in America.—One James Kay, a solid and grave Christian, being one of them, who lives in or about the Water of Leith, told me, that Mr. Peden said to him, 'James, when your wife comes in, let me see her;' which he did.—After some discourse, he called for a drink, and when he sought a blessing, he said. 'Good Lord, let not James Kay's wife miss her husband, till thou return him to her in peace and safety; which we are sure will be sooner than either he or she is looking for.' Accordingly, the same day-month that he parted with her at Leith, he came home to her at the Water of Leith.

8. When they were on shipboard at the Water of Leith, there was a report that the enemies were to send down thumbkins to keep them from

rebelling; at the report of this, they were discouraged: Mr. Peden came above the deck and said, 'Why are ye discouraged? You need not fear, there will neither thumbkins nor bootkins come here: lift up your hearts and heads, for the day of your redemption draweth near; if we were once at London, we will be set at liberty.'—And when sailing on the voyage, praying publicly, he said, 'Lord, such is the enemies hatred at thee and malice at us for thy sake, that they will not let us stay in thy land of Scotland, to serve thee, though some of us have nothing but the canopy of thy heavens above us, and the earth to tread upon; but, Lord, we bless thy name, that will cut short our voyage, and frustrate thy enemies of their wicked design, that they will not get us where they intend; and some of us shall go richer home than we came from home.' James Pride, who lived in Fife, an honest man, being one of them, he said many times, he could assert the truth of this, for he came safely home; and beside other things, he bought two cows: and before that, he never had one. I had these accounts both from the foresaid James Kay and Robert Punton, a known public man, worthy of all credit, who was also under the same sentence, and lived in the parish of Dalmeny, near Queensferry.

9. When they arrived at London, the skipper

who received them at Leith, was to carry them no further. The skipper who was to receive them there, and carry them to Virginia, came to see them, they being represented to him as thieves, robbers, and evil-doers; but when he found they were all grave Christian men, banished for Presbyterian principles, he said he would sail the sea with none such. In this confusion: that the one skipper would not receive them, and the other would keep them no longer, being expensive to maintain them they were all set at liberty. Some reported that both skippers got compliments from friends at London; however, it is certain they were all set free without any imposition of bonds or oaths; and friends at London, and on their way homewards, through England shewed much kindness unto them.

10. That dismal day, June 22d. 1679, at Bothwel-bridge, that the Lord's people fell, and fled before the enemy, he was forty miles distant, near the border, and kept himself retired until the middle of the day, that some friends said to him, 'Sir, the people are waiting for sermon.' He said, 'Let the people go to their prayers; for me, I neither can nor will preach any this day; for our friends are fallen, and fled before the enemy at Hamilton; and they are hanging and

hashing them down, and their blood is running like water!

11. After this, he was preaching in Galloway: in the forenoon he prayed earnestly for the prisoners taken at and about Bothwel; but in the afternoon, when he began to pray for them, he halted and said, 'Our friends at Edinburgh, the prisoners, have done something to save their lives that shall not do with them, for the sea-billows shall be many of their winding-sheets; and the few of them that escape, shall not be useful to God in their generation.' Which was sadly verified thereafter. That which the greatest part of these prisoners did, was the taking of that bond, commonly called the Black Bond, after Bothwel, wherein they acknowledged their appearance in arms, for the defence of the gospel and their own lives, to be rebellion; and engaged themselves never to make any more opposition: upon the doing of which, these perfidious enemies promised them life and liberty. This with the cursed and subtile arguments and advices of ministers, who went into the New Yard, where they were prisoners, particularly Mr. Hugh Kenendy, Mr. William Crighton, Mr. Edward Jamieson, and Mr. George Johnston; these took their turn in the yard where the prisoners were, together with a letter that was sent from that Erastian meeting

of ministers, met at Edinburgh in August 1679, for the acceptance of a third indulgence, with a cautionary bond. Notwithstanding of the enemies' promise, and the unhappy advice of ministers not indulged, after they were ensnared in this foul compliance, they banished 255, whereof 205 perished in the Orkney-sea. This foul step, as some of them told, both in their life, and when dying, lay heavy upon them all their days; and that these unhappy arguments and advices of ministers, prevailed more with them than the enemies' promise of life and liberty. In August 1679, fifteen of the Bothwel-prisoners got indictments of death. Mr. Edward Jamieson, a worthy Presbyterian minister, as Mr. Woodrow calls him, was sent from that Erastian meeting of ministers into the Tolbooth to these fifteen, who urged the lawfulness of taken the bond to save their lives; and the refusal of it would be a reflection to religion, and the cause they had appeared for, and a throwing away their lives, for which their friends would not be able to vindicate them. He prevailed with thirteen of them, which soured in the stomachs of some of those thirteen, and lay heavy upon them both in their life and death. The prisoners taken at and about the time of Bothwel, were reckoned about fifteen hundred. The faithful Mr. John Blackader dic

wite to these prisoners, dissuading them from that foul compliance; and some worthy persons of these prisoners, whom he wrote to, said to me with tears, that they slighted his advice, and swallowed the unhappy advices of these ministers who were making peace with the enemies of God, and followed their foul steps, for which they would go mourning to their graves. I heard the same Mr. Blackader preach his last public sermon before falling into the enemies' hands in the night-time in the fields, in the parish of Livingstone, upon the side of the Muir, at New-house, on the 23d. of March, after Bothwel, where he lectured upon Micah iv. from the 9th. verse, where he asserted, That the nearer the delivery, our pains and showers would come thicker and sorer upon us; and that we had been long in the fields, but ere we were delivered, we would go down to Babylon; that either Popery would overspread this land, or be at the breaking in upon us like on inundation of water. And preached upon that text, 'Let no man be moved with these afflictions, for ye yourselves know, that ye are appointed thereunto.' Where he insisted on what moving and shaking dispensations the Lord had exercised his people with in former ages, especially that man of God, that went to Jeroboam at Bethel, and delivered his commission faithfull

and yet was turned out of the way by an old lying prophet; how moving and stumbling the manner of his death was to all Israel! And earnestly requested us to take good heed to what ministers we heard, and what advice we followed. When he prayed, he blessed the Lord that he was free of both band and rope: and that he was as clearly willing to hold up the public blest standard of the gospel as ever: And said, The Lord rebuke, give repentance and forgiveness to these ministers that persuaded these prisoners to take that bond. For their perishing by sea was more moving and shocking to him, than if some thousands of them had been slain in the field. He was thereafter taken, the 6th. of April, by Major Johnston, in Edinburgh, and detained prisoner in the Bass, where he died. As the interest of Christ lay near his heart through his life, amongst his last words he said, The Lord will defend his own cause.

17. Shortly after that sad stroke at Bothwel, he went to Ireland, but did not stay long at that time. In his travels through Galloway, he came to a house, and looking in the goodman's face, he said, They call you an honest man, but if you be so, you look not like it, you will not long keep that name, but will discover yourself to be what you are. And shortly after, he was made

to flee for sheep-stealing. In that short time he was in Ireland, the Governor required of all Presbyterian ministers that were in Ireland, that they should give it under their hand, that they had no accession to the late rebellion at Bothwel-bridge, in Scotland, and that they did not approve of it; which the most part did; and sent Mr. Thomas Gowans, a Scotsman, and one Mr. Paton, from the north of Ireland to Dublin, to present it to the Lord Lieutenant: the which when Mr. Peden heard, he said, Mr. Gowans and his brother Mr. Paton are sent and gone the devil's errand but God will arrest them by the gate. And accordingly, Mr. Gowans, by the way, was struck with a sore sickness, and Mr. Paton fell from his horse, and broke or crushed his leg; and both of them were detained beyond expectation. I had this account from some worthy Christians when I was in Ireland.

18. In the year 1682. he married John Brown in Kyle, at his own house in Priesthall, that singular Christian, upon Marion Weir. After marriage; he said to the bride, Marion, you have got a good man to be your husband, but you will not enjoy him long: prize his company, and keep linen by you for his winding-sheet, for you will need it when you are not looking for it, and it will be a bloody one. This came sadly to pass

in the beginning of May, 1685, as afterwards shall appear.

19. After this, in the year 1682, he went to Ireland again, and came to the house of William Steel, in Glenwharry, in the county of Antrim; he enquired at Mrs. Steel if she wanted a servant for threshing victual? She said they did, and enquired what his wages were a-day, or a-week. He said, the common rate was a common rule; to which she assented.—At night he was put to bed, in the barn, with the servant-lad; and that night he spent in prayer and groaning, up and down the barn. On the morrow he threshed victual with the lad, and the next night he spent the same way. The second day, in the morning, the lad said to his mistress, This man sleeps none, but groans and prays all night; I get no sleep for him: he threshes very well, and is not sparing of himself, tho' I think he has not been used with it, for he can do nothing to the botteling and ordering of the barn; and when I put the barn in order, he goes to such a place, and there he prays for the afflicted Church of Scotland, and names so many in the furnace.—He wrought the second day, and his mistress watched and overheard him praying, as the lad had said.—At night she desired her husband to enquire if he was a minister, which he did, and desired him to be free with

him, and he should not only be no enemy to him, but a friend. Mr. Peden said, he was not ashamed of his office; and gave an account of his circumstances. He was no more set to work, nor to lie with the lad; and he staid a considerable time in that place, and was a blessed instrument in the conversion of some, and civilizing of others, though that place was noted for a wild rude people, and the fruit of his labour appears unto this day. There was a servant-lass in that house, that he could not look upon but with frowns: and sometimes, when at family-worship, he said, pointing to her with a frowning countenance. You come from the barn and from the byre reeking in your lusts, and sits down among us; we do not want you, nor none such. At last he said to William Steel and his wife, Put that unhappy lass from your house, for she will be a stain to your family, for she is with child, and will murder it, and will be punished for the same. Which accordingly came to pass, and she was burnt at Carrick fergus, which is the punishment of murderers of children there. I had this account from John Muirhead, who staid much in that house, and other Christian people, when in Ireland.

20. After this, he longed to be out of Ireland, through the fearful apprehensions of that dismal day of rebellion in Ireland, that came up-

on it four years thereafter, and that he might take part with the sufferers in Scotland. He came near the coast one morning: John Muirhead came to him; lying within a hedge: he said, Have you any news, John? John said: There is great fear of the Irish rising. He said, no, no, John, the time of their arising is not yet; but they will rise, and dreadful will it be at last. He was long detained waiting for a bark, not daring to go to public parts, but to some remote creek of the sea. Alexander Gordon of Kinstuir, in Galloway, had agreed with one, but Mr. Peden would not sail the sea with him, having some foresight of what he did prove afterwards.—In the beginning of August before this, Kinstuir was relieved at Enterken-path, going from Dumfries to Edinburgh prisoner; when the news of it came to Ireland, our Scots sufferers, their acquaintance, were glad of the news, especially that Kinstuir had escaped. Mr. Peden said, What means all this Kinstuiring?—There is some of them relieved there, that one of them is worth many of him; for ye will be ashamed of him ere all be done. Being in this strait, he said to Robert Wark, an old worthy Christian, worthy of credit, Robert, go and take such a man with you and the first Bark ye can find, compel them, for they will be like the dogs in Egypt, not one of them

will move their tongue against you. Accordingly Robert and his comrade found it so and brought her to that secret place where he was. When Robert and his comrade came and told him, he was glad and very kind and free; but he seemed under a cloud at that time. He said lads, I have lost my prospect wherewith I was wont to look over to the bloody land, and tell you and others what enemies and friends were doing; the devil and I puddles and rides time-about upon one another: but if I were uppermost again, I shall ride hard, and spurgaw well. I have been praying for a swift passage over to the sinful land, come of us what will: and now Alexander Gordon is away with my prayer-wind; but it were good for the remnant in Scotland he never saw it; for as the Lord lives, he shall wound that interest ere he go off the stage.—This sadly came to pass in his life, and was a reproach to it at his death. A little before they came off, he baptised a child to John Maxwell, a Glasgow man, who was fled over from the persecution: in his discourse before baptism, he burst out into a rapture, foretelling that black day that was to come upon Ireland, and sad days to Scotland, and after all there was to come good days. Mrs. Maxwell, or Mary Elphingston, the mother of the child, yet alive in Glasgow, told me this, That in the time

he was asserting these things, she was thinking and wondering what ground of assurance he had for them, when he cried aloud shaking his hand at her, woman, thou art thinking and wondering within thyself, whether I be speaking these things out of the visons of my own head, or if I be taught by the Spirit of God; I tell the, woman, thou shalt live and see that I am not mistaken. She told me, that she was very lately delivered, and out of her great desire to have her child baptised before he came off, that she took travail too soon; and being weak, and so surprised with his telling her the thoughts of her heart, that she was in danger of falling off the chair. At this exercise also he told them, that he could not win off till he got this done, and this was all the drink-money, he had left in Ireland, and to the family (pointing to the landlord) for all the kindness he had met with from them. After baptism they got break fast; there was plenty of bread upon the table, seeking a blessing, he put his hand beneath the bread, and holding it up with much aflection and tears, said, "Lord there is a well covered table, and plenty of bread: but what comes of the poor young, kindly, honest hearted lad Renwick, that shames us all, in starving and holding up his fainting mother's head, when of all the children she has brought forth, there is none will avowedly take her by the nand: and the poor, cold, hungry lads on the hills? For honour of thine own cause, let them not starve: thou caused a ravenous bird, greedy of flesh itself, to feed Elijah: and thou fed thy people in the wilderness with angel's food: and blessed a few loaves and small fishes, and made them sufficient for many; and had experience of want, weariness cold and hunger, and enemies daily hunting for thy life, while in the world; look to them, and provide for them." The Waiters being advertised of the bark being in that place, they and other people came upon them, which obliged them that were to come off, to secure the Waiters and people altogether, for fear of the garrison of Carrickfergus apprehending them, being near to it, which obliged them to come off immediately, twenty-six of our Scots sufferers came aboard, he stood upon the deck and prayed, there being not the least wind, where he made a rehearsal of times and places, when and where the Lord had heard and answered them in the days of their distress and how they were in a great strait.—Waving his hand to the west, from whence he desired the wind, he said, 'Lord give a loof-full of wind: fill the sails Lord and give us a fresh gale, and let us have a swift passage over to the bloody land, come of us what will.'—John Muirhead, Robert Wark, and others who were

present, told me, that when he began to pray, the sails were all hanging straight down, but ere he ended, they were all like blown bladders. They put out the Waiters and other people and got a very swift and safe passage.—The twenty-six Scots sufferers that were with him, having provided themselves with arms, and being designed to return to Scotland, there being then such a noise of killing; and the report was no greater than the deed, it being then in the heat of killing time, in the end of Febuary 1685. when at exercise in the bark, he said, 'Lord thou knowest these lads are hot spirited, lay an arrest upon them, that they may not appear; their time is not yet; though Monmouth and Argyle be coming, they will work no deliverance.' At that time there was no report of their coming, for they came not for ten weeks thereafter.—In the morning after they landed, he lectured before they parted, sitting upon a brae-side, where he had fearful threatenings against Scotland saying, the time was coming that they might travel many miles in Galloway and Nithsdale, Ayr and Clydesdale, and not see a reeking house, nor hear a cock crow.

28. When the day of his death drew near, and not being able to travel, he came to his brother's house, in the parish of Sorn, where he was born. He caused dig a cave with a saughen bush covering the mouth of it, near to his brother's house and the enemies came and searched the house narrowly many times. In the time that he was in this cave, he said to some friends, 1. That God shall make Scotland a desolation. 2. There shall be a remnant in the land, whom God should spare and hide. 3. They should lie in holes and caves of the earth, and be supplied with meat and drink: And when they come out of their holes, they shall not have freedom to walk, for stumbling on the dead corpses. 4. A stone cut of a mountain, should come down, and God shall be avenged on the great ones of the earth, and the inhabitants of the land, for their wickedness, and then the church should come forth with a bonny bairn-time of young ones at her back. He wished that the Lord's people might lie hid in their caves, as if they were not in the world, for nothing would do it, until God appeared with his judgments, and they that wan through the bitter and sharp, short storm, by the sword of the Frenches, and a set of unhappy men, taking part with them, then there would be a spring-tide day of the plenty, purity and power of the gospel: Giving them that for a sign, If he were but once buried, they might be in doubts; but if he were oftener buried than once, they might be persuaded that all he had said would come to pass:

And earnestly desired them to take his corpse out to Airdsmoss, and bury them beside Richy (meaning Mr. Cameron) that he might get rest in his grave, for he had gotten little through his life; but he said he knew they would not do it.

29. Within forty-eight hours he died, January 28th. 1686, being past sixty years; and was buired in the Laird of Afflect's Isle. The enemies got notice of his death and burial, and sent a troop of dragoons, and lifted his corpse and carried him to Cumnock-gallows foot, and buried him there (after being forty days in the grave) beside others. His friends thereafter laid a grave-stone above him, with this inscription:

HERE LIES

MR. ALEXANDER PEDEN,

A Faithful Minister of the Gospel,

at Glenluce,

Who departed this life January 28, 1686,

And was raised after six weeks

Out of his Grave,

And buried here out of contempt.

FINIS.