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The St Mary's Heritage Project

The Rev. John Hay preaches at Glasgow
on King Charles the Martyr Day, 1703.

SOURCE:

Ed. L.W. Sharp: The Early Letters of Robert Wodrow, 1698-1709, Edinburgh, 1937.

These extracts, from a letter written by Robert Wodrow in February, 1703, to Mr Lachland Campbell of Kintyre, are the earliest known reference to an Episcopalian service in Glasgow after the 1689 disestablishment.

[RGE, 2009]

The Rev. John Hay preaches at Glasgow on King Charles the Martyr Day, 1703.

We had on Saturday last, January 30, a preaching by Mr John Hay¹ in Provost Bell's lodgings². The rabble and some collegians disturbed them and broke all their windows, till the magistrates and Principal dispersed them. This no doubt will be magnified at court.

Mr. Hay's text was Lamentations, iv, 20. [*The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.*] He made King Charles a martyr for Episcopacy, and to be murdered by the sectarians.

He pretended to refute a sermon of Mr D. B.³ which he heard the Sabbath before, wherein Mr B. proved prelacy had not foundation in the Scripture. He said that this was an upstart opinion, and defended by none in the primitive times, but the heretic Aerius who was burnt. This last particular anent [about] Aerius you know is a terrible blunder in matter of fact.

The Episcopal ministers had a meeting the night before, wherein Mr Fullarton⁴ opposed their preaching in town or, at least, openly. He told them this was an incensing of the people and giving them an occasion of making a riot. He advised them to go out to Barrowfield⁵ and preach there. However, they would not harken to this seasonable advice, and some think this was done *ex proposito* to get opposition made to them and thus a pretence that without a legal toleration by Parliament they cannot preach without danger of their lives.

The sober part of mankind here are surprised at this odd step of theirs that now they should keep the day of King Charles' death, which they never kept (except in one church at Edinburgh) when Episcopacy was established by law and they had all at their disposal.

¹ John Hay of Inchnock and Gayne had been incumbent of New Monklands prior to 1689.

² Sir John Bell's mansion stood at the junction of Saltmarket and Briggait. James VII, when Duke of York, had stayed there as a guest in 1681.

³ David Brown, Minister of Blackfriars church, Glasgow.

⁴ John Fullarton had been the incumbent of Paisley Abbey until 1689. It seems that several Episcopal clergy were present. Elsewhere in Wodrow we learn that Fullarton was highly regarded in the area, and he and others preached and took services in Paisley as well as Glasgow, including Christmas Communion at Paisley Abbey in 1710.

⁵ Barrowfield, east of Glasgow Green, was the estate of John Walkinshaw, an influential lay Episcopalian. Mary Queen of Scots had been a guest there.