

THE PRESBYTERIAN

AUGUST, 1873.

JOHN KNOX IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
GLASGOW.

Continued.

One of the teachers of John Knox was an eccentric old man, named Mair, who taught what scarcely anybody would believe, namely, that kings did *not* reign by right divine—that they did *not* derive their authority from the Pope, but from the people, and that if they acted inconsistently or incorrigibly they might be deposed.

The seed thus dropped into the mind of this dark-eyed youth that came from the Loudens to study for the priesthood, at length took effect, but it was long in maturing. For, notwithstanding his great powers, he remained mute and inglorious for many years. He was in the desert until his shewing forth unto Israel, contenting himself with the humble office of a tutor in several noble families. He was full forty years old before he took upon himself a public position; but all through those years he was preparing himself for the work, or rather *He who gives every man his work to do* was preparing him for the work which he had given him to do. He was looking on in silence, but not with indifference, on the bondage of his brethren, like Noses in Egypt, for his time had not yet come. And we can imagine how, as he beheld the whole land given to idolatry, the truth would dawn upon his soul, and how to the truth would be added conviction—and to conviction indignation—and to indignation deep resolve, until the fire burned in his bosom. It is not the nature of a great mind to rush suddenly upon solemn undertakings or to be carried away with a hasty impulse. High brows are calm. Holy hearts are still. It is your thin-skinned, little men, that have no

patience—that get red in the face with a word—that crack and explode and expend themselves for nought. A great mind bears long, suffers much, is not easily provoked; but all the while is gathering strength, momentum, so that when it is fairly roused it is like a mighty river that cannot be restrained, but forces its way and carries everything before it.

There were many things that contributed to prepare John Knox for his work and to bring him forth to public view. He had long witnessed the abomination that maketh desolate. He was one of those that had *smelt the reek of Patrick Hamilton*. He had not forgotten the teaching of old Professor Mair, about the right of subjects; and there had dawned upon his soul the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, which was now making such a stir in Germany. But there was one circumstance above all that contributed to ripen his purposes and to bring him forth to the help of the Lord—the help of the Lord against the mighty, and that was the martyr death of a young friend whom he dearly loved, the Rev. George Wishart, who had boldly cast in his lot with the Protestants, and had preached with an unction and a power that every one felt who came near him. Seldom do we meet with a character so beautiful, amiable, interesting, heavenly as his. Excelling all his contemporaries in classic learning, in persuasive eloquence, in affable courtly manners, in a burning zeal which nothing could quench, he made a deep impression on the public mind. Thousands flocked around whenever and where soever he appeared, hung upon his lips with a strange fascination and never forgot his sermons, for he spake *as a dying man to dying men*. But Cardinal Beaton, who