

with the time came the man. Knox went from Edinburgh to Stirling and preached a sermon on idolatry, that set the "rascal multitude" as he called them on an errand of destruction, which was not accomplished till images, and crosses, altars and shrines, and even monasteries lay in ruins. In St. Andrew's even, the same scenes, although enacted in a more orderly manner, took place. Now came the second covenant and the contest between the Queen Regent and the Lords of the Congregation. In 1560 a measure of peace was restored, and Knox, with five other Johns—Douglas, Row, Spotswood, Willock, and Winram—drew up the Scottish Confession of Faith, agreeing in substance with those of the Reformed Churches of the Continent. Knox, who thus laid the foundation of religious liberty, had also enunciated the important principle of civil liberty, "that the power of rulers is limited by reason and Scripture, and that they may be deprived of it upon valid grounds." Immediately after the Scottish Parliament had adopted the Confession, the first General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland was held. In regard to all that was done for the doctrine and government of the Church, John Row, one of the compilers of the Confession, says, "The ministers that were, took not their pattern from any Kirk in the world, no, not from Geneva itself; but, laying God's Word before them, made reformation according thereunto, both in doctrine first and then in discipline, when and as they might get it overtaken." This was true of the Book of Discipline as well as of the Confession. In that book we find the foundation of the great educational system of Scotland, for it provides that a school shall be erected in every parish and a college in every notable town.

In 1561 the young Queen Mary left France and came to rule in Scotland. A short time after her arrival she sent for Knox, who had been appointed minister in Edinburgh, and had a conference with him on the duties of subjects, in which Knox, with all courtesy, maintained every step he had taken for civil and religious liberty. He had harder work with the courtiers who professed attachment to the Reformation, but made small provision for the wants of the infant Church. Another time he appeared before the angry Queen to answer to the charge of having preached a sermon against her. In vindication of himself, he made her Majesty listen to the first Protestant discourse she had ever heard, and, retiring from her presence, answered to the Popish attendants—who said wonderingly, "He is not afraid!"—"Why should the pleasing face of a gentlewoman affray me? I have looked in the faces of many angry men, and yet have not been affrayed above measure." After many such conferences, Mary at length found a handle of accusation against him in his circular calling an assembly of the Protestant Estates in 1563, and for this he was tried as an act of treason. Had the prosecution succeeded it would have gone hard with the reformation in Scotland. Happily the great reformer was acquitted. Yet many slanders and acts of opposition on the part of professed friends of the truth laid a heavy cross upon his shoulders. There was little of unclouded sunshine in Knox's life. He needed and received much inward strength to bear up under his heavy responsibilities and trials.

In 1566 occurred the assassination of Mary's favourite, Rizzio—which Knox reprobated—and the birth of a Prince, afterwards James the Sixth. Knox obtained permission from the Assembly to visit England, and made an unavailing effort to obtain religious liberty for the Puritan party in that Kingdom. In 1567, after the Queen had been compelled to flee and resign the government, he preached a sermon at the coronation of the infant James, and another at the opening of the parliament. In February, 1570, he was