

of the poor, the widow and the orphan. It is estimated that one half of the wealth of the kingdom was in the hands of the church and therefore paid no taxes and rendered no material service to the state. Such a social condition was intolerable. It needed only the loosening of the fetters of ignorance and superstition to inaugurate a revolution.

II. We notice, secondly, the state of learning at the time of the Reformation. Popular education was never at any period wholly neglected in Scotland. In the early Columban church the first duty of the clergy was instruction. In every period of her history we find the machinery of education in operation, even during the darkest times preceding the Reformation. Such men as Michael Scott, Thomas of Ercildoune, and John of Duns, commonly called Duns Scotus, could not have arisen in a country which wholly neglected its schools. King James I was the finest poet of his time. Education for the people has always in Scotland, taken the place of education for the few. Learning was encouraged while the church degenerated, but in promoting it the soil was prepared for the seed of evangelical truth. At the beginning of the sixteenth century there were grammar schools in all the principal towns, in which the Latin language, the universal medium of learning, was thoroughly taught. The road to Parnassus was open to all, for the universities were free to the poor as well as to the rich. In all the great universities of the continent there was a "Scottish Nation" composed of the students from that country. Balliol College at Oxford was founded for their accommodation and a number resorted to Cambridge as well. Probably nowhere else, certainly not in England, was the great mass of the people so well prepared to understand the questions agitated, or so ready to profit by the ministrations of the reformed preachers. With the awakening intellect of Europe the genius of Scotland awoke also. The men who led the Reformation movement,