

by occasional visits and frequent epistles. To him the leaders of the Protestant cause looked when the crisis came and he did not disappoint them.

In 1559, Knox appears in Scotland, "ever in the brunt of the battle." His coming struck panic into the hearts of the priests, and he was at once declared to be an excommunicated outlaw. From this time onward he takes his place as the foremost man of Scotland and as the real leader of the movement for purity of faith and simplicity of worship. Whether we view him as a preacher, politician, or statesman, we can see that he is a man of one clear purpose,—that is to win Scotland for Christ, and to cast out the superstition which had so long blighted its religious life. He was brusque, impetuous, intolerant, but withal tender-hearted and sympathetic towards those who sought his counsels and help.

When he came home he found the nation divided into hostile camps; when he died a few years later, he could rejoice that the battle was won, the nation had made a deliberate choice from which it was not likely to recede.

Besides preaching and lecturing, he carried on difficult negotiations and championed the cause of Protestantism in the presence of nobles and princes. In his dealings with the Queen Regent, and Mary Queen of Scots he may not always have displayed gentleness and tact, but he was always true to the one purpose of his life, and the carrying out of that purpose meant freedom and progress for Scotland.

He gave counsel to the Lords of the Congregation; he inspired the soldiers when they were faint-hearted; he rebuked avaricious nobles who were eager to devour "widows' houses," and the poor ministers' portion; he fought for a more scriptural creed, a more intelligent worship and a more godly discipline.

He was often cast down by bodily weakness and irritated by half-hearted friends or treacherous enemies, but through it all he preached a bold, clear gospel, and though often ready to say "good night to it all," "endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

It was largely by his means that a nation, which for long had groaned under priestly tyranny was made to feel that it stood face to face with God and must choose whom it would serve. "Common man as he was, the vague, shoreless universe had become for him a firm city, and a dwelling place which he knew. Such virtue was in belief in these words well spoken, *I believe.*"

Very affecting is the story of his death. The man who had fought such a fierce battle passed peacefully away, drawing to his heart the precious promises that had sustained him in many a trying hour. "It is no painful pain, but only such a pain as shall soon, I trust, put an end to the battle." His anchor had been cast in the seventeenth Chapter of John and it held fast during the

last dread storm. When the voice that had often rung out boldly in defence of truth lost its power, his servants begged for a sign. Then he lifted his right hand heavenwards and glided gently out of this troublesome world. Thus died the man who feared God in such a way that he lost all base fear of men.

The great lesson of his life is that it is a positive enthusiastic faith which alone is competent to wrestle with tyranny, reform abuses, and bring in purer manners and nobler laws. Scepticism and criticism are of themselves poor weapons with which to fight the world's great battles. "This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith."

Knox had no narrow view of the work of the churches. In addition to the preaching of the Gospel and the building up of men in spirituality of life, he would in every parish support the poor, compel the lazy to work, give every child a good common education, and open the way for higher education, as far as possible, to young men of real intelligence and noble ambition. Here was a great programme, a true, "forward movement," which was to bear rich fruit in spite of many hindrances, not only in Scotland, but throughout the world, in the distant lands of which he never dreamed.

We do not claim perfection for Knox. He had "the defects of his qualities," and perhaps other defects as well; but much of the criticism that has been lavished upon him has been very foolish, magnifying his infirmities, belittling his work, and reproaching him for not having attained the superficial tolerance of our easy-going days, a tolerance that is too often a shallow indifference.

It is true that Knox was a zealot, a man of strong convictions and full of fire and we cannot imagine what other kind of man could be a reformer in days of darkness, when the Church had lost the power to preach and retained only the energy to protect vested interests by cruel persecution. In such days it is refreshing to meet a man whose highest interest is to know God's truth and to use it as an instrument by which a nation may be liberated and sent forward to its high destiny.

C. E. Prayer Meeting Topics.

A very pretty Topic Card is published by the Endeavor Herald Co., Toronto, for the General Assembly's Committee on Young Societies. It includes "Uniform" Topics, and is therefore suitable for any C. E. Society; and it also includes the "Plan of Study" of the General Assembly's Committee, and is specially suitable for Presbyterian C. E. Societies. It is a very neat and tasteful card, and should be used by all Presbyterian C. E. Societies. Price 60 cents per 100.