

recognized and practised in the Scottish Reformed Churches from the Reformation in 1560 until the publication of the Second Book of Discipline in 1581; the attitude of Presbyterians towards it from that time to the Revolution Settlement of 1688; the place it had in Scotland from 1688 until 1728, when Glass' "Testimony of the King of Martyrs" was published; and then to give some account of the Independent Churches that came into existence from that date until the closing years of last century.

The Scottish Reformation was partly a religious and partly a political movement. On the one hand, the earnest religious men of whom John Knox became the leader were moved by a desire to overthrow Popery as a system of religious error, and to introduce to Scotland the religion of the "true evangel," while on the other hand, the nobles who afterwards became the "lords of the congregation" had mainly political and personal objects in view, and were moved by a desire to resist the encroachments of the sovereign and of the Popish hierarchy upon the liberties and property of the people of Scotland. The movement that resulted in the Reformation in Scotland was initiated by a combination of these two parties. They found that each was necessary to the other, or, at least, that the aims of both would be the more speedily and successfully carried out by a combined movement than by each acting separately. The real force of the movement, however, was religious rather than political, and it was on this account that Knox became the acknowledged leader of what was in its main movements a great uprising against the despotism of not only the sovereign but also the Popish priesthood,—a despotism that was felt to be as oppressive in its secular as in its religious tyranny. Knowing the great influence of Knox, six of the leading noblemen of Scotland appealed to him for his advice as to what action they should take with the view of opposing the increasing power of the sovereign and the bishops, and by his counsel they formed themselves in 1557 into a "band," and by a solemn covenant bound themselves to "forsake and renounce the congregation of Satan, with all the superstitious abomination and idolatry thereof." The covenant was renewed at Perth in 1559, after a sermon preached by Knox, and as this was followed immediately by open resistance to the Queen and her Popish counsellors, it may be regarded as the first overt movement towards accomplishing the objects sought by the Reformers. In all the movements that followed, this combination of religious and political parties had a foremost place, and gave a direction to the religious thought and life of the Scottish people that remains to this day. Had Knox and his co-religionists been left free to carry out their spiritual aims, untrammelled by

political considerations, there can be little doubt that the whole religious and ecclesiastical life of the Scottish people would have been very different from what it became.

While, in order to secure the abolition of Popery and the free preaching of the Gospel of Christ, Knox was induced to become the leader of a political party, he strove hard to keep the movement upon religious lines, and to take advantage of the co-operation of the "lords" so as the more effectually to promote the spiritual ends he had in view. How faithfully he did this the history of the period between 1559 and 1578 bears witness. It is of special interest to Independents, however, as showing the extent to which their distinctive principles found recognition during this the earliest period of Protestant church-life in Scotland.

In 1560 the Scots "Confession" appeared, and was followed in 1561 by the First Book of Discipline, both of which were drawn up by Knox, and set forth his views as to the government and order of the "kirk." These symbols of the Reformation party are remarkable for the clearness and force with which they declare the principles for which Independents have all along contended.

1. The *independence* of the several churches was declared. The "notes of the true kirk of God" were declared to be, "First, the true preaching of the Word of God. . . Secondly, the right administration of the sacraments. . . Lastly, ecclesiastical discipline rightly ministered, as God's Word prescribed, whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished. Wheresoever, then, these notes are seen, and of any time continue (be the number never so few, above two or three), there, without all doubt, is the true kirk of Christ, who, according to His promise, is in the midst of them. . . . And such like we, the inhabitants of the realm of Scotland, professors of Christ Jesus, confess us to have in our cities, towns, and places reformed." (*Scots Confession*, Chap. xviii.). There was no provision made for the government of churches by Church courts external to the single congregation; that arrangement did not come into full operation until 1581, when the Second Book of Discipline appeared. Each congregation was virtually independent, and was held to be fully competent to manage its own affairs. That this was so, will appear all the more clearly when we note the functions prescribed for each congregation.

2. Both the sacraments and discipline were to be administered by "lawful ministers, whom we affirm to be only those that are appointed to the preaching of the Word, into whose mouth God hath put some sermon of exhortation, they being men lawfully chosen thereto by some kirk." Thus, not only the "calling" of a minister by the voice of the people, but his appointment was in the hands of the people. Knox had good cause to