

## III. FROM THE BIBLE.

In writing the First Book of Discipline, as John Knox, one of those who assisted Knox in preparing it, says:—"They took not their example from any Kirk in the world, no, not from Geneva." They went direct to the word of God. In general outline this book shaped the Presbyterianism of Scotland as it has ever since remained and therein gave the model for the Presbyterianism of all English-speaking peoples.

## IV. KNOX AND EDUCATION.

There is nothing more worthy of note in this First Book of Discipline than the plan laid down for national education. A school was to be established in every parish for the instruction of youth in the principles of (mark the admirably simple programme and the order in which the subjects are given) religion, grammar, and the Latin tongue. There was also to be college in every notable town; and regulations were made for three great universities. The funds were to come from the religious endowments. The Scheme was only partially carried out for want of funds, which greedy nobles absorbed, but still was productive of untold benefit.

## FOUNDATION WORK—JOHN KNOX, HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

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The Christian Church is built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Corner-Stone. That is a fact which we would ever place at the front in all our discussions of Church life and work; but, at the same time, we believe that we are justified in using the phrase "foundation work" in connection with the career of John Knox. No one would have been more ready than he to say, "other foundation can no man lay;" but on that foundation once laid, it was given to him to build for the generations that came after.

In asking the Young People's Societies to study the life and work of John Knox the Committee has set before us a large inspiring subject. It is a subject that is still handled by able men of various shades of opinion and has by no means lost its freshness. To many of our young people this subject is no doubt quite new and it will introduce them into a world very different from that in which their lot is cast. If, however, they will make an effort to bring back the by-gone days and learn

"In what a forge and what a heat  
Were shaped the anchors of our hope"

they will find the study both instructive and stimulating.

All the space at our disposal might be spent in discussing the literature which is now available for students of this particular period of Scottish history, but we must leave for the present that attractive field, with the remark that the books recommended by the Committee are amply sufficient for the purpose of gaining a general view of those distant times and some definite conception of the Reformer's personality and work. Dr. McCrie's life of Knox, though published over eighty years ago, is still a standard work, a store-house of information concerning the man and his times. The recent work by Mr. A. Taylor Innes is perhaps more suitable for the purpose of a brief text-book; there is not so much detail, but there is an effort to grasp the deepest significance of the man's spiritual life, as well as to give a comprehensive survey of his outward career. Biography written in such a spirit is one of the most wholesome and quickening forms of literature, and if the counsel of the Committee leads many of our young people to read these books much good will assuredly come out of it.

We do not admire the saying attributed to Voltaire, "Happy are the people that have no history;" we rejoice that we have behind us a glorious history, that we are encompassed about by a "great cloud of witnesses," and that, when something is needed to rebuke our sordid meanness and enfeebling sloth, it may be found in the lives of men and women who fought the great battle of freedom through their loyalty to God.

John Knox was born in 1505, and died in the year 1572, so that his real work falls in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. He did not live to a great age, and he was late in life before he got to his work, but he has left an indelible mark on the religious life of Scotland and of the world. That short career had compressed into it a mighty work which was done under great difficulties. There were fightings without and fears within but he came off more than conqueror through the love of Christ. Whether it would have made so much difference to the religion of Scotland as Ian MacLaren seems to suggest, if Knox, instead of being like Paul, broken down by imprisonment and weakened by disease, had been like Luther, a jovial man, who "could play the flute and fight the devil,"—is not a point that can be dealt with in an article of this kind. We have time only for the essential principles and the most important facts.

To explain the full import of the phrase "His times" would require volumes instead of sentences. The life of Knox was not that of a private saint but of a public reformer. It was bound up with the life of the Scottish nation in one of the most critical periods of its history, a time when Scotland was swayed hither and thither by the changing currents of European politics. At that time Scotland was not in the stream of European culture, it had not been