

must first be proclaimed, embraced and defended. The inner life of the Church, the doctrine she taught, the food with which her children were to be fed, the groundwork of her strength and stability—the most essential and vital of all things—must first claim the attention of all true Reformers. A true and thorough Reformation, however, when it secures this essential element, cannot here rest and be satisfied. Truth must always assume an outward form. Beginning in the inner life, it must manifest itself in the outer man, in life and conduct. The Church, as a society, must be governed, and it cannot be governed without Laws. It is a portion of ground, so to speak, that has been redeemed from the world, but unless it be fenced and hedged from mundane corruptions, the line of demarkation will soon disappear, and the Church and the world become one and the same. This work of hedging and fencing was reserved for the orderly and systematic mind of Melville. His calm, clear head and firm hand rendered him very peculiarly adapted for the work, and thirty-two years later, at the General Assembly of 1592, the outer frame-work of the Church may be said to have been completed. The contests and struggles of the period are among the most interesting and important portions of the Ecclesiastical History of Scotland.

It is difficult to draw a distinct and vivid picture of the Church of Knox. We are apt to make it either an exact copy of the Kirk of the present, or else something utterly and entirely different and distinct. Yet neither would be a correct or truthful picture. The outlines of both would indeed be the same, but the colouring and details very different. In both might be seen a sameness of form and of feature, yet it is the sameness that may be witnessed in the features of the boy and the full-grown man. In the Church of Knox, we may see the Kirk of the Present, but we see it only in germ, with many of its peculiarities undeveloped, and its characteristics unformed. When we attempt, ~~the~~ thought, to throw ourselves back three hundred years in history, we feel ourselves surrounded by men and things strangely different from those of the present. Strange Soldier-priests attend at the altar of Religion. Fierce, mail-clad, haughty Barons stride down the aisles of the Churches, breaking the solemn stillness of the House of God, with the unhallowed clangour of sword and battle-axe. Haggard, anxious, crouching retainers throng the house of prayer, showing little of the quiet decorum of modern worshippers—now gazing at the Preacher, and now at their feudal lord, and ever ready to rush, at their bidding, to “ding down a Kirk,” or despoil a monastery and “drive the cows adrift.” The Preachers, too, are very like their hearers—strong, bold, impetuous, no mincers of words, no cowards in strong measures.

We realize the difference between the Kirk

of the Present, and the Kirk of 300 years ago by considering a particular case. At the time, Knox was one of the ministers of St Giles', one of the Churches of Edinburgh. From its pulpit he hurled his bitter invective against every phase of sin, and particularly against that sin which he thought himself specially called upon to denounce—the sin of Idolatry, by which he always characterised the Mass. Neither Queen nor Nobles escape his fearless rebuke. He spoke strong, rough plain words, and aroused that congregation to a state of glowing enthusiasm, and, indeed, often, of the wildest frenzy. Royalty feared him, and strove to conciliate him. Three hundred years have passed, and Edinburgh has still her ministers of religion, and St Giles' her worthy representative of the Kirk of the Present. In what respect can we see that the ministers of the Kirk in the 16th century resemble those of the 16th, and wherein do they differ? During that period have we been changing, and has the change been towards the higher and better, or the contrary? Is the popular estimate and opinion of what constitutes the duties, and what is the true sphere and calling of the ministers of the Gospel, and the duties of the Christian community, the same still, as of old? If not, which is the truer, and which the higher and better view? To answer such questions, would be to write a volume, and not a brief sketch, and the answer would be modified by the peculiar view of him who undertook the task. The ardent and extreme lover of the Past—he who sees in the dawn of the Reformation the golden age of the Church, and in the days of Knox the embodiment of Christian excellency and high honor and integrity, would be likely to characterize the ministers and people of the Present as a degenerate race. The man of less conservative and more progressive spirit—he who believes that the world grows wiser and better as it grows older, and that the movement of the Church and of the world is onwards to higher things and better, would of course, strike the entire balance in favor of the Present. One thing, however, each, in candor, would be obliged to admit, that there has been a change, and a great one.

Can we imagine the great and popular Preacher of the Reformation, occupying one of our modern Pulpits? How would his appearance and manner impress the audience and suit the requirements of modern taste? Would John Knox, as a candidate for any of our principal charges in Scotland or America, stand any chance of success against one of the ordinary striplings, fresh from the hands of the Presbytery and the University? We certainly think not. The carefully written essay, however destitute of vigour or freshness, would be likely to carry the day against the ruder and more vigorous eloquence of the fiery reformer. Many would think that the unshorn Preacher was rather an extraordinary