

much influenced by the revival of learning. by the great movement which we call the Renaissance or Renascence. John Major, a professor in Glasgow (and afterwards in St. Andrew's), under whom Knox studied, brought a great reputation from Paris, and George Buchanan, the great "humanist," born the same year as Knox, went to that city to study; but these are the brilliant exceptions that prove the rule.

The Church of Scotland was wealthy and corrupt. The monastic orders had great power, so that, while the large country parishes were neglected the priests and the monks lived in idleness luxury and vice in the abbeys and monasteries into which they had gathered the riches meant for the support of the ministry and the maintenance of God's poor. This and much worse we know on the testimony of men who continued to be faithful sons of the Old Church in that evil time.

There were many crying out for reform, but there was no sign that it could come from within the Church. That Church had sinned away its opportunities, so that reform could not come from any still small voice speaking within, but from the more violent forces which work in a revolutionary spirit. Grumblers, satirists, and even mystics were not sufficient; what was needed was a prophet of fire, an Elijah of the sixteenth century, a man with a strong sense of God's righteousness and a full realization of the eternal love manifested in Jesus Christ. Such a man was John Knox, not so great in pure theology as Luther or Calvin, but a mighty preacher, a faithful pastor, a man of keen insight and dauntless courage.

In dealing with the life of Knox, we must take first a period of forty years, stretching from his birth, in 1505, to his first public appearance as the companion and helper of Wishart.

The birth place of Knox was in or near Haddington, in East Lothian. He never lays claim to rank and both friends and foes speak of him as a man of lowly birth. Still, his parents could not have belonged to the poorest class, as they found means to send their son to Haddington Grammar School, and afterwards to Glasgow University. At school he was well drilled in Latin, and at college he studied the old Scholastic philosophy and theology.

He became a priest and tutor, but we have little information about this part of his life, as he always manifested a strong reserve with regard to it. So we cannot trace the course of his inward life, as in the case of the open-hearted, expansive Bunyan, but must infer the deep struggles and silent battles from the final decision and full formed character. In 1546, we see him going before George Wishart bearing a two-handed sword and only by earnest pathetic entreaty prevented from following that gentle, courteous man to prison and death. Thus, when we first meet Knox he is on the side of what seemed to be a feeble, hopeless cause.

Driven from one place to another, he was persuaded to take up his abode in St. Andrew's castle along with his pupils. There he continued his work of teaching and catechizing, and was occasionally drawn into controversy by some of the ecclesiastics of the city. There also there came to him in a strange fashion his real call to the ministry, which, after considering for a week in his chamber, he decided to accept. That week of communion with God and wrestling with self gave the bent to the whole of his subsequent life.

But we see in what strange ways God leads his servants. The man who has submitted to take upon himself the burden of a great work finds first of all, not useful activity, but painful imprisonment. Knox, along with others, was taken captive by a French fleet and carried to France, there to spend the greater part of the next two years in degrading slavery. The strong, resolute Scotchman was doomed to be a "galley slave." Even there he and his companions refused to bow to idols, and flung the images away from them contemptuously as "painted boards." Once during this time, the galleys appeared off the coast of Scotland, and Knox, on seeing the steeple of St. Andrew's, expressed a confident hope of again lifting up his voice there to the glory of God.

It is probable that he was liberated through the influence of the English Government; but there were still ten changeful years to pass away before he could stand face to face with his full and final work as the reformer of Scottish religion. Five of these years were spent in England and the other five on the European Continent.

The connection of Knox with England is full of interest. His first wife was an English woman, two of his sons became clergymen of the Church of England, and he himself might have been a bishop of that Church, had he chosen to accept the office. Two years he spent in Berwick-on-Tweed, and a similar period in Newcastle-on-Tyne. In both these places he exerted a powerful influence, speaking boldly for righteousness and vigorously denouncing "idolatry."

Thus a year was spent in and around London in preaching and helping on the work of the Reformation, until, on the accession of Mary, he was compelled to flee to the continent, with less than ten groats in his pocket, but believing that God would provide.

We cannot follow the details of this period of his life. At Dieppe he strengthened the Protestant cause by his personal energetic influence; at Frankfort he showed calm courage and wisdom in the midst of bitter controversies; and at Geneva he was an esteemed colleague of the great Calvin. We must not think that all this time Knox was absolutely cut off from Scotland. He watched with anxious interest the movements of religion and politics in his native land, and helped the good cause