

## From Perth to Pennsylvania: The Legacy Of Robert Sandeman

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Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.— Jude 3

### I. Introduction

For most, the Lordship controversy began in the late 1970's to early 1980's. However, in an article entitled "History Repeats Itself," J. I. Packer correctly noted, "The view that saving faith is no more than 'belief of the truth about Christ's atoning death' is not new. It was put forward in the mid-eighteenth century by the Scot Robert Sandeman."<sup>1</sup> If the average Free Grace proponent was told that their view of saving faith was nothing more than a revival of Robert Sandeman's theology, they would most likely ask, "Who's Robert Sandeman?"

After discussing the ministry of Sandeman and the ill effects of his view of faith, Packer concludes by stating, "The narrow intellectualism of Sandeman's view of faith dampened life-changing evangelism. This was one reason why the Glasite-Sandemanian denomination did not survive."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Sandeman's motto "contending earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"<sup>3</sup> clearly demonstrates that he was not vying for denominational superiority. Rather, he was merely "contending earnestly for the faith." Therefore, while Packer's observation was correct concerning the demise of this group as an

organized fellowship, the impact that the theology of Robert Sandeman has had upon the church for the last 250 years cannot be ignored.

### II. The Birth of Sandemanianism

While there were certainly many who influenced Sandeman, John Glas, his father-in-law, had one of the greatest affects upon his life. Glas (or Glass) was born in Auchtermuchty, Scotland in 1695 but spent much of his formative years in Perthshire,<sup>4</sup> where his father, Alexander Glas, served as a Scottish minister. In 1719, following in his father's footsteps, John was ordained a minister in the Church of Scotland within the parish of Tealing.

Because of his convictions that the local church should be autonomous, he was asked to leave the church of Tealing in 1730.

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