

THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

No. 3—July, 1905.

I.

THE NINETEENTH PSALM IN THE CRITICISM OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

IN the first part of the nineteenth Psalm, comprising verses 2-7, or 1-6 as numbered in the English versions, the Psalmist sings of the glory of God as displayed in the heavens:

- 2 The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament showeth his handiwork.
3 Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge.
4 There is no speech nor language,
Their voice is unheard.
5 Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
6 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course.
7 His going forth is from the end of the heavens,
And his circuit unto the ends of it;
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

In the second part the glory of Jehovah's law is first extolled:

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|---|--------------------------------------|
| 8 The law of Jehovah is perfect, | restoring the soul: |
| The testimony of Jehovah is sure, | making wise the simple. |
| 9 The precepts of Jehovah are right, | rejoicing the heart: |
| The commandment of Jehovah is pure, | enlightening the eyes. |
| 10 The fear of Jehovah is clean, | enduring forever: |
| The ordinances of Jehovah are true, | and righteous altogether. |
| 11 More to be desired are they than gold, | yea, than much fine gold; |
| Sweeter also than honey | and the droppings of the honey comb. |

II.

“JOHN KNOX, REFORMER OF A KINGDOM.”*†

THOMAS CARLYLE declared Knox to be “the one Scotchman to whom of all others his country and the world owe a debt.” And it is in recognition of that world-wide indebtedness that we are met here to-day to pay our tribute to his memory. Nay, rather to his life-work. For his life is no mere memory, but a living power. For his works do follow him, and he, being dead, yet speaketh.

Our interest in John Knox is two-fold—as one of the most notable examples of the transforming and controlling power of Christian faith, and as one of the principal actors in a great historical drama. The former is, for the present age, the more important consideration. For great as was the epoch in which he lived, important as were its issues for Scotland and England and America, its problems were temporary, and no stage is likely to be set again with either its actors or its incidents. But the personal history of John Knox has in it a universal note, which makes it of overmastering value to every age and to every individual seeking the noblest things.

By universal I mean a type of character compact of that which is highest and best and most permanent in human nature; in one aspect independent of any particular age, and in another so intense and active as to seem particularly adapted to the age in which it was formed. Thus, while claiming for Knox a breadth and dignity of character due to his sense of nearness to God, I heartily accept Mr. Hume Brown’s dictum, in which he declares that Knox possessed “an individuality marked for a special purpose, and endowed with every gift requisite for its fulfillment” (*Life of Knox*, I, 117). It is the same thing which we find in the great characters of the Bible—in Abraham and Moses, in Samuel and David, in Isaiah and Daniel, in John the Baptist and Paul—in the great characters of the Bible, and not less in those who through the Christian centuries have proved the transforming power of God’s love. The lesson of

* An address delivered before the Theological Seminary at Princeton on the occasion of a celebration in honor of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Knox.

† “Knox Himself, the Reformer of a Kingdom,” Milton, *Areopagitica*.

such a life is needed to-day and every day. The temptations to be met and mastered are the same in every age, however the masks they wear may differ. The issues are eternally the same.

I.

John Knox was born* in or near the town of Haddington, seventeen miles east of Edinburgh, of humble parentage, at a date no record of which has been preserved. He probably studied at the University of St. Andrew's, and was admitted to clerical orders prior to 1541. In 1544 he entered the family of Hugh Douglas of Longniddry as tutor of his sons and the son of the laird of Ormiston. Not a single incident distinguishes his career from thousands of others until the moment which he marks as an epoch in his own and his country's history.

"In the midst of all the calamities that came upon this Realm . . . came to Scotland that Blessed Martyr of God Master George Wishart in the year of God 1544. He was a man of such graces as before him were never heard within this Realm, yea, and are rare to be found yet in any man, notwithstanding the great light of God that since his days hath shined unto us. He was singularly learned, as well in all godly knowledge as in all honest human science" (*Works*, I, p. 125).†

Knox tells us how he "waited upon him carefully from the time he came to Lothian," and makes it clear that from the teaching of Wishart grew that experience of personal religion which transformed his life. The preaching of Wishart was that plain Scriptural exposition which was taking all Europe back to the word of God as to a newly opened fountain, with a fearless application of its teaching to the moral and social condition of contemporary life which produced an intense spiritual and political ferment. The effect upon Knox was immediate and immense. It drove him to study the Bible carefully, and he tells us that it was in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel, the glorious discourse of our Lord after the last supper, that he first cast anchor. It drove him out of his study with the fervor of a young man and a new convert to carry a

* The latest opinions on the date of Knox's birth have been collected in the March, 1905, number of the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Philadelphia*. The weight of opinion is decidedly in favor of 1515, a date which suits the established facts of his career better than any other, clears up the one dark gap, 1530 to 1541, and relieves him from the criticism which has been visited by recent historians on his second marriage.

† The popular character of this address has led to the use of the modernized text of Mr. C. J. Guthrie, London, 1898; but the references throughout are to the definitive edition of David Laing, six volumes, Edinburgh.

two-handed sword before Wishart, after an attempt had been made to assassinate him. The tender pathos of his description of Wishart's arrest and martyrdom remains to us as a page of his own deep spiritual experience. And realizing that he was now marked as one of the professors of the "new evangel," after the murder of Cardinal Beaton he took refuge in the Castle of St. Andrew's, and there came to him the public call to the office of preacher by the voice of the leaders of the new movement and the lips of John Rough. This incident is of the utmost significance in his career. That he had fervently embraced the doctrines of the Reformation was obvious enough, that he was ready to make public profession of his faith in peril of persecution he had made clear to all the world, that in the education of his young pupils he was actively teaching the Bible and a reformed Catechism he has himself recorded; but that he was not seeking the responsible office of the preacher of reform is no less plain.

At the close of a sermon upon the election of ministers John Rough—the sometime friar, the martyr yet to be—addressing Knox, gave him this solemn charge:

"In the name of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of these that presently call you by my mouth, I charge you, that you refuse not this holy vocation, but, as ye tender the Glory of God, the increase of Christ His kingdom, the edification of your brethren and the comfort of me, oppressed by the multitude of labors, that you take upon you the public office of preaching, even as ye look to avoid God's heavy displeasure and desire that He shall multiply His graces upon you.

"Whereat, John Knox, abashed, burst forth in most abundant tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber. His countenance and behavior, from that day to the day that he was compelled to present himself to the public place of preaching, did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart; for no man saw any kind of mirth in him, neither yet had he pleasure to accompany any man for many days together" (*Works*, I, pp. 187-188).

There was surely enough to cause any man to pause and reflect before he accepted the vocation thus thrust upon him. It was a call to every form of self-sacrifice—to poverty, to hardship, to outlawry, almost certainly to the pains of martyrdom. But it is clear that it was not from any want of physical courage that he shrank back. It was true of him then, as always, as the Regent Morton said by his open grave, that he was a man who never "feared any flesh." It was also true of him then, as he declared

it ever was, that he was "a weak and fearful man." That is, he realized the awfulness of the call, its grandeur transcending human powers—and he knew his own inadequacy. He had, however, cast anchor in John's Gospel at the seventeenth chapter; and the anchor held. He got his grip fast in the firm rock of holy Scripture, and thereafter though the billows rolled round him mountain high, though the storms beat and buffeted him, he never faltered in his faith nor failed in the hour of need.

He was speedily to have that deep spiritual experience which is associated with intense physical strain and the loneliness which makes a man feel that he is forsaken alike by man and God. For by the capture of the Castle of St. Andrew's he fell into the hands of the French, and for nineteen months he was condemned to the galleys.

There are certain synonyms of suffering from which the modern mind shrinks back in horror. The Hebrew making his bricks without straw, the Athenian in the mines of Syracuse, the Protestant in the French galleys knew the frightful reality whose verbal symbol causes our blood to chill. Few indeed have been the men who have come forth from such an ordeal unbroken and unembittered, who still retain their integrity and are not ready "to curse God and die." But of these Knox was one. He had learned how to suffer hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and it need not surprise us that thenceforward he should be so utterly fearless, so completely free from those influences which make a life of self-denial so difficult even to those of the loftiest ideals.

He was released from the galleys at the instance of Edward VI of England, and there being no good hope of present usefulness in Scotland, he went to England, and in Berwick and Newcastle, as one of the chaplains of the king, and as an apostle of the new evangel preaching wherever he was sent, he made proof of his ministry. When Edward died and Mary Tudor came to the throne he took refuge on the continent. For a time he preached at Dieppe, then at Frankfort as minister of a church of English exiles, and for about two and a half years he was one of the ministers of the church of English refugees at Geneva. These seem to have been his years of greatest ease and happiness. He found in Calvin and his fellow-exiles noble and kindred spirits, he had time for study and reflection, for the joys of friendship and for the formation of home ties. During these years he gathered a wide experience of men and affairs in many lands and under a wide diversity of circumstances, he enjoyed the favor of princes and he met with the sternest reverses

of fortune. Through it all his faith grew stronger and clearer, his trust in men, including himself, became as nothing in the presence of his overwhelming, all-absorbing dependence on an all-wise, all-good, ever-present God. The absolute authority of the word of God took complete possession of his mind and heart, and he became, as completely as Paul himself, the bond slave of Jesus Christ. His mind lent itself readily to that type of doctrine which we call Calvinistic, which the age of the Reformation thought of as Augustinian, which is distinctly Pauline, but which is simply the purest form of Evangelical Christianity. Knox was not dependent upon Calvin for it any more than Zwingli was. But no doubt his association with Calvin gave his views greater stability and certainty, and, as he himself tells us, developed his views of the Christian commonwealth. In one particular he pressed his doctrine of the authority of holy Scripture beyond even that of Calvin and the Westminster divines. He not only insisted on a reform which would eliminate from the Church every doctrine and ceremony which was contrary to the word of God, but he demanded that nothing should be tolerated for which distinct Scriptural warrant could not be obtained. It is easy to understand how unwelcome such teaching was, even to many who recognized the need of reform. Even had he not so deeply offended Queen Elizabeth by the one grave blunder of his career, his tract, "The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women," his uncompromising demand for a reform based upon the letter of Scripture would never have admitted him to her favor.

As for the general temper of the man, it was not coldly intellectual. His writings abound in pathos and tenderness, in broad humor and keen sarcasm. We find him acting the part of the cordial host, the gentle pastor, the loyal friend. If he held back from an unwelcome duty, no man dealt more honestly by himself for his reluctance or by the duty when he once recognized its claim upon him. His highest vocation was undoubtedly that to which he was so dramatically called, the preacher of righteousness, and to that he gave his best powers. But in whatever position he found himself, he dealt so honestly and courageously by it that as statesman and historian he attained a position second to none—not of his own country only, but of his age.

Such was the man who at length, in the year 1559, was summoned to Scotland to take part in the great work of reform now come to definite issue. Unless our faith deceives us, such a man, so formed, could not fail to acquit himself like a man in Scotland or elsewhere.

Such men, born it matters not when or where, born again by the Spirit of God, called of God to the service of truth, tried by adversity, unspoiled by prosperity, built up by companionship with the noblest men, but most of all by daily familiarity with the word of God—such men are needed everywhere to-day as much as they were in Scotland in the year of grace 1559. God send us men of like heroic mould!

II.

On the stage of European history the sixteenth century presents three interesting movements—the culmination of the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reaction. Each in its own way represents intense human activity—intellectual and emotional, social and political. Each gave birth to new ideas and new ideals. Scarcely any country in Europe escaped the influence of each in turn, yet the effect on each country was different.

Thus in Italy and Spain the Reformation wrought so feebly as to win little room for the new spirit of faith to vivify lands ravaged by the ruthlessness of the Renaissance and strangled by the repression of the Reaction. While in a great part of Germany the Renaissance did scarcely more than supply in the humanism of Erasmus and the art of Dürer the necessary instruments for a Reform too spontaneous and far-reaching to be overcome by any reaction. In France the Renaissance flowered in the age of Francis I, declined in that of Henry II, and under the influence of Catherine de Medici, in combination with the rising spirit of the Catholic Reaction, bore some of its worst fruits during the brief and bitter reigns of her feeble sons, while the forces of the Reformation, in both its spiritual and political phases, strove in vain for recognition and existence. Catherine and the Guises, while they used the weapons of the Reaction freely, exhibit that cynical superiority to the authority of the Church which is characteristic of the Renaissance; and Mary of Guise in Scotland, and Mary of Scotland herself, show the same indifference to the mandates of the Church whenever those mandates clash with their personal interests. In this court circle Henry of Navarre suffered that moral corruption which, even while he was the representative of the political phase of the Reformation movement, made him a reproach to the cause he served and eventually its betrayer.

In England the Renaissance made its first appearance in the aspect of the revival of learning, and was quickly followed by the political Protestantism of Henry VIII's divorce and ecclesiastical

independence of the papacy. A fairer phase made Edward's brief reign bright with promise, only to be blighted by Mary's fiery zeal for the Reaction. With Elizabeth's accession the Renaissance returned in full vigor, retarding the triumph of distinctive Reformed ideas, so that Elizabeth, having freely given her heart to the one, surrounded herself with a court full of the life and love of beauty of the Renaissance; and having grudgingly given her mind to the other, chose her counselors from the assured friends of the Reformation. The queen herself, with Leicester, Sydney, Raleigh and Drake, will always represent the age of Elizabeth to some; while others cherish it for the work of Cecil and Nicholas Bacon, of Hooker and of Cartwright.

Various as the influence of these movements on France and England were, their aspect in Scotland was yet different. At the death of James V, in 1542, Scotland was one of the most backward of European countries. Bred abroad, James had brought home from France ideas of national organization which were not more advanced than those of Louis XI in France or Edward IV in England, and he died of a broken heart because of the collapse of his plans in the shameful conduct of his nobility in the face of a foreign foe at Solway Moss. A savage feudalism, with little regard for any form of central government and a contemptuous indifference to a corrupt and feeble Church, characterized the land. Outside of Edinburgh there was but a single walled town. The lowlands had long been subject to the fierce forays of the border and the no less hostile raids of their highland countrymen. There was no industrial development of any importance, and the townspeople had hitherto waited in vain for that opportunity of wealth, education and civic spirit which had made the Italian republics, the French communes and the free cities of the empire nursing mothers of liberty. The only tie which bound the kingdom to the world of civilized thought and action was the strategic importance of Scotland in the age-long rivalry between France and England. In this struggle France had lately held the upper hand, and her manners had completely captured the court circle and her representatives were playing a bold game for a final appropriation of the country. But France as little realized at that time as we are likely to do to-day the hardy brutality of the great feudatories and the slight tie that bound the people or the feudal baronage to the crown.

In short, Scotland was still in a state of rude mediævalism. A mediævalism, moreover, which had grown up outside of the old Roman civilization, with few or none of those influences which for

a thousand years worked slowly toward the dawning of a brighter age. There was no conscious national life, no settled constitutional system, no church of vital powers and capable leaders, no vigorous universities informed with the spirit of the new learning. It may truly be said of Scotland as it was said of Israel in a like case: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." To the broken-hearted king on his death-bed was brought the news of the birth of his daughter, but the news brought no cheer to him, all too conscious of the failure of his plans. "It came with a lass, and it will pass with a lass,"* was his despairing prophecy. There is in his mind no room for any thought of Scotland. It is only the kingship which concerns him.

So at the very close of the year 1542 the king died, the little Mary was proclaimed queen, the Earl of Arran was named as regent by the council, and Scotland began again to thread the intricate mazes of the endless conspiracies of one more feeble regency.

But a new factor had been added to the familiar list of queen mother, great barons and churchmen, and princes of the blood. Scotland had managed to remain all but untouched by the new birth of the Renaissance, but it was not to be so with the new evangel of Martin Luther. Heresy was no new phenomena. Lollardry had early found a road into Scotland and had maintained itself with singular persistency in the western lowlands. Not a few victims had been offered upon the altar of a complacent satisfaction with an outworn order. But now that there was a contagion in the air, the Church as organized in its head and branches began to realize that this was no casual conflict with an irrepressible tendency of the human mind toward innovation, but one phase of a widespread movement. It was the more notable because it spread so rapidly beyond clerical circles and awoke such a stubborn spirit in the lesser baronage and the well-to-do people of the towns.

The Regent Arran proved himself to be a typical noble of the old order, a little less daring, perhaps, than many of his predecessors, neither more nor less capable. Succumbing to his rival, Cardinal Beaton, he became till the murder of that astute churchman his pliant tool. Finally retiring in 1554, he gave way to Mary of Guise, who used the regency and all her woman's wit to promote the power of her house, the French alliance and, where it did not clash with her dearer schemes, the power of the papacy. Among the greater nobles she did not find a single helper worthy of

* This is Pitscottie's version. Lindsay's *History*, 1728, p. 176.

note, a single minister willing and able to promote her policies. Perhaps nothing can more clearly indicate the poverty of the age than the want of capable men to serve those in power. Out of the numerous company of nobles who pass across the scene, only two of first-class ability are to be found. These are James Stewart, the illegitimate son of the late king, who appears first as the Prior of St. Andrew's, becomes Earl of Murray, and ably governs as regent from 1567 to 1570; and Lord Maitland of Lethington, usually spoken of as Secretary Lethington.

The weakness of these two men is in the very thing that this age of ours in its blindness demands of the Reformers of the sixteenth century. They were too tolerant, too ready to temporize. They were wanting in that quality which alone could face the utter intolerance and unscrupulousness of the Church of Rome and the French theory of monarchy. I prefer to call that quality inflexibility. Whatever it was John Knox had it. And his very enemies have found it hard to give it a very bad name even in him. Both Murray and Lethington were men of their age; both were singularly adroit and skillful politicians. Murray belonged rather to the school of Cecil in England and Sully in France; Lethington was more of a child of the Renaissance, of a more idealizing temperament, far less direct and reliable. He was from first to last the only man who fairly met Knox face to face in council. It must be granted that in everything except a fair estimate of the forces with which they were confronted, the generous tolerance of Murray and the able statecraft of Lethington were more in accord with modern ideas of statesmanship than anything which John Knox had to offer. In the end they were obliged to turn to Knox for the power needed to save the whole reform movement from utter wreck, and the assassination of Murray and the sad end of Lethington illustrate forcibly the sounder judgment of Knox. In the face of such a *denouement* it is foolish to criticise that judgment as harsh and uncharitable. The simple fact is that these men owed to the reform movement that deeper insight which gave them the first truly national policy for Scotland, and the modern political philosopher owes the soundness of his own theories to the fact that the Protestant Reformation succeeded in so large a measure in establishing in the greater part of Europe not only toleration, but liberty of thought and speech.

But of course Mary is the great personality of the age—Knox himself always excepted.

To those familiar with the history of the time it is scarcely neces-

sary to say that there was nothing in her mind or person worthy of the great place she occupies in the drama. "Her tragical historie" was due to her birth, her rank, her unhappy inheritance. Mr. Rosetti has put into the wail of Johanna, queen of the murdered James I, something of this tragic consequence of birth.

"'O James!' she said—'My James!' she said—
'Alas for the woful thing
That a poet true and a friend of man,
In desperate days of bale and ban,
Should needs be born a king.'"

That Mary had a mind of unusual acuteness, a temperament of extraordinary vitality and a body of masculine vigor and more than feminine beauty is not to be denied. But neither by nature nor by culture did she possess any of the finer qualities of mind or heart which she needed in the great place she was born to fill. She combined lines of inheritance which could not fail to give her extraordinary powers. The Stuart race despite its utter inability to learn the limitations of royalty and its complete untrustworthiness, had a grace and charm rarely surpassed; the Tudor blood was full of the masculine vigor which made Elizabeth so masterful; and there was no house in Europe more able and more daring than that of Guise. That this inheritance might work itself out in a fitting environment Mary was sent to the court of France in her sixth year. That I may not be suspected of prejudice in my picture of that court, let me quote from Mr. Algernon Charles Swinburne, who, if we may judge from some of his poems, is not notably prudish. He says:

"The society in which the child was thenceforward reared is known to readers of Brantôme as well as that of imperial Rome at its worst is known to readers of Suetonius or Petronius—as well as that of papal Rome at its worst is known to the readers of the diary kept by the domestic chaplain of Pope Alexander VI. Only in their pages can a parallel be found to the gay and easy record which reveals without sign of shame or suspicion of offense the daily life of a court compared to which the court of King Charles II is as the court of Victoria to the society described by Grammont. Debauchery of all kinds and murder in all forms were the daily matter of excitement or of jest to the brilliant circle which revolved around Queen Catherine de Medici. After ten years' training under the tutelage of the woman whose main instrument of policy was the corruption of her own children, the Queen of Scots, aged fifteen years and five months, was married to the eldest and feeblest of the

brood.”* For a year and a half she lived in the very storm centre of the fierce and unscrupulous struggle for power which tore the court, and for eight months more she was one of the important pieces in the diplomatic game played by Catherine and the Guises for power in and out of France. Finally, in August, 1561, she returned to Scotland. Her career thenceforward was worthy of her bringing up. It was a struggle for unlimited license in the gratification of her own wishes. No fixed purpose can be discovered even in her pursuit of pleasure; no idea of enjoyment worthy of her royal rank. She lacked the prudence and self-restraint which had marked her mother’s course. She showed none of the wicked persistence which had characterized her preceptress in crime. The claims neither of Church nor State weighed with her in comparison with her whims. If the suspicions of her Protestant subjects did not restrain her in her relations with Rizzio, the open condemnation of the Roman Church did not keep her from marrying Bothwell by the Protestant ritual.†

Her apologists find nothing to say for her more rational than that she was sinned against as well as sinning; her royal prerogative was unduly limited; she was humiliated by the blunt rebukes of such men as Knox; she was outraged by the conduct of Darnley, and swept away by the brutal force of Bothwell; she was driven into indiscretion by unjust suspicions as to her relations with Chastelard and Rizzio, and goaded into madness by the murder of her favorite.

Let us say that she was a woman of her age and her environment, a child of the Renaissance, entering the same plea for her that we did for Lethington, that we hear nowadays advanced for Joanna of Naples and Lucretia Borgia. Let us recognize that it was an age that glorified the *virago*—a word not then fallen into disrepute—

* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, XI ed., Vol. XV, tit. Mary, Queen of Scots.

† The Bothwell marriage is the culmination of Mary’s defiance of all law, human and divine. When it took place—we cannot say “was solemnized”—but three months and five days had elapsed since the murder of Darnley. Bothwell had been married but fifteen months before by the advice and express counsel of the Queen, and divorced, without cause, for the purpose of marriage with Mary. Only one month elapsed before Bothwell was expelled from the kingdom by the outraged people. While the marriage was performed according to Reformed forms, Adam Bothwell was actuated by other than Reformed ideas. Craig refused to publish the bans except upon a royal writ, and then “publicly took heaven and earth to witness that he abhorred the proposed marriage,” and he admonished Bothwell before the Privy Council. Adam Bothwell was cited to appear before the General Assembly and suspended from his ministerial office. See Hay Fleming, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, London, 1898: especially the rich mine of original authorities in the voluminous notes.

the manly woman of keen mind and resolute will and alert purpose. Let us admit that to the freedom of the Renaissance in which she was reared had been added the fine philosophy of the Catholic Reaction holding that the end justifies the means. And, finally, let us concede that the corrupt Church in which she was reared and by which she was sustained made sin and self-indulgence easy to the powerful instruments of its policy. Having granted all this, is it possible to find excuse for her contempt of the rules of decency, of the claims of religion, of the duties of the ruler?

Even the Italy of the Renaissance rejected many a ruler as brilliant and no worse than she; France refused the claims of the Guises and took a tardy vengeance on the house of Bourbon; England sent a much less wicked and false descendant of hers to the scaffold. Indeed, it was not Scotland but England, not the outspoken and inflexible policy of Knox but the halting and none-too-open dealing of "good Queen Bess," that brought Mary at last to a final accounting.

Had Mary been allowed a free hand, what would she have done for Scotland? Her only civic policy was to establish the power of the crown at the expense of nobility and people; her only ecclesiastical policy was to reestablish a corrupt and ignorant clergy in a place whose power they had abused and to permit them to light again the fires of persecution in every town in Scotland; her only social policy was to enrich a few unworthy favorites and to lead with them a life of shameless dalliance, without a thought for the moral, intellectual and industrial welfare of her land; and her sense of that divinity which doth hedge a king was not such as to restrain her from the gratification of passions—lust, revenge and private hatred—which would have disgraced the humblest outcast in the purlieus of her capital.

III.

I have endeavored to present some picture of the age and its principal characters as a background for the definitive work which John Knox was to do. Let us now trace the rise and progress of the Scottish Reformation and see how he was called to play his part in it.

In his history of the Reformation in Scotland, Knox has chosen the preaching and martyrdom of Master Patrick Hamilton, in 1528, as the first faint streak of the dawn of the new day. It was, however, not till the death of Wishart and the murder of Beaton that there was any considerable party committed to a work of reform,

and that the movement passed beyond the stage of the occasional preaching by some priest or friar whose heart had been stirred by the great Protestant Reformation. The terrible tyranny of the Church, its complete control of the vast engines of repression, are hard for us to realize. Even in Scotland, where the rude hand of a lawless baronage had never completely submitted to the laws of the State, and had again and again struck down the king, the authority of the Church could not be defied with impunity. But from the murder of Cardinal Beaton a considerable and influential body of nobility and people became aroused to the fact that this matter of reform was something more than an ecclesiastical squabble, and contained in it issues of the deepest concern for every class in society. The foreign policy of the country had long been dominated by the rivalry of England and France for the friendship of Scotland, and now the reforming party began to realize that its fortunes were bound up in the English alliance. The deaths of Henry VIII and of Edward VI soon left it without an ally, but with the accession of Elizabeth hope revived. Meantime the complete subordination of the policy of the regent Mary of Guise to the French interests strengthened the English party, and in 1558 a decided movement well supported by nobility and people began. Knox had visited Scotland in 1555 and was cheered by what he saw and heard. He was invited to return in 1557 by four of the leaders, James Stuart (afterward Earl of Murray), Lord Lorne (afterward Earl of Argyle), the Earl of Glencairn and Erskine of Dun. But it was not until 1559 that he returned to Scotland and took up the great cause.

It has become habitual with us to speak of the Scottish Reformation as the work of John Knox. As Thomas Carlyle says: "In the history of Scotland I can find properly but one epoch; we may say it contains nothing of world-interest at all but this Reformation by Knox." And he not unjustly characterizes it when he says: "At the Reformation, the internal life is kindled as it were under the ribs of (this) outward material death. A cause, the noblest of causes, kindles itself, . . . whereby the meanest man becomes not a citizen only, but a member of Christ's visible Church." And again: "This that Knox did for his nation, I say, we may really call a resurrection as from death. It was not a smooth business; but it was welcome surely, and cheap at that price had it been far tougher. On the whole cheap at any price; as life is." It took him some time to mount to the full truth, but we can see the sturdy Scotch spirit rising in the face of the petty accusations so often

taken up against Knox and this his Reformation. But as a matter of fact there was no need for any such concession to the timid Laodicean nineteenth century. For David Laing is well justified in asking: "Was a triumph of such magnitude and importance ever accomplished with less sacrifice of blood, or less sullied by personal suffering?" For there can be but one answer: Never.

Nevertheless, it is necessary that we should recognize that the great work of reform had already advanced far, and would certainly have gone farther had John Knox never returned to Scotland. But it is still true that its definite character was given by him.

The leaders had recognized his ability during his visit in 1555-56, especially his great power in arousing the people by his preaching; and at the end of this visit he was induced to write his letter to the Queen Regent, urging her to hear the preaching of the Gospel. Before his return to the continent he had written "A Letter of Wholesome Counsel addressed to His Brethren in Scotland," and in 1557 he wrote a vigorous appeal to "His Brethren and the Lords Professing the Truth in Scotland," and in 1558 two further letters addressed to the Estates and to the Commonalty of Scotland. His familiarity with the contemporary movements in England, France, Germany and Switzerland, and his acquaintance with the great leaders of thought, gave him a position quite different from that which some of his critics would associate with his vocation as a preacher. The age in which the great ministers of State were churchmen can hardly be said to have passed when Richelieu had not yet appeared upon the stage. And it is only one of the many examples of the intense secular prejudice of our time that it is necessary to vindicate the claim of Luther, Calvin and Knox to rank among the great statesmen of the sixteenth century.

We have abundant evidence in Knox's writings that he had a very definite conception of his *rôle* as a statesman. He had been discussing with his friends the basis of government, and he came back to Scotland with well-developed opinions as to the obligation of the ruler to the people, as to the right of revolution against a faithless ruler, and as to the importance of the development of a self-conscious national life.

It is notable that Knox is in this, as in everything else, a representative of the Reformation movement. It is surprising how little he was affected by the Renaissance. His scholarship, his politics, his social ideas are entirely drawn from the elements of the Reformation movement; most distinctly from the Bible. He leaps at a bound to the Biblical doctrine of the mutual obligation

of ruler and ruled, to the essential quality of men before the law, and it was by his voice that the people of Scotland were summoned to conscious life and political significance. His Puritan morality was no more hostile to the corruption in Church and State, his Scriptural views of Church polity were no more opposed to the idolatry of the mass and the many human devices of the Roman system, than his Biblical views of the relations of man and man were destructive of the old order of Scottish government. He was, above all his contemporaries, alive to the broad national character of the Reformation, yet he never for a moment failed to assert the supremacy of the religious question. In this the great leaders of the Puritan party in England occupied exactly the same position.

When the right of Mary to have mass celebrated in Holyrood was conceded by the nobles, Knox declared: "That one messe was more fearful to him then gif ten thousand armed enemyes war landed in any pairte of the Realme, of purpose to suppress the hoill religioun." Under similar circumstances Sir John Eliot proclaimed in the Commons that "Religion is the principal thing." But neither of them meant to separate the question of religion from that of State. Both meant to assert, and to insist upon, the fact that the question was one and indivisible, and that the religious issue underlay the political, and unless it was carried to complete triumph the whole battle was lost.

Nothing more clearly illustrates this than the definite doctrine of the supremacy of the civil magistrate. His belief in the existence and permanence of one Church of Jesus Christ was utterly divorced from the ideal of the old order. To him it was the duty of the civil magistrate to maintain and promote the purity of the Church. This doctrine cuts to the core the silly charge that Knox would not have relieved Scotland of the burden of ecclesiastical domination, but would merely have shifted the dominion from pope to preacher.

It is true that in the system which was adopted under Knox's influence in the reforming Parliament of 1560 the Confession of Faith was adopted as a national Confession, and acts were passed sweeping away the Roman system and forbidding the mass under heavy penalties, extending to death upon conviction of a third offense. The intolerance of these acts is but a faint echo of the old order—"the rags of popery"—in which death was not only denounced but inflicted for very petty ecclesiastical offenses, as, for instance, under a proclamation of the Queen Regent, any one who disturbed the church service, bullied the priest or ate meat in Lent was threatened with death. But it is notable that they were never

pushed to extremity. Bishop Lesley, a Roman Catholic historian, has testified: "Yet the clemency of the heretic nobles must not be left unmentioned, since at that time they exiled few Catholics on the score of religion, imprisoned fewer, and put none to death." Truly by their fruits ye shall know them! It is also important to note that these acts followed the progress of reform and gave effect to what was already accomplished, and were the work of an almost unanimous and extraordinarily large assembly of the representatives of the Estates.

The Reforming Parliament directed the ministers to draw up a Confession of Faith. The work was executed in the brief space of four days by Knox and five other ministers. The major portion of the work seems to have been done by Knox, and it reflects his experience and spirit. Says Knox: "The Confession of Faith was read in face of Parliament and ratified by the three Estates of this realm at Edinburgh, the 17th day of August, [1560,] it was publicly read first in the audience of the Lords of the Articles, and after in audience of the whole Parliament. There were present not only such as professed Christ Jesus, but also a great number of the adversaries of our religion, such as the forenamed Bishops of St. Andrew's, Dunblane and Dunkeld, and some others of the Temporal Estate, who were commanded in God's name to object, if they could say anything against that doctrine. . . . Of the Temporal Estate, only voted in the contrary the Earl of Athol, the Lords Somerville and Bothwick; and yet for their disassenting they produced no better reason, but 'We will believe as our fathers believed.' The Bishops—Papistical, we mean—spake nothing" (Knox, *Hist.*, II, p. 121).

The Confession opens with a striking passage worthy of the zeal of the Church for the recovered purity of its faith: "Long have we thirsted, dear brethren, to have notified unto the world the sum of that doctrine which we profess, and for the which we have sustained infamy and danger"; and the preface contains a profession of readiness to change any passage which may be shown to be repugnant to God's Word, which is characteristic of its Scriptural basis. It contains twenty-five articles, is of a distinctly Calvinistic character, very freshly and cogently stated, breathing the spirit of the preacher rather than the schoolman, and was well fitted to be the expression of the vital faith of a people rising into self-conscious life. Its doctrine of the Church is a necessary part of the history of the times; the issue it makes with the Roman Catholic Church being fundamental.

"As we believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost: so do we most constantly believe, that from the beginning there has been and now is, and to the end of the world shall be, one Church, that is to say, one company and multitude of men, chosen of God, who rightly worship and embrace Him by true faith in Christ Jesus, who is the only head of the same Church, which also is the body and spouse of Christ Jesus, which Church is Catholic, that is, universal, because it contains the elect of all ages, of all realms, nations, and tongues, be they of the Jews or be they of the Gentiles, who have communion and society with God the Father, and with His Son Christ Jesus thro' the sanctification of His Holy Spirit. . . . This Church is invisible, known only to God, who alone knows whom he has chosen."

It is remarkable that Knox printed but a single sermon. We owe that to the fact that it was the occasion of an attempt to silence him in 1565. "Upon the XIX day of August the King came to Sanctgellis Kirk," says the *Diurnal of Occurrents*, "and Johne Knox preachit: guhairat he was crabbit, and causit discharge the said Johne of his preitching." Knox's explanation of his reason for printing this sermon contains an interesting bit of autobiography: "John Knox, the servant of Jesus Christ, in preaching of his holy evangel, to the benevolent reader desireth Grace and Peace with the spirit of righteous judgment."

"Wonder not, Christian Reader, that of all my study and travail within the Scriptures of God these twenty years, I have set forth nothing in exponing any portion of Scripture except this only rude and indigest sermon preached by me in the public audience of the Church of Edinburg. . . . That I did not in writing communicate my judgment upon the Scriptures I have ever thought and yet think myself to have most just reason. (For considering myself rather called of my God to instruct the ignorant, comfort the sorrowful, confirm the weak and rebuke the proud by tongue and lively voice in these most corrupt days than to compose books for the age to come, seeing that so much is written, . . . and yet so little well observed; I decreed to contain myself within the bonds of that vocation whereunto I found myself especially called. . . . This sermon is it that so offendeth such as would please the Court, and yet will not appear to be enemies to the truth, that they dare affirm that I have exceeded the bounds of God's messenger. I have, therefore, faithfully committed unto writing whatsoever I could remember might have been offensive in that sermon; to the end, that as well the enemies of God's truth, as the professors of the same,

may either note unto me wherein I have offended or at the least cease to condemn me before they have convicted me by God's manifest word. If any man think it easy unto me to mitigate by my pen the inconsiderate sharpness of my tongue . . . I answer that neither am I so impudent that I will study to abuse the world in this great light, neither yet so void of fear of my God that I will avow a lie in his own presence" (*Works*, VI, 229-230).

It is, however, to the Book of Discipline that we must turn for the fullest expression of the statesmanship of Knox. It unfortunately was never adopted by the Parliament, though it was approved by the General Assembly, and profoundly impressed itself upon the policy of the Church. It contained too many of what Lethington called "devout imaginings" for a nobility whose hands were far from unstained by participation in the spoils of the monasteries and churches. Drawing freely upon the Church orders of other countries, especially upon Calvin's for the Church of Geneva, the spiritual foundation was first laid, particular provision was then made for the temporary and future ministry, then with a broad conception of the needs of the nation as well as the Church, a noble plan for popular education was elaborated, and finally a scheme for the utilization of the property of the Church and a comprehensive scheme for public charities was proposed.

Could these large plans have been carried out in their completeness the future of Scotland would have been secure. As it was a lofty ideal was set before Church and nation, and by the inspiration of that ideal Scotland has ever been guided. Who shall say that the land has not been the better for the necessity of struggling to keep this high trust. For after all it is sometimes only through conflict that men attain to the highest appreciation of the most precious spiritual possessions.

Knox returned to Scotland in May, 1559. The revolution was fully inaugurated at Perth a few days later. Mary of Guise was deprived of the regency on the 23d of October, and died the 11th of June following. The reforming Parliament met in August, 1560. On the 17th it ratified the Confession of Faith, and on the 24th the act abolishing popery and establishing the national Kirk. On December 20 the first General Assembly convened in Edinburgh. Thus was the reformation accomplished.

Queen Mary, however, withheld her sanction from the acts of this Parliament, and they had to take their chance of validity with the acquiescence of ruler and people as in the acts of a *de facto* Government. Mary returned to Scotland August 20, 1561, and for

the whole period of her residence in Scotland (to May 16, 1568) the reforming party had to play a desperate game with her craft and dissimulation. The practical triumph came with the flight of Mary to England and the establishment of Murray in the regency. Not until the last act in Mary's stormy career, when, an actress to the end, she laid her head upon the block in Fotheringay Castle (February 8, 1587), was the settlement complete.

From the summer of 1560 to the end of his life, November 24, 1572, Knox was minister of St. Giles. It was from his official position as the minister of the principal church of the capital that he was enabled to wield such an influence and withstand every effort to silence him. The unfailing support of his people was to him as was the support of London to Pym in the great Puritan conflict in England. From St. Giles the later unnamed blasts against the monstrous regiment of Mary Stuart shook the palace of Holyrood, and caused the stout preacher to be summoned to the presence chamber. It is not for me to devise careful arguments to justify or excuse Master Knox for the plain speaking which he practiced in the palace as well as in the kirk. It was Mary herself who had flung away the royal cloak which covers a multitude of faults, and had set herself a naked shame in the gaze of all the world. It was not his own will, but, as we have seen, a higher voice which had called Knox to become a preacher of righteousness. Who was the loyal, the self-restrained, the admirable figure in the four closet dramas enacted by these two I leave any candid judge to decide.

To Knox was entrusted the task of committing to writing the history of the great epoch in which he played so great a part. Amid labors more abundant he set to work in the very crisis of the struggle with Mary upon his *History of the Reformation in Scotland*. Of it John Hill Burton has said: "There certainly is in the English language no parallel to that wonderful book in the clearness, vigor and picturesqueness with which it renders the history of a stirring period." A distinguished continental historian (Prof. Frk. Shieren) says Knox's delineation of the history of the Reformation in Scotland has been definitely placed above all that Great Britain can show of an earlier date in prose literature." Sir William Stirling Maxwell says: "Knox's portraits of his contemporaries are usually so lifelike that we feel persuaded they are true to nature." While Mr. Hume Brown has so finely described it that I cannot deny myself a long quotation (*Life of Knox*, II, pp. 222-4):

"Knox's *History of the Reformation* holds a unique place in English literature. As the work of one who both made and wrote history on a scale of such importance, it has an antecedent and special interest of its own. But in itself it possesses qualities which compel us to recognize it as a notable product of character and genius. . . . In his other works, with the exception of a few letters, it is as the politician or the theologian or the preacher that he exclusively presents himself. In his *History* there is a play of mind and feeling from which we may draw some image of the man with his innate aptitudes and affinities. The dominant characteristic of the book cannot be missed by the most casual reader—the abounding vitality that quickens it from the first page to the last. On the face of it, it is the production of one whose function it was to speak and not to write, whose habit it was to emphasize with tone and gesture every sentence that rose to his lips. The intensity of the writer's likes and dislikes would of itself save the book from dullness; but his energy of feeling is manifest in the smallest details with which he concerns himself. The notion of Knox as a one-eyed fanatic, groaning under the burden of his mission, is certainly not borne out by these two volumes of his *History*. On every page the fact is thrust upon us that he was the keenest of observers, and that he had a specially wide knowledge of the practical aspects of life. When he describes a battle, as he more than once has done, it is with the gusto of one whose immediate ancestors had died under the banner of their feudal superior. From the 'meary bourds' (lively jests) with which he enlivens his narrative, we may infer that his daily conversation was not always of justification and predestination; but that he could tell his story and exchange his jest as time and place were fitting. What distinguishes him from men like Calvin or Savonarola is precisely that sense of a humorous side of things which made him at once a great writer and a great leader of men. Of the value of this quality in the conduct of human affairs he was himself perfectly conscious, and deliberately employed it both in his writings and in his dealings with his fellows. 'Melancholius ressons,' he said in one of his debates with Lethington, 'wald haif sum myrth intermixed.' Studied anticlimax, grim irony, humorous exaggeration are as distinctively his characteristics as they are those of Carlyle, in whom also they are relieving qualities to narrow intensity and an overbearing temper. With humor is usually found pity and the power of pathos; and in Knox, more than once, his harsh austerity softens into a mood the more impressive that it comes so seldom."

No better example of both matter and style can be given than the famous narrative of the fourth interview with Queen Mary.

"The Queen in a vehement fume began to cry out, that never Prince was haudled as she was.

"*Queen Mary*: 'I have borne with you in all your rigorous manner of speaking both against myself and against my uncles. Yea, I have sought your favor by all possible means. I offered unto you presence and audience whensoever it pleased you to admonish me; and yet I cannot be quit of you! I vow to God I shall be once avenged!'

"With these words scarcely could Marna, her secret chamber-boy, get napkins to hold her eyes dry for the tears: and the howling beside womanly weeping stayed her speech. The said John did patiently abide all the first fume, and at opportunity answered:

"*John Knox*: 'True it is, Madam Your Grace and I have been at divers controversies in which I never perceived your Grace to be offended at me. But when it shall please God to deliver you from that bondage of darkness and error in which you have been nourished for the lack of true doctrine Your Majesty will find the liberty of my tongue nothing offensive. Without the preaching place, Madam, I think few have occasion to be offended at me. There, Madam, I am not master of myself. But must obey Him who commands me to speak plain and to flatter no flesh upon the face of the earth.'

"*Queen Mary*: 'But what have ye to do with my marriage?'

"*John Knox*: 'If it please Your Majesty patiently to hear me, I shall show the truth in plain words. I grant Your Grace offered unto me more than ever I required; but my answer was then, as it is now, that God hath not sent me to wait upon the courts of Princes, nor upon the chambers of Ladies; but I am sent to preach the evangel of Jesus Christ to such as please to hear it. It hath two parts—Repentance and Faith. Now, Madam, in preaching Repentance of necessity it is that the sins of men be so noted that they may know wherein they offend, But the most part of [your nobility are so addicted to your affections that neither God's Word nor yet their Commonwealth are rightly regarded. Therefore it becometh me so to speak that they may know their duty.'

"*Queen Mary*: 'What have you to do with my marriage? Or what are you in this Commonwealth?'

"*John Knox*: 'A SUBJECT BORN WITHIN THE SAME, MADAM. And albeit I be neither Earl, Lord, nor Baron within it, yet hath God made me (how abject soever I be in your eyes) a profitable member

within the same. Yea, Madam, to me it appertains no less to forewarn of such things as may hurt it if I foresee them than it doth to any of the nobility; for both my vocation and my conscience crave plainness of me. Therefore, Madam, to yourself I say that which I spake in public place: whensoever the nobility of this Realm shall consent that ye be subject to an unfaithful husband they do as much as in them lieth to renounce Christ, to banish His truth from them, to betray the freedom of this Realm, and perchance they shall in the end do small comfort to yourself.'

"At these words howling was heard and tears might have been seen in greater abundance than the matter required. John Erskine of Dun, a man of meek and gentle spirit, stood beside and entreated what he could to mitigate her anger. He gave unto her many pleasing words of her beauty, of her excellence, and how all the Princes of Europe would be glad to seek her favor. But all that was to cast oil on the flaming fire. John Knox stood still without any alteration of countenance for a long season; while the Queen gave place to her inordinate passion.

"In the end he said: 'Madam, in God's presence I speak. I never delighted in the weeping of any of God's creatures. Yea, I can scarcely well abide the tears of my own boys whom my own hand correcteth; much less can I rejoice in your majesty's weeping. But seeing I have offered to you no occasion to be offended, but have spoken the truth as my vocation craves of me, I must sustain, albeit unwillingly, your majesty's tears rather than I dare hurt my conscience or betray my Commonwealth through my silence.'"

Such, as I conceive, was John Knox, his mind and heart. As for his external appearance there is little information at our command. And, after all, the outer shell, the mere husk of the man, counts for but little. Several portraits of him have been preserved and more than one pen picture, from which we gather that he was below the middle height in stature, that his hair and eyes were dark, his eyes large and full of fire, and that his beard flowed down abundant on his breast. It was not his physical stature, then, that made him such an imposing figure in the pulpit, but the spiritual height to which he attained. Nor was there any rare grace of person which made him so persuasive in his ministrations to his sisters in God, such as Mistress Elizabeth Bowes and Mistress Anna Locke, and so commanding even in the presence chamber of the queen. Yet it is plain enough that he was of the Boanergian order. His spirit has drawn its earliest inspiration from him whose name he bore and to whom the Lord first applied

the term, and the eagle is as fit a symbol for him whose spirit soared amid the storm-clouds that for a time obscured the skies of the far-off northern kingdom, as for him whose name was drawn from the tempests of storm-tossed Galilee. Both amid manifold perils endured to the end, both, we may confidently affirm, entered into the fullness of the inheritance promised to him that overcometh.

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